

**Project Title:** The Family Tree

**Log Line:** The story of a man pursuing his American dream at the age of retirement, of having a family-owned Christmas tree farm, and the local government doing everything they can to thwart his efforts.

**Synopsis:** “The Family Tree” is a feature-length documentary following the life of Terry A. McHugh, in the year he counts down to his 65th birthday, while simultaneously fighting to have his American dream of having a Christmas tree farm, and a barn to service that and more. Terry’s passion is fueled by his education in Christmas farming from his father, who was a second generation Christmas tree farmer. He is supported by his wife Emma, who shares his vision, as when they met as teenagers in college the way that they dated was to go to Terry’s farm and help to work the land. As stubborn as he is passionate, he is estranged from his siblings who took over the farm, and has found a new family in his neighbors and friends; all of whom affectionately refer to him as the “mayor” of the neighborhood. When we begin our story, Terry has been met with opposition from the local government to build his dream barn, because he is three-hundredths of an acre short of the required acreage, of which he owns that piece of land, only it is separated by sixty feet from the main property. Every move he makes to work with the government to get a variance to take care of this technicality, the Codes Enforcement Office, throws a baffling amount of red tape in his way. As the story unravels, we understand that these moves are personal, with a battle of the egos. While Terry may seem like a tough man, we gain a very personal insight into his insecurities about aging, his neighbors viewing him as a Don Quixote, and the potential heartbreak of having to choose between a home and neighbors that have provided him with so much fulfillment, and having his dream that connects him to his roots. This access is delicately opened up by his daughter, who is this film’s director.

**Roles:** Director, Producer, Cinematographer, Co-Editor

**Current Stage in Post Production:** Picture wrapped, and half-way through editing. My editor, Lillian Rose Mauser-Carter brought us to this stage and she has reviewed the footage, and logged and captured it. Because we have been in stasis for a couple of years due to lack of funding, I am taking over editing until either it is finished, or we have the funds to hire Lilly as a finishing editor.

**Overall Budget:** \$113,358.68

**Amount raised so far:** 41,506.68

The line-item budget is included in the attached full proposal.