

# Richie Mehta Hopes To Take The Panic Out Of Organic

Toronto: 'Organic Panic' is a politically and emotionally charged original 5-part series that will have you question everything you think you know about the concept of "organics".

Premiering September 1st on the digital channel The Brand New ONE, Organic Panic challenges what has become the conventional wisdom of the global organic revolution.

Each episode pits an organic "Believer" against an organic "Skeptic" in a battle to win the hearts and minds of concerned citizens. Featuring interviews with experts on all sides of the debate and following crusaders' personal stories, Organic Panic exposes false and misleading information about the organics industry and empowers people to make informed decisions about caring for themselves, their families and the world.

The stakes couldn't be higher – Is your food killing you? Is your makeup toxic? Are your clothes destroying the planet? Or, is "organic" just a scam? The filmmaker claims that the answers may not be what everyone thinks he/she knows.

The episode, 'Does glamour carry a toxic price?', goes inside a vanity bag. Gillian Deacon, author of "There's Lead in Your Lipstick" goes through 23-year old Gracie's makeup bag, exposing the health hazards that lie within. Gracie then meets Dr. Joe Schwarcz, McGill University's Director of the Office for Science and Society, and critic of the way media reports and distorts science. Dr. Joe refutes everything Gillian says... What will Gracie decide?

How clean is the body care industry? asks Organic Panic. Adria Vasil, journalist and author of the Ecoholic series, takes Holly, a concerned lawyer, on a tour of the secret world of chemicals lurking inside shampoos, toothpaste and everyday body care products. Holly also meets with Adria's nemesis, an industry lobbyist and former provincial health minister who attacks Adria's arguments.

The third episode tackles organic food that is in the frontline of the organics revolution. Governments, agribusiness, farmers, and everyday consumers are debating the merits of organic food. Raised on a conventional farm and desperate to return to his roots, trauma nurse Stewart wants to learn about the politics of food. He meets Sarah Elton, best selling author of "Locavore" and "Consumed: Food for a Finite Planet". Sarah says organic food will save the planet from certain destruction. Sarah's bitter rival, economist, geographer, and University of Toronto professor Pierre Desrochers defends industrial agriculture as the only way to feed the world.

How toxic is fast-fashion? Furniture designer Lisa North has a passion for fashion, but worries about the global impact of the industry. Lisa speaks with Kelly Drennan a fashion industry activist who claims that big chains are killing workers and poisoning the planet. Lisa tours H&M's private showroom and



Director Richie Mehta

learns about the corporation's efforts to go green and organic. Full schedule at [www.onetv.ca](http://www.onetv.ca)

The 5-part original series was commissioned by ZoomerMedia Limited Television Division VP Programming Beverley Shenken and Executive Producer Moses Znaimer. Produced by Chris Remerowski and David Bratton of Sixteen Films Ltd., and directed by CSA/Genie award-winning director Richie Mehta of Amal fame.

## Interview with Richie Mehta

**Questions: First of all, do you have personal viewpoint on the raging organic debate. And were you able to manage an impartial treatment of the controversial subject?**

I had a personal viewpoint before tackling this series, yes. And surprisingly, it was challenged in a very interesting way. And this is separate from what we tried to do in the show itself, since I believe we've done a great job in presenting both sides of the issue, to allow the viewer to discover where they might stand on the issues. But I must say that while I leaned far towards the organic-side before directing this series, I was surprised by the opposing arguments given. There is a reason our system has developed the way it has, and while I feel that underlying corporate greed is to blame for so many of the issues we face today, I also believe there are decent, idealistic, incredibly intelligent people who work in industrial practices, and are trying to make the world a better, more sustainable place.

**Mark Lynas, one of the founders of the anti-GMO movement recanted recently and became a supporter of GMO. Does he find mention in your series?**

We don't mention Lynas anywhere. We briefly reference GMOs in one episode, but we don't engage GMOs as a subject in the series. It didn't come up organically!

**Most stories on the topic deal with Food, and now it covers other areas that you deal with like personal care and fashion. In your opinion, can herbal shampoos and alternate medicine save the world!**

Haha, that's a very broad statement. I touched upon it earlier, and you're asking me for my personal viewpoint - I think the ideas behind sustainable and healthier living are steps in the right direction, but the only way to save the world is to think of these ideas as they apply to billions of people, not just your neighbourhood or household. Yes, I believe in the Gandhian edict - "be the change you wish to see." But if we are going to actually make a difference on a large scale, we have to think of how this all applies to people far less fortunate than those watching this program, who don't have the options we do. And how can they survive famine or clothe themselves or make a living even, as it pertains to sustainability for our planet. You asked a broad question, how's that for a broad answer!



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