

The gas man cometh



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The documentary, " Gas Land", by Josh Fox, is a film about the problems with contaminated groundwater due to excessive and unregulated natural gas extraction across the country. In the film, Fox travels all over to talk to many people who have rented out their land to natural gas companies, only to get contaminated water and no help from any company or organization with the problems that ensue. Fox uses many techniques in his film to get across his point that America should not be subjected into a wasteland because of poor industry ethics and unregulated polluting of our water sources.

By building his appeals, especially to ethos, as well as arranging many elements of the film, Fox creates a very staunch argument.

Fox plays a lot on his " average guy" mentality that portrays him as no expert with any bias, but instead, a concerned citizen who really likes nature and America the way it is right now. He creates this ethos persona in order to convince his viewers that he has no hidden agenda to push, and he is no different than them in the way he lives his life.

Adding onto his relatable persona, Fox tells his life story of growing up in Pennsylvania on a small piece of land surrounded by forests - prime gas extraction land. When natural gas companies approach him and offer him 100, 000 dollars to rent his twenty acres of land to them, the purpose of the documentary becomes clear: to find out why they want the land so badly, and what it truly means when he takes the money and hands over his property for drilling purposes.

As mentioned above, Fox establishes a steady pattern of ethos maintenance throughout his documentary by repeatedly using the language and tone of an average American, who specifically doesn't have any exclusive knowledge, except for what he was able to find out by his own research. This continually balances out the scare factor of the claims that Fox brings up, and puts his audience's guard down in order for them to listen and accept the information being put forth.

A few examples of his dismissal of personal bias are when he gets the call about a jar of water that will burst into flames and says, " I guess when you say you're a documentary film maker, or have a camera in your hand, people give you jars of contaminated something-or-another and just expect you to do something. " A second example of Fox's neutral attitude would be when Fox is at the " produced water pit that has colored strings of flags flying over it and says, " colored flags...

not sure why they're there.

Maybe it's the grand opening of a new pit or something. I don't really know. "

Along with his colloquial language, Fox comes across as very distinctly monotone. He really plays on the juxtaposition between his monotone voice and soft music with powerful imagery. An example of this imagery would be when he is standing in front of a natural gas well on BLM land, playing a banjo with a gas mask on.

In turn, the effect on his audience is a very ironic, but striking contradiction, which helps draw out emotional appeal to pathos.

Since the majority of Fox's audience is the average American, he plays on American pride and our natural landscape, which helps him build more ethos for himself by showing relatability and a genuine passion for our country. Throughout the United States, ranging from Pennsylvania to Montana. The powerful, miraculous landscapes make another intense juxtaposition coupled with gas wells. By emphasizing the beauty of our country and tapping into American pride, Fox's argument successfully digs deeper than just a water issue.

Even though Fox downplays any background knowledge on the natural gas industry, he doesn't let himself be seen as ignorant or naive on the subject.

He contacts government sources, an EPA representative, multiple families affected by the contaminated water, as well as cites sources such as the 2005 Energy Bill that exempted oil and gas extraction from regulation. In the larger picture, Fox is trying to push any judgment of his motives to the side, and instead makes his claims through credible sources with facts.

Fox himself is careful to not make opinionated claims himself, but rather wishes to be characterized as the person who documents the facts and current situation that is facing America regarding natural gas regulations. Overall, Fox did a very good job at presenting his point in a non-aggressive, factual way. By letting the exceptional imagery and stories speak for themselves, Fox successfully lets the argument present itself, rather than forcing it with intense complaints that could have easily overwhelmed the viewer.

Though it is a rather grim topic throughout, in the end, the plot brings us all together to show us how to work together to fight for our America to be the way we hope to have our children and grandchildren see it in the future, and to ensure that they will be able to drink water safely, without any care in the world.

After all, we live in the most prosperous, blessed country in the world, and healthy drinking water should just be a given.