

Film review – Truth to Power

11 years ago, Al Gore released the Oscar-winning call to action on climate change – An Inconvenient Truth. Amy Nicholson reports for the IFoA after recently attended a screening of the follow-up to this film, An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power, in the atmospheric Somerset House courtyard, where Gore introduced the film in person.



The core of the film follows Gore on his Sisyphean task of campaigning, coercing and cajoling world leaders into taking action on climate change. We also see snippets from his roadshow, featuring some alarming graphs and statistics on the state of the planet, and footage from his climate activist training camps. All of this is interspersed with Gore's candid reflections on his political career, and the film culminates in Gore's involvement in the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris (COP 21).

I have to admit that I left the screening mildly disappointed. Whilst the film tries to act as a rallying call (it makes no apologies for preaching to the converted), the analysis into what is causing climate change and the potential solutions is somewhat shallow. Gore appears reluctant to embrace the radical and rapid changes required to the way societies and economies are structured to address the issue. His self-reflections to the camera take up a large part of the film, and as heartfelt and affable as he may be, it takes away from the universally important message he is trying to portray. Unfortunately, the impact of the film's climax, whereby a global agreement is reached at COP 21, is dampened by Donald Trump's recent withdrawal from the agreement.

An Inconvenient Sequel does serve a very important purpose – it is unquestionably a good thing that films like this are being made and popularised. Whilst the film has issues that take away from its potential impact, there can be no doubt that it will have served its purpose if it drives some people to act.

The film's stance that strong will and motivation is needed to tackle climate change is undoubtedly true, but it is not enough. It is the responsibility of professions like ours to take proactive steps forward in shaping sustainable economies and societies.