

WELCOME TO UNDERCLASS ISSUE 2

This is the only known remaining page from the 1952 pulp novel "Death Under The Red Screen"

slammed shut behind them. Kincade tightened his grip on the pistol as his eyes began to adjust to the purple light in the subterranean laboratory. Near the entrance a large grey teletype machine was clicking away. Cables led from the teletype to a murky glass dome, roughly two yards in diameter, set upon a stainless steel pedestal. Something inside it twitched and juddered.

"Goddamn, Professor, the stories were true!"

"Yes," sighed Finkhauser, holding a hankerchief to his bleeding nose, "zis is ze home of project Re-genesis. My greatest scientific triumph and my greatest shame"

Edging towards the dome, Kincade noticed the intricate pentagram drawn upon the floor "You godlesss commies and your

black magic mumbo-jumbo," he sneered.

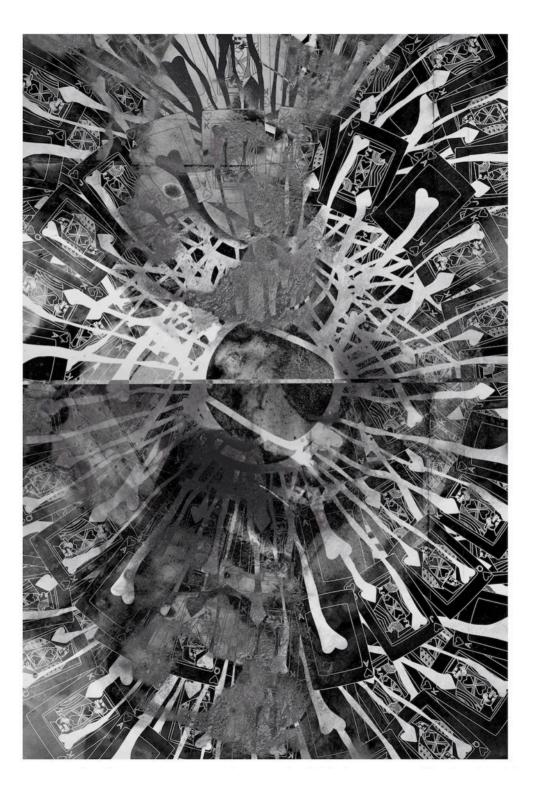
Despite what Eveline had told him that night at the observatory, nothing could have prepared Kincade for what he saw inside the dome. A nightmare, random mess of muscle, sinew, eyes and mouths, it pulsed grotesquely in a puddle of greenish ooze. Emerging from the hideous mound, a pair of malformed arms worked feverishly at some kind of type-writer keyboard. A cluster of the beast's eyes turned to Kincade, blinking moistly, one of the mouths let out a tortured, high pitched scream.

He staggered back, in fear and shock, ears ringing and vision blurred. He leaned against the bulky teletype machine for support,

watching it hammer out its latest demonic proclaimation:

'.....UNDERCLASS...ISSUE...TWO......'

As he levelled his gun at the dome, the beast screamed again, piercing and shrill. He tried with all his might to squeeze the trigger, but his hand was no longer under his control. Sweat poured



THE BROTHERS BLOOM (2008)

DIR. RIAN JOHNSON

"He writes his cons the way dead Russians write novels, with thematic arcs and embedded symbolism and shit."

The Brothers Bloom are Stephen (Mark Ruffalo) and Bloom (Adrien Brody), a pair of con men, famous for the intricacy and detail of their elaborate scams.

In a fantastic opening sequence, we learn that the genesis of their criminal career springs from two sources: firstly the need to make money and secondly, Stephen's desire to provide his younger brother with an escape from their foster home to foster home childhood.

Flash forward to the present day and the brothers are just wrapping up their latest theatrical endeavour with the help of silent assistant and pyrotechnician, Bang Bang (Rinko Kikucho).

Bloom doesn't want to be a con man any more - the years of fake identities and false relationships have left him jaded and upset. He wants 'an unwritten life'.

Dragged back into the game by Stephen, Bloom is talked into engaging in one final con. Engaging a lonely and eccentric heiress named Penelope (Rachel Weisz) in a fake globe-trotting adventure full of intrigue and romance, with a suitable pay-off at the end.

Stephen is obsessed with creating the perfect con-one where everyone involved gets exactly what they want. It is this stated intention which means that Bloom and the audience are kept off balance throughout as to whether everything is on the level.



The film is full of inventive, clever touches and techniques that create a stagey, cinematic and authored atmosphere that fits snugly with the theme of reality versus fiction.

A good example is the impressive one-take, card trick and monologue shot that must have taken an inordinate amount of time to practice and successfully film.

LUC tried to make a film once and it was almost comically difficult to achieve anything more complicated than filming a man walking through a door. To film Rachel Weisz performing a close up card trick and delivering a speech while the moving camera captures the detail of the trick as well as her face reflected in a mirror, seems like a painstaking task for all involved. Perhaps even bordering on masochistic.

The brother's anachronistic, possibly proto-hipsterish style and methods are very close of the world of Wes Anderson. In particular, the bookishness and hand-written plans are reminiscent of Rushmore and The Royal Tenenbaums. If you are a fan of these films then you will probably find a lot to enjoy here

The film has an old-fashioned, classical feel to go along with the retro trappings of the title characters, it looks fantastic (the final moments in the abandoned theatre for example) and feels very real and grounded as it visits locations across Europe.



The Brothers Bloom is at its best when it is bounding along to the rhythm of its brilliant jazzy score - the first third absolutely blitzes past. It gets bogged down a touch in the chicanery of double crosses and meta-cons. Already fairly full, the plot becomes fit to burst when elderly con supremo (and probable child molester) Diamond Dog becomes involved. The tone changes significantly and the film loses it playful charm a touch, before rallying strongly for an emotional and poignant bittersweet ending.

Commercially, it seems that The Brothers Bloom was pretty much a failure and never picked up a wide audience. Proving once again that commerce and wide audiences wouldn't know a good thing if it set up a mining operation and discovered gold in their back garden.

Fortunately, Rian Johnson's next flick, Looper was very well received and has lead to him getting the gig for one of the forthcoming Star Wars sequels. Unfortunately, a Han Solo caper movie with jazz soundtrack is probably too much to ask.

UNDERCLASS WORDSEARCH

THEME: WESTERNS

Find the eight film titles and list them below...

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THE WAY OF THE GUN (2000)

DIR. CHRISTOPHER MCQUARRIE

"The longest distance between two points is a kidnapper and his money."

Despite the modern setting, this could definitely be considered a Western. A Western where instead of clearly defined white hats and black hats everyone's headgear is a subtly different shade of very dark grey.

It features opportunistic outlaws, a wealthy and corrupt antagonist with a private army, a climactic shootout at a Mexican brothel and the two leading men are even given the real names of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. In the interest of full disclosure though I should point out that there are no horses.

Mr Parker & Mr Longbaugh, played respectively by Ryan Phillipe and Benicio del Toro, are two gentlemen who have decided to move away from the mainstream and adopt an alternative, self-sustaining lifestyle. You could equate them to Tom and Barbara from classic 70's sitcom The Good Life, although I don't think Richard Briers ever looked up from feeding his chickens to scream "Shut that cunt's mouth or I'll come over there and fuckstart her head!" over the fence at Jerry and Margot.

Initially our (anti) heroes background and motivation are as mysterious as Ryan Phillipe's wandering accent. They seem to be doing ok living some kind of amoral, hand-to-mouth lifestyle, with sarcastic semen donation a regular part of their routine.

They are on the lookout for a big score and during one visit to the sperm bank, they learn about a young woman being used as the surrogate for an extremely wealthy couple and their thoughts immediately turn to the potential ransom available.

The surrogate in question is Robin (a twitchy Juliette Lewis), carrying a baby on behalf of powerful mobster Hale Chidduck and his scheming trophy wife. Expectant Robin is accompanied everywhere by a couple of deeply humourless yuppie thug bodyguards.

One tense kidnapping and escape later, the criminal duo are on the run with the heavily pregnant Robin and demanding huge sums of money from the colossally unimpressed Chidduck. In addition to tasking the two bodyguards to clean up the whole mess, he also unleashes his veteran fixer, Joe Sarno (James Caan) onto Parker and Longbaughs trail.

The film's finest moments are probably where the experienced, world weary Sarno interacts with either side, attempting to resolve the situation with a minimum of fuss. An outcome which everybody, himself included, knows is definitely not on the cards.

Despite setting up the protagonists as mysterious, amoral characters willing to do anything for money, Parker and Longbaugh are gradually revealed as being somewhat more human than initially painted. Parker is given a bit more explicit background and character than is perhaps necessary, but I guess it would be a big

ask for a thriller with a \$20 million budget to have two completely inhuman and unrepentant leading men.

[As an aside if you want to experience a film which completely commits to having no sympathetic characters at all, have a crack at either The Comedy (2012) or Your Friends & Neighbors (1998)]

To help set up a relatively good/bad axis, the two yuppie thug bodyguards are the real amoral deal - utterly ruthless and pragmatic. During the initial attempted kidnapping, they immediately point their weapons at Robin's pregnant belly, defusing Parker & Longbaugh's plan by going straight for the nuclear option. "Walk away", Robin advises the two criminals, "They don't care about dying, just losing."



The action scenes and gunfights in The Way of the Gun are informed by a level of plausible tension and, to my untrained eye, realism which raises them above the standard boring shootouts or physically improbable action scenes that have become the norm in modern thrillers. A good case in point being the hideously painful reality of what happens when you dive over a low wall without knowing what is on the other side.

Despite their supposedly impoverished status, Parker and Longbaugh have access to absolutely loads and loads of guns and behave as though they are in the army rather than being a couple of opportunistic drifters. There is all sorts of "Clear", "Move" and "Moving" tactical dialogue, which could imply that they have a military background, or have just watched an awful lot of movies.

To go back to 70's sitcoms, the creators of Alf Garnett successfully had it both ways, you could either laugh at the ignorance of his racist outpourings, or just enjoy the unabashed racism. The commitment to depicting realistic gun battles means that you can experience The Way of the Gun as a brilliant, gritty and exciting thriller which shows the painful and final consequences of choosing a violent criminal career, or as a drooling gun nut applauding Benicio del Toro's reloading technique. I'll leave it to you.

THE MAGIC CHRISTIAN (1968)

DIR. JOSEPH MCGRATH

"This is what is commonly known as money. It comes in all sizes colours and denominations - like people. We'll be using quite a bit of it in the next two hours, luckily I have enough for all of us."

The quality of 'All-Star' casts just isn't what it used to be. Take this barking 1969 satire as an example: Peter Sellers and Ringo Starr head up a cast containing the likes of Richard Attenborough, Racquel Welch, Christopher Lee, John Cleese, John Le Mesurier, Spike Milligan, Graham Chapman and that bloke who was the millionaire in Bergerac. Then there are also the fleeting cameo appearances by all sorts of stupidly famous people - the stand out moment being when Roman Polanski, sitting at a bar is serenaded by a glamorous transvestite played by Yul Brynner. They even got Paul McCartney to knock up the theme tune.

Puts the likes of Fast Five boasting 'The Rock and Vin Diesel together at last' into perspective.

The interesting thing is that The Magic Christian isn't some huge epic all-star affair like The Towering Inferno where huge wages were paid to attract all the most famous faces around. This is a rather a sly and chaotic anti-establishment satire - which presumably attracted the stars who wanted to look like they were in on the joke.

With all the subtlety of a manicure carried out using a rusty machete, the film sets out to demonstrate that you can get away with just about anything if you have enough cash

Sellers as Sir Guy Grand adopts a homeless Ringo Starr and sets about subverting just about every establishment, cultural and social norm that he can think of, using large suitcases of cash to smooth things over after he has sabotaged the Boat Race, turned Hamlet into a striptease or gone grouse shooting with heavy artillery. In an



ideal world, this is precisely what preening ego-fest The Secret Millionaire should really be like. "I just wanted to see if you had your price," beams Grand at a traffic warden whom he has just bribed into eating a parking ticket, "most of us do".

The Magic Christian of the title is the most exclusive cruise liner ever built, a cunning trap for the rich and famous - once it sets sail Grand messes with them in any number of ways - most notably involving vampires, naked galley slaves and terrorist attacks.



By the end any slight attempt at tact and guile has gone out of the window, "100 gallons of blood, 200 gallons of urine and 500 cubic feet of animal manure" are all poured into a big vat on the bank of the Thames - a big pile of cash is thrown in and a sign reading 'FREE MONEY HERE' erected.

As the bowler hatted city types dive into the filth, Grand ponders "A bit literal I suppose, if one goes into it". Quite possibly true, but what seemed like over the top satire 40 years ago, now just looks like something that ITV would happily broadcast, complete with Ant & Dec interviewing shit-covered contestants clutching soggy piles of cash.

The Magic Christian was officially adapted by director McGrath and Terry Southern from his own novel - a book which apparently got him the gig writing Dr. Strangelove when Kubrick decided that the madness of nuclear war should be treated with comedy rather than drama. It has been reported that his script was re-tooled by nascent Monty Pythons Cleese and Chapman, it isn't hard to see how this brilliant, underappreciated black comedy is directly connected to their later work.

No one involved seems to be especially proud of The Magic Christian and you won't see it heavily mentioned in the role call of Peter Sellers career or Monty Python's back catalogue. While this utter lack of interest in such a cool, if bizarre, movie is ostensibly a sad state of affairs it is also means that it will remain a proper, cult, under-the-radar classic and will never, ever get ruined by a re-make.

Fate, consider yourself tempted.

BULWORTH (1998)

DIR. WARREN BEATTY by Special Guest Writer Nic Pillai

"You know, there's a lesson here, which is never try to make life or death decisions when you're feeling suicidal."

A senator goes mad on the campaign trail. He starts telling the truth about institutional corruption. And he starts rapping.

Directed by and starring Warren Beatty, Bulworth should be a disastrous vanity project. The signs aren't promising as the opening titles roll over Beatty uncontrollably crying in his senatorial office, watching and rewatching his campaign videos. But even this sequence tips us to the radical nature of the film. Beatty's Senator J. Billington Bulworth just keeps crying - and the scene just keeps running, stretching over an uncomfortable duration. It also establishes the screenplay's most important structural relationship, between American democracy, individual happiness and the mass media.

It is difficult to think of a more savage and prescient satire released by a Hollywood studio in the last thirty years. Beatty found himself with unusual amounts of creative control by exerting leverage on 20th Century Fox, who had backed out of producing Beatty's Dick Tracy. The threat of a lawsuit allowed Beatty to disclose only the scantiest of plot details to Fox in advance, so that studio heads had next to no understanding of what they were financing. This might explain how a film made by a major studio includes its lead character endorsing socialism, public healthcare and the following route to a post-racial America: "Everybody just gotta keep fuckin' everybody til they're all the same colour."



The film's plot is that old chestnut about the suicidal guy who hires a hitman and then changes his mind but can't cancel the order. The twist is that the hit in this case is a United States senator in the pocket of Big Insurance, who has long ago given up on scruples, ideals or marital fidelity. Given that the screenplay was co-written by Aaron Sorkin, it's hardly surprising that situations familiar from politico dramas crop up on cue (the fund-raiser, the church meeting, the televised debate) but all are subverted by the absurdity of the 61-year-old Beatty rapping through them. This spectacle - grotesque, embarrassing, hilarious - is the most memorable of the film and is spotlighted in three key moments: Bulworth flipping off Hollywood investors, Bulworth accusing networks of stealing the airwaves, Bulworth revealing the extent to which the Senate is based on graft.

Obscenity? / I'm a senator / I gotta raise \$10, 000 a day every day I'm in Washington / I ain't getting it in South Central / I'm getting it in Beverley Hills / So I'm voting for them in the Senate they way they want me to / and - and - and I'm sending them my bills / But we got babies in South Central dying as young as they do in Peru.

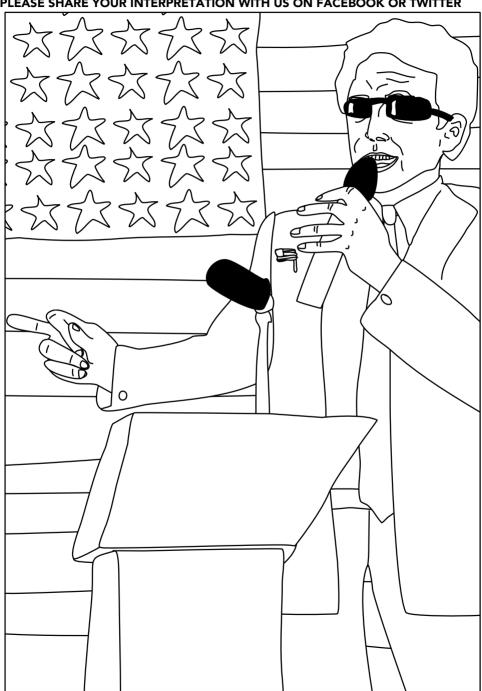
Bulworth has been accused of being a racist film and it is not difficult to see why such an accusation would be levelled. There's something undeniably queasy about watching Beatty performing blackness and lusting after Halle Berry. However, the film is entirely aware of the buttons that it is pressing, skewering Hollywood's propensity to eroticise the black body and to exploit black music in the service of white desire. America's racial hypocrisy is so rarely treated with nuance in the movies that Bulworth's unshrinking address is shocking. In the 1990s, only Spike Lee was ready to speak out in the same way but his films rarely achieve the sophistication or even the fire of Beatty's.

Notwithstanding Beatty's brave and zany lead performance, this is a production packed full of sly scene-stealers. Laurie Metcalf, Jack Warden, Don Cheadle, Paul Sorvino, Wendell Pierce and - before they were in The West Wing - Oliver Platt and Joshua Malina. An excellent hip-hop soundtrack is accompanied by an original score by Ennio Morricone which is always wrong-footing the viewer. Most moving of all is the totemic character of Rastaman the Griot, a raggedy homeless man played by the African-American poet, intellectual and activist Amiri Baraka. By casting Baraka in this role, the film associates itself with a fierce rejection of America's ingrained economic injustice, running through government, the judiciary, the entertainment industry, the news media and which underpins all social interaction. In this astonishing film's final moments, Baraka approaches the camera, breaking the fourth wall and encouraging us to reassess our place, our contribution: "You got to be a spirit. You got to sing. Don't be no ghost."

In 2013, The New York Times reported that President Obama "in private… has talked longingly of 'going Bulworth'". If only.

COLOURING IN: BULWORTH

PLEASE SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION WITH US ON FACEBOOK OR TWITTER



UNDERCLASS: STANDARDISED TEST No.1

PLEASE COMPLETE UNDER STRICT EXAMINATION CONDITIONS

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THE YELLOW SEA (2010)

DIR. NA HONG-JIN

"Toss the heads and feed the rest to the dogs"

The Yellow Sea is an action thriller, with a twisty plot layered with social commentary about immigration and subtext regarding the destructive power of sexual jealousy.

We start in the Yanbian province of China, where Gu-nam, a 'Joseonjok', or ethnically Korean cab driver spends his time playing angry Mah Jong and suffering unpleasant booze-fueled jealous fantasies. The subject of this anguish is his absent wife, away for the last six months earning money in South Korea, funded by a dodgy visa that has left Gu-nam in deep debt to local heavies.

Out of desperation (not helped by constant reminders from everyone that his wife is probably dead, or a prostitute, or both) Gu-nam accepts an offer from gangster Myun, who will wipe out the debt if Gu-nam is prepared to travel to South Korea and carry out the killing of a Seoul-based businessman.

Transported by brutal human traffickers, Gu-nam is given ten days to carry out his task before the return journey. He sets about finding his target, while also attempting to learn what has become of his wife.

In highly plausible and almost mundane detail, the killing is researched and planned. This is the blue collar murder of a complete



stranger, complete with realistic and depressing motivation. Gu-nam never asks why his mark has to die or shows much anxiety or distaste for the task, his poverty and desperation outweighing any humanity or empathy.

The assassination scene is a watershed moment, the film switches from deliberate and slow to crazed and manic. It turns out Gu-nam is a pawn in a more complicated game. Following all manner of blood soaked unpleasantness in a stairwell he is on the run from both the police and the Korean mob.

Learning about Myun's involvement, the Korean gangsters decide that he needs to be silenced. This turns out to be a catastrophically bad idea, as Myun turns out to be the hardest character in cinema history; a deadly and relentless figure who (very

literally) cuts a bloody swathe through the remainder of the film with anything sharp or heavy that comes to hand.

Much of the brutality of recent South Korean cinema has been borne of revenge and retribution. Even the morally murky characters of Oldboy or A Bittersweet Life have a grand, overarching reason to maim and murder their way to catharsis.

Myun has no such concerns. His rampage is driven by financial greed and professional annoyance. Brutal and deadly to the point where he almost becomes a metaphor rather than a person.

Generally speaking, the sort of character that can kill a whole room full of armed thugs, using only a hatchet (and at one point a large bone) are kung fu experts, hyper-trained balletic cyborg assassins or huge muscle-bound bruisers. Despite his capacity for extreme and widespread violent supremacy, Myun is a slightly bored looking man of about 40 with no outstanding physical characteristics or special powers. This relative normality makes him seem even more menacing and nasty.

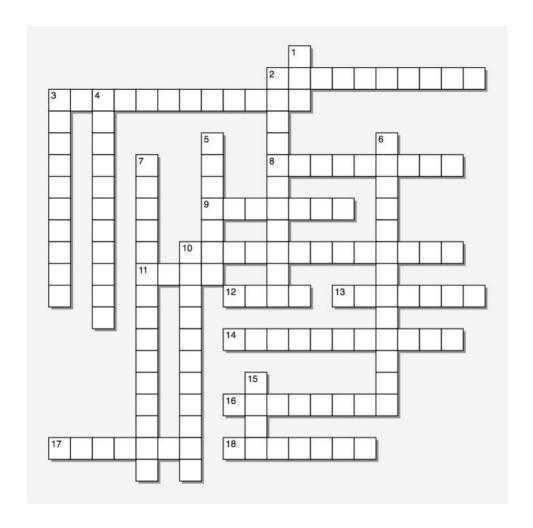


Against the background of two criminal factions hacking lumps out of each other. Gunam somehow evades everyone and begins to find out more about the conspiracy that he is caught up in, as well as beginning to uncover the fate of his wife.

Everything leads to a series of unhappy conclusions for more or less everybody involved, despite the operatic bloodshed of the second half, the movie ends on a more subtle and poetic note. It is an ending that will leave you with plenty of questions regarding exactly what has gone on, who has done what to who and why they have done it.

As with a lot of modern South Korean cinema, at times you are left wondering about the efficacy of the local police force. If they are as bumbling and corrupt as often presented then Seoul must be a pretty tasty place on a Saturday night.

UNDERCLASS CROSSWORD NUMBER 2



The first person to post a picture of a complete and correct crossword to us via twitter or facebook will win some sort of exciting prize.

Across

- 2. Linda Hamilton was the mayor of which explosive landmark?
- 3. Played Nately in Catch-22, better known for singing.
- 8. Jon Stewart's directorial debut, set in Iran
- 9. Harrison Ford got to do some carpentry and milking
- 10. As Tina Turner had to concede, "Who Run Barter Town"?
- 11. Meteorologically named singer, starred in I'm A Cyborg, But Thats OK
- 12. Jodorowsky elephant flick
- 13. "I am serious and don't call me_____"
- 14. In which Orson Welles gives a lecture on clocks
- 16. Did the soundtrack for Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid
- 17. Stunt woman who played herself in Death Proof
- 18. American city where The Untouchables is set?

Down

- 1. a murderous computer closely related to IBM
- 2. Jeremy Irons appeared twice in this Cronenberg flick
- 3. Containing the adventures of Lemmy Caution
- 4. Dustin Hoffman was 30, but playing 21 in which film?
- 5. The truck driver's CB handle in Smokey & The Bandit
- 6. Kid's film in which rabbits tear each other to bits
- 7. Alien bothering subject of a John Grant song
- 10. Anthony Edwards answers an apocalyptic phone call in 1988
- 15. Planet hosting the big battle at the start of Empire Strikes Back

MOVIE TRIVIA TOP TEN #2 ABANDONED SEQUEL IDEAS *

1. Withnail & Us

It is 1980. Recently divorced West End star Marwood gets an offer to star in a big Hollywood film, but is also awarded custody of his 4 unruly and wild children. Unable to find a nanny willing to take on the task of dealing with the kids while he is away, fate intervenes when his old friend and washed up actor Withnail turns up at one of his shows begging for work...

2. The Next Schindler's List

Tortured by dreams of those he was unable to save, an aged Oskar Schindler, makes a new list... of Nazis. Using all of his old black market contacts and shady connections, Schindler tracks down surviving members of the Third Reich and takes them out one by one. The project eventually fell apart due to funding issues but Spielberg went on to make the thematically similar Munich, while Neeson had the script re-tuned by Luc Besson, leading to the Taken trilogy.

3. Gladiator 2: Christ Killer

Russell Crowe and Ridley Scott commissioned a script from Nick Cave which saw Maximus raised from the dead to become a kind of eternal warrior figure. First leading the Christians against the Roman before cropping up in medieval times, the Vietnam war and eventually the Pentagon war room. Considered too mad for the mainstream, the script became an internet cause celebre.

4. Requiem: Deliverance 2

Some years later back in Atlanta, a serial killer is stalking visitors at the Chattahoochee River Park. Lewis phones Ed with evidence that the killer is in fact Bobby, suffering at the hands of a split personality disorder and having taken on the characteristics of the Mountain Men who brutalised him. They engage in a cat and mouse pursuit of their former friend, an experience from which none of them will escape unchanged.

5. Big Mac & Me

The corporate producers of the extended Macdonalds advert 'Mac & Me' were so sure that they had a hit on their hands that they paid Lawrence Kasdan a small fortune to write an outline for a whole series of Mac movies. The first sequel 'Big Mac & Me', would see Eric and Mac going to college together and thwarting a dastardly plot to by the evil 'FKC corporation' to close down a children's hospital in order to use the land for a giant factory farm.

* One of which is not made up, can you spot which one?

6. Cobra & Son

In this early 90's script, brutal cop Cobretti, finds out that he has a 12 year old son as the result of a one night stand with a stripper in his early days on the force. After the stripper is killed in bizarre ritual by a gang of neo-illuminati biker punks, Cobra is reluctantly awarded custody of the kid. After a difficult start, father and son develop a grudging bond, cemented by taking violent revenge against the gang leader. The project was abandoned when it transpired that Chuck Norris' Sidekicks and Burt Reynolds' Cop and a Half were also in production.

7. Top Gun 2

Now an instructor at the famed Top Gun academy, 'Maverick' Pete Mitchell is a bitter alcoholic, driven to the drink by post-traumatic stress and the tension of living in denial of his true sexuality. Driven to distraction by brilliant, yet beguiling young pilot Jed 'Turbo' Longhorn, Maverick's world is thrown into disarray when war breaks out with North Korea and he must team up with Longhorn to lead a crucial mission into figurative and literal unknown territory.

8. 8ight

Worshipped as a living god by the followers of John Doe, the disturbed and twisted former detective David Mills publishes a new set of eight coded commandments intended to bring about the end of of society. Crippled by old age and confined to a wheelchair, Detective Somerset must help a rookie cop decipher Mill's plan as chaotic and horrific acts of terrorism rip the city apart.

9. Jeffrey Lebowski

Despite Maude Lebowski's wishes, the Dude decided that he didn't just want to be the anonymous sperm donor for their son. Following the events of the first film, the Dude gave up bowling, started running and used the money from the sale of his rug to fund a new brand of ready-mixed 'Jeff's White Russians'. On the eve of a crucial IPO for his company and a watershed moment in the court battle for access to his son, he is visited by the ghost of Donny. The apparition tells him that he must travel to Japan to save Walter from the clutches of a doomsday cult, The Starshine Collective, who have based their religion on a series of pulp novels written by the now reincarcerated Jesus Quintana.

10. Mr Pink's Wild Ride

Uptight career criminal, Mr Pink, the only survivor of the diamond heist in Reservoir Dogs is the protagonist of this Tarantino script which runs a bloody thread through his alternate cinematic universe. After fencing a suitcase full of diamonds to associates of Marcellus Wallace, he heads south of the border. Rescued from certain death at The Titty Twister by Clarence and Alabama Worley, he joins their family on a chaotic search for the fabled resting place of Aldo 'The Apache' Raine and his priceless Bowie knife.



SOUTHLAND TALES (2006)

DIR. RICHARD KELLY

"Scientists are saying the future is going to be far more futuristic than they originally predicted."

I remember hearing an interview with a comedian (I think it was Dave Gorman, but please don't hold me to that) some time ago. He was talking about how he had tried to write a novel with a plot involving the discovery of a new colour. Working out how you go about describing or explaining something as intangible as a completely new colour proved to be an insurmountable challenge.

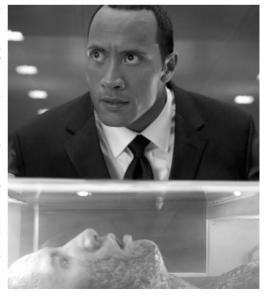
With this cautionary tale in mind I am going to try and explain why Richard Kelly's notoriously esoteric Southland Tales is so deserving of your attention in 1000 words, a fair chunk of which I have already used with that opening paragraph and am continuing to waste with this clunky and overlong sentence.

This is a brilliant film which the world has somehow mistaken for a really terrible one. Personally I lay the blame for this misunderstanding at the door of the world, rather than that of the film. As is often the case, I'm prepared to admit that I may be in the minority although I am slightly at a loss as to why this is.

Southland Tales is set in an America where a nuclear attack on Texas has set off World War 3 in the Middle East. The draft has been re-instituted and the political arena is dominated by extremes as the underground Neo-Marxists battle against the increasingly right-wing government and the patriot act-esque US Ident. In the midst of this, a genius mad scientist (played by Wallace Shawn, channeling Steve Jobs via Caliqula) and his colleagues have pitched up in California with a seemingly perpetual

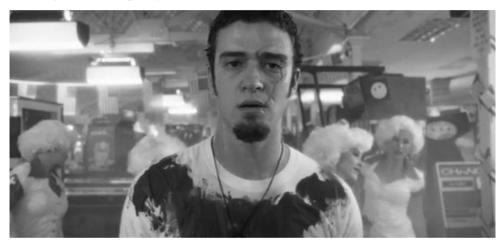
supply of wireless energy using a technology known as 'Fluid Karma'.

Against this background we meet a kidnapped amnesiac action film star and son-in-law of a Republican senator, Boxer Santeros (Dwayne Johnson aka The Rock). He is shacked up with the porn star, Krysta Now (Sarah Michelle Geller aka Buffy) and has written a screenplay with her which foretells the end of the world. Meanwhile identical twins Ronald and Roland Taverner (Seann William Scott aka Stifler) are involved in a neo-marxist scheme to blackmail the republican party by implicating Boxer in the fake racist murder of two cult underground poets.



If this opening salvo sounds confusing, then strap yourself in. That is just the first fifteen minutes. The story then branches out into dimensional rifts, telepathy inducing drugs, time travel, teen horniness, quantum teleportation and of course the apocalypse. On first viewing Southland Tales is as dense as a diamond brick and just as impenetrable. Don't let that worry you though, part of the enjoyment this film like this is trying to figure out just what the fuck is going on.

On the one hand it is a subversive satire on the US political scene post 9/11, then again it is also an explicit interpretation of the Book of Revelation with a quantum physics framework grafted on to it. Many will definitely see it as a complete Philip K Dick homage, but mostly it a full-on cinematic experience full of profound ideas underscored by eccentric humour, a blizzard of pop-culture references and full of bizarrely entertaining sequences.



Director Richard Kelly has insisted that when viewed as a complete work with the three-volume graphic novel prequel (the film is parts four, five and six) that the whole story makes consistent and complete sense. In a sense this doesn't really matter as Southland Tales has so much going on, the viewer can choose to enjoy it in a number of different ways and take their own meaning from what they have seen.

It is going to sound counter-intuitive but In the case of this film clarity is the enemy of enjoyment. There is a great article and accompanying interview by the writer Abraham Riesman on the Motherboard web site, in which he speaks to Kelly at great length about the making of and meaning of the film. He was so intrigued by the movie that he wanted to know as much as possible, but as he got to the point of completely unravelling the plot, symbolism and meaning of the film he started to become disappointed.

In a similar vein, although the longer version of the film is out there (you can get it via iTunes at the time of writing) and adds more bits of plot, other characters and makes the ending a bit clearer - I'd recommend the shorter 145 minute version. Although the longer version, adds more context, the shorter version has a fantastically dense and



confusing information overload introduction, a weird meta commentary from a disembodied announcer voice and a much sharper ending. The more condensed cut also thankfully removes a discussion about The Rock puking on Buffy's boobs during sex. No-one needs that image.

Speaking of Mr Johnson, he is fantastic in this film. Playing an amnesiac man who is a copy of himself from an hour in the future, who is suffering from a split personality and may be the second coming or the anti-christ seems like a stiff acting challenge. He switches brilliantly from nervous and jittery to more Shatner than Shatner from moment to moment. At one point he tells us "I'm a pimp and pimps don't commit suicide", minutes later he is holding a gun to his head and threatening suicide if everyone doesn't "Move to the rear of the mega zeppelin". It is easily the best thing he has ever done, eclipsing even Tooth Fairy.

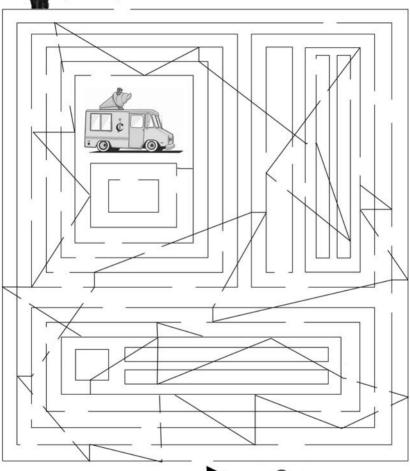
Casting primarily comedic actors, or pop culture figures throughout the film may seem like a stunt but it works really well and it always helps when you can roll out Justin Timberlake for a lip synch, song and dance dream sequence.

In the brilliant documentary Jodorowsky's Dune, the maverick filmmaker states that he wanted to make a film that would give the audience the experience of LSD without the need to actually take the drug. Southland Tales isn't an LSD substitute, but if you surrender yourself to its benign madness then it will bend your brain at least as much as a couple of pints or a quick smoke of something medicinal.

All in all, this brilliantly staged, beautifully designed, eccentrically acted and profoundly dense film is one of the most enjoyable ways to spend a couple of hours being completely and utterly bewildered. Like trying to read Finnegans Wake on a rollercoaster.



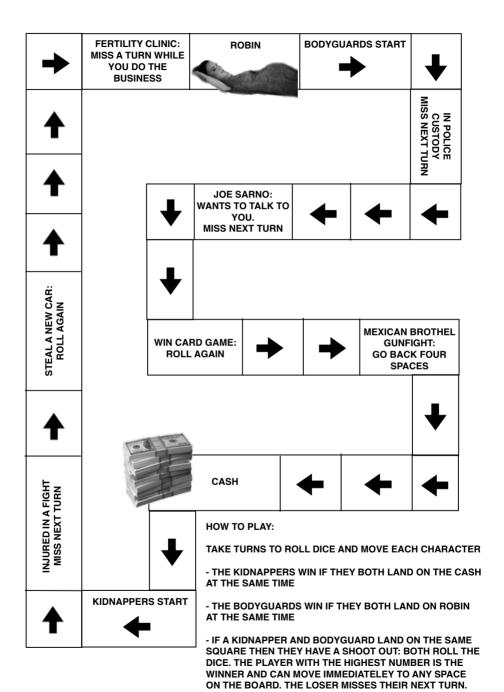
SOUTHLAND TALES MAZE



Help Ronald and Roland find their way to the ice cream truck, so they can make the fourth dimension collapse in upon itself!



THE WAY OF THE GUN BOARD GAME



WHOOPS APOCALYPSE! (1986)

DIR. TOM BUSSMAN

"You're telling me that the entire population of Great Britain went and elected a deranged psychotic to the highest office of the land.... Again?"

I haven't checked, but I reckon it is fairly unlikely that you are going to see this topnotch late cold war era satire on the TV any time soon.

Any film that makes crude, disrespectful swipes at the establishment, the army and the royal family would probably find itself out of favour in the current climate of proforces, Jubilee-tastic, culturally enforced flag waving.

Films like this are a time capsule from an era when writers, actors and comedians were more inclined to kick back against the establishment and be offensively contrary just for the sake of sticking two fingers up to those in charge. You may think that the 80's were a more docile, unenlightened time - but there is nothing nearly as savage as Spitting Image on TV these days.

More's the pity as Whoops Apocalypse is an outstanding comedy, successfully combining toilet humour, political satire and violent slapstick into one big piss-take of the Falklands War.



The main story is of a dispute over a small republic in South America snatched from British colonial grasp by a neighbouring military dictatorship. The hugely popular, yet demonstrably psychotic Conservative prime minister sends off a task force to wage war. Included in their number is the highly Diana-like Princess Wendy, who is kidnapped and threatened with execution — leading to ultimatums of the

thermonuclear type and a race against time to stop a huge apocalyptic war.

Hanging off this backdrop are a number of great interludes, such as the PM bringing in a job creation scheme fuelled by mass suicides of those in employment or the escapades of almost insanely elaborate international terrorist/impressionist played by that racist bloke off Seinfeld.

The jam in the middle of this particular donut is a ten minute sequence featuring one of the finest cameo performances you are ever likely to see: Rik Mayall as the commander of the SAS, who have been sent to raid Madame Tussauds.



Ripping the piss out the normally reverent way in

which the SAS are portrayed, Mayall's squad are a bunch of educationally sub-normal thugs who manage to lose eleven men, fighting a museum of waxworks. As a bonus all their names begin with the letter 'D'.

Sending up the straight-faced, right-wing wet dream of Who Dares Wins, Mayall yells sweary encouragement, blows a whistle like an especially psychotic P.E. Teacher and berates his team when they try to free one of their number from an elevator by shooting the doors off:

"You bastards. You callous brutal bastards. He was the best man at my wedding."

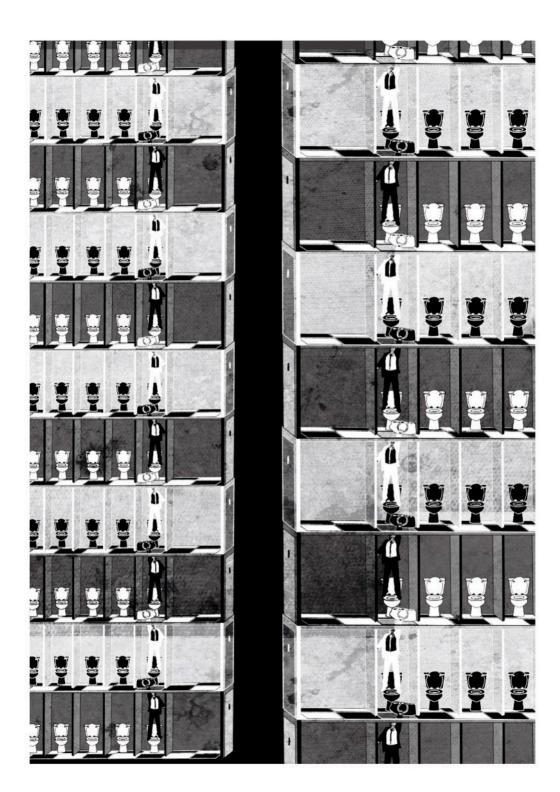
"He's dead now, Sarge."

"I know he's dead now, Douglas. I can spot a fucking stiff when it falls out of a lift."

The film creates a violent and surreal vision of the late 80's that seems only too plausible nearly thirty years on. If you remember just how mad the Thatcher years got towards the end then the public crucifications of traitorous ministers at Wembley Stadium doesn't seem all that much of a stretch

As you can probably gather, Whoops Apocalypse! is mostly about as subtle as a frying pan to the face but now and again a darker moment of satire breaks through the gags about accidental castrations involving the royal family or jump starting Russian leaders via other slightly less dead Russian leaders.

Appealing for calm within the British delegation, Loretta Swit as the rational US president implores, "But where is the sanity in vapourising millions of totally innocent people?", Cook's, hook-handed PM fixes her with a cold eyed, withering stare and retorts matter of fact, "Well it shut Japan up didn't it?"



SLEEPLESS NIGHT / NUIT BLANCHE (2011)

DIR. FREDERIC JARDIN

"I'm a cop... who does business."

Suspension of disbelief is a complex and enigmatic state - it depends on the ability of a movie to present outlandish plots, scenes or action in such an engaging way that the logical, pedantic bit of your brain just doesn't care that what you are seeing is unlikely or impossible.

There are many factors that affect immersion into a film's world or story and many different ways that you can be snapped back into reality by an incorrect detail, clumsy acting, unrealistic action or shonky special effects.

These don't always have to be grounded in our shared understanding of our world or the people in it and the way in which both behave. People will happily spend large chunks of their lives on the internet, wildly arguing about how the cross shaped lightsaber design in the trailer for the new Star Wars flick is unrealistic and unworkable.

So, we have a significant number of people violently concerned about the practical working realities of a fictional laser sword in a film about epic interplanetary conflict and space wizards. These same people must be literally soiling themselves over more basic, textbook flaws, right?

The answer is of course, no. Last time I checked (very, very briefly) there aren't loads of people screaming about how The Force Awakens is doomed because sound doesn't travel in space, or that gravity could never be so consistent.

The world of film and fiction has an layer of 'Allowable Bullshit' - a consensual contract between artist and audience that there are certain things that we will all permit before logic and pedantry begins to gnaw away at our suspension of disbelief and enjoyment.

For example: If you were to get shot in the arm or leg, chances are you would be completely incapacitated, screaming in shock and pain while explosively emptying your bowels. You may well die of blood loss without timely medical intervention. This doesn't happen in the movies - a quick tourniquet - maybe a splash of booze in the wound - and you're off to rescue the president.

Likewise, try jumping through a window (IMPORTANT EDITORIAL NOTE: Do Not Try Jumping Through Any Windows). Firstly you will be lucky to make it all the way through without bouncing off and breaking multiple bones. If you make it you are now injured beyond belief, covered in blood and the glass that isn't stuck in you is just waiting to get in on the act as soon as you move. Jumping up, brushing it off and commandeering a passing police horse to chase those pesky terrorists is probably the last thing on your mind.

These are two extreme examples of Allowable Bullshit that we all just let slide without any real thought or consideration, but there are plenty of minor examples that are in many ways just as outrageous in their unlikeliness. Top of the pile is what I would call The Great Nightclub Lie.

Think about any nightclub scene in a typical movie, there are attractive people dancing, drinking and enjoying themselves - the music is pounding, lights strobing, DJ Djing atc. Then something weird happens - people start talking to each other at normal volume, they can hear each other clearly and we can understand every word they are saying. They aren't screaming in each others ears and then shrugging and screaming back "WHAT?".

This conversation is also probably happening at a table, (a table that isn't covered in bottles and sick while being used as a personal dancefloor by that divorcee from the HR department who has been on Red Bull cocktails all night) a waitress delivers exotic looking cocktails, none of the drinks are served in dirty plastic pint glasses.

No one has ever been to a nightclub like this - but we all know that an accurate portrayal would probably lead to our maverick detective protagonist spending half an hour trying to find his informant before mishearing an important address and accidentally starting a fight with a Rugby team when he knocked over one of their pints.

In addition to pared-to-the-bone plotting and excitingly-staged action, what Sleepless Night does brilliantly is reject The Great Nightclub Lie. Rather than gloss over the realities of nightclub attendance, the film embraces them. It uses the panic inducing, surreal and nightmarish environment of a garish nightclub to help create tension and



suspense.

Perhaps stalking violent gangsters is a bit different from trying to find the toilet when you are about to throw up, but we've all experienced the horror of trying to get across a crowded dance floor — and the addition in this instance of people line dancing to Another One Bites The Dust almost turns this into a horror film.

Sleepless Night starts as it means to go on – after the credits scroll down the top of a car we are straight in to a brief car chase, shoot-out and drug heist before the first few minutes are up. This sets the tone for the rest of this lean and mean French action thriller.

The thieves are a pair of corrupt policemen, who despite getting away with a big bag full of drugs have left a witness alive [EXCELLENT JOKE ABOUT FIFA REMOVED FOR LEGAL REASONS].

This leads to one of the bent coppers having his son kidnapped and held to ransom for the powder by a local criminal kingpin who, like any good criminal kingpin, has his

HQ in a massive nightclub.



With more corrupt (and non-corrupt) coppers plus some rival gangsters in the mix it isn't massively surprising when the planned exchange of drugs for son doesn't quite go according to plan.

This leaves protagonist. our Vincent, playing cat and mouse with several factions in and around the confines of the nightclub - first relying on his wits and then as everything becomes more desperate. his propensity for creative and bruising violence.

Tomer Sisley (a man with the look of a less confused Rio Ferdinand) is sensational in the lead role, from a

quick look at his wikipedia page I was surprised to discover that he was a stand-up comedian prior to turning his hand to acting. He brings a tough, weary quality to the film and a demonstrates a skill at smashing the shit out of people with kitchen equipment that I don't think we'll ever get from Michael McIntyre.

Anyone who works in the installation or maintenance of suspended ceilings will find much to enjoy in the scenes involving a less conventional take on the traditional relationship between nightclub toilets and class A drugs.

YOUR PERSONAL SCREENING LOGBOOK

THE BROTHERS BLOOM	
Sentiment Analysis: (Tick all that apply)	
TIME AND DATE OF SCREENING	DESCRIBE YOUR FEELINGS ON THIS SCORE FILM IN ONE WORD OUT OF 100
THE WAY OF THE GUN	
Sentiment Analysis: (Tick all that apply)	
TIME AND DATE OF SCREENING	DESCRIBE YOUR FEELINGS ON THIS SCORE FILM IN ONE WORD OUT OF 100
THE MAGIC CHRISTIAN	
Sentiment Analysis: (Tick all that apply)	55000
TIME AND DATE OF SCREENING	DESCRIBE YOUR FEELINGS ON THIS SCORE FILM IN ONE WORD OUT OF 100
DUL WORTH	
BULWORTH	
Sentiment Analysis: (Tick all that apply)	
TIME AND DATE OF SCREENING	DESCRIBE YOUR FEELINGS ON THIS SCORE FILM IN ONE WORD OUT OF 100

THE YELLOW SEA								
Sentiment Analysis: (Tick all that apply)								
	DESCRIBE YOUR FEELINGS ON THIS SCORE							
TIME AND DATE OF SCREENING	FILM IN ONE WORD OUT OF 100							
SOUTHLAND TALES								
Sentiment Analysis: (Tick all that apply)	2000							
	DESCRIBE YOUR FEELINGS ON THIS SCORE							
TIME AND DATE OF SCREENING	FILM IN ONE WORD OUT OF 100							
WHOOPS APOCALYPSE								
Sentiment Analysis: (Tick all that apply)								
	DESCRIBE YOUR FEELINGS ON THIS SCORE							
TIME AND DATE OF SCREENING	FILM IN ONE WORD OUT OF 100							
SLEEPLESS NIGHT								
Sentiment Analysis: (Tick all that apply)	55000							
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For more info on the programme and details of how to purchase tickets or get involved, please visit:

festival.leamingtonundergroundcinema.co.uk

UNDERCLASS: THE PERIODICAL JOURNAL OF LEAMINGTON UNDERGROUND CINEMA - ISSUE TWO - JUNE 2015

Features articles on the movies below as well as puzzles for your entertainment, another fake movie trivia top ten, a viewing logbook for your own personal completion and, somehow, a board game.

THE BROTHERS BLOOM (2008)
DIR. RIAN JOHNSON

THE WAY OF THE GUN (2000)
DIR. CHRISTOPHER MCQUARRIE

THE MAGIC CHRISTIAN (1968) DIR. JOSEPH MCGRATH

BULWORTH (1998)

DIR. WARREN BEATTY by Special Guest Writer Nic Pillai

THE YELLOW SEA (2010) DIR. NA HONG-JIN

SOUTHLAND TALES (2006) DIR. RICHARD KELLY

WHOOPS APOCALYPSE! (1986) DIR. TOM BUSSMAN

SLEEPLESS NIGHT/NUIT BLANCHE (2011) DIR. FREDERIC JARDIN

All the brilliant artwork is by Christine Cuddihy www.christinecuddihy.co.uk

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