

VODOU HEALER is a film about Papa Joe, a Afro-American voodoo priest from the suburbs of Raleigh, North Carolina. Papa Joe grew up in rural North Carolina not far from the South Carolina border. His father believed in the power of hoodoo (root magic) while his mother is a pentecostal christian. Papa Joe's godfather was a "root doctor", a spiritual worker, who worked the "roots" for conjuring, a practice passed on from the Congo slaves of Africa .

As a young man Papa Joe moved to New York and got a job as a researcher on Wall Street. He visited pentecostal "born again" churches in Harlem. Here he found his true calling and was ordained as a minister. He preached in different churches in Queens and throughout New York City. One day he met a Haitian in the Bronx who introduced him to voodoo, and this was a turning point in his life.

He moved back to North Carolina and worked in different botanicas. In his house he set up a temple and did readings and consultations using his knowledge that he had about hoodoo. He decided to go to Haiti and be initiated into the voodoo religion. He had a Haitian godfather who taught him the secrets of the voodoo ceremonies, and after several years he was initiated as priest into the secrets of this African religion.

He decided to move to Raleigh and start his own temple , and build up a community of followers. People came to him with problems that they could not solve. His clients came from all walks of life, blacks, whites, Mexicans, pensioners, doctors, criminals, unemployed, rich, poor, handicapped and homeless. Papa Joe helped all who needed help. By word of mouth he became very well known, and today has clients come from all over the States, and even from outside the States. Papa Joe helps all whether rich or poor. In the meantime his "Planet of the Gods" has expanded and is still growing. Today he has over 30 shrines for his African gods.

VODOU HEALER is a documentary film by Henning Christoph (anthropologist, photojournalist, film maker and museum curator) who has spent the last 30 years documenting voodoo (Vodun, Vodou) in africa and the diaspora.

Over the last nine years Henning Christoph has watched and documented Papa Joe's voodoo world grow on the outskirts of a suburban housing development in Raleigh, North Carolina.

VODOU HEALER is a first time look into the Afro-American voodoo scene, not Haitian, Cuban or commercial New Orleans voodoo, but real southern American voodoo.