

BIDDER 70

A film by

Beth Gage & George Gage

73 minutes, Exhibition Format: DCP & BLU-RAY, 16:9, HD, Color, English, 2013



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Short Synopsis

In 2008, as Bush tried to gift the energy and mining industries thousands of acres of pristine Utah land via a widely disputed federal auction, college student Tim DeChristopher decided to monkey-wrench the process. Bidding \$1.7 million, he won 22,000 acres with no intention to pay or drill. For this astonishing (and successful) act of civil disobedience he was sent to federal prison. Bidder 70 tells the story of this land activist and peaceful warrior whose patriotism and willingness to sacrifice have ignited the climate justice movement.

Mid-length Synopsis

BIDDER 70 follows Tim DeChristopher, a University of Utah student, who on December 19, 2008, in a dazzling act of civil disobedience, derailed the outgoing Bush administration's illegal Bureau of Land Management oil and gas auction. As bidder #70, Tim bid 1.8 million dollars and won 22,000 pristine acres surrounding Utah's National Parks. He had no intention to pay or drill.

In February 2009, the new Obama administration agreed the land should be safeguarded and invalidated the entire auction. Nevertheless, Tim was indicted on two federal felonies with penalties of up to ten years in prison. A personal portrait, BIDDER 70 illuminates how the choices we make determine our future and the world we live in. Tim DeChristopher puts a face on Time Magazine's 2011 Person of the Year, the Protestor.

Long Synopsis

Just before the Bush-Cheney administration shut the door on the White House, they offer a parting gift to their pals in the energy industry. On December 19, 2008, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) auctions off hundreds of thousands of pristine acres surrounding Utah's treasured national parks for oil and gas exploitation. Environmental groups protest politely, but one University of Utah student steps across that proverbial "line in the sand".

Tim DeChristopher enters the BLM auction, is offered bidder's paddle number 70 and by the time he puts his hand down, has won 22,000 acres of glorious red-rock for 1.8 million dollars with no intention to pay or drill. By the six o'clock news, thousands know his name. Patrick Shea, a former Director of the Bureau of Land Management, offers to represent him, "pro-bono", should he need it.

BIDDER 70 is Tim DeChristopher's story. It's the story of young people fed up with corporate control of their government; it's the story of the power of individual choices and their

consequences. It's the story of a principled young man and the bravery of his commitment to a livable world.

On February 9, 2009, the new Obama administration's Secretary of Interior, Salazar, agrees on the significance of the auctioned parcels and invalidates the entire auction because of the land's "proximity to landscapes of national significance". Nevertheless, Tim is indicted on two federal felonies with penalties of up to ten years in prison and fines of \$750,000.

Outrage at his indictment and delight with his brilliant monkey-wrenching action quickly turns Tim into a climate-justice folk-hero. *BIDDER 70* follows Tim as he maneuvers legal purgatory, over two years and nine trial postponements. With the threat of prison looming, DeChristopher steps up his activism and matures into a charismatic, ingenious, and non-violent climate justice leader. He even places an ad on Craig's List, finds a "citizen's candidate" to run against Salt Lake's "blue dog" Democratic congressman, and on a shoe-string budget, forces a run-off in Salt Lake's Democratic Primary.

On February 28, 2011, hundreds of supporters parade through the streets of Salt Lake City as Tim's trial begins. Federal Judge, Dee Benson, disallows all Tim's defense motions including the location of the land. After five-days, DeChristopher is found guilty on two counts. His sentencing is set for July 26, 2011. Instead of quietly backing down, Tim rushes to D.C., where he is the keynote speaker at Power Shift 2011 before 10,000 energized students. Later he leads hundreds of students into the Department of Interior for the first "Occupation" of 2011.

On July 26, Tim is sentenced to two years in federal prison. He is handcuffed and removed immediately from court in chains. In solidarity, his supporters sit down in the busiest intersection in Salt Lake City, blocking traffic and trains, refusing to move. Twenty-six supporters are arrested. Tim is serving the remainder of his sentence in his hometown of Salt Lake City, Utah.

Awards and Festival Selections

Inspiring Lives Award – San Francisco Green Film Festival

Best US Feature Film – Traverse City Film Festival

Moving Mountains Award – Telluride Mountainfilm

Best of Festival, Best of Category Award – Montana Cine Film Festival

Fork in the Road Award – Greentopia Film Festival

Best Documentary, Act Now Award – Crested Butte Film Festival

Audience Choice and Green Fire Award – American Conservation Film Festival

Audience Award – Driftless Film Festival

Official Selection – Mill Valley Film Festival

Official Selection – Human Rights Watch Film Festival
Official Selection – United Nations Association International Film Festival
Official Selection – Starz Denver Film Festival
Official Selection – Ojai Film Festival
Official Selection – Bend Film Festival
Official Selection – Wild & Scenic Film Festival
Official Selection – Crested Butte Film Festival
Official Selection – American Conservation Film Festival
Official Selection – Sedona Film Festival
Official Selection – Wild & Scenic Film Festival
Official Selection – Frozen River Film Festival
Official Selection – Hero Film Festival
Official Selection – Idyllwild Film Festival
Official Selection – Boulder Film Festival
Official Selection – Colorado Environmental Film Festival
Official Selection – San Louis Obispo Film Festival
Official Selection – DC Environmental Film Festival
Official Selection – Project Native Film Festival
Official Selection – Bellingham Human Rights Film Festival
Official Selection – World Community Film Festival

Filmmaker Statement

Once in a while someone comes along that totally wows you. That's how we felt when we read about Tim DeChristopher. As bidder number 70, DeChristopher bid 1.8 million dollars and saved 22,000 acres of pristine wilderness with no intention to pay or drill. No property was destroyed, no one was hurt, and valid concerns were raised over the entire federal oil and gas leasing process. Patrick A. Shea, former Director of the BLM under President Clinton, offered to represent Tim "pro bono" should the need arise. BIDDER 70 was a story we had to tell. Since 1993, Gage & Gage Productions has produced feature documentaries that inspire, educate and entertain; with BIDDER 70, we also motivate. Tim DeChristopher is a young man with a message that needs to be heard: climate change is upon us and there is nothing more important to work for than a livable future. Tim is not alone in this message, but his commitment to future generations, his evolution as a leader and his willingness to courageously accept the consequences of his action, make his a story we hope will inspire and motivate a new generation of activists.

-Beth Gage & George Gage, Directors/Producers
Gage & Gage Productions

Gage & Gage Filmography

SKATEBOARD (1978)

FEAR IN A HANDFUL OF DUST (1983)

FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN: The Story of the 10th Mountain Division (1995)

LOCAL HEROS (2000)

TROUBLED WATERS: The Dilemma of Dams (2002)

WATER: A Clear Solution (2005)

AMERICAN OUTRAGE (2008)

FROM THE GROUND UP (2011)

BIDDER 70 (2012)

Credits

Featuring: Tim DeChristopher

Interviews/appearances with:

Robert Redford	Actor/Activist
Terry Tempest Williams	Writer/Activist
Dr James Hansen	Director, NASA GISS
Dr Terry Root	Professor, Nobel Peace Prize recipient
Ron Yengich	Criminal Attorney
Patrick Shea	Civil Attorney
Bill McKibben	Founder, 350.org

Production

Produced and Directed by	Beth Gage and George Gage
Director of Photography	George Gage
Writer	Beth Gage
Editor	Ryan Suffern
Original Music	Paul Pilot
Production Manager	Eliza Slayman
Sound Editor and Mixer	John Reese

http://movies.nytimes.com/2013/05/17/movies/bidder-70-a-documentary-about-tim-dechristopher.html?_r=3&

The New York Times

MOVIE REVIEW **Sudden Impulse, and a Warrior Is Born**

'Bidder 70,' a Documentary About Tim DeChristopher

At the end of 2008, Tim DeChristopher, a young economics student at the University of Utah, strolled into a federal auction of oil and gas drilling rights to prime Utah wilderness. Although he was opposed to the auction, which he considered “illegal and unethical,” he had no plans to disrupt it, but when he was mistakenly handed a paddle, he chose to use it, knowing that he had no way to pay for the parcels he would eventually win.

For the next couple of years, the married team of Beth Gage and George Gage followed Mr. DeChristopher through a federal indictment, nine trial postponements and the maturation of his climate warrior identity. And if their resulting documentary, “Bidder 70,” is less than lush — the photography is as prosaic as the average television news segment — it is blessed with a subject whose sincerity papers over a lot of cracks. Wisely deciding to refrain from rapping our knuckles with greenhouse gas statistics and Al Gore-style pie charts, the filmmakers fashion a portrait of a conscience spurred to action by an unexpected opportunity.

In that sense “Bidder 70,” for all its clumsiness, nails the way that a spontaneous act of courage can focus the mind and clarify an ideology. A handful of social-justice notables, including Robert Redford and the conservationist Terry Tempest Williams, weigh in, but it’s Mr. DeChristopher’s journey that resonates. Observing him as he ponders nonviolent protest, quotes Edward Abbey and visits mountaintop-removal coal mines in West Virginia, where he was born, we hear not the legal machinery humming inexorably in the background but the mental gears of an activist clicking into place.

<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/bidder-70-film-review-524582>

THE Hollywood REPORTER

Bidder 70: Film Review

5/17/2013 by Frank Scheck

Beth and George Gage's documentary depicts the legal battle precipitated by a young protestor's act of civil disobedience.

It's fortunate for environmental activist Tim DeChristopher that he was recently released from federal prison after serving a nearly two-year sentence. Now, at least, he can comfortably watch Bidder 70, George Gage and Beth Gage's documentary about how he got there.

In 2008, DeChristopher, then a 27-year-old economics student at the University of Utah, attended a Bureau of Land Management auction of some 100,000 acres of pristine Utah wilderness, much of which would inevitably be sold to oil and gas companies. Despite having no money to pay for them, he successfully bid on and won several parcels totaling around 22,000 acres. Needless to say, when his subterfuge was discovered he was indicted by the federal government on fraud charges that carried a maximum penalty of ten years in prison.

That act of non-violent civil disobedience, and the lengthy legal battle it provoked, is the subject of the film, which doesn't exactly shy away from glorifying its central figure. From the preacher comparing him to Thoreau to the archival footage of such figures as Martin Luther King and Gandhi, it firmly attempts to make a case that DeChristopher is following a long and hallowed tradition.

While viewers' reactions will inevitably depend on their political leanings, the film does provide a vivid illustration of citizen activism and its considerable personal risks. A gallery of figures, including Nobel prize-winning scientist Terry Root, author and conservationist Terry Tempest Williams and actor/filmmaker Robert Redford, are on hand to sing DeChristopher's praises. "It's profoundly wrong," says Redford about the possibility of the young man's being sentenced to prison. DeChristopher, who went on to co-found the organization Peaceful Uprising, was eventually sentenced to two years, even as the auction was ultimately invalidated by the incoming Obama administration.

Whatever one thinks about his actions, it's hard not to be amazed by the sheer waste of the effort and expense incurred by the lengthy legal battle, which is vividly conveyed by the clearly impassioned filmmakers. By the time you've finished watching Bidder 70, you'll be left both angered and hopeful.

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/movies/moviesnow/la-et-mn-bidder-70-review-20130626,0,2055601.story?track=rss>

Los Angeles Times

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/22/tim-dechristopher-release_n_3133026.html



Tim DeChristopher Released: Climate Activist Leaves Federal Prison After Serving 21 Months

Posted: 04/22/2013 4:13 pm EDT

Environmental activist Tim DeChristopher has been released from custody after serving 21 months in federal prison.

DeChristopher was arrested after an attempt to buy more than 22,000 acres of land in a 2008 oil and gas lease auction. His act of civil disobedience (done while he was still enrolled at the University of Utah) led to charges of making false statements and violating the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act. He was sentenced to two years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

The auction was later negated and leases revoked after the Obama administration found that the land should have never even gone up for sale.

His trial lasted for over two years and his lawyers weren't allowed to use a defense that his actions were a lesser evil than allowing for oil and gas development and environmental harm.

He was vaulted back into the news last year after being placed in solitary confinement allegedly for using the word "threaten" in an email to a friend.

In an interview with Democracy Now's Amy Goodman following his release, DeChristopher said he didn't regret his decision and he fully understood the repercussions when he first raised his bidder paddle.

"I honestly can't say that when I got into this in 2008 I understood everywhere that it would lead and the impact that it would have on me," he said. "It's been a more positive experience than I ever could have anticipated. And it's been a great growth experience for me, including my time of incarceration."

A documentary about his trial, "Bidder 70," will be screened around the country on Monday in celebration of Earth Day. DeChristopher will make his first public appearance at a screening and Q-and-A in Salt Lake City, which will be streamed over the Internet at 9 p.m. EDT on April 22.

<http://www.slantmagazine.com/film/review/bidder-70>



Bidder 70 ★★★★★

BY KALVIN HENELY ON MAY 12, 2013

Tim DeChristopher was a 27-year-old economics student at the University of Utah when he interfered with an auction by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). He bid on and won 12 parcels of beautiful land in southern Utah that he had no intention to pay for and, especially, to drill for oil on. On the contrary, his motivation for his inventive form of non-violent protest was to ensure that "oil stay in the ground so that we can have a chance for a livable future." Beth and George Gage's *Bidder 70* is a highly inspirational account of DeChristopher's life since then, including his beliefs on climate change, his activist efforts to bring about necessary political changes to save our planet's future, and his reflections on his indictment on two federal charges and the current state of our democracy. There are a lot of environmental documentaries out there about inciting change, but *Bidder 70* is one of the most affecting. Without being didactic, the documentary demonstrates how an ordinary concerned citizen can take a stand when politicians neglect to make decisions for the good of the people and instead serve the interests of big business. And while DeChristopher was sentenced to jail, it's clear that his efforts to draw attention to the government's failure to do anything substantial about climate change and to follow its own laws in regard to the sale of this land weren't in vain. We witness the people DeChristopher was involved with (many part of an organization called Peaceful Uprising) and whom he's subsequently inspired—and without the slightest tinge of manipulation, *Bidder 70* convinces us that these people really do care about the fate of humankind and that we're entrapped in a legal system that is, environmentally speaking, still set on driving us off a cliff.

You're feelings on all of this will, of course, still depend on your views on climate change. For Tim, his belief that there's something drastically wrong came when he heard the following in a speech by Terry Root, a Phd and Nobel Prize winner: "There were things we could have done in the '80s, things we could have done in the '90s, but at this point, we're too late." As he recounts the story with her sitting next to him, what "shattered" him and then "moved him to tears" was when she put her hand on his shoulder and said, "I'm sorry, my generation failed yours." And there's something very moving about this simple yet powerful story, maybe because Tim and Terry don't look like people under any illusions, but instead seem clearheaded and sensible. In a documentary that's not about statistics, facts, and graphs, *Bidder 70*'s most proselytizing moments are ones like these, and, without even wanting to be, they comes across inconspicuously because they feel so honest.

Although we already know that DeChristopher will end up in jail, we feel some sense of hope every time the film informs us that his trail has been postponed because it doesn't take long to realize that, without being Christ-like, he's humbly sacrificing himself for everyone who cares about saving the planet. Hopefully this film will, in a sense, continue to postpone his silencing.

http://www.filmjournal.com/filmjournal/content_display/reviews/specialty-releases/e3i7af42ba5be092b43bd9dd7e0f110d08d



Film Review: Bidder 70

The story of a brave political activist makes for a documentary more inspiring than informative.

May 16, 2013 -By Eric Monder

Bidder 70 concerns the efforts of a college student to block the attempts by the Bush administration to auction gas and oil leases to big corporations in Utah. The “David and Goliath” nature of Tim DeChristopher’s crusade is neatly illustrated by filmmakers Beth and George Gage. Audiences looking for a young hero (and a decent movie about one) should appreciate this effort.

In short, Bidder 70 reviews DeChristopher’s evolution from University of Utah economics major—with an interest in conservation—to bidder #70 at the 2008 Bureau of Land Management auction, where he outbid (and outplayed) the industry big shots at their own game of securing previously protected territory. But for all his momentary success, DeChristopher was subsequently hounded by the government, charged with federal felonies (after the auction had been invalidated anyway) and, finally, following a 2011 trial held by a biased judge, fined and imprisoned. Today, DeChristopher is on probation.

There isn’t anything greatly innovative about Bidder 70, but Beth and George Gage (who both or individually produced, directed, wrote or shot the film) use traditional techniques in a smart way. With swift editing by Ryan Suffern, DeChristopher’s journey of civil disobedience jumps back and forth between the personal and the political, not getting too involved in the details of either. So while we do not learn about DeChristopher in terms that might endear him to us more, nor do we learn about the worst horrors of the gas and oil industry. Fortunately, DeChristopher is personable enough and most viewers interested in seeing Bidder 70 would already know about the gross misconduct of the major energy companies.

The most revealing, and troubling, piece of information we learn is that the Bush agenda did not immediately change once the Obama administration came into power. The Secretary of the Interior in 2009, Ken Salazar, went after DeChristopher with the same legal zeal as had been the case earlier, during Bush’s reign. The good news is that Salazar has since left his position, the agency seems to be in better hands, and the land that had been auctioned off is back to being federally preserved. But the point of the film might be that no matter who is in charge, one should question authority. DeChristopher does it in a momentous way, but why should he be alone? We all could make a bigger difference if we had strength in numbers. Like DeChristopher, Bidder 70 is modest but revitalizing.

<http://ncronline.org/blogs/road-peace/bidder-70-focuses-climate-activist-tim-dechristopher>

**NATIONAL
CATHOLIC** **REPORTER**
THE INDEPENDENT NEWS SOURCE

A month later, Barack Obama became president, and on Feb. 4, 2008, new Interior Secretary Ken Salazar invalidated the entire auction. But the Obama administration indicted DeChristopher on two federal felonies, facing penalties of up to 10 years in prison and \$750,000 in fines. He spent two years awaiting his trial, which began Feb. 28, 2011. He was sentenced to almost two years in prison. (I interviewed him there two years ago.)

Filmmakers Beth and George Gage started filming "Bidder 70" right after Tim's arrest. They followed his case and filmed his public appearances, his nine trial postponements, the rallies, his conviction, his sentencing and his eventual jailing.

Tim was released in April as "Bidder 70" premiered. It's amazing now to see Tim walking around the red-rock cliffs near Moab, where I was last week, on land adjacent to Arches National Park, which he saved, reflecting on his action, the consequences and the need to take new risks for the earth. "To see the land look this beautiful and know that it will now remain this beautiful," he says, walking through Arches, "I could never regret what I did."

"We have to break out of the political system we're in and find a new way forward," he tells a crowded church one month after his arrest. "That's the task before us." With that, he starts to cry and apologizes for getting so emotional. "This is the prime moral imperative of our generation. ... The most loving stance we can have for those people is to fight them."

"If you look at the facts, it's hard not to feel despair," he says at one point. "But if you look at the movement, it's hard not to have hope: hope that we're not just going to survive, but that we're going to completely overhaul the system and create a more just world."

"Nonviolence does not mean being soft," he explains. "It's strong peaceful resistance."

"Bidder 70" features interviews with Robert Redford, Plowshares activist John Schuchardt, and anti-Vietnam War activist David Harris.

"All those guys on Wall Street are taking the country down, and not one of them is going to jail," Redford says, "but they're sending this kid to prison for 10 years. It's unconscionable. It's profoundly wrong."

"Bidder 70" is worth getting and showing to your peace group, church group, youth group, classroom, environmental group or family. It will inspire you to take a stand for truth, justice and peace and do what you can for truth, justice, the poor, disarmament and the earth. "Bidder 70" will be available next month from firstrunfeatures.com.

On June 25, DeChristopher is scheduled to be on "The Late Show with David Letterman." Then he moves to Boston to start Harvard Divinity School, where he was offered a full scholarship. He hopes to get a theological background to continue his climate change activism and serve as a Unitarian minister.

Edward Snowden and Tim DeChristopher remind me of Cesar Chavez's famous quote: "When we are really honest with ourselves, we must admit that our lives are all that really belong to us. So it is how we

use our lives that determine what kind of men and women we are. It is my deepest belief that only by giving our lives do we find life. I am convinced that the truest act of courage, the strongest act of humanity, is to sacrifice ourselves for others in a totally nonviolent struggle for justice. To be human is to suffer for others. God help us to be men and women."

Edward Snowden, Bradley Manning, Julian Assange, Tim DeChristopher and so many others have taken great risks and made enormous sacrifices for us all. The best show of gratitude we can make is to take our own new risks and steps for truth, justice and peace, that we might ease the suffering of humanity, create new cultures of nonviolence, end corporate greed and global warfare, and protect creation itself.

<http://go.standard.net/movies/reviews/bidder-70-tells-story-of-utahs-treehugger-tim-dechristopher>



'BIDDER 70' TELLS STORY OF UTAH'S TREEHUGGER TIM DECHRISTOPHER

Steve Salles, Standard-Examiner movie critic - May 10th, 2013



It would be easy to label Utah activist Tim DeChristopher a tree-hugging nutjob. After all, he walked into an oil and gas lease auction in downtown Salt Lake City a few years ago and bid on thousands of wilderness acres, but had no intention of developing or paying for them.

The oil people were ticked, but more important, the federal government found no humor in his little protest move. It was determined to make an example of DeChristopher, and he was equally determined to have his day in court.

And here's the interesting part, as shown in "Bidder 70." Tim DeChristopher is not a nutjob. He speaks passionately and knowledgeably about wanting to protect and preserve the environment. He was even willing to go to jail for it. If you know his story, you know he will get his chance to prove it.

You have to admire someone willing to go to such lengths to protect something that he believes benefits us all. He's persuaded a lot of good people to think likewise. I think you, too, will be surprised at his honesty and candor — if you're willing to listen to what he and others have to say about the possible future of our planet.

I think it's worth 75 minutes of your time

<http://www.theskanner.com/article/Bidder-70-EcoDocumentary-Chronicles-Trials-and-Tribulations-of-Selfless-Planetary-Patriot-2013-05-14>



**Bidder 70: Eco-Documentary Chronicles Trials and Tribulations of Selfless Planetary Patriot
Kam Williams- Special To The Skanner News May 14, 2013**

The Bush administration's announcement in 2008 of its intention to auction-off the mining rights to many square miles of virgin land located in national forests ignited waves of protests by environmental activists. But when picketing, petitioning and the lobbying of politicians failed, the government proceeded with its plan to grant oil and gas mega-corporations access to the pristine parcels.

Crashing the auction was Tim DeChristopher, a frustrated college student who had participated in the pro-nature preservation demonstrations. He impulsively joined in the bidding and by the end of the day had purchased the rights to 22,000 acres of real estate in the Utah wilderness for \$1.7 million with the hope of somehow saving some soil from fracking.

Trouble is, he had neither funds nor the wherewithal to extract any minerals, which was a technical violation of federal law. And since the energy industry doesn't cotton to tree-huggers interfering its their profit margins and inclination to "Drill, baby drill!" it prevailed upon the government to throw the book at Mr. DeChristopher.

By the time the dust settled several years later, the outspoken economics major was convicted and carted off to prison to serve a two-year sentence. While Tim's trials and tribulations are the front story of Bidder 70, this eye-opening documentary co-directed by Beth and George Gage simultaneously issues an urgent call for non-violent civil disobedience on the part of citizens truly concerned about global warming and the unchecked consumption of non-renewable carbon.

A powerful, empathetic portrait of a selfless, planetary patriot willing to sacrifice his liberty for the sake of Mother Earth's long-term prospects.

Television Coverage



http://www.cbs.com/shows/late_show/video/QS4c4xf6Z5joEaGFbCB3MXIEujBS54Nd/david-letterman-environmental-activist-tim-dechristopher/



<http://billmoyers.com/2013/05/17/bidder-70-opens-this-weekend-in-new-york-city/>



<http://video.msnbc.msn.com/all-in-/51899029#51899029>



http://www.democracynow.org/2013/4/22/earth_day_exclusive_tim_dechristopher_speaks



<http://current.com/shows/viewpoint/videos/tim-dechristopher-says-climate-movement-was-ready-for-civil-disobedience/>