

POSITIVE FORCE

More Than a Witness: 30 Years of Punk Politics In Action

Robin Bell

Punk activist collective Positive Force DC emerged in 1985, rising from the creative, politically-charged ferment of DC punk's Revolution Summer. Born in a dynamic local scene sparked by Bad Brains, Minor Threat, and Rites of Spring, a handful of young activists also drew inspiration from UK anarcho-punks Crass and the original "Positive Force" band Seven Seconds to become one of the most long-lasting and influential exponents of punk politics.

This feature-length film skillfully mixes rare archival footage (including live performances by Fugazi, Bikini Kill, Rites of Spring, Nation of Ulysses, Anti-Flag, and more) with new interviews of key PF activists including co-founder Mark Andersen (co-author *Dance of Days*) and Jenny Toomey (Simple Machines, Tsunami) as well as supporters such as Ian MacKaye, Jello Biafra, Dave Grohl, Ted Leo, Riot Grrrl co-founders Allison Wolfe and Kathleen Hanna, and many more. Covering a span of 30 years, from PF's Reagan-era origins, the creation of its communal house, FBI harassment, and the rise of a vibrant underground that burst into the mainstream amid controversy over both the means and the ends of the movement.

Through it all, Positive Force has persisted, remaining rooted in their hometown, reaching out to those in need, and building bridges between diverse communities, while bringing punk protest to the front doors of the powers-that-be. Encompassing an ever-evolving cast, the all-volunteer group has helped to nurture several generations of activists. In the best punk fashion, PF has applied creative DIY tactics and radical critiques to issues of homelessness, hunger, racism, corporate globalization, sexism, homophobia, war, gentrification, and animal/earth liberation, while struggling to constructively address conflicting dynamics and visions within the group itself.

The filmmakers' portion of the proceeds from the sale of the DVD will benefit the We Are Family senior outreach network.

Extras:

Wake Up! A Profile of Positive Force DC (28 minutes, 1991, by David Weinstein) A powerful snapshot of PF at its early 90s peak, prior to the eruption of Riot Grrrl and "Smells Like Teen Spirit," with a special focus on the role of the PF communal house.

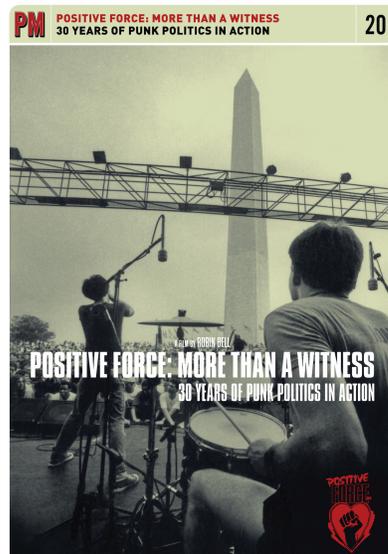
Green Hair, Grey Hair (28 minutes, 2008, by Katrina Taylor and Rachell Williams) Award-winning short documentary that spotlights the unlikely—but transformative—alliance between inner-city seniors and young punk rockers fostered by PF's work with the "We Are Family" senior outreach network.

Punks, Votes, Riots (21 minutes, 2014, outtake from *More Than a Witness*)

Live at Positive Force (33 minutes) Bonus performances by Fugazi, Seven Seconds, Chumbawamba, Anti-Flag, Souzside, The Evens, and Beefeater.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Robin Bell, born and based in Washington DC, is an award-winning videographer, artist, professor at the Corcoran College of Art & Design, and Founder and Owner of Bellvisuals, a boutique production company focused on supporting social justice groups and environmentally sustainable companies.



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