

SYDONIA

PRODUCTION

PRESENTS

LIVING TOXIC



LIVING TOXIC

A travel to the most infernal places of the Earth, where even breathing can be lethal. "Living Toxic" is a documentary series which lead us to visit the most polluted areas of the world, where radioactivity, heavy metals contamination, smoke and toxic gasses and chemical pollution keep on destroying, day after day, the life of the ecosystem and of living beings inhabiting it.

An "on the road" investigation where the protagonists Alessandro Tesei, author of the series, and the photographer humanist Pierpaolo Mittica, will reveal the behind-the-scenes never seen before of the most serious environmental disasters occurred in the world, more or less recently, from the nuclear accident of Fukushima to the massive oil pollution in Alberta, passing through Urals up to Peru and India.

The exclusive images of off-limits areas and the "real" narration of the two protagonists, will be accompanied by the real accounts of witnesses and survivors, together with those of scientists and researchers who sound a warning and spotlighting situations of extreme degrade, too often neglected by governments and mass media.



Title: Living Toxic
Genre: Documentary
Duration: 6 x 52'
Language: Ita, Eng

Production: Sydonia Production
Author / Direction:
Alessandro Tesei,
Luca Tovellesi Cesana

1. FUKUSHIMA / GIAPPONE

Nuclear disaster

This episode leads us to Fukushima, two years after the nuclear accident. Through the exclusive shooting of decontamination activities, Tesei and Mittica will explore the backstage of the actions of Japanese government and of Tepco, the electric society responsible of the plant, revealing their ambiguity and deceit towards the population.

They will visit, no-authorized, the J-Village, Tepco's general headquarters, from where the workers leave off everyday to the Fukushima devastated plant; Daiichi, the harbor village of Soma where fishing, once the primary activity, is now forbidden; the abandoned villages of Iitate, Odaka and Naraha, and much more.

They will collect the testimonies of inhabitants, among them the exclusive interview to the man who is considered the "symbol" of Fukushima: Masami Yoshizawa, the farmer who refused to leave the contaminated area, in order to save his own animals as well as the ones who had been abandoned by the other farmers.

2. CHELABYNSK / RUSSIA

Radioactive pollution

This episode will be dedicated to the region of Chelabynsk, south-east of Russia on the borderline with Kazakhstan, a territory that has been always used as the soviet "nuclear garbage".

An area affected by acid rains caused by the strong concentration of polluting elements, such as dioxine and various chemical materials, by far exceeding those identified up to now in Chernobyl and Fukushima.

From the abandoned villages to the treatment zones, such as the Chelabynsk sanatorium and the Muslyumovo hospital, the two protagonists will pass through those infernal lands interviewing inhabitants and researchers. Among them, the medician Yury Bandazhevsky, the greatest living expert in radioactive contamination.





3. ALBERTA / CANADA

Massive Oil pollution

Albertan residents have been systematically gassed by the oil industry for years. The extent of the assault on human and environmental health by concentrations of sulphur dioxide as well as chronic levels of hydrogen sulphide (H₂S) has been analysed by Dr Kaye Kilburn of Southern California's School of Medicine. He says H₂S poisons the brain irreversibly. He has studied scores of workers 'knocked down' by high doses of H₂S, as well as residents exposed to daily low doses from sour gas refineries. His conclusion is that both groups have suffered of lasting neurological impairment, including deficits in balance, reaction time and such recurring ailments as insomnia.

The Alberta government and the oil industry are all protective of the industry. So are townspeople of Beaverlodge and Hyde, the two adjacent communities, all of whom are employed by the oil companies. Our protagonists will go there to see what really happens and how pollution has upsetted the environment and the life of its inhabitants.



4. LA OROYA / PERU

Lead, Cadmium, Arsenic pollution

Since 1922, adults and children in La Oroya, Peru - a mining town in the Peruvian Andes and the site of a poly-metallic smelter - have been exposed to the toxic emissions and wastes from the plant.

Currently owned by the Missouri-based Doe Run Corporation, the plant has been largely responsible for the dangerously high lead levels found in children's blood. Activities are now underway to curtail emissions and clean up legacy residual contamination. 99% of children living in and around La Oroya have blood lead levels that exceed acceptable limits, according to studies carried out by the Director General of Environmental Health in Peru in 1999.

Lead poisoning is known to be particularly harmful to the mental development of children.

Neurologists at local hospitals state that even newborn children have high blood lead levels, inherited while still in the womb... Soil contamination is now being studied and a plan for clean up is in progress.



5. BHOPAL / INDIA

Chemical pollution

Bhopal is probably the site of the greatest industrial disaster in history. Between 1977 and 1984, Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) was licensed by the Madhya Pradesh Government to manufacture phosgene, monomethylamine (MMA), methylisocyanate (MIC) and the pesticide carbaryl, also known as Sevin.

On the night of December 2-3, 1984 water inadvertently entered the MIC storage tank and caused a runaway chemical reaction, resulting in a rapid rise in pressure and temperature.

MIC and other reaction products, in liquid and vapor form, escaped from the plant into the surrounding areas. There was no warning for people, as the emergency sirens had been switched off. The effect was immediate and devastating. Many died in their beds, others staggered from their homes, blinded and choking, to die in the street. At least 3000 people died as a result of this accident, while the number of people injured currently range from 200,000 to 600,000.

6. LYNFEN / CHINA

Air heavy pollution

The high levels of pollution are taking a serious toll on the health of Lynfen's inhabitants. Local clinics are seeing growing cases of bronchitis, pneumonia, and lung cancer. The children of Shanxi Province also have high rates of lead poisoning. A growing number of local deaths in recent years have been linked to these overwhelming pollution levels.

Arsenicosis, a disease caused by drinking elevated concentrations of arsenic found in water is at epidemic levels in the area. Chronic exposure to this toxic chemical results in skin lesions, peripheral vascular disease, hypertension, blackfoot disease, and high cancer incidence rates. A study of Shanxi's well water published in Toxicology and Applied Pharmacology found the rate of unsafe well water in the province to be at an alarming 52%.





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ENTERTAINMENT

www.sydoniaentertainment.com

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PRODUCTION

SYDONIA PRODUCTION S.R.L.

Via Marina, 10 - CAP 63821

PORTO SANT'ELPIDIO FM Italy

Tel. +39 0734 90 30 76 - Fax. +39 0734 99 99 43

info@sydonia.it

www.sydonia.it

STUDIO3TV

STUDIO3 TV S.R.L.

Scalabrini Ortiz 2415 - Oficina: 3°B - CP 1425

Capital Federal, BUENOS AIRES Argentina

Tel: +54 011 4831 0711 - Fax: +54 011 4831 0711

info@studio3tv.com

www.studio3tv.com