



Actress Charlize Theron Says Cuba and America Are Both Un-Free

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[Larry Elder](#)

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Did you know that Americans, like Cubans, suffer from a "lack of freedom"?

So says actress Charlize Theron. Born in South Africa under apartheid, the Oscar winner recently made a documentary about Cuban rappers.

Theron: While I would argue that there's a lack of freedom in America, I think, I think, you know, I think we tend to –

CNN: Yes, but you don't have Democrats being arrested and thrown in jail. And you can have a meeting in your house and –

Theron: No, but I do remember not too long ago some people getting fired from their jobs in television

because they spoke up on how they felt about the war.

CNN: Do you think the lack of freedoms in Cuba are parallel to the lack of freedoms in the United States?

Theron: Well, I would, I would compare those two, yes, definitely.

The organization Reporters Without Borders sees things a bit differently. They say Cuba imprisons more journalists than any country other than China. About Cuba's highly touted health care system, Investor's Business Daily writes, "Ordinary Cubans may get abysmal care, but under the country's two-tier medical system, the communist party elite do [not]."

Nevertheless, Ms. Theron is onto something.

Maybe she meant the threat to the freedom of those who put together and aired the docudrama "The Path to 9/11." The five-hour miniseries aired several months ago on ABC, and examined not only the Bush administration's role in the historic tragedy, but also the Clinton administration's many missed opportunities to capture or kill Osama bin Laden. Democratic Sens. Harry Reid (Nev.), Dick Durbin (Ill.), Debbie Stabenow (Mich.), Charles Schumer (N.Y.) and Byron Dorgan (N.D.) sent a letter to ABC's parent corporation, and subtly threatened the network's FCC license: "Presenting such deeply flawed and factually inaccurate misinformation to the American public and to children would be a gross miscarriage of your corporate and civic responsibility to the law, to your shareholders, and to the nation." The producers, indeed, made changes.

True, Ms. Theron did not protest this instance of the heavy boot of Big Government, but then, she was probably filming in Cuba.

Or maybe Ms. Theron meant the government's attack on "global warming deniers." Columnist Ellen Goodman recently wrote, "I would like to say we're at a point where global warming is impossible to deny. Let's just say that global warming deniers are now on a par with Holocaust deniers, though one denies the past and the other denies the present and future." And Weather Channel climatologist Heidi Cullen

said, "If a meteorologist can't speak to the fundamental science of climate change, then maybe the AMS [American Meteorological Society] shouldn't give them a seal of approval."

Now, neither Goodman nor Cullen works for government. But Ted Kulongoski, the governor of Oregon, surely does. Lawmakers in Oregon, in 1991, created the state climate office at Oregon State University. Climatologist George Taylor holds the top position, and he says, "There are a lot of people saying the bulk of the warming of the last 50 years is due to human activities, and I don't believe that's true."

As a result, Gov. Kulongoski wants to make Taylor's position a governor-appointed one. "[Taylor] is Oregon State University's climatologist," said Kulongoski. "He's not the state of Oregon's climatologist. I just think there has to be somebody that says, 'this is the state position on this.'" University of Alabama's state climatologist, John Christy, sees a disturbing trend: "It seems if scientists don't express the views of the political establishment, they will be threatened, and that is a disconcerting thought." Again, no word from the actress, since she's likely busy promoting her documentary, but I expect her to get on top of this real soon.

Or maybe Ms. Theron meant the actions of California's former Attorney General Bill Lockyer. In 2006, Lockyer filed a lawsuit against automakers, calling "greenhouse gases" from vehicle emissions a "public

nuisance." The lawsuit asked a federal judge to compel automakers to disclose their dealings with global warming skeptics. "The climate skeptics," wrote Lockyer, "have played a major role in spreading disinformation about global warming." So, here, the attorney general wants a private company to tell the government with whom it's associating, because those associations lead to "spreading disinformation." Again, no word – yet – from Ms. Theron about this attack on the First Amendment's right of freedom of association, but I'm sure someone's contacting her publicist as we speak.

Or maybe Ms. Theron meant the intentions of Rep. Dennis Kucinich, D-Ohio. Kucinich wants to reinstate the so-called "fairness doctrine" to tell broadcasters how to program their stations under the guise of "fairness and balance." President Reagan, in 1987, felt that the standard suppressed free speech. As a result, "right-wing" talk radio blossomed. This bothers folks like Rep. Kucinich, who seek to stop programmers from making decisions based on what the market wants. No word yet from Ms. Theron.

Or maybe . . .