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ABC Covers Anti-War Actors By Playing Up Their "Punishment," Not Their Errors or Radicalism

Peter's Sympathy for Hollywood Hypocrites

The war against Saddam Hussein may be over, but if you watch ABC, you might worry about the alleged oppressors still on the loose: President Bush and his supporters. On ABC last night, *World News Tonight* anchor Peter Jennings heavily promoted their final segment on how the successful Iraq war would end badly – at least for Hollywood radicals. Jennings promised: "When we come back this evening, being against the war and in show business. And the people who want to punish you for that."

Jennings avoided tackling the issue that America's vast pro-war majority might find interesting – how anti-war Hollywood actors were obviously incorrect in predicting doom, gloom, and repression "loosed by the Bush administration" – and instead reliably implied President Bush and his supporters were craven censors of courageous dissidents.

Reporter Jim Wooten reported on how anti-war entertainers like the Dixie Chicks have been boycotted by war supporters and how actor Tim Robbins and his wife Susan Sarandon have been cancelled from an appearance at the Baseball Hall of Fame.

He highlighted a Robbins speech at the National Press Club: "In Washington this week, Robbins criticized the political climate in which his right to express his views has come under attack." Robbins was quoted: "Isn't what we're fighting for there, to spread democracy, to give the Iraqis the right to express their opinions in a public forum?"

Wooten did not notice the Robbins bait-and-switch. Robbins has routinely denied the war was fought in the name of democracy, and has signed his name to hyperbolic Bush-hating rhetoric casting the White House as a center of national and international oppression. ABC didn't give viewers the flavor of Hollywood's harshest anti-war invective.

For example, an ad signed by Robbins and others in the September 19, 2002 *New York Times* ludicrously declared

the President was interested in creating an empire, not a democracy: "We are confronting a new openly imperial policy towards the world and a domestic policy that manufactures and manipulates fear to curtail rights."

Wooten capped off his story by dragging out the Hollywood Left's oldest bugaboo: "All this has reminded some of the McCarthy era's blacklists that barred those even accused of communist sympathies for working in films or on television. And actor Mike Farrell believes it could happen again."

While ABC ached for Tim Robbins, who ached when Robbins led the boycotts? ABC found post-war boycotts a horror story of free speech under attack, but did not warn of the impending doom three years ago, when it was Robbins and other leftists

organizing boycotts and blacklists. ABC gave Hollywood hypocrites a free ride.

In 2000, the Screen Actors Guild went on a long strike against advertisers, demanding higher residual payments for actors appearing in commercials. Not only did Robbins and his colleagues demand that everyone punish Procter & Gamble workers with a boycott, they were highly interested in punishing any actor who crossed the picket line.

When model-actress Elizabeth Hurley made an Estee Lauder ad, and then claimed she was unaware of the strike, Robbins was in a punitive mood, calling for Hurley to be punished, even banned from Hollywood (See box). Hurley was eventually fined \$100,000, not banned, but if she'd lost her SAG card, her acting career would have been ruined. Wooten didn't have any time in his report last night for Tim Robbins' attempt at Hollywood blacklisting. — *Tim Graham*

When Tim Robbins Seeks to Ruin Careers...

"At a New York rally Friday, outspoken actor Tim Robbins shouted, 'We're bringing [Elizabeth Hurley] to trial after this is over. She won't get away with it.'"

— ABCNews.com report on the SAG strike against advertisers, October 10, 2000. If Robbins had succeeded in stripping Hurley of her SAG card, her Hollywood career would have been ruined.

L. Brent Bozell III, Publisher; **Brent Baker, Rich Noyes, Tim Graham**, Editors; **Geoffrey Dickens, Jessica Anderson, Brad Wilmouth, Brian Boyd, Ken Shepherd**, and **Patrick Gregory**, Media Analysts; **Kristina Sewell**, Research Associate; **Liz Swasey**, Director of Communications. See more on Robbins and other anti-war celebrities at www.mrc.org.