

Viewpoint: Anti-Monsanto film ‘Percy’ promotes public confusion about crop biotech

Percy Schmeiser, a farmer from [Saskatchewan, Canada], has the real-life role of David in the movie adaptation of a reality that played out in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Well-known actor Christopher Walken plays Schmeiser The movie will likely aid public misunderstanding of modern plant breeding, farmers’ and breeders’ rights to seed, genetic modification and glyphosate.

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In the post-courtroom world, Schmeiser became a hero of the anti-GM, anti-Monsanto, anti-commercial agriculture and food crowd and was paid to travel the world telling his version of events. Like this new movie, that version differed from the one the courts heard and ruled upon.

In the late 1990s Monsanto asked Schmeiser to pay for his use of glyphosate tolerant canola on his farm. He refused to pay and the seed company sued him for violating its Roundup Ready patent Schmeiser said the Roundup Ready seed had blown onto his fields and he was innocent. The courts sided with Monsanto.

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“(Schmeiser) did not at all explain why he sprayed Roundup to isolate the Roundup Ready plants he found on his land; why he then harvested the plants and segregated the seeds, saved them and kept them for seed; why he next planted them; and why through this husbandry, he ended up with 1,030 acres of Roundup Ready canola,” the court ruled.

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