

Fate of a Nation is Contemplated in ‘Fahrenheit 11/9’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on September 22, 2018 - 9:22pm

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – You might think that “Fahrenheit 11/9,” the latest advocate documentary from provocateur Michael Moore, is all about Donald Trump and his diffident administration. But that’s not the whole thing, which is the strength of the film. Moore goes back to hometown Flint, Michigan, and other places in the USA, which exposes the symptoms rather than the Trump disease.

The impression of Michael Moore, in the 14 years since his influential “Fahrenheit 9/11” (the highest grossing documentary of all time) is that of a lost grump. His output from there has been interesting (“Sicko”) to unfocused (“Where to Invade Next”). He is still a scapegoat for the FOX News crowd, his mere name is meant to evoke anger in them. Yet his public persona had gotten as soft as his belly... he just didn’t seem to have the filmmaker’s energy that launched him as a working man’s advocate. Then along came one of the most horrible stories of the last ten years, which was the poisoning – through government-approved greed – of the residents of Flint, Michigan (Moore’s hometown) through the switching of their water supply. He spends a lot of time on this story in “11/9,” which is a basis for his thesis of both patches of optimism (Parkland student uprising) and dread horror (how the Nazi party used similar techniques as Trump and the Republicans). But Trumpers note, Obama does not get a pass either.

“Fahrenheit 11/9” begins with a recap of November 9th, 2016, when in the wee small hours one of the greatest upsets in political history occurred... the defeat of Hillary Clinton by Donald Trump in the race for president. Director Michael Moore actually predicted that victory, sensing the discontent in the majority of voters who voted... the doc points out that 100 million eligible voters stayed home.



Who Defeats Who? Director Michael Moore of 'Fahrenheit 11/9'

Photo credit: Briarcliff Entertainment

The rest of the story has three parts – the water issue in Flint, the political backlash (largely optimistic) against the president by new advocates around the country and (most scary) the similarities between the rise of Nazism in Germany and the rise of Trumpism. In putting the three of these parts together, the story becomes a question as to how “we the people” will steer the future. What kind of nation will we become?

I have underestimated the Michael Moore of the last ten years. In his public or talk show appearances, he has seemed to come off as the type of liberal/leftist/progressive that has become much easier to manipulate, image-wise, for his opponents and those they are trying to convince... the anger over the substance, the zaftig man rather than the message. But in “Fahrenheit 11/9,” he has accomplished a solid piece of reporting that puts the pieces of our confusion together like a puzzle, and paints a whole picture of what we have become.

Interestingly, because Trump becomes a symptom of the overall disease in Moore's estimation, he isn't dismissed out of hand. But his actions speak loud, and even though the Nazi comparisons are fast becoming the proof of “Godwin's Law” (that when you compare someone to Hitler, you weaken or obliterate your argument), the actions of that party in the early 1930s are eerily similar to this administration's (and the Republican party's) propaganda actions, and we as a people ignore them at our own expense.



Michael Moore as Agent Provocateur in ‘Fahrenheit 11/9’
Photo credit: Briarcliff Entertainment

The film is a bit too large, especially in the shifts in subject, but it never loses the effectiveness of its thesis. As a documentary filmmaker, Moore has always been fascinating, even as he makes it about himself. And what is “Moore himself” than his hometown of Flint, Michigan, which was also a character in his film “Roger & Me” way back in 1989? He is justifiably pissed off about the poisoning of his fellow home towners, and the economic backlash from that poisoning seemed like the final nail in the town’s coffin. In “Fahrenheit 11/9” Michael Moore embraces the old cliché, “this time its personal,” and delivers his message through it.

Where do we go from here? What will the Trump-led Republicans do to stem the tide of the president’s anger and desperation, and the potential fallout in November? Will they keep pretending all is well to maintain power? Will they sell out to their own fear and desperation? What do “we the people” owe to America? It’s up to each of us to find out for ourselves. You may be tired, but Michael Moore isn’t.

“Fahrenheit 11/9” opened everywhere on September 21st. Written and directed by Michael Moore. Rated “R”



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