

Letters from our readers

30 March 2010

On “Vendetta continues against mother who lost three in Detroit fire”

You note, “If Sylvia Young was not responsible for the deaths, than the obvious culprit was DTE.” There’s a wrongful death suit hanging over the heads of the landlord (for failing to pay the utilities, and then for supplying a faulty space heater) and DTE (for possibly wrongfully turning off the utilities of the tenant when their payment was by contract the responsibility of the landlord). That may be a major unstated part of the motivation for squeezing Sylvia on custody of the kids even though the liable parties are not directly squeezing. Her children are irreplaceable losses, but why not help her to sue and prevail?

Michael G
California, USA
26 March 2010

There isn’t anything surprising about this. They always go after the weak and vulnerable, because it’s easier to do so. DTE would’ve given them the runaround and employed expensive lawyers. The politicians and the media always know which side of their bread is buttered and don’t want to make waves, anything which exposes the venality of the elites they want to be kept covered up.

David G
26 March 2010

On “In the aftermath of the health care vote”

You pose the question: Why is the press overplaying the story of right-wing reaction to the health care vote? There are a couple of reasons: First is the need to reinforce the notion that these House members made a vote that was in some way courageous—instead of cowardly and craven. Then, obviously, there is the

intent to create paranoia among ‘liberal’ consumers of mass media—ultimately culminating in demand for more police state apparatus.

Under Republican administrations minority violent crime and the threat posed by swarthy foreigners is hyped. Under Democratic administrations the threat of right-wing extremists is hyped (look at the hysteria in the press over the “Teabaggers”). The media is the same media, it just shifts the message to accommodate the purposes of whichever political party is in power. The end result, whether Republicans or Democrats are in power: More cops, more surveillance, more police state.

Whether “liberal” or “conservative,” the average consumer of mass media comes to view his neighbors as being of greater danger to himself than is the government. People of both political stripes look to the oppressive power of the state to protect them from the other. Classic divide and rule.

Lloyd G
South Dakota, USA
27 March 2010

On “Make Way for Tomorrow: Remarkable Depression-era film released on DVD”

This is a very good review relating the film to the social and historical context of its era and avoiding the gushy “weepy” reception that has greeted it on other sites that also hysterically reject the radical reading by Robin Wood in his *Sexual Politics and Narrative Cinema*. I’d also want to add that McCarey directed one of the best screwball comedies, *The Awful Truth*, with Cary Grant and Irene Dunne that influenced similar work by Howard Hawks. Also, it should be mentioned that McCarey’s last film was *Satan Never Sleeps* (1962) with William Holden and Clifton Webb

as Catholic priests threatened by the demonic forces of Chairman Mao. Perhaps this may be on the agenda of the religiously confused Martin Scorsese who may wish to collaborate with Robert Service reaming the film and setting it in early Bolshevik Russia with Trotsky as the new villain? Leonardo could be one of the priests with Joe Pesci in the role of Trotsky. Anything is possible in today's Hollywood.

Tony W
27 March 2010

On "Afghan Star: Eyes not opened wide enough"

I agree with you that the depth of the four finalists as people could/should have been better developed, but disagree with your conclusion that the director should have focused on Afghanistan as an occupied territory and on the history surrounding the political and violent upheavals in that part of the world, because I felt the film let us in on a slice of modern Afghan life.

I think the audience should already be well versed in the injustices of Afghan history.

I have read and heard a lot of history and current reporting on the region and almost all of it focuses on the conflict, or occasionally on people in the context of the conflict.

This documentary was refreshingly focused on the people and their desire to have fun, to participate in something previously forbidden (music), and that, to me, brought to life the greater Afghan population in a way that news broadcasts and history books could never accomplish.

Katherine PF
USA
29 March 2010



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