

Video: New Zealand’s “River of Freedom”: Protest Movement against Illegal Covid Vaccine Mandates, Political Thuggery, Divisive and Illegal Acts. “Demolition of Fundamental Human Rights”

A powerful documentary about the 2022 New Zealand protests against mandates

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I am certain that most of us who had gathered on the grounds of Parliament in Wellington, New Zealand, as convoys snaking across the north and south islands converged on a sunny 9 February 2022, knew that mainstream media coverage of the convoy, the gathering and whatever unfolded in the time ahead would be slanderous and untruthful. As indeed it was.

Truth, however, like a river meander, proves unstoppable over time.

Some sixteen months after the peaceful assembly of people from all areas of our country was brutally invaded and dispersed by henchmen of the political State, an extraordinary documentary film has emerged: [River of Freedom](#).

I attended the sold-out Wellington premiere on 7 September at the Embassy Theatre and was myself transported to that relatively brief but powerful time when the citizenry reclaimed their rights, stood their ground and created, in microcosm, a society of mutual sustenance — an ideal, as it were, founded upon by charity, compassion and tolerance, and united, despite considerable diversity.

Watching the images of the multitudes who had the audacity to oppose the government’s demolition of fundamental human rights and its imposition of divisive and, frankly, illegal mandates, I was reminded of the many kindly and generous people I met, the determination to assert our unalienable rights, our requests for someone — *anyone* — from the elected body of Parliament simply to meet with us and to discuss our concerns, and the monolithic

refusal of our politicians to engage.

I was reminded too of the creative joys that emerged from the occupants of Parliament's terrain as we waited for a 'representative' to do his or her duty, such as the makeshift basketball court where I spent many an hour while on my daily rounds, the tents where music poured forth, and the meals supplied for free to all and sundry.

On one particular evening as I wound my way around, I was stopped in my tracks by a live rendition of the song I had been yearning to hear for weeks: Tom Petty's 'I Won't Back Down'.

I remember too the day when victims of the mandated Jab were memorialized by a string of white crosses hung across our stage. I was honored to have said a few words on their behalf.

As the days and weeks wore on and the government's frustration with a strong and peaceful presence grew, police actions became more aggressive and attempts to undermine our ability to continue residence became bolder. And all of this occurred during a period when a 'vax apartheid' state had been declared and those of us who were unjabbed were not permitted access to restaurants, churches, theatres, barbers, cinemas or gyms ...

On the first of March 2022 I was part of a team that had been assembled to negotiate a peaceable solution to a situation that had become very tense. A member of the police force was slated to join, but this representative never appeared. On my way home that afternoon I happened to notice that the street next to Wellington's main police station was filled with unmarked vans. I concluded that the police would stage a raid the next morning and I informed everyone I knew — filmmakers, protest leaders, media personnel and the like. Most — not all — told me that my fears were unfounded. They were wrong.

RIVER OF FREEDOM

HEART OF THE PROTEST

GRADED FILMS PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH FIVE FILMS RAYNOR PURE SOUL FILMS ANA FILMS MANAHEIM FILM
CINEMATOGRAPHY MARK LAPWOOD NEIL AICE DANE SCOTT JORDAN RANSON GAYLENE BARNES BRIAR ROSE JOHN SETTER DAVE PERRY CHUCKY RUS
EDITED BY GAYLENE BARNES ADDITIONAL EDITING BY BEN POWDRELL ASSISTANT EDITORS LEANNE MUNRO SCOTT EWING JACQUI ENNIS
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY CHANTE NEBLETT PRODUCTION DESIGNER FRANCESCA CARNEY PRODUCTION MANAGER HEIDI WATSON
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS BEN VANDERPOEL CHRIS SINCLAIR PRODUCED BY GREG DANIELS JASON CANOVAS
WRITTEN BY JARED CONNOR & JULIAN ARAHANGA DIRECTED BY GAYLENE BARNES

IN CINEMAS

PHOTOGRAPH BY DANE SCOTT

Such were the memories that crowded upon me as I viewed *River of Freedom*, as I watched a brilliant and beautifully shot and viscerally moving documentary bring us a ‘real news’

account of what happened.

Watch the trailer below.

At my barber's the other day I chanced to mention the Parliament protests — he cuts hair within a stone's throw of the area — and I could tell by his reaction that his view of the event was the one promulgated by Radio New Zealand and the Dominion Post and the State-funded TV stations and other organs of propaganda — that a bunch of dirty low-lives had conspired to make unnecessary trouble. I suggested he see *River of Freedom*; whether he will or not is another matter.

I understand that cinemas around the country, cinemas in towns large and small, have been booked out for showings of the film and that plans are underway to make the documentary available to an international audience.

Director Gaylene Barnes, producers Jared Connon and Julian Arahanga, cinematographer Mark Lapwood, and the entirety of the team deserve to be commended for presenting a *genuine* history of one of New Zealand's most significant political and social events — for correcting the record, for countering falsehood and for inspiring those of us who have fought for our rights to continue our fight.

Make no mistake: that coming together in early 2022 had consequences felt within the corridors of political power. We served them notice, with peace, dignity and strength.

And if they think they can pull another fast one, they should think again. We are better prepared.

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