

Brooke Broussard
Developing and Producing
Hunter College
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The Island President Review

Mohammed Nasheed, President of the Maldives is one of the most acclaimed Leaders, New York Times, "Hero of the Environment," and Newsweek, the "Green Guru." Mohammed is quoted saying "we can lose many battles but we cannot lose the war" in reference to climate action and his Presidential campaigns working tirelessly to save his country from the ravages of global climate change.

Nasheed creates a special urgency in this film the Island President; the film begins at the COP15 Copenhagen Climate Summit 2009 through a gathering of 120 global leaders striving to find solutions to global warming. We see the story flashback to a year to the extensive planning and preparation Nasheed initiated maximizing his country's role in the proceedings. The Maldives is 1.5 meters above sea level, living in a climate crisis. The fragile tiny islands of the Maldives in the Indian Ocean are eroding. It's a very low lying country with its impressive aquatic life and natural beauty; it's something that has to be faced now. The ability to sustain human life in Maldives is very fragile, the earth is getting hotter and the seas are rising. Global warming will destroy the Maldives.

We also see the history of the Maldives as it relates to the previous President Mamoona Gayum who reigned from 1978-2008, gangster and exclusive chief. It was Gayum's administration that placed Nasheed in solitary confinement for 18 months given a magazine that Nasheed and his activist colleagues published talking about human rights and corruption. When released from solitary, Nasheed began to introduce democracy, form a political party, he was arrested 12 times, tortured twice, and removed from his family. Nasheed began to assert a fair amount of pressure on the regime from outside of the Maldives. He eventually began to implement his vision for democracy moving back to the Maldives eventually becoming powerful leading up to his Presidency in a race against Gayum in 2008. As Nasheed became President of the Maldives, he began with his cabinet to tackle climate change.

The visual storytelling is clear on aspects in that we know what the story is defining or trying to tell us very clearly through the pictorial images we see accompanying the interviews and voiceovers. The film gives space for silence and absorbing the stunning cultural and natural

visual imagery and landscapes while still expressing the importance of the climate crisis and of monsoons shifting the rising sea level. We learn of facts that the local communities are dealing with in their industries resulting in fishing being low. As viewers we are not only learning about the life of Nasheed and his race forward announcing that the Maldives will be the first country to be carbon neutral but, we are also learning about world policies, local corruptions, and global lobbying toward international governments to implement climate action targets in order to help save the Maldives.

The film is successful for me as I am immersed in Nasheed's journey and mission. I hate the music though; it does not fit the story or even help illuminate the story, it is disconnected. The most illuminating part about this success story is that we see Nasheed hold a first underwater cabinet meeting making a call to the world to reduce carbon in the atmosphere to 350 parts per million compared to 387 parts per million in 2009. He began campaigning around the world pushing forward climate agreements with China, India and 182 nations. Nasheed did this to save his country, as the Maldives would be underwater if he did not insist to the world and its leaders the change to be implemented— he was resoundingly successful in the agreement moving forward at COP15 2009.