

AMERICAN PATRIOT

1 x 60 HD



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FRONTLINE goes inside the battle between a ranching family in the West and the federal government, examining how a simmering fight over land in Nevada and Oregon became deadly, invigorated a wider militia movement, and continues to challenge law enforcement.

Drawing on deep access to key people on all sides of the battle, *American Patriot* investigates the standoffs that propelled the Bundy family into the national spotlight and the crosshairs of the federal government. With “Patriot” groups that rallied to the Bundys’ cause surging to levels not seen in decades, the film also reports on what’s next for the family and the wider movement around them.

The effort traces the Bundy family’s story as ranchers in the high deserts of Nevada, grazing cattle for generations on federal land and ultimately going to war against the government. Now, their fight has become a lot bigger.

What began as one family’s dispute with the government over grazing fees has reinvigorated a national movement of self-styled militias and “Patriots.” They believe the federal government has overstepped its authority, strayed from its founding principles, and is filled with agents they are duty-bound to oppose. They call themselves Oath Keepers, Constitutional Sheriffs, sovereign citizens, Three Percenters. And while each group has its own cause, they rally under the same banner: opposition to federal overreach.

Over the past several years, many of these “Patriots” have answered the Bundys’ call, taking up arms to defend against what they see as government infringement of their rights as American citizens. In 2014, armed men faced down the federal government at the Bundy ranch when agents came to impound their cattle. In the end, the federal agents backed down. Then, in 2016, armed “Patriots” again joined Ammon and Ryan when they occupied a federal wildlife preserve in Oregon to protest the imprisonment of fellow ranchers, the Hammonds, who were convicted of starting fires on federal lands. In October 2016, Ammon, Ryan and five other supporters were acquitted of federal charges relating to the occupation.

American Patriot helps audiences to understand the Bundys, their fight, and the people who have rallied to their cause.

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CREDITS

Director: Rick Rowley

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