

The Climate Solution

FILM SUMMARY

Kids vs. Adults | By Glenn Weinreb | Oct 24-2025

Summary

A brilliant MIT freshman and her classmates discover the world's leaders are catastrophically wrong about climate change. National policies focus on reducing carbon dioxide emissions (“decarbonization”). However, harm comes from global warming—and warming is primarily caused by 150 years of *past* carbon dioxide emissions, melting sea ice, thawing permafrost, etc.

In other words, national leaders are trying to solve the wrong problem.

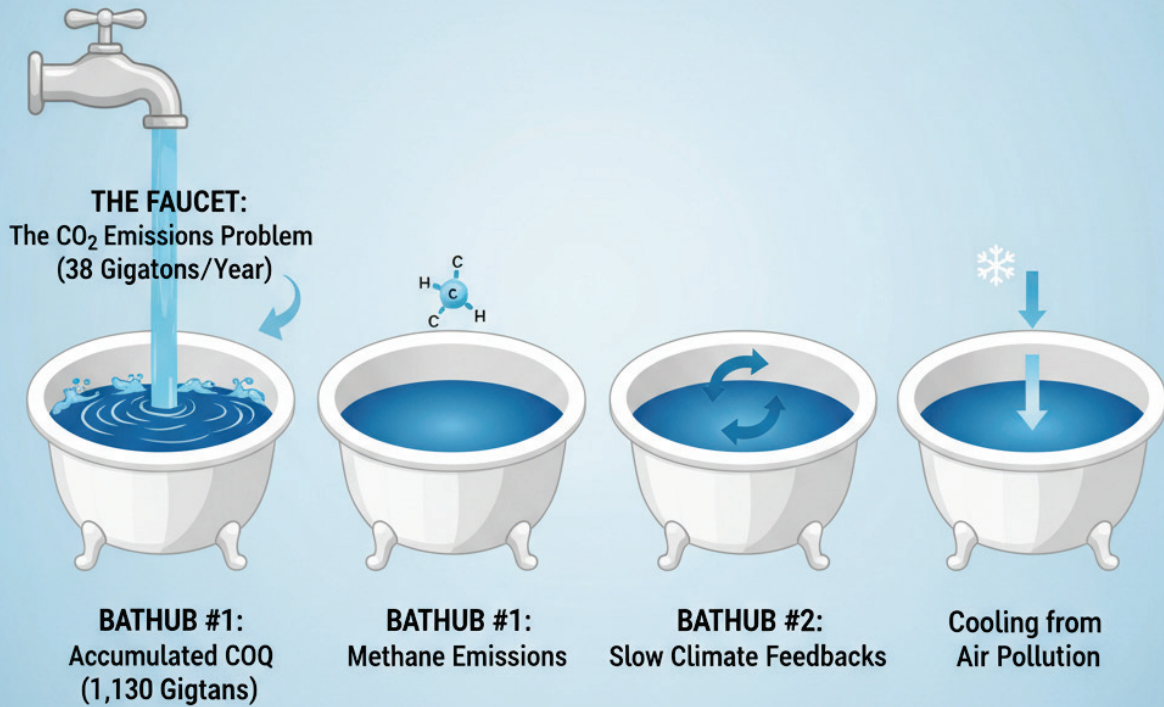
With the help of faculty, the MIT freshman come up with a plan: set up a new laboratory and task it with solving the entire climate problem with a surge of R&D in key areas. Yet what areas? Join them as they canvas the campus in search of the ultimate climate solution.

Synopsis

NANCY (18), a petite Asian American freshman at MIT with a bouncy, irrepressible energy wants to be selected for the most sought after course on campus. It is called *Economics and Leadership* (“E&L”) and it is taught by the former president of MIT, Professor Alfonso Pacino. The fall course is limited to 12 students who work together as a group. Each year they tackle a different global problem and this year's topic is climate change.

Pacino uses a writing contest to select attendees, and Nancy is selected along with 11 other eager “beavers” (the MIT mascot). The first lecture is riveting. The charismatic professor shatters the students' worldview with a simple metaphor: the climate problem is like a faucet with four bathtubs. The faucet, he explains, represents annual carbon emissions—38 billion tons of CO₂ per year. The bathtub is the 1,130 billion tons of excess CO₂ already accumulated in the atmosphere over 150 years. He reveals a terrifying truth: global policy, media, and activism are all obsessed with slightly turning down the faucet, while completely ignoring the fact that the water already in the tub is what's causing catastrophic global warming. In other words, the planet is heading toward disaster, and the people responsible for fixing it are confused.

THE FOUR BATHTUBS OF GLOBAL WARMING



The Global Warming Problem is the total water in all four tubs.
The world is only focused on the faucet.

Intrigued and unsettled, Nancy and her classmates are given an assignment: break the climate problem down into component parts. Working through the night in a caffeine-fueled research session, the freshman uncover a web of 17 interconnected sub-problems the world isn't talking about: "Unrealized Warming" already locked in, an "Acceleration Problem" that models can't explain, and the looming threat of "Climate Tipping Points" like the collapse of North Pole sea ice, which could trigger a domino effect of irreversible planetary damage. They come to a chilling conclusion: the adults in charge—the politicians, the journalists, the CEOs—are all trying to fix the wrong problem. They focus on emissions when the main problem is global warming, and the world is heading for disaster.

The students take turns explaining the 17 "sub-problems" to Pacino (*Reference: [17 Sub-Problems](#)*). Pacino encourages each student to stand tall and speak with a commanding voice.

Next week's assignment is to find a solution that addresses *all* sub-problems problems. Nancy uses her wits to track down the one person on campus who might have an answer: Professor

Oliver Stone, the former Director of Research and Development at the United States Department of Energy.

On a park bench, surrounded by pigeons, Stone lays out a plan so radical and elegant it changes everything. He explains that because of the “Prisoner's Dilemma”—where no nation or company will willingly take on economic pain for the collective good—the only way to win is to change the game.

The solution, he reveals, is a two-pronged surge of R&D:

1. Solve the CO₂ Emissions Problem: Launch a massive R&D initiative to drive the cost of reliable, 24/7 green energy to be cheaper than fossil fuels. If green is cheaper, the world will adopt it out of pure economic self-interest, solving the emissions problem without political gridlock.
2. Solve the Warming Problem: Simultaneously, launch an R&D initiative to determine how to safely reflect about 1% of incoming sunlight—for instance, by “moving air pollution higher” and spraying sulfur particles into the stratosphere. This acts as a planetary thermostat, buying humanity the crucial decades needed for decarbonization to work before tipping points are crossed.

When Nancy asks why this isn't already being done, the Professor explains the “Big R&D Problem”: the initiatives are too large for universities, too risky for corporations, and ignored by governments stuck in a “sea of confusion.”

They gather in the dining hall, no longer just students but a team with a mission. They realize they can't wait for the adults. They have to take matters into their own hands.

Their audacious plan: set up a new laboratory that is tasked with solving the entire climate problem with Big R&D. With the help of AI, they produce materials that describe the concept. This includes a business plan (*Reference: [Lab Business Plan, 75-Pages](#)*) and YouTube videos (*Reference: [Climate Lab Videos](#)*). They work through the night to place the materials onto the internet.

The United Nations is the world's most powerful organization for tackling climate change. It is led by a Secretary General who is supported by multiple Assistants. Each Assistant is responsible for a different area, making the Assistant responsible for Climate the highest-ranking person in the world for addressing climate change. His staff see the videos, they contact the students, and they request a 3-page summary for what could become The United Nations Climate Laboratory, overseen by member nations. With the help of AI, the freshmen produce the requested material (*Reference: [United Nations Climate Laboratory, 3-page Summary](#)*).

Themes & Audience Appeal

The Climate Solution is an intelligent, high-stakes thriller that taps into a deep global hunger for solutions, not just warnings. It reframes the climate debate, moving beyond political division

and personal sacrifice to champion a message of human ingenuity, economic pragmatism, and hope. In a landscape of dystopian warnings, this is a “feel-smart” film that replaces climate anxiety with a thrilling sense of agency, proving that a handful of brilliant minds with one clear idea can be powerful enough to save the world.

Film Goals

- **Policy Makers:** Encourage decision makers to consider a surge of R&D in key areas.
 - **General Public:** Provide clarity of thought with climate change.
-

Further Reading

For technical details, see file [1_Climate_Film_TECHNICAL_BACKGROUND.pdf](#)