



Journey to Planet Earth

Transcript for Episode 04: On the Brink

Complete Version

Journey to Planet Earth is produced by

**Screenscope, Inc.
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(Opening Tease)

Next on Journey to Planet Earth -- violence -- terrorism-- and environmental inequities. Are they the new national security issues of the 21st century. Severe poverty and suicide bombings in Bangladesh. South Africa -- struggling after apartheid. Peru -- on the brink of another revolution. Haiti --spiraling deeper into poverty and gang warfare. And migrants pouring across the Mexican border. Coming up -- Journey to Planet Earth investigates the global link between environmental pressures and political instability.

(Matt Damon On-Camera)

Hi, I'm Matt Damon and welcome to Journey to Planet Earth. In this episode we investigate a growing national security threat -- how environmental pressures can lead to extreme violence. We will journey to places where waves of terrorism and regional conflict have touched people, both rich and poor. But our program is not without stories of hope and courage -- and we will find them in some of the most unexpected places. So please join me now -- as we begin our journey.

(Opening Montage)

There are places in the world where people live in extreme poverty -- where disease and scarcities of water and food are overwhelming. There are also places in the world where political alienation breeds anger, helplessness and despair. When and where these problems intersect, has lead to one of the most serious national security problems of our time. For those who enjoy the luxury of living in the West, consider what you are about to see, a wake-up call – as we investigate the link between environmental pressures and extreme violence throughout the world.

(Calcutta)

At night, the streets of Calcutta come alive -- but behind the shimmering mask of endless neon, there's a place Kipling called "the city of dreadful night." In the unflinching light of day, the enormous difficulties facing thirteen million inhabitants seem almost overwhelming. It's particularly evident in Calcutta's densely populated and crime ridden slums. Unemployment is high -- the lucky ones work long, back-breaking hours as part of the city's unskilled and cheap labor force. Despite all the hardships, this has become a popular refuge for illegal immigrants from neighboring Bangladesh. Venkateswar Ramaswamy knows this place well. As a community activist much of his time is spent helping the disenfranchised

Venkateswar Ramaswamy

Over the last two decades or so, impoverished Bangladeshis keep coming into India for livelihood. They may be here for just a day, or a few days, or a few months, so for the poor boundaries don't really matter. When they have to survive, they will scale any boundaries. They will go over them, through them, or under them because poverty does not recognize boundaries.

The story of Bangladeshis fleeing their homeland to live in squalor in Calcutta's slums is about poverty, anger, and violence.

(Sunrise)

It's about a country shrouded in ancient myths and legends. Here in Bangladesh, life has never been about half measures. It's more about extremes. This is a country of rare and exotic beauty -- a place with exceptional moments of sheer magic. But living in a country of extremes can also be exhausting.

(City Streets)

Bangladesh's population is extreme. Nearly 132 million people -- roughly half the population of the United States -- are packed into an area the size of New York State. Bangladesh's poverty is extreme -- with an average income of two hundred twenty five dollars a year. Simply surviving from day to day is extreme. And given the unyielding hardness of life, reactions are often extreme -- sometimes violent

Thomas Homer-Dixon

One of the things that you find in many societies that are on the brink of violence is that things can change suddenly in a very sharp, sudden way. And often we're very surprised by what happens when the violence occurs because it just explodes in our face.

(Celebration)

But on this particular spring morning, an entire nation is celebrating. Here in Dhaka -- Bangladesh's capital -- over one hundred thousand people are gathering for -- *Pahela Baishakh* -- the Bangla New Year. Though the country is 90% Muslim, this is a secular holiday -- one that honors their common and cherished thousand year old culture. It's three minutes before nine and though the festivities are scheduled to continue for another ten hours, the celebration is about to end. A bomb goes off -- and then another. Nine are instantly killed -- more than thirty are badly injured. No one claims responsibility. Some accuse Taliban religious fundamentalists, others put the blame on feuding political parties. Anger quickly surfaces.

Venkateswar Ramaswamy

It's because of years and years of deprivation, poor sanitation, scarcity of drinking water, general degraded environment, that a kind of rage builds up, and it just needs small sparks to set it on fire and riots can break out.

How did this happen? How could a country's national security become so closely linked to severe environmental problems?

(Map)

Computer-generated models help visualize Bangladesh's place in the world. Located in South Asia, the country is virtually surrounded by India and the Bay of Bengal to the south. But in many ways, the nation's fate is dictated by the world's highest mountain range looming to the north -- the Himalayas.

(River)

Nourished by enormous amounts of snow melt ---- Bangladesh's heart and soul is a complex highway of hundreds of rivers and streams that carry more water through this tiny nation than flows through all of Europe. The Himalayas also act as a barrier, protecting the land from the frigid Siberian winds. But the protection comes with a price -- a highly volatile tropical monsoon season.

(Monsoon)

Only a few feet above sea level, for two months each year floods sweep across much of Bangladesh. Hundreds of thousands of acres of precious farmland are washed away. This annual event has always been a part of the fabric of life. But sometimes the monsoon season turns catastrophic. Not very long ago a massive cyclone slammed into Bangladesh with 150 mile per hour winds. Three quarters of the country was underwater. Twenty-five million were homeless. The storm claimed 200,000 lives.

(River Crossing)

It's been three months since the seasonal rains have stopped -- the level of the river has finally dropped. Though the most recent monsoon season was without a major disaster, for the 50 million who live in these tropical wetlands, there's little cause for joy. Bangladesh's river system is dying. And it may be too late to save it. Ironically, in a country that suffers from massive seasonal flooding, Bangladesh's biggest problem is the lack of water. For ten months each year, there is little or no rain. Even worse, upstream dams built in India, on the Ganges River are diverting nearly 40 percent of the water away from Bangladesh.

Peter Gleick

India and Bangladesh have a dispute over the Farraka Barrage, a dam built by India just over the border from Bangladesh in which India diverts water for irrigation. And Bangladesh have concerns that they will not get the water they need when they need it, and it's been a source of unrest between the two countries for many years.

(Farming)

Sources of water used for irrigation are scarce. Though rich alluvial soil makes Bangladesh one of the most fertile nations in the world -- it's useless without water.

Thomas Homer-Dixon

You have a society that's under, extreme ecological stress. And there's no new agricultural land to open up. As the land is handed from one generation to another, it gets divided into smaller and smaller parcels, and people as a result become poorer.

(Rice Threshing)

In the village of Matlab, Siraj Miya and his children are working land that has been in their family for generations. Their rice harvest is meager -- barely enough to cover their expenses, but not nearly enough to help his daughters break the chains of poverty. Without a dowry their chances of marriage are slim -- an education is completely out of the question.

(River)

As the demands of land and water scarcities increase -- more and more people flee the countryside. These are hard working people -- not particularly anxious to leave their homes -- but all sharing a strong desire to improve the quality of their lives.

(Dhaka Streets)

Many come to the teeming streets and back alleys of the country's capital. But Dhaka's government doesn't have the resources to cope with a crumbling infrastructure and a growing population. Of its nine million citizens, three million live in extreme squalor -- with no electricity -- no running water -- no toilets. An open sewer empties into the city's river. Disease is rampant -- just one more example of the mounting burdens of environmental stress.

Thomas Homer-Dixon

You have to think of environmental stress as kind of an underlying pressure, kind of almost tectonic stress within the society that increases the likelihood of violence but doesn't necessarily cause it by itself. It has to come with other things such as weak governments, availability of weapons, and also deep ethnic cleavages within a society that can make violence more likely. And then all of a sudden, you get a dramatic outbreak of riots in the streets.

(Street Violence)

In recent years, violent demonstrations have become commonplace. And as the burden of political instability and poverty become intolerable -- many Bangladeshis are left with no other choice than to flee their homeland.

Venkateswar Ramaswamy

The sheer lack of services and the degraded nature of the environment all the time itself constitutes a kind of violence on the dignity of these people--so it isn't surprising when suddenly, something provocative can lead people to a frenzy.

Bangladesh has never been about half measures. It's always been about extremes. And for those living in a country of extremes -- unfortunately there are no immediate answers -- no simple solutions.

(Wildlife)

Fortunately, there are places in the world where much is being done to ease the pain of environmental inequities -- places like South Africa. This is a country dominated by the timeless rhythms of nature -- and the diversity of life found in the rolling hills of endless green.

(Montage)

South Africa is also a tired woman selling corn by the side of the road -- an immigrant father struggling to provide for his family -- tribal celebrations in urban settlements -- and young children finding pleasures in small things. South Africa is anguish -- South Africa is joy despite its pain -- but above all else -- South Africa is defined by the legacy of Apartheid.

(Apartheid)

It meant fifty years of bloodshed and violent protests against an official government policy of racism. For blacks -- who are 75 percent of the nation's population -- apartheid meant the separation of races -- years of sorrow -- and the tearing apart of families. Men were forced to live in overcrowded work camps near large urban industrial centers. Women and children were relocated to rural settlements on environmentally marginal land where life was hard and brutally cruel. In 1994, the long struggle was finally won and blacks took control of a newly elected democratic government.

(Countryside)

Despite the victory of independence, little change has come to rural South Africa. Apartheid left hundreds of villages like Sizameleni without significant commerce or job opportunities.

(Lumber Mill)

A local lumber mill employs 52 people -- there hasn't been a job opening for nearly a year. Yet each morning. Allen Robertson, the plant manager must turn away dozens of applicants.

Allen Robertson

Some of the men came to me from homes that literally had no food at all, and they said, "We're quite happy to work just for food alone, if you'll just give us food, and we will show you that we can work, and after the second or third month if you feel we're worth our wage, please pay us." But I had to very sadly turn people away, And it's a heart rendering exercise to go through and ask these folk to leave because you just haven't got work for them. And some of the men actually said, "You don't know how hungry we are -- we desperately need food."

(Magnesium Mine)

A few find work in an open pit magnesium mine. As a team of bulldozers slowly expose the remains of a mineral-rich slag heap -- workers move in -- competing with each other to collect the largest bits of ore. Paid by the ounce -- the most agile barely earn 30 cents an hour. The work is extremely dangerous -- but what choice do these people have? Nearly a decade after the fall of Apartheid, they remain victims of a racist policy that left rural South Africa with few opportunities -- a racist policy that located heavy industries away from the countryside -- near black townships -- large urban areas that served as indentured work camps.

(Alexandra)

Today, the work camps are long gone -- replaced by urban centers -- like Alexandra. In an area less than a square mile this is a vibrant city of nearly half a million people. Not long ago, blacks couldn't own shops - - no one could enter or leave the city without written permission. Yet, Alexandra has become a success story -- a place that makes the most of post apartheid freedom. But the city is not without problems. Each year tens of thousands of migrants from the impoverished countryside pour into Alexandra. They ring the city with illegal shanties.

Thomas Homer-Dixon

One of the things you find is that when people move in large numbers from the countryside into urban areas, frequently the cities aren't well adapted to receive these people. There isn't the infrastructure of water systems, of electrical grids, of housing stock, of schools and hospitals and things. To the extent that the services aren't provided, the squatter settlements can become areas of instability within an urban area.

Obed Bapela was a hero of the anti-apartheid movement. Today his mission is to rebuild the city.

Obed Bapela

Alexandra has a number of challenges, and the immediate challenges is to deal with overcrowding in our area and also develop the houses that are as old as 50 years old-- some--and to build new houses so that people can live in habitable places.

The shanties were torn down. It's part of a hundred and eighty million-dollar government initiative to build new homes, schools and health facilities.

Obed Bapela

The pride that people want is to live in a better place. The pride of the people is to see themselves living in houses, that they can say, "It's ours," they own them -- so that it could be a community at peace with itself.

(Morning)

Sunday morning in the township of Alexandra -- families gather together and slowly make their way towards neighboring houses of worship. This is a time when people join together to give thanks that their lives are slowly improving. Today, Alexandra is empowered with a renewed sense of pride. What makes it different from Bangladesh is its ability to cope with environmental pressures. The same kind of pressures that tore apart a country 6,000 miles -- and a world away from South Africa.

(Ancient Ruins)

On a cliff overlooking Peru's Pacific coast are the remains of an ancient Inca shrine called the *Temple Of The Sun*. It's not a particularly impressive site. It's more a graveyard of memories -- a reminder of long ago struggles. Destroyed by the Spanish conquistador, Francisco Pizarro in 1532 -- its inhabitants were exiled to the most remote parts of the Andes Mountains. Several years later, Pizarro established a permanent settlement 25 miles to the north, along Peru's coastal desert.

(Parade)

Today, the people of Lima are commemorating the city's 466th birthday. The celebration reflects a mixture of Spanish and indigenous customs -- with a touch of contemporary commercialism.

(Tourist areas)

Thanks to an increase in tourism, Lima has undergone a major face-lift. An architectural refurbishing of the city's center has restored the colonial look that always distinguished Peru's capital. But economic revitalization never reached the remote highlands of the Andes.

(Slums)

Built atop one of the world's driest deserts, this is not an easy place to live. Yet, it is home to half of Lima's population. Most are unemployed migrants -- forced from the very land Pizarro exiled their ancestors to nearly 500 years ago -- the remote highlands of the Andes.

(Andes)

This is an area of exceptional natural beauty. But looks can often be deceiving.

Cynthia McClintock

That part of Peru is a kind of terrain that we in the United States wouldn't even contemplate trying to cultivate. It's arid, it's wind swept, it's extremely mountainous, so this is a tough area to cultivate under any circumstances.

(Agriculture)

These are subsistence farmers. They own very little land, yet they must produce enough food to live for an entire year. If there is drought, there's hunger. If there's a surplus, it's sold at local markets. But even in the best of times, this is a difficult existence. For years farmers have toiled on marginal land and lived in unforgiving poverty -- often the perfect conditions for igniting a revolution.

(Shining Path)

And that's exactly what happened more than three decades ago. They called themselves "Sendero Luminoso" -- "The Shining Path" -- its leader Abimeal Guzman, was a charismatic university professor. From the beginning -- in the early 1970s -- Guzman was supported by peasants -- those made desperate by environmentally based grievances.

(Rural Battles)

For nearly 20 years, Guzman's Shining Path waged a brutal guerrilla war. Violence and torture were directed at anyone who disagreed with the revolutionary movement. Equally bloody was the government's vicious counter-insurgency efforts. Politicians, rebel leaders, and the innocent were routinely assassinated. Caught in the crossfire, the rural poor -- looking for nothing more than government land reforms -- felt betrayed by both sides.

(The Battle Of Lima)

On July 16, 1992, the Shining Path mounted an attack on Lima. A truck bomb was detonated in the heart of the city's business district. Twenty-two were killed-- 250 injured. At the peak of the violence, the Shining Path came close to capturing Lima and taking control of the nation. Several weeks later security forces discovered Guzman's hiding place. This videotape of him meekly surrendering to the police was repeatedly broadcast on Peruvian television. It was the start of a carefully orchestrated campaign to strip him of any credibility. His capture was followed by a circus-like media event. Guzman, forced to wear a clownish prison costume, was put on display before the world's press. He no longer resembled the god-like image his followers believed him to be.

Cynthia McClintock

He had begun a kind of cult of personality and not only did he sell himself as this fundamentalist Gang of Four kind of Maoist ideologue and intellectual, but he also sold himself as a leader who fulfilled his promises and predictions, and that meant that when Guzman was captured, this whole myth of efficiency was punctured.

(Prison)

Without its leader, the Shining Path movement ultimately fell apart. Guzman was sentenced to life in prison -- but not before leaving behind a legacy of 30,000 deaths and a climate of fear that drove nearly a million people from the countryside.

(Slums)

Over four million peasants now live in the shantytowns of Lima. Most came in search of economic opportunity -- today they still live in poverty with even greater scarcities -- and a government unable to come up with solutions. This raises a delicate question -- is Peru ripe for a new revolutionary movement?

(Protest)

Recently, a group of protestors marched from their illegal settlement across a surrounding stretch of desert. Their voices are raised against unfair housing regulations. Their destination was the local police headquarters.

Thomas Homer-Dixon

The critical issue has not been resolved. The critical driving factor that has contributed to the rise of the Shining Path has not been resolved, and that is, land scarcity and impoverishment in the countryside

Cynthia McClintock

Some of these fundamental problems, a problem of environmental insecurity, problem of environmental degradation, means that in another generation the temptation could be there again.

(Children)

Is there among the next generation another Abimeal Guzman? Unless the issue of environmental inequities is resolved, millions of Peruvians have few choices -- they can continue to live in poverty -- start a new revolutionary movement -- or join a mass migration north.

(Haiti Beach)

It's not unlike the drama unfolding on the Caribbean island nation of Haiti, located 600 miles off the southeast coast of the United States. Thirty years ago the seaside town of Jacmel was a thriving resort for the rich and famous. Today, its beaches are badly neglected. Hotels are without guests. Buildings are decaying -- faded memories of early Spanish and French colonization. Open-air markets have little to offer. As a tourist destination, Jacmel is a total disaster -- and as a nation, Haiti is steeped in poverty -- a case study of a country verging on complete environmental and economic collapse.

(Statue)

It was never meant to be this way. In front of the Presidential Palace, there's a heroic statue of a slave's call to revolution -- a vivid reminder that in 1804 Haiti rose up against European colonialism to become the world's first black republic. Two hundred years later Haiti is still independent -- and deeply spiritual. Seeking relief from the hardships of poverty, eighty percent of the population is devoted to the Catholic church.

(Voodoo Service)

But nearly everyone clings to their African heritage by practicing Voodoo. Brought to Haiti aboard slave ships in the 17th century, Voodoo is a religion hidden in secrecy and symbolism -- a combination of West African and Roman Catholic beliefs. It not only provides a strong sense of identity -- it inspires some of the world's most creative artists.

(Artist)

Andre Pierre is a voodoo priest. He is also one of Haiti's most celebrated artists. At the age of ninety, Pierre still paints everyday. His art is filled with the symbols of his Voodoo religion -- consciously avoiding the harsh reality of Haiti's daily life. It's not unlike the works of Haiti's other leading artists. They all seem to glorify a way of life that no longer exists. Idealized distortions of a countryside that has been literally destroyed.

(Re-forestation)

In the hills not far from Jacmel, workers struggle to save Haiti's deforested and badly eroded slopes. It's not an easy task. Nearly 70% of the country is mountainous and the soil is hard to hold in place -- but even worse -- for every tree planted six are chopped down.

(Deforested Hills)

Eighty years ago 60% of the country was covered with trees. Today less than 2% remain. Satellite imagery of the border with neighboring Dominican Republic shows a dramatic difference in land cover. Uncontrolled logging and the conversion of forests into farmland has contributed to an environmental nightmare.

(Charcoal)

But the use of wood as an energy source -- in the form of charcoal -- is the major cause of deforestation. Sold on nearly every street corner it's easy to use -- and inexpensive. For the impoverished, there's simply no alternative

Leslie Voltaire

People are living on the charcoal and the trees are disappearing. And then, if we don't have energy to cook we will have a major disaster here, so this is why we think we have to find other kind of energies. Now solar and wind energy is available, but it's too expensive.

And so deforestation goes on -- causing additional environmental and economic stress.

(Fishing Village)

Deforestation has also affected the lives of the fishermen of Luly. Once, catches of snapper and spiny lobster were abundant and able to support a family. No more. Haiti's waters are over-fished. Worse, every time it rains, eroded soil washes into the sea, polluting the water, wreaking havoc on marine life. Olivaint Valcin has worked these waters all his life. Today his efforts bring little reward. He'll earn about a \$1 for his day's labor. That's why so many of Luly's young people have gone to Haiti's Capital, Port-au-Prince in search of work.

(Cite Soilel)

Many end up here, in Cite Soilel, the city's poorest slum. This is where 400,000 thousand people live in the worst conditions imaginable -- sanitation and health care are non-existent -- residents are forced to pay exorbitant prices for clean water -- poverty and frustration lead to instability -- the streets become a battle ground for rival gangs.

(Funeral)

Funeral processions are common in Port-au-Prince. This is a country with the highest infant mortality rate and lowest life expectancy in the Western Hemisphere. But Haiti's chronic impoverishment is not only about a degraded environment -- it's about a long history of repressive dictatorships and political corruption -- factors that have influenced large-scale migrations.

(Boat People)

Over the years, 2 million Haitians have fled to the United States -- legally and illegally. Some never survived the 600-mile ordeal.

Many were returned to Haiti -- where living conditions deteriorated -- and people became victims of extreme human rights violations.

(U.S. Troops In Haiti)

Just outside of Cite Soilel is an abandoned military airfield -- a reminder that American troops have occupied this country several times over the past hundred years. The most recent was in 1991. More than 20,000 United States marines were part of a UN intervention in Haiti. Their objective was to restore a democratically elected government ousted by a military coup. In the end, the insurrection was put down and the troops pulled out. But the political turmoil never ended -- corruption and human rights violations intensified -- financial aid from most outside countries was cut off -- Haiti's problems deepened.

Thomas Homer-Dixon

The bottom line with Haiti is that the country is never going to be politically and economically stable, until the underlying ecological and environmental pressures are addressed.

The problems of deforestation and poverty remain. The people of Haiti are no different than millions of others around the world -- those who seek refuge from severe economic and environmental stress.

For many, that refuge comes after a frightening and often dangerous journey that begins along the 2,000-mile boundary between Mexico and the United States.

(Mexico Ferry Crossing)

There are places where the border seems benign, almost bucolic. Located on the Rio Grande River, this ferry crossing between Texas and Mexico has been in operation for 60 years. With the proper credentials and 75 cents, each day 2,000 workers make the ten-minute journey into the United States.

(Border Checkpoint)

At more traditional checkpoints, traffic is often backed up for hours, as customs officials carefully check for illegal cargo -- particularly narcotics. For most, it's merely an inconvenience and like those that take the ferry, they have documentation.

(Desert)

But for the undocumented, a border crossing into the forbidding wastelands of Arizona can be much more dangerous. This is where the Rio Grande River gives way to the Sonora Desert. It's one of the most isolated regions in North America. -- Yet, in places it's littered with debris -- left behind by thousands of migrants who attempt to cross into the United States each day.

(Vigil)

In the border town of Douglas Arizona -- religious leaders and civil rights activists gather each week to honor the dead -- those who died trying to make the illegal crossing

Tommy Barrett

These crosses have the names of people that have died in Cochise County. When we knew the birth date and the death date we included them on the cross. And we're about 10 crosses behind since we made these 3 weeks ago.

Tommy Bassett leads the group.

Tommy Bassett

When you feel the calling, just come forward with your cross and say the name.

Like the poor of Bangladesh, Peru and Haiti, most migrants are being pushed from their homes by acute poverty associated with environmental degradation. It takes nearly an hour to read the names of the dead. Driven by desperation and armed with dreams, each year more than 400 will die from exposure to the harsh climate in the wastelands along the border.

(Agua Prieta)

On the other side of the border is Agua Prieta. The town's economy centers around smuggling. Paid guides, called Coyotes, linger in the shadows -- promising safe passage across the desert. On an average day thousands of migrants are hidden away in back alley shanties—waiting for nightfall,

(Stash House)

Called stash houses, the rooms are sparse and grim – they offer little except the luxury of time and temporary safety. The wait is never easy – everyone knows of the dangers that lie ahead.

(Tommy Bassett In Desert)

Most afternoons Tommy Bassett makes his way along the border and then into the Arizona desert.

Tommy Bassett

We're helping migrants in all the legal ways possible because they're pilgrims; they're a lot like our ancestors were -- they're coming to feed their families, send money home to their children, and by putting out water bottles, picking up trash, leaving maps, telling people what their rights are far as what the Border Patrol goes. It's just one little thing we can do.

Within 30 miles of this space, several bodies have been found. With every body that's found there's one that's not found. And with every family that receives the information that their son or daughter has passed away are other families who will never hear. We estimate that a little more than half the bodies are found. In the desert, dead things go away quickly.

About 3 weeks ago, a grave was found of a 3 month old child named Danielle -- a very shallow grave, it's hard to dig into the kalichi. Covered by a few rocks, it had a twisted thorny mesquite cross, and a piece of garbage maybe from some water bottle, was scratched Danielle, tres meses.

The desert doesn't kill people, people have lived in the desert for thousands of years. The desert's an okay place-what's killing people are the policies we have that force people who are unprepared to further and further out into the desert.

As evening comes to Agua Prieta, thousands of migrants are waiting for the right moment to jump the fence and make a dash across the border. Some seek divine guidance -- others tremble in fear – in a few hours they will be taken over the border -- in an attempt to grab a small piece of the American dream.

(Border)

Hundreds of law enforcement agents are waiting for them. Roy Bailey is in charge of this sector. He and his colleagues, wage a nightly battle along a 2,000-mile frontier.

Roy Bailey

As we grow larger and more able to halt and control the flow of illegal aliens into the country, we can certainly control it more, direct it where necessary. I don't see an immediate end to the flow of illegal aliens into the country.

The border patrol has the advantage of remote cameras to direct the action. By nightfall, the migrants have both desire and numbers on their side. On average, only one in three migrants is apprehended. Thousands of others escape into the desert -- desperate to make their way to friends or family in distant cities.

Roy Bailey

You certainly feel sorry for most of the people-the vast majority of people entering the country illegally are coming here to find jobs, to make money, to make their own lives better, or that of their families. However, it is a nation of laws, and there is legal recourse for people who enter the country illegally.

(Detention Center)

On any given day, 20,000 illegal immigrants are held in detention centers all along the border. Here in Douglas, those that are caught are fingerprinted, photographed, held a few hours and then deported. Many have journeyed thousands of miles -- the majority are from Mexico's drought stricken interior. Others are fleeing from Central and South America. Grinding poverty leaves people with very few choices. They are given back their water containers and whatever meager possessions they carry. Tonight most will attempt the crossing again. They have nothing to lose. Each year one and a half million illegal migrants successfully make it into the United States.

(Closing Montage)

Clearly there are tens of millions of environmental refugees throughout the world -- shaped by forces well beyond their control.

But there are also places in the world that offer seeds of hope. Places where land distribution and economic development are helping to keep people from moving into overcrowded cities. Places where great strides have been made in bringing health services to those in need. Places where thousands of communal kitchens are helping to provide nourishment to the impoverished. And places where financial aid in the form of simple things such as irrigation equipment have enabled farmers to earn a sustainable living. Modest programs -- small steps -- but at least a beginning to help reverse the debilitating affects of environmental hardships.

Peter Gleick

If we don't address basic human needs for water and for economic development, then we're going to see political instability -- disputes between the rich and the poor, that have spillover effects that cross oceans, that reach to our own shores.

Thomas Homer-Dixon

We have to recognize that the rich countries on this planet have a significant responsibility to the poor countries and the people who are miserable on this planet. And to the extent that we don't deal with those gaps that are developing to rich and poor, we are going to suffer. Our societies are going to be less stable and less safe as a result.

In a world where recent waves of violence have touched all countries, rich and poor, we cannot ignore the fact that the environment has become a major foreign policy issue of the 21st century. In the end the fate of those living in places like Bangladesh, South Africa and Haiti, in Peru and Mexico, will directly affect the security and well being of people everywhere. This new reality presents us with new challenges -- requiring new ideas -- new attitudes -- new hope. Planet Earth. This is our home -- this is where our journey of discovery must begin.

End Credits

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