

Al and the Oscar

And the winner is... Al Gore for "An Inconvenient Truth!"

Take it to the bank—Al Gore's film will win the Academy Award for Best Documentary and high-fives will be flying in Hollywood; George Clooney may even break dance in the aisle.

Mr. Gore's warning about global warming and the consequences thereof is in competition with four other films: One about wild and crazy Christian kids at "Jesus Camp," another dealing with the Catholic church-pedophilia scandal, and two more about the chaos in Iraq. Gore wins without breaking a sweat, no pun intended.

But did you notice that all five of the nominated documentaries have left or secular themes? In general, conservatives are not rallying to Gore's hypothesis that fossil fuels are damaging the planet, although the right should keep an open mind on that strong possibility.

The two anti-Christian films are devastating. Writing in *Variety*, Ronnie Scheib says this about "Jesus Camp": "[The film] may shock viewers, especially liberals, when it shows children speaking in tongues, their faces glowing in ecstasy and tears running down their cheeks."

And Robert Koehler's review of "Deliver Us from Evil" opines, "It's hard to imagine even devout Catholics coming away from the film without a sense of rage at a religion that appears to value members of the priesthood over the well-being of children."

Of course, the priest-pedophilia scandal has nothing to do with the Catholic "religion." Theology played no part in it. The scandal happened because evil men working inside the Catholic Church did evil things. When Richard Nixon and his henchmen disgraced America, no sane person could blame it on

the Constitution. It's the same thing with the Catholic scandal.

There is no question that Hollywood continues to pour out product designed to promote a secular society and boost liberal political positions. And the entertainment industry is a powerful colossus. Millions worldwide closely follow the attitudes and themes Hollywood puts forth.

So in the interest of being "fair and balanced," I challenge Hollywood to produce the following documentaries this year.

- **"Tiller the Baby Killer."** A documentary profiling Kansas abortionist George Tiller who, for \$5,000, will abort a fetus up until birth.
- **"The Streets of San Francisco."** A look at the thousands of homeless people, many addicted, who have flocked to the City by the Bay for free money and other perks the city bestows on them.
- **"Fidel Camp."** This film chronicles the plight of thousands of "subversives" who are or have been incarcerated in dungeons because Fidel Castro doesn't like them. Talk about an inconvenient truth. Maybe Oliver Stone could direct this.
- **"The Kyoto Blues."** An honest look at the Kyoto Protocol which, in order to blunt pollution, would require major economic changes in the USA, but would allow massive pollution to continue in China and India. Is Al Gore available to narrate?
- **"NBC and Me."** A peek inside a once proud network news organization that now promotes a leftwing agenda on a daily basis. I'd like Whoopi Goldberg to voice over this one.

These are all high concept, ready-to-roll subjects that are just waiting for some talented people in Hollywood to take them on. What say you, Steven Spielberg?

Vermont's Shame

Once again, the State of Vermont has let a vicious child molester off lightly, and once again a child's life has become a political cover up.

Bennington County, Vermont is a pretty, touristy area which is supposed to be relatively crime free. But 37-year-old Andrew James is a known troublemaker, a man convicted of a violent felony—attacking his wife with a screwdriver in front of his own small children. For that, James served 30 days in jail.

But then James upped the criminal ante and molested a 4-year-old boy. After cutting a deal with prosecutor Andrew Costello, James pleaded guilty and Judge David Howard sentenced him to probation and mandatory “treatment,” which means this monster is walking around free right now.

In the spring of 2006, the little boy told his aunt that he was afraid of Andrew James, who lived very close to him. The aunt investigated and found out that James was molesting the boy in a terrible way. The police were called and, according to the affidavit in the case, the boy told social worker Kyle Hoover and police Officer Paul McGanns that James had molested him ten times. The boy pointed to anatomically correct drawings to describe his ordeal.

After examining the situation, prosecutor Costello came to the conclusion that the boy would be a weak witness and cut the deal. But Costello also had the social worker, the cop, the aunt, and the boy's older brother to back up the 4-year-old's account. Yes, it was a circumstantial case. But with James' violent background, a decent prosecutor takes the shot in court.

Vermont is one of two states that practices "restorative justice," Minnesota being the other. That philosophy says for true justice to take place, the criminal as well as the victim must be "healed." Restorative justice states that a "holistic" approach to crime is best for society.

Of course, the U.S. code of justice states that the punishment must fit the crime. Allowing a brutal child molester to walk free while getting "treatment" is certainly not punishment enough for traumatizing a 4-year-old perhaps for life.

Last year, Vermont Judge Edward Cashman initially sentenced a man who sodomized a six-year-old girl over a four-year period to just 60 days in jail. The ensuing national outcry forced Cashman to up the sentence to three years. Still, far too lenient.

Vermont's elected officials and media supported Cashman, and now have once again rallied to support Judge Howard. They have also attacked me for reporting this awful situation to you. Shortly after Cashman's abomination last year, the Vermont legislature had a chance to pass Jessica's Law—tough mandatory prison terms for child predators. The legislature voted down Jessica's Law.

There is no excuse for what is happening in Vermont. Its Senators Patrick Leahy (ironically, the head of the Judiciary Committee), Bernie Sanders, and its Governor, Jim Douglas, have all run away from the situation. Meantime, children in their state continue to be brutalized with relatively small consequences for the predators.

America is a great country, but this situation shames us all. Every society is judged by how it protects its weakest citizens. In Vermont, an innocent 4-year-old boy and an innocent 6-year-old girl have been violated in unspeakable ways.

And not just by their predators.

Vermont's Shame

Once again, the State of Vermont has let a vicious child molester off lightly, and once again a child's life has become a political cover up.

Bennington County, Vermont is a pretty, touristy area which is supposed to be relatively crime free. But 37-year-old Andrew James is a known troublemaker, a man convicted of a violent felony—attacking his wife with a screwdriver in front of his own small children. For that, James served 30 days in jail.

But then James upped the criminal ante and molested a 4-year-old boy. After cutting a deal with prosecutor Andrew Costello, James pleaded guilty and Judge David Howard sentenced him to probation and mandatory “treatment,” which means this monster is walking around free right now.

In the spring of 2006, the little boy told his aunt that he was afraid of Andrew James, who lived very close to him. The aunt investigated and found out that James was molesting the boy in a terrible way. The police were called and, according to the affidavit in the case, the boy told social worker Kyle Hoover and police Officer Paul McGanns that James had molested him ten times. The boy pointed to anatomically correct drawings to describe his ordeal.

After examining the situation, prosecutor Costello came to the conclusion that the boy would be a weak witness and cut the deal. But Costello also had the social worker, the cop, the aunt, and the boy's older brother to back up the 4-year-old's account. Yes, it was a circumstantial case. But with James' violent background, a decent prosecutor takes the shot in court.

Vermont is one of two states that practices "restorative justice," Minnesota being the other. That philosophy says for true justice to take place, the criminal as well as the victim must be "healed." Restorative justice states that a "holistic" approach to crime is best for society.

Of course, the U.S. code of justice states that the punishment must fit the crime. Allowing a brutal child molester to walk free while getting "treatment" is certainly not punishment enough for traumatizing a 4-year-old perhaps for life.

Last year, Vermont Judge Edward Cashman initially sentenced a man who sodomized a six-year-old girl over a four-year period to just 60 days in jail. The ensuing national outcry forced Cashman to up the sentence to three years. Still, far too lenient.

Vermont's elected officials and media supported Cashman, and now have once again rallied to support Judge Howard. They have also attacked me for reporting this awful situation to you. Shortly after Cashman's abomination last year, the Vermont legislature had a chance to pass Jessica's Law—tough mandatory prison terms for child predators. The legislature voted down Jessica's Law.

There is no excuse for what is happening in Vermont. Its Senators Patrick Leahy (ironically, the head of the Judiciary Committee), Bernie Sanders, and its Governor, Jim Douglas, have all run away from the situation. Meantime, children in their state continue to be brutalized with relatively small consequences for the predators.

America is a great country, but this situation shames us all. Every society is judged by how it protects its weakest citizens. In Vermont, an innocent 4-year-old boy and an innocent 6-year-old girl have been violated in unspeakable ways.

And not just by their predators.

High on Compassion

It seemed like a good idea at the time: The Compassionate Use Act of 1996, which allowed Californians to use marijuana with a doctor's permission to alleviate pain. The act was put on the ballot and California voters passed it 56% to 44%.

The biggest bankroller of the referendum was George Soros, the secular-progressive billionaire who champions drug legalization. He pumped about \$350,000 into pro-med-pot ads, according to published reports.

Since the act was passed into law, thousands of pot "clinics" have opened across the Golden State. In San Francisco, things got so out of control that Mayor Gavin Newsom, a very liberal guy, had to close many of the "clinics" because drug addicts were clustering around them, causing fear among city residents.

In San Diego, there's another problem. Some high school kids have found a loophole in the Compassionate Use Act. Incredibly, there is no age requirement to secure medical marijuana in California and no physical examination needed either. So some kids tell a doctor they have a headache, pay him \$150 for a card, and then buy all the pot they want. Unbelievable, but true.

Catherine Martin, a school official in San Diego, actually sent letters to parents in the Grossmont Union School District warning that some students are getting the medical marijuana cards and then selling them to other students. The result: an increasing number of kids arriving at school stoned. Ms. Martin warned parents to supervise their children.

San Diego District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis told me that some

“clinics” are even marketing medical marijuana under names like “Reefers Peanut Butter Cup” and “Baby Jane.” Cheech and Chong would be proud.

Now, I’m sure George Soros doesn’t give a hoot about this, but the unintended consequence of non-prescription medical marijuana legalization is that some kids are making an industry out of it. Sure, pot is available illegally in most places, but now children have a legal option. Why work at Burger King when you can sell pot cards?

Of course, there is nothing “compassionate” about kids being intoxicated. It changes them forever. Once a child alters himself with chemicals, childhood vanishes. A national study by the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse says more teenagers are in rehab for marijuana than any other intoxicant, including alcohol.

Society needs to rethink its strategy on intoxicants in general. If marijuana can help those suffering with debilitating diseases, then doctors should have the power to prescribe it and licensed pharmacies should carry it.

But storefront “clinics” run by irresponsible adults who are aided by corrupt doctors are a joke only a confirmed stoner would find funny.

Bottom line: Be careful what you vote for. Compassion can easily turn into chaos.

A Free Press? In Your Dreams

Here are two entertainment predictions for 2007 that you can immediately take to the bank. First, Al Gore’s global warming

documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* will win an Oscar, and second, the Dixie Chicks will win a Grammy for their latest album.

Everybody in the entertainment industry knows the truth of what I'm predicting, but few of them would find it inconvenient. And here's another truism: The media defines American culture and those doing the defining are almost all liberal or far-left individuals.

As Hyman Roth once asked Al Pacino in *Godfather II*, "What does that tell you, Michael?"

It tells me the fix is in.

For months, my research staff has attempted to find one television critic writing for a major American newspaper who is a conservative thinker. They could not find one. Scores of TV writers are registered Democrats—we can't find a single registered Republican.

The same is true for film reviewers. As far as we can tell, only syndicated movie critic Michael Medved is a conservative thinker. Nearly every other writer analyzing film has left-wing credentials.

Same thing with book review editors; likewise for music critics. The field of popular culture in America is not even close to being level. It drains to the left all day, everyday.

Want more? One company, Reed Business Information, owns the leading media trade publications *Variety*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *Broadcasting and Cable*, and *Wireless Week*. That company is run by Tad Smith, a far-left true believer who is a big donor to people like Howard Dean and Hillary Clinton.

And Mr. Smith has a perfect right to put his money where his mind is. He also has a right to hire editors who reflect his very liberal beliefs. And he does.

Thus, lefty projects put out by Michael Moore, Al Gore, the Dixie Chicks and scores of others generally receive fawning reviews in the trades and newspapers. Don't even ask about the relatively few conservative entertainment projects.

Well, if you have to ask, contact Patricia Heaton who played the wife on *Everybody Loves Raymond*. Ms. Heaton is pro-life, and some in Hollywood deeply resent her for it. If the actress were a liberal activist, I believe, her employment situation would be much easier.

The question, of course, is why should you care? Most Americans don't read trade journals or listen to pinhead critics. Well-educated people who have come by their political beliefs honestly will not be affected by media propaganda or unfairness.

Unfortunately, the pool of well-informed, clear thinking Americans is shrinking and the rise of ideological popular culture is beginning to influence the debate. Entertainers like Jon Stewart, David Letterman, and Stephen Colbert have become purveyors of information for many young Americans. Also, the pronounced left-wing media "group think" inhibits dissenting points of view. The result is that many "secular-progressives" are considered heroes in the press. And the dreaded "neo-cons" are certainly the villains.

This situation has a major influence on the discourse in America, and things are getting out of hand. Almost every major pop culture magazine tilts left. The network news broadcasts tilt left. Hollywood is a bastion of far-left thought. The teacher's unions are far-left. The nation's universities are dominated by liberal, activist instructors.

Despite all that, most Americans remain traditional in their thinking and all the polls say conservatives continue to outnumber liberals by a healthy margin. But that situation can and probably will change in the very near future.

Perhaps Al Gore might want to make a documentary about that.