



PRESS KIT

Produced and directed by Malcolm Rogge.
Under Rich Earth © Rye Cinema 2008



Director Photo (hi-res jpg included in press kit)
Photo Credit: Dawn Paley

Short Synopsis

Under Rich Earth is a story about ordinary people with extraordinary courage. In a remote mountain valley in Ecuador, coffee and sugarcane farmers face the dismal prospect of being forced off their land to make way for a mining project. Unprotected by the police and ignored by their government, they prepare to face down the invaders on their own. Their resistance ultimately leads to a remarkable and dangerous stand off between farmers and a band of armed paramilitaries deep in the cloud forest. In a world dominated by news of massacres and terrorism, **Under Rich Earth** offers a surprising and poignant tale of hope and determination.

Sinopsis en Español

¿Qué pasa cuando una compañía minera virtualmente desconocida recauda millones de dólares en Toronto para financiar un proyecto en Ecuador, el cual campesinos locales están determinados a frenar? ¿Hasta dónde irá la compañía para imponer su visión de progreso y obtener ganancias? Bajo Suelos Ricos cuenta la historia de un extraordinario choque entre familias campesinas y la poderosa industria minera global. En un remoto valle en Ecuador, campesinos se enfrentan con la posibilidad de serán forzados a dejar sus tierras fértiles para abrir camino a un proyecto minero. Determinados a defender la tierra que ha sido colonizada por sus abuelos, ellos se unen y arriesgan sus vidas para detener la compañía minera. Su resistencia los lleva a un histórico enfrentamiento con un bando de paramilitares armados y escondidos en el bosque nublado. Apasionado y provocativo, Bajo Suelos Ricos trae las voces críticas

Long Synopsis

The Intag valley of Ecuador is a lush and fertile paradise inhabited by strong-willed and resourceful family farmers. Three generations of families have carved out a hard but good life in this remote frontier. While they don't earn much cash for their work, they own rich land, which is the greatest security for their children and for future generations. Their land, forests and crystal clear mountain streams are invaluable—they will protect them at all costs.

Under Rich Earth is a feature length documentary that follows family farmers in the Intag valley who resist what they see as the invasion of their land by foreign prospectors. Víctor, Rosario, Robinson, Marcia and Carlos are among hundreds of people who join together to stop outsiders from transforming their beloved valley into what a Canadian mining company says will inevitably become a 'world class' copper mine. Facing the prospect of losing their precious land and forests, the farmers are ready to give up their lives. But is their conviction matched by the tenacity of those who want to undermine them?

Over three years, the company attempts to win over the hearts and minds of the communities with offerings of development and jobs. The promise of development through mining has bitterly divided the community between people who support the company and those who are adamantly against it. Local leaders opposed to the mining project evoke the spirit of the Inca warrior Rumiñahui who resisted the Spanish conquistadores in the 1500s. The project's supporters say the company will bring benefits like roads and schools.

The company assures its investors that only a small group of radicals and meddling foreigners oppose the project; but on the ground, a profoundly different story emerges. Coffee growers become pawns in a Machiavellian strategy of divide and conquer. Lurkers sabotage a community radio station. Rogue police push an outspoken leader of the opposition into hiding. As the company tries to get its exploration project going, the

tension between pro-mining mineros and anti-mining ecologistas reaches a breaking point.

With a change of government looming and nationalists poised to take power, the company takes extreme measures to get its men on the ground. Roving bands of men armed with tear gas, pistols and attack dogs force their way past makeshift community checkpoints. But the villagers don't back down, and the crisis culminates in an extraordinary and potentially lethal confrontation between farmers and armed paramilitaries high in the cloud forest. The remarkable incident attracts national and international press and suddenly, the tiny remote village of Junin is thrust into the spotlight. Back in Canada, the company insists that their copper project will go ahead in spite of the local opposition and they successfully raise millions of dollars on the Toronto Stock Market.

In a world dominated by news of massacres and terrorism, Under Rich Earth offers a surprising and poignant tale of hope and determination.

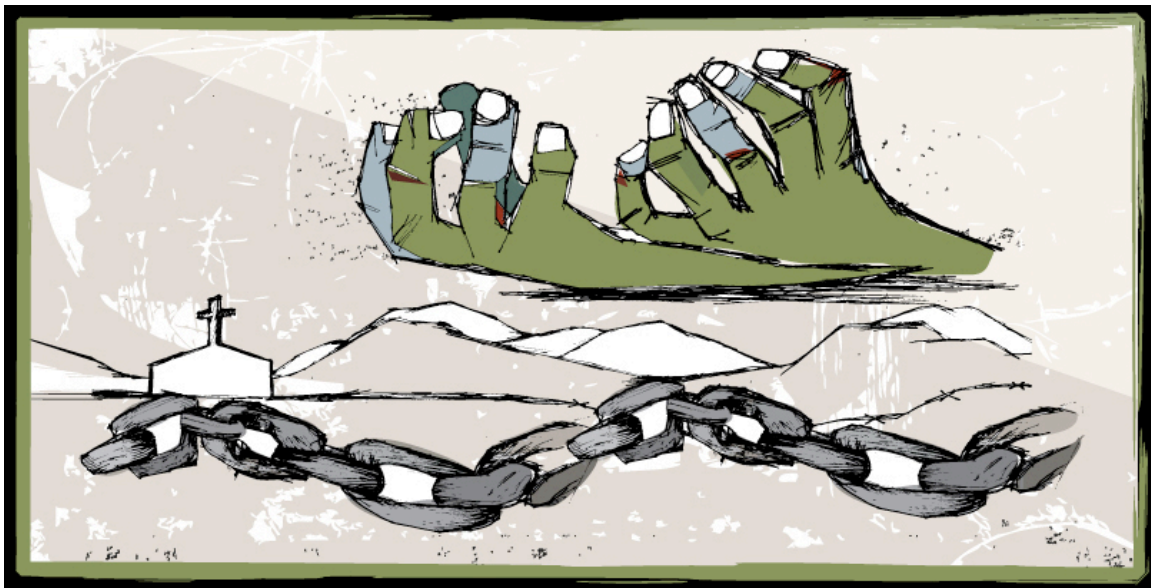


Illustration and design by Karen A. Justl
Inspired by Guayasamin
Graphics are included in the press kit

PRESS STILLS

(Hi-Res jpgs are included in the ZIP file: Press Kit)



Marcia Ramírez shouts at paramilitary men, December 2006

Photo: Liz Weydt

A hi-res jpg is included in the press kit



Government officials arrive in the tiny village of Junin, December 2006

Photo: Liz Weydt

A hi-res jpg is included in the press kit



Anti-mining activist Robinson Guachagmira after being attacked by a group of ‘pro-mining’ men.

Photo: Liz Weydt

A hi-res jpg is included in the press kit



Paramilitary assault on the community of Junin, December 2006

Photo: Liz Weydt

A hi-res jpg is included in the press kit

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Born in Winnipeg in 1969, Malcolm Rogge is a filmmaker and writer based in Toronto, Canada. His debut feature documentary film, *Under Rich Earth*, premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and met with rave reviews. After four years studying theatre, philosophy and literature in Winnipeg, Malcolm completed a Masters in Environmental Studies at York University, a Graduate Diploma in Latin American and Caribbean Studies and a Bachelor of Laws from Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto. He melds his passion for art and politics using diverse approaches in film and video. Several of his experimental, short fiction and non-fiction films and videos have been exhibited in festivals and galleries across Canada. Rogge has also worked for human rights and environmental organizations in Canada and Ecuador.

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

Under Rich Earth, 2008, 92:30, Digital Beta/HD CAM/Beta SP (documentary)

European Vacation, 2008, 10:00, Beta SP (experimental/documentary)

The Remedy, 2007, 14:00, Beta SP (experimental/drama)

TTC Film, 2004, 4:00, Beta SP (experimental)

Tear Gas Holiday (collaborative film), 75:00, Digital Beta (documentary)

Djun & Marijke, 2002, 6:00, Beta SP (experimental drama)

Like a Nice Rubber Gas Mask, 2001, 4:00, Beta SP (experimental/documentary)

FILM CREDITS

Producer and Director

Malcolm Rogge

Associate Producer

Liisa L. North

Director of Photography

Malcolm Rogge

Editor

Malcolm Rogge

Sound Editor

Jakob Thiesen

Music

Edgardo Moreno

Additional Camera

Lesley Bowling

Stuart Schussler

Helen Wefers

(Human Rights Observers)

and

Carmen Ramírez

Stills

Flaviano Bianchini

Robinson Guachagmira

Luis Guerra Guzmán

Elizabeth Weydt

CEDENMA

Story Consultants

Julian Calleros

Andrea Cohen

Jonathan Culp

John Greyson

Editorial Consultant

Steve Weslak

Graphic Communications

Karen A. Justl

Website

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Brian Macleod Rogers

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