



Extreme Realities



Introduction

Host/narrated by Matt Damon, “Extreme Realities” is a new episode in the Journey to Planet Earth series investigating the link between extreme weather events, climate change, and threats to national security. Featuring Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Thomas Friedman, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim, former CIA Director James Woolsey, and environmental visionary Lester Brown, the documentary focuses on recent political conflicts and severe weather events in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia, India, the Middle East, the United States, and the Arctic.

In the wake of these disasters, Extreme Realities addresses three fundamental questions:

- (1) are we merely experiencing once in a hundred year weather events or are they really early warning signals of an altered reality – a new normal;
- (2) have we already reached a tipping point pushing our planet towards an environmental cliff; and
- (3) are there ways we can mitigate or adapt to these newly emerging threats?

Just pick up any newspaper or watch any television news report and it becomes evident that unprecedented extreme weather events such as severe drought, heat waves, and wildfires, more intense hurricanes and floods, and crippling blizzards, are leaving a trail of death and destruction throughout the world.



We did some investigating and here is what we learned...

- Scientists now tell us that not only is our planet's climate changing at an unprecedented rate, we will begin to experience even more frequent weather-related extremes resulting in massive food, water, and energy shortages.
- The intelligence community predicts that there will be a rise in terrorist activities and failing states as a direct result of the economic pressures caused by severe weather events happening around the world.
- In addition, Defense Department analysts concluded that the consequences of climate change might define life for people all over the world – just as much as the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union did for the last generation.

At a time when there are fierce partisan debates about climate change, “Extreme Realities” clarifies these issues and makes a strong case for finding ways to cope with the challenges of a rapidly changing planet.

Produced by Emmy Award-winning filmmakers Marilyn & Hal Weiner in association with South Carolina ETV, Journey to Planet Earth is a long-running public television series that explores new ways of looking at the delicate relationship between people and the world they inhabit. The series is also designed to help viewers understand and cope with the complexities of the most important environmental issues of the 21st century. Through an interdisciplinary approach, each episode reaches beyond the physical sciences to draw connections to politics, economics, sociology, and history. Extreme Realities is the 13th episode in the Journey to Planet Earth series.

~~~~~