

CARIBBEAT: Colonialism and genocide tackled by director Raoul Peck's 'Exterminate All the Brutes' HBO Max miniseries

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Award-winning director Raoul Peck effectively takes on the role and responsibility of a history teacher with “Exterminate All the Brutes,” a four-part HBO Max miniseries examining “the exploitative and genocidal aspects of European colonialism — from America to Africa and its impact on society today.”

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“It’s not an easy story to tell. Because the story still continues today,” says Haiti-born Peck in the miniseries, which addresses colonialism, genocide, slavery and exploitation and the deep-seated doctrines of white supremacy in the series.



Some images of American slavery and its remnants from "Exterminate All the Brutes: A portrait of a nurse and a child (circa 1850), H.E. Hayward and slave nurse Louisa (circa 1858), Sallie Smith and her African American attendant, Frances (circa 1863). (The Paul Getty Museum/Missouri H)

The modern resurgence of fascism and Nazism is also explored, as well as the founding of America.

Countering the angry reactions expected when the virtues of America’s founders are questioned or challenged, Peck confidently declares, “There is no such thing as alternative facts.”

“America was born as a colonial power. And this fact is a difficult one to admit, for it bears the fatal capacity to disrupt the core story we have been told all these years and the very foundation of this country,” the director says in the series.

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Peck’s cinematic effort shines a probing light on America’s shady beginnings — examining the continual stranglehold the nation’s past events and actions have on the present day and future lives of Native Americans and African-Americans.

The miniseries is based on Peck’s personal experiences and the works of Swedish author Sven Lindqvist (“Exterminate All the Brutes”), American historian-writer Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz (“An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States”) and Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot (“Silencing the Past”).

Written and directed by Peck, dramatic scenes, animation, archival material and documentary footage are used to create the series.



Director Raoul Peck and actor Eddie Arnold, who plays an Anglican cleric in one of the historical reenactments in "Exterminate All The Brutes" HBO Max mini-series. (Velvet Film/David Koskas/Courtesy)

"Exterminate All the Brutes" is produced by Velvet Film and executive-produced by Peck and Remi Grellety.

A portion of the series is dedicated to the pivotal Haitian Revolution, in which enslaved Africans in the French colony of Saint-Domingue won their independence from France, and founded the nation of Haiti.

Peck said the Haitian Revolution "played a central role in the collapse of the entire system of slavery."

Visit hbo.com/extermine-all-the-brutes for special features, such as "The Director's Statement," a selection of the works referenced in the miniseries and a collection of books and films personally curated by Peck.

The veteran director is known for a number of works, including the 2016 James Baldwin-based film “I Am Not Your Negro” and the 1990 “Lumumba — Death of a Prophet.” He formerly served as Haiti’s minister of culture.