

STARK RAVING MAD MAX: MEL GIBSON AND ANTI-SEMITISM – LEFT AND RIGHT

By Don Feder

Posted August 3, 2006

I was one of a number of Jewish conservatives who spoke out in defense of Mel Gibson's film "The Passion of The Christ." (See, "More Power To Mel," published on this site and elsewhere)

For that, I have no regrets. I believed then – and continue to believe – that "The Passion" is not anti-Semitic. However, based on what followed Gibson's drunk-driving arrest on Friday, I'm convinced that the actor/director himself is an anti-Semite.

According to various news reports, when he was arrested by a sheriff's deputy in Malibu for DUI, Gibson was enraged. At one point, he reportedly told Deputy James Mee the "F*****g Jews...The Jews are responsible for all the wars in the world." Then, he demanded of Mee "Are you a Jew?"

On Saturday, Gibson issued the following statement: "I acted like a person completely out of control when I was arrested (*true*), and said things that I do not believe to be true and which are despicable. I am deeply ashamed of everything I said."

Forgive me, but this is a typical celebrity apology – "I behaved badly. I'm sorry. But that's not really me. Now, I'm checking into rehab"

I'm not buying it.

Mel is fond of Latin. (The dialogue in "The Passion" was in Latin and Aramaic.) The Romans had an expression *in vino veritas* -- in wine there is truth. By loosening inhibitions, drinking loosens

the tongue. It makes us say things we're thinking but usually have the good sense not to articulate. I believe Gibson believes what he said in a drunken rage – that and worse.

His father, Hutton Gibson, is a classic anti-Semite and Holocaust-denier, claiming – among other absurdities – that during World War II, Polish Jews just “got up and left,” and there were more Jews in Europe after the war than before. Gibson has refused to criticize his father. He's taken the convenient course of essentially saying: Hey, what do you expect me to do? He's my father.

Well, I loved my father (who passed away 11 years ago). And if he said things that were racist or anti-Catholic, I still would have loved him. But I also would have disavowed his views.

Why does Gibson's anti-Semitic tirade matter?

People on the right and left tend to have two standards – one for us, another for them. Gibson's conservative defenders are scrambling to rationalize the actor's ugliness. (“Well, he apologized, for God's sake!”) This makes us look like hypocrites – for a very good reason; when we adopt this expediency, we are hypocrites.

Of course, there's enough hypocrisy to go around.

The Anti-Defamation League's Abraham Foxman thundered: “Gibson's apology is unremorseful and inconsistent. We would hope that Hollywood now would realize the bigot in their midst and that they will distance themselves from this anti-Semite.”

(Note, Foxman did accept the actor's second apology.)

CNN founder Ted Turner is notoriously anti-Catholic. In 2001, on Ash Wednesday, Turner asked CNN employees who showed up with ashes on their foreheads: “What are you? A bunch of Jesus freaks? You ought to be working for Fox.”

In 1999, in a speech to the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association, referring to Pope John Paul II, Turner asked his audience: “Ever seen a Polish mine detector?” also that the Pope should “get with it. Welcome the 20th. century.”

Turner too apologized, when the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights turned up the heat. But, like Gibson’s failure to address his underlying feelings, Turner never admitted that he hates Catholics (because he’s a population-control freak and he loathes the Church’s position on abortion, birth-control and sex outside marriage). He probably believes in a Catholic procreation conspiracy.

Did Foxman demand that the Hollywood crowd distance themselves from this anti-Catholic bigot in their midst?

Speaking of hypocrisy, I’m still waiting for the ADL to even comment on Bill Clinton’s embrace of Louis Farrakhan’s 2005 DC Nuremberg rally (which the perjurer-in-chief did in an interview with The Amsterdam News) Call out an ex-president who’s a liberal icon just because he supports the most notorious anti-Semite in America? Foxman would rather burn his ACLU card.

But there’s a deeper problem with Gibson’s drunken rant – a lot of people on the left, and some on the right, really believe it: That Israel/the Jews are responsible for wars, famine, economic turmoil and all of the other tragedies to plague humanity. (If true, we certainly didn’t do that well for ourselves with the Second World War, unless -- like Hutton Gibson – you believe the Holocaust never happened.)

Pat Buchanan is much smoother than Mel in his cups.

Instead of Jews, Buchanan says “neo-cons.” Thus, the neo-cons have hijacked U.S. foreign policy. The neo-cons are whispering in Bush’s ear. The neo-cons are responsible for our disastrous interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The neo-cons are plotting war with Syria and Iran – all to benefit Israel. (Nobody else is threatened by whack-job mullahs with nuclear weapons, you understand.)

Soon, Pat will be warning us that the neo-cons are poisoning wells, spreading the plague and using the blood of paleo-con children to bake their Passover matzah.

Remember Cindy Sheehan, the left’s shrewish centerfold? Mom Sheehan (Buchanan says she “has authenticity and moral authority”) screeches: “My first-born was murdered... he was killed for lies and a PNAC (*Project for a New American Century*) Neo-Con agenda to benefit Israel My son, my family, this nation and this world were betrayed by George Bush who was influenced by the neo-con PNAC (*sic*) agenda after 9/11.” Even feminist pundit Susan Estrich calls Ma Sheehan “a raging, ignorant anti-Semite.”

If Neo-Cons (so-called) pushed us into a war with Iraq to benefit Israel, they must be brain-damaged. Since the conflict began, President Bush has been pushing Palestinian statehood. As a result, Israel turned Gaza over to the terrorists. It’s planning to do the same with most of Judea and Samaria (AKA: The West Bank).

The current conflict in Lebanon is a direct result of the signals Israel’s unilateral concessions sent to Hezbollah. Yeah, the “Neo-Con” war in Iraq has been great for Israel.

Michael Moore believes all the evil in the world is attributable to “Israel and the oil companies.” (Little wonder Gibson has become chummy with Moore. When they’re out drinking, they probably swap Jewish conspiracy theories.)

His reputed conservatism notwithstanding, Mel is anti-war. He asks rhetorically: “What the hell are we doing in Iraq? No one can explain to me in a reasonable manner that I can accept why we’re there, why we went there, and why we’re still there.” The F*****g Jews?

After all, how much of a leap is it from Israel is responsible for all Middle East turmoil and anti-Americanism to “the Jews are responsible for all the wars in the world”?

With fighting raging in Lebanon (the latest front in World War III), with the United Nations and European Union excoriating Israel for acts of self-defense, with a Muslim shooting up the Seattle Jewish Center and killing a 58-year-old woman (recall Hezbollah’s promise of a worldwide jihad against Jews and Americans), Gibson’s drunken impersonation of David Duke can’t be dismissed as more celebrity bad-boy stuff.

Gibson has embarrassed those who honestly defended him in 2004, myself included.

Perhaps he should call the next Lethal Weapon installment “Stark Raving Mad Max.” In it, he can save Los Angeles from warmongering Jews intent on fomenting a global conflict with the Malibu Sheriff’s Department to advance the PNAC Neo-Con agenda.

Postscript: This commentary was published before Gibson’s second, more comprehensive apology, which – frankly – was no more convincing than the first.

Mel still maintains that he doesn't believe what he said to the arresting officer. But words don't float in an ether and mysteriously end up in people mouths – drunk or sober. The thoughts we express in an unguarded moment are in our heads or hearts. I suspect that what Gibson regrets most is the threat to his career from letting the world know exactly what he thinks..

*(A version of this commentary appeared on
FrontPageMag.com)*