

Review Documentarian Greg Reitman traverses the globe looking for enlightenment in the warm and fuzzy 'Rooted in Peace'



Greg Reitman in the documentary "Rooted in Peace." (Blue Water Entertainment)

By **Michael Rechtshaffen**

DECEMBER 1, 2016, 10:00 AM

Setting out to determine if human beings have the potential for enlightenment, "Rooted in Peace" finds environmental filmmaker Greg Reitman embarking on a lively, if peripatetic, quest for personal betterment.

Acknowledging that the world is a violent place, Reitman -- clutching a bonsai tree that serves as his beacon of hope -- travels a path of healing with stopovers in Hiroshima, Japan; New York's 9/11 Memorial; and the Self-Realization Fellowship Center in Pacific Palisades, conferring with various holistic doctors and green experts.

Also weighing in are a parade of peaceniks, from Donovan, the late Pete Seeger and David Lynch, to Archbishop Desmond Tutu and New Age granddaddy Deepak Chopra, who cautions against becoming that walking contradiction known as the "angry peace activist."

Incorporating some terrific archival stuff, including groovy black-and-white footage of John Lennon, George Harrison, Paul McCartney, Mike Love and Mia Farrow hanging out with transcendental meditation guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Reitman has assembled an easy-to-digest package that ultimately feels more like a spirited primer than an impassioned polemic.

But while its own roots never go quite as deep as they might, there's still something goofily endearing about seeing Reitman, armed with that trusty bonsai, traipsing around the country on a healing mission.

As message vehicles go, "Rooted in Peace" may be the hot cocoa and marshmallows version of a Michael Moore film, but 'tis the season, after all.

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'Rooted in Peace'

MPAA rating: Not rated

Running time: 1 hour, 28 minutes

Playing: Laemmle's Royal, West L.A.

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