

# Confession: The New Public Relations Tool

by Gregory Murphy

## Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist

Peter Brown, Director

The Little Film Company, 2011

90 minutes, DVD, \$25

The intriguing title of Peter Brown's film made me look forward to a film that would tell the secrets of the eco-terrorists, in much the same way John Perkins' book *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* revealed some of the inner secrets of international finance. I did enjoy the film, but was disappointed to find out that it wasn't what I expected. The word "confession" in the title gives the viewer a sense that they would let in on some of the best-kept secrets of the environmental movement. This film falls short in this respect, and would be better named Remembrances of an Eco-Ter-

rorist. With that being said, the film provides a good inside look at the Sea Shepherds Conservation Society, including a sometimes humorous approach to story-telling.

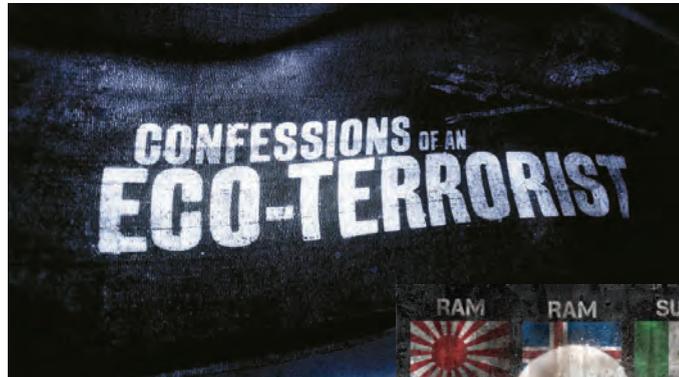
### Inside the Sea Shepherds

While the film goes behind the public image of the Sea Shepherds, it omits several very important facts about the organization. One glaring omission regards the background of Sea Shepherds leader Paul Watson. He was one of the original founders of Greenpeace and was thrown out for being too radical in their view. Another major omission in the film, was the failure to name the person responsible for the sinking of two whaling ships in Iceland in 1986. This event is mentioned in the beginning of the film as a teaser, but Peter Brown, the director and story teller, says he knows who was responsible, while failing to inform his viewers of the person's identity. This is one of the

points of the film that I found troubling.

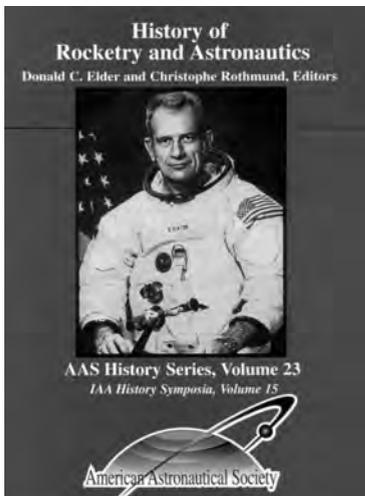
Although Brown didn't say who the reasonable party was, a quick search of the internet shows that the person who committed this blatant act of eco-terror is Ron Coronado, who joined the Sea Shepherds in 1986, but went on to become the national spokesman for the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), which was originally founded in Great Britain in 1992. The ELF works in decentralized units that commit acts of eco-terror against animal testing facilities and the logging industry.

The other point of the film that I found troubling was the lack of focus on the Malthusian outlook of the environmental movement. Paul Watson has a patently anti-human outlook. In 1977, while trying to save a whale



Courtesy of the Little Film Company

Peter Brown, director



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Courtesy of the Little Film Company

*In a still from the movie, director Peter Brown (right) looks on as Captain Paul Watson speaks onboard a Sea Shepherd's ship*

from a Russian whaling vessel, he claims to have seen pity in the whale's eye, and from that point, decided that he would devote himself to saving marine life, and not concern himself with the plight of human beings. His crusade to "save" the oceans has led him to make such groundless claims as that the Russians were whaling not for the meat, but to use the blubber to form a necessary high-viscosity lubricant in ICBMs.

The film showcases several instances where the Sea Shepherd's manipulate the media that flock around them. One such scene shows the crew of the Sea Shepherd ship firing off a flare and running around acting as though they are under attack for the sole purpose of producing television footage. Brown says in the film that the purpose of all of this needless action is to produce "mind bombs for the media." That phrase alone can be used to describe the totality of the film.

After viewing the film, this author spoke with the film's director, Peter Brown, who described his film as a collection of his memories with the Sea Shepherd's. He said that he wanted to use his experiences as a way to highlight for the public how the en-

vironmental movement operates. This is important given the fact that most of the public is unaware of the tactics of the environmental movement, and is only familiar with the Sea Shepherd's from their Animal Planet reality TV show "Whale Wars," which showcases their ongoing battles with the Japanese whaling fleet in the Southern Ocean around Antarctica.

Brown also talked more about his views on the green movement, saying that he believed that "the green movement has to have a new paradigm and that it must include nuclear power." In this, he joins other green campaigners, for example, the green commentator for the Fabian Society Mark Lynas and former Greenpeace Founder Patrick Moore. Brown further stated that he also believes that as part of the new paradigm, the greens must move beyond fighting to save seals and stop whaling since these fights are locked in the past and only good for fundraising.

I would recommend this film to anyone interested in the green movement but to be prepared to watch with a critical eye and not be overcome by the heartbreaking scenes of butchering of seals and whales.