The Afectados

New short documentary starring Julie Christie highlights chronic Amazon pollution as oil giant Chevron fights $9.5 billion fine. "I find it both striking and distressing that in 2015, a poem written by Pablo Neruda in 1950 can still be a fitting statement on the relationship between a transnational company and poor, indigenous Latin Americans," said Julie Christie.Â Â

Film
The Afectados

RÃ©alisation
Mark Donne

Joe Morris

Julie Christie

Production

Brass Moustache Films

DurÃ©e
0:13

CrÃ©ation
2015

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The Afectados

Mark DONNE & Joe MORRIS

narration by Julie CHRISTIE

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Julie Christie

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Independent Film Company Brass Moustache has produced a short arts documentary; "The Afectados" (the affected ones) to highlight the alleged contamination of the Ecuadorian Amazon by US oil giant Chevron, which faces a $9.5 billion clean-up costs and damages ruling.

The beautifully shot 13-minute film includes the emotional first-hand accounts of rainforest residents and powerful interviews with leading academics.Â "The Afectados" is structured around the powerful narration of Academy award winning screen icon Julie Christie, reading Pablo Neruda's poetic masterpiece, The United Fruit Company, and a unique sound-score composed from instrumented Amazon field recordings. The percussive, often profuse score is composed and performed by Drew McConnell, of Babyshambles, and James Carey; long time Banksy collaborator previously Oscar-nominated for "Exit Through The Gift Shop". Travelling through the tragically tainted rainforest of SucumbÃ-os province in northeast Ecuador, the production team met indigenous people with shocking stories of polluted rivers, spontaneous miscarriage, cancer and other serious illnesses.

Julie Christie said: "I find it both striking and distressing that in 2015, a poem written by Pablo Neruda in 1950 can still be a fitting statement on the relationship between a transnational company and poor, indigenous Latin Americans. Despite much legal chicanery across many years and in many territories, the real people at the heart of this story and the precious Amazon environment that was so badly impacted by what was an astounding level of pollution are both still neglected. A recent court judgment in The Hague made it quite clear that Chevron must do the right thing by those people and that environment, and deliver the compensation due. I hope in some small way that this film can introduce people around the world to a vitally important story and increase awareness of the many global campaigns to achieve justice for the afectados, their land and life sources. They have waited 23 years for justice; they should not have to wait any longer."

"The Afectados" director, Mark Donne, said: "This story is one of global importance. It shows us the psychology of a multinational company and its attitude towards small sovereign states, innocent indigenous people and precious, diverse forest. Filming in the Ecuadorian Amazon and seeing with my own eyes the scale of destruction caused by years of toxic pollution, I cannot help on a human level yearning for justice for the people I talked to. We hope we've brought this story to life, and that urgent justice will be delivered to the Ecuadorian people blighted by a simply colossal act of pollution."

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Background: Between 1964 and 1992, an area larger than Glasgow was scarred with 1,000 open toxic waste pits. 18 billion gallons of toxic wastewater was dumped, a practice outlawed in major US oil producing states. Amazon Watch, a California-based non-government organisation (NGO), describes it as one of the worst environmental disasters on the planet. Texaco was subsumed into multinational energy corporation Chevron in 2001, so Chevron inherited the lawsuit. After 18 years of litigation, an Ecuadorian court awarded the afectados $18bn in clean-up costs and damages, reduced on appeal to $9.5bn in 2011. In March 2015, the International Court of Justice in The Hague upheld this ruling. Chevron vigorously denies the allegations and maintains that Texaco's methods were in line with the standards of the day.

"A civilised world cannot allow this kind of behaviour by its corporations," said Jeremy Leggett, Associate Fellow at Oxford University's Environmental Change Institute.

The Afectados

Directed by Mark Donne

Shot and edited by Joe Morris

Narration by Julie Christie

Soundtrack by Jim Carey and Drew McConnell

Location sound and dubbing mix by Inventive Audio

Colourist Joseph Bicknell

Produced by Mark Donne and Joe Morris for Brass Moustache Films.

Julie Christie starred as Lara in Doctor Zhivago, won the 1965 Academy Award for Best Actress for Darling and received further Oscar nominations for McCabe & Mrs. Miller in 1971, Afterglow in 1997 and Away from Her in 2006. Previously a writer for The Independent and The Guardian newspapers, Mark Donne is a London-based film-maker. His most recent documentary feature "The UK Gold" - a collaboration with Thom Yorke of Radiohead and 3D of Massive Attack - was critically acclaimed and nominated for the "FACT" Journalism Prize at CPH:DOX in Copenhagen.Â