

Josh Becker DGA

Directing From The Edge



Q & A Archive
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Name: Marty Parker
E-mail: parkersm3@hotmail.com

Hi Josh.

Thanks for the BOTD diary... True, unabashed history..I just returned from Morristown, TN - I've been working there recently & found myself wondering about the old cabin. Where was it? I would love to know. I'm going back next week. Thanks,,
Marty Parker.

Dear Marty:

Hell, I don't know where we were in Morristown, that was 22 years ago. I do remember that there were trees all over the place.

Josh

Name: Charles
E-mail: cscorder@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

While channel surfing the other night, I came across "Falling Down". In the scene where Michael Douglas is confronted by the pushy beggar in the park, I saw what looked like a familiar tunnel in the background. Is that the same tunnel Bruce Campbell staggered through in "Running Time"? If so, please give me a brief L.A. geography lesson on where it's located.

And as long as I'm on the subject of Michael Douglas, what's your opinion of his work as an actor and producer?

Charles

Dear Charles:

I don't think it's the same location. I saw "Falling Down" and nothing jumped out me like, "Hey, that's the same location I used!" I'm sure there's any number of those tunnels all over town. The one I used is two blocks from where I presently sit here in Santa Monica. Regarding Michael Douglas, I'm still totally impressed he didn't fuck up "One flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," which would have been so easy to do. It looks great, the casting couldn't be better, and the score is unique and wonderful. It's a great film. I just saw him on "Inside the Actor's Studio" and enjoyed his interview a lot. Most of his films don't mean shit to me, but he was perfect as Gordon Gecko in "Wall Street."

Josh

Name: Kain
E-mail: kainproductions@earthlink.net

Dear Josh:

Do you feel film is dead? The current state of quality films and movies has been drastically going downhill for a long time now. Do you think the film industry will eventually go to shit?

-Kain

Dear Kain:

I don't think it will go to shit; I think it already has. But everything moves in cycles, and this too shall pass.

Josh

Name: Cynthia E. Jones
E-mail: cynthiaejones@hotmail.com

Dear Josh,

I, too, liked the film "The Sixth Sense," and went to see "Unbreakable" with much delight and anticipation. I will be interested to hear what you think. Personally, I'm appalled that it was only Act I of a trilogy. In my humble opinion, M. Night Shyamalan is suffering from the "sophomore slump," as they say. While most of the film, say, until the last twenty minutes or so, is excellent, the ending is horrible and feels forced. It feels like a producer or someone asked Mr. Shyamalan to change it. I don't know what happened. I won't give anything more away to you... but if you do love it, I'd love to know why. I was extremely disappointed.

On an entirely different topic, do you know anything about "The Man Who Wasn't There?" I'm hearing nothing but wonderful things. Have a great day.

Missing California,

Cindy

Dear Cindy:

I know nothing, I see nothing. I did just see "October Sky," which I thought was a nice film. Well-made, knew what it was about, though not particularly surprising. Still, not bad.

Josh

Name:
E-mail: juliejhnsn7@aol.com

Dear Josh,

You sound a little jittery about this book thing. Well who wouldn't be? The following is from Richard Feynman's 1974 CalTech Commencement Address and it's my way of wishing you luck on your book since he is a thousand times more eloquent than me.

"So I wish to you--I have no more time, so I have just one wish for you--the good luck to be somewhere where you are free to maintain the kind of integrity I have described, and where you do not feel forced by a need to maintain your position in the organization, or financial support, or so on, to lose your integrity. May you have that freedom. May I also give you one last bit of advice: Never say that you'll give talk unless you know clearly what you're going to talk about and more or less what you're going to say."

Fingers crossed, Julie

Dear Julie:

I'm a big Feynman fan, so I particularly thank you for the quote. I even liked the Matthew Broderick film, "Infinity." Did you see it?

Josh

Dear Julie,

Richard Feynman rulez!!

Shirley

Name: Chopped Nuts
E-mail: danjfox@home.com

Dear Josh:

"My book is all put together, under the title "Film: The Lost Art," and it goes out to the same publisher this week. Cross your fingers."

Very cool. Congrats.

Dear Chopped Nuts:

Yeah, yeah, but cross your damn fingers. As I go back over it I think that perhaps I just sound like a lunatic. It's pretty fat, though, it feels like a book.

Josh

Name: Stephen Kerr
E-mail: Kerrsed@aol.com

Dear Josh:

I just wanna say i really enjoy your films and was wondering which of your projects will you be working on next or is coming out in the near future. P.S. if you have already answered this and i some how did not find the info, feel free to call me any explitive in the book for wasting your time.

Dear Stephen:

Am I really that scary? Jeez, I thought I was sort of a nice guy. Fuck you! How dare you like my movies! Just kidding. I'm trying to get my film "If I Had a Hammer" to come out in some way, shape or form. No luck as yet.

Josh

Name: Kevin C
E-mail: iamani@mb.sympatico.ca

Dear Josh:

Hi, just wanted to let you know that I saw Running Time, and enjoyed a lot. It is nice to see some good solid storytelling in a film again, especially since the one shot gimmick could have become a crutch for not bothering to tell a good story.

I've been poking around your website, and since you liked Apocalypse Now, I was

wondering if you are looking forward to "Apocalypse Now Redux" with any sense of eagerness, trepidation, or indifference?

How do you feel about filmmakers in general going back to previous work and releasing "new, improved versions"? (I know everybody's thinking of George Lucas here, but I have more in mind guys like the Coen Bros., Michael Mann, James Cameron, and the like.)

Kevin C, who still thinks its funny that the director's cut of Tom Jones is shorter than the original version.

Dear Kevin:

I was one of very few people that saw the very first inter-lock screening of "Apocolypse Now" in Westwood on its very first showing. It was nearly an hour longer than it presently is, and every second that was cut out deserved to be cut out. If it was up to me I would have cut about 10-15 minutes more. That's the shit he's putting back in. No thanks.

Josh

Name: Carolynne
E-mail:

Dear Josh,

I was just wondering if Renaissance Pictures has any upcoming shows planned for television now that Xena, Herc, and their other ones are gone.
BTW, That picture of you in the blue shirt is pretty darn sexy!

Dear Carolynne:

They having nothing else at the moment that I know of, but I'm sure Rob is scheming and dreaming. Thanks about the blue shirt comment.

Josh

Name: Benedict
E-mail: ben@internetben.com

Josh,

In a world of bad movies, when you see a Hollywood film that is surprisingly good like "The Sixth Sense," do you look forward to the filmmaker's follow-ups? I'm a big M. Night Shaymalan fan, and I think "Unbreakable" was even better than "Sixth." Did you see it yet? The movie itself fits into the three-act structure, as far as I can tell, but what's more interesting is that the entire movie is intended to be just Act I of a bigger story. They're planning a sequel to be Act II and a third to be Act III. Just interested in your thoughts on

this guy.

Thanks.

Benedict

Dear Benedict:

I liked "The Sixth Sense." After I saw it a second time, however, I must say it's a film I never need to see again. I haven't seen "Unbreakable" yet, but I will.

Josh

Name: julie

E-mail: juliejhnsn7@aolcom

Hi Josh and other movie geeks.

Bruce's book as a film?

No, I don't see that at all -- the book's not that long just read it folks. I won't spoil the book for those who haven't read it yet, but I think he anticipates this sort of laziness -- he repeats himself during one anecdote to catch the attention of those "skimming." Well I'm glad I bought a first edition early, I had no idea it was already onto that many printings. I was so happy for him when he got to the LA Times and New York Times Best Sellers lists!!!

from Julie

Dear Julie:

I'm happy for him, too. My book is all put together, under the title "Film: The Lost Art," and it goes out to the same publisher this week. Cross your fingers.

Josh

Name: stacey

E-mail:

Dear Josh:

Could you tell me what i should do to get started directing. Also 4 curiosity what is the funniest line flub that Renee or Lucy has done and do either of them swear (curse)?

ps please dont show my e-mail address
thanx

Dear Stacey:

Get a digital video camera and start directing. The more things you shoot, then attempt to cut together, the better. And watch as many movies as possible. Regarding line flubs, I think all actors swear when they occur. What's amusing working with Lucy is that she if she goofs up she immediately turns back into a Kiwi, and says things like, "Schite, mate." That rhymes with "kite," BTW, and New Zealanders say it when they mean "shit." The problem I kept facing was that any actor working with Ted would tend to get the giggles, particularly Lucy and Renee. In that last ep I did, "Soul Possession," it begins with Ted and Lucy on top of a cliff and they got into a giggle-fest that went on for a while. In "Kindred Spirits," with Ted shackled in the amazon village, Ted and Renee got into a giggle thing that was hysterical.

Josh

Name: Billy Sparks
E-mail: muhogma@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

I was wondering what you think of bruce campbell's new book if chins could kill, and do you think it would make a good movie?

Dear Billy:

I have not read the published version yet. I read the first draft and gave notes, but my good buddy, Bruce, has not yet sent me a new, signed copy. Admittedly, he's been a on a book-signing tour across America, but I want my damn book (he says he saved a 1st edition for me -- the book is on it's 4th printing already, BTW). It doesn't sound like appropriate material for a movie, but who knows?

Josh

Name: caroline
E-mail: fljonjon@aol.com

Dr. Mr. Becker,

I am currently reading some old Asimov stories and stumbled across one that I had completely forgotten about called "Time Pussy." An odd story with an equally odd title. One interesting thing about it is the fact that Asimov wrote it on the exact day that Pearl Harbor was bombed and didn't write again for two months because of all the turmoil. I don't know why but all that struck me as very interesting but maybe it's just me.

I enjoyed your Humans in Chains screenplay...Dr. Ivan? Very cute. Maybe the heyday of the post-apocalyptic film has passed. Or Costner killed it with Postman and Waterworld.

I hope your next film stars Ted Raimi again. He is one cool cat.

Best wishes, Carol

Dear Caroline:

Or maybe Spielberg is killing it now with "A. I." I don't remember "Time Pussy," I'll have to look it up and check it out. I'm sure I read it as a kid, as I read all of Asimov's sci-fi between the ages of 14 and 18. I was a big fan (although I never wrote to him or anything).

Josh

Name: Charles
E-mail: cscorder@hotmail.com

Josh:

Somebody held a gun to my head and I went to see "A.I." Next time, I'll let 'em pull the trigger. It's a Kubrick-Spielberg mutant movie baby and it's very creepy if you think about the plot. Not that you would bother. I never believed or cared about any of the characters. The whole thing left me a little cold, frankly. Yes, Kubrick was a film genius, but I think the guy was more than a little greedy. Otherwise, why would he have wanted a hit so badly that he asked Spielberg to direct "A.I. to begin with? I doubt "A.I." would make Kubrick roll over in his grave, however. He was thoroughly buried by "Eyes Wide Shut."

Any progress on "If I Had a Hammer"?

Charles

Dear Charles:

"A. I." wasn't good? I'm so surprised. I'm telling you, the one and only really good Spielberg film is "Jaws," mainly because it wasn't a Spielberg film, it was a Zanuck/Brown film. Kubrick's last good film was "A Clockwork Orange" in 1970. Between Spielberg and Kubrick, neither one made a good film in past 25 years. But I guess hope springs eternal.

I'm still trying to get this film rep in NY to handle "Hammer." His assistant liked it. It's better than a sharp stick in the eye.

Josh

Name: Diana Hawkes
E-mail: sdhawkes@penn.com

Dear Josh:

I stayed up until 2 p.m. last night watching for the first time The Godfather and The

Godfather II back to back. I would like your thoughts on two things:

1--I took particular notice of, in the first film, of the infants/children crying quite loudly in the scenes with "family". Now maybe its just my disdain for cranky children but I interpreted this detail as intentional, symbolically representing "innocence" crying out. It just seemed so prominent in the audio.

2--When taking into account the two films together, what would you say is the point? Is it to tell a tale of IRONY, that through the criminality of "the business", Micheal Corleone has slip through his fingers (despite himself) "the family" --both the closest crime family members and his actual family, his brothers, father, mother, two wives and is left with a mute son and the memory of an aborted son (and a daughter).

P.S. Any comment on this?

<http://communities.msn.co.uk/LeighsConSnaps/starfurycowpt3.msnw?action=ShowPhoto&PhotoID=479>

(my understanding is it was for charity in London!)

Dear Diana:

I think you get the point. As you do everything within your means to guard your family, you end up destroying it. I think the babies all over the place in "The Godfather" is to reinforce the family concept. As I was thinking last night, I honestly don't think there has been a film released since "The Godfather Part Two" in 1974 that's anywhere near as sophisticated, well-made and well-acted. Nothing comes close.

Josh

Name: Stephanie F.
E-mail: Pooky92800@aol.com

Dear Mr.Becker,

What kind of advice would you give to a young writer/director on doing her first big screenplay?

Curiously,
Stephanie

Dear Stephanie:

Memorize my six "Structure" essays. As William Goldman says, "tattoo the information behind your eyelids."

Josh

Name: Angela L. Wheaton
E-mail: angela.wheaton@snet.net

Hello Josh!

Many Thanks again for donating an autographed photo for my charity auction! Due to computer problems, I haven't been able to have the charity auction online until now. If you'd like to check it out, it's at: <http://alwheaties.com/Auction.html>

The Charity auction will run from July 2-August 3. I truly appreciate your participation! :)

Take Care!

Angela aka ALWheaties

Dear Angela:

My pleasure. I hope it all works out great.

Josh

Name: Diane McCrary
E-mail: dianetommcc@aol.com

Dear Josh:

Ending Dialogue: "Hello, ladies and gentlemen. This is Mrs. Norman Maine"

What picture is this from, Can't be a Star Is Born as that dialogue was "Hello Everybody"
Can you help me?

Diane

Dear Diane:

I believe you're referring to the 1937 version of "A Star is Born" with Frederic March and Janet Gaynor.

Josh

Name: Bill Weber
E-mail: batman@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

I liked the movie. I thought it was cool. I didn't look for some great epic movie. I just wanted to see a cool flick.

Dear Bill:

Since you failed to include the subject of your letter, I'm not sure what you're talking about. However, since you are saying you liked something that I didn't, I'll guess it's "Pearl Harbor." And if you liked it, God bless you.

Josh

Name: Cynthia E. Jones
E-mail: cynthiaejones@hotmail.com

Dear Josh,

I didn't mean to suggest that Jack Lemmon was the only reason I love "The Apartment." The screenplay by I.A.L. Diamond, the direction by Billy Wilder, the cinematography (thank god it's available letterboxed), Shirley MacLaine (who I like from time to time, but love in this movie), Walston, MacMurray, hell. I even love the woman who plays the secretary..."I'd like another martooni."

Regarding "Pink Flamingoes" again, did you hear about what Divine did after the final dog-poo eating scene? She rushed to the hospital, convinced that eating poo would have killed her. She hated doing it. John had convinced her to, much to her disgust, but "anything for cinema!" Luckily, she survived. He. Whatever.

--cindy

Dear Cindy:

Well, all right. I love the scene in "The Apartment" where Lemmon is at the bar, wearing his new bowler hat, getting plastered and the woman is shooting straw wrappers at him. She finally sits down beside him and asks, "What do you think about Castro?" Lemmon takes her to his apartment, she goes into the kitchen to make drinks and he spots the unconscious Shirley MacLaine in his bedroom, just as the woman from the bar says, "You ought to get a new refrigerator," Lemmon goes running out the door and she says, "I didn't mean right now."

Josh

Name: Cynthia E. Jones
E-mail: cynthiaejones@hotmail.com

Dear Josh,

So happy to see that you're a John Waters fan, or at least a "Pink Flamingos" fan. "Female Trouble" is the best. Edith Massey in bondage gear...it doesn't get any better than her. I agree with you that Waters' films have since gone downhill; I shudder to think what newcomers to Waters thought of "Cecil B. DeMented," which barely passed for cinema at all, despite the Otto Preminger references.

And, speaking from my brief Baltimore experience, I can say, no, everyone in Baltimore isn't like that.

Out of curiosity, how do you feel about Gus Van Sant? Try to forget the "Psycho" remake, I'm talking "Drugstore Cowboy," "My Own Private Idaho," and "To Die For."

--cindy

p.s. I'm upset about Jack Lemmon's death. I was hoping to someday meet him. "The Apartment" is one of my all-time favorite movies. It never fails to cheer me up when I'm down. Mostly because of Jack.

Dear Cindy:

Hey, careful about "The Apartment." Jack Lemmon is great, but so everything else. I think it's Shirley MacLaine's best film, too. The script and direction couldn't be better, and the same with Fred MacMurray and Ray Walston. I love that film. I really like "Drugstore Cowboy," but I can easily live without everything else Mr. Van Zandt has done. Meanwhile, after answering that earlier John Waters inquiry, I thought of the scene where the postman arrives at Divine's trailer and says, "Package for Divine." Divine opens the door looking flabbergasted and says, "A Package? We don't even have a fucking address." She opens the box and it's a turd. She begins lamenting, "Who? Who would send me a turd?" and Edie chimes in from her crib, "I'm sure it wasn't the Egg Man." Divine sighs wearily and says, "Oh, I'm sure it wasn't the Egg Man, either, mother. But who? Who would send a turd?"

Josh

Name: julie
E-mail: juliejhnsn7@aol.com

Dear Josh:

Hey there. JUst dropping by to say I liked your last two screenplays you put up. The Dr. Seuss collection in Jessica's room immediately put me in mind of Hank's apartment in Lunatics. And oddly I was also reminded of Member of the Wedding when Jonathan punches Raggedy Andy in the face, like John Henry does to Belle. (now i sound like a game of six degrees of separation.)

J.J.

Dear Julie:

That may well have been my influence for that scene. I love the fact that John Henry looks under the doll's skirt first, then says, "I will name you Belle," then punches it in the face. Just BTW, this was Brandon DeWilde's first film, before "Shane." He had played John Henry on Broadway.

Josh

Name: JT
E-mail: jcarroll@austin.rr.com

Heya Josh,

How does one go about finding the agent for a particular actor? Is there a directory somewhere or a compiled list or something?

JT

p.s. by the way, have you ever been to the alamo draffhouse theater down here in austin? I know thats sort of a wierd question, but it's a really cool hole-in-the-wall theater that serves beer & pizza and plays a lot of cult/art/off-the-beaten-path film fare. Bruce is going to be there tonight hyping up his book... I think he comes in once a year or so for the evildead-a-thon. You should come sometime, since your scriptwriting seminar down here was cancelled last year.

Dear JT:

I think you can just call the Screen Actor's Guild and get agent info for actors. Bruce has told me of the Alamo Draffhouse Theater and suggested that I show my movies there. he likes the place and the people that run it.

Josh

Name: Brandon Wells
E-mail: gramps@maxim-mail.com

Dear Josh:

I was scanning through your list of favorite movies to compare the movies that you've reviewed to them. On the list of movies you liked was "Pink Flamingos". I personally enjoyed the movie, but I was curious about your reasons (being that the story is not the best). What do you think of John Waters other films?

Dear Brandon:

I'm a fan of "Pink Flamingos" and "Female Trouble," both of which I think are rather exceptional in creating a self-contained world of bad taste (although all of Baltimore may be like that, I don't know). I don't really care for any of Waters' other films, which really

seem weak and tame in comparison. I actually prefer "Female Trouble," but "Pink Flamingos" made me laugh pretty hard. Zany comedies can get away with a lot as long as they're funny.

Josh

Name: August
E-mail: joxerfan@hotmail.com

Dear Josh: Dear Josh,

I actually have seen the original "Member of the Wedding," although it was long ago. I wonder if you saw the live TV version in 1982 with Pearl Bailey, directed by your man Delbert Mann? I thought it was well done, but basically a videotape of a stage play.

Two questions - for the Xena finale, do you know if Rob was making any conscious nods either to Kurosawa's "Throne of Blood" (which I love) or "A Chinese Ghost Story" (which I've never seen, but I'm told has some similarities) ?

And also, I wonder if you have any reflections on the career (and any impact or legacy) of Jack Lemmon?

Thanks,

August

Dear August:

I doubt that Kurosawa was much of an influence on Rob, but I know for a fact he's seen and likes "A Chinese Ghost Story." Regarding the TV version of "Member," as I recall, Pearl Bailey was fine, it was the pudgy-faced girl that stunk up the joint. And as for Jack Lemmon, I thought he was great in "Mr. Roberts" and "The Apartment." I thought he was darn good in "Glengarry Glen Ross," too, as well as many other things.

Josh

Name: Chopped Nuts
E-mail: danjfox@home.com

Dear Josh:

About Full-Metal Jacket: The reasoning behind all of the movie is that the war makes a big machine out of men. The photographer is the guy who tries to stand outside the machine, but becomes part of it when he kills the sniper. So he joins in singing at the end with everyone else. The only one who actually gets out is the guy who kills himself.

Dear Chopped Nuts:

It's not like I didn't understand it (I even read Gustav Hasford's book "The Short-Timers" years before seeing the movie), but let me restate my position -- I think FMJ falls flat on its dramatic face, and Matthew Modine is a painfully weak choice for the lead part. I also think it's a structural mess.

Josh

Name: Julie
E-mail: juliejhnsn7@aol

Dear Josh,

If I may hijack your question to Cynthia about Member of the Wedding. I think it's a good movie. I particularly like the actress who plays Bernice the cook, the acting is so natural and believable. It's always interesting to see a film that comes out of a play (which of course came out of a novel) and to see the story come out intact after all that is wonderful. Harris plays a great angsty girl. McCullers does a good job of providing Frankie's mixed-up angsty perspective yet making her likeable, while also showing us the bigger problems around her like racism, but she has always been able to pull of those strange balances.

And I suppose I should comment since I was addressed directly... My dear Blake, I think you must have fallen asleep at some point and the Bodysnatchers got to you. You failed to bring up any points that I found valid. And you are mistaken when you say that there were no independant reviews of AI at that time. There were quite a few including a very lengthy one on ainc.com, various newspapers, etc.

--julie

PS: I like you're latest title. Simple and to the point.

Dear Julie:

I'm so glad someone else has seen "The Member of the Wedding." Bernice was played by the great jazz/blues singer Ethel Waters. I've seen the film so many times I think I know every line in it. When John Henry asks Bernice which eye she can see better out of, her real eye or her glass eye? She says, "Oh, this glass eye don't do me no seein' good at all." And then John Henry asks, "Which eye is your mind's eye?"

Josh

Name: Carl Schmitt
E-mail: schmitc_brodie@yahoo.com

Dear Josh:

I have a few questions to ask. First I want to see AI because it looks semi-interesting to me. It does however seem to be foreshadowing a bad movie. Anyway Josh you said that Clockwork was Kubrick's last good movie, I was wondering what you thought about Full Metal Jacket. Another thing I was wondering was what you thought of Episode One. I don't know if you've been asked that or not. Also, it's a ways off the subject, but I was wondering what you thought of Kevin Smith's film. Clerks, Chasing Amy, Dogma? Thanks for your time.

Dear Carl:

I think "Full Metal Jacket" is a pretty half-assed movie. It's OK for the first half-hour of the basic training sequence, but that goes on yet another unnecessary half hour, then everything in Vietnam just seems bogus. I didn't believe a word of it, and I was never sure why I was following a photographer instead of a grunt. The big finale with the girl sniper means nothing. Oh my God, it's a girl. So what? She's shot a half dozen guys by then. Regarding that other Kevin Smith, I think he is clueless. "Clerks" and "Dogma" are two of the worst films I've ever seen in my life, clearly made by someone that's utterly inept at screenwriting and film direction. As to "Episode One," I don't know what that is.

Josh

Name: Blake Eckard
E-mail: bseckard@hotmail.com

Dear Josh:

Now, what the hell.

How in the world can anyone call anyone a sucker for wanting to see a movie that nobody has seen, including you, Julie?

And as far as what S. Kubrick did on "A.I.", look Julie, it doesn't sound like you're much of a Kubrick fan as it is... or maybe it should be "Mr Have It His Way". Yes, it's now a Spielberg picture, and I understand that it's probably miles away from what it once was. But, I still want to see what Kubrick was working on from the early 90's until his death. Apparently, you've reserved yourself from liking this picture since its conception as a film? How do you know that he did any "damage" to the original story? I suppose you're also one of the people that went psycho over what Kubrick did to "The Shining"? Kubrick made movies. Who cares what happens to a book or short story when made into a picture...It's a completely different medium.

Besides, a science fiction story with certain fairy tale overtones sounds interesting to me...But, I guess I'd be a sucker for thinking that.

Well, enough of this shit. Back to normal Becker questions?

Have a good one, everybody.

Blake Eckard

Dear Blake:

Having read and enjoyed Stephen King's book long before seeing Kubrick's film, I'd say Kubrick pretty seriously fucked-up King's book, then made a lousy film on top it (admittedly, that TV thing was way worse). When I originally saw the film, I was fairly certain that Kubrick had screwed-up King's book just for the sake of messing with it, to prove that he had the power, not King. That's why King had it remade. I will restate my position which I stated in my review of "Eyes Wide Shut" -- Stanley Kubrick's career was over after "A Clockwork Orange" in 1970. Everything he did after that was junk, and I have no doubt that "A.I." continues the trend.

Josh

Name: F. R.
E-mail: swanlandprods@yahoo.com

Hey, Josh!

Your comments about Asimov were very enlightening. I hadn't known that there *was* a book from which "Bicentennial Man" came. That's movies for you, always "changing history" -- just think of all the extremely crappy period films lately ("Patriot," "Knight's Tale," etc.) -- and messing around with the source material so much that you can barely recognize it any more. If Data *did* come from the ideas of Asimov (and I've heard that before), then it would make sense that, oddly, "Bicentennial Man" was a return to Asimov, since the movie certainly seemed like (a really sappy, sentimental) version of Data to me.

Frankly, I've just never read Asimov, even though of course I know he was a great influence, etc. Which of his many, many books would you recommend to a (gulp!) virgin reader like me?

BTW, I like the "Film: The Lost Art" title. Simple, but intriguing -- "hey, what do you mean, 'lost'?" "It's the 'art' part that's lost, stupid -- buy the book and you'll see!"

best,
F. R.

Dear F.R.:

If you want to know about Asimov's robot stories, the first collection is, "I, Robot." However, as first book I would recommend "Nightfall," which is just a good short story collection.

Josh

Name: F. R.
E-mail: swanlandprods@yahoo.com

Howdy, Josh!

I love this discussion about a title for a book of your essays! (And, to paraphrase "Robocop," I'd certainly pay a buck for *that*!) It has to include your structure essays, of course, because they will establish the whole premise of "why your movie sucks" and "why I hate your movie" (both titles I liked). I seem to like the idea of a subtitle, such as "The Decline of the Auteur and the Rise of the Suits," or "Suffering through Films in a Post-Logical Age," or "Why Car Chases and Explosions are Not an Adequate Substitute for Plot and Character." Oops, a bit wordy. . . oh, well. ;)

I also have to dispute one more of the Xena posters ("Samantha," I think). She contends Xena *didn't* go out in "a blaze of glory"?!? The character single-handedly fought three armies of Samurai warriors -- if that's not "glory," for heaven's sake, what *is*?! And, guess what, our friends and loved ones die before us, and we must go on -- it's sad, but that's literally *life*! Besides, I thought it was great that the producers and writers found a way to bring full circle two ongoing threads of the series: one, that Xena could never find for herself a sense of "redemption" for all the suffering she inflicted, and, two, that Gabrielle wanted to become a strong warrior like Xena (and, I guess, continue her writing as a side-project?). The concluding episodes gave both of these subplots closure: Xena chose the ultimate self-sacrifice to redeem others and thus redeem herself, and Gabrielle took on all the warrior characteristics of Xena without the burden of a history of wanton killing of innocents. *Pretty damn good wrap-up,* if you ask me.

So, anyway. I also fear the worst from "A.I." Looks totally Spielberg-hokey-fied to me. In fact, it looks like a remake of the execrable "Bicentennial Man." Which, in turn, is a rip-off of Data in "Star Trek Next Generation," but now I digress.

have a groovy day,
F. R.

Dear F.R.:

As an old Isaac Asimov fan I must take exception to your final comment. The book "The Bicentennial Man" came out in 1975, long, long before there was a "Star Trek, The Next Generation." Also, everything that Data is comes from Asimov's robot stories. Data is an Asimov rip-off.

Title-wise, here's one I'm seriously thinking about: "Film: The Lost Art."

Josh

Name: Cynthia E. Jones
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Dear Josh,

I'm living five miles away from Dryden, a creepy town in upstate New York where apparently some guy killed two cheerleaders recently. There is an incredibly high domestic violence rate around here. Good movies are the only answer.

If you could recommend some Desert Island VHS films (preferably 1:33 to 1 aspect ratio) from the 30s and 40s I would be very appreciative. I tried to watch "Executive Suite" last night but it didn't do anything for me. William Holden, Shelley Winters, Barbara Stanwyck...it felt like an all-star excuse for a film to me. Any thoughts?

Thanks for hating Speilberg,

cindy

Dear Cindy:

I have my list of favorite films here and I stand behind it. I'm sure there are at least a hundred films you haven't seen on the list that are very much worth seeing. Here's a film I love to death that not everybody likes, "The Member of the Wedding" (1953) with Julie Harris, Ethel Waters and Brandon DeWilde, directed by the great Fred Zinnemann. If you see it, let me know what you think.

Josh

Name: julie
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Dammit Blake.

Spielberg trying to pin this film on Kubrick is sad. The guy's dead leave him out of this. Yes he worked on it for awhile. He pissed of the author of "Supertoys Last All Summer Long" by turning it into Pinnochio, which the author said was silly because he would never rewrite a fairy tale. But Mr. Have It My Way insisted. That's the extent of the damage done by Kubrick. Speilberg screwed this one up all by himself and his insistence that Kubrick's spirit was "with him all during the making of the film" is cowardly.

OK I got that off my chest. Feeling better now, really.

Anyone who spends a dime on this flick is a sucker.

Dear Julie:

Right on! You go, girlfriend.

Josh

Name: Blake Eckard
E-mail: bseckard@hotmail.com

Josh,

You won't go to see "A.I." but you went to watch "Perl Harbor"...I don't understand. Isn't it worth viewing just to see not only what Spielberg has done, but also to gain some sort of an impression of what Kubrick was working on for all those years?

You once said you would like to see Orson Welles' last (unreleased/unfinished) film "The

"Other Side Of The Wind" just to see it, even though you felt it wouldn't be any good...Doesn't this fall into the same type of situation?

Besides, how can you give Bay a chance over Spielberg? Spielberg, after all has made a good many more great films than Bay...Bay has done three movies that are all absolutely corrupt and boring. Where's the reasoning?

Have a good one.

Blake Eckard

Dear Blake:

The reasoning is simple -- Sam Raimi called me the day after he wrapped "Spiderman" and asked if I wanted to see PH with him. This was so utterly unexpected -- I think the last film Sam and I saw together was "Robocop 2" (his selection again) in 1990 -- that I had to take him up on it. Left to my own accord I never would have seen it. Nevertheless, regarding your reasons for seeing "A.I.", here are mine for not seeing it: 1.) Spielberg's saccharine sentimentality creeps me out far worse than Michael Bay's knuckleheaded stupidity, 2.) "Eyes Wide Shut" proves that Kubrick's idea of a good story in his latter years was completely bogus, and 3.) "A.I." looks to me like "E.T." without the Carlo Rambaldi rubber suit.

Josh

Name: Blake Eckard
E-mail: bseckard@hotmail.com

Dear Josh: Josh,

I definately think "The Last Good Picture Show: Can Anyone Recall?" is the best proposed title for your book so far. Hits the nail on the head.

Now, have you been approached to write it, or just trying to get interest? Are there any essays in it that aren't on this web site?

Are you going to go see A.I.? I hope it's a good one. It looks like it could be. I'm still waiting for a positive review from J. Becker.

Have a good one.

The best,

Blake Eckard

Dear Blake:

"A.I." looks good to you? You couldn't drag me kicking and screaming to see it. All the essays and reviews are I am working with are all posted on the site, and no, no one

approached me, this is my idea.

Josh

Name: Samantha
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Dear Josh:

Hi, I was just wondering how many people did not like the ending to Xena? Speaking from one fan who was a little up set with the way it ended, Thought at least Gabby would die with out her...It was not a blaze of glory how xena died...I thought her and gabby would go together, and die like true warriors....

Dear Samantha:

I guess you were wrong.

Josh

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