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Taking Liberties

2007Tagline: *Think you live in a free country? Think again.*

Director: Chris Atkins

Stars: Narrated by Ashley Jensen and David Morrissey, featuring Tony Blair, George Bush, Mark Thomas, Tony Benn, Brian Haw and many more

Length: 121 minutes





In a nutshell

Right to Protest, Right to Freedom of Speech. Right to Privacy. Right not to be detained without charge, Innocent Until Proven Guilty. Prohibition from Torture. Taking Liberties will reveal how these six central pillars of liberty have been systematically destroyed by New Labour, and the freedoms of the British people stolen from under their noses amidst a climate of fear created by the media and government itself.

Taking Liberties uncovers the stories the government don't want you to hear – so ridiculous you will laugh, so ultimately terrifying you will want to take action. Teenage sisters detained for 36 hours for a peaceful protest; an RAF war veteran arrested for wearing an anti-Bush and Blair T-shirt; an innocent man shot in a police raid; and a man held under house arrest for two years, after being found innocent in court. Ordinary law-abiding citizens being punished for exercising their 'rights' – rights that have been fought for over centuries, and which seem to have been extinguished in a decade.

Opinion

A mixture of documentary footage and gorgeous animations works really well to explain political concepts and history and make them accessible to people who might not be familiar with them, but doesn't patronise those who are. The facts are hard to deny especially when they consist mainly of statements direct from the lips of Tony Blair and George Bush, and there are some genuinely scary scenes of hordes of police violently descending upon genuinely peaceful protestors.

The film shows extremely normal, middle England types who simply want to protect their civil liberties by exercising their right to disagree, and how that has become less simple with the passing of so many new anti-terrorism laws which directly affect the personal freedom of each and every one of us. It tells us that Tony Blair's New Labour Party has passed more new laws than any other political party in history, including such reassuring ones as "It is illegal to detonate a nuclear bomb".

This is an important film for everyone to see, regardless of political persuasion. Like any great documentary it could only have been made by people who are passionate about the subject, but that doesn't mean that the information is any less genuine. While the facts are worrying to say the least, the film is ultimately very uplifting, throwing the power back to the people and trying to encourage everyone to think of themselves as a citizen with rights and to act accordingly.

As the director himself says on the film's website, "If there's one thing I've learnt from making this film, is the understanding that politics is not about self important windbags in Westminster, or thundering newspaper editorials – it's about people. And all people need to do is to engage and have a voice and they can change the world."

Facts

- This film was co-produced by Kurt Engfehr, who produced Fahrenheit 9/11 and Bowling For Columbine.
- The soundtrack includes music from Radiohead, Jarvis Cocker, Franz Ferdinand, Joy Division, Oasis and Edward Elgar.

Laura saw Taking Liberties courtesy of Ritzy Cinema in Brixton.

Laura Kidd

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