

## Podtalk: Director Robert Greene of 'Bisbee '17' at Chicago's Music Box Theatre

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on October 5, 2018 - 4:58pm

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CHICAGO – In a film that worked like destiny for veteran documentary filmmaker Robert Greene, “Bisbee '17” will open at the Music Box Theatre in Chicago on Friday, October 5th, 2018, and run through October 11th. As part of the run, director Greene will make an appearance on behalf of the film on October 5th, in a post-screening discussion moderated by fellow documentary maker Steve James (“America To Me”). For details and tickets, [click here](#). [20]

The film is like destiny because Robert Greene encountered Bisbee, Arizona, when his family bought a vacation home there in 2003. He went on to become an award-winning documentary producer/director (“Actress,” “Kate Plays Christine”), but never shook the stories he heard about Bisbee, especially about the “Deportation of 1917.” The physical beauty of the region stuck with him as well, and he returned to chronicle that deportation and its modern impact in “Bisbee '17.”



Fernando Serrano in 'Bisbee '17,' Directed by Robert Greene  
Photo credit: MusicBoxTheatre.com

The '17 in the title refers to two eras, the story of the original deportation incident of 1917, and its re-creation by the townspeople in remembrance of that event in 2017. The incident involved labor – mostly Slavic and Mexican immigrants – who worked at the nearby copper mine, which was experiencing record profits during the years of World War One. In July of 1917, an outside union had convinced the workers to strike, for better jobs and a safer workplace. The town's reaction, with coercion by the owners of the copper mine, was to deputize men in

Bisbee as law enforcement and round up the strikers to kick them out of town. The strikers were shipped to the middle of a New Mexico desert via train, and told if they came back they would be killed.

When Robert Greene came in to document the centennial of the deportation, he met with an already formed committee with the proposal to re-create the events of 1917, with the locals playing the roles of the strikers, law posse and town folks. With that re-creation as his documentary framework, "Bisbee '17" follows the people of the town as they prepare for the event, and their focus on re-creating it correctly on the actual day of the 100th anniversary. The elements of this preparation profoundly change some of the practitioners, and reinforce beliefs in others. This divide is very familiar in 2017, and generates a larger picture of the events of 1917.

**In PART ONE of a Podtalk with Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com, director Robert Greene of "Bisbee '17" talks about the origin of his involvement in the centennial, as well as the town and people as re-creators.**

**In PART TWO, Greene talks specifically about one symbolic Bisbee re-creator, and a cautionary tale involving an earlier documentary that he directed.**

*"Bisbee '17" screens at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 North Southport, Chicago, from October 5th through the 11th, 2018. Director Robert Greene will make an appearance for the film on October 5th at 7pm, moderated by filmmaker Steve James. For general information about the Music Box Theatre, [click here](#). [21]*



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