AIMS For a better birth...

Birth Time: the documentary - a review

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By Anne Glover

Birth Time: the documentary[1] is an Australian production, released in November 2021. It questions why an increasing number of people are being left traumatised after giving birth, and what can be done about that.

The documentary can be viewed at private screenings in UK cinemas and is now available to stream online for 48 hours at a cost of £7.99. It was co-written, directed and produced by three Australian women, one midwife and two doulas. A further doula joined their team to introduce the documentary to the digital world and to create an online educational platform.

The three co-producers spent four years travelling and filming, to bring about this powerful and informative documentary on birthing today, based in Australia. The main thread of the documentary is to address the question of what it would take for all women to emerge from their births both physically well and emotionally safe. It is a beautifully presented documentary with a good balance of evidence-based information and real-life drama. I was enraptured from the beginning as I listened to both midwives and parents, from various communities, tell their own personal stories, including about their birthing experiences and the physical and emotional trauma they experience. It is raw, powerful and very moving. The consistent message is that globally we are losing trust in our ability to give birth, in our maternity systems, and how the focus should be on individualised and nurturing care by having one midwife for one

woman[2] (#OneWomanOneMidwife).

The documentary directly addresses the stark realities of the failings of the maternity system in Australia, in a way that will resonate with the UK audience. It questions the increasing intervention rates and why there is a lack of continuity of carer. It queries why the system is broken and why there is so much trauma experienced throughout communities around the world. Unfortunately, these are not new questions and discussions. The documentary goes on to suggest how we can all be involved in the change, in the hope that many viewers will sign up to the Birth Time movement mission to "change current politics, practice and funding of maternity care across the world." In this way, there is so much more to this documentary: it is also seeking to be the beginnings of a new movement that will bring about real change. There are further resources that anyone can access via the documentary'swebsite, featuring a global online education resource supporting those involved with and interested in birth.

The message is clear. Everyone who works in the birth world needs to do better to support women and birthing people, to ensure the focus of care is on the birthing person and baby. It will be fascinating to see how this movement evolves, as it seeks to make a difference across the world. As a doula, I wholeheartedly recommend the documentary.

Author Bio: Anne is a doula and HypnoBirthing® educator in Northern Ireland, and currently volunteers with the AIMS Campaigns Team.

Further reading:

www.aims.org.uk/campaigning/item/implementingbetterbirthscontinuityofcarer

www.aims.org.uk/campaigning/item/continuity-birth-activists

www.aims.org.uk/journal/item/campaign-update-continuity-carer

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[1] Birth Time: the documentary – www.birthtime.world/stream-now

[2] Birth Time: our mission – www.birthtime.world/our-mission