

TWO RAGING GRANNIES – a film by Håvard Bustnes

Two Raging Grannies is a road movie where two gutsy, old ladies on their mobility scooters embark on a quest to seek answers to the burning question: How do we get out of this economic mess?



FACTS:

Genre: Documentary
Country of origin: Norway
Length: 77 / 58 min

Language: English
Co-producing countries: Denmark, Italy

Director: Håvard Bustnes
DOP: Viggo Knudsen
Composer: Ola Kvernberg
Production company: Faction Film

Producers: Christian Falch and Håvard Bustnes
Editor: Anders Teigen

Co-producers: Jesper Jack - Fridhjof film, Paolo Pallavidino - EiE film, Line Halvorsen
Release date: November 13th (Denmark) **World Release:** January 2014

Financed by: MEDIA, DR2, NRK, The Norwegian Film Institute, Fritt Ord, The Danish Film Institute, The Nordic Film and TV Fund, Filminvest Midtnorge and Midtnorsk Filmsenter, Bertha Foundation.

World distribution/Sales Agent: Films Transit Inc

Press photos:

<https://www.dropbox.com/home/01%20Raging%20Grannies%20shared%20documents/Stills/COLOR%20GRADED%20STILL%20GRABS>

SHORT SYNOPSIS:

“Two Raging Grannies” is a touching and thought-provoking documentary that challenges the idea that we must continue to shop, consume, amass, and keep the economy growing. Armed with courage, humor, a long friendship and a zest for life, Shirley and Hinda take to cities and towns across the US to engage everyone from the recently homeless to university students to growth economists and Wall Street

tycoons, questioning the sustainability of continued economic growth, and demonstrating that it is never – ever – too late to get out and make a difference.

TREATMENT:

Shirley and Hinda are two American women approaching their nineties. Their bodies reveal all the signs of aging, but their minds are as sharp and adept as ever. Their long friendship is the context for the unfolding of what begins as a simple discussion and snowballs into a full-on street crusade to explore and expose what's gone wrong with the economy.

Their age affords them a unique lens from which to view the economic downturn. They are no longer actively engaged in the workforce nor are they engines for the level of consumerism needed to keep economic growth charging forward. As they read and reflect they begin to question the widely-held solution that economists propose to combat rising debt, unemployment and other signs of financial crisis: *We have to shop our way out of this.*

In an early conversation, Shirley admits not knowing what else to do but go shopping. Hinda rejects this as tired and dinosaurian and spurs her friend to think outside the box. Inspired by a YouTube clip of Robert F. Kennedy's speech on the true meaning of a nation's gross national product, the two women resolve to inform themselves about how the economy works.

They start at home, with a stack of phonebooks and a computer, determined to find the right people who can educate them and answer their questions. Before long, they gas up their mobility scooters and hit the streets to visit classrooms, shelters for the newly homeless and executive offices. They engage people on both sides of the debate, from those most affected by the crisis to those most invested in continued economic growth.

They learn about the *exponential function* from Professor Albert Bartlett, who purports that *"The greatest shortcoming of the human race is our inability to understand the exponential function."* Armed with a new awareness on the irreversibly destructive impact of economic growth on human life, Shirley and Hinda resolve to engage people at higher and higher levels.

Their journey of these unlikely activists is disheartening at times, and we see the public disregard for both their age and their questioning of the status quo. As they attempt to inspire people to think critically about the unsustainability of continued economic growth, they are kicked out of a university classroom, laughed off stage at a Wall Street gala and verbally assaulted by security.

At the backdrop of this quest for answers is a touching relationship and a bright and humorous commentary on old age, illness and death. The two have very different temperaments. Hinda is a feisty New Yorker, who maintains that no one will listen to a couple of old grandmas. Shirley is more idealistic and naïve. They laugh like schoolgirls, marvel at life, and bicker like family. The cinematography enhances the story's unfolding, with beautiful imagery that captures hope, uncertainty, tenderness, and the strength of the human spirit.

The contribution of the film is not its particular resolution, but its capacity to inspire viewers of all ages to take a closer look at the viability of continued economic growth and to begin to ask themselves the important questions that lead to constructive solutions.

WHY MAKE THIS FILM?

The conflict between economic growth and environmental protection is becoming more apparent as the oversized economy meets its limits. From depletion of ocean fisheries to loss of pollinators, from groundwater drawdown to deforestation, from climate change to increasing concentrations of toxic pollution (not to mention increasing childhood cancer rates), from massive urban slums to degraded rural lands, the consequences of too much economic growth are observable all around us. Still, economists and politicians alike seem to present only one solution to solve our problems: **economic growth**. How can that be?

Hinda and Shirley's quest for answers is the drive of this film. The two ladies have been political activists for years. They're concerned with environmental issues and have found that it is time to investigate and to act. Full of courage and bonded by a tight friendship they have started the battle for their grandchildren's future. *Two Raging Grannies* is not a typical "activist film". While being a warm and humorous portrait of two old friends, it is also an eye-opener and a thought provocation to anyone who has not yet started reflecting on these immensely important and pressing issues.

Two Raging Grannies offers a fresh look at the financial crisis and the far-reaching social and environmental effects of unchecked consumption. It's a topic that fills newspapers in every corner of the globe. The film also manages to touch on universal issues like aging and the fear death with humor and directness. Money and death are two of the most important taboos in our society today. Our hope is that *Raging Grannies* will be able to open up a discussion on both topics



DIRECTORS NOTE:

Many will argue that the question of economic growth should be left to the economists, as macroeconomics is so complicated that it takes years of studies to understand how it works. My opinion is that, for this exact reason it is vital that we

ask these questions, even though economists use a language that is difficult to understand. When I met Shirley and Hinda I was amazed by their energy and I was touched by their friendship and willingness to fight for a better future for their grandchildren. These girls have the spark and want to be alive until the last breath of life. If I'll be half as cool and alive as these two women, I will not be afraid of getting old.

COMPANY PROFILE:

Faction Film is an award winning production company based in Trondheim, Norway. Over the years, Faction Film has produced a wide range of documentary films, shedding light on stories of human interest, and on social- and cultural issues from Scandinavia and other back alleys of the world. Faction Film is active in the international documentary market. The documentary A Beautiful Tragedy, set in a ballet school in Russia, received acclaim from around the world, winning several awards and broadcast on television worldwide. The four part documentary series Abraham's Children - Lovers and Neighbors in the Middle East premiered nationally to critical acclaim, and is now in the international distribution circuit cured by Cinephil in Tel Aviv. The feature documentary Big John won the Amanda Award for best theatrical documentary as well as Best Nordic Documentary Prize at Nordic Panorama. It has been screened at festivals throughout the world.

Faction film is presently developing and producing a number of films for the international television market. Raging Grannies will require major commitment from the company in the time to come.

PREVIOUS FILMS:

- The Seduced Human (2011)
- Health Factory (2010)
- Big John (2008)
- Prisoner and Pilgrim (2008)
- Abrahams Children (2008)
- A Beautiful Tragedy (2008)
- Loveletters From a Children's Prison (2005)
- Positive Mental Attitude (2007)
- To China on a Shoestring (2006)
- Moonshining (2006)
- Business as Usual (2002)

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LINKS:

The documentary Raging Grannies: www.tworaginggrannies.com

The production company Faction Film: www.factionfilm.no

Danish co-producer Fridthjof film: <http://f-film.com/>

Italian co-producer EiE film: <http://www.eiefilm.com/>

