

'Uncle Tom' Blacklisted by Hollywood

Actor Ben Affleck once explained why he found it difficult to watch Republican actors on screen. "It's ... hard," explained Affleck, "to get people to suspend disbelief. ... When I watch a guy I know is a big Republican, part of me thinks, I probably wouldn't like this person if I met him, or we would have different opinions. That (expletive) fogs the mind when you should be paying attention and be swept into the illusion."

This likely explains why "Uncle Tom," the documentary on which I worked as executive producer, gets no love from the lists of best documentaries of 2020. A critical and financial success by any measure, the gross earnings of "Uncle Tom," so far, exceed seven times its cost and counting. It recently became available on iTunes, Amazon Prime and Walmart online, as well as on store shelves.

Former CBS reporter Sharyl Attkisson recently wrote about the film's snub with the headline: "Censored: Larry Elder's 'Uncle Tom' film." But the Hollywood trade publications Variety and Hollywood Reporter? Silence.

The Chicago Tribune's John Kass, a political writer, wrote a piece headlined "What Frightens the American Left: Larry Elder's New Documentary 'Uncle Tom.'" Kass writes: "Is there anything more frightening to the American political left and their high media priests of the woke world than Black Americans who think for themselves and refuse to kneel? ... And so, they are demeaned by Democratic politicians and either ignored outright or marginalized as race traitors, sellouts and 'Uncle Toms.' It's a way to humiliate them, shut them up, and cancel them. And the party's handmaidens of the media play along. But that's one reason why Larry Elder's stunning new film, 'Uncle Tom: An Oral History of the American Black Conservative,' is so important, especially now."

Each of the following three year-end lists of "best" documentary films of 2020 ignores "Uncle Tom," despite an IMDb viewer rating higher than (SET ITAL)any(END ITAL) on the lists -- in most cases, (SET ITAL)far(END ITAL) higher. (IMDb, the Internet Movie Database website, assigns films a rating, from one to 10, based on viewers' reviews.)

First, Polygon's list: 1) "Dick Johnson Is Dead," 7.5 (IMDb rating); 2) "Bloody Nose, Empty Pockets," 7.3; 3) "Welcome to Chechnya," 7.9; 4) "Collective," 8.4; 5) "You Don't Nomi," 6.7; 6) "The Go-Go's," 7.5; 7) "Mucho Mucho Amor," 7.2; 8) "I Am Greta," 5.2; 9) "Mayor," 7.5; 10) "City Hall," 7.3.

Next, Paste Magazine's top-25 list, listed alphabetically, without rankings, contains some of the same films, but many others are not on the first list. The new additions are: "76 Days," 7.1; "David Byrne's American Utopia," 8.3; "The Annotated Field Guide of Ulysses S. Grant," N/A; "Boys State," 7.7; "City So Real," 7.4; "Crip Camp," 7.8; "Epicentro," 6.8; "Feels Good Man," 7.6; "Fireball: Visitors from Darker Worlds," 7.0; "The Grand Bizarre," 6.7; "Heimat Is a Space in Time," 6.8; "The History of the Seattle Mariners," N/A; "I Walk on Water," 6.7; "Malni -- Towards the Ocean, Towards the Shore," 6.2; "The Metamorphosis of Birds," 7.8; "The Painter and the Thief," 7.6; "Sunless Shadows," 7.3; "Time," 7.2; "Vick," 7.4.

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Finally, there's IndieWire, an independent film website whose 2020 "best of" list (unranked and listed alphabetically) also ignores "Uncle Tom." The films on its "best of" but not already listed above include: "All In: The Fight for Democracy," 6.3; "Athlete A", 7.7; "Gunda," 7.4; "The Mole Agent," 7.6; "The Social Dilemma," 7.7.

Not a single film on these three lists achieved an IMDb rating of 8.5 or more. Not one. "Collective" registered the highest at 8.4. How did "Uncle Tom," again, shut out on (SET ITAL)all three lists,(END ITAL) rate on IMBD? 8.9. Not a typo: 8.9.

Finally, of the last 10 Oscar winners for Best Documentary, none has a higher IMDb rating than "Uncle Tom." None. Only one matched its 8.9 rating. See you at the Academy Awards?

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