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FILM REVIEW: Bryan Fogelâ??s The Dissident Speaks Volumes

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

Bryan Fogel, the Academy Award-winning director of *Icarus* premiered *The Dissident*, a bone-chilling documentary film, at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival. In *The Dissident* Fogel explores the events leading up to the 2018 brutal murder of *Washington Post* journalist Jamal Khashoggi and the events in the aftermath of the killing. Fogel follows Khashoggiâ??s friend and colleague, Omar Abdulaziz, a Saudi exile in Canada risking his life for the freedom of speech and Khashoggiâ??s fiancÃ©e, Hatice Cengiz, arguing for justice in front of the United Nations. In addition, with 2018 footage of Khashoggi in and out of briefings, Fogel lays the impressive groundwork of a counter-revolutionary movement underway in Egypt and Jordan and provides critical insight into the progressive, reformist leaning Vision 2030, the Saudi Arabian King Salmondâ??s Crown Prince son, Mohammad Bin Salmondâ??s (MBS) blueprint for Saudi society.

Furthermore, Fogel discusses a top-level purchase of highly sophisticated cyber-espionage technology, known as Pegasus, enabling MBS to hack into dissident social media accounts across the country and beyond. MBS employed an army to control social media content by infecting untold accounts with Pegasus. Interesting to note, Amazonâ??s Jeff Bezosâ?? smartphone was hacked and downloaded for months by Pegasus after MBS sent Bezos a mysterious video attachment on WhatsApp. The social media space, manipulated so effectively by Russia in the US elections, had now become an international warzone not just in the US and Suadi Arabia but in many countries around the world. Not surprisingly, US President Donald Trump went to the country of Saudi Arabia on his first stop of his first official visit abroad, refused to acknowledge Khashoggiâ??s murder despite every intelligence agency concurring, and proceeded to announce to the American people a massive $500 billion dollar arms sale. â??The Saudis buy a lot of weapons from us,â?• opined the President in defense of himself.

But, Jamaal Kashoggi was widely respected both in Saudi Arabia and globally as a very astute scholar well-versed in the ways of diplomacy. Seemingly, his outspoken journalism aginst the destabilizing â??reformsâ?• of MBS, published in the Washington Post, led to his murder in the Istanbul Saudi consulate on October 2, 2018. The Turkish government investigated Koshoggiâ??s murder compiling a formidable case. United Nations Special Reporter Agnes Callamard started her own investigation and

concluded an international crime had been committed in Khashoggiâ??s death with no less than six violations of international law igniting protests and strengthening the countryâ??s demand for freedom of speech under the banner â?? Justice for Jamal. His murder also undid MBSâ??s Vision 2030. In reality, Vision 2030 was an ambitious power grab under the guise of an anti-corruption probe where MBS rounded up and imprisoned the countryâ??s most powerful people while seizing hundreds of billions of dollars.

With a covert exposeâ?? touch, Fogel adeptly uncovers and reveals the truth in this highly controversial and well-researched, socio-political-economic arena unfolding in the global news cycle with an abundant supply of footage of all the key players and some very informative graphics. Make no mistake, *The Dissident* is a powerful and startling look at the cost of freedom of speech, the murder of a journalist for exercising his freedom of speech, and the ramifications of the interference of a government in social media. Donâ??t miss this one. Highly recommended.

Category

1. #Sundance
2. Documentary
3. Sundance
4. Sundance Film Festival

Tags

1. Bryan Fogel

Date Created
April 14, 2020
Author
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