

'Post' Nightmare: Spielberg, Streep Dodge Killer Obama Question



Some media observers say overseas reporters cover U.S. politics better than stateside scribes.

It's a case-by-case situation, of course. It's not far from the truth, though. We saw a great example of it recently courtesy of the BBC.

"The Post," out in select theaters now and going wide Jan. 12, stars Meryl Streep as Katherine Graham, The Washington Post publisher circa 1971. Graham approved the publication of The Pentagon Papers under great duress, a watershed moment in journalism. Tom Hanks co-stars as editor Ben Bradlee, and Oscar winner Steven Spielberg is behind the camera.

Talk about heavy hitters.

The story itself is both true and significant to U.S. history. That's catnip to Oscar voters. It doesn't hurt to have the legendary trio of Hanks, Streep and Spielberg fueling the film. Together, they account for nine Academy Awards.

Stateside reporters are fawning over "The Post" as if it's the

most important drama of the hour, if not the minute.

Why?

In Trump's America, good journalism matters ... *more than ever*. Or so we're told. What's left unsaid? How the era of fake news and monumental MSM gaffes shattered our already shaky trust in news outlets. That's a subject few, if any, U.S. based reporters will throw at the trio.

What a shame.

Yet one reporter did his homework and asked an equally tough query.

Meet Husam Sam Asi, a BBC TV host and founder of ukscreen.com. Asi recently interviewed "The Post" stars on a range of subjects captured in the following 10-minute clip.

Asi, a member of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) since 2010, wasn't satisfied with throwing the screen legends softballs. He hunkered down and challenged them with more substantial queries.

For example, he reminded Streep and Spielberg that President Barack Obama flexed his might against journalists via the Espionage Act. Here's how Jake Tapper put it:

"The Obama administration has used the Espionage Act to go after whistleblowers who leaked to journalists ... more than all previous administrations combined."

That doesn't take into account Obama's war against Fox News or how he spied on Fox News' James Rosen.

How did Streep and Spielberg, hardcore Democrats who supported Obama during his two presidential terms, react? Let's just say each has a potent political career awaiting them given their fancy footwork.

Here's Asi's corker:

"If you look at the numbers, there were more prosecutions under the Espionage Act during the Obama administration than any other administration. Yet no one in Hollywood was urged to say something about it, or do something about it..."

How did Spielberg answer?

He didn't. He dodged the question entirely, rambling on about how Daniel Ellsberg, the key source behind The Pentagon Papers' acquisition, wanted to stop the Vietnam War. Or something. Watch the clip yourself and see if his answer even remotely addresses the question (start at the 7:35 mark).

What about Streep?

The video doesn't directly connect the question and answer, although given Streep's response it's apparent she's attempting to answer it without actually doing so.

"I think it's good that that is exposed now. I think we have to hold not only people that we have adversarial political views from to task but I think we also have to hold our friends and our compatriots, people who follow a line of policy that we agree with, we have to hold them to the same standard. I think that's absolutely valid and important. And that's sort of what the film is about."

Asi asked a tough, but fair, question to these A-list stars. He deserves plenty of credit for that ... even if the stars couldn't fairly fire off a response.

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