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# "Let Them Be Naked" documentary lifts veil on chemical risks in clothing



Documentary Let Them Be Naked Credits: Courtesy Earth Conscious Life + Inside Out LLC

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As pressure mounts on the fashion industry to confront its environmental and health impacts, designer Jeff Garner is offering a personal—and urgent—call to action. His award-winning documentary *Let Them Be Naked* will stream globally for the first time this Mother’s Day weekend (8–11 May), in memory of his mother, Peggy Lynn Garner, whose death from cancer he links to the synthetic toxins commonly found in everyday clothing.

Presented by Earth Conscious Life and backed by Suzy Amis Cameron’s Inside Out LLC, the documentary provides a rare and provocative examination of the hidden chemicals used in global garment production. It arrives at a moment of heightened scrutiny for the industry, as regulators, scientists, and sustainability advocates demand greater transparency and accountability in the lifecycle of fashion products.

## A designer’s personal loss, an industry’s moral crisis

Garner, who has been designing sustainable fashion since 2002, began his investigation after losing his mother in 2019 to breast cancer. “This is a gift to all the mothers who deserve to know what lies in their clothing,” said Garner in a statement ahead of the preview. “No mother should suffer from the unknown carcinogenic toxins found in their bra or underwear.”

Let Them Be Naked—a title referencing the unfiltered truth behind what we wear—was filmed over the course of 2023, following Garner and his small crew across continents as they uncovered the underreported health risks associated with synthetic fibres and industrial dyes. The documentary builds on the designer’s earlier Let Them Be Naked handbook, which compiles scientific studies linking textile chemicals to skin absorption and long-term health risks.

One cited 2018 study from Sweden and Italy found that benzothiazole, a chemical present in many garments, can leach through skin and into the body. Other research suggests that up to 37% of toxic chemicals in clothing may be absorbed dermally—a figure that rises with sweat and friction, conditions common in daily wear.

## **Growing scientific and institutional alarm**

The film’s release coincides with a global pivot toward stricter environmental governance in fashion. In April, the United Nations dedicated its International Day of Zero Waste to the fashion industry, warning that “unless we accelerate action, dressing to kill could kill the planet.” The UN highlighted the use of thousands of chemicals in textile production—many of which are harmful to human and ecological health—as a pressing threat.

This growing international awareness has exposed the fashion industry’s long-standing complacency on chemical safety. For decades, consumer safety and health impacts have remained secondary to cost and aesthetics in the global supply chain. While some luxury houses and independent designers have begun to invest in sustainable alternatives, meaningful systemic reform remains slow.

## A call for clean clothing and consumer awareness

Garner's mission now centres on public education. Through his film, he hopes to ignite a consumer-led movement toward nontoxic fashion. His own practice, Prophetik, has long used natural fibres such as hemp and plant-based dyes grown on his Tennessee farm—approaches that were once niche but are now gaining traction among climate-conscious designers.

The documentary is also a rare example of fashion intersecting with legislative advocacy. Garner and his collaborators—including Amis Cameron's Inside Out, a platform for regenerative design and living—aim to press for tighter regulation of chemical use in clothing manufacturing. Their goal is not only to inform, but to catalyse change at both consumer and policy levels.

For an industry that has built its empire on aesthetics, Let Them Be Naked asks a more uncomfortable question: what lies beneath the fabric? As the fashion sector repositions itself in an era of climate and health awareness, Garner's documentary stands as both memorial and manifesto—a call to strip away the sheen and confront the chemical truths stitched into the seams.

Jeff Garner's Let Them Be Naked will stream globally from 8–11 May via [www.let-thembenaked.com](https://www.let-thembenaked.com), presented by Earth Conscious Life and supported by Inside Out LLC.



Peggy Lynn Garner with Jeff and sister Melissa (clothing designed by Peggy) Credits: Courtesy Inside Out LLC and IO Media