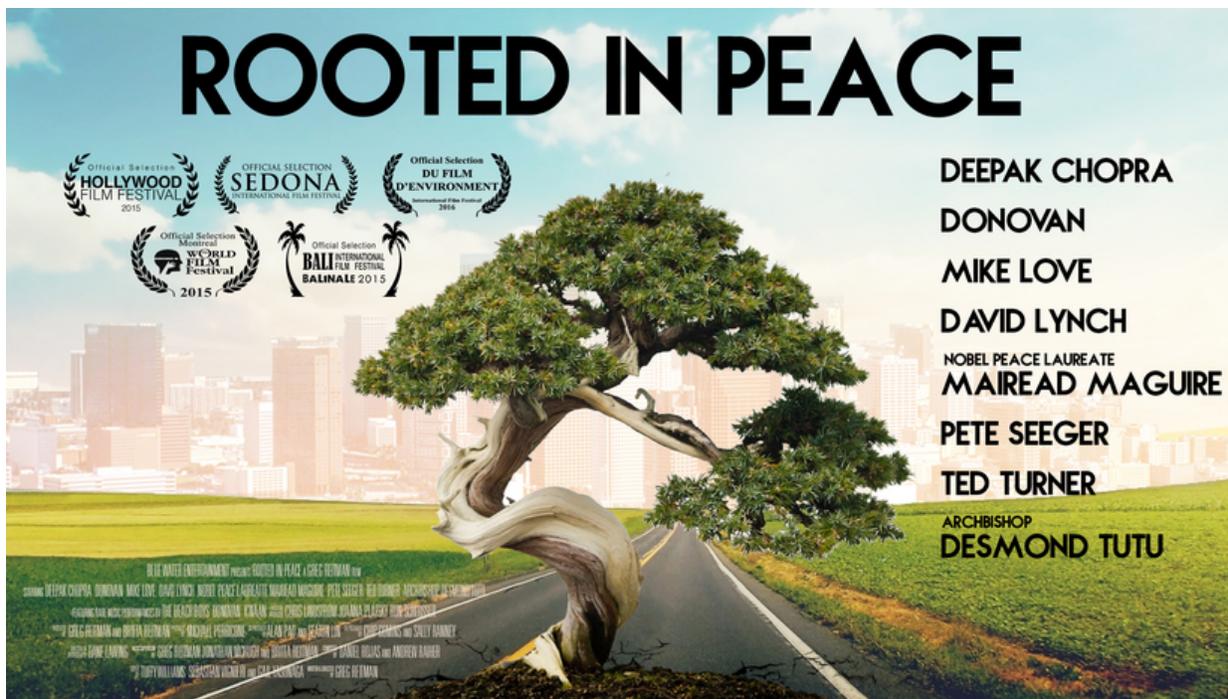


Betsy Rosenberg, Contributor

Environmental media host/producer, speaker, writer, commentator, green consultant

Rooted In Peace Is Rooted In Hope: A Time for Action

03/28/2017 01:51 pm ET | Updated 1 day ago



FILM DIRECTED BY GREG REITMAN

Greg Reitman is indeed the right man to make this sweet and poignant film at just the right time—amidst a current backdrop of political bitterness, unprecedented national divisiveness and bellicose buildup of military might at the expense of public health and our environment.

Although Donald Trump was not yet on the political scene when *Rooted In Peace* was conceived and produced, his presidency and dark values loom in stark contrast to the movie’s primary message of the need for peace, hope and love to prevail if humans hope to live in harmony with themselves, each other, and nature.

Open minded and open hearted, Reitman shares his journey from a presumably normal New York City boyhood, filled with the usual comic books and video games, to young adulthood during which his travels exposed him to trauma caused by witnessing violence, even if only as a bystander.

The first two life-changing events occurred on foreign territory—witnessing, as a student, bombing raids in Israel during the first Gulf

trauma hit closer to home as we learn in an interview with Reitman's brother-in-law, who witnessed the 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers.

Setting out on a journey of self discovery—armed with a miniature “peace tree” and existential questions like how did humans learn to become so violent (since we're not born that way) and how can we reconnect with our inherently peaceful nature as individuals, nations and a planet—Reitman takes his quest for answers to India and seeks out spiritual gurus like the Maharishi and Deepak Chopra. Along the way he poses philosophical queries such as: Is there any such thing as a just war? And can one be an angry peace activist?

Along the way Reitman comes face to face with...himself. First, in the form of health issues which force the filmmaker to seek medical advice, ultimately leading to a change in diet and exercise habits. Next, he confronts anger issues in his relationship with girlfriend Britta, a co-producer in the film. Once he gets the toxic stuff out of his body and relationships, Reitman turns his lens on the endangered health of our planet. He meets with noted environmental thinkers like Paul Hawken, Lester Brown and William McDonough, who weigh in on what must be done to reverse ecosystem decline and the planetary crises caused by, and facing, mankind.

Throughout the film there are cameo appearances and clips with Desmond Tutu, Pete Seeger, David Lynch and Ted Turner. Also threaded throughout was a killer soundtrack with songs from Mike Love and The Beach Boys, Donovan, Sting, Coldplay, Pink Floyd and David Gray.

In the end Reitman welcomes and shares wisdom gleaned from his worldly mentors. Among the nuggets? A meditation practice can expand the brain to become more receptive than reactive: our hearts have a stronger connection to our emotions than our brains: our planet is the circulatory system of all life: and the rage of Gaia (earth) will come back with great vengeance if we continue to abuse, and take from, nature. And closing the loop back to where the film opens with the mini Bonsai, humans have more in common with trees than it would appear on the surface, including the ability, and necessity, to breathe oxygen.

The movie concludes with a nod to its title. Following many scenes in which the seeker-filmmaker is planting trees, Reitman turns over the omnipresent “peace tree” to his nephew, in whom he seemingly plants his hopes for a better future. Finally, in the ultimate act of hope, we see Reitman and his girlfriend tie the knot while the sun sets on the couple beginning their future as a married couple.

Now if only we could make **Rooted In Peace** required viewing for everyone, especially those in the Trump administration. In that fantasy scenario Reitman, will have planted seeds of change that would cause a pivot toward peace and sustainability and away from a no-win war on ourselves, each other and our precious planet.

A promotional banner for HuffPost's Morning Email. The background is a collage of images: on the left, a man in a suit holding an Oscar; in the center, the US Capitol building; on the right, a woman's face and a woman in a military-style uniform. The text is centered and reads: "HUFFPOST THE MORNING EMAIL Start your workday the right way with the news that matters most." Below the text is a white input field with the placeholder "address@email.com" and an orange "SUBSCRIBE" button to its right.

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Greg Reitman is a director, producer, writer and active member of the Director's Guild of America. Described by Movie Maker Magazine as “one of the top ten filmmakers producing content that impacts our world,” he is the founder of Blue Water Entertainment, Inc., an independent production company. DVD release for the film is May 10th, to be sold at Whole Foods nationwide.