



TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2005

Cannes Film Festival: Americablog Is There

by Michael in New York on [5/17/2005 02:35:00 PM](#)

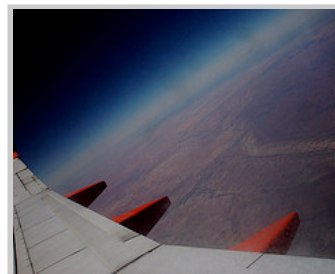
I'm attending the Cannes Film Festival as part of my other life as a freelance entertainment journalist. Here's some of the political news from the fest:

*Kevin Bacon was in one European magazine in what was either a feature or an ad (it was hard to tell). It featured a picture of the beautiful Cannes beach and below it was a postcard addressed "From Kevin Bacon to George W. Bush. 'The weather is here...wish you were beautiful! Love, KB.'" Unquestionably, this endeared him to Europeans.

*Director Lars Von Trier held forth on US politics during the press conference for his American slave allegory "Manderlay" (the second part of a US trilogy that began with the excellent "Dogville"). Von Trier said that 60% of his brain is taken up with the US and he hates it but there's nothing he can do -- we dominate the world. He said, "Bush is an asshole" and insisted this wasn't controversial but a simple fact since the US is "shitting on the world." His movie, unfortunately, was far less entertaining than his interview.

*"The Power of Nightmares" is a three-part BBC documentary that proved the most entertaining and provocative. It aired in the UK in 2004 and created quite a stir. Now it's been updated and merged into one film that's 137 minutes long. The basic premise: the neocons in the US and the fundamentalist radicals developed side by side and use similar tactics -- they create a boogiemane enemy far more dangerous than the facts suggest to enthrall people, instill fear in them and win their allegiance. Strongest when it sticks to facts and weakest when it deals with broad sweeping issues (like the fall of the USSR), this documentary doesn't break new ground but does a terrific job of stringing together the public record and reminding people of recent history. There's damning but funny footage of Rumsfeld in the 70s making hysterical claims about the tottering Soviet Union and even better footage of him on "Meet The Press" talking about a James Bond-like underground bunker that Bin Laden supposedly had in the mountains of Pakistan/Afghanistan (seen away from the fear of those days, the claim looks absurd and of course no real evidence for the bunker exists). It details the numerous legal "success stories" in the war on terror in the US and UK and reminds everyone that most of the cases completely fell apart and even the ones with a little substance were blown radically out of proportion. Dirty bombs? Our own government has done tests showing they simply don't work under the best of circumstances and that the total deaths from a dirty bomb would be...zero. And on and on it goes, very wittily jumping from the 70s to the 80s (when the CIA was ordered by head William Casey to develop a report claiming lies it spread about the USSR in an attempt to smear the Soviet Union in the media were actually true) and

JOHN'S PHOTOS



HOT OFF THE WIRE

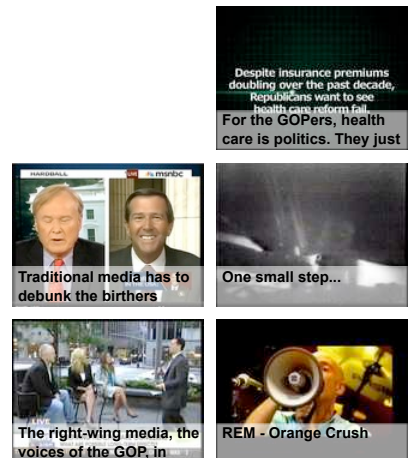
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