



FRIDAY, AUGUST 05, 2005

"Good Night. And, Good Luck." The Americablog Preview

by Michael in New York on [8/05/2005 05:45:00 PM](#)

THIS IS NOT A FILM REVIEW NOR DOES IT CONTAIN SPOILERS (UNLESS YOU'RE IGNORANT OF RECENT AMERICAN HISTORY).

George Clooney's second feature film as a director has been [tapped to open the 43rd New York Film Festival on Sept. 23](#) and no wonder. The Oscar buzz is already building for this smart, entertaining look at the showdown between the fear-mongering Sen. Joe McCarthy (seen only in vintage news clips) and crusading journalist Edward R. Murrow (a great, controlled David Strathairn). Shot in black and white, it's about much more than McCarthyism -- it's about decency and what it means to be an American, the politics of fear, the increasing commercialization and dumbing down of TV (back in the golden age of live drama, mind you) and more.

"Good Night. And, Good Luck" -- named after Murrow's signature sign-off phrase -- confirms Clooney as a serious talent and is bursting with great actors giving tight no-nonsense performances. Everyone from Robert Downey Jr. and Frank Langella to Patricia Clarkson and Clooney himself is top-notch. And for everyone tired of bloated moviemaking, it's about a trim 90 minutes long, with several subplots we haven't even mentioned. It's going to send more young people into journalism than any movie since "All The President's Men."

But why is Americablog talking about it? Because this movie is incredibly relevant. The far right can't turn this into some leftie diatribe -- this is recent American history, based on the facts and often using historical footage from the HUAC hearings and the actual words of Murrow and McCarthy. It's the far right's own unease over Bush's deeply un-American policies (torture, smearing people who disagree with you, attacking anyone who doesn't support you as weak on terror/communism) that let's them understand why this film speaks to us today.

You'll thrill to what journalism was capable of and can be again when Murrow delivers some stirring commentary. Hear him argue with network executives about taking on McCarthy -- when Murrow says passionately that there AREN'T always two balanced sides to every story -- and you'll want to applaud. Listen to Murrow finish a broadcast by saying we can't fight for freedom abroad by abandoning it at home and you'll reach for a pen to write those words down. Watch a clip of Eisenhower trumpet the greatness of America -- how no one has to fear being thrown into jail by the government, how we have habeas corpus and are proud of it --and you'll realize how far we've fallen from that American Dream.

This is going to be one of the major films of the year and it

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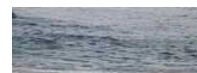
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