



BBC World Update, April 17, 2009. The following is an excerpt transcription of BBC World Service Radio interview with filmmaker Meaghan Kimball on her documentary *Blau Jeans*, conducted by Dan Damon.

Listen to the full interview: http://mcsilver.net/Blau_Jeans.mp3

DAN: Meaghan Kimball is the American documentary filmmaker who made the film *Blau Jeans* and it premieres in Berlin tomorrow. I asked her first to tell me the things that Germans love about Americans.

MEAGHAN: Germans are very fond of the American optimism. This is a quality that is distinctly American, that Germans really admire, and in their history, a quality that they really welcomed. They love our confidence, and our friendliness, as people, but also in our culture, in our movies, the optimism, the happy ending, all of this is something they really admire.

DAN: And what really turns them off?

MEAGHAN: Our self-absorption. Our sense of just only being curious about ourselves within our borders. Being presumptuous about our culture, that everyone does have our cultural references, everyone does understand our language and speak our language. Our arrogance too, our presumptuousness in culture, as people, but also in our politics, kind of arrogance, and ignorance.

DAN: Germans are not arrogant then?

MEAGHAN: (laughs) Yes they have their own--I guess we could have another conversation about that too! (laughs)

DAN: When you started the project what did you expect and what were the surprises, really, when you got to the end of it?

MEAGHAN: Well, when I started the project. I really began it as a cultural documentary, to kind of explore how American culture has had an effect in German and European psyche, in their lives, growing up, the movies, the songs, and I was really surprised to really just learn how immensely influential it has been to them. They knew all of our songs, they could recite our TV shows, they could reference our movies, just like Americans could. I was expecting the anti-Americanism, just because it was so evident during the Bush administration. What surprised me as someone from my generation was the fondness they had for America in the past. I interviewed multi generational people, but really understanding, as a younger new generation person, why people really did love America in the past, that nostalgic magical feeling of Post-World War II. These are things that I had not been directly exposed to, so that was a nice thing to learn, but also to recognizing that it is not like that now. It is a love of the past.

DAN: Was it anti-Bushism or was it anti-Americanism that you were looking at?

MEAGHAN: Well, that was another reason why I did the documentary. This big blob of anti-Americanism, and breaking it down, what is what? What, I really learned is that it truly is more of a political issue, that the cultural issue is not as strong in anti-Americanism, but our government does monumentally influence how people receive our country.