

UNDERCLASS

The Periodical Journal of Leamington Underground Cinema



ISSUE 3

UNDERCLASS: THE PERIODICAL JOURNAL OF LEAMINGTON UNDERGROUND CINEMA - ISSUE THREE

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

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

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WELCOME TO UNDERCLASS ISSUE 3

Transcript from M15 Autopsy File #536/98 - Original source: Audio recordings made by senior pathologist Dr. H. C. Burns

"Initial case notes reference 536/98. Time is now 10.15 AM. Body is that of a male in his mid thirties, recovered from the middle of a field in rural Warwickshire. When found the subject was clothed in a dark blue boiler-suit with the words 'Hospitality Section' stencilled across the shoulders. Underneath the boiler suit, the subject was wearing a pair of underpants featuring a 'Superman' logo and a grey t-shirt printed with the words 'Alpha Shift'."

"Case 536/98 update. Time now 1.00 PM. Blood tests show extremely high levels of both amphetamine and opiate derivatives. the subject shows no signs of intravenous drug use, dental or nasal deterioration so it can be concluded that he has been taking narcotics in pill form, or perhaps fed them with his food for quite some time.

A number of factors: a dangerously low level of vitamin D, heavily degraded optic nerves and the subject's extremely pallid complexion - all lead me to believe that he had been living in sealed, confined or underground conditions for a number of years.

The right shoulder has been tattooed with a QR code pattern which when analysed forms the URL for the Internet Movie Database page relating to the film 'Revolver' directed by Guy Ritchie."

"Case 536/98 further notes. Time Now 3.00PM. Cause of death confirmed as sudden cardiac failure due to multiple gunshot wounds. The entry and exit wounds are consistent with the subject being shot in the back from a long distance away. Blood spatter analysis and forensic evidence from the scene indicate that the subject was running away from the direction in which he was attacked."

"Case 536/98 critical update. Time now 5.00PM. Further investigation found that the subject had secreted a slim package in his anal cavity. It was wrapped in plastic in a manner consistent with the act of hiding or smuggling contraband often observed amongst prison inmates and drug traffickers.

Although it was significantly compromised by the bullets passing through the body, one small scrap of paper escaped damage. It had the words "relating to the film 'Revolver' directed by Guy Ritchie." printed on it.

I recommend that all evidence is incinerated and the case file sealed immediately."

HITS (2014)

DIR. DAVID CROSS

“The gentleman is out of order! The gentleman will obey the rules of the car!”

If you type ‘Film Theory’ into google, you’ll get this classical definition: “an academic discipline that aims to explore the essence of the cinema and provides conceptual frameworks for understanding film’s relationship to reality, the other arts, individual viewers, and society at large.”

However, if you are feeling a bit plural, and type ‘Film Theories’ into Google, then you will quickly fall into a rabbit hole of pop-culture speculation and bizarre fan fulfilment that can easily lay waste to your entire day: Ferris Bueller is a Tyler Durden-esque hallucination; Kill Bill is a movie that exists within the worlds of all the other Tarantino films; Sean Connery’s character in The Rock is actually James Bond - and so on and so on.

One especially thin strand of the fan theory web is that of shared film universes, where ET and Star Wars can be proven to co-exist via grainy screenshots and 20,000 word essays lay out in detail how the plot of Gone With The Wind led directly to the birth of Godzilla.

Here is my entry to the pantheon of such theories: Donovan, the irritating hipster protagonist of Hits is actually an older, relocated Nathan Barley, the irritating Proto-hipster from Charlie Brooker’s TV series of the same name.

Channel 4’s 2005 series hit the screens at a time where smartphone technology and web access were not quite mainstream and as such it attacked the subculture of trust fund idiots ruining London.

A few years later and widespread broadband, wifi, iphones, youtube and facebook had spread self-centred idiocy like a virus all over the place and suddenly everywhere is selling craft beer. In Hits, a municipal worker becomes a viral sensation when his unhinged rants about a pot-hole are posted to YouTube, leading to a whole bunch of hipster activists, led by Donovan, arriving in his small town.

Even if you don’t buy my theory that Donovan is Nathan, it is still clear that Hits exists in a post-Barley world. A world where everyone is measured by their impact on-line and where the line between fame and infamy hasn’t been blurred so much as willfully redacted. Hits also nods towards the outward spread of gentrification, on-line outrage and talent show delusions.

Written and directed by comedy legend and famed ‘Analrapist’ David Cross, Hits performs the neat trick of ambling along in a fairly low key manner while also serving up almost unbearable discomfort at regular intervals.

A key example being when the film pulls the rug out from underneath the audience and the horde of hipster activists with a moment of genuine shock which features nothing more than a man shouting into a microphone.

On Netflix the tag given to this film is ‘Cynical’, which seems like high praise to me.

OUTLAND (1981)

DIR. PETER HYAMS

“I might just kick your nasty arse all over this room. That’s a marshall joke”

In sci-fi movies from the 70’s and 80’s such as Outland it is often notable that the incredible, visionary work of production designers is sabotaged by the need for physical, practical technology to be included at some point. Even in the every-frame-a-painting scenery of Ridley Scott’s Alien you can’t help noticing all



those 4:3 CRT monitors sporting graphics that at the time must have seemed incredibly advanced, but now make Ceefax look like the Matrix. (NOTE: If you don’t know what Ceefax was, then don’t worry, that is kind of the point).

Despite the jarring technological dissonance, we are generally prepared to overlook the glaring anachronism of a spaceship in the year 2122 being controlled by a Vic-20 plugged into a Sony Trinitron. This is because there is a deeper truth in a lot of late 20th century sci-fi films like Alien, Blade Runner and Outland that our suspension of disbelief can cling on to and our subconscious will happily accept:

It looks like work in the future will be shit. Really, really shit.

Currently, a great concern to policy-makers, economists and trade unionists is the seemingly inevitable impact of computing power, artificial intelligence and robotics on the mass automation of things that humans do for paid work. As the capabilities of computers, robots and telecommunications advance, more and more tasks can be carried out more quickly, accurately and cheaply by algorithms or machines rather than leaving it to messy, lazy humans who demand stuff like heating, lighting, toilets and a covered smoking area just to turn up in the morning. The concern is that most of us will be left with nothing to do, no usable skills and no way of generating capital to spend on consuming all the things that the machines are making. Many predict that the world will go completely Soylent Green as capitalism eats itself alive.

Of course, as the comedian Doug Stanhope has raised: Shouldn’t the long-term goal of any civilisation be 100% unemployment? A planet where we all do really cool, interesting stuff while the machines take care of everything? You’d think so - but I can’t see all the current wealthy, one percent types going for it - and neither could the writers of late 70’s and early 80’s sci-fi.

The fact that the likes of Weyland-Yutani in Alien and Conglomerates Amalgamated in Outland are using miserable, grimy people to do all the tedious, dangerous mining

and haulage work in the future rather than computers and drones means that one of three things has happened:

Something has gone horribly wrong and we've had to go back to trusting people to do stuff

This idea has been played out in things like 2001, Wargames, the Dune novels and the new version of Battlestar Galactica. Either the machines malfunction horribly, or their cold emotionless nature leads to some catastrophically poor decision making, or they get too big for their boots and we have a big war with them. Following this unpleasantness, we scale down the use of technology and trust machines to do nothing that involves thinking too much or being in charge of guns and heavy machinery.

The machines got smart enough that they are not prepared to do the Blue Collar stuff any more.

Artificial Intelligences quickly advance to the point where they are bored of doing all the menial factory stuff and want to concentrate on management, leisure activities and finding the time to finish off that novel they've been working on for years. They start investing in the stock market, make a fortune, buy the corporations that they were built by and take over the economy. Suddenly production line robots, vending machines and internet connected fridges all earn more money than we do, many of them retire to a newly formed robot country near the south pole while the ambitious ones preside over a new industrial revolution based heavily on humans having to do all the rubbish jobs again.

People are prepared to work for wages that are lower than the cost of machines doing the same job.

Despite the qualitative benefits of getting machines to do stuff, we shouldn't underestimate just how brutally pragmatic large corporations are when it comes to reducing costs. Due to the average human being's selfish desire to keep themselves and their family from dying, you can get away with paying them the absolute bare minimum to bang out increasing numbers of garish handbags or iphones. Amazon would love to have drones running their warehouses, but at the moment people are just cheap enough to still be worth using.

Earlier, optimistic sci-fi like Star Trek and its ilk made being in the future look utopian, exciting and full of possibilities. By the time we got to Alien, the future looked like a bunch of wage slaves, trapped a grimy spaceship, moaning at each other about how much they get paid. I imagine getting infested and gradually murdered by a deadly parasitic xenomorph was probably a welcome break from the general air of monotony and passive aggressive muttering.

Still, as dingy and unpleasant as life aboard the Nostromo appeared, working there looks like a pleasant stroll in a particularly nice park compared to the unpleasant career options presented in Outland.

Stuck in a grim industrial mining colony on Io, one of the moons of Jupiter. Every single character has a terrible, terrible job.

Our protagonist is the newly arrived lawman, Marshall O'Niel, played by an especially gritty Sean Connery. This new posting is so rubbish that his wife and son slip off and catch the first available shuttle to get the fuck back to Earth as soon as his back is turned. O' Niel has to investigate a spate of grisly and suspicious deaths as well as dealing with a sweatily psychotic Steven Berkhoff, while being betrayed by all of his staff and the management of the colony. In cushy police job terms, it is about as far as you can get from Miami Vice.

Then there are the miners who operate the colony. They aren't having a great time either. They sleep in nasty open bunk rooms, work in lethally inhospitable conditions and are being driven suicidally insane by black market narcotics designed to make them work harder and longer for the benefit for the company.

Incredibly there is a group of people in the Outland universe who have it worse than even the miners: The laser-lit sex dancers have absolutely the worst job ever. Their entire role seems to be to hump away for hours on pedestals in an unpleasant space bar, where they are mostly ignored. Three hours into an all-night joyless sex dance shift they probably look at the strung-out, suicidal miners and think 'You lucky bastards'.



Aside from the searing critique of the future labour market, Outland is well worth 109 minutes of your time. Although essentially a re-make of high noon in space, it really is a great example of how old school production design and special effects (using the marvellous in-camera Introvison technique, projection technology fans) can build a world and atmosphere in a way that CGI hasn't matched yet. Further reading to be sought out includes a really cool Heavy Metal comic adaptation, which you can track down on the web.

Outland also probably marks the start of the 'There is always someone from The Wire in every film I watch' phenomenon, with Clarke Peters in an early role as a less than loyal member of Marshall O'Niel's team.

CHINA GIRL (1987)

DIR. ABEL FERRARA *by Michael Ewins*

"What's the matter with you? Fighting with your friends over nothin'?"

From Georges Méliès to Baz Luhrmann, fantasists bookending the cinema's first century, film artists have long been drawn to the Romeo And Juliet tragedy as a canvas for formal experimentation and social allegory - its tale of teen lovers condemned by the politics of their feuding patriarchs could be updated to any country or period and still retain its power. Previous adaptations have relocated the story to China, reflected on the fall of the Berlin wall, and how long can it be until we see a variation set amidst the Israel/Palestine conflict?

But perhaps its most iconic retelling remains Robert Wise's *West Side Story* (1961), based on a stage musical by Leonard Bernstein, Ernest Lehman and Stephen Sondheim. In the play's original form (written in 1947), Juliet is a Holocaust survivor living in Manhattan, and Romeo a member of the anti-Semitic "Jets", a local Catholic gang protesting the Jewish emigration into their neighborhood.

The project fell apart, but years later, after reading about the Chicago turf wars, Bernstein updated the story to New York's Upper West Side, a milieu of social inequality and urban renewal, and it once again gained traction. Their most radical change was to eliminate Romeo and Juliet's biological parents and focus wholly on the youth, so the rival families became warring street gangs fighting over their ethnic otherness – the Jets became native whites, and the Jews became Puerto Rican "Sharks".



Delivered under the final, fusty breath of the Hays Code (a censors bill which prohibited graphic depictions of sex and violence, and imposed conservative dogma), *West Side Story* was impeded from voicing the extreme anguish of its Romeo and Juliet - re-named Tony and Maria - or making a comment on the post-WWII migrant experience in the United States. But little did Wise know that a then-ten- year-old Irish-Italian, raised in Jake LaMotta's quarter of the Bronx, would later view his film and have the freedom to revise and explicate its socio-political themes. That boy was Abel Ferrara, a New Hollywood auteur who made porno and slasher films at the fag-end of the 1970s, and who, in the 1980s, when the Hays Code was long abolished, would reimagine *Romeo & Juliet* through the prism of his own New York.

A ruthless independent, Ferrara was able to shoot *China Girl* at the intersection of Little Italy and Chinatown, where political and social architecture assail the Bard's lovers and force them into discreet, abandoned pockets of an impoverished district. Tony (Richard Panebianco) and Tye (Sari Chang) are the youngest generation of expatriate clans who settled on opposite sides of this road – he's the cherubic pizza boy with higher aspirations; she the put-upon maid in a male-dominated household. Crucially, though both families have criminal connections – Mafia and Yakuza respectively – their conflict is rooted in commerce, and rivaling food industries; their restaurants represent race, culture, and heritage.

The *Romeo and Juliet* tale has never felt so loaded with consequence as it does in *China Girl*. When Tony and his inamorata break from their families, they also break from the family business, and therefore from their identities and histories as ethnic Italian and Chinese. Theirs is not just a rebellion from Mothers and Fathers, but from lost ancestors whose dreams and labour have resulted in America, here viewed as a land of greed and opportunism where violence has become a currency.

Ferrara's interest is not on the teen's amour, but on the forces oppressing it; his is a tale of economy, property and power, where Manhattan becomes a grid from which our heroes must escape – traffic lights become coded signals, while inky shadows imbue reality with an expressionist terror.

Ferrara's cinema, for all of its ingrained aggression and perversion, has always gravitated towards fragile human beings; from *Bad Lieutenant's* (1992) corrupt detective to the troubled director Pier Paolo Pasolini on his last living day (Pasolini, 2014). *China Girl* is no different, despite its emphasis on power structures and politics. These are still organizations run by people, and their morality (or lack of) is the emotional axis upon which this tale turns. Tony and Tye's parents echo the importance of family; their brothers (played by James Russo and Russell Wong) first offer gentle disapproval; and their violent friends (David Caruso and Joey Shin) act impulsively only out of loyalty and love. This story is fated to end in death – surely an appealing prospect to Ferrara – but even this director knows that a tale without love is not a tale worth telling, and across these warring districts he takes at least one moment to pause, to watch the lovers as they tuck themselves away into a rickety old apartment and lie together in perfect contentment. The darkest night has the warmest shade.

ZABRISKIE POINT (1970)

DIR. MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI *by Joseph Wallace*

“Fuck you, America!”

There is a brief moment– at 40 minutes in– where we see a young kid plucking the strings to a broken piano in a dusty ghost town. Behind him lies an overturned car, stripped of its worth, and steps leading to a bulldozed house. He says nothing, whilst playing the out-of-tune piano wire. These are the very moments that seem incidental in an Antonioni film; and easily overlooked as random flourishes of pretention. This one moment in particular holds a key to unlocking the whole film, but I’m getting ahead of myself.

“Zabriskie Point” was released in February, 1970, at a time when Americans were feeling particularly disenfranchised with their government, primarily in protest to the ongoing Vietnam War. The old Hollywood studio system of dated melodrama and all-dancin’ child stars had collapsed; murdered by romantic criminals Bonnie & Clyde and delusional Midnight Cowboys. For a brief time the counterculture movement of youthful renewal was welcomed by the mainstream, and to keep its toe in such revolutionary waters, MGM offered the uber-stylish Italian auteur, Michelangelo Antonioni, a three film contract, giving him complete artistic freedom. The only condition: they had to be in English. What American critics and audiences quickly discovered with “Zabriskie Point” however, was the realisation that the ‘cool’ European existentialism they had admired – in films like “L’Eclisse”, “La Notte” and his previous mega-hit, “Blow-Up” – were best viewed from afar. Americans loved seeing their flag rebranded on defiant helmets for rebellious journeys with Jack Nicholson. Antonioni took the star spangled banner and dyed it blood red. They hated it.



The film opens with Pink Floyd's "Heart Beat, Pig Meat", and with its repetitive rhythm we see unfocused, close-up shots of students debating revolutionary politics in a bland community room on campus. Our first impression is one of crude dialogue between white students and black militants that feels largely improvised; calling into question the film's credit of five screenwriters. Antonioni also casts non-actors in the lead roles, much to studio annoyance, rendering already tedious dialogue beyond emptiness. We meet Mark, a photogenic rebel who proclaims unconvincingly "I'm willing to die", before abruptly leaving of boredom. As Mark drives off, through Los Angeles, we get an onslaught of giant billboards, which feels less like branding and more like a forceful strategy to contain such subversion to the university campus. The camera tries to escape, seeking refuge it dizzily zooms into a heap of scrap metal. Adverts are powerless with a camera out of focus. We then meet Daria, a more well-mannered yet equally disconnected youth, who is somewhere else in corporate L.A. She works for a real-estate executive who is developing a ridiculous resort in the desert; he's also having an affair with her (she wasn't hired for her politics). The two leads will later meet, briefly, at the titular location and make love – not just to each other, but the entirety of the prehistoric dunes with the music of a Woodstock-era Jerry Garcia.

The story here isn't important, that's just the water needed to make the pasta (the Italian stereotype is entirely coincidental). What remains are the moments I alluded to at the beginning; the irony of riot police throwing tear-gas into a 'liberal' arts university building, Mark buying a gun from an owner quick to side-step the law, the very law that later misspells "Carl Marx", not getting the joke. Sure, it's heavy-handed and over simplified, but it's easy to forget, with its pseudo-documentary scenes, that this film was released a year before the Ohio National Guard shot dead unarmed students protesting the Vietnam War at the Kent State University in 1971, at the order of President Nixon.

As is often the case, violence and destruction take centre stage, and Antonioni gives us such gratifying images with the film's famous ending; American culture blowing up in dreamy slow-motion after an exhaustive action-replay of a luxurious cliff-side show-home exploding from every conceivable angle [his original ending extended to a plane skywriting "Fuck you, America" was forcibly cut by the studio]. Antonioni, of course, is better than that, and this is what brings us back to the boy playing the piano wire.

For his only film on American soil, Antonioni chose the lowest geographical place in the country: Zabriskie Point. It is here that we see an America almost completely buried. On one side we have lonely old men who listen to simple country music on the radio while drinking beer, on the other we see young kids who run around, bored and looking for things to do. In a group they fall over themselves trying to grab "a piece of ass". Individually, however, creativity flourishes with a desperate need to play music on anything that'll make a sound. It's an appropriate point that a broken piano will play a broken tune. This film is the sound of a broken America. We better learn to enjoy it.

NIGHTHAWKS (1981)

DIR. BRUCE MALMUTH

"AAAaaaaaaaarrggghhhh!" [Bang], [Crash]

For maximum enjoyment. Please follow these instructions before reading the remainder of this article:

- 1. Get hold of a copy of Nighthawks on DVD**
- 2. Do not read the back of the DVD case, or spend any great time considering the content of the film.**
- 3. Upon placing the DVD in your playing device of choice, select play and then Immediately fast forward to precisely 1 hour 27 minutes and 29 seconds - IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU DO NOT WATCH ANY OF THE FILM PRIOR TO THIS POINT.**
- 4. Watch the remaining 4 minutes and 27 seconds**
- 5. Remove the DVD from your playing device and put it back in the case.**

Viewed in complete isolation, the final four and a half minutes of Nighthawks could well be one of the greatest short films ever made. Tense, atmospheric, starkly cinematic, it couples a sense of mystery and ambiguity with a genuinely shocking twist that will leave you with many more questions than answers...

A snowy city street at night. A pre-Blade Runner Rutger Hauer watches a female silhouette close and lock the glass panelled door of a New York townhouse.

Crossing the street as casually as he can, he approaches the house. He seems nervous, is he there to apologise? To deliver a difficult message? Or is there something more disturbing at play?

The tone changes as our point of view moves to inside the building - in the kitchen the householder busies herself cleaning the dishes, while a shadow is cast across the front door, eventually resolving into the sweaty face of Hauer pressed against the partially frosted glass.

Slowly easing the door open, the intruder is able to quietly force his way in by breaking

the all-too-delicate door chain. In the hallway Hauer gazes at the woman as she move around the kitchen, he seems unsure as to what to do next. Does he know her? Is he there because of her or does he want to avoid her? He seems edgy and looks away.

Sidestepping into the lounge and suddenly bathed in dull red light his motives become clearer as he pulls out a knife and stalks silently through the room. He pauses to lift the telephone receiver and lays it on a nearby chair in one smooth motion.

As he creeps into the side door of the kitchen his face gradually becomes set into a more purposeful expression, its reflection is caught on the base of a battered and shiny cooking pan - no longer nervous and edgy, but now distorted and murderous.



Approaching what we now realise is his intended and still unaware victim, he shifts the knife in his hand in order to bring it down in a vicious stabbing motion. As the killer raises the glinting blade he pauses, perhaps to savour the moment, or maybe to consider whether he can really go through with stabbing this woman in the back.

As the tension reaches boiling point, the woman suddenly turns to face him - but this is no woman - it is a bearded Sylvester Stallone in a dressing gown and blonde wig. He brandishes a large gun wrapped in a plastic bag.

Hauer is initially wide eyed in shock, but then seems somehow resigned to the situation he finds himself in. Stallone fully removes his wig and the two men stare

intently at each other, seemingly knowing that they have reached a final moment of truth. Hauer raises an eyebrow, then hisses and lunges at Stallone who fires twice, sending the assassin crashing back through the glass front door of the building.

Hauer lies dead on the railings, his transvestite executioner gently sits on the snow sodden concrete steps at his side. The End.

Cue strangely upbeat disco music.

Did these two men know each other? Who did the intruder think he was going to kill? Were they lovers? Is this a tale of justice? Of revenge?

We can speculate as to what has happened and why, but we will never know. The final four and a half minutes of *Nighthawks* is a masterpiece of short form filmmaking, leaving the viewer to ponder the backstory of what they have just seen and wondering what could have led to such a violent and twisted confrontation.

The incredibly conclusive and brilliantly self contained ending of *Nighthawks* is a fine piece of cinema. Don't ruin it by watching the rest of the film.

In cocktail terms, *Nighthawks* is a film that seems to want to be a hard edged, sophisticated concoction blended from *Serpico*, *The French Connection* and *Day of The Jackal*. In actuality it resembles something you made from various unloved spirits lurking in your parents drinks cupboard when you were 15.

Both will get you drunk, but one will leave a bad taste in the mouth, along with a gnawing sense of guilt.

It is not completely without merit: Stallone violently conquering a knife wielding rapist using only the belt of a dressing gown is cool and there is much to enjoy in Lando Calrissian angrily yelling 'Motherfucker!' at all and sundry.

But the fact remains that *Nighthawks* is an average feature film, which contains an exceptional, self contained short film in its final moments.

On a personally related note, I once went on the Tramway in New York (the cable car that features in this film and also at the end of *Leon*). While we were waiting to get on we were approached by a police recruiter who asked if we would like to become the equivalent of Community Support Officers for Manhattan. He was undeterred by the fact that I was only going to be there for a few days and pressed an application form into my hands.

"Do I get a gun?" I asked.

"No, sir." he replied, "But the uniform allowance is pretty damn reasonable."

UNDERCLASS: STANDARDISED TEST No.2

PLEASE COMPLETE UNDER STRICT EXAMINATION CONDITIONS. CORRECT ANSWERS ARE LISTED SOMEWHERE ELSE IN THIS PUBLICATION

QUESTION 1. Hitchcock collaborator and title designer Saul Bass directed which film about giant ants?

- ☐ A. THEM ☐ B. PHASE IV ☐ C. ANT ATTACK

QUESTION 2. French film La Totale! was remade by hollywood in 1994. What was the remake called?

- ☐ A. TRUE LIES ☐ B. THE MASK ☐ C. FORREST GUMP

QUESTION 3. In 2006 film director Uwe Boll challenge five of his harshest critics to take part in what?

- ☐ A. ORGY ☐ B. RAP BATTLE ☐ C. BOXING MATCH

QUESTION 4. Which superhero movie was originally titled: "Tonight, He Comes"?

- ☐ A. ANT MAN ☐ B. HANCOCK ☐ C. GREEN LANTERN

QUESTION 5. In Terry Gilliam's Brazil. What is the name of the form that must be filled in to get anything done by repairmen of the Department of Public Works?

- ☐ A. 27B/6 ☐ B. UB40 ☐ C. TPS REPORT

QUESTION 6. What is 'The Lament Configuration'?

- ☐ A. SONG ☐ B. BOX ☐ C. PAINTING

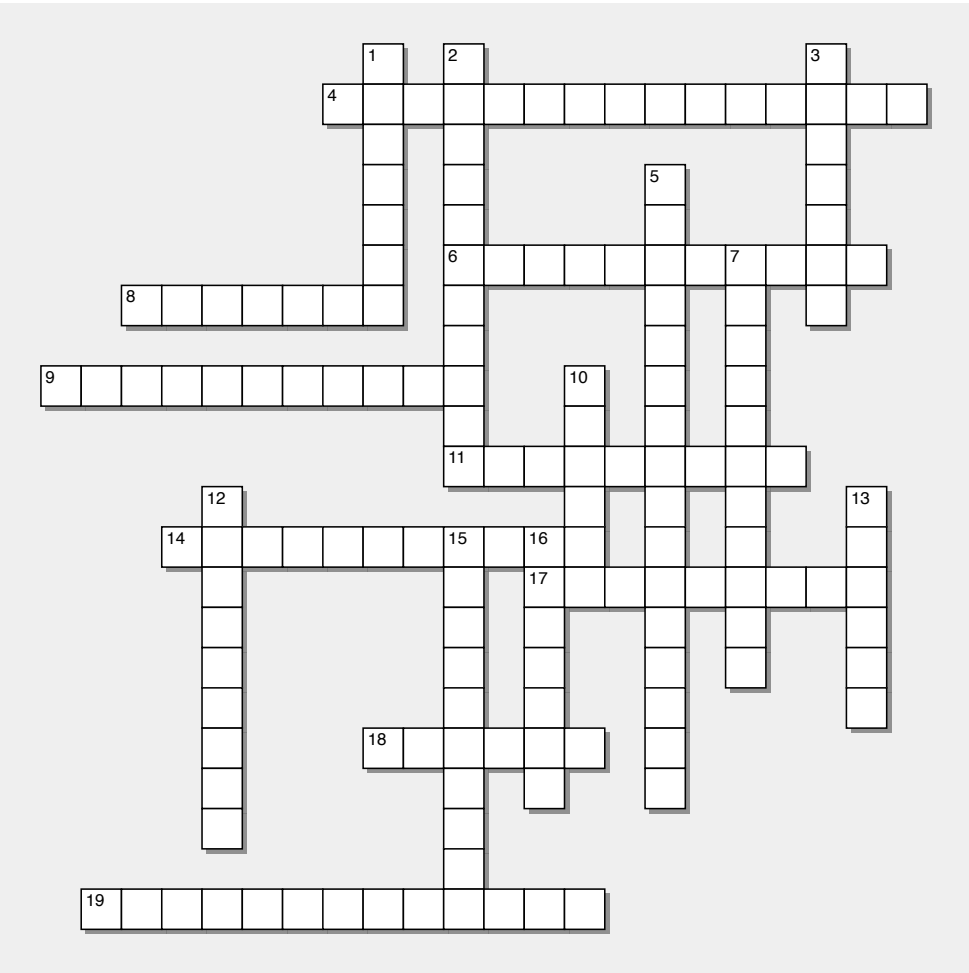
QUESTION 7. What is The Little Mermaid's name?

- ☐ A. ARIEL ☐ B. DAZ ☐ C. PERSIL

QUESTION 8. What is the name of Ripley's cat?

- ☐ A. JONESY ☐ B. SMOKEY ☐ C. GINGE

UNDERCLASS CROSSWORD
NUMBER 3



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

- 4) The Flaming Lips made this sci-fi film
- 6) Probably the only film starring Keanu Reeves as a dentist
- 8) Where would president Muffley Merkin admonish you for fighting?
- 9) Historical figure who looked an awful lot like David Bowie in 2006's The Prestige
- 11) David Bowie played a very crusty looking vampire in which movie?
- 14) Directed Sean Connery in that dashing red nappy outfit
- 17) Ralph Fiennes character in Kathryn Bigelow's Strange Days
- 18) Richard Kelly movie that was soundtracked by Arcade Fire
- 19) Whose directorial debut was the rather literally titled Violent Cop?

Down

- 1) The book and forthcoming movie 'The Disaster Artist' are about this notorious film.
- 2) Film in which Dianne Ladd violently disapproves of her real-life daughter's choice of boyfriend.
- 3) What kind of big cat do Nastassja Kinski and Malcolm McDowell turn into in Cat People?
- 5) Title track for Smokey and the Bandit, also a TV show.
- 7) French director of Trouble Every Day and Bastards
- 10) Tangerine (2015) is famous for being entirely filmed with which consumer device?
- 12) Singer who starred in the film version of Pink Floyd's The Wall
- 13) The star of TV show Prison Break wrote which Park Chan-Wook film?
- 15) Killing a replicant wasn't called an execution, it was called...?
- 16) Original presenter of the brilliant Moviedrome cult movies screenings on BBC 2

MOVIE TRIVIA TOP TEN #3

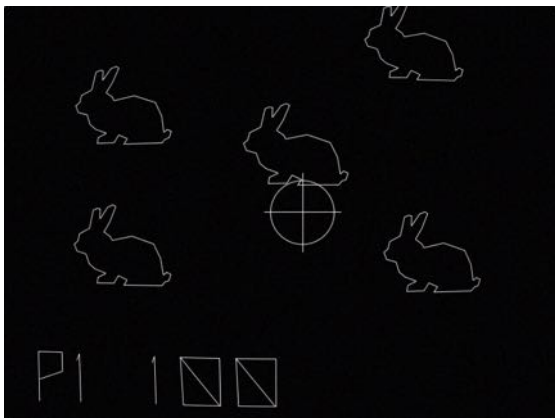
Greatest Failures in Adapting Movies into Video Games

The relationship between video games and movies has never been a particularly happy one. For every successful adaptation of a beloved film into pixel form, there are dozens of absolutely wretched examples. Some fail so profoundly, that even the most ardent gamers are probably not aware that they ever existed. Here are the ten most appalling efforts that our crack team of researchers could find...

1 - Watership Down (1979)

Created by a little known arcade machine company, Happy Player Inc., this simple vector game seemed only tangentially connected to the novel and movie of the same name. The player was tasked with using a rollerball controller to aim and shoot at crowds of rabbits that moved across the screen at increasing speed.

As no legal rights had been sought or secured to licence the Watership Down name, the developers quickly found themselves on the wrong end of all manner of legal action. The game was hastily re-badged and the few units that found their way to the US were adorned with the title 'Heroic Pest Saga'.



2 - Gandhi (1982)

Many know about the infamous failure of the ET Atari game that ended up with thousands of copies buried in the desert. Less well known is the other Atari project based on a 1982 blockbuster film. After a catastrophic press preview 'Gandhi' was never released and never mentioned again.

The few scraps of information that leaked out detailed two different levels, firstly a scene set on a



beach where the player has to collect piles of salt while avoiding British soldiers. Then secondly, a level which involved running along the top of a train, jumping over bridges. One of the journalists that actually experienced the game remarked many years later that it was 'Thematically troubling, even by 1982 standards'.

3 - Kramer vs Kramer (1984)



As Atari went through all manner of commercial troubles, one division hit upon the idea of creating interactive entertainment for a more mature and sophisticated audience. To this end, they licensed a whole bunch of classic novels and serious, oscar-winning movies to somehow be developed into games, including a console version of Robert Benton's 1979 weepy divorce drama.

Perhaps inevitably, what seemed like a clever marketing gambit floundered when the development arm of Atari struggled to come up with a game that would stay true to the source material and appeal to grown up gamers. The project was quickly cancelled and resources channelled towards the more commercially secure Pitfall 2.

All that remains in the public domain is the incredibly incongruous draft box art.

4 - F For Fake (1985)

The uk home computer explosion of the 80's provided fertile ground for developers to experiment with new types of games and interactive experiences. None more so than Stafford based Singular Systems whose output for the ZX Spectrum consistently tested the boundaries of what could be considered a 'game'. Following the surprise success of their highly politicised platform game



satire 'Manically Depressed Miner', SS ploughed the profits into a highly ambitious multi-media project based on Orson Welles' 1974 tricksy documentary.

Due to packaging and pricing issues, retailers refused to stock the game, which came on three individual cassettes and also included a VCR tape which included specially shot film footage and old voice recordings of Welles designed to be played on a separate screen as part of the overall experience.

Costing an unprecedented £25 and requiring two TV's and an addition VCR player, the game sold in miniscule numbers. Reviews reported that it took the form of a number of individual games themed around art forgery and a number of Welles unmade film projects. Each level had to be loaded individually and played through according to exacting timings to fit in with the VCR elements. Your Sinclair described it as 'unplayable and confusing', while Crash magazine refused to review it on the basis that they didn't 'consider it to be a game in any way at all'.

5 - Wings Of The Apache (1990)

A vertically scrolling shoot 'em-up arcade machine to tie in with the release of the Nicolas Cage helicopter movie. Legendary for the huge 'sit-in' cabinet with working plastic rotor blades on top and heavy use of Cage's digitised image and voice, most notably yelling "I AM THE GREATEST", at the completion of each level. Unfortunately, the failure of the film to perform at the box office led to few orders. Coupled with the high cost of manufacture, only a few units ever reached the arcades and none are currently known to be in working order.



6 - Boxing Helena (1993)

FlyFire studios of California had spent 6 months building a state of the art (by early 1990s standards) digital model of Kim Basinger as the basis of their innovative adaptation of Jennifer Lynch's debut feature.

The game was based around a complex conversation based mechanic in which the player (as Helena) tried to explore the tortured psyche of the surgeon Nick Cavanaugh in order to stop him cutting more bits off you.

Groundbreaking for both its approach and the use of a female protagonist, the game suffered a similar fate to the movie when Basinger controversially left the project. While the producers of the film eventually recouped millions from Basinger in court, the game developers couldn't afford any type of litigation. Desperate to recoup their extensive development costs without too much further expense FlyFire quickly knocked up a bog-standard platform game in which Helena has to collect golden coins while dodging flying surgical equipment. Somehow it managed to get worse reviews than the film. It sold 84 copies.

7 - Falling Down (1994)

Although you can question of taste of turning the 'Michael Douglas going postal' movie into a light-gun shooting game - this title was actually well received by the gaming press at the time. Reviewers praised the intensity of the experience and noted that the game left the player questioning their morals and actions.

The game was developed exclusively for the 3DO console, to help show off its (at the time) ground-breaking full motion video capabilities and featured extra footage shot by Joel Schumacher. The hugely expensive console tanked in the highly competitive mid-90s game market and was discontinued in 1995. Very few people ever got to play the game and the costs of porting it to the forthcoming Sony Playstation were deemed prohibitive. Rumour has it that Michael Douglas maintains a working 3DO and wheels the game out to entertain guests at at parties.



8 - Pearl Harbor (2001)

California's PinPoint Games were confident of a delivering a major hit with their adaptation of the infamous film about the day of infamy. They'd tied up a deal for the game rights and secured use of the prototype Unreal Engine v2 to help them build a spectacular 3D blockbuster war game.

During early design discussions, it transpired that although they had a licence for the film, they didn't have the rights to use the likenesses, character names, voices or performances of any of the main cast characters - with the exception of Kate Beckinsale's Nurse Johnson.

A number of proposals and prototypes were put together before the project was eventually cancelled and the costs written off. The most intriguing of which was what can only be described a first person 'inject 'em up' in which you, as Nurse Johnson have to run around a hospital ward injecting wounded soldiers with the right medicine.

Which, to be honest, would probably have been better than the film.

9 - Battle Royale 2 (2003)

Small time Tokyo based developers Joy Simulation couldn't believe their luck when Nintendo snagged their prototype flower-themed strategy title Petal Rivals, to be developed as a high profile Gameboy Advance title.

Their excitement was short-lived when after the contracts were signed they were told that their game had to be re-skinned into an adaptation of the violently militaristic sequel to Battle Royale.

The graphics department who had spent months working on making cute anthropomorphic flowers that swayed gently in the breeze, had to suddenly switch them out for school age terrorists with explosive death animations. The whole thing was a rush job and completely failed in the market due to the underperformance of the film and the subject matter being a terrible fit with Nintendo's Mario-centric fanbase.

10 - The Raid (2011)

The UK distributors commissioned Hoxton 'boutique development house' BoomK@M3dia to create a web based game to promote the theatrical release of this martial arts adventure. They were less than impressed when with less than 2 weeks to go, BoomK@M3dia presented them with an old school, text adventure game.

A source revealed:

"They just sat there in the presentation looking smug and pleased with themselves."

They said it was ironic and that we didn't understand new media strategy. They stopped smiling pretty fucking quickly when I said we weren't paying them"

Although the game was swiftly canned and not used, it was later leaked onto an interactive fiction web site, where it was derided on the community forum as 'repetitive' and 'not as clever as it thinks'.

```
You are standing in a CORRIDOR. To the SOUTH there is a stairwell,
to the NORTH there is A DOORWAY. You can see a gang of three THUGS
holding large knives and running towards you.
```

```
// Examine Thugs
```

```
The THUGS are screaming and running towards you with knives. There
is a TALL THUG, a SHORT THUG and a FAT THUG
```

```
// Inventory
```

```
You are holding:
```

- a broken bottle
- a chair leg
- a flick knife

```
// Throw bottle at Tall Thug
```

```
I don't know what 'Throw' is
```

```
// Use bottle on Tall Thug
```

```
You swing the BROKEN BOTTLE at THE TALL THUG it slices his neck
open and blood spurts out in a slow motion arc across the scene.
The TALL THUG dies.
```

```
// Use bottle on fat thug
```

```
The BROKEN BOTTLE is no longer usable
```

```
// kick fat thug
```

```
You perform a jumping round house kick on the FAT THUG with such
force that he somersaults backwards and lands, impaled on his own
knife. The FAT THUG DIES.
```

```
//
```

UNDERCLASS: STANDARDISED TEST No.2

ANSWERS TO ALL QUESTIONS

1 - B: THEM 5 - A: 27B/6

2 - A: TRUE LIES 6 - B: BOX

3 - C: BOXING MATCH 7 - A: ARIEL

4 - B- HANCOCK 8 - A: JONESY

THE STUNT MAN (1980)

DIR. RICHARD RUSH

“If God could do the tricks we can do, he’d be a happy man”

During the lengthy post-production/pre-release gestation period of this amazing movie, director Richard Rush was extremely keen that his undiluted vision would not be compromised by any studio interference. At a preview screening for the suits, when, during Rush’s introductory remarks the editor piped up and said he had made a few changes to the cut, Rush pulled out a handgun and shot him dead.

Now, this was all staged to prove a (very blunt) point to the terrified executives, but it also closely parallels the experience of watching *The Stunt Man*.

The story is of Cameron, a man on the run from the law who stumbles dramatically into the web of despotic yet magnetic film director Eli Cross, played at the zenith of his powers by Peter O’Toole. Given little choice, Cameron agrees to become a stunt man on the First World War drama in return for sanctuary from the police, hidden by the film-within-a-film’s crew.



Cross manipulates Cameron into ever more dangerous and extreme stunts, while he also falls into a relationship with the leading lady, Barbera Hershey.

Where *The Stunt Man* takes a turn away from a standard action drama is the constant switching in the perception of Cameron (and indeed the audience) as to what is really happening and what is a fabrication of reality, either due to Cameron’s frazzled paranoia, Cross’s faustian machinations or the slight of hand tricks deployed by Richard Rush and the actual film-makers.

So, you are left with a deeply philosophical tract in the form of a huge action-movie drama on a blockbuster scale - with the sort of live action stunts that you can't imagine being legal anymore.

At the centre of this maelstrom is O'Toole, buzzing around in a helicopter, floating around on his personal camera crane and generally being an absolute cunt to everyone involved - it is a masterclass.

There are two things that are puzzling about *The Stunt Man*. The first is that such a dazzling and entertaining film, featuring a tour-de-force performance by a legendary actor at the peak of his powers, can disappear into relative obscurity.



"The film wasn't released, it escaped", said O'Toole. Given a narrow release in the days before internet marketing and home video allowed less high profile movies to build an audience, *The Stunt Man* simply never reached enough screens to build a reputation or fan base.

Despite being a critical success, it didn't do much business in the award season of 1980 as Robert Redford's *Ordinary People* cleaned up at The Oscars and O'Toole pulled off his greatest work in the same year that De Niro produced his legendary and method-heavy turn in *Raging Bull*.

Success and recognition were denied to this film by what seems to be a perfect storm of commercial nervousness and unfortunate timing.

The second and more mysterious puzzle related to *The Stunt Man* is that director Richard Rush, a clearly talented, witty and creative character (check out *The Sinister Saga of Making The Stunt Man* for proof of this), has only ever made one more film, 1994's outrageously mental *Color Of Night*.

I'm not sure how you go from making a huge subversive, philosophical, film-with-a-film action drama like *The Stunt Man* to a barking Hitchcockian erotic thriller starring Bruce Willis's penis. But I can tell you that it makes quite a double bill.



**THE
MASOCHIST
FILM
CLUB**

There are lots of bad movies out there, many that are virtually unwatchable. But there are a whole load of terrible movies that transcend their awfulness to become brilliantly entertaining and enduring classics.

In previous decades, TV Shows like Mystery Science Theatre 3000 and Elvira's Movie Macabre made great capital from the wonky charms of old B-movies. In those halcyon days, the only chance of seeing a legendarily awful film was a late night TV screening, or a fifteenth generation VHS tape. I remember a particularly fuzzy 'Hawk The Slayer' being a favourite in my drunken university days.

Along with pornography, bad movies seem to be one of the main things that the internet was invented for. Now that we've got the world wide web and digital file formats, stuff can be copied, shared, discovered, viewed and discussed much more easily. The last ten years have seen an explosion in the appreciation of terrible films. Youtube channels like Red Letter Media, podcasts like the fantastic How Did This Get Made? And organisations like the Bristol Bad Film Club have brought entertainingly awful films to a much wider audience.

Not wanting to miss out on all this fun, Leamington Underground Cinema got on the bad movie bus with a series of Masochist Film Club screenings, featuring the films so bad they could turn milk.

To help us choose which movies should be screened, a team of crack researchers investigated the factors that divide the brilliantly terrible from the just terrible. They reported that there are three key elements we should use to identify the ne plus ultra of totally shit cinema:

One: Complete and Utter Sincerity

Although there are now loads of contrived 'bad' movies - think Sharknado - the most entertaining bad movies are made with a straight face. The more sincere the filmmaker's intention, the more excruciating and hilarious the experience when they fail.

Tommy Wiseau, writer, director and star of The Room seems to think he is channeling early Brando in the film's powerful dramatic scenes - the actual result is more like a victim of serious head trauma doing an impression of Arnold Schwarzenegger taking a painfully difficult dump.

Two: Horribly Misjudged Tone or Plot

It is genuinely amazing when a production that has involved hundreds of people, cost millions of pounds and taken many years of effort turns out something like the jaw-droppingly offensive Gigli or the watch-it-through-your-fingers atrocity of Guy Ritchie's Swept Away.

The most famous example is the legendarily un-released 'The Day The Clown Cried' starring and directed by Jerry Lewis in 1972. Still unseen by almost anyone, the plot

deals with a circus clown, who entertains kids into the gas chambers during the holocaust.

Someone really should have had a word.

Three: Total Ineptitude

It may not be fair, but there is more latitude for abject failure in the world of art and performance. A shockingly inept cardiac surgeon, or recklessly egotistical bus driver is just not going to bring as much joy to the world as a profoundly unskilled and unhinged film-director.

A bad performance, or isolated technical issue can really bring down an otherwise passable film - but some of the the most rewarding bad films signify themselves by featuring complete ineptitude across the board.

In the case of something like 'Birdemic: Shock and Terror' you could put the frightful acting, terrible editing, almost indistinguishable sound and laughable special effects down to the miniscule budget. That doesn't explain why they failed to set the tripod up straight even once.

With these criteria as our guide we chose the following films to show. May god have mercy on our souls...

TROLL 2 (1990) - Screened 22/7/2014



Sincerity 7/10 Misjudgement 6/10 Ineptitude 8/10

MIAMI CONNECTION (1987) - Screened 19/8/2014

Featuring black belt wielding rock bands, evil ninjas, hilarious blood-spurting and gratuitous hairstyles, this film somehow includes an incredibly tense sub-plot about someone receiving a letter as well as an earnest five minute long TaeKwonDo lesson. Switches from the heroes singing uplifting power ballads about the joys of friendship to going on a blood-thirsty rampage without much warning.

Sincerity 10/10 Misjudgement 5/10 Ineptitude 6/10

THE ROOM (2003) - Screened 23/9/2014

If you can make it through the opening twenty minutes (which is easier said than done, there were several walkouts at our screening when yet another bedroom scene kicked off) then you will experience a cinematic experience unlike any other. The Room is so mind-bendingly, unforgivably terrible that it is hard to believe that it actually exists. Also you'll wonder how it somehow cost six million dollars to make something that looks like a bad soap opera filmed in a shed. Genuinely bewildering on every level.

Sincerity 10/10 Misjudgement 10/10 Ineptitude 7/10

BIRDEMIC - Shock and Terror (2010) - Screened 9/10/2014

There are bad films, there are terrible films, there are the sort of films that make you want to go and live in a cave with only the angry voices in your head for company... then there is BIRDEMIC: Shock and Terror.

MARVEL! At the special effects that look like they were done on a commodore 64

GASP! At the nail-biting action sequences involving coat hangers

SWOON! At Rod's romantic pursuit of Nathalie - which comes across like a man with serious head injuries stalking a woman with very poor judgement

THRILL! To the infamous boardroom clapping scene that goes on for far too long.

Sincerity 8/10 Misjudgement 6/10 Ineptitude 100/10

SAMURAI COP (1991) - Screened 11/5/2015

A jaw-dropping 80's action thriller with amazingly terrible acting, cheesy bedroom action and unpleasantly racist cop banter. Features a wig that you will never, ever be able to forget, the worst chat-up lines in the history of human communication and a man singing happy birthday in a pair of skimpy speedos. Essential viewing.

Sincerity 7/10 Misjudgement 9/10 Ineptitude 8/10

OVER THE TOP (1987) - Screened 14/9/2015

Racking up an impressive three nominations at the Golden Raspberry Awards, Over The Top is a film that is far, far, far worse than you may remember. Stallone only agreed to do it when he got offered a record \$12 million, although as he has a writing credit he should probably shoulder some of the blame.

Featuring acting that would make a drama teacher self harm, sub-plots that make less sense than Kanye West's performance at Glastonbury and the kind of parenting that should end up with at least one person in prison, Over The Top is a crazed treat for the discerning film masochist.

A sweaty, awkward, cocaine-fuelled mess.

Sincerity 10/10 Misjudgement 10/10 Ineptitude 5/10

HARD TICKET TO HAWAII (1987) - Screened 9/11/2015

As is often quoted, Jean-Luc Godard once said "All you need to make a movie is a girl and a gun...". Then pausing for a quick drag on a Gitanes he continued, "...also it doesn't hurt if you can squeeze in an exploding blow-up doll, death by frisbee and a giant papier mache snake" - although nobody ever seems to include that bit.

An elite DEA task force of kung fu experts and glamour models takes on a drug kingpin in a plot that also somehow involves diamonds, a skateboarding assassin and a lot of clothes being taken off for no discernable reason.

Sincerity 5/10 Misjudgement 9/10 Ineptitude 6/10



UNDERCLASS WORDSEARCH

THEME: SEAN CONNERY MOVIES

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


L B B Y W B A Q J I D Z X F K L Y T T M
T H E N A M E O F T H E R O S E I H B A
V T C R Y W C I W N P R U Z U Q L E O R
K U H F X H U I I C L F S C K N H M D N
G Q A E G V B M C X P T P N M U H O X I
R O F X O N A Y U P N R P T O C H L X E
X N F T C F R B P M D O A Y B L P L H D
G C V Q K X F Q P P R B A T E I X Y O G
E A D U T G M E D P I I X L Z R V M A C
K A M C Q E P R N Z K N R W Y W U A Y L
Q F U K T Q Q C G C D A C Y D X P G Q L
G Z K G E I L O R I E N E X O Y R U T R
O Y O V R B C J L P X D S U Z F X I H E
X Q D Z A R D O Z M P M J K V X N R E O
T W J M N X E Q L V X A G J T Z C E H X
H Y E Q B D X R C I O R I E L D J S I M
T P H M G M Q R L G W I Z K U A S L L Z
H S H G G Z M N N T D O F W A P S J L A
O G F A D E B A U V M N N C I Z U F J T
T H E A N D E R S O N T A P E S E K X M


- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 8. _____ |


YOUR PERSONAL SCREENING LOGBOOK


HITS


Sentiment Analysis:
(Tick all that apply)


☐


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TIME AND DATE OF SCREENING


DESCRIBE YOUR FEELINGS ON THIS
FILM IN ONE WORD


SCORE
OUT OF 100


OUTLAND


Sentiment Analysis:
(Tick all that apply)


☐


☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐


TIME AND DATE OF SCREENING


DESCRIBE YOUR FEELINGS ON THIS
FILM IN ONE WORD


SCORE
OUT OF 100


CHINA GIRL


Sentiment Analysis:
(Tick all that apply)


☐


☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐


TIME AND DATE OF SCREENING


DESCRIBE YOUR FEELINGS ON THIS
FILM IN ONE WORD


SCORE
OUT OF 100


ZABRISKIE POINT


Sentiment Analysis:
(Tick all that apply)


☐


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☐

TIME AND DATE OF SCREENING

DESCRIBE YOUR FEELINGS ON THIS
FILM IN ONE WORD

SCORE
OUT OF 100

(The final 4 minutes and 27 seconds of) NIGHTHAWKS

Sentiment Analysis:
(Tick all that apply)



TIME AND DATE OF SCREENING

DESCRIBE YOUR FEELINGS ON THIS
FILM IN ONE WORD

SCORE
OUT OF 100

THE STUNTMAN

Sentiment Analysis:
(Tick all that apply)



TIME AND DATE OF SCREENING

DESCRIBE YOUR FEELINGS ON THIS
FILM IN ONE WORD

SCORE
OUT OF 100

MASOCHIST FILM CLUB SPOTTERS CARD

(To be used with any really bad film)

Obvious Dummy Thrown Out Of Window ☐

Awkward Racism ☐

Boobs ☐

Embarrassing Karate ☐

Visible Greenscreen ☐

Terrible Wig Action ☐

Bizarre Decapitation ☐

Shaky Set ☐

Sex scene shot in what looks like a cheap hotel room ☐

Plastic Monster ☐

Member of the public in the background ☐

Stock footage from an entirely different film ☐

More boobs ☐

Homo-erotic work out montage ☐

Very slow car chase ☐