

"Adaptation." (2002) (review: May 23, 2003)

Everyone in this movie is utterly loathsome. Condescending and bereft of decency or selflessness, I'm surprised the real-life Susan Orlean and John Laroche cooperated as they come off as especially vile. More disgusting were the negative stereotypes the Seminole Indians are saddled with. So much for Hollywood being the champion of native peoples.

Contrary to what he believes, Charlie Kaufman isn't *The Second Coming*, but a hack shamelessly reinventing the wheel. He could not figure out how to adapt Orlean's book, and if he cared half as much about the book as "Charlie" swears he does, he would have admitted defeat. But because he is too much of an egomaniac to admit his limitations, Kaufman unleashed this mess onto an undeserving world, contriving a ludicrous "story" about loser "Charlie", who is struggling with writer's block, and his loser twin brother "Donald", who badgers him relentlessly. And leave it to the loons who vote for the Oscars to nominate Kaufman AND his imaginary twin for Best Adapted Screenplay!

When Orlean first talks to Laroche, she jots on her pad "delusions of grandeur". The perfect description of Kaufman and his creation.

"The Age of Innocence" (1993) (review: February 7, 2006)

Daniel Day-Lewis is a strange-looking man. Hollow cheeks. Slits for eyes. Square chin. Jowls that won't quit. He has flat hands, and long, spindly fingers webbed with veins. Nothing about Day-Lewis screams "macho". And the harder he tries to act he-mannish, the more he looks like Maria Shriver!

Day-Lewis has the prerequisite burr up his ass, but his Archer is a wuss. I actually laughed when he kissed Ellen's feet. The only thing more ridiculous was how she kept telling him how needy she was, then leveled a stare that could freeze Hell!

Winona Ryder seemed so intent on making May a martyr, she failed to convey the knowing underneath. After all, May was born and raised for the job. When she tells Archer she told Ellen she was preggers, she doesn't let on that she knows she's just fucked him up, fucked him up good! So when their son Ted (why his name was changed from Dallas is not for us to ponder) tells Archer May thinks Archer is such a great guy, he gave up what he wanted for appearances, it's another cheat.

Another thing that got me was how Mrs. Mingott had all this power when she got it by marrying it. And why does she back Ellen, but tells the far more-virtuous Mrs. Beaufort to take a hike?

I couldn't understand why Archer and Ellen felt trapped. Why didn't they go West, where no one gives a shit and you can make it up as you go along? Yeah, I know that's not in the book, but at least it would have made me feel I hadn't wasted 2 1/2 hours of my life.

"Alexander" (2004) (review: September 19, 2005)

The guy getting beaten with a severed head was cool; the elephant getting medieval on Hephaestion was just silly! Throw in Anthony Hopkins as the Travelocity Gnome, Val Kilmer as The Town Drunk, Angelina Jolie as Boris Badenov, Rosario Dawson as Catwoman, and Colin Farrell as Shirley Temple, and you've got one hum-dinger of a snooze!

Some think Oliver Stone is drawing parallels between what Alexander wrought in ancient Persia and what Bush has begat in modern Persia, but that's being kind! His Alexander is a Mama's Boy with Daddy Issues. How this sniveling brat conquered the known world with his Abercrombie and Fitch Army is beyond me. And he has such a pathetic need to be liked, he wants to bring the world under his boot so that he can free it? Right! The real Alexander was nothing but a tyrant in liberator's clothing, just like Ollie's buddy, Fidel Castro.

"Amarcord" (1973) (review: April 1, 2008)

I didn't mind that there was zero plot as I did everyone in this fog-riddled acid trip were utterly deplorable. *"Amarcord"* reinforces the stereotype of Italians as dumb, vulgar, horny grease-balls who drink like fish, swear like sailors, eat like pigs, and scream at each other at the top of their lungs! Even the priest has sex on the brain, daring the "hero" not to pleasure himself at the sight of the skanks which blanket the town! Then, a heaping helping of racism (the Ethiopians) is thrown in for good measure! We're supposed to feel sorry for the asshole dad because he shits his pants when he's interrogated? Nope! The only way the Mrs. can get away from this prick is to die, and he doesn't have the decency to pretend to mourn! Fortunately for Federico Fellini, the townsfolk didn't have sense to toss him into that bonfire!

"The Anniversary Party" (2001) (review: July 10, 2007)

One IMDb poster wrote this film "serves as a take of how seriously the Hollywood 'citizens' take themselves to the point where they can't function in their own lives without something industrial". What does that say about Alan Cumming and Jennifer Jason Leigh, who are responsible for this clap trap? "We're whiny, indulgent, self-absorbed, elitist twerps, but we KNOW we're whiny, indulgent, self-absorbed, elitist twerps"?

Cumming and Leigh as a couple was even more laughable than him admiring the flat-chested Gwyneth Paltrow's "great tits"! With the Latina help stashed in the kitchen as though they were being grounded, their lily-white employers and lily-white guests get blasted on Ecstasy

while spewing the most insipid filth within earshot of the kids one couple foolishly hauled along with them! Steve Rhodes called the scene where Phoebe Cates tells Leigh that once you have children, you can't commit suicide because "kids rob you of that option" "a bitingly true commentary on parenthood". I call it idiotic! Ernest Hemingway, Sylvia Plath, Kurt Cobain, and Diane Arbus were parents. And they committed suicide! If I were the dog, I'd run away from this house, too!

"Australia" (2008) (review: November 1, 2009)

While I was scratching my head over the "warning" to Aboriginal viewers that opens this so-called film, I realized that the boy who hops on the horse owned by the guy that was just shish-kabobed knew the guy that was just shish-kabobed because he lives on the estate of the guy that was just shish kabobed! Moreover, King George knew that the guy he just shish-kabobed was no threat to the boy! So, now I was left wondering: why was the guy shish-kabobed, why didn't the boy tell anyone that the guy got shish-kabobed, why didn't anyone notice that the boy was riding the guy's horse, why was the boy and all of the other characters on crack, and why didn't King George shish-kabob hack Baz Luhrmann instead?!

"The Avengers: Age of Ultron" (2015) (review: November 26, 2016)

A few months ago, Joss Whedon, the hack behind this brain-dead venture, launched an on-line campaign to save humanity from Donald Trump. Most of those he recruited for this pitiful exercise in self-importance are in this brain-dead venture. That's all I kept thinking of while watching this pitiful exercise in self-importance. That, and why is it that every time these pitiful excuses for super-heroes so much as fart, they cause billions in damages? The Avengers are like the plague. Only worse.

As did George Lucas, Marvel Comics creator Stan Lee sold his "kids" to Disney for billions. Unlike Lucas, he has been all-too happy to be The House of Mouse's bitch, as evidenced by his cameos in every one of these brain-dead ventures. Here, he inexplicably shows up as a party guest donning a Vietnam Veteran cap. No way did Lee or his cameo served in Vietnam, but as the man will turn 94 on December 28th, I'll cut him some slack.

Anyhoo, in this brain-dead venture, one of Tony Stark's brain-dead inventions has gone rouge and is hell-bent on taking over the world by picking on a bunch of poor little Eastern Europeans and turning a good chunk of their little hamlet into a floating whatchamacallit. To add insult to injury, Mr. Rouge is all glib and slangy -- just like Whedon!

The House of Mouse has chained Lee's and Lucas's creations to an assembly line to churn out mind numbing, soul-sucking dreck. Only thing more-obscene is that very-talented people (Whedon excluded) choose to whore themselves out to Disney for big, fat paychecks.

"The Aviator" (2004) (review: October 14, 2005)

After his former boss became a barking-mad recluse, Noah Dietrich wrote a book claiming that he was the power behind the throne upon which sat Howard Robard Hughes, Jr. That is bunk, but Martin Scorsese bought it. No hint of the genius who parlayed his inheritance into a multi-billion dollar empire. Simon Ramo, Dean Woolridge, and Tex Thornton each cut their teeth at Hughes; Dietrich didn't find them, Hughes did. Yet Marty couldn't manage to squeeze this into his opus.

This is a retread of *"A Beautiful Mind"*. Like John Nash, Hughes was a racist, antisemitic prick who carried on with both sexes. It was perverse to make Hughes this Great Hero, complete with semi-happy ending. Even more perverse was the shot of the projector making the big creep a Christ figure.

The casting was horrid! My boxer looks more like Ava Gardner than Kate Beckinsale! And I was constantly distracted by Cate Blanchett's mile-wide mouth and hoary vocals. Was she playing Katharine Hepburn or Martha Raye? Howard bought Kate *"The Philadelphia Story"*, the work which turned her career around, after she left him and before she met Spencer Tracy. Yet Scorsese couldn't manage to squeeze any of this into his opus (or get the facts straight). But when Blanchett exits, *"The Aviator"* loses its pop. And Leonardo DiCaprio has this thing for screwing his forehead into knots. Does his forehead have an agent, and how much does it get per knot?

Hughes was married when he came to Hollywood, but the Mrs. is MIA. Scorsese really drops the ball here. Ella Rice was Hughes's college sweetheart. Exploring their relationship would have opened a whole-new side to Hughes up. What made him want to conquer aviation, movies, and golf? Your guess is as good as mine. This would have been a masterpiece if it had been written by a writer who could actually write, then started at minute 105 when Poor Little Rich Boy slams his shiny new toy into a Beverly Hills neighborhood. The previous 104 minutes are a bore.

"Bad Santa" (2003) (review: December 11, 2003)

Willie is a loser whose only redeeming quality is he's a crack safe cracker. Marcus is a foul-mouthed midget with even fewer redeeming qualities. For the past six years, they have hired themselves out as a cut-rate department store Santa/Elf act so they can rob the place blind on Christmas Eve. But in order to make it to Christmas Eve, Marcus must keep Willie in line, which is getting harder and harder to do, because when he doesn't show up blasted, get medieval on Rudolph, swear at the kids, or soils himself, he's gifting "stocking stuffers" to large-sized ladies. Their new boss throws over a perfectly-good Santa for our dynamic duo, only to find himself stuck when he realizes that firing an African-American little person

would not be good for public relations. Then there's Sue, a bartender with a Santa fetish; Gin, the mall's security chief who gets wise to our heroes; and Thurman, a friendless and disturbed boy who lives with his senile grandmother and thinks that Willie is the real Saint Nick! Yet on its giddy E-ticket ride to Hell, something even worse than Willie's idea of a tostada happens: "*Bad Santa*" loses its nerve, turning on a plot device totally out of Willie's character, and becomes the very sticky-sweet Christmas story it's sending up!

Unlike Terry Zwigoff's brilliant "*Ghost World*", "*Bad Santa*" is clunky and disjointed. The characters' actions are baffling: Willie berates Thurman, then turns on him when Thurman berates himself. I wonder what Brett Kelly's agent was thinking when he passed the script onto his parents, and what were THEY on when they said yes? What is said at and happens to Thurman is nothing less than child abuse. And Zwigoff legitimizes the abuse by having Thurman taking a page out of Willie's book (after a boxing lesson, which, I must admit, had me laughing silly!) Humbug!

"Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice" (2016) (review: November 27, 2016)

Pity the poor schmo tasked with having to peddle this steaming pile of shit. First, begin with the "positives": 4 washed-up Oscar winners (Ben Affleck, Kevin Costner, Holly Hunter, Jeremy Irons), and 4 washed-up Oscar nominees (Amy Adams, Jesse Eisenberg, Laurence Fishburne, Diane Lane). Rave that there is a showdown between Batman (Affleck) and Superman (Henry Cavill, who was born washed-up). Then, mention there is a blob AND this really hot chick (Gal Gadot) who does battle with the blob! Yeah, that'll make the Fanboys cream their pants and fork over Daddy's hard-earned \$12!

This is a sequel to "*Man of Steel*" (2013), which left the Earthlings distrusting Superman (after he proclaimed himself ruler of the world in *Action Comics* #311, then renounced his American citizenship in *Action Comics* #900, who can blame them?) There was much anticipation in Fanboy Land for this steaming pile of shit as Superman and Batman are such good pals, Batman keeps a ring of Kryptonite in case Superman becomes a danger to himself and/or the universe (*Action Comics* #654).

Anyhoo, Lex Luthor's demon spawn has decided it'd be fun to pit our heroes against each other in a battle to the death. To get Superman to play along, Demon Spawn kidnaps Superman's Earth mom, and says he'll kill her if Superman doesn't kill Batman. After Demon Spawn blows up the Capitol, where Superman is appearing before some Senate committee to answer for something, everybody wants to kill Superman, including Bruce Wayne, who blames the Man of Steel for the 9/11-like collapse of Wayne Tower. Yet everyone is ready to canonize Superman after he takes one for the team? Spare me!

Superman can hear Bruce yap to Alfred, and Lois Lane drowning, but he can't hear Earth Mom whimper as a bad guy gets ready to torch her? The Batsuit can deflect bullets but not knives? And just as Batman is about to fix Superman's little red cape with a spear of Kryptonite (don't ask), Superman ruins the fun by grunting out Earth Mom's name, which also happens to be Bruce's mom's name? I warned you this was brain-dead!

The best superhero entry I've ever seen is the cartoon "*Batman Beyond*": an aging Bruce Wayne recruits a punk to take over as Batman. It was everything this isn't: imaginative, ambitious, and respectful of the audience's intelligence. As it was made by Warner Bros. and DC Comics, the entities behind Steaming Pile of Shit, I'm sure that was purely unintentional.

"A Beautiful Mind" (2001) (review: February 17, 2003)

If you're going to make a film for grown-ups, treat the audience like grown-ups. But Ron Howard extracts the aspects of John Nash's life he decided we grown-ups couldn't handle. Gone is Nash's racism, snobbery, arrest for indecent exposure, violent behavior, affairs with both sexes, the woman and son he abandoned, the voices that told him aliens were transmitting messages to him via the *New York Times*, the stays at various loony bins, his attempts to renounce his citizenship, the fact Alicia divorced him in 1963 and their son is schizophrenic. In short, everything about Nash which made him such an enigmatic yet despicable human being has been scrubbed clean.

The whitewashing doesn't end there. Parcher calling Joe McCarthy "an idiot" and proclaiming the atomic bombs "evaporated 150,000 people" ("conveniently" omitting what lead to said "evaporation", namely, the atrocities Japan committed during World War II) has no business being in here as such "opinions" were totally foreign to Americans, even those who are figments of one's imagination.

Russell Crowe as Rain Man and Jennifer Connelly as the Long-Suffering Wife doesn't tell us what kept (and keeps) Nash and Alicia together. The cruel irony that a man who finessed a mathematical theory of rational behavior should succumb to insanity is totally lost on Opie and fellow hack Akiva Goldsman. Instead, they suggest that if you learn to "ignore" your imaginary friends, then you will be "cured" of whatever ails you.

"Bee Movie" (2007) (review: February 4, 2009)

When I saw Jerry Seinfeld dump on the Subway sandwich guy on his "comeback" appearance on David Letterman a couple of years back, it confirmed what I had always suspected: he is a mean, petty misanthrope (as is Letterman, for that matter). The scene between Barry and Bee Larry King proves Seinfeld is an antisemitic Semite, too boot! I was wondering how Barry

knows so much about the world and humans without ever having been outside the hive until he informed Bee Larry Human Larry is hunched-over, squinty-eyed, and Jewish!

Another alleged comic who has utter contempt for his people is Chris Rock. How he voiced the mosquito reminded me of one of his routines, a revolting diatribe contrasting Negroes to Niggers. Had a white actor voiced the mosquito as Rock does, he'd be blackballed!

More idiotic than a man being jealous of a bee (don't get me started on a non-human practicing law!), why didn't Vanessa warn Barry of the ramifications of winning his lawsuit? Yeah, she's a dingbat (proof Seinfeld is also a raving misogynist!), but she knows what will happen if bees don't pollinate (then again, maybe not). And why can't the bears sue Barry for defamation? Too bad Sting and Ray Liotta can't sue Stink-feld for dumping on them!

"Behind the Camera: The Unauthorized Story of 'Charlie's Angels'" (2004) (TV) (review: March 9, 2004)

The *"Three's Company"* pic was everything this isn't: it had pace, pop, actors who weren't afraid to chew the scenery, and a decent script. This one had me baffled. If Farrah isn't serious about a career, why does she have a manager (and why is he wasting his time)? If Kate and Barney are "artists", why do they sign up for The Mother of All Jiggle Shows? While they got the history right (the poster was released before Farrah got the show), Silverman rejecting pitches for *"Funniest Home Videos"* and *"American Idol"*, and Spelling promising his baby girl Tori that he'll create a show for her someday obviously did not happen.

Spelling is depicted as the show-runner and creator when he was neither. And how he "comes up" with the "idea" for *"Charlie's Angels"* is laughable! How were Spelling and Goldberg allowed to enforce Farrah's oral contract when the others were signed? Why didn't Farrah or Bernstein tell them she was leaving not because she discovered her Inner Diva, but because Lee Majors wanted her to? This is why, when it tries to create conflict by setting Farrah up as the "bad girl" (like Suzanne Somers), it fails because the groundwork was never laid -- that was where the *"Three's Company"* pic delivered.

"Behind the Camera: The Unauthorized Story of 'Three's Company'" (2003) (TV) (review: May 13, 2003)

As I wait for the inevitable *"Friends"* exposé, I caught this last night. In interviews, Joyce DeWitt said that since she was powerless to stop this, she offered to help get it right. Smart move, as everyone, save for her, Don Knotts and Norman Fell, gets roasted. The ABC execs are patronizing scum-suckers who treat the cast as though none of them has a working brain cell, programming genius Fred Silverman is a cigar-chomping mercenary, and John Ritter is a back-stabbing weasel, as opposed to Suzanne Somers, a front-stabbing weasel who goes along

with every "strategic move" her obnoxious and clueless hubby comes up with -- even as he sinks her career! The guy who played Ritter was impressive and the sets were perfect.

"Behind the Candelabra" (2013) (TV) (review: September 12, 2013)

My mother and I watched this during HBO's free-view weekend. She summed it up in one word: "putrid". I would add "putrid piece of shit"! Seeing how Hollywood fancies itself the champion of "gay rights", the giddy delight it has taken in trashing Liberace is baffling. Addicted to drugs and porn? Trolled bath houses? Hated his mother? Bullshit! Liberace was a lot of things, but he was a private man who was devoted to his family. And there is zero proof he and Sonja Henie ever met!

This putrid piece of shit opens with an underage Scott Thorson being picked up by a man at a bar. The two then motor off as Thorson's foster parents waive goodbye, I kid you not! After their first romp, Thorson tells Liberace he likes girls. When Liberace wants to "return the favor", Thorson gets indignant. Liberace greets his mother's death with: "I'm free", yet we never learn why he felt trapped. Why did he demand that Thorson go under the knife? (I remember a photo of them, post-surgery, fascinated and creeped out at the same time). A dying Liberace begs Thorson to not tell anyone how he looked at the end. Needless to say, he didn't keep his promise.

Steven Soderberg, director of this putrid piece of shit, said he will retire at age 50. According to IMDb, he is now working on a mini-series which will wrap after he turns 51. Scott Thorson isn't the only one incapable of keeping a promise.

"Being Bobby Brown" (2005) (TV) (review: July 31, 2005)

Mr. and Mrs. Whitney Houston manage to do the impossible: they make Mr. and Mrs. Britney Spears look deep! Instead of doing something productive, like, say, mow the lawn or help someone less fortunate, they sludge from one hotel to another, blow her fortune, and diss the guy who won't let them borrow his skeedoo (smart man).

While Bobby tries in his own fumbling way (his culinary experiments are a hoot), Whitney is a train-wreck who doesn't pretend to be a gracious human being. She is filmed chowing down, yet goes nuts when a fan wants to take her picture. When she reads about a celebrity in a magazine and "asks" her: "invite me to your wedding" like some nobody, I had to cringe!

These are two dysfunctional and miserable people trapped in a bad marriage. Giving us a tour of their house, Bobby mentions the awards are "mostly my wife's" then, in a classic Freudian slip says: "I have 5 Grammys". No, Bobby, you have 1 Grammy -- which is 1 Grammy more than you deserve!

I felt sorry for their kid. The one time Whitney pays attention to her is when they're shopping and she repeatedly asks for a kiss. Bobbi keeps pushing her away as if to say: "Mom, you're embarrassing me". Too bad her parents weren't embarrassed to put her through this.

"Belgravia" (2020) (TV) (review: April 13, 2020)

Too bad Napoléon lost at Waterloo because he could have done EPIX customers a huge solid and sacked this latest offering from the twits behind *"Downton Abbey"*.

The "big secret" which the Downton Dipshits manage to string along for 5 episodes had me howling: NO man of Bellasis's rank would trick a young girl into believing they are married (and recruit his buddy to "marry" them) unless he wants to annihilate his family's reputation for the next 100 years! And what was in it for him to target Sophia (pronounced "So-FI-ah" -- EXCUSE ME!)? If you are the son of an earl and you have decided to go through life being a cad, have some self-respect! Set your sights on a daughter of a marquess or a duke or - dare I say it! - the king, NOT some girl whose family has just crashed the party! Well, the joke is on Lord Byron Wannabe: he buys it at Waterloo (thanks, Napoléon!). But So-FI-ah dies after giving birth to their son, whom her class-conscientious Mum then has had stashed away like a draw full of Daddy's old *Playboys*.

Byron Wannabe's Mum and Dad (who become the neighbors of So-FI-ah's family at Belgravia – how "convenient") don't have a clue that they have a grandson, which is neither here nor there as the boy's illegitimacy entitles him to squat, which is also neither here nor there because, flash-forward 25 years, and Junior (who has been saddled with the moniker "Charles Pope") owns a cotton mill and is living large. I hope those who stick this dull, overwritten (So-FI-ah could have explained her dilemma to Mum in 3 wordless shots instead of babbling about how Dad gave her his blessings to hook up with Byron Wannabe), ham fisted ridiculousness out won't feel gypped when - "surprise"! - it turns out Junior isn't illegitimate after all! Jane Austen must be spinning in her grave!

"Bewitched" (2005) (review: December 17, 2005)

It is truly sad when three - count 'em, THREE - Oscar winners are this hard-up! Michael Caine and Shirley MacLaine have been whoring themselves out for eons, but that didn't make watching this any less painful, while Nicole Kidman is only one more clunker away from wearing out her welcome. Really, all that's left for her to do at this point is don a latex bodysuit and kick some CGI booty!

As if to "prove" that two hacks are better than one, Nora Ephron recruits her sister and they crib *"Bruce Almighty"* while Will Ferrell does everything except talk out of his no-talent ass!

Anyone notice Jack's manager is a chipmunk-faced midget who strikes a pose every 5 seconds? Any resemblance to a certain Oscar winner's superstar ex-hubby is purely coincidental, I'm sure!

I howled when the producers told Jack it would be hard to find a nobody for Samantha! If Hollywood is chocked with anything, it's nobodies! How is it Ephron can churn out such misogynistic shit but isn't called on it because she is allegedly a woman? Worse, she take a potshot at Dick York, the original Darrin, because she can! Too bad York's estate can't sue. And too bad Isabel couldn't rewind this turkey back into turnaround so someone with talent could have done it justice!

"Beyond the Sea" (2004) (review: July 7, 2007)

It's trendy these days to depict celebrities as loathsome pricks. But Bobby Darin was Kevin Spacey's idol. Why? Judging from this mess, I have no idea! He doesn't use Darin's recordings, and he's too much of an egomaniac to admit someone a lot younger should have played his beloved Bobby. To add insult to injury, Spacey can't be bothered to stick to the facts (Darin made his debut at the Copa before he got married, not after)!

Darin could be an asshole. He treated Connie Francis like shit until her father came after him with a gun! He dumped Sandra Dee because he decided he didn't love her anymore (or she cramped his style, take your pick). But he had moments when he realized the world didn't revolve around him. On their wedding night, Dee revealed that she had been molested by her stepfather for years, which reduced Darin to tears. Had Spacey used that, it would have humanized his hero. Instead, he has Darin charge into the bedroom wielding a sword like a crazed penis, scaring the shit out of his teenage bride! Even weirder is Dee's mother asking Sandy why she isn't trying to get Rock Hudson interested, especially given how "successful" Spacey has been at quashing the rumors about his sexual preference!

The second half is devoted to another Bobby -- Kennedy. Now that he didn't have JFK to kick him around anymore, RFK was now America's Savior, sent to deliver us from Vietnam. Incredibly, Darin and many others bought it. Too bad the Bobbys didn't live to see what happened after Congress left Southeast Asia to the tender mercies of Pol Pot.

I hear Darin and Dee's son is trying to get a film about them off the ground. Let's hope it has something to do with them and nothing to do with Spacey.

"Birth" (2004) (review: June 10, 2005)

The bathtub scene didn't weird me out. Nor did the premise. Scenes go on forever with no payoff, except for Big Sean dropping dead. I was more bothered at how everyone was

congratulating Anna on her engagement when, one look at Joseph, you know she could do a hell of a lot better!

What was it about Big Sean that has Anna paralyzed with grief, especially when Anna learns he was unfaithful? Maybe he was better in the sack than the obnoxious Joseph, which leads me to the loopiest scene I've seen in ages: Joseph flips out during the wedding rehearsal, grabs Little Sean, and drags him around the flat like King Kong with Fay Wray. You're expecting him to throw the kid out or bash his brains against a wall. But, no, he takes him into the dining room, and spansks him! No wonder critics were gaga; it's the kind of movie which validates their own pretentiousness!

Nicole Kidman (channeling Mia Farrow) and Lauren Bacall (having a grand old time for herself) do what they can with this exercise in misogyny (Anna begging Joseph's forgiveness when it should be the other way around)! As for Cameron Bright, as long as there are parts for One-Dimensional Psycho Boys, he will never be out of work.

There have been comparisons between this and *"Eyes Wide Shut"*. Aside from Kidman and migraine-inducing scores, both set up an exquisite game of chicken, only to blink. Little Sean plays Anna for a fool, and director Jonathan Glazer plays the rest of us for chumps.

"Blonde" (2001) (TV) (review: November 13, 2005)

There is nothing positive in this image of Marilyn Monroe. It's disheartening that über feminist Joyce Carol Oates re-imagines her as The Dumbest Whore in Christendom. That said, I was taken with Poppy Montgomery. There are moments you sense she could have hit it out of the park if she had a decent script to work with!

"Blonde" gives you no idea of Monroe's brilliant career or what drove her. Hearing her scream at the Joe DiMaggio stand-in that her work is her life made me laugh, as her "work" consists of "auditioning" for every studio exec in town. And Richard Widmark's heirs ought to sue for the totally fictional scene of Marilyn "auditioning" for him!

If Marilyn Monroe actually was a no-talent bimbo, I wouldn't be writing this. And Oates wouldn't be tripping all the way to the bank!

"Blonde" (2022) (review: October 8, 2022)

It probably goes without saying but had Marilyn Monroe lived the long life as contemporaries Elizabeth Taylor, Joanne Woodward, Shirley MacLaine, and Sophia Loren, she wouldn't have become a multi-gazillion dollar industry. As some wag noted upon learning the 42-year-old Elvis had swiveled his pelvis for the last time: "Good career move".

Indeed, while she was fêted as a legend in her own lifetime, her probable suicide at age 36 made her immortal. And while fanboys and fangirls speculate on what might have been, can you seriously imagine a 50-or-60-or-70-something Marilyn peddling perfume or hawking her actor hubby's food line or re branding herself a New Age Guru or playing herself AND her mother in a mini-series? Me neither. But at least she wouldn't have been the subject of the countless garbage offerings humanity has been bludgeoned with since her death 60 years ago.

As I mulled over this latest garbage offering - garbage "auteur" Andrew Dominik's garbage take on garbage "wordsmith" Joyce Carol Oates's garbage novel *Blonde* - I came across his 2016 garbage draft of this garbage offering. As I noted in my take of garbage network CBS's 2001 garbage take of *"Blonde"*: "There is nothing positive in this image of Monroe. It's disheartening that über feminist Oates re-imagines her as The Dumbest Whore in Christendom". Oates published *Blonde* after Joe DiMaggio died, but while Arthur Miller and Marilyn's first husband James Dougherty were still alive. In Dominik's artsy-fartsy impersonation of von Trier impersonating Lynch, Dougherty is ignored (for which his family must be eternally grateful) as The Dumbest Whore in Christendom is violated over and over, figuratively and literally. Even when she is given agency by hooking up with "Cass" and "Eddy", the ne'er-do-well brats of Charlie Chaplin and Edward G. Robinson, respectively, she is put through the ringer. Why Dominik didn't just go all-out, and have Marilyn flogged and crucified in a vulgar send-up of *"The Passion of the Christ"* is beyond me.

Two things in this garbage offering have the Me Too and Pro-Choice mobs breaking out the pitchforks: Marilyn saying "Daddy" like a broken record; and having a conversation with her unborn child. This will cheese the Man Haters off to no end, but the "Daddy" is one of the few things this garbage offering actually got right. Miller recalled in his autobiography a then-overwhelmed Marilyn calling him "Papa" as she phoned him while making *"Bus Stop"*. A letter she wrote DiMaggio in 1954 and sold by Hunt's Auctions in 2006 begins "My Dad", and in a note to him weeks later, she refers to herself as "your baby". Speaking of, the "baby convo" is a hoot, *"2001: A Space Odyssey"* on crack. By the way, no woman gardens in a summer dress. And even the most amateur of Green Thumb Warriors know to wear gloves before doing battle with those pesky weeds. Upshot is, the real Marilyn was a Green Thumb Warrior who wouldn't have been caught dead doing battle with pesky weeds while wearing a summer dress and no gloves. And this Marilyn has an abortion (complete with "fetus-cam"!), so I honestly don't understand what the NARAL Nuts are bitching about.

Marilyn isn't the only one put through the ringer. In stark contrast to Patricia Richardson's Gladys in the 2001 *"Blonde"*, Julianne Nicholson's Gladys is a wackadoodle with homicidal tendencies. Adrien Brody has been slouching his way toward Miller (pardon, "The Playwright") since *"King Kong"*. I had pegged Bobby Cannavale as DiMaggio (pardon, "The Ex-Athlete") since *"The Station Agent"*. Here, Cannavale is King Kong and Brody is your

standard-issue passive-aggressive prick. The toilet bowls Marilyn pukes her guts out into have more regard for her than "DiMaggio" and "Miller" do.

Which leads me to the most-infamous scene in this garbage offering. John F. Kennedy was assassinated when I was nearly 6 months old, so I never had the reverence for him those who lived through "Camelot" have. And he always struck me as cartoonish: sunk-in beady eyes, plastic hair, square teeth, nasally voice which refused to enunciate words correctly (before you go there, I'm from Massachusetts). The torrid tales of "Camelot" which have dropped since JFK dropped confirm he was the worst sort of garbage human. And I'm surprised no one else caught onto this, but this JFK is the stand-in for Dominik. How else to explain the perverted delight he takes in Marilyn being manhandled throughout his opus, yet never more so than when two Secret Service goons dump her strung-out self in the Presidential Suite to be manhandled by The Prez like an animated sex doll.

For a "performance" in which she manages to degrade both her subject AND herself, Aña de Armas has scored a BAFTA, a Golden Globe, a Screen Actors Guild Award, AND an Oscar nomination! "*¡Felicidades!*" to her management.

"The Blot" (1921) (review: March 17, 2020)

The Griggs live in a really-nice house in a really-nice neighborhood. Dad is a college professor and his daughter is a librarian. Yet we're supposed to buy that the family is so "poverty-stricken", buying tea and fancy cakes forces them to fall behind on the mortgage? Spare me!

What had me wanting to put my head through the TV was the Woe Is Me Act by the Professor and Mrs. Professor. Why is it up to Rich Boy to tell his dad to raise Hell with the Board over the Professor's meager wages? Why doesn't the Professor (whom has tenure, I assume) go to the Board and raise Hell over his meager wages? Why doesn't Mrs. Professor tell the Professor to go to the Board and raise Hell over his meager wages? Why don't we see the other professors go to the Board and raise Hell over their meager wages? Why doesn't the Professor just quit and go to another college? These human doormats allow their circumstances to control them instead of the other way around. To add insult to injury, the title cards are few and far between (and lamely written, too boot). Unless you read lips, you won't know what everyone is blubbering about 90% of the time.

Then there is the "dilemma" facing Librarian and her Three Romeos. Only Rich Boy is proactive in his pursuit of her (ignoring the Society Girl who loves him). Next door neighbor Shoe Boy just stares at her, and by the time Rich Boy's pal Preacher Man decides to make his weak-as-water move, it's too late. The film's final shot is of him walking away, moping.

The premise is as laughable as the idea of the family's reputation being threatened over Mrs. Professor's half hearted attempt to swipe Shoe Boy's mother's chicken. Mrs. Professor loses it when a basket of food containing - you guessed it - a chicken is delivered to the house, courtesy of Rich Boy. Mrs. Professor speculates as much to Librarian, who refuses to eat the subsequent chicken dinner, thinking it's Shoe Boy's Mother's chicken (which she tries later to reimburse Shoe Boy's Mother for); they fall into blubbering sobs after Rich Boy confirms that he sent the chicken! Had this ham fisted virtue-signaling on income inequity not been written and directed by a woman, would critics and film scholars be praising it to the skies? Doubt it.

"The Blue Angel" (1959) (review: June 29, 2007)

What were the executives at Fox smoking when they green lit this?! Bad enough this turkey is stuffed with unnecessary exposition, but the ending destroys the whole point of the story! Folks, it doesn't get any sillier than Sgt. Schultz coming to the rescue!

In the original, Lola-Lola was a heartless bitch, but Marlene Dietrich made her utterly captivating. May Britt, on the other hand, is dull and annoying. And she is tone-deaf! How this got past the film's music director is beyond me! It was Rath's vanity as much as his lust which caused his downfall, but Curd Jürgens is too busy trying to look pathetic.

"Blue Jasmine" (2013) (review: February 13, 2015)

In Woody Allen's *"A Streetcar Named Desire"* rip-off, Blanche DuBois is the stupid, selfish wife of a Mini Madoff who is reduced to living with her sister. Stella and Stanley divorced after Mini Madoff blew through their windfall; both blame Blanche. When Blanche isn't fending off her boss, she's fending off the grease-ball Stella's grease-ball boyfriend sets her up with. She then meets into the only straight guy in San Francisco, passing herself off as an interior decorator, and, wouldn't you know it?, he has a manse waiting for her homey touches.

I never bought Mini Madoff offing himself. How Stella's fling ends is cruel. Blanche has to take a class to learn how to go online? Mini Madoff gets busted right after Blanche drops a dime on him after he admits he took a buddy's au pair to Paris? SMH! By the way, the Hôtel Ritz is renown for its discretion: the idea the management would call Mini Madoff to tell him he forgot his Rolex is laughable!

Having been dumped by The Only Straight Guy In San Francisco after a run-in with Stanley then getting dissed by Mini Madoff's slacker son, Allen leaves Blanche (another hammy turn by Cate Blanchett) babbling on a park bench. Let's hope she stays there.

"Boogie Nights" (1997) (review: March 3, 2008)

Ten minutes into this, and I realized Paul Thomas Anderson knows squat about the porn industry. The power is wielded not by the male performers, who are a dime a dozen, but by the female performers, who approve their on-screen partners. Anderson couldn't be bothered to do any character development, either. Why is Eddie's mother a harpie and his father a wuss? Why would Little Bill (another wuss) marry a nymphomaniac (another harpie)? Why would she marry him? And his "solution" to his woes comes out of absolute nowhere.

How The Colonel's dalliances with underage girls is more repugnant than Jack recruiting an underage boy to have on-camera sex is beyond me. But when The Colonel is thrown into the pokey, Jack suddenly gets a moral compass? Give me a break!

How does the banker know Buck does porn unless he was stupid enough to put that on his application? The doughnut shop scene was so silly and incredulous, I couldn't stop laughing!

Amber wants her kid back, but does zip to show why she should get custody. But not to worry, to Jack, she is still "the foxiest bitch in the whole world". How sweet!

Rollergirl drops out of school because some bozo makes a crude gesture at her, then proves why she is unworthy of the respect she thinks she deserves. To add insult to injury, she gets no "foxiest bitch" kudos from Jack.

One more thing: why do we see Dirk do white girls and only white girls, but Anderson oh-so-modestly cuts away from Reed and his "Chocolate Love" before they get their freak on?

"Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan"
(2006) (review: May 9, 2007)

How does using the plight of Eastern Europeans mock Americans' preconceptions of them? That Sacha Baron Cohen reduces them to nothing but clichés - and paid them a pittance for their cooperation - says a lot more about him than he thinks! I won't give Cohen a pass for his despicable rendering of Jews because he is Jewish. There is such a thing as being an antisemitic Semite! Borat's antisemitism tells me Cohen needs to see a psychiatrist instead of deluging us with his self-loathing.

The skits were obviously staged and were just gross. Again, how are our preconceptions mocked or challenged by Borat jerking off in front of a Victoria's Secret, chasing strangers to kiss them or unleashing a chicken on a train he keeps in a suitcase?

Are we actually to believe Borat has never heard of Jesus? Kazakhstan is 47% Muslim, 44% Russian Orthodox, and 2% Protestant. Guess they've never heard of Jesus, either.

As far as the "outrageous" wrestling scene? Yawn! Why were Borat's naughty bits blacked out but his son's weren't? One more issue for Cohen's shrink to sort out!

Borat speaks Hebrew to Azamat, and Azamat speaks to Borat in Armenian. Huh? In case anyone cares, Kazakh and Russian are spoken in Kazakhstan.

Cohen's "message" is nothing new: America is a cauldron of stupid, and violent sub-humans. This explains why Borat lusts after Canadian Pamela Anderson instead of Texas tart Anna Nicole Smith, who also had tattoos, big fake boobies, and Fruit Loops for brains.

"Bounce" (2000) (review: August 24, 2003)

There is only one other actor besides Tom Cruise who is more self-conscious of the fact he's before a camera, and that's Ben Affleck. His jaw-flexing makes Cruise's facial gymnastics an act of super human restraint! Matching him twitch for twitch is ex best-gal Gwyneth Paltrow, who does the "I can look pained a hell of a lot better than you can" bit every chance she gets!

Why wouldn't Buddy tell Abby he gave Greg his pass? Why did Janice agree to take Buddy's name off the roster? Why would Abby think Buddy lied by not telling her? Why did Buddy lie to Scott about Greg not mentioning the Christmas tree? Why don't we see Abby when she learns the truth, and why isn't she there when Buddy and the kids see the tape?

Buddy telling Abby he can't afford his condo as he quit before Jim axed him confused me. He co-owned the company; he couldn't be fired. Jim was an ass who had little use for Buddy to begin with, which made their partnership baffling. And why is their firm called Tag-Weller?

I appreciated Don Roos interjecting the routine of everyday life, and how Buddy and Abby didn't hop in the sack right away. But Roos coped-out by casting two gorgeous actors in the leads. If Abby looked like Agnes Moorehead, would Buddy have thrown her the sale? If Buddy looked like Jimmy Durante, would Abby have popped up at his office with Dodger tickets? Not likely.

"Britney & Kevin: Chaotic" (2005) (TV) (review: June 11, 2005)

Britney Spears is not only a narcissistic, empty-headed twit, but she is not a nice person. Kevin Federline is even worse: a third-rate gigolo who can barely put a sentence together! Her bodyguard fears that she will be taken advantage of by this "punk," but why does he care? Lord knows he can find another narcissistic twit to get coffee for!

I was hoping to find out what it's like to be a celebrity. Aside from pointing out photographers outside her hotel, Britney putts around her suit, bitches about its decor, smokes, runs a treadmill, quizzes her minions on how they like to have sex, and shoves her camcorder in Boy Toy's face. We don't get any sense of what it's like to be on tour, but Britney complains that the person who scheduled hers "must have been out of his mind", as if she has no control over her life. Boo Hoo!

"Brokeback Mountain" (2005) (review: December 26, 2005)

Although based on a story written by a straight woman, directed by a straight man, starring actors who are straight (one of whom is dating his movie wife), this has become a litmus test for society's tolerance of the LGBT lifestyle. It reminds me of the self-congratulatory hoopla over *"Guess Who's Coming to Dinner"*, made by the very type of people who saw to it that blacks never played anything more substantial than maids and train porters! Such films exist solely to make the elitists look good and feel good -- which is why this will make out like a bandit on Oscar night!

Jack and Ennis don't live happily ever after because of intolerance. Oddly, this "intolerance" demands they betray those fool enough to love them. If they weren't such pricks, I could have gotten on board. But each treats his wife like crap, and Jack sleeps with other men! Don't give me the line that each "had" to marry: Ennis could have broken his engagement, and it was perfectly acceptable back then for a man to be a confirmed bachelor. And when his true love dies, is Ennis devastated? Hardly! His run-in with that bear had more depth!

As for the "historic" hook-up, you'll find more explicit stuff on basic cable! The boys never show their "fishing gear", but the girls show their "bait". That's Hollywood's idea of progress, kids! Worse, the film utterly fails to convey same-sex relationships as natural, what with all the jokes just begging to be cracked about eating beans and sleeping with sheep!

If this was about two girls, would they be condemned for betraying her partner or excuse the affair? When the elitists stop cynically patronizing minorities with pretentious tripe, then they can consider themselves enlightened.

"The Bronx Is Burning" (2007) (TV) (review: September 5, 2007)

My take based on the last two episodes:

* Joe DiMaggio waiting in line for tickets with the great unwashed only to get an "I just work here" from the bozo at the window? Somebody has to prove to me that actually happened!

* The scene with George Steinbrenner "talking" to Howard Cosell was ridiculous! They couldn't even be bothered to make sure Cosell's image was cleaned up and in focus!

* Reggie Jackson looked like Jackie Chiles having a VERY bad hair day!

* Reggie reading *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*? LOL!

* DiMaggio had brown eyes, not blue!

* Save for Dick Howser, everybody were such egotistical, immature pricks, they had me pulling for the Son of Sam!

"Capote" (2005) (review: May 6, 2006)

Bad enough these amateurs de-flame Capote and bash his circle (are we to really believe they thought so little of Harper Lee, they mangled her little opus like a smug in-joke?), Perry Smith is this oh-so-sensitive victim, even as he is shown dispatching the Clutters. Then, they drop the ball: the executions were carried out after midnight, April 14, 1965; Truman is at the prison 22 HOURS LATER!

Catherine Keener doesn't try to sound like an Alabama native. The way Chris Cooper kept shouting "Alvin!", I was waiting for the Chipmunks! Philip Seymour Hoffman gives us not the charming gadfly, but a cynical suck-up desperate to cash in on an horrific act. When he whines about being "tortured" by the appeals, I wanted to give him a gun so he could do humanity a favor and blow his brains out!

"Captain America: The First Avenger" (2011) (review: April 30, 2012) / *"Captain America: The Winter Soldier"* (2014) (review: January 25, 2015)

A scrawny runt who couldn't cut it in Basic turns into Rambo the moment he's pumped full of some radioactive crap. He always knows what to do, never hesitates, never has a "my bad". And the crap coursing through his veins doesn't affect him one bit. In real life, Scrawny Runt wouldn't have had a clue, his body would have attacked the crap coursing through his veins, and he would have been dead by the time he was popped out of his pod!

The Bad Guy, a Nazi gone rouge, has a ray gun that evaporates everything it's pointed at. So, he builds this complex deep in the forest, houses 400 Allied POWs, and waits for the right moment to unleash Hell. And the Good Guys know all about Nazi Rouge and his plans to unleash Hell. Huh? If Hitler had gotten his hands on the Ultimate Weapon of Mass Destruction, would he have holed up in the forest, goofing on Wagner?! Hell no!

After two hours of nonsense (and Tommy Lee Jones looking really constipated), we are treated to a close-up of a pair of eyes with the longest lashes I have ever seen. Is it a Maybelline commercial? No, it's Scrawny Runt waking up as if from a bad dream! Moments later, he's running down a street of present-day Manhattan (my idea of a bad dream), and runs smack into Samuel L. Jackson, who informs Scrawny Runt that he's been "asleep" for 70 years! So, why isn't Runt at some a top-secret location being defrosted and debriefed? Because that would make way too much sense! Besides, Marvel needs Scrawny Runt to peddle their newest bag of buffalo chips, "*The Avengers*".

For reasons I will never know, this crud warranted a sequel. When Nick Fury buys it, I smelled "set-up" and I was right. The "plot" concerns a bad guy played by - are you ready? - Robert Redford (!), who uses SHIELD as a cover for HYDRA by setting up Fury as the baddie and using Captain's war buddy to take him out. Captain lectures Fury about using enough firepower to obliterate the universe, yet the Sundance Kid doesn't get the same lecture. Redford never was a good actor, but he's Olivier compared to Chris Evans and Scarlett Johansson. But Samuel L. Jackson is a great actor. Why he insists on whoring himself out to these brain-dead CGI-fests is as baffling as it is sad.

"Catch Me If You Can" (2002) (review: December 28, 2002)

Spielberg does Soderberg, and the results are deadly. A technically flawless but self-righteous filmmaker, he is utterly incapable of embracing the joy of this cat-and mouse chase or appreciating the delicious irony of Frank Abagnale's post-conviction life. Ironically, the usually-bombastic John Williams's score was such a surprise, I thought someone else did it.

DiCaprio tries mightily, yet Abagnale remains a selfish punk throughout. He lets his father drown in debt while he makes off with suitcases stuffed with cash. That Pop has no problem claiming to be a Medal of Honor winner in a pathetic attempt to get a loan tells us he wasn't above accepting "help" from Junior. Which leads us to Hanratty, who takes a perverse joy in telling Junior what happened to Senior. And he wonders why Junior escapes the plane!

The ER scene should have been written thus: Junior storms in like a general, talks to Mom while examining/comforting the boy, asks the interns respectfully for their diagnosis, forces himself to soak up the blood from the wound (which we get a gratuitous close-up of) while trying desperately not to pass out! That would not only have been funny, it would have displayed Abagnale's moxie and pluck. Instead, I found myself hoping he'd rot in jail.

When Junior is given a bogus check by the FBI, he notes the paper is not perforated. As we never learn how he mastered making bogus checks or obtained the tools needed, we must assume he wasn't working with paper that wasn't perforated! How this minor detail got past the FBI (and Spielberg) is not for us lesser minds to ponder.

"Catherine the Great" (2019) (TV) (review: November 13, 2019)

I understand actors wanting to develop their own projects, but surely Helen Mirren can do better than this slop. Had she made sure the script and casting (sorry HM, but you are WAY-TOO old to play the Notorious CTG; double-ditto, the stiff you bagged to play Potemkin) was as top-shelf as the sets and costumes, she would have really had something. Instead, we are treated to "Caligula-Lite", complete with enough F-Bombs to sink the entire Imperial Russian Navy! And if you are looking for historical accuracy, look elsewhere!

Below are a few of the reasons why this Chatty Cathy had me pulling my hair out:

- * Potemkin and Praskovya were never lovers. She not only played Cupid between he and Catherine, she "tested" the men he selected for Catherine as potential favorites. Moreover, it was Potemkin who engineered her downfall.
- * Potemkin was never lured into a game of billiards, then pummeled within an inch of his life by two of Catherine's Boy Toys.
- * Potemkin lost his left eye in 1762 after Catherine came to the throne, the circumstances of which remain unclear. What is clear is that he didn't lose the eye fighting the Turks.
- * While speaking of the Treaty of St. Petersburg, Catherine tells Zavadovsky and Zubov that Frederick the Great called her "a cunt". In fact, she asked him for recommendations for a bride for Paul. Would she have sought him out if she knew he thought she was a Naughty Word?
- * Germany became a nation in 1871.
- * Constantinople was renamed "Istanbul" in 1923.
- * Potemkin yells "Let's get this show on the road!" as he boards Catherine's barge. That phrase was coined circa 1910.
- * According to *Catherine the Great and the French Philosophers of the Enlightenment*, she did not have a policy which punished her critics -- odd for a ruler who prided herself on being an autocrat. Ergo, the hissy fit she throws at court, announcing that "the monster" who slammed her will be tried and (hopefully) executed never happened.
- * The French Revolution did horrify Catherine, as she saw it as an assault on civilization. While she did blame Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau for the uprising, she mostly blamed Louis XVI (for whom she had great sympathy) for "not knowing how to rule", and did not order a burning of books by French writers.

* Catherine was German, yet singles her mother out for derision because she is German, calling her a bitch? Her relationship with her mother was ambivalent, however, her rise was due, in no small part, to Mama. The outburst comes out of absolute nowhere.

* Praskovja lost her position in 1779 when Catherine caught her and a Boy Toy in the act, engineered by none other than Potemkin. Needless to say, Praskovja schmoozing with Potemkin at court, then chatting with Catherine in the garden later never happened.

* By the time Paul came to the throne, he had 8 children, not 2. He was also a man in his 40s, not an overgrown brat in his 20s.

* The account of Catherine's death is pure hooey. She was found on the floor of her study by her chamberlain; her physician diagnosed a stroke. Attempts to revive her failed, and she fell into a coma. Paul and Maria arrived at the Palace that evening (having been notified by Zubov, who traveled to Gatchina), and spent the night at her bedside. Informed there was no hope of recovery, Paul ordered Bezborodko to sort and seal her papers, under the supervision of Aleksandr and Konstantin; she died that night. The very-idea of a dying Catherine lying on the floor as Paul tears the place apart searching for the paper naming Aleksandr as her heir is unthinkable and twice as ludicrous!

* Paul scoffs at the rumor Catherine has secretly married Potemkin. The actual rumor was she married Grigory Orlov, father of her son Aleksey. Aleksey nor her two daughters are even hinted at here.

* The epilogue says Paul was assassinated on Aleksandr's orders. Aleksandr did not punish his assassins, yet there is no proof he had Dear Old Dad offed. Also, the Aleksandr in the miniseries is a child (he was actually 18 when Catherine kicked off). Are we really expected to buy that a child ordered his father's murder, like some Mini-Mafioso? Face palm!

"Celebrity" (1998) (review: May 16, 2006)

Woody Allen admits he's a stinking pile of shit. Indeed, everyone in *"Celebrity"* is a stinking pile of shit! Kenneth Branagh is a WASP Woody: a narcissistic, misanthropic, self-loathing asshole, only the self-loathing asshole is an act because no self-loathing asshole would admit he's a self-loathing asshole! The only bearable character is Tony, who's too nice (or too stupid) to realize that his family are a bunch of parasites. But even he can't accept the woman he loves as herself until he remakes her as this bubble head slobbering over other bubble heads!

Why should this surprise us? When has Allen ever been interested in anything besides himself? After *"Stardust Memories"* - his one-finger salute to the faithful - why would anyone watch his crap? Why do actors still lap up the crumbs he tosses at them? I remember a story

Tippi Hedren told of Charlie Chaplin's fear that she wouldn't want to work with him on "*A Countess from Hong Kong*". Paris Hilton will win an Oscar before Allen displays such humility! As long as critics and moviegoers cling to an idealized vision of Allen as this pure soul unsullied by the vulgarities of his profession, he will continue to have his cake and eat it too!

"The Champ" (1931) (review: June 4, 2009)

First, if Andy and Linda had actually hooked up, their kid would have looked like a gargoyle! Second, I didn't understand how Andy got custody of Dink as the only times fathers were awarded custody was if the mother was as an unfit a parent as Andy is!

Which leads me to the fight. Wallace Beery flayed around like a crazed fish in search of water! When Jackie Cooper started bawling for this loser, I wanted to deck him! He was so damn annoying throughout, but never more so than then!

And what happened to Dink's pal Jonah? Didn't anyone care about him because, as Dink puts it, he's "colored"? That must be it.

"Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle" (2003) (review: October 22, 2003)

On Drew's tiny shoulders rests the legacies of John, Ethel, and Lionel. She gives signals every now and again that she is finally ready to assume the mantle of her majestic surname, only to do *Playboy* and flash David Letterman! Party Hound that John was, I doubt he would have allowed himself to be caught dead at Hef's with a bunch of bleached blonde bimbos!

So what would John, Ethel, and Lionel have thought of this dreck? Would they have rolled their eyes at the "plot"? Would they have felt sorry for John Cleese? Would they have concluded Matt LeBlanc has no right calling himself an actor? Would they have squirmed at the racism and misogyny? Or would they have hurled at the thought that a BARRYMORE unleashed this mess onto an undeserving world?

Not that I didn't try to get into the cheesiness (love that mechanical yak!), but it doesn't try to retain a modicum of intelligence. Why top-secret information which could cost people their lives is stored on a pair of rings is beyond retarded! At least my DVD player didn't blow up. And I don't have a splitting headache. For this, I am truly grateful.

"Chicago" (2002) (review: September 12, 2003)

In "*Chicago*", the bad guys win, and the good guys get kicked to the curb -- a warped affirmation of everything that Hollywood holds near and dear!

Renée Zellweger tries to make Roxie a victim. This is a fatal mistake. Roxie is completely amoral, as cold as the snow that blankets the city. You can admire her gumption, but, if you try to make the audience feel sorry for her, you lose them.

Catherine Zeta-Jones and Queen Latifah don't fall into that trap. Velma and Mama don't care if you like them. Zeta-Jones brings the ruthlessness and self-assuredness Velma calls for, while Latifah infuses Mama with a wink of mischief and a heap of homo-eroticism. But was Zeta-Jones's performance Oscar worthy? I don't think so.

Why wasn't Kitty's name/background changed to reflect Lucy Lui's ethnicity? Her appearance and WASP-name coupled with Rob Marshall recycling Velma's story and Lui's attempt to out-bitch the leading ladies is jarring. And you forget her 30 seconds after she exits. As for Richard Gere, he does what he does best -- being stiff and smarmy.

Why does Marshall stick the audience into a corner when the story uses the history of the great city as a metaphor for life in it? In his unimaginative staging, ripping off nearly every movie musical in the process, there's little raunch, no heat, and a confused rhythm no amount of machine-gun editing can hide. BTW, no woman in Cook County has ever "swung".

"Chocolat" (2000) (review: July 13, 2003)

No woman during the 1950's would volunteer that she has never been married, hence, her child is illegitimate. Indeed, Reynaud wouldn't have gossiped to the villagers, but made sure Vianne's shop closed before it opened and sent her packing.

Armande describing the shop's décor as "early Mexican brothel" is funny, but, as we can assume she's never been to Mexico, such an observation wouldn't have popped in her head.

Lasse Hallström letting his non-French actors not sound French isn't nearly as bad as how he tries to shoehorn reality into his fable, then, as if he's afraid there's TOO much realism, has Reynaud get in line in a way completely out of character, and – in light of how Reynaud deals with the Serge/Josephine situation - cruel and undeserved. I find it a stretch that Vianne and Henri manage to keep Reynaud's romp in the chocolat shop to themselves. And why didn't anyone hear him break in?

Reynaud is not the baddie needed to create tension; without tension, there's nothing at stake. It's only a matter of time before Vianne wins everyone over and all is right with the world.

The town's name Lansquenet is derived from the German *landsknecht* ("valet of the fief"), which I found interesting as Josephine's dad was a Nazi informant.

"A Christmas Carol" (1938) (review: November 25, 2005)

"A Christmas Carol" is built on conceits that requires the reader to suspend disbelief. Why should Marley give a hoot about Scrooge? Why should Scrooge give a hoot about Tim? Why did Scrooge become so obsessed with money? The biggest conceit is we're asked to buy that his conversion is genuine and not a cynical ploy to avoid Marley's fate.

Reginald Owen is the worst Scrooge I've seen: his accent fades in and out, and he fails to convey the deep loneliness behind the old man's meanness. Gene Lockhart, however, was a great Cratchit. In other versions, Cratchit is this wuss with a serious martyr complex. But Lockhart gives him a backbone and makes you feel Bob's anguish over Tim without making you feel that he loves his other kids any less.

MGM mounted a handsome production, which is the biggest problem. The Cratchits live in a nifty flat with pricey furniture. Bob must be scamming the boss; no wonder Mrs. Bob is only too-happy to drink to Scrooge's health! The filmmakers omits several key points, and have Scrooge 180 way too soon. As a result, Scrooge seeing his grave doesn't have the impact it has to have in order for us to buy he is a changed man. I guess they're going to keep doing this until they get it right!

"Christmas with the Kranks" (2004) (review: January 1, 2006)

After watching this, I read some reviews that amused me. Some saw this as a valentine to the "totalitarianism" of George Bush. Guess they forgot those *"Sesame Street"* bits on cooperation, how everyone must do their part to achieve a goal (in this case, the decoration contest). The irony is many of these critics, who would otherwise be raking the Kranks over the coals for not surrendering Frosty to the Collective, blog about Bush robbing us of our civil liberties without fear of being dragged out of their homes, never to be heard from again!

One criticism is valid: a neighbor assures a passer-by the Kranks aren't Jewish. That hack Joe Roth is Jewish doesn't excuse this nor the jokes at the expense of Barbie's Latino Boy Toy. The very idea this brat will throw the Mother of All Hissy Fits if Mom and Dad tell her don't pony up the honeyed ham she loves within 48 hours, chop!-chop!, made me wan to puke! Luther stiffing the unfortunate so he can juice up on Botox didn't put the jingle in my bells, either.

The real crime this commits is it loses its nerve. The biting satire on communal holiday celebrations that was building gets mushed into lame-brained slapstick right out of Sitcom Land Hell. Roth should be boiled in his own pudding!

"The Cider House Rules" (1999) (review: August 4, 2002)

Why did Larch bury the girl and not try to locate her family? What about life on the outside? What is St. Cloud's relationship with the locals? The logistics of running the place? Being asked to accept that 1 doctor and 2 nurses care for dozens of orphans is sloppy writing.

Although Rose pays for his vile acts, John Irving makes this monster a figure of decency. It is Rose who tells Homer in so many words that *The House Rules*, which serves as a metaphor for the moral code people are taught to live by, are for suckers and dummies. The supposedly naïve Homer already knows this. When crises hits, he conveniently abandons the "principals" that forced him to break with Larch, and repays Wally's kindness by shagging his fiancée because poor Candy "isn't really good at being alone".

Then Homer, as we knew he would, returns to St. Cloud's. Armed with phony degrees and certifications - which he doesn't question and the Trustees don't bother to verify - he (literally) takes Larch's place and readies to make the underage Mary Agnes his next conquest -- with the eager approval of everyone! It's Good To Be King in Irving's morally-bankrupt universe.

"Cléo de 5 à 7" (1962) (review: April 2, 2008)

I've been dying to see this since I heard about it. Alas, like most movies I'm dying to see, this was a letdown. If a movie is going to address those Big Questions, is giving us a character we can root for too much to ask? Cléo is a self-absorbed prima donna who acknowledges the existence of those around her only if they are serving a need at that particular moment. She is gorgeous, yet, oddly, inspires no wolf-whistles from the horn-dogs who line the Parisian streets. Indeed, the men here are a bunch of drips, especially the one she hooks up with!

Cléo has a voice as flat as a pancake, yet lives it up a spacious flat (with a swing, no less) and has a maid. Either she knows more about cattle futures than Hillary Clinton or she has a second job, and it's not flipping hamburgers at McDonald's! And the movie does her no favors by inviting us to compare her to Édith Piaf.

"Cold Mountain" (2003) (review: July 23, 2004)

I watched Nicole Kidman and Jude Law closely when they first meet as their characters are supposedly "destined" for each other. Yet Law's face showed anything but dumb-struck love, while Kidman seemed to be counting the seconds until she could run to her trailer! Renée Zellweger's character is pure Granny Clampett (complete with banjos) and so over the top, it was all I could do not to laugh! Ironically, her performance serves to highlight just how stiff-as-a-board the leads are.

Ada nearly starves because she freed her slaves. More perplexing is why none of them stayed on as she and her father were unusually-benevolent, and it was a very dangerous time for Negroes (as they're politely called). Why didn't anyone teach her how to milk a cow or grow a crop? Why didn't she just sell the farm and go home? And for all of Ruby's practicality, when she dispatches Ada's "evil" rooster, that puts the kibosh on having any chickens!

By the time Inman returns, Ada doesn't need him or anyone else, which is the big joke! Indeed, her real intimacy is with Ruby, who has turned Ada into an Über-Babe version of herself. Anyone else notice how they walked down the hill holding hands, happy as two peas in a pod, as they leave Inman?

But Anthony Minghella was too busy making an anti-Bush film. Inman says he is "like every fool sent out to fight with a flag and a lie", and Ada's father says: "I imagine God is weary of being called down on both sides of an argument". These "observations" are historically inaccurate. It was incomprehensible for a soldier to think that the cause was "a lie" (in fact, most in the rank-and-file were indifferent). For filmmakers to stamp their views on a period where such views were foreign to those who lived in that time is beyond obnoxious.

Worse than Law and Kidman having zero chemistry was the script: a mess of half-baked clichés and banalities. "Small moments like a bag of diamonds?" Ugh!

"Crash" (2004) (review: April 4, 2006)

When *"Brokeback Mountain"* didn't win Best Picture, I had a hunch the voters would be called homophobic. Sure enough, *"Brokeback"* hack Annie Proulx threw a hissy fit. I won't waste my time commenting on Proulx's rant, but she was right about dubbing *"Crash"* "Trash".

The racist cop saves the black woman he assaulted?! The Persian shoots point-blank at the Latino but misses because the Latino's daughter is the Persian's angel?! The Persian happens to be the father of the coroner who has to break the news to the black cop about his punk brother who got offed by the racist cop's partner, who kept the husband of the woman the racist cop assaulted from getting blown away by his trigger-happy cohorts?! The white trophy wife learns her "best friend" is the Latina maid she hates?! I don't know what was worse, the utterly-insulting coincidences or how it ends with the Cambodians tossed onto one of the worst sections of town like garbage! Avoid this wreck!

"The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" (2008) (review: November 3, 2009)

BRAD PITT CANNOT ACT! No matter the situation - that the man who has befriended him is his father; that he is to become a father; that his foster mother has died (the body count here

puts Freddy Krueger to shame) - Pitt reacts with a blank stare! I bet when Angelina told him she was preggers and he responded with that stare, she got Lara Croft on his retarded ass!

The clichés would make the folks at Hallmark puke! And the explanation of the "fates" which "conspired" to destroy Daisy's career when, in fact, she had no one to blame but her fool self, was obscene! Even-more obscene is the portrayal of African-Americans as a bunch of wide-eyed rubes who scream "Praise Jesus" at the drop of a hat!

"Curious" how Cate Blanchett's face was airbrushed on the film's poster, but Pitt - who has an "I am SO hunky" moment on a motorcycle - doesn't get the airbrush treatment! From "1962" on, he looks exactly the same (complete with that stare)! Also "curious" how Benjamin catches The Beatles on Ed Sullivan, yet was AWOL when JFK's head was blown off 3 months earlier! He was also out to lunch during Germany's assault on Murmansk (while he was IN Murmansk!), Vietnam, and the Moon Landing, just to name a few minor events.

Why wasn't Button reported when he snatched Benjamin? How could a black woman get away with raising a white baby in the Jim Crow South? How could the "old" Benjamin bone a whore like an 18 year old on Viagra? How did he know Elizabeth's hubby was a spy? Why does Daisy accept him bailing on her, then accept him showing up years later? Why does he expect her to take care of him? Why does she keep him a secret from their daughter? Why does he talk like a Taoist Nike commercial? How is it he flies under everyone's radar? How does this hack Eric Roth keep getting work?

If F. Scott Fitzgerald wanted to set his story in New Orleans, he would have! And if he had wanted to create the dimwits which populate this tripe, he would have done that, too! That whirring sound you hear is him spinning in his grave!

"Daredevil" (2003) (review: July 30, 2003)

It is irresponsible for studios to market PG-13 flicks toward kids because there's lots of action. This is a dark and violent film not fit for the munchkins.

Michael Clarke Duncan was all wrong for Kingpin. He's a big teddy bear who couldn't strike fear into the heart of Mr. Jingles. His Kingpin is your standard-issue baddie instead of the chilling strategist he is in the comic. Colin Farrell, who really needs to get over himself, was over-the-top as Bullseye. Jennifer Garner lacks Elektra's dangerous edge, and Ben Affleck doesn't have the range to play the troubled Matt. However, they are yummy to look at when the rain pours down on them. How did Matt create Daredevil or afford his posh digs and costumes/gadgets? In the comic, Daredevil does not kill; here, he kills and lets others be killed. So when he spares Kingpin after spewing shit on the evils of seeking vengeance, it was totally disingenuous.

"The Dark Knight" (2008) (review: June 14, 2009)

The Batsuit can deflect bullets, but it can't withstand a dog attack? Holy Wardrobe Malfunction! Were I Bruce Wayne, I would have kicked Morgan Freeman's backside back to *"The Electric Company"*, and sued the crap out of the firm that made the material that was supposed to protect my richer-than-God self from Cujo! But that would make way too much sense, and "sense" is the one thing the Batman franchise has never been accused of having!

Tim Burton's and Joel Schumacher's Batman movies never pretended to be anything other than silly popcorn flicks. Christopher Nolan, on the other hand, wants to be Ingmar Bergman when he grows up -- which is why he rips off Burton! Don't tell me that stupid standoff was a happy accident, Heath Ledger grunting: "Come on, come on, hit me!" à la Nicholson? Batman doesn't turn The Joker into roadkill because he has a moral code? Spare us! And for a supposed "agent of chaos", every one of The Joker's actions are well-planned and executed. Memo to Nolan: look up "chaos" in the dictionary!

Since when does twitching like a coked-up Mexican jumping bean constitute acting? No disrespect, but let's be real: if Ledger hadn't died, that truly-morbid Oscar campaign would not have sprung up and he wouldn't have been nominated, much less, won. As I could never understand Ledger because none of his directors had the balls to tell him to enunciate like a human being, he had to have been dubbed because I understood every word he said! And it's "close to the vest", NOT "close to the chest"! Idiots!

"Days of Thunder" (1990) (review: March 30, 2003)

This is *"Top Gun"* on wheels, complete with screeching guitar at the "big" moments. It also suspends disbelief: if a doctor slept with a patient, she'd be stripped of her license. But, as in *"Top Gun"*, nobody even questions the affair. It was interesting to watch this with all that's gone down: Cruise divorced Mimi Rogers (for which she must be eternally grateful!) shortly after filming began and took up with America's Newest Sweetheart, then dumped her when the 50/50 clause of their prenup was about to kick in. But don't feel too sorry for Nicole: she got Tommy Boy to cough up \$65 million, then bagged an Oscar. What's interesting is that, even at this early stage, she had better chops than he ever will, evidenced in her scenes with that old ham, Robert Duvall. The rest is dreck.

"Death to Smoochy" (2002) (review: July 3, 2003)

"A Face in the Crowd" meets *"Network"* meets *"The Manchurian Candidate"* meets *"Barney the Dinosaur"*. In short, this is all over the place. I never understood the role of the "charity", how/why it had so much power, why it had the hire-ups at KidNet shaking in their boots, and why Burke advises Sheldon to "play ball" with them.

I understood why Randolph wants to destroy Sheldon, but the ways he goes about it had me scratching my head. No talk about the "rocket ship" cookie?! Come on! And Randolph's foul mouth also bothered me. He's not the squeaky-clean guy he plays on TV, I get it, but the foul language was overkill.

Danny DeVito tries to distinguish himself from his fellow What-I-Really-Want-To-Do-Is-Direct actors. Aside from a couple of cool shots and set-ups, he is as generic as most. What was unforgivable is how he hogties Robin Williams. What Williams does in the "out takes" is flat-out crazy yet in total keeping with his character. Any other director would have dropped to his knees and thanked God for this Not-From-This-Universe-Genius moments. Instead, DeVito made Williams stick to the script and re-shot the scenes! Not surprisingly, what Williams did is far superior to what DeVito leaves in!

"The Devil Wears Prada" (2006) (review: January 12, 2007)

Do you want to know where this lost me? Miranda bringing Andy to tears because she couldn't get Dragon Lady a flight out of a hurricane! Nigel then tells Andy to stop whining, then decides to turn her into a Fashionista? Yeah, right!

The twins are as evil as Mommy, but why would they try to get Andy sacked? Andy quits because she realizes she did to Emily what Miranda did to Nigel! But that car did that job for her. Besides, Emily is such a bitch, Mother Teresa would have mowed her down!

Christian didn't have to get the Harry Potter book for Andy, and he didn't bed her until after she broke up with Nate, so I didn't think he was the prick some others thought.

What makes Miranda think all those people would actually go with her if she left Runway? Why didn't Irv call her bluff? She's costing him \$300,000 a day! We're supposed to feel sorry for her because the latest Mr. Priestly told her *adiós*? Please!

"Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood" (2002) (review: June 21, 2002)

What makes a Chick Flick a Chick Flick:

a grab-ya-by-the-heart premise ("*The Way We Were*")

a script free of insulting stereotypes ("*Out of Africa*")

and, most importantly...

characters you sympathize with even when you want to throttle them ("*Terms of Endearment*")

Instead, we get a vain, self-absorbed windbag and her bourbon-drenched pals whose loyalty to the aforementioned windbag inexplicably know no bounds. Vivi and her fellow Ya-Yas didn't earn my empathy or admiration (essential for a Chick Flick). I just wanted to bitch-slap the whole lot of 'em!

The lip service it pays to race relations and its failure to explore Vivi's relationships with her other children was galling enough. And the big "secret" that was supposed to explain Vivi to Sidalee explains squat -- at least, not to those of us who were stupid enough not to check our brains at the door. Shep's excuse - that Vivi made him promise not to tell - not only does not fly, it's sloppy writing.

There was a movie about parent/child relationships screaming to get out here, but it wimps out when it's time to put up or shut up.

"Doctor Zhivago" (1965) (review: February 16, 2002)

This is one of those very flawed great films. It's structure is like that other "epic love story", *"Titanic"*. Like *"Titanic"*, it's told in flashback by a character talking to another character, and, like *"Titanic"*, the teller can not possibly know most of what he's "telling". Rose was not privy to the meeting in which the architect tells the captain the ship is going to sink or Jack's poker game or Cal's conversations with his bodyguard, etc., but we see these as though she witnessed it all when she couldn't have. Yevgraf couldn't have known about Lara's life before she met Yuri or the particulars of Yuri's trip across Russia or of the others he shares the boxcar with or of his life once he gets to the Gromeko house or of Yuri's ordeal at the hands of the White Russians, etc., but we see these as though he was privy to it all.

The second-biggest problem is Zhivago himself -- this guy is a wimp! He is so passive, you can't believe he had the nerve to approach a publisher. The Bolsheviks take over his house, he loses his post and is reclassified, he and his family are forced to move across country, his poems are banned, and he doesn't bitch once! The only time he shows any backbone is when he throws Komarovsky out of Lara's flat, which comes out of absolutely nowhere.

The third-biggest problem is the cast. Omar Sharif is too-exotic to pass for someone from Zhivago's part of Russia, and Julie Christie is too mature to pass for a girl of 17. Tom Courtenay, looks young enough to be Lara's child instead of her fiancé. However, Alec Guinness is perfect as always, and Rod Steiger is wonderfully creepy.

Why is Komarovsky addressed as "Monsieur" when he's obviously not French? What happened to Lara and Strelnikov's daughter? Why does Komarovsky keep coming to Lara and Zhivago's rescue, even saving their lives at one point? This is critical because he later abandons their child. And why does everyone speak with a British accent? I HATE that!

"The Dotted Line" (2011) (TV) (review: October 13, 2011)

I was expecting this self-righteous screed about how professional athletes must be forced to "give back", blah, blah, blah. But this was even worse than I feared: Self-righteous hack Morgan Spurlock took an utterly fascinating subject and made it utterly boring!

Since Spurlock couldn't bother to explain why sports agents have become a necessary evil, I will. Until the 1970s, athletes weren't allowed to be represented in contract negotiations. Were it suspected you had an agent, you were blackballed! Imagine it: 18, 19, 20-year old kids with no business acumen and less formal education forced to deal with men who had the power to take full advantage of them! Spurlock never hints at any of this. Instead, he insinuates that, to the agents and the athletes' families, Super Jock is little more than a human ATM waiting to pay out, which is such a cliché, a TV series was based on it (*"Arli\$\$"*)!

Eugene Lee, who must have been a snake oil salesman in a past life, feigns outrage when a client dumps him. Did he take on the kid out of the goodness of his heart? Didn't think so!

"Down with Love" (2003) (review: October 14, 2003)

I wanted to like this, but the filmmakers were so concerned with getting the sets and costumes as on-target (and over the top) as possible, they mixed up the time-line:

During a conversation with Peter, Catcher refers to the Cuban Missile Crisis. This places the story between October - December 1962. He later takes Barbara to a Yankees game, which is a neat trick seeing how the World Series ended in October in San Francisco.

At the *"Ed Sullivan Show"*, Vikki says Judy Garland is a last-minute replacement for The Singing Nun. The Singing Nun was unknown in 1962; Garland debuted on *"Sullivan"* in 1966. Barbara prepares for her date with Catcher to "Fly Me to the Moon" by Astrud Gilberto, which was released in 1968. In the dating montage, there are marquees for *"Oliver!"* and *"Bye Bye Birdie"*. *"Oliver!"* opened in 1963, and *"Bye Bye Birdie"* closed in 1961.

This is an "homage" to the Rock Hudson/Doris Day films. I put homage in quotes because, unlike the Hudson/Day films, this was rude, crude, and cynical to the core. Rock may have been a scoundrel and Doris may have been a prude, but they were basically nice people who weren't out to hurt anyone. Catcher and Barbara each go out of their way to hurt and ruin the other to "prove" a "point". They are vicious, self-centered, and incapable of caring for anyone, which may be the punch line. But the way the script smirkingly weaves in Hudson's personal life left me feeling the good time had by all was at my expense.

"Driving Lessons" (2006) (review: September 18, 2007)

Every movie I have PPV'd because Leonard Maltin praised it to the skies has blown chunks! Every single one! When will I learn?

Evie is a raving Old Bag who thinks nothing of claiming she's dying of cancer to get her way! Laura is an insufferable Medusa filled with The Holy Spirit (and her hubby's protégé)! Caught between these harpies is Medusa's dumb-as-a-rock boy who's been pressed into weed-pulling servitude by The Old Bag! As I said, when will I learn?

I was lifted out of my malaise when The Old Bag stuck her head in a sink. But she did not die. I was lifted out of my malaise again when Medusa got mowed down. But she did not die. It should be a capital offense to torture audiences like this!

Without Harry Potter to kick him around, Rupert Grint is just a pair of big blue eyes. Julie Walters's scenery-chewing (especially when she "plays" God) is even more shameless than her character. At least this Harold bangs some other bimbo instead of Maude; for that, I am truly grateful. And if you're reading this Mr. Maltin, you owe me \$3.99!

"Duck Dodgers" (2003) (TV) (review: November 1, 2005)

As Chuck Jones, Micheal Maltese, and Mel Blanc, the geniuses behind the original Duck Dodgers, are no longer with us, I was prepared for a letdown and I wasn't disappointed!

In the original, Daffy was a bombastic nitwit, which was part of his charm; here, he's a loathsome prick! In the episode I saw, he demands help as he has Eager Young Space Cadet cleaning his house. Mr. Hi assigns him a robot. He likes the robot until he dispatches the bad guys better than Dodgers ever did, earning Mr. Hi's raves. Dodgers is now hell-bent on getting rid of it. When the robot sacrifices himself for him, Dodgers actually seems devastated -- until Mr. Hi says he can rebuild him. Dodgers then throws a fit, stomping on the heap of metal which had saved his life!

I was so disgusted by what the no-talent clowns behind this "cartoon" did to Daffy and Porky, I'll never watch this Duck Dodgers again!

"The English Patient" (1996) (review: February 13, 2003)

Some call this a great love story. It ain't. Katharine and Almásy are two very self-absorbed people, their encounters are anything but romantic, and there is no reason for them to seek each other out: Almásy is a surly jerk, and Clifton worships the ground Katharine walks on.

She breaks with Almásy not because she loves her husband, but fears what will happen to her social standing. As if being asked to root for these twits wasn't bad enough:

How did Almásy know that Katharine told Clifton she wanted to return to England?

Trying to get Madox to turn around, Almásy shoots the flare behind him. Despite Almásy's assurances to Katharine, it's a mystery how Madox manages to find them.

Caravaggio asks Almásy if he killed the Cliftons. But since he was told of the circumstances of Madox's death, he must have been briefed on them, too.

Assuming they found Clifton's plane, how did British Intelligence locate his body?

How could the Nomads find the thimble, but not Katharine?

Katharine and Almásy had hooked up by 1938. Germany invaded Egypt in 1941, but was driven out by 1943. Almásy gives the Nazis the maps so he can get back to Katharine, gets shot down, then pops up in Italy in 1945?! Forget that we're supposed to buy that nobody suspected they were doing the nasty for over two years! Either Katharine was in the cave for two years (not likely), Almásy was cared for by the Nomads for two more years (even less likely), or Anthony Minghella screwed up the time line big time (a lot more likely).

But what really drove me nuts was the British could not possibly have mistaken Almásy as German as Hungarian and German do not share a common ancestor. Ironically, English is a Germanic language.

When he bought the rights to *The English Patient*, Saul Zaentz "assured" Michael Ondaatje: "Don't worry, we'll fuck-up your book". You don't have to read it to know Zaentz succeeded.

"Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" (2004) (review: March 20, 2006)

Do those proclaiming Charlie Kaufman *The Second Coming* remember the cards sent to Joel's friends asking them to not tell him that Clementine had him zapped from her memory? As seeing him again neither re-triggers her memory or fries her brain, what possible reason is there NOT to tell him? And what about the woman with her dead dog? Did these "geniuses" send cards out to Buster's pals informing them that his mistress has had him zapped from her memory, so please don't mention it to him? It's the lamest plot device I have seen in ages!

The nature of the subconscious is never explored or how memory is intertwined with thought or how the most random sight, smell, or touch can trigger the most deep-seated memory. We not only dream of people (and pets) no longer a part of our lives, but people we have never met. How do you "zap" that? And what happens if a person somehow reconnects with what

they had zapped? Kaufman doesn't even begin to address any of this. Instead, he trots out his trademark Twits Behaving Badly: the minions raid Joel's fridge, smoke pot, and dance on his bed with the stereo full blast; Mary tries to seduce Stan; Patrick swipes Joel's gift for Clementine so he can score with her; the Doctor zaps Mary's memory so his wife won't find out they've been playing doctor! Yuk, yuk!

Kaufman also has a serious problem with women. Clementine is a total wack job who should never be allowed to reproduce, and Joel (a passive-aggressive wuss if ever there was one) shouldn't apologize for stating the obvious. So, guess what happens? Joel and Clementine, having listened to the tapes of what each really thinks of the other (thanks to Mary revenge on the Doctor), reboots their toxic relationship! Two hours of my life that I'll never get back!

"Evening" (2007) (review: November 10, 2007)

I didn't know which was funnier: Vanessa Redgrave chasing tiny moths and tripping over her nurse; Glenn Close wailing that her "precious" boy (whom she and the Mr. had decided was a drunken loser) has been turned into roadkill; that the tone-deaf Ann schmoozed with Peggy Lee; or the horrid CGI of Crypt Keeper Annie gazing at her younger self!

I never bought Clare Danes as the young Redgrave nor did I buy Natasha Richardson and Toni Collette as sisters. If Meryl Streep's daughter wants to be an actress, she better have Mama give her some lessons! I had no idea why any girl (or Buddy) would make fools of themselves over vapid stud du jour Harris! Ann's daughters are as whiny and thoughtless as she, and Luc is a retarded slacker! *"Evening"* gives Chick Flicks a bad name!

"Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain" (2001) (review: August 17, 2002)

Aside from the Gnome, everyone here is crazy or irritating or vitriolic or all three. The narration was pointless. The cinematography, editing, and music were nauseating. Paris, one of the filthiest cities on the planet, is spic and span! But what got me was how we are teased with Nino smiling at the photo booth repairman, but the film doesn't have the guts to go through with the homo-eroticism just thrown in! Instead, Crazy Boy Nino finally (and I mean finally) hooks up with Crazy Girl Amélie, and they (and the Gnome) live crazily ever after!

"Failure to Launch" (2006) (review: August 14, 2006)

I PPV'ed this, then couldn't sleep! Everything about this is so wrong on so many levels, I actually wanted to kill the dip shits responsible for my agony:

The vet gives the dog the injection from outside the bandage and with the needle inverted. Even a retard like Tripp would have figured out that the vet was bogus!

Paula guesses Tripp used "chipmunk cream" to treat his bite. There no such thing.

Paula tells Kit she has "fiduciary responsibilities" to fulfill her contract. A Fiduciary acts as the caretaker of someone's rights, assets, and/or well being. This certainly isn't the case here.

The coffee shop patrons watch the real-time showdown between Tripp and Paula on the jumbo screen via Ace's laptop as a series of shots and edits, which is impossible.

And, most disturbing, human CPR cannot be performed on a bird.

Aside from the patronizing Wise Minority (in the form of the cute-as-a-button Jeffrey), the main problem is Tripp is such a prick, I never bought that he was capable of falling in love with anyone but himself. His Mom and Pop are even worse! Want Junior to move out of the house? Hire a whore, sorry, "professional interventionist"! Gee, why didn't our parents think of THAT instead of letting us know the second we hit 18 we were out the door?!

"Far from Heaven" (2002) (review: May 16, 2003)

Todd Haynes wants to be Douglas Sirk when he grows up. But he can only copy Sirk's style (a pale copy at that). He has none of his touch or timing. He lets the cat out of the bag WAAAY too soon, then displays how intolerant he is by spending the rest of the movie self-righteously slamming the intolerance of everyone around Raymond and Cathy.

The revisionists do not grasp the concept of classic liberalism: those who lived in the past were products of their time. Were Haynes and his fellow liberals not so full of themselves, they'd recognize the irony. As for the "big statement" he thinks he's making: it's been done before and done better.

"Finding Nemo" (2003) (review: June 13, 2003)

I was disturbed by how Marlin was ridiculed for being over-protective of Nemo. While the "can do" attitude toward his handicap is heartening, Nemo remains the same brat he was when he put the story into motion. *"Nemo"* struck me as anti-family (strange to say about a "family picture") in how the parent was the one was expected to grow up, not the child.

It had some scary moments. The "whale talking" bit got old real fast. But the anti-American jab (which got the biggest laugh from the audience) was outrageous. Hollywood hates Bush so much, it has to shoehorn its politics into the one place where it doesn't belong! Here's a weird idea: let kids be kids and save the Bush-is-Hitler shit for the grown ups?

"Flesh and the Devil" (1927) (review: September 7, 2005)

While Greta Garbo (who never looked more ravishing) and John Gilbert (who looks like a total wuss) have their moments, the real love affair is not between them but between Gilbert and Lars Hanson, his "beloved friend." Notice how they can't keep their hands off each other, even as they agree they must duel? As if she knows this, Felicitas plays Leo like a violin: making sure her husband catches them, then marrying Ulrich, then setting him up. Ulrich, like a lovelorn girl, is totally clueless until the moment Felicitas dies, the moment "everything is clear". Our heroes embrace, and we fade to them at Mamma's feet, in matching suits, helping with her knitting! No grief over Felicitas, not even a mention of her name! I think the film makers wanted to end with this, but were afraid of alienating Gilbert's female fans, thus, they have Leo get Hertha to stay. When you consider how determined she was to leave, having had enough of Leo's indifference, this is forced, and it feels so.

If that weren't enough! The kiss Leo greets Mamma with -- on the lips! The pastor's erect cigar inches from Leo, and his repulsion at the sight of the girls! The kiss Felicitas gives Hertha, more tender than any she ever gave Leo. Boy Howdy! Felicitas's death can be seen as either punishment for her wickedness or God's refusal to give her the redemption Hertha offers.

"Fred Claus" (2007) (review: May 15, 2009)

The most ridiculous thing about this ridiculous movie is its conceit that after one becomes a saint, his/her family, and his/her significant other live forever. Let's forget that, in order to become a saint, the saint must be dead.

That Nick has been the Jolly Elf to Fred's Scrooge for a millennium is never even hinted at! Here's an idea: open on Nick learning how to make toys, then on Fred learning how to run numbers; Nick giving a sick child a dolly, only for Fred to repossess the dolly, along with the family farm! After a few more such episodes, morph to present-day Fred venting his spleen at Siblings Anonymous as his fellow losers nod in empathy. There -- I just wrote a more cohesive story-line than this idiocy!

This Santa, who is one "ho, ho, ho, ho, ho" away from a massive coronary, is a neurotic wuss saddled with the Queen of the Harpies, an operation out of Mega-Mall Hell, and answers to a Board (huh?) which put the Tooth Fairy on a "one-child, one-tooth" edict and given the Easter Bunny his pink egg. Oh, and his right-hand man is a ditz blonde in a mini-dress and go-go boots. Ho... ho... ho... ho... ho!

But what really sent me over the edge was Slam named #1 on the Naughty List. Shouldn't a Naughty List be reserved for children who are the true embodiment of evil? Nope, to Old

Sausage Fingers, a good boy who lashes out because he is unwanted and unloved is the Demon Seed! The Nimrods behind "*Fred Claus*" should be boiled in their own pudding!

"Freddy Got Fingered" (2001) (review: August 13, 2007)

I have seen "*Plan 9 From Outer Space*" AND "*Santa Claus Conquers the Martians*" AND "*Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*" AND "*Fair Game*" AND "*Body of Evidence*" AND "*Showgirls*" (twice). But for the first time in my film-going life, words fail me! Was this supposed to be a missive on the state of Western Civilization? Or what constitutes art? Or a challenge to the conceptions of the cinematic form? Or was this just an excuse for Tom Green to commit unnatural acts without getting arrested?!

Why is Gord such a retard? Why is Betty an even bigger retard? What made Rip Torn, Drew Barrymore and - for The Love of God, NO! - Shaq sign up for this? More importantly, why are sick, depraved fucks like Green and Eli ("*Hostel*") Roth allowed to walk the streets?

If Green and Roth can get their shit bankrolled, then there is hope for your little opus!

"*Fun with Dick and Jane*" (2005) (review: September 10, 2006)

There is no "fun" poking fun at the desperate plight of illegals. Or the desperate plight of head-shop owners, for that matter. That the richer-than-God Brian Glazer didn't see the irony of having his "heroes" do exactly what the villain does - rob honest, hardworking people of their life savings - doesn't surprise me! Hell, how do you think he got to be richer than God?!

In this alleged satire about greed, Glazer reveals his own hypocrisy: the McMansions, the McToys, the McChildren, the McIllegals who are paid peanuts to take care of the McMansions, the McToys, and the McChildren! But the main problem (aside from the revolting bigotry) is the premise: as the former executive of a now-infamous company, Dick would be the Big Scalp for every corporate headhunter in the country! No soup kitchens for him! And, raking in high six-figures, you'd think he wouldn't be caught dead around a Gore/Lieberman poster!

"*Fur: An Imaginary Portrait of Diane Arbus*" (2006) (review: July 20, 2007)

Hollywood has been taking liberties with historical figures since forever. "*Yankee Doodle Dandy*" gave George M. Cohen one wife when he actually had two, neither of whom was named Mary. "*Bugsy*" and "*The Untouchables*" were pure fiction. Less said about "*The Aviator*", the better! But the village idiots behind "*Fur*" are beyond arrogant, inventing "characters and situations that reach beyond reality to express what might have been Diane's inner experience on her extraordinary path". Huh?

"Un Chien Andalou" on crack, *"Fur"* is even more insipid and infuriating than that waste of celluloid! Worse, after being dragged through enough metaphors to choke a horse (wigs, coats), our heroes don't do the Wookie Nookie until Chewbacca ditches The Scarecrow get-up and gets a shave! So much for beauty being only skin deep! Now I know why Mr. Arbus wound up playing the shrink on *"M*A*S*H"* after that glued-on beard got him nowhere!

I did get two things out of *"Fur"*: Nicole Kidman doesn't want to do full frontal anymore, and the only person who should be caught dead in a gorilla suit is Marlene Dietrich!

"Gerry" (2002) (review: July 29, 2007)

Some have opined this is about the terror of nothingness, a metaphor for humanity's spiritual desolation. Sorry, this is nothing but an artsy-fartsy remake of *"Dude, Where's My Car?!"*

The Gerrys are dumb as rocks! They don't stay put after they realize they're lost. They're surrounded by water (the plants) but never figure that out. "Fuck you" is deep conversation. That's why I never bought they knew how to build a fire or which direction they've been walking (in circles, but I digress). Then Beavis kills Butthead and hobbles off toward the highway! What did Gus Van Sant mean by that? Matt Damon is too hunky to have his mangy carcass picked clean, but Casey Affleck isn't? Whatever!

"The Girl Next Door" (2004) (review: October 8, 2004)

Danielle is SO desperate to escape her past, she dresses like a slut, doesn't object to her ex-pimp re-entering her life, works a porn convention, has no problem taking Matt to a strip club, and enlists her friends to "help" him shoot a sex video! If she were really serious about making a fresh start, she'd be working a legit job, call the cops the second the pimp showed up, and dress like a librarian!

Matt's moral compass is even more off! How do you go from resolving to lead a moral life to deciding that the only way you can save the day is have on-camera sex? Emile Hirsch looks like an underage Leonardo DiCaprio, and Elisha Cuthbert looks like a young Deborah Harry, which makes their hook-up downright creepy. It doesn't matter, since they had no chemistry. When the most appealing character is a "fatherly" porn king, what does THAT tell you?

"Good Night, and Good Luck" (2005) (review: October 6, 2005)

So what if the Verona cables proved there were Communists in our mists, and Khrushchev's memoirs confirmed that the Rosenbergs committed treason? *"Good Night, and Good Luck"* will make those who share Boy George Clooney's warped world-view hug themselves.

The irony of using African-American Dianne Reeves to underscore the "crusade" launched by Murrow and his lily-white staff is totally lost on Clooney. He isn't much of a director, either: the pacing is sluggish, the scenes are poorly blocked, the characters are not fleshed out, and a subplot goes nowhere. To top it off, he decides some gay-bashing is in order. That Clooney socks it to Liberace, of all people, and is being given a pass, is despicable.

Joseph McCarthy did not create the blacklist. He did not blacklist Larry Parks for naming names, and Zero Mostel for not naming names, and Faye Grant for speaking out at a colleague's funeral while "friendly witnesses" Ronald Reagan and Gary Cooper went on with their lives. Hollywood did. CBS had a blacklist as well, which Murrow surely knew of, but Clooney ignores. He provides little background about the hearings or any context; he hopes those going in won't be up on the minutia.

He uses McCarthy's claim of 200 Communists in the State Department to lead the audience to believe the basis for the "witch-hunt" was false. Eisenhower finally put the brakes on McCarthy, partly because of his tactics, but mostly because he set his sights on Ike's cabinet. Despite what Clooney insinuates by closing with him extolling the virtues of American society, Ike never publicly denounced McCarthy.

CBS owner Bill Paley says McCarthy wants William F. Buckley to do his rebuttal to Murrow's attacks. Clooney doesn't tell you the reason why Murrow refused: because he knew Buckley would have ripped his pompous ass to shreds.

Boy George should have explored how the Fourth Estate destroys innocent lives without reprisal. But what do you expect from the pompous ass who declared that Charlton Heston deserves to get Alzheimer's? And how cheeky of Clooney not to mention that TIME magazine's founder Henry Luce backed Tailgunner Joe. Could it be because his baby owes its existence to Time-Warner? Nah!

"The Good Shepherd" (2006) (review: May 14, 2007)

Ever wonder how 10 - count 'em, 10! - Oscar winners can make a mess of a movie? Me neither, but Robert De Niro has been "kind" enough to provide the answer! I don't know what was sillier: Matt Damon mud-wrestling before his Skull & Bones buddies and getting pissed on for his troubles; Angelina Jolie getting all huffy over hubby's fooling around; or the Hitler-loving Professor teaching Matt how to be a good little spy! Oh, and anyone wonder how Vito Corleone wound up head of the OSS in this WASP Paradise?

Racist, sexist, homophobic, and boring, through the 22 years it covers, Matty-Boy doesn't age one bit. Must be that burr he has planted firmly up his snooty ass!

"The Grand Budapest Hotel" (2014) (review: January 25, 2015)

The "star" of this is not in Budapest but in a fictional European country. The "hero", a filthy-mouthed gigolo, is the "legendary" concierge of said establishment. Just how dumb is this? The skin tone of Filthy-Mouthed Gigolo's sidekick, Lobby Boy, turns white, and his schnoz grows to twice its size by the time he's 70! It's that dumb!

Filthy-Mouthed Gigolo is framed for the murder of his filthy-rich lady friend, who left him a priceless painting. Filthy-Rich Lady Friend's Psycho Son sicks his henchman on her lawyer, the sister of her loyal butler, then on Loyal Butler to get his grubby hands on Priceless Painting. Lobby Boy, with help from the future Mrs. Lobby Boy springs Filthy-Mouthed Gigolo and his new best friends out of the pokey. On the heels of Filthy-Mouthed Gigolo and Lobby Boy is World's Worst Police Detective, who lets Henchman get away with murder, then tries to bust Filthy-Mouthed Gigolo and Lobby Boy after Lobby Boy pushes Henchman off a cliff. It climaxes with Psycho Son shooting at Filthy-Mouthed Gigolo and Lobby Boy as a bunch of other psychos shoot at each other at said establishment, which has been taken over by Psycho Son's Nazi Wannabes! It's that dumb!

Filthy-Mouthed Gigolo calls a colleague from a phone booth in the middle of God-forsaken nowhere. Forget wondering why there is a phone booth in the middle of God-forsaken nowhere, this phone booth has no wire connecting it to a telephone pole because there are no telephone poles! It's that dumb!

Loyal Butler snuck an envelope with Priceless Painting containing Filthy-Rich Lady Friend's will. Filthy-Mouthed Gigolo displays Priceless Painting in his berth. When Filthy-Mouthed Gigolo places Priceless Painting into the Hotel's safe, it's been re-wrapped! It's that dumb!

Filthy-Rich Lady Friend's will left everything, including said establishment, to Filthy-Mouthed Gigolo, who leaves everything to - you guessed it - Lobby Boy, who recounts these hi-jinks to his guest. In real life, the will would never have been allowed into Probate, and Filthy-Mouthed Gigolo and Lobby Boy would have wound up with squat! Lobby Boy then tells his guest that Mrs. Lobby Boy and their son died of illness, and Filthy-Mouthed Gigolo was shot by the Nazi Wannabes. That is vicious. What was Wes Anderson's "point"? That he's a self-indulgent hack? Well, he succeeded.

"Gremlins 2: The New Batch" (1990) (review: January 11, 2004)

"Gremlins" was as original as its sequel is lame. As if they knew this, the "filmmakers" tried to spoof themselves, which only served to emphasize how pointless this was. When the most original thing is the name of the DNA place (Splice of Life), then you know you're in trouble! Heck, Billy never even asks Gizmo how he wound up at Clamp!

Gizmo doing Rambo was funny, but the script didn't take it nearly far enough (how cool it would have been to have Giz wipe out the baddies single handedly!) And, what's with the Head having an Aussie accent? Talk about needless!

"Guess Who" (2005) (review: December 7, 2005)

The big joke here is that the black Jones family is whiter than the pasty boy toy their baby brings home! As if to prove you can take the boy out of the hood but you can't take the hood out of the boy, Bernie Mac does his grammatically-challenged shtick which is totally wrong for the educated man he's playing. Worse is Percy's creepy obsession with protecting his not-so-innocent baby from McWhitey while ignoring his other skanky daughter.

Family means so much to Percy, he tossed Dad in the old folks home, dragging him out for special occasions. It's obvious Dad exists solely to react to the jokes Percy bullies Simon to crack. The joke wasn't nearly as offensive as the ones before it; for Dad try to throttle Simon over it is just inane! It shows the film makers have no understanding or respect for the characters. This is epitomized by the reason Boy Toy quits his job like the dumb wuss he is. If that happened in real life, the boss would be sacked and Simon would be one rich brother from the subsequent settlement! For all its posturing, the film makers have no idea how to address the issue of race relations. It's just goofy male-bonding on rom-com autopilot.

"Hancock" (2008) (review: June 23, 2009)

The original script doesn't specify Hancock's race. He's just your garden-variety sleaze who drinks, smokes, swears, and screws. The Ray character was not a guilt-ridden Social Justice Warrior but a department store security guard named – are you ready? - Horus Longfellow! In short, this was retooled so The Fresh Prince could play action hero! "Goody"!

Funny how a movie that suffers from homophobia would have a scene of its star lying on his stomach... on a cot... in a jail cell... with his ass up?

Superheroes get paid squat. Even Bazillionaire Batman has to work for a living. So, how does Hancock earn his keep? Now that I think about him with that ho, forget I asked.

Just how ridiculous is this? Mary warns Hancock that she'll kill him if Ray learns of her powers, then they have the obligatory downtown-showdown. Makes "sense" to me, too.

Ray is a successful yet properly guilt-ridden white liberal who treats Hancock like a 2-year-old. Even how he thanks him for saving his life is despicably patronizing.

Hancock and Mary have been on-again/off-again since 4 B.C., but they're toxic to each other? Sounds like a typical relationship. That bit of info is followed by an idiotic monologue about how "they made us in pairs". Who were "they"? Being "made in pairs" means Hancock and Mary "are" identical. Did "they" give Hancock and Mary the ability to morph into different races? What happened to our lovebirds between 4 B.C. and 1850? Why do I care?

When Hancock didn't tear into the retards for ignoring the railroad crossing, it lost me. He should have let the train "teach" them a lesson. I would have!

"Hemingway & Gellhorn" (2012) (TV) (review: June 10, 2012)

The International Imitation Hemingway Competition, better known as Bad Hemingway, was a contest where entrants submitted the most ham fisted tales in the style of the man some consider the greatest writer America has ever produced, Ernest Hemingway. Too bad the contest is defunct now because the twits behind this would have "won" hands down!

I howled at the scene where a bomb explodes as Hemingway and Gellhorn do the nasty, stop as debris rains down on them, then pick up where they left off. Then this has the gall to have Gellhorn come upon the crying baby, the lone survivor of a Japanese bombing raid (one of the most horrific of all war images). When her guide (whom I thought was the butchiest woman in China) tells her there's nothing they can do, I wanted to reach inside the TV and throttle them! That the Butchiest Woman in China is none other than the future Chairman Mao - whose regime killed 40 million people (and babies) - was a bit of nasty the "filmmakers" didn't want to touch with a 10 foot chopstick. Instead, they were too busy turning Mao's partner in crime, Zhou Enlai, into an erudite stud, castrating Chiang Kai-shek, and making case for "Papa" and "Marty" being Forrest Gump's parents!

An actor who plays a real person should inspire people to learn more about that person. Clive Owen and Nicole Kidman fail at this miserably. Granted, Ernest Hemingway and Martha Gellhorn were not the nicest people: he constantly tried to undermine her and she constantly cheated on him (more bits of nasty the "filmmakers" wanted no part of). And the script is a putrid mess: "You spend so much time arguing with F. Scott Fitzgerald about who has a bigger penis but I know the truth"? Gag!

After "Marty" kicked the documentary crew out of her apartment, I was hoping she would follow "Papa"'s lead. No such luck. Instead, we are "treated" to a bizarre interaction between her and a raven (!). Then, she straps a backpack on, and storms out like a Girl Scout having a bitch fit. She wasn't the only one having a bitch fit.

"Hitch" (2005) (review: April 22, 2007)

As if the Fresh Prince playing cupid wasn't stupid enough, this self-proclaimed "cure for the common man" spews out the most inane bits of "wisdom": Look her in the eyes! Hear what she isn't saying! Focus! Focus! FOCUS! I lost it when we learn what led Sugar Bear to become Tony Robbins: when a guy gets fucked over by a girl like that, he doesn't turn into Cyrano de Bergerac, he turns into the Marquis de Sade! I never bought Stupid Cupid could get the hots for that ball-busting bitch (but seeing whom Mrs. Fresh Prince is, I digress). I thought it'd make more sense for Stupid Cupid to hook Porky up with Ball-Busting Bitch while he tried to score with the Paris Hilton Wannabe. Yawn.

"Hollywoodland" (2006) (review: March 9, 2007)

If this doesn't prove once and for all Ben Affleck has no right calling himself an actor, I don't know what will! Bob Hoskins is on his game. Diane Lane struggles mightily with the unenviable task of making goo-goo eyes at Affleck. But Adrian Brody channels Heath Ledger from *"Brokeback Mountain"* -- I couldn't understand him half the time!

Everyone in this *"Chinatown"* wannabe were the most-thoroughly deplorable characters I've had the displeasure of wasting two hours of my life on! So did Superman blow his brains out or was someone kind enough to pull the trigger? The film won't say nor does it make us care. The self-proclaimed George Reeves expert who posted on the IMDb "the artists here have done a powerful and affecting job" should be screaming at how the man is depicted as a Z-grade gigolo and overall scumbag. I guess he was too busy counting the rea\$on\$ the producers gave him not to notice.

"The Honeymoon Killers" (1970) (review: February 15, 2008)

Only thing they got right here was that Martha Beck and Raymond Fernandez were killers.

* The story took place in the late 40's, not the late 60's.

* The scene of Martha confronting the nurse and orderly is pure fiction. She was superintendent of a home for handicapped children in Florida, not a head nurse at a hospital in Alabama.

* After she was fired, Martha showed up at Raymond's apartment in New York with her two children, and dutifully abandoned them at a Salvation Army on his orders. None of this is in the film.

* Although they may have killed as many as 20 people, Martha and Raymond were convicted of one murder, the Albany widow. After they killed the Michigan widow and her child, they were extradited to New York, which had the death penalty. None of this is detailed.

* Martha, crazed with jealousy over Raymond's wooing of their latest mark, calls the police? Needless to say, that didn't happen.

This was an obvious answer to the ultra-glitzzy *"Bonnie and Clyde"*. Granted, this was shot on a shoe string budget, but Leonard Kastle isn't half the filmmaker Arthur Penn is: the story jumps, the pacing is sluggish, the sound is wretched, and, he is so disinterested in his heroes or their victims, whom he insultingly depicts as hopelessly square and stupid, you wonder why he bothered! The result is a campiness only John Waters could love (Shirley Stoler could have been Divine's mother!) Gustav Mahler must be spinning in his grave!

"The Hours" (2002) (review: June 26, 2003)

I don't understand why Nicole Kidman won the Oscar for this pretentious bore-fest. After thinking that her, Meryl Streep's, Julianne Moore's, and Ed Harris's line deliveries wildly-fluctuated on purpose so to clue us in at something deeper, I realized that hack Stephen Daldry was too intimidated by his powerhouse cast to steer them in the direction he wanted them to go. I found this especially true of Streep. She kisses Allison Janney not as one kisses her lover, but as if she just wanted to get it over with! However, Daldry coaxed a great performance out of little Jack Rovello. Too bad he couldn't form a bridge from Rovello's Richie to Harris's Richard; it never seemed they were the same person.

Daldry opens with Virginia's suicide and has an elderly Laura visit Clarissa. I would have ended with Virginia's suicide, then Laura doing what she describes to Clarissa: gets up, makes breakfast, then hops on a bus, leaving a note on the table. It's not important to know anything more. Indeed, it's more powerful if we don't learn her fate.

I wondered where Laura got the money for the posh hotel room and how Clarissa and Sally can afford a high six-figure Manhattan flat compared with Richard's more-realistic cubbyhole. When a movie doesn't jell, your mind wanders.

"How to Make It in America" (2010-2011) (TV) (review: December 31, 2010)

Never heard of this until I caught some episodes last night. A few observations:

* "How to Make It in America" is too long of a title and, given the premise, makes no sense.

* These guys make *"The Real Housewives of New Jersey"* look like MENSA candidates. Dumb shows some gumption by charming the fashion designer with a toast, but when he and Dumber show up at the designer's place, what do they bring with them to this make-or-break meet-and-greet to prove that they're serious and got game? Nada!

* After I stopped yelling at my TV, I realized that Dumb and Dumber are supposed to be stand-ins for every schmuck who's ever had a crazy dream. Well, even schmucks know they have to work to make their crazy dream come true. Dumb and Dumber seem to think that business models and prototypes and capital and material for their "visionary" jeans should fall from the sky and land on top of them because, well, heck, they just should, dang nab-it!

* Oddly, Dumb and Dumber take their sketches with them when they see the pattern maker. I have to assume the lone reason why they just happen to have the sketchbook was because Dumber's mother put them into his backpack!

* When the psycho cousin and the ex-girlfriend's nutter boss are way more interesting than your leads, you've got problems.

"The Howards of Virginia" (1940) (review: July 5, 2007)

In his intro, TCM's Robert Osborne said this was one of Cary Grant's least-known films. Ten minutes in, you know why. Matthew is 9 or 10 when he loses his father. A title card moves us forward 12 years, meaning Matthew should be 21 or 22, but is played by the 36 year old Grant! It also doesn't help that Matthew is an asshole! He rejects his son because he is crippled and names the kid after the hated Fleetwood! The irony that Matthew becomes the kind of man he despises Fleetwood as - landowner (and slave owner), politician, elitist - is lost completely on director Frank Lloyd.

As if he knew he was horribly miscast, Grant tears through this like he's on crack! Martha Scott struggles mightily in a thankless role. Only Cedric Hardwicke emerges unscathed. He makes you feel Fleetwood's bitterness as his world crumbles, betrayed, through no fault of his own, by the people he thought of as his own.

Did anyone pick up on that Roger is gay? Fleetwood gives Jane the family's necklace because he knows Roger will never marry! And Tom-Cat Jefferson was SO effeminate, I was waiting for him to hook up with Roger! Boy Howdy!

"Ice Age" (2002) (review: March 16, 2002)

Who decided that characters getting pummeled, squished, slammed, zapped, whacked, and impaled is funny? Yet, as I cringed while Scrat and Sid were forced to endure one indignity after another, the kids and parents around me were laughing their asses off.

Although it implied some of the violence and death, this was cruel. I was especially disturbed by the dodo bird sequence. It was not only historically inaccurate, it was vicious. Good thing they've been extinct since 1681, otherwise, Fox would be shilling out mucho dinero to the dodos and their lawyers. The watermelon concern also has grounds for a big-time lawsuit.

Manipulative and paint-by-the-numbers, Manfred's story was an obvious ploy for our sympathies. But he so unlikable, it was impossible to have any empathy for him. My hopes were raised when Diego comments that the baby will become a hunter and he might, someday, hunt them! But the film makers didn't have the guts to explore the moral and ethical questions just raised, especially in light of Manfred's story. It reminded me of the soldiers in *"Saving Private Ryan"* discussing the stupidity of 8 guys risking their lives to save one, then the issue being dropped: it was patronizing and insulting.

And why did they add on that coda? Talk about cold! Hasn't Scrat suffered enough? Leave the poor thing (and his acorn) alone!

"I Heart Huckabees" (2004) (review: June 24, 2007)

Caught this last night and I can't believe the raves. I stuck it out only because of the cast. Who knew there were so many hard-up multi-millionaires? God, this was boring, stuffed with idiot characters I didn't give a shit about! The fireman was an asshole! He accuses the family of being selfish hypocrites, but displays nothing but selfishness! Our "hero" is even worse! He starts the fire which could have killed the girl (especially as the fireman was "rescuing" her), and no recriminations whatsoever! And "thank you", David O. Russell for that image of our "hero" suckling at his soul mate's man-boobies! PUKE! Stay away! Stay FAR away!

"The Illusionist" (2006) (review: February 25, 2007)

If Leopold, Kronprinz von Österreich-Ungarn (that's more High German than there is in the whole movie) has immunity from prosecution if he commits a crime on Imperial Property (huh?), then why does he blow his brains out? I would have shot Uhl, then told the police he confessed to killing Sophie as part of a plot to overthrow the Imperial Family (or some such nonsense) and I had just dispensed justice (or some such nonsense).

Why does Leopold need Sophie to win over the Hungarians? If he has killed before, why the uproar over the "demise" of the stiff-as-a-board Sophie (played by the stiff-as-a-board Jessica Biel)? And why does he want to overthrow Daddy when he's next in line to the throne?

I was bothered by how Leopold's guests mocked him. That, kids, is treason, and, in the real world, they would have been dragged out by their snooty heels, and shot!

Edward Norton, Biel, Paul Giamatti, Rupert Sewell, and the supporting cast sound like refugees from an East End stock company. And if Philip Glass rips off his half-ass score from *"The Hours"* again, I hope someone makes him disappear!

"Infamous" (2006) (review: October 6, 2007)

It's unfair that this should be compared to *"Capote"*. Unfair because this makes the bozos behind that stinker look downright competent! Sandra Bullock is much-more serviceable as Harper Lee than Catherine Keener. Hope Davis as Slim Keith does not embarrass herself. But Jeff Daniels's Alvin Dewey wouldn't have known the Clutters if they fell on top of him! The real Babe Paley ate wusses like Sigourney Weaver's Babe Paley for breakfast, then picked her teeth with losers like the one this passes off as her all-powerful hubby! I couldn't tell if Juliet Stevenson was playing Diana Vreeland or auditioning for an All-Drag Queen version of *"The Rocky Horror Picture Show"*. Peter Bogdanovich as Bennett Cerf? For the Love of God, NO!

Which leaves Toby Jones. He is physically perfect but falls into the same trap as Philip Seymour Hoffman, turning Capote into a whiny, malevolent elf you can't understand why the Queen Mum would bother wishing Merry Christmas to! Treating the natives as a bunch of rubes, Truman drops names the way you and I breathe to win access to his soul mate Perry Smith, who later threatens to make Whiny Malevolent Elf 's dream come true and shove a sock down his "fucking throat" so he knows how it feels to be used! How stupid!

At least this has Truman at the executions when they occurred. But then, *"Capote"* didn't subject us to campy heads dishing against a *"Tonight Show"* mock-up.

"Iris" (2001) (review: September 7, 2002)

Even a movie that doesn't purport to get to the meat and potatoes of its subject needs to give a frame of reference. The shift between Iris and John's "old" and "young" selves was maddening. Did they just leap over middle age? I can see why Iris was attracted to the novelty of being with John: he's a sweet puppy of a bloke, someone you'd take to Mom. But he's not a serious affair, and certainly not a life partner. Indeed, his willingness to be her doormat is such, his outbursts come off as forced, as if director Richard Eyre realized that John was in serious danger of becoming a martyr.

But Eyre wimps out with Iris's relationships with Maurice and Janet. The second we see him, we know Maurice is a gay man who "switch hits" with Iris, hence, his viciousness when she unexpectedly brings John along for dinner. Yet while John seems clueless about Maurice, he is quite accepting of Janet, either because she is a woman or he expects Iris to shag whomever.

And why does she cheat? Is what attracts her to John the same thing that repels her? Is fidelity a concept that she has rejected as Man's imposed will on Woman? Is she amoral? Or is he just lousy in the sack? Your guess is as good as mine.

As far as the acting, what do you expect from Judi Dench and Kate Winslet? Too bad they didn't have anything real to work with.

"It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World" (1963) (review: June 4, 2003)

Stanley Kramer was Steven Spielberg's dad. I'm serious! Both specialize in big, self-congratulatory message movies: Nukes are Bad; Racism is Bad; Nazis are Bad. So, is it any wonder when each decided to make a comedy, he fell flat on his ass?

The "making of" doc boasts that everyone who was anyone in comedy begged Kramer to be in his little opus (can you say "full of himself"?). So, where were Lucille Ball, Bob Hope, George Burns, Carol Burnett, Jackie Gleason? Weren't they big enough? Weren't they funny enough? Didn't they beg enough? Let me guess: they didn't beg, period! The nerve!

Why did the kid take Meyer on that detour? Why was there dynamite in a hardware store? Why does Culpepper throw his career away? The characters were selfish jerks and I didn't care about any of them!

"It's Complicated" (2009) (review: November 15, 2010)

On the subject of Meryl Streep, Bette Davis and Katharine Hepburn were divided. Davis thought Streep had the goods, and even wrote her a letter expressing the hope they'd work together. Hepburn thought Streep, with her myriad of accents, was a one-trick pony. Two Oscars and 16 nominations may have proven Davis right. But Hepburn was also proven right. With *"Prime"*, *"Mamma Mia!"*, *"Julie & Julia"*, and this steaming pile of shit, Streep has officially joined Robert De Niro, Al Pacino, Dustin Hoffman, Michael Caine, Jack Nicholson, Samuel L. Jackson, Susan Sarandon, and Anthony Hopkins in The Ham Club: great actors who have tanked their careers to ham it up in steaming piles of shit for big, fat paychecks!

I never bought Streep and Alec Baldwin as exes, much less, parents. She is a self-absorbed whiner, and he is a self-absorbed creep. If self-absorbed creep Baldwin weren't so full of himself, he'd see the irony of his casting. Steve Martin plays the prototypical Sad Sack. You

can see him just counting the seconds until he could run back into his trailer and hide! To say Martin is horribly miscast and that he and Streep have zero chemistry is being charitable.

The children are supposedly adults, yet they act like their puppy has just died when they learn the awful truth. As Mom explains why she and Dad are playing "home, sweet home" (gag!), the children are huddled together on a bed like 5 year olds! How retarded! Speaking of, on what planet do shrinkers advise patients to sleep around? Seeing how Jane, an alleged baker, plays with dough (more shameless hammy by Streep), and doesn't know the first thing about croissants, the shrink should have ordered her to go to baking school!

The only one in this steaming pile of shit who does himself proud (if you can say that) is the kid who plays The Stepson From Hell. That he had me wanting to ram his bratty head through the wall is either a testament to his talent or proof that he actually is a brat.

This steaming pile of shit was made by Nancy Meyers, whose specialty is churning out fluff about obscenely-successful middle-aged white women with "issues". For reasons beyond me, she assumes that women who are not obscenely-successful, middle-aged, white women will not only connect with these Girl Power caricatures, but root for them. One of Jane's pals is played by Rita Wilson, whom Tom Hanks played "home, sweet home" (gag!) with while playing "home, sweet home" (gag!) with his wife, reminding me of that old chestnut, "if he cheats with you, he'll cheat on you". Were Meyers not so full of herself, she'd see the irony of casting Wilson. Then again, probably not.

"The Jazz Singer" (1927) (review: April 13, 2020)

Saw this "landmark", finally. I wasn't expecting *"The General"*, and I wasn't disappointed, but the plot - with enough clichés to sink Solomon's Temple - would make Hallmark puke!

A 13 year old kid is in a saloon, and none of the adults call the cops. The kid's parents don't bother wondering where he is until their friend tells them where the kid is (why the "deeply religious" friend is at the saloon wetting his whistle at the same time the kid is there is not for us lesser minds to ponder). Papa drags the kid out of the saloon, and no one reacts. The kid declares that he will run away from home if Papa gives him another trashing, and he nor Mama bother to go to the cops when the kid makes good on his promise. When we next see the kid, he is 41 year old Al Jolson! NO explanation as to what he has been doing or how he survived on his own for 28 years -- he is now 41 year old Al Jolson! Just accept it.

Jazz Singer Jolson tears through his repertoire like he's on crack! He utterly-butchers "Blue Skies", a song which demands that each word be delivered slowly and fully; I could just imagine Irving Berlin pounding his head against a wall in mortification.

Anyhoo, Jolson's love interest (a "shiksa" Mama bemoans in horror!) is a star on the rise who helps him bag his big break and is happy to learn that his career means more to him than Mama or Papa or her (weird!). As Jolson agonizes over subbing for Papa at the synagogue or going on with the show that night, the show's director warns him not to "queer yourself". I found that interesting as it showed how meanings of words can deviate over time. Ironically, the word "queer" is used to this day by men who identify as homosexual as the insult it was originally intended! Anyhoo, Show Director tells the Opening Night audience (who are dressed to the nines) there won't be a show, Jolson performs the Kol Nidre at the synagogue, is reconciled with Papa, who croaks as he hears Sonny Boy sing, and NOBODY except Mama notices! We then jump forward a few years: Shiksa is nowhere to be found, but Mama is front-row-center as her black-faced Sonny Boy serenades her. Freud would have had a field day with these two! The blackface IS disgusting, but what is truly-insulting is that the film builds up a moral dilemma, only to allow Sonny Boy to have his Lekach and eat it, too.

"Joan of Arc" (1999) (TV) (review: June 14, 2002)

Aside from Joan being burned at the stake (and they didn't even get THAT right), it is inaccurate when it isn't ignoring key points. She was captured at Compiègne on May 23, 1430, 9 months after Charles was crowned. Here, she leaves home not to lead her army again (against her will), but to be captured and martyred. At her trial, the prosecution tried to connect her with some superstitious practices performed around what the "Fairy Tree", but this isn't even mentioned! Instead, Joan goes into "Jesus mode," with repeated talk by her and others about meeting her end to the point where you just want to say: "Die, already!" Where did they get the stuff about the relationship between Joan and her father, which is inexplicably resolved just as Joan is about to leave home forever? Did I mention that her wannabe boyfriend being allowed to inform her of a last-minute rescue attempt by her soldiers is pure hooey? About her execution: her hair was cut off and she was put in a gown. She walked to the stake holding a crucifix, and was NOT put to death immediately after recanting her confession. The film makers couldn't bother to get any of this right. Indeed, the scene of the execution features snow flurries -- in late May!

It also bypasses some really interesting tidbits that would have given insight into Joan and her relationship with her men. The day after she began her liberation of Orleans was Ascension Day. To celebrate, she declared a truce, kicked the prostitutes out of the camp, agreed to the attack planned for the next day, and dictated another letter to the English which promised "a disturbance such as will be eternally remembered" if they didn't go home. None of this is here. It doesn't even bother to mention that Joan was cleared of all charges at a retrying 25 years after her death.

"Joan Rivers: A Piece of Work" (2010) (review: January 9, 2011)

This begins with Joan Rivers looking like a refugee from *Night of the Living Dead* before tons of make-up transform her into something resembling a human being. The peek behind the pose will seem brave to some; to me, it confirms she has turned herself into Leona Helmsley! A few more gos under the knife, she'll turn herself into Michael Jackson!

Rivers has money and fame, but what she really wants is status, which is why she attends a Kennedy Center tribute to George Carlin, although, as she points out, it represents everything Carlin was against, namely rich Republicans (yuk, yuk). That Carlin made millions off of his feigned disdain for the establishment is lost on Rivers. That you have to earn respect to get respect is lost on her, too.

Kathy Griffin prattles about how Rivers paved the way, but that's the extent of the props, which is telling yet not surprising. Rivers is an utterly unlikable creature. One routine about her daughter nixing an offer to pose for *Playboy* made me want to wash my ears out with soap! Little wonder her manager bails on her every chance he gets, her staffers put up with her only because she pays them, and her fame-whore daughter can't stand being in the same room with her. Only once, when she and her grandson (whom she seems to adore) visit an ailing photographer does Rivers seem to get that the world does not revolve around her. But maybe that is part of her act.

"Julia" (TV) (2021) (review: June 1, 2022)

This would have you believe that no harried housewife in human history had ever made a meal from scratch until Julia Child burst into living rooms across America on July 26, 1962 to save humanity from the heresy of Swanson frozen TV dinners. I had to look up the date as the makers of this "Girl Power" stomach bomb couldn't be bothered to slap it on the screen. Upshot is Julia wanted to have it both ways: she poo-pooed the patriarchy (in the form of her Stiff-as-a-Starched-Shirt Papa) which kept Harried Housewife "chained" to her unhappy home, yet the heretics at Swanson never released a Bœuf à la Bourguignonne frozen TV dinner -- she expected Harried Housewife to make THAT one all by herself!

Irony is Julia was "saved" from becoming a Harried Housewife (albeit, an Über Privileged Harried Housewife) by a man. "Better", Paul Child "saved" Julia from Stiff-as-a-Starched-Shirt Papa. As this IS HBO, John McWilliams is depicted as Every Leftist's Boogeyman: über wealthy, conservative, bigoted, and (gad!) a Nixon supporter! So taken are they with their Stiff-as-a-Starched-Shirt Papa Bashing, the makers of this "Girl Power" stomach bomb couldn't bother to give props to the 3 women who made Julia a household name: Louisette Bertholle, co author of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*; Knopf's Judith Jones, who pushed to get said opus published; and Knopf's Avis DeVoto, who edited and guided said opus.

Anyone familiar with Julia Child's life will find no big reveals here. Anyone not familiar with her life will find even less.

"Julie & Julia" (2009) (review: May 16, 2010)

Julie Powell is shattered when a reporter informs her that Julia Child is not amused by the blog Julie is writing as she plows through all 524 recipes of Julia's magnum opus, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*. We're supposed to conclude that Julia is a crotchety fart who doesn't recognize an homage if it jumped onto her dowagers hump! But, as they say, the truth hurts. The real reason why Julia was not amused, her editor Judith Jones told *The Boston Globe* in 2009, was because the "homage" was stuffed like a bad cannoli with four-letter words. Julia concluded that Julie was not a serious cook and the blog was a stunt. Unfortunately for Julia, the stunt worked!

But, as they also say, why let the facts get in the way of a good story? Nora Ephron sure doesn't, hence, the totally-fictitious scene of Julia locking horns with her father over Joe McCarthy. McCarthy didn't have the pull to order his mother, much less Julia's husband, to Washington to be grilled on how American they were. In case anyone cares, Julia's father was a supporter of Richard Nixon.

Some of the reviews gushed over Streep's grandstanding to the point I wondered if they had been bought off. The less said about Adams, the better: she is whiny, self-absorbed, and unlikable. Moreover, Ephron's disdain for anything that smacks Red State is such, she has Texas native Julie speak with the most mind-numbing monotone this side of Kevin Costner.

Did we really need to see Madame Ham get her freak on? Did we really need to see Worker Drone kill not one, not two, but three lobsters? Did I really need to waste two hours on this mess when shoving bamboo rods under my fingernails would have been more constructive?

"Juno" (2007) (review: May 17, 2008)

What idiot saddles their kid with a name like "Liberty Bell"?

Juno has sex because she's bored? As Retard boyfriend observes, that's how mothers and teachers get babies!

What 16 year old references Soupy Sales or has pictures of Prince Charles and Glen Campbell on their bedroom wall? Puke!

"Pork swords"? Double puke!

The step-mother lets the ultrasound tech have it for having the nerve to observe babies raising babies is not a good idea.

Mr. Jingles wants a divorce because Juno has unleashed his inner Kurt Cobain? I'm surprised Miss Prissy Britches didn't accuse him of making "music" with Juno!

Dad assures Juno that someday she'll be in the hospital "on your own terms". Guess he missed the part about her jumping Retard's scrawny bones was on her terms!

The father and step-mother agree not to tell Retard's mother the awful truth? The father later gives Retard a pat on the shoulders instead of beating the holy hell out of him? Seriously, what planet are these people on?!

Retard shows absolutely no interest in the pregnancy nor ponders his impending fatherhood. But he suddenly shows up at the hospital all concerned? Give me a break!

The messy little episode behind them, Juno and "the cheese to my macaroni" take up where they left off, as if she just had a cold and not their child!

Change your name to something "clever" like Diablo Cody and the critics and the Academy will kiss your no-talent ass, too!

"Just Imagine" (1930) (review: October 26, 2005)

This strange bird anticipates hand driers and "incubator babies", but not computers. There don't seem to be any minorities in 1980, either. Oddly, it correctly predicted that people will still be using pens and fly swatters in 1980!

It takes jabs at antisemitism and eugenics, which probably inspired the Nazis' Final Solution. For reasons not explained, the government decides who marries whom based on "distinction". LN-18 has been "betrothed" to MT-3, a jerk whose only "distinction" is he runs the newspaper his father left him. LN-18 loves J-21, who has nothing going for him other than he's a nice guy. His roomie RT-42 loves LN-18's best friend, D-6. RT-42 advises J-21 to forget about LN-18, but he is determined to do something to prove he is "distinguished" enough to marry her. A flunky for inventor Z-4 seeks J-21 out for a project guaranteed to blow Paper Boy out of the water: the first trip to Mars! Meanwhile, for reasons also unexplained, scientists have revived a man who died 50 years earlier. In a jab at how scientific endeavors are often nothing more than exercises in megalomaniac callousness, once brought back to life, the man is tossed aside like a piece of garbage. J-21 and RT-42 befriend Single O, and he gets blasted on the booze pills they give him!

If Roberto Benigni and Fanny Brice mated, they would have had El Brendel. He has Brice's sweetness and Benigni's charm without the self-serving phoniness. You should be offended by a gay joke he cracks at Loko's expense, but Brendel diffuses it with a goofy sincerity. He also had great physicality. Watching him get manhandled by Boko, who can't stop conking him over the head, then dispatching with a Vulcan Grip was a riot!

If Ed Wood had a budget, he would have made *"Just Imagine"*. The Mars sequence is a hoot! The natives dress in Caveman-Buck Rogers, and dance like Martha Graham on crack! Who knew it took only 2 hours to fly from Earth to the Red Planet?

"Justice League" (2017) (review: July 10, 2018)

\$300 million was spent on this. All the good \$300 million could have done, and Warner Bros. threw it at hack Joss Whedon, who took over after fellow hack Zack Snyder dropped out after the loss of his daughter (he is credited as the director as he helmed the principal photography). Turning to Whedon to complete a film featuring Wonder Woman after he was blasted on social media when his rejected Wonder Woman script was leaked unto an undeserving world is an irony lost on Warners, I'm sure.

The beef I have with superhero movies (aside from idiot studio execs throwing hundreds of millions of dollars at hacks) is NONE of them are ever faithful to the origin story: the Kents adopted baby Kal-El from an orphanage; Diana competed against the other Amazons to become Wonder Woman; Bruce Wayne saw a bat come through his window as he was brooding in his study. Here, Snyder and Whedon "outdo" themselves by trashing not one but two superheroes: Aquaman is a tatted-up boozier who can't communicate with fish, and The Flash is a whiny Soy Boy who exclaims "Oh, snap!". And like the rotten cherry on top, the Villain has an Oedipus Complex!

Then, there are the plot holes. Yeah, a superhero movie just isn't a superhero movie without tons of plot holes, but Whedon and co-hack Chris Terrio (who won an Oscar; how in God's Name did THAT happen?!) seem to take a perverse delight in trying to out dumb-and-dumber Snyder: God-awful CGI; slow-motion sequences which will make you beg to be water-boarded; ripping off nearly every Si-Fi film from the past 20 years. Barry and Victor exhume Clark's grave in the dead of night? The non-human Superman has memory loss after being brought back to life? The henchmen of The Villain With The Oedipus Complex tear through Russia, but can't tear the salt box a family lives in to shreds? Did The Villain With The Oedipus Complex set up shop at a defunct nuclear reactor in the former USSR so that the little girl who lived in the salt box could play with a flower on a radioactive LSD trip? Makes as much "sense" as anything else in this tripe!

But the real crime against humanity is Dumb and Dumber wasting the erotic chemistry Ben Affleck and Gal Godot unleashed in *"Batman v Superman"*. I was anticipating Batman and Wonder Woman hooking up (or realizing they are soulmates, at the very least), but here, they act as though they hardly know each other -- and don't want to!

Seeing how Whedon has made a second "career" out of his seething hatred of Trump, I'm surprised he didn't manage to shoehorn some jabs at Agent Orange. Perhaps he did but his overlords nixed it. Walter Chaw of Film Freak Central opines Snyder's *"Man of Steel"* and *"Batman v Superman"* predicted the Trump presidency, but he gives Snyder way-too much credit for brains AND talent!

I don't blame Whedon or Snyder for this shit as much as I blame Affleck, who has managed to do the impossible: make George Clooney the second-worst Batman ever! One of the producers, Affleck hired Terrio to write *"Argo"*, for which Terrio won an Oscar (how in God's Name did THAT happen?!). After the \$75 million Warners had to eat when Affleck's opus *"Live by Night"* arrived D.O.A., why the former Mr. Jennifer Garner hasn't been tarred, feathered, and run out on a rail is beyond me!

As Shakespeare would have put it, this "is a tale told by an idiot (in this case, three), full of sound and fury, signifying nothing". The Warner Brothers are spinning in their graves!

"Kate & Leopold" (2001) (review: September 14, 2002)

I'm a sucker for a romance film as anybody, but the only thing about this that made any sense was how everyone thought Stuart was wacko. If you told everyone you have found a time portal, you'd be thrown into a loony bin, too! While it's clear why Stuart tracks down Leo, why does Leo follow him to the Brooklyn Bridge (saying "stop, please," which was really odd) instead of sicking the cops on him?

It was also odd how quickly Leo adapts. He doesn't react with fear. He doesn't wonder if he will ever get home. He just complains about "General Electric's" toaster. It's also highly unlikely he's encountered anyone outside his race. Yet Leo not only accepts the presence of Stuart's young friend (which is downright creepy), but entertains him.

Why did Kate ask Leo if he's seen *"Breakfast at Tiffany's"*? How did Leo pull off the rooftop dinner? And how cheeky to include Elisha Otis as a plot point. Stuart credits Leopold with inventing the elevator, yet it was invented by Otis (who attends Leopold's party) in 1853!

Then there's Leo's lecture about integrity. Coming to New York to marry the richest girl you can bag does not constitute fraud, but peddling crappy "pond scum" butter to an unsuspecting public is?

Why does Kate's hair look like a box of under-cooked spaghetti? How was Leo hired for his gig when he's so undocumented, he's never heard the term "Social Security"? And more importantly, why can't I sue Miramax for wasting two hours of my life?

"King Kong" (2005) (review: May 16, 2006)

There simply isn't enough story to justify a 3 hour movie. As if he knew this, *"Lord of the Rings"* hack Peter Jackson rips off *"Titanic"*, *"Jurassic Park"*, *"Starship Troopers"*, the 1976 version of *"King Kong"*, and finally, Tolkien! Not content to fix what wasn't broken, Jackson gives the Big Guy a sensitivity chip! He still rampages, but he has reason to, dammit! This Kong is so floored by Ann's juggling, he tracks her down just in time to save her?! O-Kay!

Why do the natives regard Kong as a god? And if he truly is King, why do his non-human "subjects" keep trying to knock Kong off of his throne?

Naomi Watts and Adrien Brody as lovers is laughable -- she has more cojones in her pinkie than has in his whole body! But it was the Army acting like trigger-happy yahoos that cinched it for me (physics should have taken Kong out when he was on the ice, but that would have made way too much sense). Maybe Jackson is commenting on current events, but based on the previous 170 minutes I endured, I'm giving him way too much credit!

"Kingdom Come" (2011) (review: February 10, 2015)

As I was watching this, it occurred to me that everyone bitching about how hard the indie life are highly-successful industry people. Whenever I think of Illeana Douglas, I think of her grandfather, who left behind - aside from a great body of work - two Academy Awards. I imagine if she were really hard-up, she could pawn Grandpa's Oscars for a pretty penny.

As for our "hero" Daniel Gillies (aka Whiny Bitch), he is a working actor whom, I presume, has an agent, whom, I presume, knows people, whom, I presume, can help Whiny Bitch get his vanity project off the ground! For those with even less connections, this tells you squat about how to get your opus off the ground. And Gillies's "producer" -- talk about clueless!

The other thing that bugged me was how everyone bitched about "the money people". Again, these people crap what you and I make in a year. I guess there are a few twits who get their jollies stringing aspiring filmmakers along, but, if you're asking me for x-amount of dollars, what guarantee do I have that you won't go to Vegas, and blow the whole wad?!

The Colombia segment featured stray dogs. When I realized Whiny Bitch did squat to help these poor creatures (I would have moved heaven and earth to bring them to the States or, at the very least, make sure they were off the streets and properly cared for!), he lost me.

If they ever make a film about Michael Hutchence, Whiny Bitch would be perfect. Not only is he a dead ringer for Hutchence, he is also vain, self-absorbed, and a legend in his own mind!

"The King's Speech" (2010) (review: January 9, 2012)

If one needs proof Americans have an inferiority complex when it comes to anything stamped "Made in the UK", look no further than this pile of pretentiousness.

In order for there to be drama, there must be conflict. The "conflict" here is the bitchy archbishop learning the speech therapist treating the Duke of York (aka Bertie) is an unqualified quack! Well, I knew that when the quack had Bertie rolling around on the floor screeching like a banshee!

Edward's hook-up with Wallis Simpson was much more than a quickie at the Quickie Mart. But instead of showing the turmoil triggered by their liaison, we get Edward acting like the petulant Golden Boy forced to marry the Coyote Ugly he banged in Daddy's Caddie.

Bertie is a repressed wuss with Daddy issues. Edward is a feckless wuss with Daddy issues. Logue (the quack) is an elitist wuss with Daddy issues. Bertie babbles like Lenny Bruce on an acid trip when he got his knickers into a bunch? Seriously doubt that happened. Ditto, Bertie and Mrs. Bertie being allowed to leave their gilded cage without so much as a Bobby in tow.

What really made me want to hurl was the whole German thing. Logue, and the hog playing Churchill advise Bertie he should not come to throne as King Albert as "Albert" is "too-German". Bertie was not crowned King Albert because Grand-mum Queen Victoria declared that no male successor be crowned as Albert out of regard for Grand-dad Prince Albert, for whom Bertie was named. By the way, Victoria and Albert were... wait for it... German!

"Kinsey" (2004) (review: August 4, 2007)

According to biographer James H. Jones, Alfred Kinsey "intended to use science to attack Victorian morality and to promote an ethic of tolerance... he had a personal stake in seeking to overturn traditional morality, for he was a bisexual voyeur who engaged... in increasingly-violent masochistic masturbation". But hack Bill Condon creates a vast right-wing conspiracy. Kinsey was subjected to criticism, but his critics were not Ring-Wing Witch-Hunters but statisticians who were appalled by his methodology, and intellectuals who were aghast by his view of human nature.

The majority of the public bought Kinsey's conclusions readily. Indeed, he was portrayed as a courageous researcher seeking to enlighten the masses. But don't tell Condon that, he's too busy throwing Alan Gregg under the bus. In the movie, Gregg is this stick-in-the-mud who

turns his back on our hero in his time of need. In fact, Gregg never wavered in his belief that Kinsey was a man of absolute rectitude. Did he have the slightest inkling his Rockefeller Foundation was unwittingly picking up the tab for Kinsey's "home movies"? Hmm.

Anyway, I was bored. John Lithgow as Liam Neeson's father?! LOL! Worse, Condon is SO predictable! When Tim Rice declares Negro men have a harder time keeping it in their pants than white men, Condon cuts to the black guy in the classroom! He then discredits Rice by having the students crack gay jokes! What is Condon, who is gay, trying to tell us? Hmm.

How about the paradise Condon envisions once his Jesus delivers us from the evils of morality? At a party, a Kinsey flunky excuses himself with a cheerfully-graphic remark about his state of arousal. Degradation, perversity, AND no class! Nice!

Neeson's Kinsey is a whiner. When the Foundation pulls the plug, he mutilates himself! That's real mature! We're never told Kinsey developed a pelvic infection due to his perverted practices, hastening his death, because would that validate those Condon mocks for warning of the dangers of promiscuity and torpedo his (and Kinsey's) agenda? Hmm.

"La La Land" (2016) (review: October 6, 2017)

I was reminded constantly that people who have "made it" are playing people trying to "make it". Had this been cast with people who actually need that "big break", I might have been able to forgive the cliché-ridden "plot" you've seen a bazillion times and hopped on board.

Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone have zero range, and their roles make their "abilities" only stick out like sore thumbs: can't sing; can't dance; can't act. Seriously, how much did Stone's team pony up for her to bag an Oscar? She's an "actress" playing an "actress", but couldn't convince me of even that! And Gosling is nothing but droopy locks and a grin. Unfortunately, "thanks" to Eva Méndez, we can't ship Droopy Locks back to Canada until she kicks him to the curb or their kids turn 18!

Six more beefs:

- * Stone skips town because her "brilliant" one-woman show flops, forcing the theater owner to eat the money she owes him? That DOES NOT happen in real life.

- * Who the hell green lights a "concept" without a script (to be shot in Paris, no less)?

- * Who the hell blows beau-coup bucks on a band with NO SHOT of charting in the Top 200?!

* According to Gosling's jazz pianist character, jazz is dying, which "explains" the hordes of 20-somethings at his jazz club!

* Casting directors don't call an actor's ex, they call the actor's agent!

* I lived in Boulder City, where Stone's character hails from. The name of the library is... the Boulder City Public Library! The film's assistant prop manager is supposedly from Boulder City, yet didn't set the hack, sorry, director, straight because she didn't want to lose her job. Speaking of jobs, Earth to John Legend: don't quit your day job (whatever that is).

"Lars and the Real Girl" (2007) (review: August 17, 2009)

I was waiting for this whiny twit to go postal so that the 106 minutes of my life I wasted on this would not have been in vain. But no such luck! Instead, I had to endure one stupid contrivance after another. It was as if the "filmmakers" wanted to see out how goddamn dumb they could get!

I couldn't tell who was the bigger dingbat: the sister-in-law, the doctor, the sewing circle, or the Reverend, who tells everyone to think what would Jesus do in this situation this. In the real world, no EMT would even think of rushing a sex doll to the hospital unless he wanted to get his ass fired. Now, I'd buy that a mortician would be willing to bury a sex doll - hey, it's your money! - but who ponied up for the funeral and the ambulance? Not Dingbat-in-Law. Not the Dingbat Sewing Circle. Certainly not Loser, sorry, Lars. Guess Reverend Dingbat and Dr. Dingbat took up a collection because that's what Dingbat Jesus would have done!

As the Town Dingbats insist on treating Bianca as human, shouldn't Loser, sorry, Lars have been arrested for her "murder", convicted, then shipped to the Funny Farm? No such luck!

"Lincoln" (2012) (reviewed: February 20, 2023)

As if I needed more proof Steven Spielberg is the most-overrated "filmmaker" ever, I had the misfortune of watching this obnoxious bore-fest the other night. Going from one laughably bad sequence to another (a fanboy reenactment of hand-to-hand combat, followed by a Negro soldier lecturing his Commander-in-Chief on equality, followed by Lincoln floating on water in a dream!), he and "screenwriter" Tony Kushner miss one blown opportunity after another, like some grandiose version of Whack-a-Mole.

The biggest blown opportunity was not underscoring how the Civil War pitted families against one another, none more so than Mary Todd Lincoln's. Mary was from Kentucky and the only member of her family who supported the Union. When her half-sister Elodie, wife of Confederate Army Colonel Nathaniel Dawson, traveled to The White House, she was

confronted by a sentry who demanded she take a Union loyalty oath. When Elodie told him in no uncertain terms to take a flying jump, Lincoln himself intervened and escorted her inside. Escorting her to her carriage after her visit, Lincoln told Elodie he hoped that she didn't blame him for the misery and suffering the War has inflicted. That Spielberg and Kushner don't include this, much less, hint at the how the War tore the Lincoln and Todd families apart, is incomprehensible!

Mary Lincoln was 46 in 1865. Here, she is played by the then-66-year-old Sally Field. I have to assume that Spielberg (who is nobody's idea of an Alpha) allowed Field to browbeat him into submission after she decreed that she was the only actress alive capable of going toe-to-toe with Daniel Day-Lewis (also, nobody's idea of an Alpha). Mary was 9 years younger than Lincoln; Field is 10 years older than Day-Lewis. Holy Miscast, Batman! And the "toe-to-toe" scene - where Abraham and Mary argue over which of them has grieved the most for their son Willie (forget their other son Edward, who died 10 months before Willie was born) - plays out like *"Celebrity Lip Sync Battle"* on crack!

Kushner's "script" gives the others little to do but either yell at Lincoln or sing his praises. He did manage to squeeze in how Dishonest Abe channeled his inner Il Duce without mentioning he had printing presses destroyed and suspended habeas corpus. Yet the fact President Rail Splitter was a racist at his core who genuinely believed that blacks inferior to whites was a bit of nasty Kushner wasn't going to touch with a 10-foot wedge! However, as if to "prove" he and Spielberg are Good Little Woke Lefties, Kushner has Thaddeus Stevens (played by the perpetually constipated Tommy Lee Jones) hop into bed with his black housekeeper after Lincoln's baby, the 13th Amendment, is passed by the House of Representatives as a result of Dishonest Abe's hired henchmen bribing the right bunch of outgoing Democrats. Make of that what you will.

"Little Black Book" (2004) (review: January 28, 2007)

This was painful. Squirm-in-your-seat painful! And the "payoff" is the kind of cruelty usually reserved for snuff films! And the whole Carly Simon bit: what's with this obsession with *"Working Girl"*, which should never be confused with *"Broadcast News"*? Holly Hunter must be wondering how she got from that to this!

Who keeps pictures of his exes on his Palm (and shares "joint custody" of his dog with one of them), and what does that say about his commitment to his new squeeze? What exactly qualifies Derek as an NHL scout? Because he owns a hockey stick? I once owned the first stick Wayne Gretzky used as a pro, which, according to this stinker, qualifies me to be Commissioner! Shouldn't he actually have played hockey? And be a Canadian, eh?

"Little Miss Sunshine" (2006) (review: February 6, 2007)

The self-help guru who can't help himself. The burnt-out wife who serves KFC every night. The foul-mouthed, horny Grandpa. The gay suicidal college professor. The Nietzsche-worshipping slacker. The pudgy girl who dreams of being Miss America. The VW bus that breaks down every 5 minutes. Stop me if you've heard all of this before!

Why does Richard want to be Tony Robbins when he grows up? Why does Dwayne think not talking will make him a fighter pilot, and why would such a non-conformist want to join the military to begin with? If Proust was such a loser, then why is Frank a Proust scholar? The cop overlooks Grampa's rotting corpse, yet gets a boner over the porn? The pageant runner has no problem with the JonBenet wannabes, yet blows a gasket when Olive gets her Super Freak on? Gimme a break!

The "plot" hinges on a message that Olive has become a replacement for the Little Miss Sunshine regional winner. Does anyone ask why Little Miss Sunshine didn't call? Does anyone ask how Olive will be able to enter the pageant without paperwork? Does anyone ask how she could possibly be considered beauty pageant material to begin with? Heck, no! Instead, everyone piles into the VW so she can get there by Sunday! No wonder this cliché ridden claptrap will clean up at the Oscars!

"The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring" (2001) (review: August 12, 2002)

Since the information in the prologue is repeated throughout, that was a waste of 8 minutes that could have been used to get the story going. Only problem is, it never gets going -- just a bunch of characters you never get to know and never care about who never stop yapping as they bumble through misadventures they would otherwise have avoided were they not so collectively stupid! Frodo is especially dense: a lad who insists on tempting fate at the worst possible moments because he can't begin to fathom the power the Ring holds.

Elijah Wood's acting seems limited to how big he can bulge his eyes out of his sockets! And if hack Peter Jackson proves nothing else, it's that he's The Second Coming of George Lucas (insert your *"Attack of the Clones"* joke here.)

"Mad Men" (2007) (TV) (review: July 20, 2007)

Call me old-fashioned, but I like to root for somebody. Instead, I had the "pleasure" of wasting an hour of my life on an amoral prick with a Beatnik Bimbo in the city and a clueless Marilyn Monroe look-a-like wife stashed in the burbs. His co-workers are even worse. The men are horny assholes, and the women are bitchy sluts! Joan, the head Bitchy Slut, tells Peggy, the Asshole Wannabe, to stop dressing like a schoolgirl if she wants the Horny

Assholes to take her seriously. So, Peggy crashes a "meeting" the Horny Assholes are having at a strip club dressed like a Bitchy Slut! That the Horny Assholes don't take Head Bitchy Slut seriously either is lost on Joan completely!

As this makes a big deal out of how period it is, I Googled the *Reader's Digest* article that had the characters' panties in a collective bunch. "Cancer by the Carton" warned that the new low-tar cigarettes which promised a "healthier smoke" were anything but. It was published in 1952, 8 years before the series is set! At least the Big Tobacco Big Shot was right about the pre Columbian Native Americans "giving us" tobacco. In case anyone cares, tobacco as used today was perfected by Frenchman Jean Nicot, for whom Nicotine is named.

"Man About Town" (2006) (review: September 30, 2007)

The first of what I hope was an unintentional Ben Affleck Marathon, as this stinker was followed by another (*"The Third Wheel"*), then one more for shits and giggles (*"Reindeer Games"*). How a Lifetime Razzie has so far eluded Ben's talentless clutches is beyond me!

You think Jack Asshole would have figured out what his minions REALLY think of him when they haul him to that dentist! *Au contraire!* After beating the crap out of the guy who beat the crap out of him, he goes back to the SAME DENTIST when he should be hauling the clown into court! And some people wonder why this turkey was shelved for 2 years!

The female characters are even more loathsome: Barbi is a Dragon Lady racist cliché; Mrs. Jack Asshole is a brainless Trophy Wife; and the less said about the Sharon Stone wannabe, the better. At the climax of this masterpiece, Trophy Wife and Dragon Lady duke it out over Jack Asshole's precious journal in one room, the Sharon Stone wannabe crosses and uncrosses her legs in another room, and Jack Asshole's Top Client (over whom he kicked Trophy Wife to the curb) begs Jack Asshole's forgiveness. That whirring sound you hear is Preston Sturges spinning in his grave!

So who winds up running Jack Asshole's agency after he and Trophy Wife kiss and make up in his fish tank (I kid you not)? The token lesbian, who has more *cojones* in her pinkie than all the men in the movie put together!

"The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit" (1956) (review: February 4, 2022)

Gregory Peck and Jennifer Jones starred in the most-twisted mainstream film I have ever seen, *"Duel in the Sun"* (1946). Bad enough their characters had no redeeming qualities, their showdown tries to force you to pick a side. It's sort of that way in *"The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit"*, but here, Peck is such a wuss, his children (who are strangely obsessed with death, even counting how many characters on the westerns they watch on TV get shot) ignore him,

and Jones is a social climbing harpy who makes life altering decisions without so much as giving Hubby a heads-up. When she informs him she has sold their home and they are moving into the abode his grandmother (may or may not have) left him, he doesn't even blink! Social Climbing Harpy's reaction to Doormat's admission that he fathered a boy while in Italy during the War is so ludicrously over-the-top, I laughed. When Doormat tells Social Climbing Harpy at the end "I worship you", I wanted to hurl. Needless to say, I never bought them as a couple. The flashbacks make clear that Doormat cared deeply for Mamma Bambino, but he now wants nothing to do with her or their boy, yet he's a pillar of virtue because he feels obligated (after some serious arm twisting by his Army buddy) to cough up \$100 a month for their care? What a "gent".

The subplot, which goes nowhere, has Doormat's Boss being forced by his own Social Climbing Harpy (whom has nothing better to do except prattle around in *haute couture*) to deal with their spoiled brat, who wants to do nothing but party with cads and blow through Boss's money. Why Boss doesn't toss Spoiled Brat out on her derrière and cut her off without a cent is not for us lesser minds to ponder. And the idea that Boss sees Doormat as a surrogate son to where he's fine with Doormat proclaiming that he's a "9 to 5 man" from now on strains credulity to say the least. As for the film's "message", it's been done to death and done better.

"Marie Antoinette" (2006) (TV) (review: December 27, 2009)

It's beyond me how David Grubin won 10 Emmys, 3 Peabodys, and 2 Duponts - as his website oh-so modestly informs you - because this stunk! A paint-by-the-numbers job complete with cheesy reenactments, this Marie-Antoinette (there is an "-" between the names!) is an airhead who can't be bothered with the world outside her gilded cage. Naturally, this "explains" why Her Airheadness invited the children of the working-class to Versailles, and had her children give their toys to the poor. Marie's sense of *noblesse oblige* isn't even hinted at; Grubin, as so many of his ilk, cherry-picks what fits into his agenda, the facts be damned!

However, he seems to have this thing for illustrations of bare-breasted women in compromising positions; we are subjected to at least 5 minutes of this. A simple blurb about how the Queen's reputation was dragged in pornographic pamphlets would have sufficed! And will someone please tell Antonia Fraser to get a grip? She looked as though she's about to burst into tears at any moment!

"Marie-Antoinette" (2006) (review: April 2, 2007)

While it's true that Maria Theresa instructed her daughter to be nice to Madame du Barry, the real reason isn't made clear. Madame had supreme influence over Louis XV, and - after helping bring about Choiseul's downfall - she seriously threatened the Franco-Austrian alliance. I don't know which was funnier: Mercy telling Marie to make nice with Madame or

him getting cheesed because she didn't read his brief on Poland! And why is Marie being told to make nice when Louis's guests openly diss Madame at dinner?

It is outrageous to insinuate Fersen fathered Louis-Joseph. Who knows if the real Fersen strutted around the battlefield like Napoléon (funniest thing here), but any sympathy I had for Marie I lost when Sophia Coppola had her put out for this Swedish meatball!

Sofia Coppola has Marie smoking weed and two guests snorting coke! Though that would explain A LOT, there is no proof that she or her posse got blasted on anything stronger than champagne and bonbons!

France and Spain backed America for one reason: to stick it to their arch-enemy Britain. I assume Coppola insinuates we caused the Bourbons' downfall to please the Bush-haters, but to no avail: the Bush-haters at Cannes booed Francis's little girl right out of the theater!

Coppola blew a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity; who wouldn't kill to film at Versailles? Worse, Marie is played by Kirsten Dunst, whom was born zonked. Jason Schwartzman is laughable as Louis XVI. Thirty seconds of these twits, and you understand why there was a Revolution!

"Marilyn's Man" (2004) (review: April 14, 2005)

The hack who made this said he wanted to restore James Dougherty's "place" in history. Of course, were his first wife not you-know-who, he wouldn't be a blip on the radar.

All her biographers have noted Monroe was furious when Dougherty told *Photoplay* in 1953 she was so in love with him, she threatened to jump off the Santa Monica Pier if he left her. Little wonder how she would have reacted to his claims that he created "Marilyn Monroe", she was forced to divorce him, and she yearned to return to him. How do I put this? Bullshit! Not only is there no evidence they stayed in contact, according to the August 6, 1962 *New York Times*, when her self-proclaimed "dedicated friend for life" was informed of her death, he replied "I'm sorry" and didn't attend her funeral.

Dougherty also makes another outrageous claim: he created SWAT. It was LAPD Officer John Nelson who presented the SWAT concept to Darryl Gates. The hack should have taken his cue from Norma Jeane, and kicked "Jimmie" to the curb like the loser he is!

"Matchstick Men" (2003) (review: September 26, 2003)

Only the most naïve viewer will be surprised by the twist most will see coming a mile away. Like most hacks, Ridley Scott assumes his audience is clueless, as epitomized by the cheap film-school tricks he uses to convey Roy's disorder (like the cheap film-school tricks Spielberg

used to convey Tom Hanks's "issues" in *"Saving Private Ryan"*) He rips off not only *"The Sting"* and *"Paper Moon"* but *"Les Diaboliques"* and *"The Kid"*, then tries to convince us that what ultimately happens to Roy is a good thing, with a resolution so predictable and perfectly timed that it's, in itself, a con.

Scott, who seems uncomfortable with projects that don't call for tons of CGI, over edits, but, at least, unlike *"Gladiator"*, you can follow the action. This would have more bite were it set in the past, where people were much more trusting, instead of our cynically-drenched times. What redeems it is Nicolas Cage as a variant of his goofball self. Whoever came up with the line "For some people, money is a foreign film without subtitles" earned his paycheck.

"Meet the Parents" (2000) (review: May 26, 2003)

IMDb user darqness hits it on the head. I don't know if it's a good or a bad thing that I wanted to tell these people to go "f*ck" themselves. I guess it's partly because I grew up being picked on. But, as he states, the characters except for classic 1950's mom Dina are mean. Not just mean, vicious. And, I couldn't understand what Greg saw in Pam. As others have noted, she seems to be rooting for him to "fail." Only at the end did she stand up for him (sort of). Indeed, she still seems to have feelings for Kevin (especially now that he's loaded). But Greg is no prize, either, and a rather slimy one too boot. When he blows up, though understandable, his tantrums come out of nowhere, and when we're supposed to get an idea as to his inner feelings, Ben "I'm No Bobby DeNiro" Stiller gives blank looks. Just as I couldn't understand what Greg saw in Pam, I was just as baffled as to what she saw in him.

"Midnight in Paris" (2011) (review: July 4, 2019)

Caught this the other night after seeing it a few years back, and was reminded of why I found it such pretentious claptrap. As in *"Celebrity"*, Woody Allen taps a young blonde-haired, blue-eyed man to be his WASP doppelgänger, and surrounds him with obnoxious WASP elites. We're supposed to sympathize with him and his "plight"; only problem is Gil (aka WASP Woody) is a such whiny, insecure twerp, you want to deck him!

For reasons I never got, Gil wishes he could have kicked it with The Cool Kids of 1920's Paris when Paris was, you know, like, cool. One night, while walking down a cobblestone road, Gil gets his wish. What's more, The Cool Kids welcome him into The Club instantly; no one so much as asks: "Who the Hell is this guy?". Forget that none of The Cool Kids (Joséphine Baker, Djuna Barnes, Juan Belmonte, Luis Buñuel, Salvador Dalí, T.S. Eliot, F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Pablo Picasso, Cole Porter, Man Ray, Gertrude Stein, Leo Stein, Alice B. Toklas) were kicking it in Paris at the same time, Allen mocks these figures by reducing them collectively to the same shallow cliché as their new amigo.

Gil finds himself in competition with Hemingway (whom Allen seems to have a bizarre obsession with; he gets more screen time than the rest of The Cool Kids put together) for the affections of Picasso's, ahem, "muse". Why any woman would give either one of these assholes the time of day is beyond me, but, then, she's doing it with Picasso, King of the Assholes, so her standards aren't very high to begin with! Anyway, the "muse" is supposed to be this Little Girl Lost, so we're supposed to sympathize with her and her "plight". Only, we don't (I didn't, anyway). One minute, she's throwing herself at Gil; the next, she runs off with Hemingway to Africa (!). After Little Girl Lost pops back up in Paris, Gil gives her a pair of earrings, then they wind up in the 1890's because Allen has run out of ideas (not that he had any to begin with), where they find themselves kicking it with The Cool Kids, Belle Époque Edition (Edgar Degas, Paul Gauguin, Henri Matisse, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec). When Little Girl Lost declares she is staying in the 1890's, Gil says basically "whatever." This is the love of his life, but he just goes "whatever"?! The Belle Époque began some 20 years before Little Girl Lost declares "it's the start of the Belle Époque". But... whatever.

What had me screaming (aside from Gil finding Little Girl Lost's diary in a bookstore, and how Paris - one of the filthiest cities on the planet - is always freshly scrubbed in the movies) was how Gil tells everyone he's from the future, yet no one asks for proof! He could have blown everyone's minds by showing them his "masterpiece" on his laptop, but... whatever!

"Mighty Aphrodite" (1995) (review: December 8, 2005)

What I "learned" from *Mighty Aphrodite*:

- * The ancient Greeks dressed in rags, smeared chalk on their faces, and sang Cole Porter!
- * F. Murray Abraham has the scariest honker this side of Jimmy Durante!
- * Want your boss to bankroll your art gallery? Dick with his head (both of 'em)!
- * Hookers get their décor from adult toy makers!
- * Hookers will kick a client out if he just wants to talk!
- * Hookers make sure they get exclusive rights to their porn names!
- * Clint Eastwood doesn't want to play hairdressers!
- * Pimps can't get court-side seats to NBA games!
- * The fucking Knicks suck!
- * Boxers don't know their left from their right!
- * Zeus has an answering machine!
- * If a guy is upset his fiancée is a hooker, he's uptight and repressed and doesn't accept her!
- * Helicopter pilots don't have cell phones!
- * Helicopter pilots dig hookers!
- * Want to score with a babe young enough to be your daughter? Cast her in your movie!

"Million Dollar Baby" (2004) (review: March 23, 2006)

900 years ago, the Britons invaded Ireland. Those who weren't enslaved were killed, and Irish women were forcibly mated with Scottish men. I mention this to give an idea of how insulting it is for a person named Maggie Fitzgerald to be ushered into an arena with bagpipes! But, hey, why do you expect her Gaelic-reading trainer to be up on Irish history when he doesn't even notice her robe should read "*mo chuisle*", not "*mo cuishle*"?

Why doesn't Frankie visit his daughter, and ask her what the hell her problem is? Maggie gets a title shot, but no reporters show up at the gym, nor does she get a single piece of fan mail! Even those who don't follow boxing know that the stool is put out after the fighter reaches his corner! Frankie doesn't raise hell with the boxing commission after the fight! Maggie tells her family to shove it then dies without a Will, automatically leaving them her estate!

But it was her "If I'm too old for (boxing) then I got nothing" that's the real hit below the belt! Go to college? Join the military? Bag a rich old geezer? That no options are presented to Maggie is proof Clint Eastwood has a serious problem with women! Why critics kiss Dirty Harry's ass, but won't call him out on his misogyny is beyond me!

The narration, chocked with stupid metaphors, is useless! How is it Scrap can dissect every characters' problem like he's Freud? Would he possess such startling insights if he were white? Doubt it. This is one big sucker punch!

"Miss March" (2009) (review: September 27, 2010)

If it was the intent of Trevor Moore and Zach Cregger - neither one of whom I knew existed until now - to make a film so vile, disgusting, and retarded, it makes "*Freddie Got Fingered*" look like "*Citizen Kane*", they succeeded beyond their wildest dreams!

Why "Miss March"? Why not "Miss April" or "Miss May" or "Miss June"? April, May, and June are girls' names. *Playboy* has a Miss April, a Miss May, and a Miss June. The title would let us know our hero misses his girl. There -- I just came up with something more clever than anything in this dreck!

Near the end of this waste, Tucker's psycho girlfriend has her psycho firefighter brother hogtie him. As Psycho Firefighter prepares to dispatch Tucker with an ax (which, I admit, I was rooting for!), Tucker tells Psycho Girlfriend that he loves her. Forget the sheer stupidity of this: a guy is hogtied and about to be beheaded on the grounds of the Playboy Mansion before dozens of witnesses, and NO ONE reacts! No "Wait!" or "Stop!" or "Are you off your meds?!" The other firefighters don't even try to grab the ax away Psycho Firefighter. Makes you question your faith in humanity.

As it turns out, Cindi (Miss March) isn't the kind of girl you'd take home to mother. She allows a goon to beat the crap out of Eugene, then humiliates Tucker's buddy to prove to Eugene that she is as pure as the driven slush. Cindi tells Eugene that she became a cog in the Playboy machine because it was the only way that she could pay his medical bills. Huh? Cut to Hugh Hefner (or The Crypt Keeper), who lectures Tucker that inside every woman is a Bunny (or a slut), then shows Tucker a photo of his true love: a girl named Gertrude who had a dead right eye and died when she was 18. Lucky her.

As they watch Tucker's buddy film a music video which would have made 50 Cent blush, Eugene tells Tucker the lyrics to the song make no sense. As the retards who play these retards wrote the lyrics, how would they know?

"Miss Potter" (2006) (review: July 26, 2007)

Misunderstood loner (whom everyone thinks is gay) meets misunderstood professional (whom everyone thinks is gay), who - being the only one on the planet who recognizes the loner's genius - guides the loner to fame and fortune as they hook up so everyone will stop thinking they are gay! Fortunately for Ewan McGregor, the real Norman died shortly after proposing to The Human Scrunchie (Renée Zellweger) so he was able to check out before this finally (and I mean FINALLY) ends. Though the official cause was leukemia, I bet poor Norman actually died from acute embarrassment.

Beatrix Potter was a smart, shrewd woman, but you'd never know it. Here, she's a wack job who tells Peter to stop being naughty and shake his goodies like an East End Rent Boy! Why didn't this just have her drop acid and beat on Papa's bald head with her ta-tas, it takes her that seriously? This will make you wish Farmer MacGregor had put her into that pie!

"Mission: Impossible II" (2000) (review: March 11, 2007)

I'm surprised no one picked up on the rock-climbing bit: Tom Cruise isn't Ethan Hunt, he's Jesus Christ, complete with his own Judas (Ambrose), Mary Magdalene (Nyah), and white doves! After you stop laughing, remember how Tommy moves from one rock piece to the other? He does an inverted swing so he winds up as he were being crucified! The Redeemer as narcissistic pinhead who wants to be Chow Yun Fat when he grows up!

The less said about this so-called movie, the better! Everyone involved - especially John Woo (if this shit isn't proof he has sold his soul to the Devil, nothing is!) and Jesus Cruise Superstar - ought to be ashamed of themselves! Stay away! Stay FAR away!

"Monster-in-Law" (2005) (review: October 27, 2005)

Jennifer Lopez is the Latina Liz Taylor: a girl whose lone talent is getting boys to pony up bling. And when she isn't getting boys to pony up bling, she plays girls who get boys to pony up bling. Jenny's Bling Boy this go-round is Michael Vartan. So what if he's never seen a comb or a shaver and is as dull as dishwater? He's a doctor. BLING!

Even though he hasn't shown her the bling (yet), Jenny moves in with him, I guess because she's had enough of her roommates' *"Jerry Maguire"* jokes. Bling Boy then takes her home to his mother Baba Wawa and her wisecracking Mammy. Things go great until Bling Boy asks Jenny to marry him -- in front of Mama. The claws come out. Hilarity ensues.

We're supposed to buy that Baba Wawa never cut the umbilical cord, yet Bling Boy didn't get her blessings before shacking up with Jenny. Heck, he probably didn't even visit her during her respite in the loony bin! So who does Mama recruit to convince her baby that he is marrying way below his station? His slutty ex! Makes "sense" to me, too!

Turns out Jenny is as psycho as Mama. When Bling Boy learns her parents are dead, she replies it's okay because they died long ago. Cut to the Big Day and Jenny suddenly gets all teary over Mom and Dad. Then, she trades bitch-slaps with Mama! Seeing by how Jane Fonda gets savaged here, Jenny better hold on to all that bling. She's going to need it.

"Move Over, Darling" (1963) (review: October 14, 2004)

I am aware of the aborted Marilyn Monroe version, and recognized some parts of that here. My problem is the character development, specifically, the 180 Nick does. He was so anxious to marry Bianca, he has Ellen declared legally dead. But when Ellen suddenly shows up, he can't kick Bianca to the curb fast enough! If he was conflicted, not knowing what to do, I could have gotten on board. Instead, Nick is such a jerk, I was hoping he wound up alone!

Polly Bergen simply has a toughness that works against her trying to sell the fragile Bianca. Heck, Bianca is way more into her shrink than she ever is into Nick! James Garner was better than I imagine Dean Martin would have been in the Monroe version, but I couldn't help but think another actor would have been better. Don Knotts was just creepy. I don't know if that was due to the direction given or his lack of range, but his take was completely wrong.

As for Doris, nobody does self-righteous indignation like Doris. In *"Pillow Talk"*, her outbursts were perfect because they were totally justified. Here, they're just plain childish. Her getting worked-up over Bianca made no sense. And the car wash episode made her look like a loon instead of a level-headed woman wanting to return to her family. What saves this is Thelma

Ritter. I liked how she and Doris have a grown-up relationship. And she knows what's best for her boy. You go, girl!

"Mr. Bean's Holiday" (2007) (review: January 4, 2008)

Mr. Bean is a mumbling, squirmy-faced, insouciant retard, the brainchild of British "comic" Rowan Atkinson. Bean even does pelvic thrusts and chases chickens like Borat, the brainchild of fellow British "comic" Sacha Baron Cohen. The "humor" depends on Bean being brain-dead, yet he figures out how to get across Paris using a compass, raise money, rig the effects board so Ugly American Director blows his stack (literally), change seats with the girl without crashing the car, and run his video on a commercial film projector!

The father, a big-shot director, decides to take the train to Cannes with his boy? And he is SO worried about Junior, he attends a screening of Ugly American Director's self-indulgent opus! Instead of going to the police, Junior tries to call Pop even though he and Bean can't figure out the last two digits of the phone number. Why didn't the girl or Bean let someone know they had the boy instead of trying to pass him off as her daughter? To torture us for 10 more minutes? "Joy". I laughed once: when Bean, stuck in an outhouse in the middle of nowhere, wanders onto the road and gets mowed down.

"Mr. & Mrs. Smith" (2005) (review: January 14, 2006)

The problem with this is not the rope-a-dope script, the flatter-than-a-pancake delivery by the too-yummy leads, or the misogyny (is 320 the number of people Jane has offed or slept with?), it's the reason John and Jane find themselves on their respective agencies' hit lists: why it takes five (or six) years for their bosses to decide that them being Mr. and Mrs. is "bad for business" (whatever that means) is beyond me!

Because John already knows what Jane does when they meet, the whole premise is bogus. Even stupider is the idea of the agencies jeopardizing the lives of innocent people AND allowing the FBI to buy their ruse just to take out two of their own! So who's trying to take out John and Jane? His agency? Her agency? The FBI? Or all three?

Although Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie didn't give me a single reason to like them, I found myself rooting for them, which sickens me. When Bruce Springsteen decided to humiliate his wife by flaunting his affair with his backup singer, the reaction was a collective: "You go, Boss!" I remarked to someone at the time that had Madonna cheated on Sean Penn, she would have been crucified by the same retards giving Springsteen their seal of approval. To see the dance the media did around Pitt's adultery is to realize the hell Jennifer Aniston would have been put through had she done the horizontal mamba with her co-star. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

"Must Love Dogs" (2005) (review: May 2, 2006)

No one has the right to put me through the hell of watching Diane Lane channel David Cassidy! Bad enough this has enough clichés to choke a horse, why does Hollywood think a man can't be sensitive unless he apes Kevin Costner in *"Message in a Bottle"*? Jake not selling his baby to a guy who wants him to cut it in half "proves" he has character? I doubt Kevin would give a rat's ass if the owner of one of his babies ran it through a wood chipper!

Even the most-vindictive Mom wouldn't diss Dad in front of Junior or imply that Dad can't keep his fly zipped! Sarah dumps Bob because he "played" her AFTER she played him, then bawls like a baby? This Dog needs to be put down!

"Nacho Libre" (2006) (review: July 4, 2008)

This starts out okay but quickly jumps the tracks, thanks to Jack Black's raving id. Forget the idea of Encarnación giving The Flatulent Friar the time of day. If you think hot babes like that wind up being nuns, I've got some oceanfront property in Arizona you'd be interested in!

Some critics have opined the film is racist, but it's too stupid to be racist. It can't even be bothered to follow the rules of lucha libre or tell us about its traditions and culture. Instead, Black and Jared Hess seem more concerned with depicting luchadors as pricks, and I am shocked that César González, a real-life luchador, didn't set Black and Hess straight!

Silencio uses a tombstone pile-driver on Nacho in the Battle Jam, which is illegal, as is the luchadors beating Nacho and Esqueleto with their belts! Also, Ramses should have been disqualified for ripping off Nacho's mask, and Nacho could not have won by pinning Ramses outside the ring! Señor González, why did you go along with this garbage?!

The showdown between Nacho and Ramses is an exhibition, so both are paid squat! Yet next time we see our hero, he's tooling the orphans around in a bus last seen on *The Partridge Family*. He must be pimping Esqueleto out to every ample-sized lady in Oaxaca! The lone thing saving this crud from the 3-count are the songs! I am, I am!

"The New Normal" (2012) (TV) (review: September 12, 2012)

It's not the premise I object to. Nor the inane set-up. Nor the insipid dialog. Nor the shallow, one-dimensional characters reeking of ugly stereotypes. It's the sanctimonious smugness, and the revolting misogyny, attitude toward children, child-bearing, and child-rearing.

After the shopaholic "wife" of the gay couple exchanges coos with a baby at Barney's, of all places, he rushes home to his beer-guzzling, football-watching "husband": "I want us to have baby clothes. And a baby to wear them". This will come as a shock, but a child is not a fashion

accessory. And it is not, as one character says, a cupcake out of an Easy-Bake Oven (a truly vicious put-down). It is a human being.

"Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian" (2009) (review: December 27, 2010)

I don't know which was more tortuous: watching Ben Stiller for 100 minutes or the historical figures here made ludicrous. Ivan the Terrible, Napoléon, and Al Capone as stupid twits taking marching orders from a Boris Karloff impersonator? Theodore Roosevelt as a rude snout? George Custer as a cowardly buffoon? The Tuskegee Airmen as dim bulbs? The Wright Brothers as chauvinist pigs? Einstein (all 7 of him) as giggly bubble-heads? Octavian giving a shout-out to Obama? And may these jackasses rot in Hell for what they do to Abraham Lincoln! The only figure afforded any dignity is Sacajawea (who has to put up with Roosevelt's lechery), and that's only because the "filmmakers" were afraid of being called racists! If the very idea of Amelia Earhart throwing herself at Stiller makes you want to toss your cookies, stay away -- stay FAR away!

"Norma Jean & Marilyn" (1996) (TV) (review: October 9, 2004)

After Joe DiMaggio died, Jill Isaacs, the writer of this movie, wrote a piece for *The Los Angeles Times* about him and Marilyn Monroe I found moving. It made me wonder what was it about her which compelled his devotion. I was reminded of that as I caught this, and thought: why didn't Isaacs write about THAT instead of churning out this dreck?

The only original thing here is two Marilyns for the price of one, kind of like splitting the atom if you ask me. Imagine Frankenstein and the Creature - each with his own hangups - in the same body, and you get an idea of what it was like to be Marilyn Monroe (based on what I've read, anyway).

Isaacs offers no insight into how or why Monroe became what she became. You can say it was her childhood, but countless others have had miserable childhoods, too. Why did she go into acting? How did she create Marilyn Monroe? Even after she became the biggest star in the world, she continued to refine the persona by infusing it with her real self. I think the reason for Monroe's enduring appeal is that her "real self" was a genuinely-nice person and not the cold-blooded harpy we get here.

Then there are the campy moments. What is Isaacs trying to say? You don't just stumble upon a brilliant career. What about talent? Determination? Dedication to craft? Instead, we get a vapid creature who tramples on everyone unfortunate enough to cross her path. As a result, I found myself waiting for her to kick off. That Ashley Judd and Mira Sorvino come THIS CLOSE to overcoming all that is a credit to them as actors.

"North by Northwest" (1959) (review: April 20, 2003)

It's never explained how Vandamm was able to use the estate without poor Townsend's knowledge. Why does Thornhill pull the knife out of Townsend's back as he tells everybody: "I had nothing to do with this"? And a photographer just happens to be there when he does? In his quest to rectify the case of mistaken identity, Thornhill assumes Kaplan's name and all but uses his credit cards? THAT makes no sense! Eve deliberately sends Thornhill off to his doom (the crop-dusting scene), yet a few minutes in her hotel room, and - after some barbs at the auction - all is forgiven?

Hitchcock never could shoot mattes or action so they don't distract the viewer, made worse by the inconsistency in his exteriors. The script repeats information: Thornhill proposes to Eve as they cling to Mt. Rushmore, then calls her "Mrs. Thornhill" as he pulls her up. And Thornhill allowing two thugs to muscle him out of a crowded restaurant without so much as a struggle? One yell for help and the movie is over.

"Oblivion" (2013) (review: January 12, 2014)

In 2017, aliens invade Earth. They were eventually defeated, but the Moon was destroyed, and the Earth was laid to waste. It is now 2077. Humanity has relocated to Saturn's moon, Titan. Tom Cruise plays a pilot named Jack, who repairs the machines guarding the machines extracting what water can be extracted before he and his colleagues leave for Titan in two weeks. If this sounds familiar, it is because *"Oblivion"* rips-off just about every sci-fi flick. It won't come as a surprise to learn the "good guys" are the bad guys and Jack is some sort of Christ figure who has been sought for by Morgan Freeman to save the Scavs, humans still on Earth whom the bad guys have duped Jack into believing are the bad guys.

Were the Moon destroyed, Earth would, literally, rip itself apart. Not only does that not happen, Jack chills at an idyllic lakeside retreat. He and his wife live in posh digs, complete with swimming pool! The posh digs, supported by a pole hundreds of meters in the sky, is impervious to wind, storms, and pesky space debris. His "co-pilot" is an Elvis bobble-head doll he calls "Bob". Before going on patrol, Jack puts on a Yankees cap. And he gets all mushy after he realizes he has landed at the venue of the last Super Bowl ever played.

Wait? If his memory was erased (as he tells us in a mind-numbing opening), how does he know about the Super Bowl? How did he get his grubby hands on "Bob", a Yankees cap, and the albums stashed at his idyllic retreat? How does Big Sister not know about "Bob", the Yankees cap, or the idyllic retreat? Why isn't Jack and the Scavs affected by the radiation, courtesy of the nukes used to zap the aliens? Why are humans needed to repair the machines built by machines? Where does the energy for the posh digs and the machines come from? Who chose the uninhabitable Titan as humanity's new home and why? How will humanity

survive once the water they brought from Earth is gone? Where did Morgan Freeman get those big, fat cigars? Questions! So many questions!

"Ocean's Eight" (2018) (review: March 30, 2019)

I hate stupid movies. I hate sloppy movies. I hate stupid, sloppy movies which cost the GDP of a small country to make. Judging by the reviews, I am the ONLY person in the entire universe who noticed that the "star" of this stupid, sloppy movie - the replica of a priceless Cartier diamond necklace a crew member the "criminal mastermind" behind the heist of the real necklace "fishes out" of a moat, claiming that it "must" have "slipped" off of the lovely neck of the not-so-lovely celebrity racing toward the bathroom to puke her guts out, despite the unique clasp which makes such a "slip" impossible - was COUPLED, AND she is wearing the necklace when she has her head in the toilet puking her guts out! You would think the actors would have turned to the hack behind the camera, and yelled: "Hey, Dummy! The fake necklace is coupled AND she's wearing the real one when she has her head in the toilet puking her guts out!" But no such luck. Stupid Sloppy is as Stupid Sloppy does.

The owner of the lovely neck is Anne Hathaway, who plays a vapid creature named Daphne Kluger (why she didn't play herself, as *Vogue*'s head honcho Anna Wintour does, is not for us lesser minds to ponder). Hathaway's ex, "real estate developer" Raffaello Follieri, defrauded investors out of \$100 million in a scheme involving properties the Catholic Church was selling to settle assault claims. Unfortunately, humanity will never know if she even so much as asked Follieri how the hell he was paying for their pricey amusements as the FBI allowed her go along her merry way without so much as asking her a single question.

I mention this because *"Ocean's Eight"* isn't just about fraud, it IS a fraud! This odious ode to Girl Power (co-written by a woman!) doesn't have one compelling reason to exist. Bad enough Marlo Thomas, Elizabeth Ashley, and Elliot Gould are dragged out of mothballs for cameos which give "cringe" a bad name, it has more plot holes than a sieve.

The "criminal mastermind" is the sister of the deceased (or not) Danny Ocean. Hours after Debbie Ocean is sprung from the pokey after promising to be a good girl, she relieves Bergdorf-Goodman and Burberry of a few goodies, then crashes at The Plaza, with an unwitting couple footing the bill. Any one of these stunts should have landed her back in the pokey, but no one catches on because she is a "criminal mastermind"!

Criminal Mastermind wants revenge against her ex, an art fraudster (you were expecting a Boy Scout?) for sending her to the pokey, so she decides to steal a bauble, dubbed The Toussaint, during The Met Gala, and frame him for it. She and her Sidekick recruit a motley crew with specific skills, one of whom comes up with the "genius" idea of creating the fake bauble from zirconium using a 3-D printer. Forget it is impossible for a 3-D printer to 3-D print zirconium AND zirconium is heavier than diamonds, these are "criminal masterminds"!

The "master hacker" warns of the need to erase digital footprints as she creates digital footprints. Vogue hires four members of The Motley Crew for The Met Gala without conducting background checks. How did Criminal Mastermind get the mobile she uses to con The Plaza into giving "the couple" their room back? How did the "master jeweler" set up shop in The Met's kitchen bathroom without anyone noticing? Did I mention the fingerprints and the DNA The Motley Crew leave all over the piece of The Toussaint Criminal Mastermind slips into Art Fraud's pocket to "prove" that he stole it?

That this odious ode to Girl Power relies on a MAN (Yen from "*Ocean's 11*") to relieve The Gala of its other priceless bling was lost on everyone, too. Forget how we're supposed to buy that Criminal Mastermind moves over \$300 million, then splits it eight ways without the FBI and the Secret Service on her like flies-on-shit, she is a "criminal mastermind"! Had ONE of the ladies used her ill-gotten booty to help the less-fortunate, I wouldn't be feeling ripped-off. But no such luck. Stupid Sloppy is as Stupid Sloppy does.

"The Old Man & the Gun" (2018) (review: July 10, 2019)

My mother and Robert Redford were born on August 18, 1936. As each approaches their 83rd birthday, Mom looks as though she's going on 73 while Redford looks as though he's going on 183! As I watched this last night, I was distracted constantly by the patchwork quilt which is now his once impossibly-gorgeous visage, his slovenly sideburns, and his shriveled-up physique to the point where I kept asking: What the HELL happened to him?!

When the "hero" of your opus is anything but, the you better give the audience at least one compelling reason to be invested in him; Redford's vanity project fails miserably. Bad enough it takes the usual liberties (Forrest Tucker - NO, not the guy from "*F Troop*" - was living in a retirement home in Florida when he pulled his final jobs; none of his wives or children knew about his shenanigans; he escaped San Quentin with two other inmates; the real Jewel was a Miami shipping heiress and Tucker's 3rd wife), we never learn a thing about him. Why did he pursue a criminal career? Did he have Mommy issues? Was he exacting some bizarre revenge? Was he dropped on his head a lot as a child? I didn't know nor did I care.

Where this lost me was how utterly-inept the film's Javert is. How did he NOT realize Valjéan was holding up the bank WHILE HE WAS THERE?! As if to make up for dropping the ball big-time, Javert - egged on by the Mrs. - launches a Les Misérables-like pursuit of Valjéan, complete with having his kids follow Valjéan by pressing thumb-tacks into a map.

The one thing which is impossible to ignore is how "woke" this is: Mrs. Javert; Javert's kids; Javert's partner; Valjéan's cohort; a sheriff Javert talks to; and the bank exec Valjéan tries to sweet-talk into letting him pay off Fantine's mortgage are black. Yet, its "wokeness" goes only so far: none of the other Keystone Cops are Latino, Asian or Native American; ditto, Valjéan's

victims. And how ironic the über-"woke" Redford allows his equally-"woke" cohort David Lowery slip into a scene Javert's daughter reading her Get Well letter to then-President Reagan, thanking him for "making America safe"! All this "woke" accomplishes is to emphasize how forced, contrived, and condescending the whole enterprise is.

We never even learn if the cops ever find Valjéan's ill-gotten booty. Speaking of, why didn't he retrieve said booty before he tried to sweet-talk the bank exec instead of telling her that he didn't have the money? At this point, I half-expected him to "get" the money by robbing the bank. But no such luck.

Near the end, The Sundance Kid pulls a Horse Whisperer (or a Jeremiah Johnson), and swipes one of Fantine's horses to attempt a getaway (how he knows how to saddle, bridle, and ride a horse is not for us lesser minds to ponder). I suppose we should be grateful we were not subjected to Valjéan and Fantine (aka Sissy Spacek) getting jiggy with it. This Forrest Tucker needs to go back to F Troop!

"Once Upon a Crime..." (1992) (review: January 5, 2008)

I can only surmise the cast signed up for this *"Pink Panther"* rip-off so they could goof off in Europe on somebody else's dime. Jim Belushi is especially irritating. His scene with John Candy (doing a Z-grade Dom DeLuise) was torture. Speaking of torture, five minutes of the talentless Cybill Shepherd, and the prisoners at Gitmo would crack like walnuts!

The real "crime" (besides this stinker being green-lighted) is Shepherd's character: a mousy wife who takes a Monte Carlo casino for a half-million bucks! If you buy that, I have some oceanfront property in Arizona you might be interested in!

"Original Sin" (2001) (review: October 19, 2003)

I rented the unrated version because of - I admit it - the sex scene. What a letdown! As I watched, I was thinking: "aren't they supposed to be in love?" because they sure didn't act like it. There was no romance, no nothing. Like two wild animals. It left me cold.

The costumes were as yummy as the sets were fake. The leads were badly underwritten. Antonio Banderas nails Luis's little-boy innocence, Angelina Jolie nails Bonnie's ice-cold cunning, but I didn't care about either of them, nor did I believe that he would willingly ruin himself for her. That he winds up taking Billy's place was beyond belief! And I have a silly question: how did Billy find out Luis was loaded if poor Miss Russell thought he was just a humble clerk at a coffee company?

"Oz, the Great and Powerful" (2013) (review: June 22, 2014)

"Oz, the Great and Powerful 2" is in the works because no one was clamoring for the first *"Oz"* to begin with. With a whopping \$215,000,000 budget, it grossed \$234,903,076. Clearing under \$20,000,000 tells me it was damn lucky to break even. I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall at the pitch: "A prequel to *'The Wizard of Oz'*? And it will only cost \$215,000,000? (Dumb-ass Who Pitched This), you're a genius!"

It is as every bit as lame-brained as it sounds. In 1905 Kansas, two-bit carny Oscar hops into a hot air balloon to escape the wrath of his girlfriend's jealous husband. The balloon gets sucked into (what else?) a tornado and lands in the Land of the Perpetual Acid Trip, stuffed with characters you want to bitch-slap down the Yellow Brick Road (which moves; the CGI people must have been bored out of their skulls). But no one in the Land of the Perpetual Acid Trip deserves bitch-slapping more than Oscar: a greedy, selfish, narcissistic, cowardly prick who acts as though everyone should feel honored by his presence. How this greedy, selfish, narcissistic, cowardly prick could be mistaken for the prophesied Wizard who will defeat the Wicked Witches and bring balance to The Force (sorry, wrong turkey) I'm sure not even the dumb-asses behind this turkey know. One update from *"The Wizard of Oz"* is the inhabitants of the Land of the Perpetual Acid Trip are a politically-correct Rainbow Coalition, each of whom cheerfully avails himself to Oscar, their hoped-for pasty-white Master. Oh, did I mention Greedy, Selfish, Narcissistic, Cowardly Prick hooks up with Glinda? L. Frank Baum must be spinning in his grave.

"The Painted Veil" (2006) (review: August 10, 2007)

If it were only half as interesting as the scrumptious scenery! Instead, I was bombarded with stupid, choppy dialog, stupid, choppy direction, and thoroughly-unlikable characters. Props, however, to the guy who played Waddington, the very image of the sleazy British expat, complete with bad teeth and whacked-out native mistress! Boy Howdy!

It may be PC to cast a Eurasian as Yu, but it's historically inaccurate. In that time, if you were not fully-ethnic (or worse, bi-racial), you were lower than dirt, period! In short, there was no way in hell a half-Chinese man would have become an officer in the Chinese Army.

Why didn't Walter die the hideous death the other victims do? His has to be the cleanest, most serene death in the history of movie epidemics. I can only guess Edward Norton's raving id wouldn't allow him to go out with purple feet!

"Partners" (2012) (TV) (review: September 25, 2012)

I am dumbfounded as to how this brain-dead child of the creators of *"Will & Grace"* got on the air. To say this is moronic is being kind. Two guys, one gay and one straight, have been BFFs since childhood. But now their BFF-ness as well as their professional partnership (they are architects, allegedly) is being threatened by the gay guy's constant meddling in the straight guy's relationship with his girlfriend.

As with the other gay "comedy" *"The New Normal"*, this is choke full of revolting misogyny, racism, and stereotypes. But its real problem is the heroes are WAY-more into each other than their bed buddy *du jour*. In one scene that made me squirm, the gay BFF wails about what a horrid person he is as he sticks his backside out at the straight BFF! Why don't they do humanity a favor and hook up? Better yet, CBS, do humanity a favor and dump this turd!

"La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc" (1928) (review: March 14, 2011)

After years of hearing this praised to the skies, I finally got to see this last night, thanks to our buddies at TCM. For the benefit of you budding actors, the following is an account of Maria Falconetti's portrayal of Joan of Arc, hailed as the greatest performance in the history of film:

- *Goes into Pop-My-Eyes-Out-of-My-Sockets Mode. Then cries.
- * Goes into I'm-Feeling-Sorry-for-Myself Mode. Then cries.
- * Goes into Lobotomized Zombie Mode. Then cries.
- * Goes into Bobbing Head Doll Mode. Then cries.
- * Repeats modes like a broken record. Then cries. A lot.

Joan was a female Patton, someone who knew how to kick ass and take names. Falconetti's Joan is a blubbering wack job no one would follow into a pillow fight! Oddly, the only time she drops the blubbering wack job bit is when Joan is about to be burnt to a crisp.

The ending is a stupefying orgy of violence and bizarre shots. There is even a baby nursing, complete with full-frontal boobie! And the guy in the Mountie get-up lording over Joan's execution is a hoot! Where I can score that crack Carl Theodor Dreyer was smoking?

"Phantom Thread" (2017) (review: September 30, 2018)

Having seen this last night, and two other films by Paul Thomas Anderson, I am convinced that he is a reptilian and a misanthrope, too boot. His characters are cruel, selfish, sadistic, heartless, amoral or a combination thereof. The sequence with Barbara Rose (a stand-in for Woolworth heiress Barbara Hutton) in this twisted *"Pygmalion"* (George Bernard Shaw is spinning in his grave!) is the perfect example of Anderson's truly-vile nature. The "hero" and

"heroine" not only do not give a whit for their obviously miserable client, after she passes out at her wedding, they decide that she does not "deserve" to wear the gorgeous gown they made (and she paid for!). They go to her hotel room and demand the gown back. After the lady's lady companion balks (understandably), the "heroine" storms into Barbara's boudoir and strips it off of her, an act which gives her and the "hero" a sexual charge! Karl-Otto and Ilse Koch had nothing on these two!

But things really kick into "high gear" when Ilse discovers the joy of poison mushrooms: you can slice them; dice them; crush them; fry them in gobs of butter. Oh, and you can use them to make the man you claim to love deathly-ill to get back at him for raking you over the coals over how you cooked the asparagus! Now, you'd think the "my girlfriend is trying to kill me" bit would have Karl-Otto running to the nearest police station, chop-chop, but, nope, he gets his sick kicks being waylaid by his Wicked Witch to the point where he tells the doctor that his sister (aka The Butchest Women in The British Empire) drags into this sordid, sorry mess to examine him to shove his stethoscope where the sun don't shine!

Incredibly, Karl-Otto and Ilse tie the knot, and - wouldn't you know it! - run into Dr. Shove Your Stethoscope Where The Sun Don't Shine on their honeymoon. You're waiting for Ilse and Dr. Shove Your Stethoscope Where The Sun Don't Shine to hook up when he invites her to a New Year's Eve Party he promises will be a jolly time. She goes to the Jolly Time, but Dr. Shove Your Stethoscope Where The Sun Don't Shine is a no-show (!). Anderson really drops the ball here when Karl-Otto drags Ilse out of the Jolly Time, then whines to The Butchest Women in The British Empire he made a mistake marrying Ilse, and Ilse decides it's time to break out her New Best Friends (again!): Ilse could have dispatched Karl-Otto and The Butchest Women in The British Empire, taken over The House of Woodcock (what a stupid name!), hooked-up with Dr. Shove Your Stethoscope Where The Sun Don't Shine, and lived happily ever after -- until it was time to break out her New Best Friends (again)!

"Police Academy 5: Assignment: Miami Beach" (1988) (review: December 5, 2005)

Crossed up by Harris, our heroes (led by a Bobby Sherman look-a-like) must clean up his mess and rescue Lassard. As every second counts, what do they do? Coordinate with Miami PD and the FBI? Heck, no! They change into Police Academy shorts and t-shirts! This and the very idea of the brain-dead Lassard as Officer of the Decade is fair warning that you better check your brain at the door! If our heroes had any brains, they (and Harris) would be ecstatic that someone would actually be brain-dead enough to want to nab Lassard!

Too bad the movie is so lame, because it's actually ahead of its time: Harris never goes anywhere without Proctor; Harris mocks Proctor's pass at a woman; Harris and Proctor get foam on their noses while each sips a "potato" colada; Proctor wears a wet suit showing his

ass-ests; Bobby Sherman becomes Wayne Gretzky's ball-busting fiancée's bitch; Bobby Sherman writes on Harris with semen-like sunblock. There ought to be a law!

"Power and Beauty" (2002) (TV) (review: December 30, 2004)

As the paramour of John F. Kennedy and Sam Giancana, Judith Campbell Exner had enough goods to bring down the Presidency itself, but you'd never know it from this snoozer. Our "heroine" whines to her wuss of a boyfriend as the FBI camps outside her house and barge in whenever they feel like it. And the dialog is a hoot: "I want to be with you. I want to go to a soda fountain and drink vanilla Cokes!" I couldn't stop laughing!

Judy tells us about her mistakes, then says she doesn't regret a thing! Why is Giancana - here, the kindest mobster ever - so crazy about her? There certainly isn't anything about her that justified such puppy-like devotion.

Exner's last years were bittersweet: she was reconciled with the infant son she gave up for adoption, and some of her story was verified. However, like the other good-time girls before and since, her 15 minutes lasted 14 minutes too long.

"Pride & Prejudice" (2005) (review: May 31, 2006)

This gets it SO wrong on SO many levels! Bad enough Mrs. Bennet has been turned into a harpy and Mr. Collins has a burr up his ass, no one of Darcy's rank would be caught dead at that hillbilly hoedown!

Keira Knightley is too self-conscious to convey Elizabeth's intelligence and Matthew Macfadyen looks positively zonked (somebody get him a comb!). They speak in the most relentless monotone! Elizabeth is tweaking Darcy in the scene where he's at his desk, but Knightley delivers these zingers like lead balloons! Then it just dragged on! When Darcy makes his big speech, I couldn't stop laughing! Only Judi Dench (bless her!) gets that Austen's opus is as much about the class system as it is about two people who would rather slit their throats than admit their love! I had no idea why this Elizabeth and Darcy hooked up, and I didn't care! Another \$3.99 I'll never get back!

"Prime" (2005) (review: April 15, 2006)

I suppose Meryl Streep and Uma Thurman were trying to help out a budding film maker. But calling Ben Younger a film maker is like calling Dick Cheney a crack shot!

Where do I begin? The cat is let out of the bag WAY too soon. The paintings are too expert. Dave says what Pie Guy does isn't funny, but they stay buds. Dave ditches his girl hoping to

score with Rafi. Rafi's gay friends reek of ugly stereotypes. Dave throws a fit because Rafi wants him to act like an adult. Dave is over Rafi the second he hits the dance floor. Rafi gets cheesed when she learns Dave is dating. Pie Guy finally gets his, but we don't see him get his. Just as Dave decides to get serious, Rafi dumps him.

Bryan Greenberg: do humanity a favor and go back to your day job! I SO wanted Uma to go into Kill Bill mode, and shred this no-talent twit to ribbons!

About the "stick with your own kind": no one cares today, certainly not your therapist. Lisa is not only a bigot (Dave bristled at taking his black girlfriend home, knowing that Mother would not approve), she is totally unprofessional.

If Younger can get a budget and A-list cast for this "comedy," then there's hope for those with actual talent!

"Proof" (2005) (review: April 7, 2006)

...this is one stupid movie:

What was this earth-shattering paper about? Why did Robert need Catherine to work on it? What techniques made it so hip and proved whatever it was trying to prove?

"I feel like I could crack open. Like an egg, or one of those really smelly French cheeses that ooze everywhere when you cut them." Gag!

Robert complains to Catherine that she didn't get up until noon. If you are caring for someone, as she is supposedly doing, you are on their schedule, not yours!

Catherine is a narcissistic, self-absorbed whiner who doesn't deserve anyone's sympathy.

How Gyllenhaal gets work is beyond me! I never bought he could add $2 + 2$, much less, is a math whiz! But I did buy he'd bang Catherine so he could make off with the old man's "shit"!

Claire's determination to convince Catherine that she's nuts and put her in the loony bin. What's in it for her?

Who knew mathematicians are a bunch of drugged-out wack jobs? Sophie Germain must be spinning in her grave!

"The Queen" (2006) (review: June 9, 2007)

I confess, silly me got caught up in the orgy of grief after Diana got all smashed up because she didn't buckle up (let that be a lesson to you, kids) until I watched George Clooney self-righteously slam the media for their "role" in her death. Then I saw the parade of celebrities at her funeral, waving to the crowd as though they were attending a premier. Who the hell invited Tom Cruise, Steven Spielberg, and Elton John? Then it occurred to me this was what "Shy Di" was all about: a frivolous, utterly-shallow creature whose concern for the less-fortunate lasted as long as it took the camera to get her good side!

"The Queen" is a total goof: Blair babbling like a schoolboy; Mrs. Blair shooting blood out of her eyes at the mention of the Royals; Campbell getting a boner every time Blair's popularity spikes; Charles's reaction and his crocodile tears at Diana's casket; the Queen Mum and Philip popping off like a pair of drunken sailors; the stag in slow-motion (a sick metaphor for you-know-who). It ends with Blair patronizingly praising his Monarch on a job well-done, only to be warned that he will suffer the peoples' wrath if he doesn't watch it (a jab at his support of Bush)! Who cares if any of this actually went down? I couldn't stop laughing!

"Ratatouille" (2007) (review: January 21, 2008)

La ratatouille niçoise is a vegetable stew. Its name comes from *"ratouiller"* ("to shake") and *"tatouiller"* ("to stir"). That Brad Bird tries to pass off ratatouille as a casserole should tell you exactly what he thinks of those silly enough to shill out their money for this "masterpiece"!

But Bird-Brain lost me WAY before that! How does Rémy know how to read? How can he identify foods he's never stuffed in his face? Granny blasts the holy hell out of her house to try to blast Rémy and Émile to kingdom come?! Come on! And Rémy just happens to wash up at his idol's restaurant? How convenient!

If someone doesn't claim to be Gusteau's progeny within two years of his death, the place goes to Skinner. Huh? Gusteau (or at least his ghost) is shocked to learn he actually has progeny (given just how porky this pig is, that really IS a shock)! It won't take a genius to figure out that Linguini is The Chosen One, but why would his mother disclose this to Skinner instead to Gusteau's lawyer?

When The Chosen One doesn't give Rémy the credit Rémy thinks he deserves at the press conference, Rémy lets the colony have at the food! Having learned his "lesson", The Chosen One lets Ego in on who made his delicious ratatouille! All of this is beyond dumb!

Which brings up another plot-hole-you-can-drive-a-tank-through: after the press conference, Linguini forces Rémy to take a time out. Rémy returns to the restaurant, but after it's closed. How did Linguini manage to cook that night without Rémy?

Ball-Busting-Bitch Colette falls for Girly-Man Linguini? LOL! The less said about the other ludicrous clichés Bird-Brain tries to pass off as characters, the better.

"The Rat Race" (1960) (review: September 8, 2014)

Garson Kanin is best-known for his collaborations with his wife, actress Ruth Gordon, primarily *"Adam's Rib"* (1949). Kanin's adaptation of his play never leaves the stage. Even the opening, which standard-issue rube Pete (Tony Curtis) hops on the Greyhound, leaving the confines of Milwaukee for the hellhole of the N-Y-C, hell-bent on becoming the next Charlie Parker, is downright claustrophobic.

Pete (who oddly insists on using his full name when introducing himself) arrives in The Big City just in time to see his landlady (Kay Medford) toss Peggy (Debbie Reynolds). Learning she is broke with nowhere to go, he offers to let her stay, strictly-platonic. Peggy, who works for club owner/loan shark/pimp Nelly (Don Rickles), is floored by his naïveté. For reasons never explained, she owes Nelly \$400 which he wants her to pay back by offering "companionship" to some Big Shots but she refuses because she is Not That Kind of Girl.

Pete is punked time and time again. He gets an offer to play with The Red Peppers. Only they aren't the real Red Peppers. Why the Fake Peppers go to such lengths to steal his instruments, then leave him a "So Long, Sucker!" note is beyond me. How does Peggy manage to pay the rent when Nelly is taking every dime she makes? Why does she show up for work after she leaves a Big Shot in the lurch?

The other problem is the leads. Curtis and Reynolds are simply too old. And someone should have told Curtis that Midwesterners don't talk like they're from Da Bronx. But I was surprised by how good Rickles is. Mr. Warmth is as cold as a Nor'easter. The scene where he makes Reynolds strip to make a "point" had real tension. But he also made me laugh when, in the middle of threatening to cut her face, he puts on a pair of women's glasses. Medford and Jack Oakie are fine as the Greasy-Spoon Greek Chorus.

"The Reader" (2008) (review: March 27, 2010)

This is pretentious cheese. Stupid, pretentious cheese. Only in the movies does a woman who finds a boy drenched to the skin and puking his guts out NOT phone his parents. Instead, she washes the vomit off the cobblestones (first things first!), gives him a hug (huh?), then walks him home as it begins to snow! After 5 minutes in bed with scarlet fever, the boy tracks down

his angel of mercy, spies on her, shovels coal for her, gets naked for her, then lets her have at his scrawny, underage bones. Only in the movies.

The scrawny, underage bone-jumping continues through the summer without anyone wondering where the boy goes or what he does. Turns out Scrawny Underage Bone-Jumper is (surprise!) not the kind of girl you'd bring home to Mother. But since she's played by Kate Winslet, whom, like Angelina Jolie, Nicole Kidman, and (in her salad days) Helen Mirren, drops her drawers the way you and I breathe, what Scrawny, Underage Boy Toy (who gets his own naughty bits moment) is going to have a problem with that?

So what's my problem with this stupid, pretentious cheese? For starters, the German characters have British accents! Hey, you guys are getting paid good money to be in this stupid, pretentious cheese. Would it kill you to do a German accent?

Ralph Fiennes's performance consists of "I'm constipated!" and "I'm really constipated!", while Winslet's is one big "Look at me!" She-Devil, who is put on trial for allowing a church full of women and children to burn to the ground, bawls as she watches a children's choir perform? Spare us! And when she is told that she's getting a promotion, Winslet looks as though she wants to throttle somebody (maybe her agent)!

Fiennes, whose lone resemblance to Boy Toy is they're both zonked, gives a woman, one of She-Devil's "charges", her life savings. I didn't know which was more absurd: giving a woman who lives in a 7-figure Manhattan flat a tiny wad of bills or her telling Boy Toy to donate the "blood money" to a Gentile literacy group (Jews, she huffs, hardly have a problem with illiteracy!), but she'll keep the tin it came in. Wait! Isn't it tainted by the "blood money", and, worse, seriously-clashes with the décor?

"Reframed: Marilyn Monroe" (2022) (review: January 24, 2022)

This is so wedded to its "all men are scum" take (ironic, as the last episode features the truly reptilian Lawrence Shiller!), it intentionally ignores Joe DiMaggio's reentry into Marilyn Monroe's life after her divorce from Arthur Miller. Contrary to what "biographer" Sarah Churchwell states, Marilyn didn't "somehow" get herself out of the Payne Whitney Psychiatric Clinic. DiMaggio did. It was he who cared for her during her last 19 months (to the extent she allowed), claimed her body, and arranged her funeral (dismissed here as a small gathering of family and friends). He also quit his job four days before her death to return to California to ask her to remarry him. All of this is ignored! Churchwell's insistence that Monroe saw DiMaggio as a means to boost her fame by co-opting his is a load of hooey, and the Girl Power bit by the talking airheads does Monroe no favors.

While *The Misandrists* do note Zanuck tried to replace Monroe after she fled to the N-Y-C, only Sheree North (who played her mother in the TV movie *"Marilyn: The Untold Story"*) is

mentioned (Jayne Mansfield would like a word, guys!). No mention of Monroe's pivotal role in *"The Asphalt Jungle"* (!) or her conversion to Judaism upon marrying Miller (!!)? Seriously? The Harpies dragging then-nobody Hugh Hefner in the second episode for not giving Marilyn a heads-up about using the nude calendar photos to launch *Playboy* was the perfect metaphor for the entire series: utter bumptiousness and twice as inane.

"Requiem for a Dream" (2000) (review: October 15, 2005)

A black deaf-mute drug lord gets blown to smithereens by a white hit-man posing as his limo driver. Allow me to congratulate Darren Aronofsky for kicking that obnoxious poseur, Quentin Tarantino, right in the crotch! Unfortunately, it all goes downhill from there. The split screens and hyper-fixes get old real fast. The plot is all over the place. In a moment of clarity, Harry realizes Sara is addicted to diet pills and tells her to stop because "they're no good". Is he hearing himself? Nope. So, why does he bawl like a baby in the cab?

"The dream I'm referring to is the great American dream... And the fact that it'll kill you dead. Striving for it is a disaster. Attaining it is a killer" said writer Hubert Selby, Jr., no doubt, while on his way to the bank! The irony is this isn't about drugs, it's Buñuel on crack stuck in a Z-Grade Grand Guignol.

"Road to Bali" (1952) (review: November 30, 2009)

When more than one writer is credited with a script, chances are the movie stinks. As if they knew this, Bob Hope and Bing Crosby break the fourth wall and throw in stuff which do nothing but bog the "story" down. Even more-creepy were girls young enough to be their daughters throwing themselves at the boys. Were their egos' that fragile or that inflated?

How is it the natives spoke perfect, unaccented English? Where did they get their fine clothes and jewels? How did they build that mansion? Bob, Bing, and Dorothy land on a supposedly deserted island, but spend the night in the swankiest hut ever, and she romps in a man-made lagoon! Why did they throw in the tiger and the gorilla? How did her evil cousin wind up where she wound up? Then, because the film makers ran out of ideas (not that they had any to begin with), they go Irwin Allen and have a volcano erupt!

Ninety minutes of torture, and our trio never do get to Bali (why they had to get to Bali is never explained). Instead, Bing, Dorothy, and Jane Russell (don't ask) walk to a yacht anchored in the harbor (don't ask) as Bob frantically tries to stop the "movie" from ending (don't ask). Avoid this. Your brain will thank you.

"Reality Bites" (1994) (review: February 28, 1994)

I watched Neil Armstrong walk on the Moon, and Richard Nixon resign, which makes me a Baby Boomer. But I also cut my teeth on Speed Racer and Slurpees, which also entitles me to membership into that most ominous of fraternities, Generation X. That confusion was more so after I saw this latest attempt to explain us to ourselves. Now, I am really confused!

For all the talk about how twenty-somethings are the source of creativity in movies today, the script by 24 year old Helen Childress is shockingly conventional. Lelaina (Winona Ryder) is a production assistant for the Senior Citizen From Hell, Grant Gubler (John Mahoney), and wants to be a documentary film maker. Her roommate Vickie (Jeanne Garofalo) is a sales clerk at the Gap whose main ambition in life is sleeping with as many men as possible. One day, Vickie invites two guys to crash with them: Sammy (Steve Zahn) is a space cadet's space cadet, and Troy (Ethan Hawke) is the World's Angriest Young White Man. For reasons better left un-fathomed, Lelaina and Troy are attracted to one other but are loathe to admit it.

Enter Michael (Ben Stiller, who also directs). At first, Lelaina has contempt for Michael and the ultra-square lifestyle he represents. But she comes to like the shy vice-president of In Your Face ("You know, MTV with an edge") who offers to show the video that she's making about her friends to his bosses with no strings attached. Naturally, Troy is not amused. Lelaina is eventually forced to choose between them. You'd think this would be a no-brainer: does our heroine go with the decent, respectful guy or stay with the Kerouac wanna-be who sees working for a living as an infringement on his civil rights? But, noooooo!

If the idiotic plot was the only problem, but that would be asking too much. Lelaina is a Houston native, yet speaks without an accent. Vickie gets depressed when she gets a promotion. Troy uses Freudian babble to express himself. Sammy mumbles about "doing something for a living." And although Lelaina has demonstrated that she doesn't know the first thing about film making - trivial things such as framing, pacing, lighting - we are expected to believe that she has created a mini-masterpiece which Michael's bosses destroy, when it actually looks a hell of a lot better after they get through with it!

More disturbing is Grant Gubler. In the past, senior citizens were merely feeble and absent minded; today, they're sadistic bastards. Instead of Lelaina dismissing Grant's feelings as contempt, could it be that he sees her lack of direction and wants her to make the most of what is being offered her? Ah, but that would mean that Grant has had the benefit of experience, a concept that is apparently blasphemous to Stiller and Childress, and totally lost on Lelaina and her friends. In wanting nothing more than to make sure their children had it better than they did, the Depression-Era Kids destroyed the lives of the Baby Boomers and the Generation X'ers, ergo, the premise. That is the real blasphemy.

"The Royal Tenenbaums" (2001) (review: July 27, 2003)

Having established Royal as a wild, Carpe Diem kind of guy, Wes Anderson has him act like a grown-up at the wedding of his ex-wife. Wouldn't he have pulled another crazy stunt, like, crashed Eli's roadster into the house? Maybe Anderson wanted to avoid being predictable, yet I WANTED Royal to do something nutty in one, last desperate attempt to win back his family instead of meekly conceding defeat. Why was he invited to the wedding as if nothing had happened? Royal and Etheline separated, yet there is no mention of a divorce. Anderson totally blew it here: Royal should have dug in his heels, refuse to give Etheline a divorce, refuse to recognize Henry as his replacement, force her to get an annulment, which can take years. BTW, a priest cannot marry someone who is divorced.

Anderson is inconsistent with Royal's attempts to reconcile with his children. Royal hardly gives Richie and Chas the time of day and acknowledges Margot only long enough to lecture her on the dangers of two-timing her husband, who is old enough to be her father. Henry is the Ultimate Uncle Tom, complete with bow tie. Anderson would be accused of racism were it not for the dignity and simmering rage Danny Glover gives Henry. But after Henry exposes Royal's scam, he shrinks back into the shadows like an Uncle Tom.

We're expected to embrace these characters, yet apart from Gene Hackman, the actors seem trapped by the rigid framing. In having Richie pine for Margot, only to be later so mortified by her, he takes a razor to himself, Anderson is saying that intimacy is a messy - even fatal - proposition. Better to keep Life - and Love - at a distance like Henry and Chas, then to jump into the fray with reckless abandon like Royal.

"The Royals" (2015) (TV) (review: March 16, 2015)

Why do a show about about a fictional British royal family when the real Royal Family is way-more entertaining? And what's with the names: Prince Liam? Princess Eleanor? Prince Cyrus? King Simon? Queen Helena? Princess Penelope? Princess Maribel? While it does its darnedest to get down-and-dirty with the debauchery (Elizabeth Hurley chews the scenery like Meryl Streep on an acid trip), after a terrific opening, it sinks faster than a rock. The writing is Gawd-awful, and there is no one to care about. Worse, this waste makes E!'s other shit look Emmy-worthy.

"Ruby & the Rockits" (2009) (TV) (review: July 22, 2009)

As if the premise isn't bad enough, the set-up is awful. A girl named Ruby (Alexa Vega) shows up out of nowhere, and informs a has-been pop star (David Cassidy) she is his kid. And he accepts it! Then he dumps her on the brother (Patrick Cassidy) he's been feuding with for the past 20 years, who also accepts Ruby as Has-Been's kid.

The brothers were once this big pop act. Their "music video" has them in silly wigs, lip-syncing to a retched song as a girl (now married to one of the brothers) does her best Tawny Kitaen. The brother who gets Ruby dumped on him, now pushing SUVs, longs for the good old days, while his son wants to be Kurt Cobain when he grows up. And Ruby, who can't carry a tune, also harbors delusions of greatness.

David ought to be ashamed of himself for whoring out a sorry episode of his life. And Shaun (creator of this mess): I want to kick myself for having the biggest crush on you! You are a hack! And you weren't even that good of a singer!

"Run Granny Run" (2007) (review: March 13, 2010)

I wonder if Doris Haddock ever realized everyone she met during her run for the Senate was patronizing her. She didn't do herself any favors: she was naïve, a bigot, and a parrot for her son's warped world-view: the scene of him on the phone shaking people down for contributions tells us more about him than the filmmakers intended.

Granny's visit with her daughter Betty (who died three months after the election) was an obvious ploy for our sympathy. But Granny's admission that her activism outweighs what guilt she feels over not being there for Betty lost me.

The film tries to make Judd Gregg the heavy when the real baddies are the DNC elite whom take Granny less-seriously than Gregg does, evidenced by the nincompoops who run her campaign. The manager wastes much-needed funds while twiddling his thumbs, and the "peace and love" strategist bails when she refuses to take a pay cut for twiddling her thumbs! The manager crows after the election that they're only \$300,000 in the hole (the DNC SHITS \$300,000!), then tears out of Granny's driveway like a bat out of Hell!

The manager gushing over Joe Trippi had me rolling my eyes, especially as the debate coach nailed Granny's strengths and weaknesses. Anyone who would toil willingly for that wack-job Howard Dean is not someone I would ask for advice.

"The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe" (2015) (TV) (review: June 2, 2015)

I'd copy-and-paste "putrid piece of shit" like a broken record, but there are a few things which need to be said about this putrid piece of shit:

Dougherty has Marilyn's mother hauled off by the cops after she knocks down their bedroom door brandishing a knife? You buy that, I've got some oceanfront property in Utah for sale!

Marilyn basing "Marilyn Monroe" on a cigarette girl whom she sees seductively selling a boy a pack of gum? Rrrriiggghhhttt.

No proof Dougherty ever called Marilyn "crazy like your mother" and threatened to take her to a "head doctor".

Her first screen test/contract happened after she divorced Dougherty.

No proof Tom Kelley knew Joseph Schenck, much less, wrangled her an invite to one of Schenck's "poker parties".

No proof Johnny Hyde got her hooked on uppers.

She rehearses a dance from "*Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*" before she meets DiMaggio. She learned she got "*Blondes*" on her 26th birthday, after she met DiMaggio.

She and DiMaggio met on a blind date at Chasen's, not at some dive where a brunette is ready to pounce on him. And the real date did not wind up like this one does. A figment of the filmmakers' warped imaginations.

No proof DiMaggio ever owned a bowling shirt.

The DiMaggio dinner table is headed by his parents. He tells Marilyn when they run into each other after their divorce "my folks ask about you all the time". DiMaggio's parents died before he met her.

Marilyn saying Peter Lawford's much-better half, aka JFK's sister, is everything she wants to be? Too funny.

DiMaggio and Marilyn get jiggy with it after running into each other while she has drinks with Peter Lawford's much-better half, aka JFK's sister while still married to Arthur Miller AND with the disapproval of Peter Lawford's much-better half, aka JFK's sister? They did run into each other in Reno while she was making "*The Misfits*", but she had her posse in tow, and, needless to say, there was no getting jiggy with it.

No mention of DiMaggio's son or Miller's children, all of whom she was very close to.

Miller a passive-aggressive prick who blames Marilyn for killing their unborn child? Any takers for that oceanfront property in Utah yet?

No mention of her trip to Korea?! Are you kidding?!

DiMaggio had a warm relationship with Eunice Murray, who found Marilyn dead (at least they got THAT right!). Threatening to sack her if she doesn't clean Marilyn's pig sty of a bedroom? Pure fiction.

The real Marilyn was right-handed.

I should have copied/pasted "putrid piece of shit" like a broken record.

"Selfie" (2014) (TV) (review: October 1, 2014)

In this retarded rip-off of *"Pygmalion"*, we meet Eliza Dooley, who is obsessed with gaining fame through social media, on a plane with her co-workers. After the co-workers see fit to capture on their smartphones her barf bags spilling all over her, Eliza decides she needs a "re-brand". Enter tight-ass co-worker Henry Higgs, who saved the company they toil for by "re-branding" its top product -- not reformulating it; giving it a new look. In short, Henry (who gets plastered with a kiss by the fruity boss) is as shallow as Eliza. And the "advice" he gives her? Greet the receptionist each morning, I kid you not! Sparks are supposed to eventually fly between these annoying twits. Hopefully, that plane didn't run out of barf bags.

"Sense and Sensibility" (1995) (review: May 11, 2003)

The DVD features 3 trailers for Emma Thompson's films, and her funny yet pretentious Golden Globes acceptance speech. Unlike Mel Gibson with *"Braveheart"*, this "high brow" venture allowed her to dodge charges of being a megalomaniacal "actor". Still, she is not without an ego. She replaces Austen's wit with a wisecracking tone and raucous slapstick that serves only to bog things down. And Ang Lee didn't have the nerve to tell her she was WAY too old to play Elinor. She and Hugh Grant, who walks as if he has a sheet of plywood up his ass, make as ridiculous a pair as you imagine.

An even-odder pair is Kate Winselt and Alan Rickman. Brandon is supposed to be love-struck the moment he sees Marianne, yet Rickman looks downright drugged. Their match seems something Marianne settles for rather than true love.

"Shakespeare in Love" (1998) (review: February 3, 2002)

Shakespeare lived in Bishopgate outside London at the time he wrote *"Romeo & Juliet"*; there wasn't any reason to have him living in a rooming house within the city. Burbage's home was The Theatre, which was owned by his father, James; he wouldn't move to The Curtain, which was also owned by his father, until 1597. But, I digress...

Ned Alleyn married Philip Henslowe's stepdaughter in 1592, making them partners in The Rose. Alleyn ran the productions and Henslowe handled the money. Even if they were in trouble, it's unlikely that Burbage would have come to the rescue since James Burbage, literally, kicked Alleyn out of the Burbage company when he accused Burbage of cutting him out of his share of the profits. And the real Alleyn was 6' 7"! But, I digress...

I never bought this Shakespeare wrote the greatest plays in the English language: he is a self-centered, horny jerk for whom everyone is a means to an end. He should have tried out for the British track team with all the running around he does instead of torturing us with his delusions of genius! And what's with the Mad Max get-up? But, I digress...

How did Viola learn of the audition? How did the Queen know Viola was "Master Kent" when she was, literally, a last-second replacement for Sam? Why didn't the Nurse investigate the ruckus in Viola's bedroom? Why didn't Wessex break the betrothal contract? And Will just happened to be in the same church in a desperately-cynical attempt to save his immoral mortal soul Viola was at, praying for HIS immoral mortal soul? But, I digress.

"Shattered Glass" (2003) (review: July 11, 2006)

Aside from my surprise at Hayden Christensen, this offering by Billy Ray (Cyrus, sorry) reveals more about The Fourth Estate than he realizes.

Contrary to Lane's blurb about all the "shit we're about to eat," only Glass suffers the consequences, while Lane finds a mea culpa awaiting his signature and all is right again with the world! He should have been sacked, and the just-sacked Kelly shouldn't have landed a gig as a copy boy, much less, wind up at *The Atlantic*! Don't ask how *The New Republic* got buffaloeed by this juvenile delinquent: Ray accepts the class and political ideology of mainstream journalism when he should be probing its seamy underbelly.

Funny how no reviews noted the irony of Lane landing at *The Washington Post*, which had its own Stephen Glass moment. Ben Bradlee crows about how he brought down Richard Nixon, but mention "Janet Cooke", and he dances like Fred Astaire! That this pompous prick is revered by the elite when he should be a pariah for green-lighting Cooke's bogus series about an 8 year old black heroin addict tells you all you need to know about the sanctimonious hypocrites who run the The Fourth Estate!

"Showgirls" (1995) (review: November 23, 2003)

Film Quarterly recently devoted an issue to *"Showgirls"* with four serious essays by four serious film scholars, I kid you not! I defy anyone to get through the first essay and not suppress their giggles.

MGM repackaged this as "so bad, it's good". Problem is, unlike "*Plan 9 From Outer Space*" (which isn't the crime against humanity some think), it doesn't lend itself as camp (save for the Nomi/Zack sex scene, which has got to be seen to be believed!) because Paul Verhoeven and Joe Eszterhas are as dead-serious about their opus as the gang at *Film Quarterly*!

No club would ever stage something as God-awful as Goddess. From the Z-Grade sets to the Nazi-biker costumes to the migraine-inducing music to the pelvis-obsessed choreography to the no-concept concept, it doesn't resemble a Vegas show so much as it does a pornographer's wet dream of a Vegas show.

Why are children backstage where naked "ladies" say, as the little girl puts it, "the f-word," the way you and I breathe? Where's Child Welfare when you REALLY need them?!

And it's totally inane! Take Nomi and James. First he dismisses her as the no-talent skank she is. Then after she kicks him in the crotch, he decides she has talent, and tries to convince her to do "serious work." But his idea of "serious work" is sleazier than what she does at the Cheetah! So where does this "serious artist" and his "serious work" wind up? A strip club! Let it not be said Paul and Joe don't have a sense of self!

I thought Elizabeth Berkley got a bum rap, the world blaming her for this stinker while the REAL culprits got off scott-free! She was in way over her head: soft when she is supposed to be hard, and psycho-bitchy when we're supposed to be rooting for her!

BTW, "Verhoeven" and "Showgirls" both contain "ho." Coincidence? I think not.

"Sid & Judy" (2019) (TV) (review: October 20, 2019)

I read an anecdote once about Sid Luft and Judy Garland sitting at a restaurant bar when she said something and he belted her in reaction, knocking her off of the stool. No one reacted as she meekly got up off the floor, and crawled back onto the stool next to him. Some years after her death, an acquaintance ran into Luft tooling around in a Mercedes: he had bagged the rights to Garland's work, and was now living large. In 2002, he was ordered to pay The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences \$60,000 for attempting to sell the juvenile Oscar awarded to Garland for "*The Wizard of Oz*" and its replacement. Yet Luft always insisted that he was the only person who ever cared truly for Garland and had best interests at heart.

Though "*Sid & Judy*" tries mightily to make Luft The Knight In Shining Armor to Garland's Damsel In Distress, it ends the charade when we are introduced to the vipers who became her managers. It then wants you to see Luft as this hapless schmo whom Freddie Fields and David Begelman push out their charge's life when, in fact, the three formed an Unholy

Trinity; to protect himself, Luft recorded the telephone conversations he had with Fields, Begelman, and most everyone else in Garland's orbit without their consent.

For those with even a cursory knowledge of Garland's life, nothing here will come as a revelation, although learning that she aborted Luft's child, as each were married to other people at the time (she to director Vincente Minnelli; he to actress Lynn Bari), and he being a total prick about the whole thing, was a shock. It also made me wonder why she decided to not only stay with him, but marry him.

While the focus is understandably on Garland, we don't learn anything about Luft, as if he just popped up out of absolute nowhere. I had to do some research to learn that he had been a test pilot and was in the Royal Canadian Air Force. I also learned that while married to Garland, he lost the custody battle for his son with Bari, the judge ruling that the Luft household "was an improper place in which to rear the boy." Ouch!

Not omitted, however, is the perfunctory exploration of Garland's addictions, which I sympathize with yet never understood. Like Garland, Mickey Rooney was the product of show business parents who found himself a cog in the MGM soul-sucking machine before he hit puberty. The demands made on him by his overlords were just as punishing as the demands made on her. And his personal life was an even-bigger train wreck than hers, if that's at all possible. Yet Rooney didn't fall into the abyss, shuffling off his mortal coil at the ripe old age of 93, outliving Garland by 44 years!

The last 15 minutes are rushed, as if director Stephen Kijak had grown bored with his subjects. He jettisons Garland and Luft from their own documentary, ultimately, in favor of a creature who calls himself "Miss Major Griffin-Gracy". A "trans woman activist", he prattles on about Garland being an icon for people who suffer from gender and/or sexual identity issues as we watch him and his confederates descend upon her resting place like the Army storming Normandy; "cringe-worthy" doesn't begin to describe it.

Judy Garland and - dare I say it - Sid Luft deserve better.

"Six Wives with Lucy Worsley" (2016) (TV) (review: February 6, 2017)

Lucy Worsley is a British TV personality who fancies herself an historian. While she has an engaging persona, an historian she is not. So for the benefit of you history majors, allow me to point out where Worsley gets it wrong with her take on the Six Wives of Henry VIII:

Henry and Wife #2 Anne Boleyn celebrated the death of Wife #1 Catherine of Aragon.

Henry annulled his marriage to Anne Boleyn, THEN sent her to the chopping block.

Two weeks before he had her arrested, Henry engineered a meeting between Anne and France's ambassador to England, who was forced to adjudge her. Had Henry become so disaffected, why would he have expended such diplomatic capital on her behalf?

Henry found Wife #4 Anne of Cleves so repulsive, he couldn't bring himself to do the deed.

Anne of Cleves did not bargain for a settlement after Henry decided he wanted out of the marriage. In fact, Henry was so delighted that she refused to give him a fight, he loaded her down with all sorts of goodies, including 2 castles.

The heroine of Worsley's clichéd tales of woe is Wife #5 Catherine Howard, a stupid, silly creature who screwed around on Fat Bastard with his courtier (who just happened to be her cousin), and lost her stupid, silly head as a result. Worsley imagines her a victim of sexual abuse while she was at a boarding school; there is no evidence Catherine was ever violated, but plenty of evidence that she was always game for a good time.

"61*" (2001) (TV) (review: November 8, 2003)

I bet those who raved about "61*" don't know the liberties Billy Crystal took. Not enough he has Roger Maris ahead of Babe Ruth and Mickey Mantle in the home run chase, he slanders the media. So, why did sportswriters slam Ford Frick for declaring the record would have to be broken by Game 154 for it to count? Don't confuse Commissioner Crystal with the facts, or his pinhead will explode:

Frick is shown presenting Maris with his 1960 MVP. Joe Cronin was the actual presenter.

Maris autographs a ball with an X, and gets raked for it. That happened in 1962.

Gabe Pressman is shown delivering a report saying Maris's teammates wanted Mantle to beat Ruth. Pressman filed a report about Maris blowing off fans.

There was no Sports Illustrated cover with Mantle and Maris.

Maris hit #53 off Hank Aguirre, not Frank Lary.

Maris hit #58 off Terry Fox, not Jim Bunning.

The movie shows Ruth with 23 homers, Maris with 27, and Mantle with 24. Ruth had 25.

Maris and Mantle hit his respective 45th homer on the same day. In the movie, Maris hits his 45th and Mantle his 44th.

It states Ruth had 48 homers, Maris 53, and Mantle 51 after 130 games. Ruth had 51. And the totals were after 139 games, not 130.

A reference is made to President Kennedy interrupting a news conference to mention that Maris has hit #47 and #48. Didn't happen.

Mantle and Maris became friends, but not right off the bat (sorry!) 7/31/61 *Sports Illustrated*: "Last year they also battled each other for the home run title and relations between the two became cool. Mantle was the incumbent hero... Maris was the new boy... This season they have apparently learned the secret of peaceful coexistence".

Yankee fans boo Maris, which never happened. But when he hits #61, a Yankee fan congratulates him, which did happen. So were the fans for or against Maris?

For some reason, Crystal has a problem with Joe DiMaggio. He has Moose Skowron mention that Joe didn't talk to him during his rookie year. The fact Skowron joined the team 3 years after DiMaggio retired may have had something to do with that.

Maris DID NOT get an asterisk, which Crystal knows damn well! The MLB single-season home run record was listed like this:

61 - ROGER E. MARIS, AL: NY, 1961 (162 G/s)

60 - GEORGE H. RUTH, AL: NY, 1927 (154 G/s)

In 1991, Fay Vincent removed the distinction. In 1998, Mark McGwire made it moot and meaningless. That pretty much sums up "61*", too!

"Det Sjunde Inseget" (1957) (review: February 18, 2008)

I sat through three other Ingmar Bergman films: the girl in *"Jungfrukällan"* was a spoiled brat. The old man in *"Smultronstället"* was a whiny fart. The adults in *"Fanny och Alexander"* were pricks. Yet the critics were beside themselves, Bergman had so deftly tapped into their egos. Hence, every time Iggy took a dump, they raved like a pack of Pavlovian dogs!

So when Death, looking like a Marilyn Manson fan, makes his grand entrance, I wasn't expecting any profound insights from Iggy, and I wasn't disappointed:

Block: Who are you?

Death: I am Death. (duh!)

The Grim Reaper blows chunks at chess. Beating Block centuries before The Mad Queen? LOL! And his "I'm just doing my job" shtick when asked about the Divine was a total cop-out! When Block didn't bitch-slap Grimmy, I knew I was in for a long and boring night!

The confession scene was a hoot! Block whines that God doesn't answer him, wishes he could purge Him from his heart. Now you know the "monk" is Death, but because Iggy isn't the filmmaker he thinks he is, he lets us in on it before Block (who's a few fries short of a Happy Meal) realizes whom he just blabbed his "brilliant" chess strategy to!

If Block not trying to save the girl was supposed to get us to relate to his world-weariness, sorry, all it did was make me lose all empathy for him. Block's filthy, God-hating sidekick is the real hero of this opus. In his one act of heroism (unintentional, I'm sure), he saves a girl from the man who talked Block into going on the Crusades (huh?), then tells her that she better come with him because he hopes his wife is dead by now and he could have just raped her. How sweet!

Jof was weird and not because he has a vision of Mary teaching her Baby how to walk. He's a juggler, but can't keep two balls in the air. How did a dolt like that land a babe like Mia?

Dentistry back then was non-existent, yet the peasants have perfectly pearly choppers. The girls' faces are scrubbed clean, and have no unsightly body hair! And shouldn't the horses be sick from drinking sea water? But I digress.

"Skyfall" (2012) (review: May 26, 2014)

Bond falls 100 feet after being shot, goes over a waterfall, and walks away without a scratch. Next time we see him, he's banging a girl in a hut on the beach. How did he get new clothes? How did he get back to London? M tells him his stuff is now in storage as it was presumed he was dead. Later, Bond, deciding M needs to get out of Dodge, drives her to where his crap, including his beloved Aston-Martin, is stored. How did he know where it was? When Bond drives M to his family estate in Scotland, named Skyfall, the estate's game keeper (whom never tends to any game) tells him Skyfall was sold. By whom? And why didn't this mystery person sell the rest of Bond's crap to the highest bidder?

Our villain, a bleached blonde Blofeld, is hell-bent on fixing M's little red wagon because she gave him up after he got chummy with some Chinese operatives. He uses her computer to blow up MI6 headquarters, killing several people. After Bond blows off Blofeld's pass, he kills Bond's latest gal pal without 007 blinking an eyelash. Then in a shameless rip-off of *"Silence of the Lambs"*, Bleached Blonde Blofeld is put in an isolation booth, which he springs out of, kills his guards, tracks down M as she is grilled by some stuck-up bitch using the MI6 attack to score political points, shoots up the place, then slips out. And while M is grilled by Stuck-Up

Bitch, Bond races to her rescue by running half-way across London! Forget wondering why Q couldn't stop Bleached Blonde Blofeld from ditching his digs when Q supposedly created the software Bleached Blonde Blofeld used to blow up MI6. When one character declares "we have a democracy", I wanted to scream: No, dumb-ass, the UK has a constitutional monarchy!

The showdown is sheer ridiculousness. Bond, M, and the Game Keeper (who never tends to any game) booby-trap the old gal, only to see Bleached Blonde Blofeld sweep in with a military helicopter, and blast it and the Aston-Martin to bits. Jimbo gets his man, after more ridiculousness involving a frozen pond, but he also gets the boss killed. Not very professional. Or competent. But not to worry. Jimbo is back on the job with a new M and a new Moneypenny, whose "expert" marksmanship set this ridiculousness in motion, and all is right with the world. The new owner of Skyfall isn't the only one pissed off about this.

"Smash" (2012) (TV) (review: February 7, 2012)

In Steven Spielberg's "brilliantly-original idea", the clichés are trotted out like a bad cold. The theater lover married to a jerk who hates the theater. The catty gay guy. The bitch who'd kill Grandma to land a lead. The Babe in the Woods waiting tables as she struggles for her big break. The hard-boiled producer desperate for a hit. The homophobic director. The tacky, tasteless production numbers crammed with enough double entendres to chock a horse! The upshot is that the "talents" vying for the "dream role" of Marilyn Monroe are made up to look like drag queen versions of Anna Nicole Smith! At least someone associated with this tripe has a sense of humor! If the writers want to learn how to do dialog that won't make viewers squirm, my rate is \$25 per/hour. I'm sure Mr. Spielberg has that much in his piggy bank.

"Some Like It Hot" (1959) (review: September 2, 2003)

After being warned by Joe about his lust, why would Jerry help him woo Sugar by allowing Osgood to romance him, especially after blasting Joe for his Junior act? Sugar thinks Junior is loaded, but he's such a jerk, why is she so willing? How could Joe fit into Beinstock's clothes? How could Jerry fit into the bellhop's uniform? Why did everyone accept Joe and Jerry as women except Spats and his thugs? Despite the fact that Mulligan is there and the hotel is a public place, Little Bonaparte orders a hit? How did Sugar know Joe had gone to the pier after he was chased out of the hotel? And even if her bicycle was jet-propelled, there is no way in hell she could have gotten there before he, Jerry, and Osgood shoved off!

But it's so perfectly-executed with its perfect cast, you're happy to forgive its many faults. While I loved Marilyn Monroe's performance, this puppy is Jack Lemmon's all the way; he seemed to have had a blast making this! The scene with Monroe in the train berth and with Tony Curtis after their dates makes me scream every time!

"Something's Gotta Give" (2003) (review: April 9, 2004)

Yeah, it will gross Mom out that her baby girl is getting it on with a man old enough to be her grandfather. But Marin is an adult, and not exactly Sweet Polly Purebread. Writer/director Nancy Meyers shouldn't have teased us with Marin's romance, only to wimp out. As it turns out, Harry (the grandfather) isn't the prize he thinks he is.

The scene with real-life exes Jack Nicholson and Diane Keaton at the beach exuded real warmth. Erica's realization she's still "got it" as Julian pursues her, and when Harry contemplates his mortality, are the only times when the movie has life. But it lost me when Erica falls apart after Harry breaks with her. It was totally out of character.

About Erica's play: the title is silly; the script is in the wrong format; the "dancing Henrys" was an obvious rip-off of the "dancing Itos" during the O.J. trial; and Harry isn't vain enough to get so cheesed about Erica's depiction of him.

Ultimately, Harry doesn't prove he is worthy of Erica. And if Meyers is making the point that people are as vital in their 60s as they are in their 20s, then why are Jack's and Diane's faces airbrushed in the film's poster?

"Speed Racer" (2008) (review: April 5, 2009)

After *"The Matrix"*, somebody should have told the Wachowski Brothers to quit while they were ahead. Instead, they made not one, but two sequels that were DOA, then *"V for Vendetta"*, and now they've unleashed this onto an undeserving world!

In case anyone cares (the Wachowskis certainly don't), Rex left home after a blow-up with Pops after a race. He didn't fake his death, then go under the knife to become Racer X! If he had his face done, why does he need a mask? Anyone who cares about Speed Racer (the Wachowskis certainly don't) should be mad as hell about this!

The editing is a mess, the plot is downright retarded, and the bad guy is a Z-grade Tim Curry! Curry whored himself out for *"Home Alone 2"* and *"Charlie's Angels"*, but this was beneath him? That ought to tell you something right there, kids!

I know don't which is sadder: John Goodman and Susan Sarandon are this hard-up for work or the brat who plays Spritle blows them off the screen!

"Spy Kids 2: Island of Lost Dreams" (2002) (review: August 11, 2002)

As this was made by a Latino, there may be a temptation to view the movie through a racial prism, since the good guys are Latino and the bad guys are white. This would be a mistake. While the Cortezes are Latino, ethnically, they are white, and the one who betrays them is another Latino, but of Indian ethnicity. The objects of Carmen's and Juni's crushes are white non-Latinos (Macaulay Culkin look-a-likes, too boot). And the one whom Carmen and Juni befriend is also a white non-Latino with a Latino surname.

Alexa Vega and Daryl Sabara have wonderful faces and are fine instinctual actors. That said, I found the movie insultingly predictable. And the less said about the horrible effects, the better. It's a shock that hack Robert Rodriguez has children since he obviously doesn't know the first thing about writing for children.

While I was heartened by the message about the importance of being a nice person and being nice to others and how Carmen was strong and self-reliant (even though she allows Gary to compromise Juni at every turn, smacking of the Latina stereotype of "standing by your man") Rodriguez lost me when he had Carmen make like J-Lo at the end credits. It was so disturbing, it bordered on kiddie porn.

"The Squid and the Whale" (2005) (review: October 11, 2007)

Frank, our underage "hero", guzzles beer, swears like a sailor, and "bonds" with library books! Walt - the stand-in for the half-wit behind this snot rag - is an asshole! Both treat their mother with utter contempt. Not that she deserves any respect, but I was shocked at how they spoke to her. Had I told my mother "You disgust me", I would have gotten the tar beaten out of me! But the mom just stares. She later gives Walt a half-hearted slap because he makes it clear that he hates her for (among other things) putting out for a Baldwin!

The dad is a prick. When he has a heart attack while trying to catch the cat, I cheered until I realized he wasn't going to die. Proof there is no God in movies made by half-witted snot rags!

But the real crime is Kevin Kline's and Pheobe Cates's decision that Frank would make a peachy addition to their little rugrat's demo reel. Shame on them!

"Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith" (2005) (review: January 3, 2006)

Some want to see Palpatine as a stand-in for a certain world leader, but that's giving George Lucas WAY too much credit! Lucas is a hack, period! Plot, dialog, character development, logic, and cohesiveness are concepts he has proved time and again totally escape him! "Only a Sith deals in absolutes!" And a Jedi doesn't? Since when?

If Anakin had a brain cell, he'd play the Jedi and the Sith against each other, sit back as they wipe each other out, then take over what's left of Dodge as its undisputed, all-powerful sheriff with no prune-faced hunchback or pointy-eared green midget to answer to!

There were times I felt I was stuck in a bad video game (the showdown between Anakin and Obi-Wan); other times, the visuals were really cool (Obi-Wan and Grievous). The inconsistency of the CGI could stand as a metaphor for all six episodes! But what really sent me was how easily the Jedi betray their lofty ideals. Instead of bringing Palpatine to justice, Windu goes vigilante, and Obi-Wan abandons Anakin as he endures utter agony. So much for Yoda's lectures on fear and hatred are fast-tracks to The Dark Side, yadda, yadda, yadda.

Watching Hayden Christensen, I could only think of the injustice of it all: thousands of actors with more talent in their pinky, and this twit now has a place in film history because was at the right place at the right time!

"Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens" (2015) (review: November 24, 2016)

This over-hyped garbage heap cost a staggering \$245,000,000 to make, and grossed an even-more staggering \$936,627,416 in the USA alone, proving once and for all no one has ever gone broke underestimating the "intelligence" of the American public!

Why this over-hyped garbage heap came within \$63,327,584 shy of hitting the One Billion mark is beyond me. If you've seen the first one (Episode IV), you've seen this. Indeed, I found myself making a mental list of things to check off as I watched. Orphaned hero (albeit, a girl with a British accent)? Check. A droid containing intel which can save the universe? Check. A Super-Machine which obliterates planets at the push of a button? Check. Grouchy Old Fart who escorts our hero to a Cantina out of the Wild-West, then disables Super-Machine, then gets offed by the Bad Guy? Check. Double-Check. Triple-Check. Bad Guy controlled by a Super Bad Guy? Check. The "filmmakers" throwing a politically-correct bone in the form of a black Storm Trooper who gets a conscious? Check.

The only twist, if you can call it that, is the Bad Guy is the son of Grouchy Old Fart Han Solo and Grouchy Old Dyke Princess Leia, making them officially the Worst Parents in the Galaxy. In a truly-painful bit of exposition, Leia (now a general with a nutter for a hairdresser), yaps to Han how she lost him and Junior when she sent Junior away. Why won't she just admit she didn't want the brat? Anyhoo, Junior's goal in life (aside from finding this map which will lead him to Uncle Luke) is to be as bad a baddie as Grandpa Darth Vader. Not "more powerful than" but "as strong as", which makes him a shitty bad guy! A shitty bad guy with conditioned locks who pouts and throws hissy fits and answers to a Butt-Ugly Hologram and is upstaged by a Hitler Wannabe! Would Grandpa Vader have gotten medieval on a computer

after some poor schmo delivers some bad news? No, Grandpa Vader would have gotten medieval on the poor schmo delivering the bad news!

Just how stupid is this cynical cash grab? Luke has checked out (in more ways than one) because one of his pupils turned on him! Leia knows the exact moment Han buys it, yet she needs a map to find Luke! It's never explained how the First Order arose from the ashes of the Empire or how Butt-Ugly Hologram lured Junior to The Dark Side or how the Cankles who runs the Cantina wound up with Luke's light saber or how Junior wound up with Grandpa's helmet or how Han and Chewie wound up on a First Order ship as the Falcon, which just happens to be piloted by Orphan Girl, just happens to be hauled in by a tracking beam. Oh, did I mention the sheer ridiculousness of Orphan Girl doing the Jedi thing better than any Jedi ever? Come back, George Lucas! All is forgiven!

"Stranger Than Fiction" (2006) (review: October 13, 2007)

The wacko novelist whose idea of research is fantasizing about what it would be like to jump off a building. The assistant the publisher sends to make sure the wacko novelist meets her deadline (only in the movies are novelists wacko and have deadlines). The obsessive-compulsive bureaucrat who owns a wristwatch that has a mind of its own! The Bohemian capitalist who thinks 9/11 would have been avoided had Osama bin Laden been pummeled with her cookies! The literature professor who doesn't know that comedy and tragedy are genres, and is so obsessed with the wacko novelist, he has built his sham career on her nauseating ditty "Little did he realize."

Just when you think this couldn't get any stupider, it does. IRS auditors who never use calculators. Wrecking crews that tear down the wrong building. A stranger who sets his watch four minutes too fast but doesn't tell the obsessive-compulsive bureaucrat who asks for the time, then is at the bus stop the next day just in time to save the brat who cuts in front of rush hour traffic because - you guessed it! - his watch is four minutes too fast (you would think the watch would *know* this and re-set itself, but I digress)! Only good thing I can say about this exercise in obnoxiousness is I saved \$3.99 I would have blown watching it on PPV.

"The Stepford Wives" (2004) (review: December 27, 2004)

One scene in this tripe had me scratching my head. At the party, Walter sneaks off to the basement. Because of the deer-caught-in-the-headlights look on his face, it's obvious he has no idea where he is or what he's doing. Yet he deactivates the microchips, and the women return to normal. We then learn his wife Joanna has not joined the Perpetually Perky because Walter decided against it! Huh? I don't know which is worse: the sheer illogic of the "plot", that Paul Rudnick is an A-List scribe or that the cast agreed to waste their time on this!

Just like Leonardo DiCaprio, no matter how old Matthew Broderick gets, he'll always look 18. Bette Midler was so over the top, I wondered why she wasn't the first to be "Stepfordized". Glenn Close was over the top in the opposite direction.

Oddly, it took this stinker to make me appreciate Nicole Kidman. At first, she looks like Annette Bening channeling Evita Peron. But she works hard to sell the story (such as it is). And she's gorgeous. Tom Cruise, you're an idiot! There, I've said it!

"Sugar" (2008) (review: September 26, 2010)

The film wants so badly for you to root for its hero, it saddles this opus with enough clichés to choke a horse. The upshot is it's their hero who is the ultimate cliché: the arrogant, self-absorbed jerk with the \$1,000,000 arm and the 10¢ head!

When one buddy gets cut, another gets promoted, and a third buddy's progress regulates our man to the bullpen, Sugar jumps the team. That's real mature! Even his mother's attempt to guilt-trip him back to his senses doesn't work. If Sugar doesn't care that his family is now screwed because he decided to screw up, why should we care about him?

Some have opined the film is about how poor minority kids are exploited by rich white guys. But it takes two to tango, and none of these kids have ever been forced to sign up for a shot at the big time. That Sugar and his fellow screw-ups decide to stay in the U.S. after their visas expire renders the filmmakers' screed as pointless as their opus.

"Sugartime" (1995) (TV) (review: January 3, 2006)

From Romeo and Juliet to Jack and Ennis, there have been countless stories about what happens when lovers don't show a little self-restraint. However, those stories manage to make the audience care about the two crazy kids whose actions spell doom for themselves and everyone around them. This is not one of those stories.

The scene at the dinner table convinced me this Romeo and Juliet deserve each other. The set up is obvious: we're supposed side with the lovers by siding against Romeo's kid. Annette (the kid) is a brat, but she a right to be upset. So how does Reverend McGuire's little girl handle the situation? Telling Annette, in so many words, to fuck off!

Bubble-head Phyllis is no prize. But neither is Annette's pop, and not just because he has friends in low places. Sam is a vicious sociopath -- and that's his good quality! I was shocked the movie omitted that while he and Phyllis were canoodling, Sam had Judy Campbell bouncing like a ping-pong ball between himself and JFK!

Then there's how Tony Accardo is depicted. Accardo ruled organized crime longer than any mobster, 50 years. Sam was never the Boss of Chicago's underworld, but merely Accardo's junior partner. To have him do nothing but bitch about "that dame" - and get yelled at by some goombah - is not only inaccurate, but (dare I say it) insulting to Accardo.

As if none of this were bad enough, we jump from "1960" to "8 Months Later" to "7 Years Later" with no points of reference. I don't know which is the bigger crime: Phyllis and her sisters singing the title song off-key repeatedly, or being asked to care for Sam and Phyllis when they could give a rat's ass about anyone but themselves.

"Sullivan's Travels" (1941) (review: October 19, 2005)

Big Shot director John Sullivan may feel so guilty about his outrageous good fortune, he hits the road as a hobo to learn about life. Yet when push comes to shove, he doesn't feel THAT guilty. He doesn't help the guys on the chain gang. He doesn't even make sure the warden gets what's coming to him. It's as though they never existed!

Sullivan, like the progressives of his day and the liberals of today, merely pays lip-service to the suffering of others. And he has no problem with the studio using their suffering to score PR points! When he rejects making his opus for churning out the mindless fluff he hates, he justifies it by saying people need to laugh. What he really means is he likes his cushy existence and doesn't want to screw it up! Preston Sturges's career ultimately fell victim to that mentality. That he got this off the ground is something of a miracle.

"Super Speedway" (1997) (review: September 3, 2002)

It was so painfully obvious that the Andrettis, the Haas team, and the other drivers were acting from a script and not doing a very good job of it, coming across as stiff and unnatural. Witness the scene before the "big race," how every driver is complaining of the problems he's having with his car. Why are they waiting until NOW to bitch?! Was Michael the only driver who had the foresight to do test runs? The only time Mario and Michael were themselves were when they were driving -- the one time they couldn't afford to think about the fact that they were on camera.

Aside from some tidbits on how a F1 car is built, I gleamed no insights whatsoever into how these men think and why they, literally, risk their lives for a living; "because I love it" doesn't cut it. And the car the mechanic gave Mario: are we really expected to believe he wrestled that beauty from the heap of scrap he found in a barn?! Gimme a break!

"Sylvia" (2003) (review: April 28, 2004)

I've never read Sylvia Plath or Ted Hughes and know nothing about them. We learn nothing about Plath other than she was a Fullbright Scholar, her father died when she was 9, and was a Grade-A wack job! We learn even less about Hughes. What was he doing at Cambridge? How did he support himself? I didn't have a clue as to what attracted them to poetry or why they hooked up. This insinuates Plath was something of a groupie, seeking Hughes out because he was a rising star, only to become jealous of his success. No matter. I could have cared less about either of them.

Hughes isn't the monster that, to her admirers, drove Plath to suicide, but just your garden variety jerk. I thought it cruel he visits her, they make love, THEN tells her Assia is pregnant. If he had any decency, he wouldn't have led her to think they were going to reconcile only to lower the boom.

The time between Hughes leaving Plath (I never got the how, when or why, and there is the little matter about Assia being married) and her death drag on forever, which is funny as the movie jumps from 1956 to 1960 to 1962. Plath's problems didn't seem to me insurmountable. Yeah, her husband's left her, she's got two young kids, and she still hasn't gotten the recognition she's convinced she so richly deserves. But as Alvarez tells her, you suck it up and go on. It was disingenuous how she frets to her neighbor about the kids while leaving them alone for hours. How she finally "solved" her "problem" was selfish and cowardly!

I wonder if Gwyneth Paltrow and Kevin Costner have the same acting coach, each speaks with the most-relentless monotone. Daniel Craig is a British Billy Baldwin: they both have this shock of black hair and you can tell they're, like, emoting, by how tightly they purse their lips! I'm sure Blythe Danner was cast because the film makers just couldn't resist the novelty of having Plath's mom played by Paltrow's mom, a move which only proves that talent can and does skip a generation.

"Tadpole" (2000) (review: November 18, 2005)

IMDb poster mwyrabrough thinks those who have a problem with Tadpole don't get it: "Because he is very intelligent, Oscar makes the classic adolescent mistake of overestimating his own maturity...". The problem with that is no adult, no matter how sophisticated (the adults here twist themselves into pretzels to "prove" how "sophisticated" they are) would put up with this obnoxious shit for 5 minutes!

The only thing that rang true is Obnoxious Shit's paranoia about Step-Mom's Gal Pal. But how he tries to stop her is mean, and when she all-too happily drops the bomb, Dad (who is such a wuss, he opens Thanksgiving with an apology to Native Americans) won't confront

them, and Step-Mama reacts with a halfhearted "I'm shocked". As others have noted, a crime was committed, but only in the movies can a 15 year old boy be served at a bar without getting carded, bed an older woman, have other women swoon over him, and French kiss Step-Mom, who tells him: "You're old enough to make your own decisions!" Oy! No wonder Sundance ate it up, critics compared it to Woody Allen, and Miramax picked it up for a whopping \$6 million! Voltaire must be spinning in his grave!

"Thelma & Louise" (1991) (review: July 25, 2003)

I met Callie Khouri at one of those symposiums that, for \$400, you had the "honor" of listening to a bunch of industry big shots tell you what a loser you are. Anyway, after one of these sessions, I asked her about my main beef about *Thelma & Louise*: why did they decide to go to Mexico, which is notoriously misogynist? She said, "They were probably acting out of confusion". Huh? Why were they confused? Why didn't she know? She CREATED them! And why the Southwest? It would have made more sense if it started out in Minnesota, and have our heroines make a run for Canada (which, like Mexico, will not extradite a foreign national if he/she faces the death penalty).

The end is the biggest cop-out! What was the point? That women are oppressed? Sorry, that's up there with "the dog ate my homework". The dirty little secret of the women's movement is that women have participated in their own subjugation for thousands of years. In the end, Khouri had no point, no answers, no hindsight, no foresight, no frame of reference, and was probably acting out of confusion.

"30 for 30: June 17, 1994" (2010) (TV) (review: June 19, 2010)

During the commercial, there was a blurb with director Brett Morgen giving his take on the O.J. Simpson saga. When Morgen mumbled that O.J. ushered in reality TV, I had to laugh. Reality TV has been around since there has been TV: the Army-McCarthy Hearings; the JFK assassination; the Vietnam War; the Apollo missions. Hell, *"The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet"*, a TV family played by a real-life family, had them all beat! Morgen's self-satisfied blubbing only confirmed he has Fruit Loops for brains!

Melding Arnold Palmer's final round at the U.S. Open, the New York Rangers' Stanley Cup parade, Game 5 of the NBA Finals, the World Cup, and Ken Griffey, Jr.'s record-tying home run with *The Juice On the Loose* seemed slapped together by a 5 year old on crack! The how did he/they/we get here montages were as pretentious as they were pointless.

Morgen's conceit of using music and split-screens only underscores his shortcomings. He doesn't provide any perspective or insight, but regurgitates what we have seen ad nauseam.

And would it have killed him to get a clean copy of the O.J./Palmer commercial? How this comb-challenged twit won a Peabody is beyond me!

"This Sporting Life" (1963) (review: April 30, 2022)

"Thanks" to TCM guest programmer Brian Cox, I had the displeasure of watching 2 hours of Richard Harris doing his impersonation of Richard Burton doing his impersonation of Marlon Brando. Bad enough whoever wrote this knew squat about professional sports (no scenes of the players practicing, training, promoting the team, etc.), we're asked to root for a self-absorbed jerk doing his impersonation of Richard Burton doing his impersonation of Marlon Brando. Harris plays a Neanderthal who thinks nothing of abusing his elderly friend yet is a kindly father figure to his widowed landlady's two small children. Speaking of, Neanderthal fancies himself in love with Widowed Landlady, a bitter harpy who wants nothing to do with him even as she sleeps with him. I don't get it, either.

To give you an idea of just how all over the place this is, Neanderthal pours his "heart" out to his teammate about Widowed Landlady, only to lower the boom on her later by telling her that her husband's death wasn't a workplace accident but a suicide, THEN tells her he loves her and needs her! Oy!

He gets the skinny on Widowed Landlady's Hubby from the owner of the team, whom he and Widowed Landlady's Hubby slaved away for in the coal mines. It will probably come as no surprise that Mrs. Team Owner fancies herself in lust with Neanderthal. Now, this is where it lost me: our "hero" isn't without a working brain cell (he won't sign unless he gets £1,000 up front), yet blows the golden opportunity to own Team Owner big-time with the mash note from Mrs. Team Owner. Hell, he could have burned it all down at Team Owner's party, but no! Such jaw-dropping stupidity makes you question your faith in humanity!

After Widowed Landlady tosses him (only thing in this Kitchen Sink Soap Opera which makes any sense!), he and his pricey whip find themselves at a flophouse (this would have been the time for Big-Time Rugby Star to own Team Owner big-time with the mash note from Mrs. Team Owner, but I digress). One night of flophouse life and he is pounding on Widowed Landlady's door, then learns from her neighbor she is in the hospital. The Doctor tells him she has lost the will to live. Being the self-absorbed jerk he is, Neanderthal decides she is dying of a broken heart (you would think her children would be reason enough for her to want to live, but I digress again). Once she and a spider on the wall he punches out buy it, he ditches the Kindly Father Figure routine and blows off her now-orphaned children waiting outside her room. He then breaks into her flat for his "Hey, Stella!" moment. Richard Burton and (dare I say it) Marlon Brando deserve better.

"Tillie's Punctured Romance" (1914) (review: September 4, 2016)

This has a place in history as the being the first feature-length film comedy, the feature-length film debut of Charlie Chaplin, and the film debut of Marie Dressler, who recreated her Broadway role as the title character. After seeing this on TCM, I found a much more serviceable print on YouTube, complete with title cards (the opening credits of the TCM version make a big to-do about how lovingly and meticulously its print was cobbled together from various sources).

Dressler was 45 when she made this -- far-from the spring chicken you'd expect to be cast as the heroine of a romantic comedy. Conversely, Chaplin, who plays the object of her schizophrenic affections, was 25 -- young enough to be her son! But the truly-screwy thing is her performance. I'll never know if Mack Sennett couldn't figure out how to reign her in or assumed this was how Dressler played Tillie on stage, but she comes off as downright-retarded: gesturing wildly, making faces, incognizant of the goings-on around her. It undermines our rooting for "the pride of Yokeltown" as Charlie, who tries to sandbag her into marriage once he learns she is an heiress, moves in for the proverbial kill.

Charlie's on-again/off-again romance with his equally-scheming gal pal Mabel Normand seems to depend upon how much cash he can swindle at any given moment. And the moment he lands Tillie, who is now seriously-in-the-money, thanks to her uncle's unfortunate mishap on Mount Baldy, he and Mable are back on with a vengeance. When Tillie catches Charlie and Mable smooching up a storm, she chases him through her mansion with her trusty 6-shooter (fortunately for him, she isn't exactly a crack shot) just as the presumed-dead Uncle shows up to ruin the fun. It climaxes with the Keystone Cops chasing Tillie as she chases Charlie and Mable. Suddenly, Tillie and Mable realize that each can do way-better than Charlie, and go all Girl-Power as he is hauled away.

At the party sequence, look for what has to be the first openly-homosexual character in film: a male guest who is the very definition of FLAMING!

"TMNT" (2007) (review: August 19, 2007)

Bad enough they couldn't stop at *"The Secret of the Ooze"* and just HAD to make *"Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III"*! I was willing to forgive until I saw this. Who decided this bozo Kevin Munroe had the nun-chucks to revive the franchise? Animation that rips-off *"The Incredibles"* and *"Shrek"*! Not using the voices from the series! Turning April into a Z-Grade Lara Croft, and re-hooking her up with Casey! Worse, Munroe's Turtles are obnoxious, undisciplined brats, and all Splinter does is wait for his favorite TV show to come on! Oh, and one silly question: if the monsters have been wreaking havoc for 3,000 years, why hasn't anyone known about it until now?

As this turkey arrived DOA, the idea of Donatello as a tech consultant and Michelangelo doing kids' parties in a turtle outfit obviously came from someone with a working brain cell. Come back, Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, all is forgiven!

"Tonari no Totoro" (1988) (review: August 2, 2002)

"Totoro" is not like American cartoons. It takes its time and there are gaps when nothing happens. But if you hang in there, you and your munchkin will be rewarded with a sweet, smart movie about the need for family. I was impressed at how dead-on the dynamics of sibling relations were portrayed, especially in light of what the girls are dealing with. They're the kind of well-rounded characters you simply won't find in Western cartoons. My friend's 5 year old, convinced he would hate this, was captivated from start to finish. If that's not a ringing endorsement, I don't know what is.

"Too Rich: The Secret Life of Doris Duke" (1999) (TV) (review: June 26, 2002)

I didn't know a lot about Doris Duke, except for her friendship with those vipers, Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos. Then, after watching the mini, I came across stuff about her on the web. To say it took liberties is being kind.

While it established Duke's need to do something meaningful, she helped care for soldiers in Egypt, not England. And it completely ignored her philanthropy, how she gave nearly \$400 million, often anonymously, and her deep involvement with Duke University. There wasn't even so much as a coda about The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

Duke did have a torrid affair with Duke Kahanamoku, but he did not father her child, Arden, who died 24 hours after she was born; her first husband did. She also had flings with George Patton, and Errol Flynn (who didn't?), neither of whom are portrayed.

How she took a \$30 million inheritance and parlayed it into a \$1.2 billion fortune would have been a great primer for all us would-be moguls, but the mini ignored this, too. It also ignored an incident that should have landed her in jail. On October 7, 1966, Duke and her interior decorator Eduardo Tirella were leaving her estate, Rough Point. As he opened its gates, she "accidentally" gunned the car, dragged him across the street, then crushed him against a tree. The police ruled it an "unfortunate accident". The Chief of Police resigned in disgrace amid the furor in the wake of the "investigation", and Duke paid Tirella's family a hefty sum.

All the film makers seemed interested in was the power struggle to control a now-dying Duke, and the rumor her father was a Swedish butler. Fine, but get the facts straight.

"Town & Country" (2001) (review: December 30, 2007)

Who knew a \$90 million budget qualified as an independent film? The roads and schools and hospitals and fresh water systems \$90 million could have built in some third-world country, these bozos decided that \$90 million would be better spent on this stinker!

The characters are selfish or self-absorbed or sex-crazed or just plain nuts! And like the rotten cherry on top, Charlton Heston plays a gun-toting wacko who has a less-than healthy relationship with his "Buttons".

For a film supposedly about the consequences of infidelity, it wimps out. Alex tells Porter she's preggers, then cheerfully reveals he isn't the daddy. Such jaw-dropping stupidity makes you question your faith in humanity.

No doubt, Warren Beatty snared ex-paramours Diane Keaton and Goldie Hawn so his raving id could justify hooking up with women young enough to be his granddaughters, then hired Peter Chelsom to direct because Alan Smithee was unavailable. With "friends" like Shirley's baby bro, you don't need enemies!

"Undateable" (2014) (TV) (review: May 29, 2014)

The first scene of this "comedy" has a slacker trying to prevent what we're led to believe to be a girl from leaving their rental. Turns out the girl is a man (I think). So Slacker is gay, right? Oh, no, he assures his sister, he likes girls, he really, really likes girls, and Shannon (the roomie) left because he is getting married to a girl (I think). It is not only insulting but dishonest. The no-talents behind this dud play chicken, then blink.

Then the one-dimensional characters that are an insult to one-dimensional characters are rolled out: the Nerd, the Meterosexual, the Black Gay Guy, and the White Wanna-Be Gay Guy. For reasons lost to me, these losers are convinced Slacker is the only human capable of turning them into Romeos. I do not know which was more disturbing: the racial jokes about the bar owned by Meterosexual or Meterosexual wanting to hook-up with his employee, a girl (I think). Will she lose her job if she refuses him or tells him to stop his advances when he isn't simulating strangulating her? I have a better title for this dreck: *"Unwatchable"*.

"V for Vendetta" (2005) (review: March 17, 2006)

Those who dissed Alan Moore as a sour-puss for refusing to give his OK to *"V for Vendetta"* should read what he told MTV: "(My comic) has been turned into a Bush-era parable by people too timid to set a political satire in their own country... (The film) is a thwarted and frustrated and largely impotent American liberal fantasy of someone with American liberal

values standing up against a state run by neo-conservatives - which is not what '*V for Vendetta*' was about".

I was reminded of the bozos who flood the blogs with cries of Impeach Bush, as if actually booting him will make the world safe for Bic Macs again. Impeach Bush, and guess who gets to be Prez? Elmer Fudd Cheney! In other words, V isn't well thought out. Stuffed like a turkey with pretentious diatribes only Harold Pinter could love, it is a boring exercise in didactic propaganda meant to appeal to the narcissistic fantasies of teenage boys, complete with the hot babe falling for the nerd! It wants us to believe we are living in a totalitarian regime. The irony that no totalitarian regime would allow "V" to be made is lost on those who made it. Go to Cuba and make a movie that takes potshots at Papa Fidel and see how far you get!

All I got out of this was Natalie Portman wants to be Joan of Arc when she grows up, the Wachowskis know how to blow things up real good, and \$50 million doesn't go as far as it used to! Too bad "V" doesn't share the romanticism of Larry Wachowski, who left his wife for a dominatrix and now lives as preoperative transsexual Laurencia! THAT is a movie just begging to be made!

"Vanilla Sky" (2001) (review: October 15, 2005)

Cameron Crowe wants you to think *"Vanilla Sky"* is a remake of *"Abre Los Ojos"*, but don't believe it! It's a coked-up version of that *"Seinfeld"* episode where Jerry meets his soul mate, and finally realizes why all his prior relationships have failed: "I've been waiting for ME to come along!"

David is a selfish prick who demeans the giving Julie as a "fuck buddy". As if the gods hear his prayers, selfish prick Sophia crashes his party. Jabbing him with put-downs until he's punch-drunk with lust, they hit the sack and she coos: "Do you love me? I mean really love me. Because if you don't, I'll just have to kill you". Oh, you crazy kids!

Because this is Crowe, our hero is obliged to tell us who his favorite Beatle is. This is because Paul McCartney wrote the theme, the best thing Sir Mop Top has cranked out in ages. In a display of shameless narcissism, Tom Cruise does *"English Patient"*-Lite hoping critics will give him brownie points for "taking risks". Among the face masks he carts around like Linus's security blanket is a lavender one! Is Crowe poking fun at his producer's I'm Not Gay lawsuits he tosses around like confetti?

And I don't know about you, but Penélope Cruz morphing into Cameron Díaz is definitely NOT my idea of a nightmare!

"Victoria" (2016–2019) (TV) (January 29, 2018)

I'm writing this is because of the characters of Paget and Drummond. Yes, there actually was an Alfred Paget and an Edward Drummond, but NO, neither man identified as homosexual. The real Drummond (whose family owned Drummonds, banker to Victoria's grandfather, King George III) was 23 years OLDER than the real Paget, and died three years BEFORE Paget came to court as an equerry in 1846! In short, there is no evidence Paget and Drummond ever met! That they are presented here as hunky 20-somethings with the hots for each other for no other reason than to push an agenda is a vile insult to them and to their families!

While there is a "point" to making Paget and Drummond hunky 20-somethings with the hots for each other, there is NO point in vilifying Victoria's and Albert's uncle, Leopold. The real Leopold was a tremendous help to his niece and nephew. Here, he is a scheming scumbag who undermines Victoria at every turn, then, because he can, hints to Albert that he is Albert's father. There is no evidence Leopold's relationship with Albert's mother was anything but platonic, and there is no point in making him the heavy.

The real Victoria and Albert were progressive-conservatives, determined to drag the United Kingdom kicking and screaming into the 19th century. But here, they are SO put upon! Neither takes any interest in the issues or the welfare of the people unless forced to; it's a wonder either notices that they have children, much less, give them the time of day!

But the real crime *"Victoria"* commits is that it is shallow, boring, silly, poorly written, and annoying. If you're looking for anything resembling historical accuracy, look elsewhere!

"La Vie en Rose" (2007) (review: January 7, 2008)

This Édith Piaf is a cold, heartless bitch, unworthy of any sympathy! She lost me when she told her begging mother to "Eat shit!" Yeah, Mom abandoned her, but that was downright vicious. So when Pop (looking like Fidel Castro) lets his baby get smacked around and hauled away by Asso, I cheered!

Little Édith befriended by two whores in Grandma's brothel, only to be torn away from them in a reenactment of the Elián González raid? Not even Spielberg is that shameless!

Édith as an adult looks like a crack whore, then Madonna in *Like a Prayer*, then a drag queen doing Judy Garland as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

Édith is never seen in a recording studio, yet a montage shows her records being pressed. Pretty neat trick!

Édith's movie career is ignored.

Édith's association with Communists and that she performed for the Nazis are ignored.

Édith whines Americans don't "get her", yet they give her a standing ovation. Guess the Frenchies who gave her standing ovations didn't "get her", either.

Édith in awe of fellow self-absorbed chanteuse Marlene Dietrich? Please!

Marcel Cerdan beat Tony Zale to win the Middleweight Title on September 21, 1948; the caption which tells us he and Édith are in the United States for the fight says "1947".

The fight scene has Cerdan towering over Zale. In fact, they were the same height (5'8") and roughly the same weight (154 lbs.).

Édith's wailing and wailing and WAILING over Cerdan's death is the campiest moment since the "no more wire hangers, ever!" bit in *"Mommie Dearest"*.

"Non, je ne regrette rien" was written in 1956, yet Édith didn't know of it until it was played for her 4 years later? Yeah, right!

"Le Violon Rouge" (1998) (review: November 19, 2005)

This is as gorgeous and as lame-brained as a Jerry Bruckheimer blockbuster. But hey, if we were following logic, the film makers wouldn't have an excuse to blow millions of other peoples' money!

Forget figuring out how the violin found its way to the monastery, I expected the teacher to take it after he learned it had been buried with his Mozart wanna-be (all the work he put into the kid for nothing). Instead, in a truly laughable montage, some gypsies rob the grave, fiddle with the violin, then sail to England, where it's given it to a Mick Jagger wanna-be in exchange for being allowed to stay on his lands.

Our hero next pops up on a ship with a destitute Chinese seafarer. I didn't bother to wonder how a destitute Chinese seafarer wound up with this priceless object for fear what was left of my brain cells would explode! So do the Western music-hating Maoists toss the violin into a bonfire when they find it at the teacher's house? Heck no, they hold onto it for 30 years, then consign it to a Montréal auction house! That's when Mr. Bad Ass Himself, Samuel L. Jackson, decides it will make a really neat present for his kid!

So what does the curator do when she realizes the violin up for bids isn't THE violin?
Nothing! Here's hoping she and everyone else (especially Mr. Bad Ass Himself) can land jobs at Walmart after the winner realizes he got hosed!

"Waking Up Wally: The Walter Gretzky Story" (2005) (TV) (review: May 14, 2011)

If there was a story about finding the strength to overcome adversity, I couldn't find it. What I found instead was a cynical Made-for-TV Hell cash grab made to cash in on a certain family member's celebrity.

The guy playing Walter didn't look more than 15 years older than the guy playing Wayne, and neither of them looked remotely like Walter or Wayne. The woman playing Phyllis looked like Sarah Palin. The guy playing the therapist looked like he just dropped out of junior high. The guy playing Walter's buddy looked like a dumpy Clive Owen. At least the guy playing the doctor looked like a doctor.

Here, Wayne and his brothers don't have lives, and their sister is well on her way to becoming Canada's most famous spinster when Walter's therapist begins to hit on her. Yeah, they did get married, but it was more than a bit icky.

Since the therapist is so inept at his job he makes lists, he must have written the following for Walter to do; there is simply no other possible explanation:

Have flashbacks about teaching your boy to play hockey while on the way to the hospital.

Visit your parents' graves, then flip out like Frankenstein on an acid trip while having flashbacks about feeding chickens with your mother.

Flip out like Frankenstein on an acid trip as you watch your kids play hockey.

Flip out like Frankenstein on an acid trip when your wife serves you lunch.

Flip out like Frankenstein on an acid trip as you chase a figment of your imagination before it falls through the ice and drowns.

Babble in Ukrainian like Frankenstein on an acid trip.

Go into deer-caught-in-the-headlights mode at the drop of a hat.

Crawl on your hands and knees across a skating rink.

Get dissed by the coach of a pee-wee hockey team.

Drive your wife and daughter up the wall.

Phyllis and Kim were utterly-unlikable as they had something resembling personalities. The others could have been played by cardboard cut outs and no one would have noticed.

"Welcome to Sweden" (2014) (TV) (review: July 18, 2014)

While some accuse Amy Poehler of having talent, I doubt the same charge will be leveled at her brother, who quit his law practice to become a comic. I am not making that up.

Greg Poehler's exploits in Sweden, where he moved to in 2006 with his Swedish wife, are the basis of this one-joke premise. It may have made for a cute movie, the type of fluff which is the stock-in-trade of Lasse Hallström, whose wife, Lena Olin, plays the mother of Poehler's girlfriend. But as a series, there is no there there.

More annoying than the clichés Poehler passes off as characters is his depiction of Sweden as the Good Country and America as the Bad Country. An Ugly American moment opens the first scene of the episode I saw: an Iranian man rails at America as he introduces himself in a Swedish language class. He later pushes his wife in a wheelchair, who lost her leg in an American attack. Of course, Poehler is too much of a chickenshit to admit to the man that he's an American, forget telling him we are not his enemy. That it never occurred to Poehler no one in the class except him would know English, much less, speak it fluently, underscores why *"Welcome to Sweden"* is as lame-brained as a Lasse Hallström movie. No there there.

"We're the Millers" (2013) (review: June 27, 2014)

When I watch dreck starring actors who don't need the paycheck, I question their sanity. When said dreck rakes in over \$150,000,000, I really question the sanity of the people who ponied \$11 a ticket to waste two hours of their lives.

I don't know much, but I do know two things: strippers make beaucoup bucks; and the Mexican Cartels don't let Pablo Escobar Wanna-Be's play in their sandbox. The stripper (Jennifer Aniston) agrees to pose as the wife of a two-bit pot dealer (Jason Sudeikis) after she is locked out of her place for failure to pay rent. After proving what a dumb-ass he is by stashing his stash and ill-gotten booty in a foot stool, Two-Bit Pot Dealer is now in deep shit to his Richer-Than-God Supplier (Ed Helms). However, if Two-Bit Pot Dealer goes to Mexico to get some weed, Richer-Than-God Supplier will pay him \$100,000. In addition to the Stripper, Two-Bit Pot Dealer recruits a young man who is too dumb to realize he has been abandoned by his mother, and a homeless girl who claims not to be homeless to pose as his children; an all-American family, he reasons, is the perfect cover to sneak two tons of weed

across the border in an RV! That's when Pablo Escobar Wanna-Be gets on their ass because, as it turns out, Richer-Than-God Supplier's weed belongs to Pablo Escobar Wanna-Be.

There are the obligatory pot shots at those who would not be down with this dreck in the form of the God-fearing Fitzgeralds. He is a clueless narco, she is a sex-starved whack job, and their daughter is tighter than a nun's you-know-what. Thanks to Clueless Narco, our heroes wind up in Witness Protection with a new name, hence the title. The final shot is of a line of pot plants just "watered" by Two-Bit Pot Dealer. Stupid is as stupid does.

"What Dreams May Come" (1998) (review: August 8, 2003)

I've heard that Ron Bass has screenwriting down to a "science", working on as many as 6 scripts at once. Judging by this mess, it seems true. I never had any emotional investment because I never got to know anyone. If you're going to make a film on something profound, we MUST connect to the characters, otherwise, what's the point?

Chris and Annie are much more concerned with each other than with their children. Yet, notice how easily he "lets go" when she visits his grave (and she never visits the kids' graves)? And what on what planet does a doctor recommend a patient take up smoking?!

Heaven and Hell are nothing as described in the Bible. That God is dismissed with a vague "He's up there" should send Christians into a collective tizzy! And if Time no longer exists, why is there Day and Night? This is life-affirming in the most deadly, calculating way.

"Wilde" (1997) (review: December 4, 2005)

The film seeks to make Oscar Wilde a revolutionary, but we're not given any insight as to what made him tick. No mention of the woman (yes, woman!) he fell in love with who left him for Bram Stoker. No mention of his role in the aesthetic and decadent movements and his socialist writings. Or his drunken rampages. While he was, as shown, well-received in the rough-and-tumble Leadville during his tour (it doesn't mention he was in America to repair his wilde-man rep and counter the backlash against aestheticism), it omits that he was ripped by the upper-crust in San Francisco, of all places!

Worse, this reeks of ugly stereotypes. I got little feel for how big Wilde was (George Bernard Shaw was a fan) and how truly-spectacular his downfall was. Nor does it show him conflicted in the least. You get the impression he decided he was a homosexual, married because it was expected, and expected the Mrs. to put up with his shenanigans. The film alters the key episode of his life. Douglas was arrested (not shown) after Bosie egged Oscar to charge the old man with libel (as shown). Since our hero admitted to perjuring himself (also not shown), it's understandable why it was revised to make Wilde the ultimate poster boy for "the love

that dare not speak its name". How ironic that Oscar's great love (beside himself) converted to Catholicism, married, and spent the rest of his life attempting to bring gays to "justice".

"Wildlife" (2018) (review: June 20, 2019)

Stylish and twice as boring, I didn't buy Carey Mulligan and Jake Gyllenhaal as a married couple, much less, as parents. Ed Oxenbouldt as son was one, big 1,000 yard stare! It's never explained why the family moved to Montana or how they can afford to rent a house on Dad's meager \$40 a week salary as a glorified gofer at the country club. Dad deciding that he needs to abandon his family to play Firefighter comes out of absolutely nowhere. Likewise, Mom pulling Junior out of school for the day to drive up to the fire WITHOUT tracking Dad down made even-less sense. Instead of setting an example for her boy on how to be strong, independent, and self-reliant, the now-"liberated" Mom throws herself at the slovenly Town Big Shot, and recruits Junior to help her reel him in in a scene which borders on incestuous! You've Come a Long Way, Baby!

Actor Paul Dano (in his directorial debut) does us no favors by chucking key points in the novel (Dad was fired because a club member accused him to stealing his wallet, sending Dad into a breakdown). Worse, Junior's budding relationship with a classmate goes nowhere. So, what does Dad do when he learns Mom has been doing the "cha-cha-cha" with the slovenly Town Big Shot? He pours gasoline on the porch, and sets it on fire (I'm sure the Landlord really "appreciated" THAT)! No wonder the critics were hugging themselves, giving Dano props for making a film about stupid, selfish, immature, pathetic trash right-thinking people would avoid like the plague! He ought to stick to doing the one, big 1,000 yard stare!

"Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?" (1957) (review: August 12, 2006)

Based on the Broadway play of the same name, Frank Tashlin did a great job "opening" it up so it doesn't have that "stage" feel (the opening credits are a hoot!). However, the tone is uneven and Rita Marlowe had me scratching my head. She is this Sex Bomb who turns men into jelly with her oh-so kissable lips, but we never see a single male swoon over her! And Rock never wonders why his niece has pictures of Rita plastered all over her room instead of Elvis or Ricky Nelson, or even Pat Boone.

Rita complains about how she finds these lunks and turns them into stars, only to have them leave her. Little wonder, as Jayne Mansfield give us no clue how this walking squeak-box has the power to make or break the studio janitor! She Goes Gotham to make her latest "protégé" jealous. But he not only does not take the bait, he predicts she'll crawl back to him! As it turns out, she never loved him! What was the point?

Which leads to my main beef: Rock swears to Jenny he loves her, yet clearly enjoys the perks that come with being Lover Doll. He becomes such a jerk, the level-headed Jenny getting worked up over Rita makes zero sense! And the "lesson" we're supposed to learn - success is what makes you happy - comes across as totally insincere.

"Wishful Drinking" (2010) (TV) (review: December 22, 2010)

Bitch, bitch, bitch! That's all Carrie Fisher does! Bitch about her father leaving her mother. Bitch about her mother's ex-husbands. Bitch about her father's ex-wives. Bitch about her own ex-husband. Bitch about being a cog in the most lucrative franchise in movie history. Bitch about the father of her daughter leaving her for a man. After 90 minutes of this self-absorbed child of Hollywood royalty bitch, who could blame him?

I do not understand what Fisher has to bitch about. She has a charmed life and millions in the bank. So her father left her mother. Earth to Carrie: men walk out on their families all the time -- what makes yours so damn special?! It is only too-obvious her "problems" are of her own making. Her pathetic bid for approval may make for an interesting doctoral thesis on narcissism, but it makes for lousy television.

"The Wizard of Oz" (1939) (review: March 15, 2014)

I was prompted to take a stroll down the Yellow Brick Road for the gazillionth time after some obnoxious shit at *The Daily Beast* mocked some woman's opinion that *"Frozen"*, this year's Oscar winner for Animated Film, is an endorsement of the LGBTQ agenda. Now, you know why only obnoxious shits work for *The Daily Beast*. But it had me wondering if there actually is a "gay" kids film. And the winner is...

Think about it. Miss Gulch is a stone-cold dyke (Zeke calls her "a heifer"). Ditto The Wicked Witch of the West. The farmhands never hint at being attracted to girls. The Strawman and the Tin Man are asexual. God only knows how Glinda or the Wizard get their jollies. Even Dorothy has her own butch moment when she bitch-slaps the Lion. Only the Munchkins (bless them!) are into what Nature intended, although the sight of three grown male midgets offering a teenage girl a lollipop is more than a bit creepy.

The crux of the story is not Dorothy's quest to return home, but the Lion's struggle with his sexuality. He sings: "I'm afraid there's no denyin' / I'm just a dandelion / A fate I don't deserve". He reasons that if he can scare the shit out of some poor, helpless creature, it will prove that he is worthy of the mucho-macho title King of the Forest. It is only after he helps rescue Dorothy that he realizes bravery and sexual identity are mutually-exclusive and he can now begin to accept that he is fruitier than Carmen Miranda's hat.

Fortunately, all of this sailed over the heads of generations of children. If I have just obliterated your childhood, my apologies.

"Wo Hu Cang Long" (2000) (review: September 7, 2003)

A legendary sword is stolen by a spoiled brat, and retrieved by its guardians, who try to put said brat on the path of righteousness. That's it! The fact the brat is a girl is what's supposed to make us all go "whoa!" And as if the writers knew how trite that was, they torture us with an incredibly long flashback sequence that's even more boring than the main story!

That critics overlooked the weak story line and God-awful Pokémon dialog strikes me as patronizing and more than a bit racist. Were this made by Americans, it would have been slammed big time! And it sure as heck wouldn't have bagged 4 Oscars!

It was obvious the actors were on wires. The fights get tiresome real fast. And the "love story?" As the saying goes, shit or get off the pot! Were it a short, *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* would have been killer! But as a film, it's an exercise in tedium.

"The Wolf of Wall Street" (2013) (review: September 11, 2016)

Based on the wild tales spun by con artist Jordan Belfort, this is an NC-17 remake of *"Catch Me If You Can"*, another film based on the wild tales spun by another con artist, Frank Abagnale, Jr. As Belfort and Abagnale were both played by Leonardo DiCaprio, I'm surprised no one has made the connection.

No one in this profane Caligula peep show is likable. Even the most-sympathetic character, the first Mrs. Belfort, is a money-whore who wants her worse-half to stop wasting his time on Joe Schmo and go Captain Ahab on the richer-than-God Moby Dicks. And after Belfort has his Come-to-Jesus moment, he's the same asshole he's always been. What was the point?

Belfort began his misadventures when he was 25 after the august Wall Street firm he worked at fell victim to Black Monday, but there isn't the slightest attempt to make the 38 year-old DiCaprio look 25. Even-more laughably-miscast is Matthew McConaughey as our hero's mentor at said august Wall Street firm. In one of most truly-bizarre scenes you will ever see, McConaughey and DiCaprio pound their chests while downing Martinis and grunt like a pair of retarded King Kongs.

Then there is the butler, who is fired after the second Mrs. Belfort walks in on him and his pals getting jiggy with it. Belfort, repulsed by the very idea of two (or more) men getting jiggy with it on his pricey sofa, demands Butler tells him which one of the pals getting jiggy with made off with Belfort's \$50,000. Moments after Butler pulls the "You Hate Me Because I'm

Gay" Card, the one character you'd least expect beats him to a bloody pulp, then, joined by his partners in crime, holds Butler upside-down over the railing by the ankles, threatening to turn him into a puddle of flesh unless he fesses up! I bring this up because the actor playing the butler bears an uncanny resemblance to David Geffin, who came out several years ago after dating a string of women, including Cher. Geffin is a business partner of Steven Spielberg, who is a bosom buddy of the film's director, Martin Scorsese. Was this butler storyline an inside jab at Geffin? Seemed like it to me.

Brokers doing prostitutes. Belfort doing anything. Everyone snorting mountains of coke and popping crate-loads of ludes. Belfort's mad dash across the Mediterranean in a yacht to retrieve his ill-gotten booty from a Swiss bank, only to be thwarted by monster waves borrowed from *"The Perfect Storm"*. A strung-out Belfort crawling to his Lamborghini (a GREAT bit of physicality by DiCaprio). I doubt half of this is true. I also doubt anyone involved in this grotesque ode to greed and gluttony cares.

"Wonder Woman" (2017) (review: March 17, 2018)

Having seen this several times, I have come to the conclusion that the reviewers praising this 141-minute commercial for hair conditioner were bought off! That this ungodly mess passing itself off as the savior of the struggling DCEU franchise takes liberties is an understatement. First, Zeus did NOT create humans; Prometheus did. Second, Zeus gave Ares the boot because Zeus hated his guts! We are told Zeus created Themyscira with his dying breath, THEN gave life to Diana! Neat trick! We are also told Zeus gave the Amazons a sword dubbed the "God Killer", which Ares turns into rubble!

This is why you DO NOT mess with the original origin story!

If you read *All-Star Comics #8* (Wonder Woman's debut), you will learn Themyscira has no protective bubble; it was undiscovered until Steve crash-landed when his plane ran out of fuel as he pursued a Nazi. As to how Diana (and her hair-conditioned locks) knows how to deflect bullets with her bracelets: the Amazons had guns. No use wondering why the hacks behind this mess make them play with bows and arrows and swords. They don't bother to explain what "Wonder Woman" is (no, NOT Diana and her hair-conditioned locks) nor has a single character SAY the words "Wonder Woman" -- odd for a movie titled *"Wonder Woman"*!

This is why you DO NOT mess with the original origin story!

Forget wondering why Diana (and her hair-conditioned locks) works at The Louvre or what she does there (or how The Louvre managed to score a work visa for a non-European!), I want to know who the "genius" was who decided to move the setting from World War II America to World War I Europe? This not only negates the whole point of Wonder Woman,

these "geniuses" cross themselves up big time! They have Steve work for British Intelligence, and Darnell, head of American Intelligence in the comics, as a British Colonel who yaps about the armistice as his boss callously sends young men off to their deaths. Diana tells Steve the Amazons are duty-bound to keep Ares in check, yet they have NO idea the war is raging. Huh? And the German destroyer penetrates Themyscira's bubble, but DOES NOT blast Themyscira to bits? HUH?!

This is why you DO NOT mess with the original origin story!

Bad enough Steve's "tres amigos" (the shell-shocked Scottish drunk; the noble Native American; the charming Arab con-artist) are insulting clichés, what do they do when their ammo runs out and the Krauts are about to turn them into Swiss cheese? Get in, group hug! I am NOT making that up! Worse, Shell-Shocked Scottish Drunk is cruelly denied his "redemption moment" after he chokes, "obliging" Diana to take out the sniper picking off the villagers (and the church steeple he's holed up in), then bad-mouths Shell-Shocked Scottish Drunk to Charming Arab Con Artist as a shooter who can't shoot!

This is why you DO NOT mess with the original origin story!

Hippolyta yaps about "the more (Diana) knows, the sooner (Ares) will find her". Well, when Ares (aka Morgan) and Diana are introduced, he shows ZERO hint he knows who she is (though he claims later: "When you first arrived, I was going to crush you".) So how did World War II happen without the God of War egging Hitler on after Diana (making like Jesus after making like Joan of Arc in No Man's Land) zaps her "brother" dead? Do these "geniuses" want us to believe that Diana (and her hair-conditioned locks) prevented World War II by killing Ares? That is even-more ludicrous than this hair conditioner commercial!

This is why you DO NOT mess with the original origin story!

Shoehorned into this mess is a "love story". The actors playing Steve (aka teenage Pajama Boy with a Doc Savage complex) and Diana have zero chemistry nor show any signs of being in love, which is why I had to laugh when Diana (and her hair-conditioned locks) goes into Hulk Mode when Steve buys it. As to Steve taking one for the team: why didn't it occur to him or the "tres amigos" to defuse the timer?!

This is why you DO NOT mess with the original origin story!

The real Erich Ludendorff lost a stepson, whom he regarded as his own, in World War I: THE perfect motive for the movie Ludendorff to want to secure victory with The Mother of All Weapons of Mass Destruction AND get the audience to sympathize with him. Instead, the hacks behind this mess turn him into Red Skull's retarded brother.

This is why you DO NOT mess with the original origin story!

Ludendorff's family ought to sue.

"Wonder Woman 1984" (2020) (review: November 1, 2022)

I found myself watching *"Wonder Woman 1984"* on TV the other night when my mother walked in. After I told her the title, she asked "Didn't (Steve) die in '*Wonder Woman*'"? I said yes. Then she said, very confused: "How did he come back?" I explained that Diana discovers a legendary crystal which grants wishes and she wished for Steve to return, and he assumes another man's body. As I was saying this, not only did I realize how utterly lame this was, I could hear the Barbara character yell: "LAME!" inside my head!

It starts with child Diana participating in some bizarro cross between American Ninja Warriors and the Grand National. She's supposed to learn some bizarro lesson about truth after her He-Man aunt stops her from winning because it turns out that Child Diana isn't half as clever as she thinks she is. Flash forward to 1984 Washington D.C., and Adult Diana works at the Smithsonian. Her boss is Oprah Winfrey's twin from 1986, who has just hired someone whose existence she barely acknowledges. This someone is the aforementioned Barbara, Michelle Pfeiffer's *"Batman Returns"* stand-in in a past life. Diana and Barbara meet-cute when Diana helps gather the papers Barbara dropped on the floor as the "gentlemen" around them confirm that chivalry is officially dead. A few days later at lunch, Diana tells her: "You make me laugh". Now, I'm thinking: THIS is getting interesting! But, alas, just when you think Di and Babs are about to give "Girl Power" a whole new meaning, Patty Jenkins (who co-wrote and directed this dumpster fire) shoehorns in the aforementioned Steve Trevor, and snake oil salesman Max Lord, who seems to be on TV 24/7. One of those Fake-It-Til-You-Make-It types, Snake Oil Salesman tries to convince his investor and Jack Palance's stand-in in a past life to keep throwing good money after bad, then Oprah Winfrey's Twin From 1986 gives him a VIP tour of the Smithsonian. In no time, Mad Max zeroes in on the hapless Barbara, swipes the aforementioned crystal from literally behind her back, then proceeds to give "Power Trip" a whole new meaning.

That isn't even the stupidest part of this dumpster fire (and DO NOT get me started on Diana Does the Shopping Mall bit). Our lovebirds swipe a Panavia Tornado, which magically switches from its inline seating configuration to a side-by-side configuration the moment they hop in, and - extra added bonus! - it's fully fueled! On what planet does THAT happen?! Even-more ridiculous is how Steve makes like Tom Cruise while Diana makes like David Copperfield. Did I mention they jet off to Cairo without managing to get shot down over French, German, Italian, Greek, or Egyptian airspace (and, no, the David Copperfield routine would not have prevented the Panavia from being detected by radar)? Did I also mention Diana isn't sacked by Oprah Winfrey's Twin From 1986 for this little stunt upon her return?

It all goes downhill from there, complete with gratuitous Arab-Children-Playing-in-the-Middle-of-the-Road-in-the-Middle-of-Nowhere-Must-be-Saved-from-the-Convoy-of-Tanks-and-Manned-Machine-Guns-Protecting-Crazy-White-American-Out-to-Corner-the-World's-Oil-Supply. Rapidly losing her powers because she was silly enough to wish for Tom Cruise to return, Diana dons the armor of the Amazons' greatest warrior Asteria (who was actually the Greek goddess of nocturnal oracles and shooting stars, but I digress) and has it out with Barbara, now sporting a cheetah suit (don't ask) after their previous meet-cute at The White House (don't ask) as Mad Max goofs before a camera in a top-secret government installation (don't ask) and hands out wishes like candy.

And because no one was clamoring for it, a third Wonder Woman movie is now in the works. I honestly don't know whether to laugh or cry.

"The Wonderful World of Tupperware" (1965) (review: July 21, 2021)

To say that this industrial short gives "cringe" a bad name is being kind. Tupperware wormed its way into popular culture by following the trail blazed by Avon, Fuller Brush, and Stanley Home Products, offering harried housewives their own little side hustle through the joys of multi-level marketing, in this case, Tupperware Parties, where said harried housewives would treat their fellow harried housewives to coffee and cake, then sandbag them with some good old-fashioned high-pressured sales tactics. The Tupperware Party concept was a shameless reinvention of the wheel by former Stanley Schlep Brownie Wise, who was eventually forced out of Tupperware by founder Earl Tupper after her marketing strategies put Tupper's crap on the map and made her a household name. As the film makes clear, Tupperware's honchos (all men) appreciate their Little Suzy Homemakers way-more than they do the drones who crank out their crap. Indeed, the "happy" employees look as though they just want to crawl under a rock and die.

The cringe kicks into high-gear at the 22:00 mark. First, we are treated to a bunch of biddies doing something akin to the hokey-pokey. Then, we are treated to another bunch of biddies doing something akin to the hokey-pokey while wearing Mexican attire, topped off by a biddie putting a tiara on a MAN'S head as he clutches a bouquet of flowers (!) as their fellow biddies clap in delight! We are then whisked to the 1964 Jubilee, where the top Little Suzy Homemakers and their harried hubbies (who looked like refugees from *"The Lawrence Welk Show"*) gather at Tupperware HQ in Florida to be fêted with fabulous gifts (an idea created by Wise, which was nearly dumped by Tupper before he sold the company). The entertainment is provided by singers Anita Bryant and Johnny Desmond. Bryant was the orange juice pitch lady who was pilloried by the media which now celebrates LGBT activists targeting children for warning parents that LGBT activists would target children. Desmond, whom I didn't even know existed, is a Z-Grade Vegas lounge lizard. The closing is straight out of Cult Hell:

attendees parade across a stage with candles as the narrator solemnly intones about Tupperware's values. You have to see it to believe it.

"You Don't Mess with the Zohan" (2008) (review: April 19, 2009)

Surely with his bazillions, Adam Sandler can find a shrink willing to hash over his obsession with butts, gays, penises, defecation, boobs, rednecks, hummus, and Mel Gibson. Then again, maybe not. Judging by how this opens with the hero making like a hipper-than-thou Jesus, butts, gays, penises, defecation, boobs, rednecks, hummus, and Mel Gibson are the least of Sandler's hang-ups!

Has anyone noticed this retard always follows up a serious film with a pile of dung, just like that other noxious bastard child of Lorne Michaels, Will Ferrell, lest either be accused of having actual talent? Maybe we should just be grateful Ferrell hasn't aped Sandler. Yet.