West Denial Virus

A dissident’s film dodges the “other” side

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Robin Scovill’s new documentary, *The Other Side of AIDS*, repackages the debunked HIV-does-not-cause-AIDS debate for a new—and unsuspecting—generation. Spawned in the ’80s by molecular biologist Peter Duesberg, HIV denialism spread, most infamously, to South African prez Thabo Mbkei in time to outrage the 2000 World AIDS confab. But if you’re looking for a rich history of HIV dissidents, you won’t find it here—the inflammatory film comes off as mere propaganda for the movement’s remaining flock.

Scovill—whose wife is arch denialist Christine Maggiore—unrolls this conspiracy theory as robust, timely and true. He disses big pharma (as profiteers whose products are the true killers), blames gay men (as immuno-compromised sex and drug addicts) and ridicules mainstream AIDS docs (for buying the HIV “myth”). Meanwhile, Maggiore pops up with Erin Brockovich–like bravado—lobbying then San Fran mayor Willie Brown and piping up onstage with fellow denialists the Foo Fighters. “Christine’s telling [HIVers] that there is a life-affirming path to consider—not just ‘life as I know it is over,’” Scovill told *POZ*. And by the end, that path reaches sci-fi proportions, with Kary Mullis, PhD, likening AIDS hysteria to that of demon possession and one young HIVer pleading, “If it’s true [that HIV is harmless], I can live a life free of fear.”

Peer deeper into the Other Side at www.theothersideofaids.com.

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