
Reaction to Leonardo DiCaprio's before the Flood

Summary

Before the Flood is a National Geographic film starring Oscar-winning actor Leonardo DiCaprio, who travels through various countries to meet with scientists and leaders in order to discuss the damage done by and future dangers of climate change. The movie begins when DiCaprio was appointed to be the Messenger of Peace at a United Nations conference. As could have been expected, this caused an uproar from deniers of climate change, as they saw his appointment as an opportunity to convert supporters of the phenomenon. DiCaprio was seen as a figure who had little to no experience in environmental science, and deniers made this publicly apparent to portray climate change as even more of a joke and a hoax.

Soon after this happened, the actor and newly born environmentalist began his journey around the world to further his knowledge of the worldwide worry. On his expedition, he came face to face with the destruction and devastation climate change has already caused by interviewing people who are knowledgeable in the field and have to deal with the issues everyday. Throughout his travels, he learned an abundance of new information that he found to be appalling. Before the Flood captures DiCaprio's fear for what is to come for the world's future, and leaves viewers feeling the same way.

Reaction

Personally, I found many aspects of this film to be absolutely shocking, and not in a good way. Within the beginning of the film, government officials who vehemently deny that climate change is a real problem facing our society today are shown. Many of these strong influences may have been swayed from the known truth when fuel companies, who play a major part in causing climate change, paid them millions of dollars to speak in their defense (Before the Flood). I found this to be absolutely disgusting because people who have it in their power to change our environment's destiny for disaster will not make the change, simply because the ones causing the problem are paying them to keep their mouths shut. I am sure I am not the only one who believes that money is not as important as our world's future, but clearly these people's beliefs have been corrupted. The fact that these things happen in government made me no longer believe that we, the citizens of the United States, have elected the right people to such powerful positions in our country.

Another part of the movie that I found to be terrible was the fact that Greenland itself is literally slowly melting away, and may be completely destroyed for future generations. Believe it or not,

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the damage done by the melting of the ice caps will have an even bigger effect than just the country's absence. According to Pat Brennan at NASA, "The result [of this] could be...an expected acceleration of global sea level, long predicted by computer models of Earth's climate" (Brennan, 2017, 3). Because of the major mass of the ice caps, so much water will be released when they melt, sea levels are expected to rise substantially. For me, the fact that the country has already begun to melt away is enough to prove the harsh reality of climate change, but evidently many government officials do not feel the same way.

A final aspect of the film that I thought was quite depressing was the fact that many companies are insisting on the usage of palm oil in their products, simply because of how cheap it is to grow and harvest. Companies such as Tyson, Pepsico, and Kraft Heinz all consider palm oil to be a suitable crop for their needs (Before the Flood). However, this crop requires a substantial amount of land, which leads to deforestation. In the particular area shown in the movie that is being used for the growth of this crop, forests were being completely burned down to the ground. Since trees hold in carbon from our atmosphere, burning them releases carbon molecules back into the air, which is damaging to wildlife and the environment. One of the specific forests pictured happens to be home to many species of animals, such as elephants, orangutans, rhinos, and tigers. This is the last place on earth that has all four of these creatures living together in one place (Before the Flood). All of these animals being killed at one time due to selfish companies who contribute to climate change simply to make a larger profit make me angry because the question is raised: Why do they not care enough about our world and the creatures that live in it to choose a different method of obtaining their materials? I cannot think of a good enough reason to continue with this behavior, as it makes the human race the true cause of the devastating effects of climate change.

Overall, there were not a lot, if any at all, aspects of this film that I found to be positive. We, as human beings, are acting as though this world is completely ours, which it is not. This conduct makes me irate because the United States government has everything within their power to turn the effects of the devastation caused by climate change around, and yet they choose to allow it to escalate.

Discussion of Significance

Although Before the Flood may seem straightforward and factual, there are deeper

meanings and controversies surrounding many aspects of this film. For example, government officials accepting money from companies that play a major part in causing climate change in order to call the phenomenon a hoax says that they care more about money than about our environment and our health. A wider implication of the melting of Greenland is that many other countries that lie near the ocean will eventually be affected by the rising sea levels because

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parts of them will be

flooded and others will be completely lost. More meaning to consider while learning about the killings of elephants, orangutans, rhinos, and tigers in forest fires is that these species could eventually become extinct if palm oil consumption continues at the rate it is currently at.

However, these facts and implications are surrounded by controversy, as many people question whether or not humans alone could create such a disaster. Personally, I believe that the answer to this popular question is yes because we, as humans, create many man-made goods and dispose of garbage irresponsibly, which in turn produce and release many harmful things into the atmosphere. Also, some citizens have enough trust in our nation's government to trust their word, a lot of which are not in favor of supporting helping the issues of climate change, which they "believe" is not real, even though it is backed up by years of scientific evidence.

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