

The Summer of Love

Forty years ago the United States was a much more conservative place than it is today. Even though the civil rights movement had won some tough victories down south, and Vietnam dissension was heating up, most Americans were still tied to the traditional values of their parents.

For example, in my heavily ethnic neighborhood of Levittown, New York, if an unmarried girl got pregnant it was a huge scandal. Rarely was abortion even discussed because most of us were Catholic. The young girl usually got married to the father quickly and quietly. This happened to my cousin and two of my friends. An unwanted pregnancy was a major deal.

Drugs, also, were not acceptable. Addicts were shunned like lepers, and even marijuana was considered way out of bounds. In 1967, while some of my high school friends were drinking beer whenever they could, nobody in my crowd was even thinking about dope.

But out in San Francisco the “summer of love” was unfolding. Young people streamed into that city and congregated in the parks, where they were introduced to pot and hallucinogenic drugs by local dealers. According to a recent series of reports by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, thousands of young Americans spent the summer stoned and having sex with a variety of their compatriots. This led to an epidemic of overdose situations and social disease problems.

The press, however, did not concentrate on those negatives. Instead, the media immediately branded the summer of love crew as “hippies” and proclaimed the era of “flower power,” thereby creating a glamorous subculture. The glorification and marketing of that subculture forty years ago swept the nation and remains with us today.

Almost immediately, the music industry hopped on the hippie

bandwagon and rebellious, drug-addled pop stars soared up the charts. The names are now icons: Joplin, Hendrix, Morrison, Slick, Garcia, and so on. No question, the summer of love changed America's attitudes towards drugs, sex, and rock 'n roll.

The unintended consequences of that summer are staggering. Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, and Jim Morrison all died at age 27 from drug and/or alcohol activity. Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead lasted longer, but his heroin intake ultimately did him in. All told, the damage the drug scourge has done to America is incalculable.

But you'd never know that by the media, which generally continues to glorify our permissive culture. There's little mention that 70% of African-American babies are now born out-of-wedlock, while the overall birth rate outside of marriage has gone from eight percent 40 years ago to 37% today. Single mom homes, of course, are the major driver of poverty in America.

So, call me a foggy, but I'm not real nostalgic about the summer of love. I like the music it engendered, but you can have the acid trips and the poor hygiene. Certainly, love is a good thing in any season. But it must be accompanied by responsibility to truly flower.

Politics of Death

The eerie kabuki dance that is Iraq is about to enter a new phase where death is the only certainty. The Democratic party is hell-bent on pulling out of the desert killing fields, while the Bush administration is trying to buy time with an aggressive push against the murderous "insurgents."

Polls show that most Americans are sick of the entire mess and the left is capitalizing on the disenchantment. There is no question the war has been mismanaged and the Iraqi government is corrupt and cowardly. But the stakes in Iraq are enormous, and that point has been consistently hidden from the American public by a media that despises the Bush administration and is openly rooting for a Democratic president in 2008.

The cold truth is that Iran will dominate Iraq if the USA withdraws. That dominance will lead to increased terror activity against American interests not only in the Persian Gulf region, but also around the world. Iran's goal is to humiliate America and establish a powerful Shiite juggernaut that will target Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the United States itself. Using terror surrogates trained and armed inside Iraq, Iran will unleash them all over the world. Chaos doesn't even begin to cover it.

There is little difference between al-Qaeda and the Mullahs who call the shots in Iran. Both groups want to annihilate Westerners and Jews. This is not a secret. Iranian President Ahmadinejad delights in stating his homicidal urges every chance he gets.

But living in relative safety, many Americans simply don't want to hear it. It was the same thing in the late 1930s when millions of Americans didn't want any part of Hitler or Tojo. It was only after Pearl Harbor that the country rallied against the evil that threatened it.

9/11 was Pearl Harbor II, and for a time, Americans came together to fight the enemy. All of that evaporated, however, in the fog of confusion called Iraq. President Bush and his advisers truly believed the Iraqi people would choose freedom over carnage. They were wrong.

Yes, there are good, brave Iraqis, but not enough of them. Ancient tribal hatreds and terror-for-hire madmen rule the

day. The United States military has performed magnificently. But no nation can impose order on a population that believes God requires them to murder people.

So what should be done in Iraq? A rapid U.S. pullout would likely result in massive death, as the various Muslims sects would try to obliterate each other. The cut-and-runners don't mention that very much, but the Democrats already have their talking points. If thousands are murdered after the Americans leave, it would be Bush's fault because he got us in there in the first place.

So it's a win-win for the left. They can claim they saved American lives by getting the military out, and if civilians are murdered as a result, they'll put it on Bush and the Republicans. The politics of death is alive and well.

Those of us bright enough to understand the big picture in Iraq know that the USA must keep a strong presence there, but cannot continue to support a corrupt government. So a new defensive strategy must be put in place. Protect Iraq against an Iranian incursion, but increasingly let the Iraqis manage their day-to-day problems. By next March, Americans will have sacrificed for five years in this place; that's more than enough time for the Iraqis to step up.

Finally, all Americans should listen very closely to what the presidential candidates say about Iraq. The next president will have to manage this problem, and if he or she makes a mistake, it could lead to worldwide catastrophe.

That's how intense this whole thing is.

High School Musical Blues

There is no doubt that some entertainment critics have glorified rap “artists” like Eminem, Snoop Dogg, and Ludacris. Twenty years ago, pro-drug, anti-woman, and pro-violence lyrics would not have been embraced by the mainstream media for fear of public backlash. But today, bring on perversity in the name of diversity. Anything goes.

The same thing can be said for these revolting torture movies. A number of critics believe they’re just great—the more eye-gouging, the better. The director Eli Roth, whose sadistic films are beyond disturbing, is considered a genius in some quarters.

Thus, when wholesome movies like *High School Musical* and its sequel become big hits, there is cheering among many traditional Americans. But not among some critics.

Entertainment Weekly magazine said *High School Musical 2* was “too simplistic.” And writing in the *Chicago Tribune*, critic Maureen Ryan gently mocked the movie writing: “How strange and amazing that the most popular teen musical of our time features so little kissing. Honestly, *High School Musical* and its sequel make *Grease* look like *Caligula*.”

So now I must break this to Ms. Ryan and *Entertainment Weekly*: These movies are not being viewed by high school kids—little children are watching them. “Simplistic” plays among 7-year-olds. Get a clue.

More than 17 million children and their parents watched the second installment of *High School Musical*, giving Disney an enormous money making machine. Even Caligula could figure this out: Many American parents are desperate for clean-cut entertainment for their kids. Kissing isn’t an issue for most elementary school urchins; they just like singing and dancing minus the obscenities.

But that concept is unsettling among some liberal entertainment people. Richard Roeper, the film critic for the liberal *Chicago Sun-Times*, put out a column entitled "Disney Hit is No Victory for Right-Wing."

In said column, Mr. Roeper says that he doesn't believe critics would hammer *High School Musical* simply because it is wholesome. Roeper goes on to say that conservatives might distance themselves from the movie because it embraces "liberal" (his word) values like tolerance and interracial dating.

That's right, Richard, all those mean conservatives would never like anything tolerant, would they?

Here's what I believe, based upon more than thirty years of working in the media: Many critics are jaded and cynical. Most are extremely liberal. If the property is "edgy," anti-American, or over-the-top offensive, they will like it. If the writers of *High School Musical* had turned the dancing kids into flesh-eating zombies, the critics would have been wowed.

The sad truth is that if an entertainment project espouses traditional values, applauds the USA, or embraces religion, a good number of American critics will hoot at it, and demean those who find it worthy, sometimes even citing Caligula.

So here's my review of *High School Musical*. It makes little kids happy without encouraging stuff parents don't approve of, therefore it's a good show.

With apologies to decadent Roman emperors, that's the veritas.

The Immigration Insurrection

All around the country, certain cities are refusing to inform federal authorities about the activities of illegal aliens, even foreign nationals who commit crimes in their jurisdictions. This week the police department in New Haven, Connecticut issued a memo ordering officers not to cooperate with Homeland Security on enforce warrants for illegal immigrants. This follows New Haven's distribution of ID cards to illegals so they can access city services.

This, of course, is outrageous, and verges on anarchy. New Haven officials have violated Federal Statute 1373(a), and if Attorney General Gonzalez still has an office, he should prosecute them.

But he won't. And President Bush will remain mute as well. The President could urge Congress to cut off federal funding to New Haven and every other municipality that violates federal immigration law, but again, that will never happen. Every politician knows that calling for tough action against illegal immigration will bring accusations of bigotry.

The so-called "sanctuary city" policies of cities like New Haven, New York, Los Angeles, Houston and on and on have now become life and death issues, not simply ideological defiance. Let's take a look at what happened in the "sanctuary city" of Newark, New Jersey.

Jose Carranza, an illegal from Peru, was known on the streets as a very bad dude. Authorities knew it as well, because Carranza was charged with raping a 7-year-old girl and assaulting four adults.

Nevertheless, when Carranza appeared before Judge Thomas Vena on the child rape charge, Vena cut his bail in half, allowing Carranza to walk free. Ten months later, police say Carranza executed three college students in a Newark schoolyard by

shooting them to death.

Because Newark is a “sanctuary city,” no official notified Homeland Security (ICE) about Carranza. Had they done so, the feds could have detained Carranza the moment he walked out of Judge Vena’s courtroom.

There are many villains in this dreadful story. If convicted, Carranza is obviously an animal. Judge Vena may have the deaths of three people on his conscience. New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine and Newark officials are apparently fine with criminal aliens running around because they support the “sanctuary” policies.

Americans are rightfully confused as to how all of this can be happening. We have immigration laws in place, yet New Haven, Newark and scores of other places will not obey them. And nothing happens to the scofflaws. Following that logic, why should any law be obeyed?

The brutal truth is that three young Americans are dead in Newark because irresponsible politicians and a stupid judge would not protect them. Thousands of Americans have been killed by illegal aliens, and the only thing that can stop the madness is a public outcry because our politicians are too cowardly to crackdown.

We the people have to demand action. But will we?

The Bourne Buffoonery

When *The Simpsons Movie* turns out to be more realistic than *The Bourne Ultimatum*, you know something is up. Nevertheless, the thriller is a big hit, proving once again that film

audiences now want live action cartoons rather than crisp realistic films like *The Ipccress File* or *The French Connection*.

For those of you not familiar with the Bourne series, Matt Damon plays a CIA agent who becomes involved in the "Program" (as in, "get with the"). This sinister plan results in Damon being brainwashed, making him a lean, mean killing machine with no personal memories. Thus, he can murder without conscience, kind of like what Hollywood producers often do to scripts.

Anyway, Damon runs around beating up four guys at a time and eluding authorities all over the world. However, he turns on the CIA, so they must kill him. But they can't, since Matt is Clint Eastwood and Sean Connery times ten. Plus, he has Julia Stiles helping him. No way the CIA has a chance.

I knew this movie was trouble when I read the reviews. Almost all the critics liked it. The only way American movie critics would like a violent car chase film like this was if it bashed the USA, which, of course, it does.

The CIA guys are bad, bad, bad. And just to make sure Indonesian and Pakistani audiences get the picture, the CIA chief issues his evil orders with the American flag clearly seen on his desk. No language barrier here, no sir. The U.S. intelligence agencies are fiendish enterprises, which want to hurt Matt Damon and actually force Julia Stiles to cut her own hair. How could they?

Actually, both Mr. Damon and Ms. Stiles don't have to do much acting. Damon does work for the far-left MoveOn organization and is on record as having requested the Bush daughters serve in Iraq. The actor also told the *Idaho Statesman* that the CIA's use of waterboarding is an erosion of our American values.

Guess what? There's a waterboarding scene in the flick. What a

coincidence!

Julia Stiles is also down with the far-left. On a cable program she explained why she missed a MoveOn event by saying, "I was afraid that Bill O'Reilly would come with a shotgun at my front door and shoot me for being unpatriotic."

Look it up if you don't believe me.

In the Bourne movie there are no shotguns to frighten Julia, but plenty of automatic weapons fired at U.S. intelligence agents, not by al Qaeda, but by American Matt Damon. As the casualty count rose, I kept thinking about all those disability payments we taxpayers would have to pick up.

Now, all of this is harmless nonsense to those of us who understand the hero and villain business, and realize the simplistic bias that permeates Hollywood. But to impressionable audiences, the anti-American theme could resonate.

The director of the movie, Paul Greengrass, told the *Times* of London that he purposely tapped into the mistrust the world has of the USA. In my opinion, Mr. Greengrass has used his skills as a filmmaker to create a slick propaganda package that will make him millions of dollars. And standing between Mr. Greengrass and real life terrorists who would slit his throat are, of course, real life American intelligence people.

In the end, the America-haters will love *The Bourne Ultimatum* and apolitical others may enjoy the action and carnage. The movie is a perfect storm of misguided ideology, silly plotting, and absurd conclusions. In other words, it's a blockbuster.