

When You Ride Alone You Ride With Bin Laden: What the Government Should Be Telling Us To Help Fight the War on Terrorism

Bill Maher

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This collection of essays is an intelligent, well-argued, funny, and deeply patriotic look at how America has changed since 9/11.

Taking his cue from World War II propaganda, the author reminds listeners of the ways in which politicians rallied Americans to support the military. Families were encouraged to grow victory gardens, cut back on their usage of electricity, recycle tin, and ration precious commodities like gasoline. Believing “anyone under fifty” doesn’t have a clue about WWII, Maher has updated and included variations on WWII posters as part of the packaging of the audiocassette.

Arguing that prior generations (particularly the so-called “greatest generation”) knew the connection between what we do and how it helps, Maher’s stated goal is to suggest ways in which our “pandering government” and all Americans can help ensure against future terrorist attacks. “For over a year now the American government has been telling its citizens that we’re in a war,” says Maher, “but apparently one we can win so easily that the home front is asked to do little more than shop, eat out, and travel.”

Maher’s previous books include *Does Anybody Have A Problem With That? Politically Incorrect’s Greatest Hints*, and the novel, *True Story*. After the events of 9/11, he upset “easily-offended and frightened people” with several widely, naively, or willfully misunderstood remarks about terrorists on the program he hosted for nine years, *Politically Incorrect*. (Maher defined political correctness as “the elevation of sensitivity over truth.”) His jokes about the flags on vehicles making “the highways look like a county fair on wheels” weren’t well received. Bush spokesman Ari Fletcher said, “Some people need to watch what they say and do.” Anxious sponsors withdrew support for the program, and ultimately the network canceled it.

Maher’s irreverence is palpable. He takes on racial profiling, airport security screenings, SUVs, marijuana laws, politicians, American arrogance, broadcast news and newscasters, patriotism, and the class system in the military. Whether Maher’s opinions deserve to be heard and discussed, whether or not listeners and readers agree with them, because he is the best kind of patriot—he loves his country, questions its leaders, and has the courage to speak his mind. He’s hilarious, articulate, and provocative.

PAM KINGSBURY (May / June 2003)

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