

Letters to the WSWS

2 March 2001

To the editors,

I would like to applaud you and the rest of the people involved in making this web site. You do excellent in-depth work! I hope the rest of the world can wake up and see what is really going on.

KR

Netherlands

24 February 2001

I recall reading an article (one of a series) concerning the American media, exposing the political backgrounds of several political commentators, including Bill O'Reilly of Fox's the O'Reilly Factor. I have seen Mr. O'Reilly on occasion, and, while describing himself as independent politically, his questions clearly reveal the right-wing nature of his politics.

Well, over the weekend, channel surfing, I saw Mr. O'Reilly on C-span answering questions at some forum. The audience members were basically in awe of O'Reilly. One person asked him whether he would consider a run for Senate. He responded that he had thought about it, but decided that he can effect a change in the political landscape more thoroughly from his bully pulpit on the air.

This astounded me, as he is portrayed as an objective journalist. I must be naïve.

O'Reilly also said that he is considering a run for Senate against Hillary Clinton. I guess it goes without saying that he would run on the Republican ticket.

I just thought the author of those articles might like to be aware of this. Now that I think about it, he probably is. Keep up the good (objective) journalism.

CRK

26 February 2001

I am a right-wing Republican from Tennessee and I do not necessary agree with all your views. However I find the WSWS Email news to me very informative and truthfully it makes me think. Please keep up the good work!

WT

24 February 2001

Excellent article by Frank Gaglioti on the mapping of the human genome. Many questions raised by the discoveries, so I'll only touch on one. The destruction, finally, of the biological underpinnings of race is long overdue. One lives in a society where every tiny difference in color, shape, custom, ethnicity, etc., is used to divide and destroy mankind ... what a joy to unearth the fact we're more alike ... than different! Fine writing, great we bsite ... keep up the wonderful work.

EP

NYC

28 February 2001

Dear Editor:

I thought David Walsh's review of *Cast Away* was unusually lenient, although I agreed with all his points.

I was persuaded against my better judgment to go and see this film with a friend. I did not have high hopes of a film starring Tom Hanks but thought that the castaway scenario who provide some bearable drama, if not of any great depth.

Having read both Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and a biography of Alexander Selkirk, the marooned mariner on whom Defoe's novel was loosely based, I'm a keen aficionado of the lone individual struggling to survive on a desert island story.

Imagine my disappointment when just at the point when I was getting interested, as Hanks struggled to spear his first fish, the film jumped ahead four years by which time the hero was an accomplished fisherman and had managed to survive. For me most of the dramatic possibilities of Noland's fight for survival, getting enough food and conquering loneliness, were lost.

I thought the creation of a companion out of a football, which Hanks painted a face on and carried on one-way conversations with, was rather crass and unbelievable. But I suppose it provided the opportunity

for the kind of inane comic moments which filmgoers seem to lap up today.

Also when Noland sees the lights from a ship on the distant horizon in the black of night and he starts shouting and jumping up and down in the most ridiculous manner, I found it inconceivable that anyone could be so stupid. Perhaps the director had asked Hanks to release his improvisational acting skills and this was the best he could come up with.

The film's supposedly most profound moment in the airport lounge, after Hanks has been rescued, and he slowly mutters about the wonder of his still being alive, "living ... breathing ...," one couldn't help wondering what the message was. Living for what purpose? To worship today's great idols? The TNCs. In his case Federal Express. Or to live in the current worthless and unfulfilling individualistic pursuit of consumerism and lifestyle.

Yours sincerely,

DR

23 February 2001

Thank you for your thoughtful review of Stanley Kramer's career. Regrettably, most of his films are near-unwatchable today, although in the 1950s they all served a significant role in keeping alive the ideals of human rights and freedom of speech in the popular discourse of a dark era. While neither his analysis nor his technique delved very deep, he still had the courage of his somewhat limited convictions: I am thinking especially of the bold ending of *On the Beach*, one of the most moving and effective finales in all film. (Surely Kramer had to fight to resist the pressure for a happy ending, particularly at the height of Kissinger's realpolitik theorizing.)

With this film he managed to achieve a grand romantic gravity suitable to recording the extinction of mankind, partly via unusually expressive music and photography, but also by devoting time to the relationships of minor characters and by playing many scenes in the everyday bustle of the city streets. Surely this film led millions of viewers to question the value of nuclear "preparedness," if not the legitimacy of the Cold War, and thus reaffirm their own shared humanity. Of what current films can we say as much?

RK

Chicago

26 February 2001



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