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Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed (2008)

Starring: Ben Stein, Richard Dawkins Director: Nathan Frankowski

Rating: PG Format: DVD ★★★ (240 customer reviews)

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Product Details

Actors: Ben Stein, Richard Dawkins, Robert J. Marks II, Mark Souder, Gerald Schroeder

Directors: Nathan Frankowski

Format: Color, DVD-Video, Widescreen, NTSC

Language: English

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Region: Region 1 (U.S. and Canada only. Read more about DVD formats.)

Number of discs: 1 Rating: PG Studio: Premise

DVD Release Date: October 21, 2008

Run Time: 95 minutes

Average Customer Review: ★★★★

(240 customer reviews)

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Theatrical Release Information

Editorial Reviews

Product Description

Big science has expelled smart new ideas from the classroom ... What they forgot is that every generation has its Rebel! That rebel, Ben Stein (Ferris Bueller's Day Off) travels the world on his quest, and learns an awe-inspiring truth ... that educators and scientists are being ridiculed, denied tenure and even fired – for the crime of merely believing that there might be evidence of design in nature, and that perhaps life is not just the result of accidental, random chance. To which Ben Says: Enough! And then gets busy. NOBODY messes with Ben.

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U.S. affiliate themselves with some form of

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**** Great Documentary

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**** a glimpse of truth

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**** Reviews here not based on art

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********* Lies: Now in a convenient disc format, July 3, 2008

By K. McKnight (Scottsdale, AZ) - See all my reviews REAL NAME"

By all means, buy this. Nothing could undermine the credibility of the Intelligent Design crowd faster than this dishonest, venal attempt to make an end run around the legitimate scientific vetting process. [...]

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1,523 of 1,976 people found the following review helpful:

********* A complete sham, I can't believe I paid money to see this in the theater, July 14, 2008

By Adam "www.voiceofreasonreviews.com" (MA, USA) - See all my reviews

**UPDATE: 9/24/08 - After numerous requests I have ultimately decided to rewrite this review, almost in its entirety. The first review was posted on 7/14/2008. My rating has not changed nor have my opinions on this documentary. However, people have made suggestions in format changes as well as making the content more concise and I think they are good suggestions. It doesn't matter whether you support ID or Evolution, the review should help people make an educated decision about this product. Thank you to those who helped with their suggestions and didn't simply write this off because I gave it one star. This applies to people on both sides of the ID and Evolution argument, you people are truly taking the high road and I appreciate that.

I believe I should clarify something before I delve into the full breadth of my review. When I first saw this I was ready to give it three stars. I didn't see any point in questioning Ben Stein's report about people losing their jobs because of their beliefs. Humanity can be cruel no matter where you are and prejudice can rear its head no matter what the belief. That being said, I walked out thinking there was a problem starting to sweep the academic community and the only issue I had with the film was its association of Darwin and the Nazis (I'll go more in depth on this later). I've been quite a fan of Ben Stein's commentary on the economy and many other things. He seems to be very fair and balanced, thus, based on that perception I didn't have any reason to question his work here. Until I started doing some research on it, that is. I went to expelled exposed.com to read the scientific communities response. I was shocked. I didn't stop there; I went to freegonzalez.com one of the scientists featured in the documentary. I may not have looked at every scientist interviewed in detail, but I've seen enough.

Ben Stein shows us a world where Academia's freedom of inquiry might not be so free. This should be a concern for anyone and everyone. This undermines the concept that we will be teaching facts and truth in our universities. However, if you watch how this documentary is formatted you will find that this documentary is overly biased, delving into spectrums of propaganda! Let me explain. Stein sets about proving his premise by interviewing scientists that have been rejected by the establishment. Scientists who have allegedly had their lives ruined because of their belief in something called "Intelligent Design." Science isn't here to persecute people's beliefs and this concept would probably outrage anyone... that is until you realize the lengths he goes to paint

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science as the root of this evil.

So, we have Stein interviewing scientists that have had their qualifications ruined by the establishment, wouldn't you think Stein should interview people working in the scientific community at the time about this issue? If this persecution of dissidents was happening I would think he'd go and talk to people still working in the field and cite his examples for scrutiny. This never happens. Either Stein is a just a terrible host for a documentary and should stick to the game shows, or he has an agenda. Stein does interview PZ Myers, Michael Ruse, Eugenie Scott, and the mighty Richard Dawkins for his grand finale, but he never once asks them about the people that were fired or denied tenure. He only sticks to questions concerning how life began. He doesn't even really talk to them about why Intelligent Design is rejected by the scientific community versus why evolution is taught. He never asks these questions. Michael Ruse, who isn't even credited during his interview (more sloppy documentary work), proposes a possible life beginning scenario involving crystals. This results in Stein asking him again how it's possible... after Ruse just told him and results in what can be interpreted as a rude response from Ruse. This style of filming to show scientists as unwilling to entertain the idea of Intelligent Design pushes the viewer to see science as intolerable. In our overly politically correct society this seems "mean" or whatever to people. Science isn't a democracy; it's based on factual observations. Intelligent Design cannot provide something observable that can be repeated in a laboratory, that's a fact, not a belief. So why should science also be politically correct and show "tolerance" for things that are blatantly unscientific. (I know some people will cry conspiracy about evolution, but that's not the point of this documentary.)

Stein also interviewed Berlinski and played favoritism to him in this film, I think, because he was giving the kind of answers Stein could agree with. That shouldn't be the point of something you're making to generate awareness. He goes into his grand finale with Dawkins. I'm not going to try and defend Dawkins' embarrassing answer for him; I agree with others that he's a better writer (though I do admire him for trying to speak out for the side of science). Long story short, Stein pushed Dawkins to come up with an answer of how life began and Dawkins naturally replied that he didn't know. He actually replied with "I don't know" multiple times until we come to a cut scene where it shows Dawkins proposing that aliens could have possibly seeded life on the planet. If you notice Dawkins' tone of voice and mannerisms it's pretty clear he didn't even believe his comment. So why say it? I have no idea; I also have no idea how long this paltry debate between Dawkins and Stein went on until Stein finally got some ammunition to help his point along.

As further proof of this rather slanted take on the subject, I submit the whole Nazi/Holocaust association with science. I'm sorry, but what does that have to do with freedom of inquiry in the present day academic community? For me Stein is simply reaching at straws and he's really out to demonize science. As someone told me, he was quoted as saying "Science leads to killing." After seeing this relation in the midst of his documentary I can see why he believes it, but that doesn't mean he's right. Not to mention Hitler was influenced by a lot more than just Darwinian Theory, just read "Mein Kampf" and you'll see him quote another document called "The Protcol's of the Elders Zion." Hitler basically repeated the anti-Semitic theories from that document almost verbatim concerning his prejudice. Not to mention the Nazi practice of "survival of the fittest" doesn't even correlate with Darwin, because mankind is meddling at that specific point. Nature isn't in control over who is the "fittest" the Nazi party and other humans were. Just because the Nazis don't understand what it means or want to skew it doesn't mean it was all Darwin's fault. Either way, apparently he forgets why we understand the cause of Small Pox and can create a vaccine or how penicillin works and is just focusing on those who made things like the atomic bomb. I'm well aware that Darwin influenced the Nazi scientists, but this has nothing to do with the scientists supposedly being fired

In the end I was left realizing the immense piece of propaganda I had viewed. After I sat down and analyzed what I saw and did some research this swiftly dropped to a one star rating. There is simply no excuse for this and whether you support Intelligent Design or Evolution, it doesn't matter; you should not want Stein representing you on this case. You should not want this documentary to be used as your "proof" against the establishment. "Expelled" is propaganda and you can even tell that from the way it's filmed. If you must see it, then do the research to back it up on both sides. Regardless if you believe his points or think that Gonzalez should be freed, you have to ask yourself "why didn't he ask Richard Dawkins or PZ Myers or any of the other scientists about the firings and losing of tenure?" If you don't have an answer for this then you know this film isn't on the level.

P.S. This is an abridged review from the original. I think this stands as my full

or merit

This documentary is artistically done and makes its point well. The point being that those in academia who question Darwinism are shunned and/or fired (when possible).

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Published 6 days ago by victoria

A film you'll either love or hate

If you look at the number of reviews from people who give "Expelled" either five stars or one star, you'll see why I titled this review "A film you'll either love or hate.

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Published 7 days ago by Steven Schwartz

**** The truth shall set you free

As a biologist and environmental lawyer, I loved this movie. Too many reviewers have gotten caught up in the evolution vs.

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review for just the film. Hopefully this improved/rewritten review will come across as being more useful for those reading.

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113 of 134 people found the following review helpful:

*** Excelled, September 17, 2008

By <u>Gord Wilson "alivingdog.com"</u> (Bellingham, WA USA) - <u>See all my reviews</u>
TOP SOO REVIEWER

After seeing Expelled in a theater, I wrote a long review of it elsewhere on the web. Now I see it's sparked a rather lively debate among reviewers. Actually, among those who, by their own admission, haven't seen it, and as I write, the DVD is not out yet (so I can only write about the film, and not any extras the DVD may include). One reviewer asks why people are voting against his review (which is against the film). Probably for the same reason people are voting against my review of Dawkins' book: not because the review is "not helpful" but as a way of voting for or against the book or film, as it were.

Having said that, it's probably as impossible to be neutral about this film as about Michael Moore's Farenheit 911 or an Oliver Stone fictionmentary. In my view, however, it's a fine piece of film making. Witty, irreverent, inventive, thoughtful, and Ben Stein is at his likeable, deadpan best. A friend I watched it with said just the opening titles were better than most films he'd seen recently, and I'm inclined to agree. If this film had had the opposite message, I think it would be getting an Academy Award and the New York Times wouldn't stop raving about it (instead of at it).

That's all well and good, one may be saying, but you haven't said anything about the subject. No, and I'd really rather not. If you hold a view generally called these days "Neo-Darwinism" you probably still will after seeing the film. If you incline to an idea called "Intelligent Design", you'll still incline so. If you're interested in battles between factions of the Academy in universities, however, or in free speech and press versus censorship (and this would likely be the topic of many reviews if this film had a different viewpoint), here's an engaging look at the salvos flying back and forth in a social and intellectual debate that much of the media have to date declined to cover.

One interesting thing came out of this film, and that was a test case for "fair use" in relation to copyright laws, an idea everybody knows about, but which seems generally undefined. It concerned Yoko's suing Ben Stein and the producers for using a snippet of John Lennon's song "Imagine". Hasn't everyone and their dog used that song? Yes, but here it wasn't used to sell tennis shoes, but to be considered critically. Again, if the film had the opposite viewpoint, I don't think there would have been a suit, but the outcome was to define "fair use" in its original intent, so that common Joes and Janes don't have to fear cadres of corporate lawyers merely for referring to copyrighted songs, books, films and other materials.

As the film shows, the use of Darwin's ideas to support Nazi ideology and eugenics was almost universal during and following the Victorian era, and was generally known as "social Darwinism". One may argue that these were actually Huxley's ideas, or that Darwin borrowed heavily from Alfred Wallace, but whatever their pedigree, they were pressed into service nearly at once. G.K. Chesterton wrote tirelessly against the Nazis as they were beginning to come to power, attempting to expose their plan of eugenics. In reference to another reviewer, I have read Mein Kampf (sp.) also, and Hitler's plan was entirely based on "social Darwinism". So were the ideas of Margaret Sanger and numerous other crusaders for what was known as "scientific planning". Numerous authors have pointed out the racist motivations behind the Royal Society in Britain and the ages of Victorian and Edwardian exploration, in which races were contrasted in elaborate displays during the world expositions

This was also the motivation in the Soviet Union, which forced a famine in order to coerce farmers onto state cooperatives. When Malcolm Muggeridge exposed this plan in the 'thirties, he was widely denounced by Soviet supporters in the media who wanted this experiment in social planning to succeed. Among these were the Fabian Socialists, Sydney and Beatrice Webb. But Beatrice Webb wrote in her diary in 1933: "(There was) another account of the famine in Russia in the Manchester Guardian (a British newspaper), which certainly bears out Malcom's reports....Fortunately for the USSR, the attention of the capitalist countries is today concentrated on the Mad Dog of Europe--Hitler's Germany."

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This film may induce a sense of vertigo, being chocabloc full of information and history barely referenced in the media. The effect may be akin to sailing in a calm sea, only to find one has unaccountably hit an iceberg. Or rather the tip of an iceberg, and the film may spark curious viewers to explore the vast reaches submerged below.

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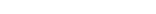
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