

Re: Fact-checking Moore's political broadside

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It's a movie. Get over it. Don't want to see it? Don't.

--

Joe S.

"Parallax" <dbohara@mindspring.com> wrote in message
news:792abaf9.0406191745.d25eadc@posting.google.com...
> "ClassWarz" <Outsourced@AmercanWorker.Com> wrote in message
news:<10d7i0e4b235uef@corp.supernews.com>...
> > "Psalm 110" <Melchizedek@USA.com> wrote in message
> > news:2275a3c5.0406181853.538066d0@posting.google.com...
> > > <http://www.iht.com/articles/525560.html>
> > >
> > > Fact-checking Moore's political broadside
> > >
> > > Philip Shenon/NYT The New York Times
> > >
> > > Friday, June 18, 2004
> > > Viewer finds Moore 'on firm ground'
> > >
> > > LOS ANGELES Michael Moore is not coy about his hopes for "Fahrenheit
> > > 9/11," his blistering documentary attack on President George W. Bush
> > > and the war in Iraq. He wants it to be remembered as the first
> > > big-audience, election-year film that helped unseat a president.
> > > .
> > > "And it's not just a hope," the Oscar-winning filmmaker said in a
> > > phone interview last week, describing focus groups in Michigan in
> > > April at which, after seeing the movie, previously undecided voters
> > > expressed eagerness to defeat Bush.
> > > .
> > > "We found that if you entered the theater on the fence, you fell off
> > > it somewhere during those two hours," he said. "It ignites a fire in
> > > people who had given up." The movie's indictment of Bush is nothing if
> > > not sprawling. Moore suggests that Bush and his administration
> > > jeopardized national security in an effort to placate Bush family
> > > cronies in Saudi Arabia, that the White House helped members of Osama
> > > bin Laden's family to flee the United States after the attacks of
> > > Sept. 11, 2001, and that the administration manipulated terrorism
> > > alert levels to scare Americans into supporting the invasion of Iraq.
> > > .
> > > Moore's previous films generated a cottage industry of conservative
> > > commentators eager to prove sloppiness and exaggeration in his films;
> > > a handful of mainstream critics have also found flaws. But if
> > > "Fahrenheit 9/11" attracts the audience Moore and his distributors are
> > > predicting, Moore may face an onslaught of fact-checking unlike
> > > anything he - or any other documentary filmmaker - has ever

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> > > experienced. After all, White House officials and the Bush family
> > > began impugning the film even before any of them had seen it.
> > > .
> > > So how will Moore's movie stand up under close examination? Is the
> > > film's depiction of Bush as a lazy and duplicitous leader, blinded by
> > > his family's financial ties to Arab money men and the Saudi Arabian
> > > royal family, true to fact? Moore and his distributors refused to
> > > circulate copies of the film and its script before the film's release
> > > on Friday; his production team said recently there was no final script
> > > because the film was still undergoing minor editing - for clarity,
> > > they said, not accuracy.
> > > .
> > > After a year spent covering the U.S. commission investigating the
> > > Sept. 11 attacks, I was recently allowed to attend a Hollywood
> > > screening. Based on that single viewing, and after separating out what
> > > is clearly presented as Moore's opinion from what is stated as fact,
> > > it seems safe to say that central assertions of fact in "Fahrenheit
> > > 9/11" are supported by the public record.
> > > .
> > > Moore is on firm ground in arguing that the Bushes, like many
> > > prominent Texas families with oil interests, have profited handsomely
> > > from their relationships with prominent Saudis, including members of
> > > the royal family and of the large and fabulously wealthy bin Laden
> > > clan, which has insisted it long ago disowned Osama.
> > > .
> > > Moore spends several minutes in the film documenting ties between the
> > > president and James Bath, a financial adviser to a prominent member of
> > > the bin Laden family who was an original investor in Bush's Arbusto
> > > energy company and who served with the future president in the Air
> > > National Guard in the early 1970s. The Bath friendship, which
> > > indirectly links Bush to the family of the world's most notorious
> > > terrorist, has been well documented.
> > > .
> > > Moore charges that Bush and his aides paid too little attention to
> > > warnings in the summer of 2001 that Al Qaeda was about to attack,
> > > including a detailed Aug. 6, 2001, CIA briefing that warned of
> > > terrorism within the United States. In its final report next month,
> > > the Sept. 11 commission can be expected to offer support to this
> > > assertion. Moore says that instead of focusing on Al Qaeda, the
> > > president spent 42 percent of his first eight months in office on
> > > vacation; the figure came not from a conspiracy-hungry Web site but
> > > from a calculation by The Washington Post. The most valid criticisms
> > > of the film are likely to involve the artful way that Moore connects
> > > the facts, and whether he has left out others that might undermine his
> > > scalding attack. A great many statistics fly by in the movie - like
> > > assertions that 6 percent to 7 percent of America is owned by Saudi
> > > Arabians, and that Saudi companies have paid more than \$1.4 billion to
> > > Bush family interests. Moore and his team say they have news reports
> > > and other evidence to back up the numbers, and that it will be posted
> > > on his site, www.michaelmoore.com, after the release of the
> > > documentary. Moore may also be criticized for the way he portrays the
> > > evacuation of the extended bin Laden family from the United States
> > > after Sept. 11. As the Sept. 11 commission has found, the Saudi
> > > government was able to pull strings at senior levels of the Bush
> > > administration to help the bin Ladens leave the United States. But
> > > while the film clearly suggests that the flights occurred at a time
> > > when all air traffic was grounded immediately after the attacks ("Even
> > > Ricky Martin couldn't fly," Moore says over video of the singer
> > > wandering in an airport lobby), the Sept. 11 commission said in a
> > > report this April that there was "no credible evidence that any
> > > chartered flights of Saudi Arabian nationals departed the United
> > > States before the reopening of national airspace," and that the FBI

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> > > had concluded that no one aboard the flights was involved in Sept. 11.
> > > .
> > > Moore defended the scene, saying his goal was to show how the White
> > > House was eager to bend and break the rules for Saudi friends, in this
> > > case the extended family of the terrorist who had just brought down
> > > the twin towers of the World Trade Center and attacked the Pentagon.
> > > And as reporters have found, the White House still refuses to document
> > > fully how the flights were arranged. "I don't want to get lost in the
> > > forest because of a single tree," Moore said. "The main point I want
> > > people to go away with is that these people got special treatment
> > > because they were bin Ladens or Saudi royals, and you and I would
> > > never have been given that treatment."
> > > .
> > > Moore is readying for a conservative counterattack, saying he has
> > > created a "war room" to offer an instant response to any assault on
> > > the film's credibility. He has retained Chris Lehane, a Democratic
> > > Party strategist known as a master of the black art of "oppo," or
> > > opposition research, used to discredit detractors. He also hired
> > > outside fact-checkers, led by a former general counsel of The New
> > > Yorker and a veteran member of that magazine's legendary fact-checking
> > > team, to vet the film. And he is threatening to go one step further,
> > > saying he has consulted with lawyers who can bring defamation suits
> > > against anyone who maligns the film or damages his reputation. "Any
> > > attempts to libel me will be met by force," Moore said. "The most
> > > important thing we have is truth on our side. If they persist in
> > > telling lies, knowingly telling a lie with malice, then I'll take them
> > > to court."
> > > .
> > > Joanne Doroshow, a public interest lawyer and filmmaker who shared in
> > > a 1993 Oscar for documentaries and who joined the fact-checking effort
> > > last month, said, "We have gone through every single word of this film
> > > - literally every word - and verified its accuracy." That said,
> > > Moore's fact-checkers said they did not view the film as straight
> > > reporting. "This is an Op-Ed piece, it's not a news report," said Dev
> > > Chatillon, the former general counsel for The New Yorker, adding, "The
> > > facts have to be right, yes, but this is an individual's view of
> > > current events. And I'm a very firm believer that it is within
> > > everybody's right to examine the actions of their government."
> > > .
> > > Besides, it may turn out that the most talked-about moments in the
> > > film are the least impeachable. For the White House, the most
> > > devastating segment of "Fahrenheit 9/11" may be the video of a
> > > befuddled-looking Bush staying put for nearly seven minutes at a
> > > Florida elementary school on the morning of Sept. 11, continuing to
> > > read a copy of "My Pet Goat" to schoolchildren even after an aide has
> > > told him that a second plane has struck the twin towers.
> > > .
> > > Bush's slow, hesitant reaction to the disastrous news has never been a
> > > secret. But seeing the actual footage, with the minutes ticking by,
> > > may prove more damaging to the White House than all the statistics in
> > > the world.
> > >
> > Moore said on the Letterman Show tonight that he gets a lot of his facts
> > from the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times.
> > >
> > I've seen all the Moore films--Bowling eight times! -- and I find Moore
uses
> > stuff that ought to be common knowledge to most of us.
> > >
> > But here comes the Republican Dirty Tricks Machine:
> > >
> > <http://www.michaelmoore.com/words/message/index.php>

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> >
> > //begin quote
> >
> > Some People Still Don't Want You To See My Movie... From Michael Moore
> >
> > Friends,
> >
> > We're a week away from the nationwide opening of "Fahrenheit 9/11" and
not a
> > day goes by where we don't have some new battle to fight thanks to those
who
> > are still working overtime to keep people from seeing this film. What's
> > their problem? Are they worried about something?
> >
> > A Republican PR firm has formed a fake grassroots front group called
"Move
> > America Forward" to harass and intimidate theater owners into not
showing
> > "Fahrenheit 9/11." These are the same people who successfully badgered
CBS
> > into canceling the Reagan mini-series a few months ago. And they are
> > spending a ton of money this week to threaten movie theaters who even
think
> > about showing our movie.
> >
> > As of this morning, a little over 500 theaters have agreed to show the
movie
> > beginning next Friday, June 25. There are three national/regional
theater
> > chains who, as of today, have not booked the movie in their theaters.
One
> > theater owner in Illinois has reported receiving death threats.
> >
> > The right wing usually wins these battles. Their basic belief system is
> > built on censorship, repression, and keeping people ignorant. They want
to
> > limit or snuff out any debate or dissension. They also don't like pets
and
> > are mean to small children. Too many of them are named "Fred."
> >
> > This new nut group is the Right's last hope in limiting how many people
can
> > see this movie. All of their other efforts have failed. Let's recap:
> >
> > 1. Roger Friedman at FOX News reported that the head of the company
which
> > first agreed to fund our film "got calls from Republican friends"
pressuring
> > them to back out. And they did. But... Miramax immediately picked up the
> > film! Except...
> >
> > 2. Michael Eisner, the chairman of Disney, then blocked Miramax (a
company
> > owned by Disney) from releasing the film once it was finished. But...
public
> > attention and embarrassment forced Disney to let the Weinstein brothers
of
> > Miramax find another distributor! But...
> >
> > 3. Instead of a new distributor stepping right in -- as all the media
> > predicted would happen -- it took another month to find distributors who
> > would take on this movie. A number of other distributors, thanks to

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various

> > pressures, were afraid to get involved. It looked for a while that we would
> > be distributing this ourselves. But then Lions Gate and IFC Films rode in to
> > the rescue!
> >
> > So, we have beaten back all attempts to kill this movie, and the only thing
> > in the way of you now seeing "Fahrenheit 9/11" is this Republican big-money
> > front group trying to force theaters not to show the movie.
> >
> > Please, contact your local theaters and let them know you want to see
> > "Fahrenheit 9/11." Tell them that some people don't know that this is
> > America and that we believe in freedom of speech and the importance of ALL
> > voices being heard. (The members of MoveOn.org-an ACTUAL grassroots
> > organization-have done a very cool thing. They are pledging to send a
> > message to theater owners and are planning to attend a showing of the film
> > on its opening weekend.)
> >
> > I appreciate their efforts, but you don't have to be a member of MoveOn to
> > help stop this effort to keep "Fahrenheit 9/11" from making it to screens
> > across the country. If a theater in your area is planning to show the film,
> > just give them a call and thank them for standing up for the freedom of
> > speech. If your local theater isn't showing the film, call them and let them
> > know that you would like to see it and you'd like them to show it.
> >
> > The White House and their minions in our media have presented one distorted
> > version of the truth after another for the past four years. All we are
> > asking for is the right to show what they HAVEN'T shown us, the real truth.
> > The truth that ain't pretty (and is, sadly, damnably hilarious).
> >
> > On top of all this, the MPAA gave the film an "R" rating. I want all
> > teenagers to see this film. There is nothing in the film in terms of
> > violence that we didn't see on TV every night at the dinner hour during the
> > Vietnam War. Of course, that's the point, isn't it? The media have given the
> > real footage from Iraq a "cleansing" -- made it look nice, easy to digest.
> > Mario Cuomo has offered to be our lawyer in appealing this ruling by the
> > MPAA. Frankly, I would like to think the MPAA is saying that the actions by
> > the Bush administration are so abhorrent and revolting, we need to protect
> > our children from seeing what they have done. In that case, the film should
> > be rated NC-17!
> >
> > However it turns out, I trust all of you teenagers out there will find your
> > way into a theater to see this movie. If the government believes it is OK to

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> > send slightly older teenagers to their deaths in Iraq, I think at the very
> > least you should be allowed to see what they are going to draft you for in a
> > couple of years.
> >
> > Finally, some very sophisticated individuals have been hacking into and
> > shutting down our website. It is an hourly fight to keep it up. We are going
> > to find out who is doing this and we are going to pursue a criminal
> > prosecution. I'm preparing lots of cool stuff for the site so watch for new
> > items on it next week (www.fahrenheit911.com and www.michaelmoore.com).
> >
> > Thanks again for your support and I hope to see you at the movies on opening
> > night, June 25.
> >
> > Yours,
> >
> > Michael Moore
> >
> > PS. I am sponsoring a number of benefits around the country next week for
> > local and national peace and justice groups, including Military Families
> > Speak Out and September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows. Please check
> > your local papers and my website next week for further details.
> >
> > PPS. Also, I am going to be on the "Late Show with David Letterman" on
> > Friday night. It's on CBS at 11:35 PM Eastern and Pacific. And on Monday
> > morning (June 21) I will be on "The Today Show" on NBC. Next week, Jon
> > Stewart and Conan. I'd go on O'Reilly but, like a coward, he walked out on a
> > screening we invited him to (with Al Franken just a few rows away!). I
> > personally caught him sneaking out. Embarrassed, he tried to change the
> > subject. He said, "When are you coming on my show?" and I said, "Turn around
> > and watch the rest of the movie and I will come on your show." He walked
> > out. Fair and balanced.
> >
> > //end quote
> >
> >
> >
> > CLASSWARZ
> >
> >
> > .
>
>
> So now Moore believes a company is obligated to show his movie even if
> they or their customers do not like it? It took Moore over a month to
> find a distributor, big deal, sounds like distributors were afraid it
> would bomb at the box office as most propaganda movies do. Moore now
> admits to lying about the Bin Ladens leaving the US after 9/11. Whats
> Moore going to do now, sue me for being critical of him? Typical
> leftie lover of "freedom".