

BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE

by Michael MOORE

FICHE TECHNIQUE

Pays : USA

Durée : 2h

Année : 2002

Genre : Film documentaire

Son : Ivo SPALI, Robert JANSKA

Montage : Marie ZEMANOVA

Coproduction : Dog Eat Dog Films, Alliance Atlantis Communications, Salter Street Films International

Distribution : Diaphana

Sortie : 9 octobre 2002

César du meilleur film étranger 2003

SYNOPSIS

Bowling for Columbine is an alternately humorous and horrifying film about the United States. It is a film about the state of the Union, about the violent soul of America. Why do 11,000 people die in America each year at the hands of gun violence? The talking heads yelling from every TV camera blame everything from Satan to video games. But are we that much different from many other countries? What sets us apart? How have we become both the master and victim of such enormous amounts of violence? This is not a film about gun control. It is a film about the fearful heart and soul of the United States, and the 280 million Americans lucky enough to have the right to a constitutionally protected Uzi.

Bowling for Columbine was the first documentary film accepted into competition at the Cannes Film Festival in 46 years. The Cannes jury unanimously awarded it the 55th Anniversary Prize. From a look at the Columbine High School security camera tapes to the home of Oscar-winning NRA President Charlton Heston, from a young man who makes homemade napalm with *The Anarchist's Cookbook* to the murder of a six-year-old girl by another six-year-old, *Bowling for Columbine* is a journey through America, and through our past, hoping to discover why our pursuit of happiness is so riddled with violence.

AUTOUR DU FILM

1 – Le réalisateur

Michael Moore is the award-winning director of the ground-breaking documentary *Roger & Me*, which became the largest-grossing non-fiction film of all time, and the creator and host of the Emmy-winning series TV Nation and the *Awful Truth*. His latest film is *Bowling for Columbine*. He lives in Michigan.

2 – Questions posées au réalisateur sur *Bowling for Columbine* :

Q. Why is the movie called *Bowling for Columbine*?

A. First off, let me make it clear that this is not a bowling movie. Bowling fans will be disappointed if they come expecting to see a number of exciting bowling maneuvers.

It is also not a movie about the Columbine tragedy, although that sad event is revisited briefly in the film.

The title is taken from the little-known fact that the two killers, Dylan and Eric, were supposed to be in bowling class at Columbine High School on the morning of the murders. At least five witnesses, including their teacher, told the police that they saw one or both boys that morning at the bowling alley for their first hour class. Some school and law enforcement officials later maintained that the two boys skipped that class that morning yet no other witness has come forward to say they saw Eric and Dylan anywhere else that morning.

One reason the film is called *Bowling For Columbine* is that, after the massacre, all the pundits and experts started blaming all the usual suspects that are wheeled out for blame whenever a school shooting occurs-evil rock music (in this case Marilyn Manson), violent video games, and bad parenting.

My point is that those scapegoats make about as much sense as blaming bowling. After all, Eric and Dylan were bowlers, they took bowling class at Columbine-was bowling responsible for their evil deeds? If they bowled that morning, did the bowling trigger their desire to commit mass murder? Or, if they skipped their bowling class that morning, did that bring on the massacre? Had they bowled, that may have altered their mood and prevented them from picking up their guns. As you can see, this is all nonsense, just as it is nonsense to blame Marilyn Manson. The title suggests other metaphors for the state of the nation which are best left to the viewers and their imagination.

Q. Is that bank that hands out guns for real?

A. Yes. North Country Bank (with branches throughout Northern Michigan) offers you a wide choice of guns when you open up a certificate of deposit account. In effect, they are giving you all of the interest the account will earn in advance in the form of a gun. The bank is also an authorized federal arms dealer so they can do the quick background check right there at the bank. I put \$1,000 in a long-term account, they did the background check, and, within an hour, walked out with my new Weatherby-just as you see it in the film. (I did have a choice of getting a pair of golf clubs or a grandfather clock, but they didn't have either of those hanging on the wall like they did those three rifles). I learned about the bank's gun offer from an ad in the local paper that showed a gun across the top with the heading, " More Bang for Your Buck" from North Country Bank. I still have the account and the gun to this day (though I plan to legally "auction" off the gun for charity, and creatively have it destroyed-more on that later!).

Q. Are you really a member of the NRA?

A. Yes. I currently hold a "Life Membership." I was a junior member and won the NRA Marksman Award when I was a teenager (back when the NRA was known as a gun safety and sportsman organization). I went hunting with the neighborhood kids but there were never any guns in our house. After Columbine, I decided that I would run against Charlton Heston for the presidency of the NRA. If elected, my plan was to try to return the NRA to a gun safety organization, instead of its current agenda of gun fanaticism. The rules said that to run for president, you had to be a member for the past five years or buy a lifetime membership for \$750. And that's what I did. But after a while I realized this endeavor was going to take too much time, so I decided to focus all my attention on the movie I was making.

Q. When you went into the bedroom with James Nichols and he cocked his gun, what were you thinking?

A. That this was really a bad decision on my part and that the gun could go off any second.

Q. How did you convince Lockheed to let you in their missile factory in Littleton?

A. Well, first of all, the Lockheed PR people would disagree with your use of the term, "missile." They now call their Titan and Atlas missiles on which nuclear warheads were once (and still are but in less numbers) attached, "rockets." That's because the Lockheed rockets now take satellites into outer space. Some of them are weather satellites, some are telecommunications satellites, and some are top secret Pentagon projects (like the ones that are launched as spy satellites and others which are used to direct the launching of the nuclear missiles should the USA ever decide to use them).

Lockheed Martin is the largest defense contractor in the United States. They gave us the MX missile and are now heavily involved in developing the nutty Star Wars missile defense shield. They have five facilities in and around the Littleton and Denver area and they are the #1 private employer in the school district that contains Columbine High School.

How did I get their permission to film there? I threatened them with bombing, of course.

Q. Did the United States really do all that stuff in the Wonderful World section?

A. Yes, we did. You can read more about it here. More updates will be posted there in the coming weeks.

Q. How did you get the security camera footage of the Columbine shooting?

A. We asked for it, and the sheriff's office sent it to us.

Q. The teacher we see on the footage as he dives through the cafeteria-was he OK?

A. Yes. We do not show anyone being shot or killed at Columbine in the movie.

Q. Did Columbine High School give you permission to film inside the school?

A. No. So we just walked in and filmed the empty hallways. It is very easy for anyone to just walk right in to the school. There is virtually no security still at the school.

Q. How did you get a tape of all those all calls the day of the Columbine massacre?

A. The sheriff's office provided a CD-Rom to the press of selected phone calls but tried to block the rest from being heard. We unscrambled them and were surprised to hear how many media outlets were tying up the emergency lines that day with their demands that they talk to "someone live on the air." Calling 911 without a legitimate emergency is a crime.

Q. Why is Denver the center of so many weapons of mass destruction?

A. There is nothing unusual about this. We are a nation that had, at one point, 40,000 nuclear warheads. You could pick many, many other areas of the country and show similar activities taking place.

PISTES PÉDAGOGIQUES (DESTINÉES À DES TERMINALES TOUTES SÉRIES)

1 – Avant la projection

Certains documents que l'on peut trouver dans le manuel *XL Tles* peuvent servir pour travailler sur la question soulevée par le droit au port d'armes qui figure dans la Constitution américaine.

P. 42/43 : double page sur le droit au port d'armes.

P.46/47 : article sur le film *Bowling for Columbine* 'gun violence in the US'.

Ces activités permettront aux élèves de mieux appréhender le film et de faire le point sur leurs connaissances concernant ce sujet.

2 – Pendant la projection

Demander aux élèves de trouver la réponse aux deux questions que se pose le réalisateur tout au long du film :

How come American people own guns and use them so much?

Why is gun culture so important in the USA?

Demander aux élèves de choisir la partie du documentaire qui les a impressionnés le plus et d'en parler en classe.

3 – Après la projection

Différentes activités sont possibles selon le temps accordé à cette séquence, le type d'élèves et le choix du support.

1. XL : p.31 article sur le massacre à Columbine High School.

2. Broadways TL ES/S : p. 99 vignette humoristique sur Charlton Heston.

3. A partir du DVD, possibilité d'étudier certaines scènes. Voici quelques suggestions :

Interview des deux lycéens : DJ et Trent

Montrer l'opposition entre le discours de Charlton Heston après le massacre et celui du père d'une des victimes (rhétorique, arguments apportés...).

Interview du chanteur Marylin Manson

Partie du documentaire montrant le rôle joué par les médias dans l'exacerbation de la peur.

Le dessin animé retraçant de façon humoristique l'histoire de l'Amérique.

4. Broadways Tle L : p. 104 poème 'the hero'. Pourrait servir de conclusion assez générale à la séquence.

ÉVALUATIONS (SUGGESTIONS)

Compréhension écrite à partir de l'article 'A gun culture' extrait de Broadways Tle L p. 101.

Expression écrite :

- description d'une affiche (exemple : p.103 Broadways Tle L)

- essai dans lequel les élèves pourraient exprimer leur opinion sur la violence armée ou sur le film.