Salinger, the movie

A full-length documentary comes to light following the elusive author’s death

By Alex Beam
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Hope springs, etc.

Only the most hardened cynic and Kennedyphobe could resist the journalism and sentiment of Larry Shore and Tami Gold’s marvelous 55-minute documentary, “RFK in the Land of Apartheid: A Ripple of Hope.” I could not resist. I came to the movie with uncleans hands; I wanted to see how Margaret Marshall, the Supreme Judicial Court chief justice who gave us gay marriage, looked when she was an activist, anti-apartheid student in South Africa in the 1960s. (Pretty darned bold is the answer to that question.) But I left uplifted.

“RFK” tells the story of Senator Robert Kennedy’s five-day trip to segregated South Africa in 1966. What was unclear, and fascinating, to me was: What was in it for him? No American media accompanied Kennedy on his jaunt (there were a few US correspondents stationed in South Africa), and this was long before satellite-enabled jabberrers like Wolf Blitzer could comment on “live feeds” from anywhere in the world.

“There were enormous risks for him in this trip,” the South African-born Shore told me, speaking by telephone from Weston, Conn. “It took courage to barnstorm South Africa with zero security. Also it could have looked like grandstanding; his critics say he went to try and win the black vote in the US, but I don’t think he was planning to run for president then. He went because he was invited, and because he was appalled by the injustice of apartheid.”

During the visit, Kennedy delivered his famous “ripple of hope” speech (“It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. . .”). at Cape Town University. A lengthy excerpt from the speech is engraved on his tombstone at Arlington National Cemetery.

The DVD may be available for sale soon, and I hope the producers close a deal to show it on public TV. Shore says he’ll send you a copy, if you like. He can be reached through the website www.rfkoffilm.org.

One more!
The mediocre documentary “Beer Wars” is now available online on demand from every major cable company in this area. Or you can download it from iTunes or Netflix.

Why would you want to see this? Well, you probably missed it on its one-day theatrical “release” last year. There is some footage of local suds celebs Jim Koch (Sam Adams) and Rhonda Kullman (Edison light). Maybe you are into beer, or the Clydesdales - who knows?

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