

Hollywood – Especially in the Age of Trump

I come to you today, my friends, from inside The Bubble. Hollywood, California, where as Woody Allen once said, “they don’t throw their garbage away. They make them into television shows.”

It’s a place that’s unapologetically liberal, undeniably open-minded, proudly tolerant of the other guy’s point of view – as long, of course, as the other guy’s point of view is the same as the liberal guy’s point of view.

Around here, conservatives keep a low profile. Not all – not box office heroes like Clint Eastwood – but too many who for practical reasons keep their political opinions to themselves – especially if they like Donald Trump.

Since I’ve been out here, I’ve had talks with a super-star network broadcaster, a big Hollywood agent, a recently retired high-powered network TV executive, an important journalist who works for a national news organization (not Fox), a publicity agent who represents lots of liberal Hollywood clients, a former TV advertising executive, and a retired syndicated TV producer who had a big hit show back in the day.

Just between us, they’re all (I’m looking around at the moment to make sure nobody is seeing me write this) ... *conservative*. And there are more of them than you might think here in Hollywood – but a lot of them are practical enough to keep quiet when it comes to politics. If you’re a conservative in Tinsel Town it’s best to fly under the radar.

But I’ve also had coffee with a few liberals. One, a comedian who has written for and appeared in several very big sitcoms, told me he ordered my book *Bias* from Amazon because he wants to open himself to opinions and facts he doesn’t usually come

into contact with in Hollywood. I can't tell you his name because he's a nice guy and I wouldn't want to be responsible for the end of his career.

Another lefty, who writes about the movie business and isn't quite so open-minded, solemnly informed me that while it may be true that not everyone who voted for Donald Trump is a racist, "everyone who is a racist voted for Donald Trump." While you're taking that in, consider this: He was actually more generous in his assessment than a lot of passionate Trump-haters – who really do believe that *everyone* who voted for Donald Trump is a racist.

Partisanship, especially in the age of Trump, has become so "toxic," as the Hollywood Reporter explains it, that it's become "a word used over and over by conservatives in the industry" – conservatives, the paper says, who "are skittish about doing anything publicly in the Trump era when it comes to their personal politics."

We all know that this isn't exactly breaking news. It's no secret that Hollywood, like most college campuses and American newsrooms, is a liberal institution dedicated to perpetuating liberal ideas and values.

But it's not a good thing when liberals forget what it means to be liberal and try to silence, one way or another, conservative voices. One entertainment writer told me, over a meal of enchiladas and tacos at El Coyote (a Mexican restaurant in LA that opened in 1931) that libs in Hollywood don't believe in free speech. That's a tad over the top, but I know what he's talking about. So does Pat Boone.

Mr. Boone, who is 84 years old and an out-of-the-closet conservative says, "There used to be more of us. Tom Selleck, Jon Voight, Bruce Willis, who were outspoken, but they've been browbeaten and ridiculed, which is the main instrument on the left to shut us up."

This is a town that makes movies that nicely fit into the liberal consciousness of the community – movies about pedophile priests (Spotlight) about the evils of cigarettes (The Insider), about the dangers of nuclear energy (Silkwood, China Syndrome), about climate change (The Day After Tomorrow) about racism (most recently BlackKkKlansman and Green Book) about a prominent martyred gay man (Milk), about exploited women (Erin Brockovich, to name just one), and a movie about a detested (by the left) political bogeyman, Dick Cheney (Vice).

And I'm glad Hollywood made every one of those movies. We need movies that reveal points of view that we should hear and think about.

But if the creative community out here wants to show us how open-minded it is, let me help by suggesting a few movies that don't quite fit the liberal template.

How about "The Jussie Smollett Story" where a gay black man is attacked by two white Trump supporters in Chicago, racists who throw a noose around his neck and pour bleach on him. The story is so over-the-top ridiculous that Adam Sandler can play the black guy and turn it into a comedy.

Or how about a movie about a real-life tragedy, the fake Duke Lacrosse case where three white students are accused of raping a crazy black woman who made the whole thing up. The boys face long prison sentences for the crime they didn't commit. As it turns out the evil prosecutor pursued the case because he was trying to win black votes in his reelection campaign.

Rob Reiner, who once said on Morning Joe that "a lot of Trump supporters are racist" could show us how liberal he is and direct this heartbreaking true story.

When Mr. Reiner, who is a very good director, is done with the Duke story he could do a historical film simply called, "Tawana Brawley" – about a teenage girl who said she was gang raped by a bunch of white bigots but made the whole thing up

because she ran away from home and was afraid she'd get into trouble.

Tawana Brawley could play herself along with co-star Al Sharpton playing Al Sharpton who fed the lie to the American people risking a race war in the process.

What about "Jackie" – a story about a college girl by that name who fabricated a story about a gang rape at a fraternity house that Rolling Stone turned into an expose that cost them millions of dollars when it came out Jackie made the whole thing up.

Or how about "Bias – the Movie" ... about a young, incredibly handsome and courageous journalist who risked everything to single-handedly take on one of America's most powerful institutions, the news media. The role of Bernie Goldberg would be played by Bradley Cooper and Bernie's wife by Lady Gaga.

Here's the part that's not so funny. Back in the 50s it was liberals who fought the "Hollywood Blacklist." Liberals were the courageous ones who stood up to the right-wing forces that wouldn't let actors and directors and screenwriters work if they were so much as suspected of having communist sympathies.

Today, it's not communists in the crosshairs, but conservatives. And while there may not be the same kind of Hollywood Blacklist today, a lot of conservatives out here aren't taking any chances. When it comes to politics, they just keep their mouths shut.

It's safer that way.