

RADIO IOWA

Documentary on the meaning of peace premieres in Iowa Sunday

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A documentary that aims to define the meaning of “peace” will premiere in Iowa this weekend and the filmmaker will attend the debut. Six years in the making, Greg Reitman says “Rooted in Peace” is the story of his personal quest which took him around the planet, with a few stops in southeast Iowa.



“I go on a journey asking the question, ‘Why are we so violent?’ and why we don’t connect with ourselves and with nature,” Reitman says. “Along the way, I’m guided by some incredible people.” The list includes: Archbishop Desmond Tutu, spiritualist Deepak Chopra, film director David Lynch, media mogul Ted Turner, and music legends Donovan, Pete Seeger and Mike Love.

Reitman first met Love, one of the founders of the Beach Boys, at a 2009 concert in Fairfield. Reitman is a New York native who now lives in southern California and the process of making this film took him to several continents.

The documentary had its beginnings more than two decades ago when he visited Japan and saw the ruins of first city that was wiped out by an atomic bomb. “When I was in Hiroshima and I saw the devastation, I didn’t cry and learned a little about PTSD,” Reitman says. “I came up with this idea when I was 19 in college at UMass-

Amherst that I was going to save the world by planting trees. I created this tree-planting initiative called The Giving Tree-Rooted in Peace.”

Now in his 40s, he shows himself in the documentary carrying a tiny potted tree through places like Times Square in New York City. “Essentially, I come back 20 years later with the bonsai tree as a symbol of hope, looking at the tree as a symbol for all of us and our connection with humanity and how we want to connect with nature,” he says. “That really becomes the unfolding story.”

The documentary “Rooted in Peace” will be shown Sunday at 7 P.M. at the Sondheim Center for the Performing Arts in Fairfield. Reitman will do a question-and-answer session afterwards. His 2008 film, “Fuel,” won the Sundance Audience Choice Award.