

# Chicago Daily Law Bulletin®

Volume 164, No. 190

Serving Chicago's legal community for 163 years

## Michael Moore gives us reason to think

**B**lue-collar polemicist Michael Moore's recently released documentary, "Fahrenheit 11/9," is a call to action. The title refers to the date Donald Trump's presidency was proclaimed after the 2016 election results were determined. It is also a play on the title of a previous Moore film, "Fahrenheit 9/11," which was a smackdown of George W. Bush's build-up to the Iraq war.

Now on a quest to save democracy, Moore seeks to frighten us into the fray. To accomplish this mission, he evokes the misdeeds of Trump, Hitler, Hillary Clinton, Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder, Nancy Pelosi, the ousted media sex offenders and Barack Obama.

In this somewhat disjointed film, Moore rattles together several stories: the rise of the "malignant narcissist"

Trump; the poisoning of the water in Flint Mich.; the euphoric victory of the West Virginia teachers' strike and the unqualified virtue of the students who survived the Parkland, Fla., school

shooting. Moore shocks us by showing unspeakable political mendacity, then provides hope by presenting models of successful grassroots organization.

Bernie Sanders-supporter Moore, who famously predicted Trump's defeat of Clinton, saw Trump as the inevitable choice (or default) of a disillusioned, disengaged populous and campaign coverage that cynically and condescendingly doubled down on Trump to extract maximum entertainment value. Everything Trump has done, says Moore, he's done in plain sight. "People don't



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care if he's lying. People believe in him."

Where did the disillusionment in the political system that led to the Trump victory come from? Moore

*Democracy can be lost, warns Yale professor Tim Snyder, if people don't constantly assert themselves. "Democracy can go away or the way money is used in the political process can make democracy a joke."*

spotlights his hometown of Flint, Mich., as a microcosm of America. He chronicles the Gov. Rick Snyder-staged takeover that switched Flint's water source from the glacial Lake Huron to the open sewer that is the Flint River.

The river water brought with it lead poisoning, Legionnaires' disease and corrosion of the water-bathed auto parts manufactured in General Motors' Flint plant. When GM complained, Gov. Snyder made clean water available to GM, but not to the residents of Flint.

In a "Waiting for Superman" moment, Barack Obama visited Flint.

The citizens were thrilled, expecting him to declare a national emergency and send the Army Corp of Engineers to fix Flint's water problem. Instead, the president pantomimed drinking "safe" Flint water by touching a glassful to his lips. The audience gasped.

"When he came here he was our president" said whistleblower April Cook-Hawkins, a former state employee who refused to falsify lead levels reported in state health department documents, "after that, he wasn't."

Donald Trump was the only presidential candidate to visit Michigan, a state Clinton lost by only two votes per precinct.

Moore urgently wants to show that political anger makes us vulnerable to charlatans like Snyder who mask crass exploitation in the guise of problem-solving.

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In a different time and place, a similar political climate led to National Socialism. In case we don't get that message, Moore has helpfully mocked-up a clip of Hitler lip-synching one of Trump's speeches.

More convincingly, he interviews Ben Ferencz, the last living prosecutor of the Nuremberg trials, who is moved to tears of frustration as he considers the direction in which the nation is headed.

"I had people hanged for doing the things they say now," said a grief-stricken Ferencz. "It doesn't have to end up like this."