

THE REDWOOD SUMMER'S ATTEMPTED-MURDER MYSTERY

Earth First! activist and filmmaker Darryl Cherney wants to know, Who Bombed Judi Bari?

On May 24, 1990, in Oakland, Calif., a car bomb exploded beneath the seats of Earth First! activists Darryl Cherney and Judi Bari. Cherney escaped with minor injuries while Bari, who had to be cut out of the car, was disabled by the blast. Before Bari was out of the hospital, the duo found themselves as the main suspects in the attack.

Over two decades later, Cherney has completed a film about the bombing of his former partner, lover and fellow activist's car, as well as the stunning aftermath, including the FBI declaring them "environmental terrorists," followed by a lawsuit Cherney and Bari filed and won against the FBI for violating their First and Fourth Amendments.

In making the film he had four goals: First, to educate people about activist tactics and strategies. Next: Inspire: "We save a few forests, we beat the FBI. The point is, it's a movie about how to succeed." Third: Teach the world who Judi Bari is: "We think Judi Bari is an under-known woman hero, in a world that needs more heroes, especially women heroes."

And finally, he wanted to solve the bombing case. Bari herself died of breast cancer in 1997.

While all noble goals, number four is particularly noteworthy, because while Cherney and Bari received vindication in court in 2002 (including \$4.4 million in damages), their bomber is still at large. Cherney is offering a \$50,000 reward for "information leading to the identification, arrest, prosecution and incarceration of the person or persons responsible for the attempted assassination of Judi Bari by placing a bomb under the seat of her car."

And he won't rest until the film's titular question is answered. *Who Bombed Judi Bari?* is only one method in solving the case, drawing attention to an attempted-murder mystery that detonated in the early days of the Redwood Summer — the 1990 summer of protest to protect California's old-growth redwoods — with a cast of characters that includes



environmental activists, Big Timber, the FBI and an alleged bombing suspect known as The Lord's Avenger. To tell their story, Cherney and co-filmmaker Mary Liz Thomson use the trial's deposition, clips sifted from over 700 hours of archival footage and the voice of Bari herself, who tells her story while battling breast cancer in the hospital.

Making the film was not as cathartic as people think. "Rather than catharsis, it's the culmination of a life's work," Cherney says. "Frankly, we're still looking for the bomber." He says that actually finding the bomber, "That's what would be cathartic."

In addition to self-distributing the film around the country (Eugene's March 2 screening at the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference will be the one-year anniversary of its release), Cherney is also acting as investigator; presently, he is awaiting DNA results from the duct tape used in the bombing that he believes could lead to a suspect, or, at least, eliminate suspects. He also tells *EW* that a source that he could not name has come forward with new information within the past four months.

But goal number three is still at the heart of this documentary: Teach the world who Judi Bari is. Cherney says that "Judi was a working, single mom. What's more American than that?" He adds, "I think that the biggest misconception is that we're somehow not regular people. We're wild-eyed, long-haired radicals that will protest at the drop of a hat ... Every human being is just one injustice away from becoming an activist." ■

Who Killed Judi Bari? screens at PIELC 4 pm Saturday, March 2, at University of Oregon School of Law, Room 175, followed by a Q&A with Cherney, Bari-Cherney Attorney Ben Rosenfeld and Earth First! co-founder Mike Roselle; free. There will be additional screenings 7 pm Monday, March 4, at the Eugene Public Library, and 7 pm Tuesday, March 12, at the Newport Visual Arts Center; \$5-\$8 donation at door.

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