

UNCOVERING

The Permian Climate Bomb

The climate cannot be saved without stopping the Permian Climate Bomb.



EARTHWORKS.ORG

Uncovering the Permian Climate Bomb

United States | 13 minutes 46 seconds | English

Watch the film: www.earthworks.org/film

Download stills: www.earthworks.org/film

Media contact: media@earthworks.org



Short Synopsis

To protect billions of people from the immediate risks of climate change, science tells us the world needed to end all new investment in oil and gas by 2021. But in the Permian Basin of West Texas, the fossil fuel industry is planning more production than ever before. Despite living close to this region his whole life, 22-year-old Miguel Escoto witnesses this villainy for the first time, becoming a stand-in for a world that has yet to grasp the gravity of the Permian Climate Bomb.

Detailed Synopsis

Uncovering the Permian Climate Bomb takes viewers to the frontlines of one of the most lucrative oil and gas regions in the world as Miguel Escoto, West Texas Field Associate at Earthworks, comes to terms with the scope, intensity, and danger of the Permian Basin.

Guided by Sharon Wilson, Senior Field Advocate at Earthworks and Certified Thermographer, Miguel witnesses the fossil fuel industry's villainy for the first time by viewing pollution from oil and gas sites through optical gas imaging cameras, which makes air pollution that is invisible to the naked eye visible.

The story begins in the border communities of El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, where Miguel shares the root of his passion for climate justice: a warming world's impact on forced migration and climate refugees. We accompany Miguel to the boom-and-bust oil town of Pecos, Texas where Sharon introduces Miguel to mountains of machinery and toxic incidents that sprawl the vast West Texas desert landscape: pumpjacks, flares, venting tanks, pipeline blowdowns—all adjacent to communities and people's homes. Most importantly, using Earthworks' optical gas imaging camera, Miguel encounters the industry's dirty secret: plumes of methane emissions that spew from oil and gas operations in steady streams.

Like many in his generation, Miguel's concern for the climate crisis has driven him to the world of activism, political education, and action-driven community organizing. Although he is based just a few hours from the Permian Basin, he—like most of the nation—had not realized the sheer, colossal magnitude of the Permian's role in the climate crisis.

With Miguel, the audience processes what this all means. What is the Texas state government's role in one of the world's highest producing oil and gas regions? How much does the Permian Basin contribute to global climate change? How does the force of the Permian Basin fracking industry spread outside of the immediate region—and into El Paso and the Gulf Coast?

With the direction of Melissa Troutman, award-winning filmmaker, this short documentary film aims to embody a person's discovery of climate horrors in their own backyard—leading the audience to do the same.

Credits

Directors Miguel Escoto
Sharon Wilson

Writers Miguel Escoto
Sharon Wilson
Melissa Troutman

Producers Miguel Escoto
Sharon Wilson
Josh Eisenfeld

Editors Edison Rodriguez
Carey McKelvey

Cast Miguel Escoto
Sharon Wilson

Awards & Allocades

Award Winner Nature Without Borders International Film Festival

Semi-Finalist Sustainable Stories Film Fest

Nominee International Activism Film Festival

Selected Cinema Verde Environmental Film & Arts Festival
Montauk Film Festival
South Texas International Film Festival
Texas Short Film Festival
Voices Rising Film Festival
Wildlands Film Festival

The Directors

Miguel Escoto and Sharon Wilson are climate activists that use optical gas imaging technology to make the oil and gas industry's invisible air pollution visible.

Growing up in the border community of El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, **Miguel Escoto** has witnessed how the climate crisis drives climate migration and the oppression of vulnerable communities. He brings this perspective to his position as West Texas Field Associate at Earthworks. Miguel's experience with community organizing comes from his work with Sunrise Movement El Paso, a youth-led environmentalist organization dedicated to transitioning the border region to clean energy while addressing systemic issues of injustice. He worked as a legal assistant to environmental attorney David Baake and his work for the Sierra Club. There, he learned about Permian fracking industry regulation and opposition from a New Mexico perspective.

Sharon Wilson is a 5th generation Texan who worked for the oil and gas industry in Ft. Worth, but was unaware of any environmental issues. After 12 years, she left the industry and bought 42 acres in Wise County adjacent to the LBJ National Grasslands. Unknown to her at the time was that George Mitchell was experimenting in Wise County to figure out how to produce oil and gas from shale. She had a ringside seat at the sneak preview called Fracking Impacts.

As she watched her air turn brown and, eventually, her water turn black she documented it all on her blog texassharon.com. Sharon and her son moved to Denton, Texas thinking the city would provide more protection. That irony still burns, but it brought her life's work with Earthworks' Oil & Gas Accountability Project in 2010. In 2014, she became a certified optical gas imaging thermographer and now travels across the U.S. making visible the invisible methane pollution from oil and gas facilities and giving tours to media, Members of Congress, state lawmakers, regulators, and investment bankers.

Directors' Statement

Experts agree the world needed to end all new investment in oil and gas by 2021 to protect billions of people from the immediate risks of climate change. But in the Permian Basin, oil and gas companies are planning more production than ever before. Unless we unite and force our governments to take action, the fossil fuel industry will continue to make this planet unsuitable for living. The climate cannot be saved without stopping the Permian Climate Bomb.