

EARTH DAYS

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“Moving, elegiac, deeply contemplative”—Variety

“A beautifully composed tribute to visionary thinking...powerful emotions are evoked”—New York Times

“Rapturous and enlightening”—Entertainment Weekly

“Provides a sweeping history of the environment movement...Spectacular”

—The Hollywood Reporter

In EARTH DAYS, acclaimed director Robert Stone (*Oswald's Ghost, Guerrilla: The Taking of Patty Hearst*) traces the origins of the modern environmental movement through the eyes of nine people who propelled the movement from its beginnings in the 1950s, to its moment of triumph in 1970 with the original Earth Day, and to its status as a major political force in America. Drawing heavily on eyewitness testimony and a wealth of never-before-seen archival footage, Stone examines the revolutionary achievements—and missed opportunities—of a decade of groundbreaking activism. The result is both a poetic meditation on man's complex relationship with nature, and a probing analysis of past responses to environmental crisis.

In the 1950s, a small group of scientists began to document the impact of technology on the Earth's ecosystem. Within a decade it seemed as if the post-war dream of a better world brought about through science, technology, and economic growth was turning into an unfathomable nightmare.

By 1970, the world's human population had nearly doubled since World War II and was set to double again by the year 2000. Exponential and unstoppable growth in environmental pollution was taking place on a number of fronts. In 1979, a national energy crisis propelled environmental issues further into the mainstream. In response, President Jimmy Carter outlined his plan to reduce oil imports and improve energy efficiency. He encouraged Americans to scale back their energy use, and invested in renewable energy research, which he hoped would allow for 20% of US energy to come from renewable resources by the year 2000. But as the political landscape shifted, these promising solutions came to a halt. Federal funding for energy research was slashed by as much as 80% in some instances.

Nearly forty years after the original Earth Day, Stone's eyewitnesses remain dedicated to the cause of a sustainable relationship between humanity and their environment. Scientist Dennis Meadows says, “Environmental problems emerge out of daily life, and the solutions are also rooted in daily life. We need six billion people to get up and have a different consciousness and do things differently.”

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AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

CREDITS

Executive producer: Mark Samels

Senior producer: Sharon Grimberg

Written, Produced & Directed: Robert Stone

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