

# Hollywood Highs: What We Could Learn From Hollywood

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January 27, 1996

Hollywood is either everyone's convenient *cesspool* or favorite *target*.  
Much is indeed wrong in America's *cultural capital*.  
But all is not bad in *Babylon*.  
When *should* we look to Hollywood?

[This column was written with a focus on what the GOP could learn from Hollywood. In reality, we can *all* learn from these particular movies.]

As Hollywood approaches the upcoming Academy Awards in the wake of political criticism of the movie industry, Republicans, and, especially, true conservative Republicans, can learn something from this industry. The clear choice for best movie, *Apollo 13*, depicts America at its best, portrays a principled, can-do America which can surmount any odds – if it perseveres. In an age which cries out for a return to values, in which even President Clinton and liberals forever *mouth* the phrase (while expressing criticism of this movie which exemplified those values), it behooves each of us to look to what is right, and to persevere in the cultural war within which we are engaged.

Having just praised *Apollo 13* (a remarkable movie to have come out of an anti-American, counter-cultural industry), the Republican revolutionaries who are seeking to restore those traditional values would do well to pay close attention to three other Hollywood offerings from 1995.

The first, *Braveheart*, has already won a Golden Globe award to Mel Gibson for best director, and surely could give *Apollo 13* stiff competition as best movie. *Braveheart* is an exemplary depiction of the importance of freedom, the cost of achieving and preserving it, and the dangers of losing it (whether piece by piece through compromise, or through abject surrender). Having seen the movie several times, I am reminded of the monument recently dedicated to Korean War soldiers, and the much under-appreciated statement proclaimed within its shadow: "Freedom is not free."

Dare we neglect the legacy of our forebears, who suffered the slings and arrows of outrageous despotism, and became patriots revered and emulated the world over. Dare we, in a nation which gave the definitive clarion call to freedom – allow our freedom to languish and wither on the vine, allow ourselves to become enslaved by those who claim to be our guardians. I think not! William Wallace, freedom fighter of the 12th century, would have been understood and revered by our forebears, who themselves placed a very high value on freedom – and were willing to pay the price.

Another Celtic film, *Rob Roy*, presents a struggle between those who would be tyrants and those who would be free. Its thrust was different from, yet complementary to, that of *Braveheart*. *Honor*, not *freedom*, was the prized possession. Duty, honor, country – themes so eloquently expressed by Douglas MacArthur in his farewell West Point address, were fought for by Roy and his followers. Traditional values. A willingness to die for one's honor and beliefs, to never give in for a noble cause (recall, *The Impossible Dream*, and remember, sometimes dreams do come true).

The third film which Republican revolutionaries should heed, *First Knight*, dramatically depicts its own Camelot culture war, a battle to the death between two competing, mutually-exclusive worldviews. The antagonist, Malagant, is a truly bad dude who just won't go away peacefully. He has his own ignoble cause for which he is willing to die (of course, he really doesn't believe he could die), and his guiding maxim is "The end justifies the means." Sound familiar?

We can apply these lessons to the current cultural war which engulfs us, use them to analyze the rhetoric of hate which attacks any change in the status quo (e.g., the manner in which the budget "talks" progressed and school lunch "cuts" were *defeated*). Like Malagant, the Democratic Party and its countercultural elite will *not* go away peacefully. 1995 proved they will *not* gracefully yield their agenda to the will of the people. And, like Malagant, they will do anything in their power, use any resources at their disposal, to thwart the revolution.

How much of this resistance is *ideological*, and how much is a hunger to preserve *power*, is a matter for debate. We may never know. But the plain fact is that resistance – fervent, and often hysterical resistance – is what we can expect, until we have truly won the victory. That victory *requires* winning the hearts and minds of the people!

William Wallace won respect from the people for what he *did*, not what he said. *Then* they listened to his words and followed him. Likewise, Rob Roy *proved* his honor and *earned* his position of leadership. King Arthur not only expressed his values, he *lived* them, *earning* his place in the hearts of his people. The spirit of *Apollo 13* is a result of similar legacies.

We must, like Wallace, keep our eyes forever on the goal: *liberty!* The road to that goal requires – yes, *requires* – preserving and expanding on the *traditional* values which made us a great nation in the first place.

*Winning* the revolution means *living* the revolution.

Remember these three lessons: liberty, values, perseverance. Without all three, we can never return to those glory days epitomized by *Apollo 13*.