

PLOW TO PLATE PRESENTS: "BEYOND IMPOSSIBLE: THE TRUTH BEHIND THE FAKE MEAT INDUSTRY"

August 26, 2025

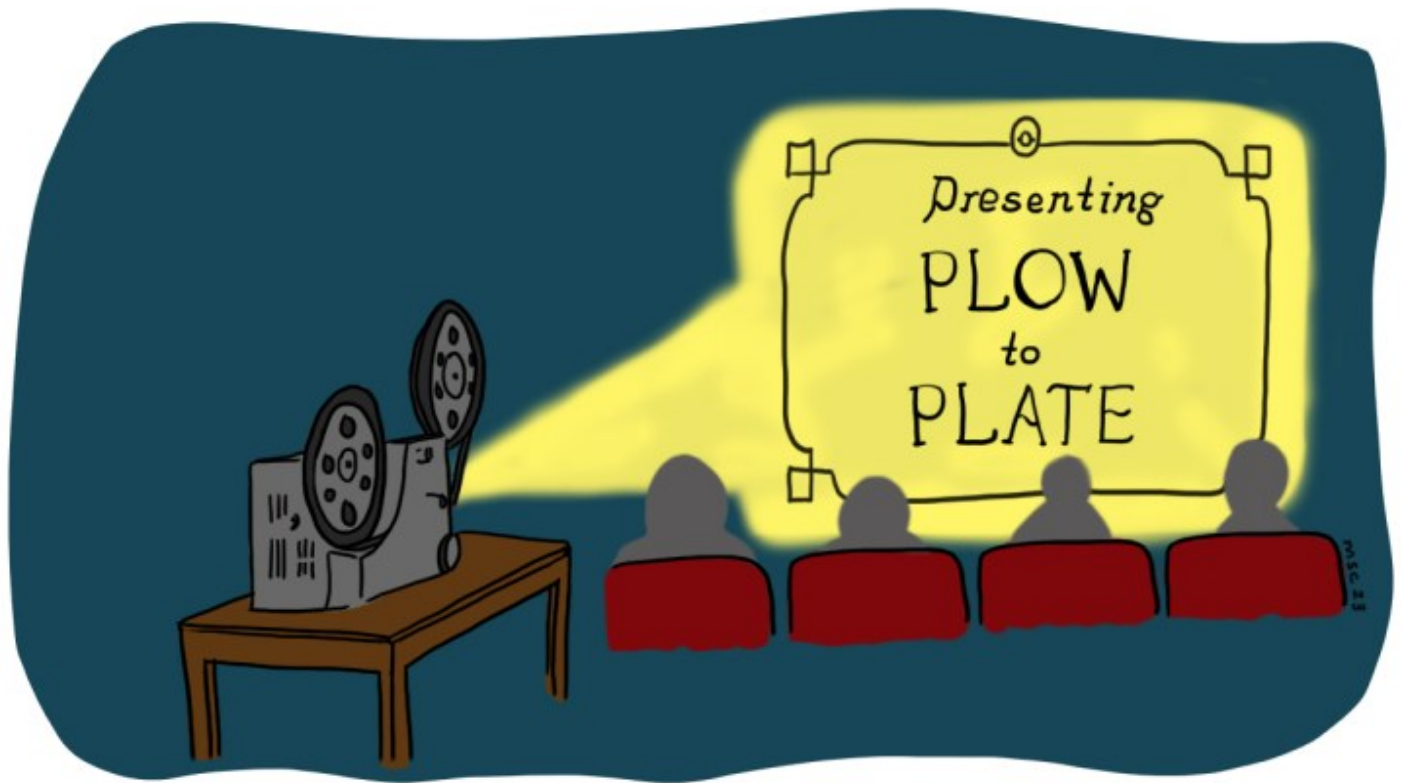


Illustration by Maggie Carson

August 26, 2025

By Adam Rabiner

The host of the documentary *Beyond Impossible*, Vinnie Tortorich, is a bit of a tough guy. Squarely facing the camera at close range, he's a no-nonsense straight talker who's occasionally droll but delivers a serious message. He's fed up with radical vegans, doctors like Dean Ornish who prescribe high-carb, low-fat diets and give the meat a bad name, and transnational policymakers seeking to curb beef production and create a global eating plan. He politely invites many of these adversaries to an honest health debate, but all of them demurred to appear in his film.

Let's cut to the chase and hear what Vinnie says is a good diet: First, eat anything with a single ingredient. Steak? Check. Zucchini? Go for it. Dairy? No problem. Impos-

sible Burger? No way. With a list of at least 20 proteins, oils, binders, flavorings, vitamins and minerals, and other substances, Tortorich rightly classifies this as an ultra-high-processed food to be avoided. These synthetic meat substitutes are now endorsed by McDonald's, Burger King, Pizza Hut, Pepsi, and even meat companies, like Tyson, not because these corporations suddenly care about their customers' health, but because there is money to be made.

Tortorich dislikes kale but is happy to place a stalk of broccoli beside his porterhouse steak. Cut out carbs, sugars, and grains, eat more red meat, drink more milk, use butter not margarine, avoid seed oils, love fruits and vegetables and for God's sake, exercise. It's what we used to call a well-balanced, omnivorous diet.

Plow to Plate has presented films advocating different approaches to the ideal diet. Many tell us everything we have ever been told is false, we are being fooled and I am just as confused as everyone else. Questions abound. Part of the problem of figuring out how to eat healthily is that most scientific studies, even gold-standard clinical trials, show correlation, not definitive causation. Despite this, newspaper headlines usually mislead readers into believing X causes cancer. A specific industry may fund a study, which raises the question of a potential conflict of interest.

THERE IS A GROWING UNDERSTANDING AND CONSENSUS THAT VEGANISM DOES NOT NECESSARILY EQUATE TO HEALTHY.

Smokers and drinkers are more likely to eat red meat. Conversely, vegetarians often exercise more and have a stronger focus on well-being. Less healthy processed meats like salami, which includes chemicals, sugar, nitrates, and nitrites, are sometimes lumped with regular old steak. A study involving hamburgers may combine the bun, cheese, condiments, and toppings with the patty. How do you explain why most of the attendees of Woodstock in 1969 were more athletic and thinner than the next generation of fans at Woodstock 1999? What about the hundreds of thousands of new

devotees of the ketogenic diet who are demonstrably losing weight on a diet almost exclusively of meat, fat, and dairy? Is that healthy?

Despite these contradictions and the need to approach dietary claims skeptically, I see consistency in the almost universal rejection of fake and artificial processed foods in favor of more complex, complete and digestible, naturally occurring real bioactive whole foods. Impossible and Beyond Burgers initially hit the aisles as tasty and popular vegan alternatives but have lost some of their initial glow. There is a growing understanding and consensus that veganism does not necessarily equate to healthy. (Oreos are vegan, after all.)

Besides health claims, *Beyond Impossible* also addresses arguments about the environment and animal cruelty. I won't repeat every refutation Tortorich makes and will leave it to the viewer to seek out the film on YouTube. But he does a good job of countering the notion that cows are an invasive and destructive methane-spewing species primarily responsible for global warming due to out-of-control greenhouse gases. He also points out that even the most die-hard vegan will unwittingly ingest insects (and sometimes even small mammals) that get caught up in modern combines. The film concludes with truly shocking and disturbing videos involving foraging wild boars. "There is no free lunch," Tortorich proclaims. That statement, at least, appears to have an unequivocal ring of truth.

Beyond Impossible was screened in February.

Screening link for *Beyond Impossible*.

To be added to our mailing list for future screening announcements, please email a request to plowtoplate@gmail.com.

Adam Rabiner lives in Ditmas Park with his wife, Dina, and child Ana.