

# Death of a President

Contributed by Colleen Boltz

The Toronto Film Festival has not seen a film like it. On September 10th, the docudrama, "Death of a President" will make its debut. The film made by a British film company and set to air on the More4 TV channel (British TV) later this year has caused a stir in America, Canada and overseas. The film's goal was to focus on the affects of the War on Terror, but the main talk of the movie surrounds the gruesome assassination of President Bush. Ten minutes into this docudrama, Bush is shot by a sniper after making a speech in Chicago in October of 2007.

Enclosed by spectators, Bush is only shown a few seconds after being shot. Later in the film, the investigation turns out facts that the suspect is a Syrian born man and the country has to deal with the post-war on terror aftermath.

The main question that arises in anyone's head after hearing of such a docudrama is why? Peter Dale, head of More4 TV Channel, admits that the film is disturbing but also feels that it has a good thought process behind it. Dale also profusely denies that this film has any anti-Bush or America connections tied to it. "It raises questions about the affects of American foreign policy, and particularly the war on terror," said Dale in The Washington Post. "It's a fairly attention-grabbing premise but behind that is a serious and thought-provoking film." With that the only main defense backing the film, there have been a widespread opinions that want the film out of the public eye. Roy Greenslade, a British media critic believes the film "crossed the line" and is "obviously tasteless." More4 is a rather new station in Great Britain, only ten months ago the station started broadcasting. Many feel this may be a way to grab the attention of the public and get more viewers. Greenslade states, "It's about hype rather than a serious matter." This eerily real dramatization has caused many questions to arise in Americans' heads. The depicting picture of the assassination itself is what has people talking. Can this be seen by an unstable, or anti-American activist and be seen as OK? Will this put ideas into someone's head? The image is so realistic that when the still image was first shown in papers, some believed that the assassination of President Bush truly happened. The documentary style that this film was shot in is what makes the film so controversial. The actual head of the President was digitally put onto the actor's head that was playing the role. This life-like portrayal of the President has many Americans disturbed. Eric Staal of Republicans Abroad in London was quoted in The Evening Standard stating, "I wonder if they are celebrating the idea that the president could be assassinated. We've seen from early in his presidency the extremes that the political Left are willing to go to vilify him. This takes this vilification to a new and disturbing level. It is an appalling way to treat the head of state of another country." Not only do the Republicans or strong Bush supporters disregard this movie but democratic leaders are also voicing their opinions. "With the number of the irrational acts occurring in the world and the onslaught of copycat crimes being committed, this is inexcusable, irresponsible and reprehensible. I am disappointed that someone would think it is appropriate to depict the murder of an American President," Former Gov. Wilson of Missouri (also chairman of the Missouri Democratic Party) said. "Neither myself nor the Missouri Democratic Party condone this absence of responsibility." The white house just brushed off the film as vulgar, not even giving it any recognition. The only response was that it did "not dignify a comment." The right of free speech is what would allow this movie to be shown in the United States. Although this docudrama wants to be seen as a serious movie and has a serious point, could there have been another way to go about it? Was it necessary to use a George Bush look-alike or would it have been just as successful using fictional image? Dale goes on to defend the film stating, "It's absolutely legitimate to deal with contemporary named figures, I would urge people to see the film and see if they think it is fair." In all fairness this does solidify Greenslade's theory of publicity. And in the mind of any human being, using the assassination of the head of state in any country should be seen as very poor taste and quite thoughtless.