

## film reviews

# Inconvenient principles

A new film about Jimmy Carter paints the former President as humble and devout. Does it go deep enough, asks **Wendy Ide**

Jimmy Carter Man from Plains  
n/c, 125 minutes ★★★★★

A Walk into the Sea  
n/c, 75 minutes ★★★★★

The Cool School  
n/c, 86 minutes ★★☆☆☆

The Banishment  
12A, 150 minutes ★★☆☆☆

Wild Child  
12A, 98 minutes ★★☆☆☆

Little Box of Sweets  
tbc, 90 minutes ★★☆☆☆

In many ways a sister film to *An Inconvenient Truth*, Jonathan Demme's documentary **Jimmy Carter Man from Plains** is an affectionate and admiring portrait of a politician who, like Al Gore, became more idealistic and effective on the world stage once he left office. President Carter is portrayed as humble, folksy and devout; he's also endlessly patient when dealing with the controversy surrounding his latest book, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*. Carter's warm interactions with members of the American public are unexpectedly moving, but the focus on the Palestine book makes it harder for the film to get to know the man.

Two other documentaries are released this week at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London. **A Walk into the Sea**, by Esther

Robinson, is the better of the two. It traces the fate of Robinson's uncle, Danny Williams, a film-maker and sometime lover of Andy Warhol, who disappeared mysteriously in 1966. The cold, cruel world that surrounded Warhol seems culpable in the loss of this talented young man's life, as it was in so many others. **The Cool School**, meanwhile, is a history of the LA art scene which will be most interesting for those who are involved in it.

The Russian director Andrei Zvyagintsev fails to match the promise of his exceptional debut feature *The Return* with his sophomore picture **The Banishment**. While the heavenly rays of the Almighty Himself could not have done a more exquisite job lighting

the film, its beauty doesn't compensate for the sparse, slow and unrewarding story. The movie starts with a thrilling chase through the rain-washed streets of an unnamed city. But this turns out to be the only excitement in a film that spends the next two hours watching a family sullenly glower at each other.

The premise of **Wild Child** (below) sounds like something Boris Johnson might propose: cure teen delinquency with fresh air, lashings of ginger ale and plenty of lacrosse. The wild child is Emma Roberts (niece of Julia), playing a ghastly Malibu princess transposed to a British girls' school. It's *Mean Girls* meets *Malory Towers* and as such it's

strictly for a tween girl audience.

Sugar-coated and naive, **Little Box of Sweets** is an Indian coming-of-age story that feels firmly mired in the colonial melodrama of the Merchant Ivory era. The writer/director Meneka Das also casts herself as the lead character, Asha, a servant girl with academic ambitions. Her abilities in all three jobs are a little overstretched. ●

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*Wild Child is Mean Girls meets Malory Towers*  
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