

# Film highlights global warming issue



Al Gore's documentary film *An Inconvenient Truth* is a big hit in the States and brings home the climate change in our world due to global warming.



# Grim message for our planet

“MY NAME is Al Gore and I used to be the next president of the United States.”

As an opening line to a film, it isn't bad and shows a dry wit that many people didn't realise Al Gore had when he was a candidate for the US presidency in 2000. It is a line that is heard at the start of an important new film, involving Al Gore, entitled *An Inconvenient Truth*.

The documentary film, which has been a surprising hit in the United States, grossing more than \$30 million to date, shows what has been happening in Al Gore's life since he controversially lost that presidential election to George W Bush.

What he has been doing is delivering lectures on the dangers posed by global warming. It is a lecture he has delivered all over the



By **DAN BOYLE**

world on more than 1,000 occasions.

On the surface, this doesn't sound like the plot for a very entertaining film — a grey man standing in a lecture theatre speaking to a Powerpoint presentation. But what makes the film work is the subject that is being discussed and the surprising amount of passion that is invested in arguing why the subject is an important issue and why action needs to be taken now.

Since his election defeat, Al Gore has become a born-again environmentalist. He would claim this is something he has always been. However, few can say that he approached these issues with anything like the same fer-

vour when he was Vice-President of the United States to Bill Clinton.

Al Gore has since committed himself to inform as many people as possible of the risks that are already being posed by global warming and how these effects are likely to get worse, unless the United States and Western Europe begin to change their ways. In this film, he largely succeeds.

Facts are piled one on top of the other. Ten of the world's highest average temperatures have occurred since 1985. The number of category four and five hurricanes has more than doubled in the last 30 years alone. Ice flows from the Arctic and the Antarctic have

more than doubled in the last 10 years alone. Viruses that previously could not exist at higher altitudes can now infect people at higher and higher heights. Animals and plants species are disappearing at a faster rate than at any time in recorded history.

These are only the effects we are aware of now. If the trends continue what we could see are global sea levels rising by more than 20ft, with the loss of shelf ice in Greenland and Antarctica, devastating coastal areas worldwide.

Heat waves will be more frequent and more intense. Droughts and wildfires will occur more often. The Arctic Ocean could be ice-free by 2050. More than a million species worldwide could be driven to extinction by 2050.

Faced with such a hopeless collection of facts and predictions *An Inconvenient Truth*

could have been a very depressing film. What saves it from becoming totally dismal is the optimism that Al Gore shows in highlighting what solutions are needed, and how those solutions can be brought about.

I would urge anyone who wants to better understand the problems we face because of global warming to go to see this film, and having seen it to encourage as many others as possible to see it. The Green Party has organised special showings throughout the country, including one in Cork yesterday.

Maybe together, we can begin to turn back the tide of this most problem facing the planet today.

*An Inconvenient Truth* is showing at the Kino Cinema. See [www.kinocinema.net](http://www.kinocinema.net)

● Dan Boyle is Green Party TD for Cork South Central



**ROBERT O'SHEA**

MOST of the time it's better to keep your trap shut.

Take politics. Obfuscation trumps glacier-mint-like transparency every time. It is a lesson I guess you learn early in your political career and then run with it.

Bertie Ahern hasn't been off the front pages for a few days now, but he still has managed to reveal as little as possible about the money his friends gave him when he was Minister for Finance in 1993, information that was leaked last week.

The Taoiseach, who told the Dáil in 1997 that "it is quite unacceptable that a member of Dáil Éireann, and in particular a Cabinet member and Taoiseach, should be personally supported in his personal lifestyle by gifts made to him personally", is now, nine years later, telling us his own personal lifestyle is "none of our business".

Fair enough. This is the way things are supposed to be. Journalists dig up alleged dirt. Politician tries to squirm away from it. Newspapers try to squash politician. Politician keeps his mouth shut until it all blows over/decides it is time to step down from public sphere to pursue opportunities in the private sector, where he could have made a pretty penny more if he hadn't been so loyal to his constituents.

What you don't do, is what the Hungarian prime minister did this week, say that you lied.

When it comes to politics, honesty is never the best policy.

The result? Riots in Budapest.

Politicians never lie. They "present a different viewpoint", "realise that they may have been mistaken", and, perhaps, "on mature recollection" they might "remember" things they didn't "remember" earlier.

There are many preferred options to saying you lied. You forgot. You were drunk at the time. You are a moron. Alien beings kidnapped you and replaced you with an identical alien who actually told those lies before returning to his home planet.

All these are favourable and less damaging.

If every politician were to follow the Hungarian prime minister's example, what function would journalists have? If politicians suddenly became honest then we'd be forced to fill our pages with celebrity

tittle-tattle and excessive sports coverage and where would the world be then?

No, us journalists are here to tell the truth; to point towards bulls\*\*t and hand out the clothes pegs.

Take the Ryder Cup. There was Bertie afterwards giving a speech about how fantastic the joust between the Europeans and the US was and how the tournament showed Ireland for the great country that it is.

I'll tackle the last point first. Ireland is mad and weird and most of us who have grown up here will always love it; there's money flowing through it, but mostly to the same pockets and not always fairly, and there's a long way to go — and we know in our hearts we'll probably never get there — before we become a great country.

So no, I am not proud to be Irish this morning because a lot of well-off people cheered loudly at a golf tournament.

Now to the competition itself. For me, the Ryder Cup has lost something. Specifically, it has lost me almost a full week's wages. Yes, I backed the Yanks, and no, I don't feel unpatriotic for doing so, just stupid.

The win was a fine sporting achievement. Europe played brilliant golf and they pasted the Americans for a second successive time. I didn't get to see much of the first two days because of work and hangover commitments, but the Sunday, the real Ryder Cup day, was an anti-climax again.

No matter what you think of American behaviour at Brookline seven years ago, that comeback was one of the best by a sports team many of us have ever witnessed. That, and the Bel-fry three years later, is what the Ryder Cup is supposed to be about.

While it was nice to see Darren Clarke skulling back a pint, the near-saintly Harrington guzzling champagne and Paul McGinley throwing souvenirs (jumper, golf shoes, potted plants) to the crowd, the competition is nothing without, er, competition.

But the tournament was a positive showcase for what Ireland has to offer and we can expect thousands more American golfers heading for these shores each year. Well, at least there's that.

● Ryder Cup TV review — see page 63.