

## THE LEFT COAST REPORT A Political Look at Hollywood

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August 28, 2006

A NewsMax Report

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### #1 Michael Moore Trying to Influence Midterm Elections?

Michael Moore has been secretive about his latest project, "The Great '04 Slacker Uprising."

But now that the master propagandist is screening portions of the film at the Toronto Film Festival, rumors are circulating about the movie's content.

Predictably, Moore is pushing a left-oriented agenda and attempting to gin up controversy, which translates into PR fuel.

Footage for the movie reportedly comes from college campuses in 60 American cities, which was taken prior to the 2004 presidential election.

Festival promotion material trumpets Moore as a "master filmmaker" who will "discuss the journey he's taken since Fahrenheit 9/11. (No, not the one to and from the bank.)

It turns out that Moore is only showing "a short teaser" from his upcoming health care film "Sicko" at the festival. But longer segments from his "work-in-progress," "The Great '04 Slacker Uprising," are being shown.

"Uprising" is described as a "record of his travels during the 2004 U.S. election campaign that captures the birth of a new political generation," according to the festival promo materials.

The film appears to be timed to coincide with the upcoming midterm election campaign season.

The Left Coast Report smells a big-screen campaign ad, which, incidentally, is unaffected by the vaunted campaign finance legislation.

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### #2 Sean Connery Ducks Political Debate, Slams Hollywood

Sean Connery has refused to participate in a planned political debate, which is scheduled for Scotland's Festival of Politics.

The actor's refusal came after he discovered that his opponent had indicated he was going to bring up a certain issue at the forum.

Connery has been a staunch supporter of the Scottish National Party, which seeks Scottish independence from the U.K.

His assigned debate opponent was supposed to be the festival's presiding officer, George Reid, who let it be known that he was going to question Connery about his views on domestic violence.

One controversial statement attributed to Connery goes as follows: "Sometimes there are women who take it to the wire. That's what they are looking for -- the ultimate confrontation. They want a smack."

Connery always claimed the remarks were taken out of context.

Although Connery has backed away from the political debate, he did manage to attend a ceremony during which the British Academy of Film and Television Arts presented him with an award for Outstanding Achievement in Film.

The veteran took the opportunity to announce the end of his 50-year Hollywood career, and he did so with a furious tirade against Hollywood. Connery accused the entertainment industry of incompetence and a lack of professionalism.

"The time has come because of my rather unfortunate last movie. The cost to me in terms of frustration and avoiding going to jail for murder cannot have continued," Connery wryly said.

He also accused "The League Of Extraordinary Gentlemen" director Stephen Norrington of being "insane."

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### #3 Jackie Mason and Matt LeBlanc Head for Courtroom

Jackie Mason has filed a lawsuit, and Matt LeBlanc has been hit with one.

Mason sued Jews for Jesus for \$2 million over pamphlets that feature an image of him next to the words "Jackie Mason ... A Jew for Jesus!?"

"While I have the utmost respect for people who practice the Christian faith, the fact is, as everyone knows, I am as Jewish as a matzo ball or kosher salami," the comedian said in legal papers filed in the New York Supreme Court.

Meanwhile Matt LeBlanc was sued in a strange slander lawsuit.

The actor's wife filed for a divorce in March 2006. LeBlanc blamed the divorce on a combination of too much alcohol and a stripper named Stephanie Stephens, whom the actor claimed was "pushing" her anatomy into him and "grabbing my hands to go all over her body."

Stephens filed a lawsuit against the actor in Los Angeles, which claims that LeBlanc damaged her reputation with his "false statements."

The basis of the falsity, according to Stephens' suit, is that she never came in contact with LeBlanc in a sexual manner. She did acknowledge, however, that the actor met with her in his home.

The Left Coast Report doesn't envy the job of the jury in having to figure out what kind of publicity harms a stripper's reputation.

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### #4 Next Week's 'Wicker Man' Flick and Others--Go or No-go?

Here's what Hollywood is delivering to your local movie theater next weekend:

1. "The Wicker Man": Remake of a 1973 British horror movie where a police detective (Nicolas Cage) encounters a strange cult while attempting to find a missing young girl on a remote island; Rated PG-13 for violence and profanity.

Maybe Go (for mature horror fans)

2. "Crank": A guy is poisoned and can only stay alive by maintaining an adrenaline rush; Rated R for lots of violence, profanity, sex, nudity and drugs.

No Go

3. "Idiocracy": A sci-fi comedy where the subject of an experiment (Luke Wilson) goes into induced hibernation only to awaken 1,000 years into the future, where he is considered a genius because everyone else has devolved into idiots; Rated R for use of profanity and sexually laced jokes.

No Go (unless an adult seeking a time waster)

4. "Crossover": A pre-med student tries to use his basketball talent to obtain a scholarship to UCLA while spurning the NBA; Rated PG-13 for profanity and sex.

Maybe Go (for teens and adults)

5. "This Film is Not Yet Rated": Limited release exposé about the American movie ratings board; Left-of-center agenda-driven documentary; No rating (consistent with its title.)

Maybe Go (for those interested in the ratings board of the MPAA)

6. "How to Eat Fried Worms": Continuing run about a fifth grade boy who takes on a bully; Rated PG for bullying scenes and some crude humor.

Go (sweet story offsets the unrefined comedy for families with children old enough to handle the crude humor)

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#### #5 Tom Cruise News Continues

The London Daily Mail recently reported that Sumner Redstone, the executive who kicked Tom Cruise off the Paramount lot, had an in-house lobbyist who influenced his decision.

Evidently, Paula Fortunato, the 43-year-old wife of the 83-year-old CEO, was "incensed" by Cruise's criticism of Brooke Shields' use of prescription drugs for postpartum depression.

Fortunato, who met Redstone while he was still married to his first wife of 55 years, reportedly told her husband, "I never want to see another Tom Cruise movie again." She also suggested that Cruise's comments had turned female fans off.

In commenting on the Cruise-Paramount fissure, Redstone made some unusually brusque public statements blaming Cruise's "unacceptable conduct" and "creative suicide" for the split.

The executive focused on the Oprah couch-jumping incident and "Today" show face-off with Matt Lauer to explain the Cruise pink slip. But Hollywood is a place where eccentric behavior is typically part and parcel of the celebrity picture so as a sole explanation Redstone's rationale rings hollow.

Perhaps Paramount execs had been taking note of the downward trend in Cruise's popularity.

Negative perception of Cruise has risen almost 100 percent since mid-2005 while positive perception has fallen about 40 percent; this according to Marketing Evaluations Inc., the company that tabulates the closely watched Q Scores. A USA Today/Gallup poll recently determined that half of those surveyed held an "unfavorable" opinion of the actor. And in a poll conducted by Yahoo! Entertainment in the U.K. that surveyed people on which celebrities they would most like to have as their best friend, Cruise came in last.

While his behavior may have been a factor, the reality of the Cruise-Paramount situation is that the breakup was the result of failed negotiation. The studio made an unacceptable offer to the actor's company, most likely believing that Cruise's value was lower than it had previously been.

Richard Lovett is president of one of the prime agencies in town, Creative Artists Agency (CAA), which happens to handle Cruise.

In an interview with the Wall Street Journal, Lovett responded to the Cruise-Paramount separation with the following comment: "Paramount has no credibility right now. ... It is not clear who is running the studio and who is making the decisions."

Lovett also hinted at a possible CAA boycott of Paramount.

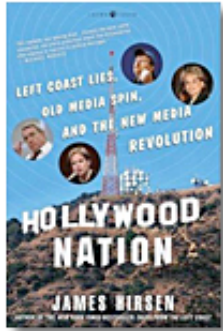
Cruise's producing partner Paula Wagner, a former CAA agent who is married to Cruise's CAA rep Rick Nicita, responded to Redstone's remarks, saying, "We had ceased negotiations. I'm not sure why this happened. You need to respect your artists."

"I don't understand why this would be turned into a personal attack. Because that's what it is," Wagner added.

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