

**Newsmax's Top 25 Conservative Documentaries of All Time**

By Troy Anderson | Wednesday, 04 Apr 2018 08:44 AM

While conservative documentaries are often panned by Hollywood critics and seldom garner film festival awards, many draw impressive crowds to theaters, rack up eye-popping box office totals, and have exerted a significant impact on American culture and politics.

For instance, film industry experts say “2016: Obama’s America,” “The Clinton Chronicles,” and “Hillary’s America: The Secret History of the Democratic Party” helped lay the groundwork for the election of Donald Trump as president and other conservatives.

“Some of these movies have actually changed the political landscape,” says Dr. Ted Baehr, a media critic and publisher and editor-in-chief of Movieguide, a website and journal that evaluates films and television programs from a conservative Christian perspective.

New York Times best-selling author Dinesh D’Souza says his 2012 film “2016: Obama’s America” didn’t keep voters from electing Barack Obama as president, but his 2016 film “Hillary’s America” seemed to have more of an impact.

“Arguably my later film ‘Hillary’s America’ had more impact in actually shaping the narrative and the outcome of an election,” D’Souza told Newsmax. “'2016' was my first documentary. I’ve now done three of them. In fact, I have a new one (tentatively titled ‘Death of a Nation’) coming out this summer, but I think the Hillary movie may have had more electoral impact, although the Obama movie I think has had a greater impact in shaping how Obama is seen by the population at large and perhaps also by history.”

Now, to help readers choose some of the best conservative documentaries, Newsmax has compiled a list of the top 25 conservative documentaries of all time. The criteria followed were simple: The films that generated the highest box office totals and made a “significant impact.”

In selecting the films, Newsmax sought to pick the documentaries by cross-referencing data on Box Office Mojo with the Internet Movie Database as well as information provided by filmmakers and film industry experts.

The second criterion — films that made a “significant impact” — is a more subjective one based on knowledge of conservative documentaries and the film industry.

Given thousands of documentary films made over the decades, undoubtedly some fine films were left out, but this list will give Newsmax readers a discerning guide to the highest-grossing and most impactful conservative documentaries.

Without further ado, here’s how Newsmax, in collaboration with author Troy Anderson, ranked the top 25 conservative documentaries of all time:

1. “In Search of Noah’s Ark” (1976) — This film brought in a whopping $55.7 million at the box office and inspired many people to take up the search for the biblical ark that Noah and his family built to escape the Deluge. The documentary explores the theory that Mt. Ararat in Turkey is the final resting place of Noah’s Ark. It would have been a certified blockbuster in today’s dollars, raking in nearly a quarter billion, after adjusting for inflation.

2. “The Late Great Planet Earth” (1979) — Based off the best-selling nonfiction book of the 1970s of the same name by Hal Lindsey, this film narrated by actor Orson Welles explores whether events prophesied in the Bible indicate that civilization is headed for doomsday. The film grossed $19.5 million and inspired popular interest in biblical predictions. If released today, it would have tallied around $70.3 million in box office receipts.

3. “2016: Obama’s America” (2012) — In this documentary based off New York Times best-selling author Dinesh D’Souza’s book “Obama’s America: Unmaking the American Dream,” D’Souza examines the question, “If Barack Obama wins a second term, where will we be in 2016?” The film grossed $33.4 million, becoming the second highest-grossing political documentary of all time. “We know the audience, what will resonate, how to speak to them and how to tell them the films are coming to theaters,” director John Sullivan told Newsmax.

4. “In Search of Historic Jesus” (1979) — Based on a book of the same name, it became a box office hit that grossed $22.4 million. This Canadian documentary examined various historical sources, such as the Shroud of Turin, through narration, dramatization, and expert testimony to determine the accuracy of the biblical account of Jesus Christ. “In Search of Historic Jesus” made the equivalent of $80.7 million in today’s money.

5. “The Clinton Chronicles” (1994) — In this documentary film that grossed $10 million ($17 million in today’s money), producer Patrick Matrisciana examined various alleged improprieties of former President Bill Clinton while he was serving as governor of Arkansas. The film is widely considered the turning point in the 1994 Republican Revolution.

6. “America: Imagine A World Without Her” (2014) — The sixth highest-grossing political documentary of all time, Dinesh D’Souza’s second film grossed $14.4 million at the box office. Based off his best-selling book of the same name, D’Souza explored the landscape of a world in which America had lost the Revolutionary War. The film examines the “shaming of the U.S. through revisionist history,” along with the lies and omissions by educational institutions, political organizations, and progressives designed to destroy the country.

7. “Hillary’s America: The Secret History of the Democratic Party”(2016) — Coming on the heels of his first two films, Dinesh D’Souza says “Hillary’s America” made the greatest impact on America’s political system of all his films. “Our movie ‘Hillary’s America’ is one of the things that helped to shape the narrative and help people to see Hillary and the Democrats not as a benign force for the public good,” D’Souza says. The film, which grossed $13.1 million, explored the dark history of the Democratic Party and Clinton’s true motivations in her failed bid for the presidency.

8. “Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed” (2008) — In this popular film, American writer, lawyer and actor Ben Stein examines academic freedom and decides there is little when it comes to the debate over intelligent design. The film, which grossed $7.7 million, argues that the scientific establishment suppresses those who believe in intelligent design and that the contemporary evolutionary consensus is part of a “scientific conspiracy to keep God out of the nation’s laboratories and classrooms.”

9. “Spellbound” (2002) — This film follows eight teenagers on their quest to win the 1999 Scripps National Spelling Bee. The film, which grossed $5.7 million, garnered numerous film festival awards, and a nomination for an Academy Award for best documentary feature. The International Documentary Association listed it as fourth among the “IDA’s Top 25 Documentaries” of 2007. “Spellbound” box office take would have neared $8 million today when adjusted for inflation.

10. “Waiting for Superman” (2010) — Conservatives and school-choice advocates found their box-office champion in this sobering and at-times inspiring documentary that follows ambitious kids trying to navigate a failed public school system. “Waiting for Superman” was nominated for the Sundance Film Festival’s Grand Jury Prize but won the Audience Award on its way to many industry accolades. The film had such an impact with audiences that then-U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said, “The movie is going to create a sense of outrage, and a sense of urgency.” The film earned $6.4 million at the box office.

11. “Fahrenhype 9/11” (2004) — This documentary debunks Michael Moore’s blockbuster film “Fahrenheit 9/11.” The film, which grossed $3 million at the box office, explores how America has been lied to about the cause of 9/11, the truth about Islamic fascism, and how to make America safe.

12. “Is Genesis History?” (2017) — World magazine described this film as “an engrossing primer on why we can feel confident believing the Bible’s account of creation.” In this film that grossed $2.7 million, Del Tackett of The Truth Project explores the world to determine how it intersects with the biblical account in Genesis. He journeys through canyons, climbs mountains, and explores the depths of the ocean to “examine two competing views — one compelling truth.”

13. “In Our Hands: The Battle for Jerusalem” (2017) — Released on the 50th anniversary of the Six-Day War, this CBN Documentaries and Biblical Productions film tells the story of the 1967 war through the eyes of the Israeli Defense Forces 55th paratrooper brigade. The documentary, which grossed $2.6 million, follows the liberation of Jerusalem. In his endorsement for the film, “It’s Supernatural!” host Sid Roth said, “The greatest evidence that the Bible is true and that miracles are for today is Israel! Your faith will explode when you witness the supernatural power of God documented in this film!”

14. “Hillsong: Let Hope Rise” (2016) — Based on the story of the international church whose songs are sung each Sunday by more than 50 million people worldwide, this film grossed $2.4 million as it explored the Australia-based band Hillsong UNITED’s rise to prominence.

15. “Restrepo” (2010) — Unlike most war documentaries, “Restrepo” isn’t about trying to understand a war as much as survive it, and therefore lacks a political bias. For a year, filmmakers Sebastian Junger and Tim Hetherington embedded with a platoon of American soldiers attempting to gain a foothold in a region of Afghanistan that the Taliban was desperate to keep. The self-financed film, which beat out “Waiting for Superman” at Sundance, went on to earn an Oscar nomination for Best Documentary and more than $1.4 million worldwide.

16. “Genesis: Paradise Lost” (2017) — In this 2017 documentary that grossed $1.4 million, Seven-Fold Films examines what happened at the “Creation” and the “Beginning.” Employing “stunning visual effects and the latest in scientific research,” the film brings the book of Genesis alive.

17. “Steve McQueen: American Icon” (2017) — Based on the best-selling book by Harvest Christian Fellowship senior pastor Greg Laurie, “Steve McQueen: The Salvation of an American Icon,” the Riverside, California, minister hits the road in his mint Mustang, traveling America in search of the “true, untold story of McQueen’s redemption-filled final chapters.” The 2017 film grossed $1.2 million.

18. “Paper Clips” (2004) — A classroom project to combat prejudice became an international phenomenon and a film that grossed $1.1 million. The documentary follows middle school children in Whitwell, Tennessee, as they collect 6 million paper clips representing the 6 million Jews who died in the Holocaust. The film also shows the youth meeting Holocaust survivors and how their experience transformed their community.

19. “The Cross: The Arthur Blessitt Story” (2009) — This documentary film tells the inspirational story of Arthur Blessitt, a minister who started carrying a wooden cross on Sunset Strip in Hollywood in 1968 and subsequently carried it to every continent and island nation. In 2013, he made Guinness World Records for walking the greatest distance during a “round the world” pilgrimage of 40,235 miles. “I was to become a fool in the eyes of many and a saint in the eyes of others,” Blessitt wrote in January on the 50th anniversary of his journey. “The road with the cross would lead me through wars, jungles, deserts, cities and to every continent, nation and major island group, and territory. … Along the way I was to kiss the lepers, touch the sick and diseased. I wept with the hurting and shared hope with the lost and dying. I saw the love of Jesus manifested in people’s lives and rejoiced with them along the roads.” The film grossed $726,159.

20. “Monumental: In Search of America’s National Treasure” (2012) — Starring actor Kirk Cameron, the film follows this father of six across Europe and America in his quest to discover America’s real “national treasure” that made the country the “best example of civil, economic, and religious liberty the world has ever known.” In the film grossing $500,000, Cameron follows in the footsteps of the pilgrims on their journey from Europe to America to discover their “formula for success that went way beyond what they could have imagined.”

21. “In the Face of Evil: Reagan’s War in Word and Deed” (2004) — Written and directed by former White House chief strategist Stephen K. Bannon, this film chronicles President Ronald Reagan’s campaign to “destroy the most tyrannical and depraved political systems the world has ever known.” The film grossed $500,000.

22. “The Case for Christ” (2007) — This film documents former Chicago Tribune legal editor Lee Strobel’s journey from atheism to faith via a two-year investigation of the Bible and the life of Jesus Christ. In this documentary, Strobel draws on his investigative skills to determine the historical accuracy of the gospels and whether Christ rose from the dead. No box office totals were available. Pure Flix Entertainment and Triple Horse Studios released a feature film dramatization of Strobel’s life in 2017, also called “The Case for Christ” that grossed $14.7 million.

23. “I Want Your Money” (2010) — Featuring conservative icon and media personality Andrew Breitbart, this documentary film contrasts views of the role the federal government should play in the daily lives of Americans using the words and actions of Presidents Barack Obama and Ronald Reagan. The film grossed $425,899.

24. “Bonhoeffer” (2003) — This 2003 docudrama film chronicles the life of German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was one of the few ministers to stand up to the Nazi regime. He was hanged shortly before the end of World War II. The pastor, pacifist, and Nazi resister was imprisoned and ultimately executed for plotting to assassinate Hitler. The film chronicles his trip to America, his calls to “change the world for better, and his noble attempts to respond to Nazi Germany as a Christian.” The film grossed $163,720.

25. “Hating Breitbart” (2012) — In this film, the filmmakers delve into the life of entrepreneur, media critic, and television and radio personality Andrew Breitbart and the many controversies in which he was a key player. The film, which grossed $81,432, traces his role in the birth of the Tea Party movement in 2009 and the takedowns of ACORN and Congressman Anthony Weiner. “Andrew Breitbart famously said, ‘politics is downstream from culture,’ meaning it’s impossible to have meaningful lasting effect on politics if your message is counter to the popular culture, therefore, if you want to change the politics you have to change the culture,” “Hating Breitbart” director Andrew Marcus told Newsmax.

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