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Mockumentary *Mister America* has world premiere

October 7, 2019



From left to right: Alessandro Serradimigni, Terri Parks, Curtis Webster, and Manuel Giusti. Photo by anonymous, public domain.

The evening of October 4, the mockumentary *Mister America* had its world premiere at Grauman's Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood, California as part of Hulu's Beyond Fest film festival. *Mister America* is a continuation of the elaborate multimedia universe of Tim Heidecker and Gregg Turkington's web series *On Cinema at the Cinema*. Wikinews attended the premiere.

The film follows a fictionalized version of comedian Tim Heidecker who hosts the absurd and shallow *On Cinema* film review Web series with purported film expert Gregg Turkington. When Heidecker narrowly avoids a murder conviction,

he sets out to run for District Attorney of San Bernardino County and fails to even be on the ballot.

The premiere was accompanied by a question-and-answer session moderated by Canadian comedian Nathan Fielder, delving into the logistics of shooting with a five-person crew over the course of three days on a shoestring budget. Fans in the audience probed the stars about their comedic backgrounds, including Turkington's alias of insult comedian Neil Hamburger and Heidecker's interest in political comedy.

In addition to the cast of the film, additional *On Cinema* alumni including Alessandro Serradimigni, Joe Estevez, and Manuel Giusti were in attendance.

The Beyond Fest 2019 continued through October 8 and *Mister America* debuted to a wider audience on October 9.

U.S. President Donald Trump announces troop withdrawal from Syria

October 8, 2019

Late on Sunday, the United States President Donald Trump, in a statement delivered via the press

secretary, announced US troops would be leaving Syria. The announcement was made after Trump had a phone conversation with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The statement also said U.S. troops had defeated ISIS and Turkey would be moving into Northern Syria. Turkey would also take over guarding captured ISIS fighters which, the statement said, European nations have refused to repatriate.

The U.S. had been allied with Kurdish groups in fighting ISIS. One of these groups, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), opposed the withdrawal and said it was previously given "assurances from the U.S. that it would not allow any Turkish military operations against the region." Kino Gabriel said, "The statement was a surprise and we can say that it is a stab in the back for the SDF."

According to the BBC, the SDF is largely made up of YPG militia which support the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The PKK is banned in Turkey. According to a statement released by Erdoğan's office, "neutralizing the threat stemming from PKK-YPG terrorist" is an aim of the Turkish military operation. The other primary goal is a safe zone to repatriate Syrian refugees.

According to CNN, Turkey has an estimated two million Syrian refugees, down from a peak of over three-and-a-half million at the height of the Syrian Civil War. The Turkish statement called for the safe zone for refugees to be set up East of the Euphrates River, which is territory controlled by the SDF.

Former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley wrote on Twitter, "We must always have the backs of our allies, if we expect them to have our back. The Kurds were instrumental in our successful fight against ISIS in Syria. Leaving them to die is a big mistake."

Brett McGurk, who was Trump's Special Presidential Envoy to the international military intervention against ISIL until December, also criticized the decision via Twitter. "The WH statement tonight on Syria after Trump spoke with Erdogan demonstrates a complete lack of understanding of anything happening on the ground. The "United States" is not holding any ISIS detainees. They are all being held by the SDF, which Trump just served up to Turkey." McGurk later wrote, "The SDF suffered thousands of casualties in the Raqqa battle. Not a single American life was lost. Trump later expanded the operation down the ERV. He touts these operations in political rallies but without apparent thought as to who did the fighting and dying."

Trump, also on Twitter, defended his decision, "As I have stated strongly before, and just to reiterate, if Turkey does any-

thing that I, in my great and unmatched wisdom, consider to be off limits, I will totally destroy and obliterate the Economy of Turkey (I've done [it] before!). They must, with Europe and others, watch over the captured ISIS fighters and families. The U.S. has done far more than anyone could have ever expected, including the capture of 100% of the ISIS Caliphate. It is time now for others in the region, some of great wealth, to protect their own territory. THE USA IS GREAT!"

Senator Lindsey Graham spoke on Fox News, "This is going to lead to ISIS' reemergence. Nothing [is] better for ISIS than to create a conflict between the Kurds and Turkey. The Kurds will now align with [Bashir al] Assad because they have nobody to count on because we abandoned them. So this is a big win for Iran and Assad — a big win for ISIS."

"ISIS is not defeated [...] The biggest lie being told by the administration [is] that ISIS is defeated. The caliphate's destroyed, but there's thousands of fighters over there. And no, the caliphate would not have been destroyed without the Kurds, and I applaud the president for getting the Kurds and the Arabs to do most of the fighting. The [U.S.] casualties destroying the caliphate was very low", Graham continued. "[T]his impulsive decision by the president has undone all the gains we've made, thrown the region into further chaos. Iran is licking their chops. And if I'm an ISIS fighter I've got a second lease on life. So to those who think ISIS has been defeated you will soon

see."

Ginger Baker, influential rock drummer, dies at age 80

October 7, 2019

The morning of October 6, English drummer Ginger Baker died in a hospital at the age of 80. The news came from the Twitter account in his name and was independently confirmed by *Associated Press* with his daughter Nettie Baker. On September 25, it was reported Baker was hospitalized in critical condition. Baker was widely known as the drummer and co-founder of the rock band Cream, an early supergroup.

Baker, a life-long smoker and former heroin addict, suffered from health problems for years. The list of ailments included hearing loss, osteoarthritis, emphysema and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, as well as heart problems for which he had surgery in 2016. Although known to have lived his latter years in South Africa, his daughter said he died in Britain without elaborating.

Ginger Baker was born Peter Edward Baker in Lewisham, London, in 1939. His father was killed in combat in 1943 during World War II. Baker — who was reportedly nicknamed Ginger due to his red hair — began playing drums in his teens. In a story he sometimes told, he had a habit of tapping on school desks. When an opportunity arose at a party, his classmates encouraged him to sit down at a drum set. "I'd never sat

behind a kit before, but I sat down – and I could play! One of the musicians turned round and said, 'Bloody hell, we've got a drummer', and I thought, 'Bloody hell, I'm a drummer' ", he recalled in a 2009 retelling of the story to the *The Independent*.

Baker began his career as a drummer in jazz bands. He played with Acker Bilk and Terry Lightfoot. In 1962, when fellow drummer Charlie Watts was leaving Blues Incorporated for The Rolling Stones, Watts recommended Baker to be his replacement. Later, Baker found early success with rhythm and blues band The Graham Bond Organisation where he met bassist Jack Bruce.

In 1966, Baker, Bruce and singer/guitarist Eric Clapton, who was known from The Yardbirds, formed Cream. The rock trio was a massive success, selling tens of millions of records, including the first ever platinum certified album *Wheels of Fire*. Cream recorded four albums, then in 1968 disbanded with Baker and Bruce having developed a volatile relationship. Clapton and Baker were subsequently in another supergroup Blind Faith with Steve Winwood and Ric Grech. Blind Faith recorded only one studio album but notably played before a crowd of a hundred thousand at a free concert in London's Hyde Park.

In the 1970s, Baker moved to Nigeria where he established a studio and began playing polo. Here he collaborated with Fela Kuti and worked on Wings's album *Band on the Run* with Paul

McCartney of The Beatles fame. Later, he recorded with John Lydon's Public Image Ltd.

Cream was inducted in 1993 into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The band reunited in 2005 for several London and New York concerts. Afterwards he moved to South Africa, and still lived there when the 2012 documentary *Beware of Mr. Baker* was filmed. Baker's last recording was 2014's *Why?* solo album. Baker retired from live performances in 2016 due to his ill health.

Paul McCartney wrote on Twitter, "Ginger Baker, great drummer, wild and lovely guy. We worked together on the 'Band on the Run' album in his ARC Studio, Lagos, Nigeria. Sad to hear that he died but the memories never will."

"A very sad loss, and my condolences to his family and friends. A loss also for his contribution to music. He was well-grounded in jazz from very early on," wrote Steve Winwood in a statement. "Beneath his somewhat abrasive exterior, there was a very sensitive human being with a heart of gold. He'll be missed."

Mick Jagger of The Rolling Stones also reacted on Twitter, "Sad news hearing that Ginger Baker has died, I remember playing with him very early on in Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated. He was a fiery but extremely talented and innovative drummer."

U.S. judge orders release of President Trump's tax records, then appeals court issues delay

October 10, 2019

On October 7, United States District Court Judge Victor Marrero issued a ruling against President Donald Trump finding that New York City prosecutors could view his tax records after a subpoena issued by a grand jury. The Manhattan district attorney's office is investigating Trump over alleged hush money paid to two women with whom he has been alleged to have had affairs. Such payments could be considered bribery. President Trump sued Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr. and his own tax preparer Mazars USA to block the release of eight years of tax returns to the grand jury, but Judge Marrero dismissed the president's lawsuit. The president's legal team appealed the decision to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, which issued an administrative stay to Marrero's order about an hour and a half after the district court ruling.

The appeals court ruling placed a stay on the district court's ruling until it hears arguments from the president's lawyers and District Attorney Vance's office. According to a court clerk, arguments in the case would be scheduled as soon as the week of October 21, with briefs from both parties due in the intervening time until then.

Trump had asked the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York

intervene in a New York City criminal proceeding, in which a subpoena had been issued to Trump's tax preparer. He sought such intervention to prevent Mazars from releasing his tax returns, arguing that, as president, he should be immune from prosecution, and that, by extension, his tax preparer, Mazars USA, could likewise be exempt from investigation. Marrero rejected this argument:

"The notion of federal supremacy and presidential immunity from judicial process that the President here invokes, unqualified and boundless in its reach as described above, cuts across the grain of [...] constitutional precedents. It also ignores the analytic framework that the Supreme Court has counseled should guide review of presidential claims of immunity from judicial process. Of equal fundamental concern, the President's claim would tread upon principles of federalism and comity that form essential components of our constitutional structure and the federal/state balance of government powers and functions. Bared to its core, the proposition the President advances reduces to the very notion that the Founders rejected at the inception of the Republic, and that the Supreme Court has since unequivocally repudiated: that a constitutional domain exists in this country in which not only the President, but, derivatively, relatives and persons and business entities associated with him in potentially unlawful private activities, are in fact above the law.

"Because this Court finds aspects of such a doctrine repugnant to the nation's governmental structure and constitutional values, and for reasons further stated below, it **ABSTAINS** from adjudicating this dispute and **DISMISSES** the President's suit."

Following Marrero's order, the appeals court issued a stay, delaying Mazars' compliance with the subpoena until it could review the case.

Trump responded to the ruling via Twitter, attacking the subpoena as a political strategy: "The Radical Left Democrats have failed on all fronts, so now they are pushing local New York City and State Democrat prosecutors to go get President Trump."

The Manhattan district attorney's office began its probe into Trump's financial affairs after his former lawyer Michael Cohen was convicted of federal campaign finance law violations connected to payments made to porn actress Stormy Daniels and former Playboy model Karen McDougal to remain silent about alleged affairs with Trump. Cohen is serving a three-year-long prison sentence.

Trump has admitted to ordering the payments, according to prosecutors, but the U.S. Justice Department maintains a policy of not charging the sitting president with crimes.

In recent United States history, it has been customary, but voluntary, for presidential candidates to release their tax returns when running for office. Trump was the first president to refuse to

do so since 1976. Trump has cited an Internal Revenue Service audit as prohibiting him from releasing them. The president has a lawsuit to prevent a New York State law from allowing the House of Representatives' Committee on Ways and Means from gaining access to his records.

The Swedish academy announces 2019 Nobel Prize winners in physics

October 11, 2019

On Tuesday, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences announced the winners of the 2019 Nobel Prize in Physics in Stockholm, Sweden. The prize was shared between James Peebles and the duo of Didier Queloz and Michel Mayor. They are to share a monetary award of 9 million Swedish kronor (approximately U.K. £738 thousand or U.S. \$910 thousand) from the Nobel Foundation.

Canadian-U.S. scientist James Peebles won his half of the prize for his work in predicting cosmic microwave background and creating a theoretical framework from which other scientists have been able to calculate the age and structure of the universe, including the calculation that the universe is 95 percent dark matter and dark energy. He is a professor at Princeton University.

Queloz and Mayor, both from Switzerland, won their prize for discovering the first known exoplanet in 1995. The planet they found was 51 Pegasi b, a Jupiter-like gas giant some 50 light-years away from Earth. Since their discovery, according to the academy,

over four thousand other exoplanets have been discovered. Both are professors at the University of Geneva; Qeuloz is also a professor at the University of Cambridge.

"Both these prizes [...] tell us something essential, something existential about our place in the Universe", said selection committee member Ulf Danielsson. "The first one, tracing the history back to an unknown origin, is so fascinating. The other one tries to answer these questions about: 'are we alone – is there life anywhere else in the Universe?'"

U.K. urges U.S. to waive immunity for diplomat's wife involved in fatal collision

October 10, 2019

On Monday, October 7, Prime Minister Boris Johnson joined the calls by United Kingdom officials asking the United States to waive diplomatic immunity for Anne Sacoolas. Sacoolas, who has immunity as a diplomat's wife, was involved in a traffic collision which killed motorcyclist Harry Dunn on August 27. She subsequently left the U.K. and returned to the U.S.

Prime Minister Johnson was questioned about the case while speaking to the press at a hospital in Watford. He said, "I think everybody's sympathies are very much with the family of Harry Dunn and our condolences to them for their tragic loss. I must answer you directly, I do not

think that it can be right to use the process of diplomatic immunity for this type of purpose."

Johnson continued, "And I hope that Anne Sacoolas will come back and will engage properly with the processes of law as they are carried out in this country. That's a point that we've raised or are raising today with the American ambassador here in the U.K. and I hope it will be resolved very shortly. And to anticipate a question you might want to raise, if we can't resolve it then of course I will be raising it myself personally with the White House." The White House refers to the United States president's office.

Harry Dunn, a 19-year-old motorcyclist was struck by a Volvo XC90 driving on the wrong side of the road in Northamptonshire according to traffic camera footage. The crash happened around 8:30 p.m. BST (1930 UTC) on August 27. He died from his injuries at John Radcliffe Hospital a short time later. The wreck occurred near RAF Croughton which is a intelligence base used by both the Royal Air Force and the U.S. Air Force.

Northamptonshire police were able to determine the Volvo had come from RAF Croughton and spoke with Anne Sacoolas as a suspect. She informed police she had diplomatic immunity, but "that she had no plans to leave the country in the near future". Normally, only embassy workers – and their spouses – in London

have diplomatic immunity, but in a 1994 agreement it was extended to all US workers at RAF Croughton.

Despite the assurances, she and her husband Jonathan Sacoolas left the country, police revealed on Saturday. Northamptonshire's chief constable Nick Adderley wrote to the U.S. Embassy in London asking to waive her diplomatic immunity. Both he and the county's Police and Crime Commissioner Stephen Mold, urged the immunity be waived. The embassy declined the request and said the Sacoolas family left per advice from the United States Department of State.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab urged the embassy to reconsider and spoke with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo about the case. The State Department gave its "deepest sympathies" and said immunity cases were afforded "intense attention at senior levels and are considered carefully given the global impact such decisions carry".

Dunn's mother, Charlotte Charles said on television, "She didn't purposely drive on the other side of the road... if she'd have stayed and faced us as a family we could have found that forgiveness... but forgiving her for leaving, I'm nowhere near." Charles told the *Daily Mail*, "All we need to do is ask her to come back. It's not much to ask. She's left a family in complete ruin. We're broken."