



Nick Prescott's Reviews

An Inconvenient Truth

Talent: Al Gore.

Date of review: Thursday 14th September 2006

I was as surprised as everybody else was when I learned that the former Vice-President of the United States was starring in a soon-to-be-released motion picture. Once the rest of the information about *An Inconvenient Truth* emerged, however, the project made perfect sense. Al Gore, the man who famously lost the 2000 US Presidential election by the proverbial bee's whisker, has long been a passionate advocate of environmental awareness. For some years, Gore has traveled the world delivering lectures designed to raise awareness about the pressing dangers of climate change and Greenhouse emissions. This film is a part of that effort.

An Inconvenient Truth is a document that functions on numerous levels. While it is in large part a filmed version of Gore's deeply alarming lecture about how climate change has been brought about and what it is doing to the planet, the film is also a moving portrait of a man whose life direction has changed in response to what he sees as the single greatest threat to humankind: global warming. As an ex-politician, and as a father and grandfather, Gore has seen the climate change debate from a number of vantage points; what's more, he has seen the whole issue of global warming go from being a debate to an increasingly disturbing fact. Gore clearly states that voluminous scientific research, carried out by tens of thousands of the world's scientists over a period of more than thirty years, now leaves no doubt as to the existence of climate change. Global warming is a measurable, tangible scientific phenomenon, and it's rapidly getting worse.

This is all deeply disturbing, as Gore's film conclusively shows. Many of the most troubling sequences in *An Inconvenient Truth* juxtapose before-and-after photographs of some of Earth's most significant natural ice formations, including the Arctic and Antarctica, Greenland's ice shelf, and the snows atop Mount Kilimanjaro. Photographs taken in the 1970s show these natural structures as most of us know them from older documentaries; as healthy, expansive realms of ice and snow. Gore shows us such "period" photographs, and then shows us photographs of the same areas that have been taken within the last two years. The changes we witness are terrifying to behold.

The most important thing about *An Inconvenient Truth*, however, is that it is inspirational and instructive. Gore and his director, documentarist Davis Guggenheim,

have taken an immensely positive and optimistic approach to the pressing subject matter. The first two-thirds of the film show us what is happening to our planet, and demonstrate clearly that we have perhaps a decade in which to reverse the climate-change trend. The final third of the film shows us what we can do to in order to help correct the planet's dire situation. Simple things like using less hot water, replacing filament light globes with fluorescent fittings, pumping up the tyres on the family car, and using public transportation all help to reduce Greenhouse gas emissions and reduce global warming. The website attached to the film, www.climatecrisis.net, gives many further hints and resources, and shows that we as individuals can do much to help restore our planet to health. I'll say it now, and you should see the film to decide for yourself: An Inconvenient Truth is the most important film of our generation.

Nick Prescott

Director: Davis Guggenheim

Duration: 97 minutes

Classification: PG

We rate it: Five stars.