

New Documentary on Marlee Matlin's Life Coming to PBS in 2025

Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore will feature ASL as its primary language

Production for ***Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore***, an innovative documentary feature exploring the life and career of the pioneering actress, activist and author, is underway, aiming for a 2025 release. The film will explore Matlin's life as a groundbreaking performer, whose meteoric and tumultuous rise to fame started in 1987 when she became the first Deaf actor to win an Academy Award for her role in *Children of a Lesser God*. At the age of twenty-one, Matlin was thrust into the national spotlight, becoming for many Americans the first Deaf person they saw on TV and overnight becoming the de-facto representative of the Deaf community.

The film boasts never-before-seen home video filmed over the course of Matlin's 37-year career by her longtime interpreter and producing partner Jack Jason- including footage of Matlin behind the scenes on the sets of some of her most iconic roles including *Children of a Lesser God*, *The West Wing* and *Seinfeld*. For the first time in her own language, Matlin will reflect on her relationship with actor William Hurt, her place in the Deaf community, her fight for roles and accessibility in Hollywood and what it means to be "the first."

The project is being directed by Shoshannah Stern who is bringing her singular vision to Matlin's story. Stern's prior work includes the award-winning Sundance series *This Close* which she conceived of, wrote for and executive produced; recurring acting roles on *Supernatural* and *Grey's Anatomy*, writing on Marvel's *Echo* and recent story consulting on HBO's *The Last of Us*. About her perspective she states, "As a deaf woman who first saw herself reflected in Marlee as a child, I was inspired to become an actor. I am now an actor, a writer and with this film, a director. I am experiencing everything Marlee has made possible in a beautiful metaphysical tandem. In our film, the telling of her story is rendered through the easy familiarity people have with an interviewer that shares their lived experience. Hopefully because of this, our project will exemplify why nobody, much less Marlee Matlin, should be alone anymore."

Using ASL as the film's primary language along with stylized captioning and dynamic editing, the film will push the boundaries of conventional documentary form. *Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore* has also brought together Deaf and hearing collaborators across production and post production roles.

The project, co-produced by [Actual Films](#) and [American Masters](#) Pictures, The WNET Group's theatrical imprint for documentaries co-produced by PBS' *American Masters*, Impact Partners, and ITVS in partnership with AfterImage Public Media, has unprecedented access to Matlin and features interviews with her close friends and family along with colleagues Henry Winkler, Aaron Sorkin, Randa Haines, Sian Heder, Lauren Ridloff and John Maucere.

"Marlee's career spans generations of movie and television lovers, and we follow her as she becomes the first Deaf director in the Directors Guild of America. Her talent, charisma and resilience have made her a role model for millions around the world, said *American Masters*

Executive Producer Michael Kantor. “We are proud to partner with Shoshannah Stern and are certain that Marlee’s pioneering story will resonate with both Deaf and hearing audiences across the country.”

Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore is being produced by Robyn Kopp along with Bonni Cohen and Justine Nagan of Actual Films. Michael Kantor is executive producer for ***American Masters***. The rest of the team includes EP’s Ruth Ann and Bill Harnisch, Melony and Adam Lewis, Patty Quillin and Jenny Raskin; Co-EP Ann W Lovell; Director of Photography Jon Shenk; Editors Sara Newens and Kristina Motwani and Composer Kathryn Bostic.

The film has received funding support from The Ford Foundation, Jewish Story Partners and the Burton P. and Judith B. Resnick Foundation.

ABOUT ACTUAL FILMS

Actual Films creates powerful works of documentary cinema to have a positive impact for change in the world. Over the past 20+ years, the company has created critically acclaimed, award-winning films such as *Athlete A*, *Audrie & Daisy*, *An Inconvenient Sequel*, *The Island President* and *The Lost Boys of Sudan*. Recent work includes the Academy-Award nominated short *Lead Me Home* and *Make A Splash*, which premiered at the 2022 Tribeca Film Festival. Distribution partners include Netflix, HBO, Paramount, ESPN, Disney+, PBS and Samuel Goldwyn. Founded by filmmakers Bonni Cohen and Jon Shenk, Actual Films’ documentaries have won Emmys and Peabodys, and been nominated for an Academy Award. Together with Head of Production Justine Nagan, Actual Films frequently collaborates with passionate filmmakers across the country and from around the San Francisco Bay. www.actualfilms.net

ABOUT THE WNET GROUP

[The WNET Group](#) creates inspiring media content and meaningful experiences for diverse audiences nationwide. It is the community-supported home of New York’s [THIRTEEN](#) – America’s flagship PBS station – [WLIW21](#), THIRTEEN PBS KIDS, WLIW World and Create; [NJ PBS](#), New Jersey’s statewide public television network; Long Island’s only NPR station WLIW-FM; [ALL ARTS](#), the arts and culture media provider; newsroom [NJ Spotlight News](#); and FAST channel PBS Nature. Through these channels and streaming platforms, The WNET Group brings arts, culture, education, news, documentary, entertainment, and DIY programming to more than five million viewers each month. The WNET Group’s award-winning productions include signature PBS series ***Nature***, ***Great Performances***, ***American Masters***, and ***Amanpour and Company*** and trusted local news programs like ***NJ Spotlight News with Briana Vannozzi***. Inspiring curiosity and nurturing dreams, The WNET Group’s award-winning Kids’ Media and Education team produces the PBS KIDS series ***Cyberchase***, interactive ***Mission US*** history games, and resources for families, teachers and caregivers. A leading nonprofit public media producer for more than 60 years, The WNET Group presents and distributes content that fosters lifelong learning, including initiatives addressing poverty, jobs, economic opportunity, social justice, understanding, and the environment. Through Passport, station members can stream new and archival

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ABOUT IMPACT PARTNERS

Impact Partners is dedicated to funding independent documentary storytelling that entertains audiences, engages with pressing social issues, and propels the art of cinema forward. Over the span of 15 years, Impact Partners has been involved in the financing of over 150 films, including: ICARUS, which won the 2018 Academy Award® for Best Documentary Feature; 32 SOUNDS, which won 2024 Cinema Eye Honor for Outstanding Nonfiction Feature; AFTERSHOCK, which won a 2023 Peabody Award, WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR?, which won the 2019 Independent Spirit Award for Best Documentary; DINA, which won the Grand Jury Prize at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival and was named Best Feature by the International Documentary Association; THE EAGLE HUNTRESS, which was nominated for the 2017 BAFTA Award for Best Documentary; HOW TO SURVIVE A PLAGUE, which was nominated for the 2013 Academy Award® for Best Documentary Feature; OF FATHERS AND SONS, which was nominated for the 2019 Academy Award® for Best Documentary Feature; and HELL AND BACK AGAIN, which won the Documentary Grand Jury Prize Award at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for the Academy Award® for Best Documentary Feature.

ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Services (ITVS) is the largest co-producer of independent documentaries in the United States. For more than 30 years the San Francisco non-profit has funded and partnered with documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning titles and premieres them on our Emmy® Award-winning PBS series, INDEPENDENT LENS. ITVS titles appear on PBS, WORLD, NETA, and can be streamed on various digital platforms including the PBS app. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, Wyncote Foundation. For more information, visit itvs.org

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