



New PBS Series “Energy Switch” Is Must-Watch Energy TV

By **Robert Bryce**

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One of the reasons why our discussions about energy and climate policy are so shallow is simple: we don’t get to hear many real debates about the issues. Instead, we are bombarded by narrowly focused messaging from NGOs, trade groups, and climate activists who are pushing agendas that will perpetuate their favored industries.

This lack of debate -- combined with the innumeracy and scientific illiteracy of policymakers and the general public -- has resulted in a lot of bad energy policies at the local, state, and national levels. That’s why I’m pleased to see the traction that Scott Tinker, who heads the Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas at Austin, is having with his new TV series, “Energy Switch,” which is now available to stream, for free, on PBS.

The show’s tagline is an “energy and climate talk show with America’s leading experts.” Before I go further, I must note that I am one of the “experts” featured in the “Energy Switch” series. I was flattered to be included. I’m in two episodes from season one, both of which are captioned “**Solar and Wind Power The World?**” (The answer to that question, of course, is no. But my counterpart on those episodes, Leia Guccione from Rocky Mountain Institute, gave a good effort.) I must also note that my father, Walter Bryce, frequently told me that an “expert is anybody who’s from out of town.” Given that the show was filmed here in Austin, I don’t qualify as an expert. Nevertheless, the list of **bold-faced names that Tinker assembled for the series** is impressive and includes Daniel Yergin, Michael Shellenberger, Naomi Boness, Ernie Moniz, and many others.

The new series is the latest project of the Switch Energy Alliance. Tinker is the chairman of the group, which describes itself as a non-profit “dedicated to inspiring an energy-educated future that is objective, nonpartisan, and sensible.” (For more, see **SwitchOn.org**),

Tinker has had great success in getting distribution for the series. Season one of **Energy Switch**, which premiered in September, is now airing in over 165 markets across the country. In a recent email, Tinker, who I count as a friend, said that those markets serve about 57 million households in the U.S. He continued, exclaiming that “This is a big deal! Season two will be released in Spring 2023 and season three will be filmed in Februarv 2023.” He also said that he and his lonatime colleague. producer and director Harv Lvnch. are

planning to release the series on NPR and major podcast channels, “as it works well in radio or podcast format.”

I have written about Tinker in these pages before. [Back in 2020, I wrote a review](#) of his [feature-length documentary, SwitchOn](#). In that piece, I wrote that the film succeeds “because it shows how electricity and clean cooking fuels nourish humans.” *SwitchOn* is Tinker’s second documentary. The first, *Switch*, came out in 2012. It looked at the progress (and the lack of progress) on the energy transition in developed countries.

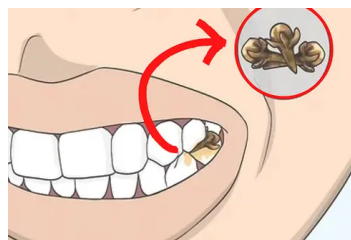
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The first season of the Energy Switch series includes a dozen episodes. The captions for the episodes include the future of nuclear energy, making energy more sustainable, why the US needs an oil and gas industry, the geopolitics of energy, hydrogen, and more. Tinker is an even-handed and laconic moderator, who gives his guest time to make their points.

To be sure, Just Stop Oil’s recent antics or the 200 climate activists who [ransacked a French cement plant last Saturday](#), are getting lots of media attention. But slogans, super glue, and tomato soup aren’t enough. Our society depends on reliable and affordable energy. The current meltdown in Europe shows how bad energy policy can lead to disastrous economic outcomes. Now more than ever, we need more reasoned debate and pragmatic energy policies. If you are interested in the future of our energy and power networks, “Energy Switch” is must-see TV.

Robert Bryce is the host of the [Power Hungry Podcast](#), executive producer of the documentary, [Juice: How Electricity Explains the World](#), and the author of six books, including most recently, [A Question of Power: Electricity and the Wealth of Nations](#). Follow him on Twitter and TikTok: [@pwrhungry](#)

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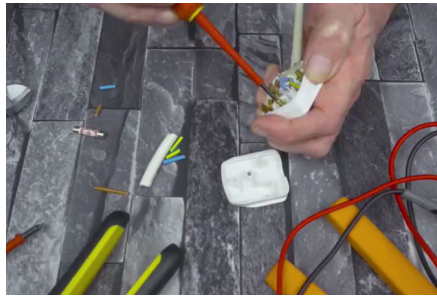


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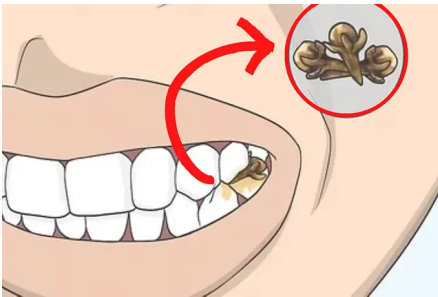
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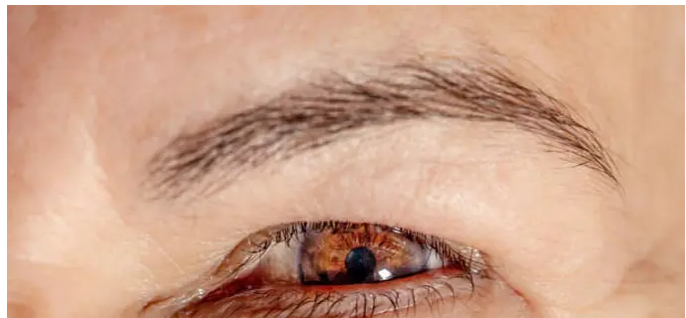
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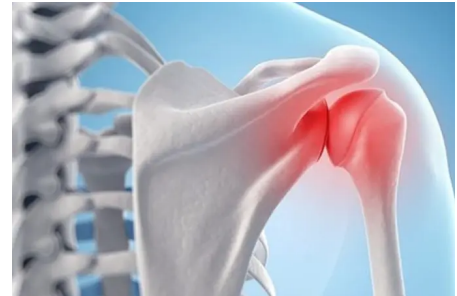
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