

THE HUFFINGTON POST

JUNE 23, 2009

- HOME
- POLITICS
- MEDIA
- BUSINESS
- ENTERTAINMENT
- LIVING
- STYLE
- GREEN
- WORLD
- COMEDY 23/6
- NEW YORK
- CHICAGO
- VIDEO
- BLOGGER INDEX
- ARCHIVE
- Get Email Alerts
- Make HuffPost Your HomePage



FAKE! Jon & Kate Divorce Papers: Lived 'Separate And Apart' TWO YEARS



PHOTOS: Miley Cyrus Photo Uproar: Innocent Or Too Sexy? (POLL)



Phil Spector In 'Sensitive Needs' Area Of Prison



Michael Giltz

Freelance writer and raconteur

Posted: May 16, 2009 07:40 PM

- BIO
- Get Email Alerts
- Become a Fan
- Bloggers' Index

Cannes 2009 Day Four: Finally, A Great Film!



Read More: [A Prophet The Movie](#), [Aboriginals, Cannes Film Festival](#), [Cannes Movie Reviews](#), [France](#), [Jaffa The Movie](#), [Movies](#), [Samson](#), [Entertainment News](#)

Buzz up! Be the First to Submit This Story to Digg

Get Breaking News Alerts

never spam

Share Print Comments

Over the weekend, I'll just post reviews. Come Monday, I'll offer up some interviews and tidbits, so keep checking out the Entertainment page.

A PROPHET -- **** (OUT OF FOUR) A sigh of relief. Sometimes at Cannes, it can take days and days to see even a halfway decent film. You despair of liking anything. Not so this year. The Opening Night film was the delightful *Up*. And Thursday and Friday offered a range of films that appealed to different people in one way or another. But no more caveats: this morning was

the premiere of *Un Prophete* and it was received with a rush of enthusiastic applause by the critics. (By the way, when people say a film was greeted with a standing ovation at Cannes, they're referring to the evening performance for invited guests and the stars where a standing ovation is almost obligatory. It's the morning screening for the critics where people will applaud and boo with gusto and that's the reception that matters.) It's a familiar story, but of course one could say that about virtually any film. But when a film is specific and true, when its characters come alive, it doesn't matter if you're watching boy meets girl or a mother fighting to keep her family together or a triumph over adversity. When it's done well, it becomes fresh all over again.

In this case, it's the story of a harmless young man sent to prison for some unknown crime. Within minutes, it seems, he's entered a horror zone where men attack and beat him with impunity. Soon, one of the strong men of the prison -- the Corsican leader Cesar (Niels Arestrup) -- is demanding our hero Malik (Tahir Rahim) kill another prisoner slated to testify in court. Malik is a mutt, of sorts, and can pass between many groups but is despised by all. The Muslims see him as Corsican, the Corsicans see him as a dirty Arab, the gypsies see him as weak, the guards don't see him at all and when he's beaten there is no one to help. Will Malik commit the murder? Will he become hardened and cruel or get eaten alive or somehow survive but maintain his humanity? That's the

People.com

Sarah Jessica Parker and Matthew Broderick Reveal Twins' Names [READ MORE](#)

Robert Pattinson Films by Day, Prowls by Night [READ MORE](#)

Gosselins Go Their Separate Ways [READ MORE](#)

[More Celebrity News at People.com](#)

Don't Miss HuffPost Bloggers

Gavin Newsom
The Nation's Most Ambitious Recycling Law

T. Boone Pickens
Propane and the Pickens Plan

Popular Stories on HuffPost

Johnny Depp As Mad Hatter, Helena Bonham Carter's Red

question that drives this engrossing and terrific film. We know Malik is smart. He takes advantage of the prison school and learns how to read and write; he picks up Corsican just by listening to the men talk. And when he peeks into the Muslim prayer service, we wonder: is Malik being drawn to faith or just trying to make inroads on another group that might be able to protect him? Co-writer and director Jacques Audiard has made some very good films this decade. *Read My Lips* was a fun thriller about a deaf woman partnering with her lover to pull off a crime. *The Beat That My Heart Skipped* was an unlikely remake of the cult film *Fingers* by James Toback that surpassed the original. But this film is a major leap forward. It's visually gripping, with shadowy passages interspersed throughout the film where all we see is a fuzzy glimpse of what is happening or might be happening soon. (Don't forget the title of the film is "A Prophet.") And the score is sparsely used and very effective: at key moments, the theme overwhelms the action and transports Malik from a man going about his furtive business to a person taking charge of his destiny. Both lead actors are exceptional and I'm certain it will snag at least one major award. Perhaps it is this year's *Gomorra*, a crime film that was embraced by critics but didn't quite break out in the US. But however this fares commercially, you don't want to miss it.

JAFFA -- ** (out of four) A melodramatic Israeli film with some nicely restrained acting by two lovers surrounded by scenery chewing and a cheap, intrusive score. The set-up has potential. An Israeli family owns a garage where the two main mechanics are Arabs (perhaps Palestinians?) good at their jobs. Unfortunately, they're overseen by the tiresome owner's son who can't be bothered to do any work but makes everyone else's lives miserable. (His own mother calls him a plague.) What's immediately apparent is that the daughter is in love with the sweet-faced, younger Arab mechanic and they're planning to elope right away (she's pregnant). A tragic accident/crime ensues and everyone is miserable from then on. Frankly, it's hard to take seriously a film where a young woman ages almost a decade -- and suddenly has a 9 year old daughter to prove it -- but looks exactly the same.

MOTHER -- ** 1/2 (out of four) Bong Joon Ho's *The Host* -- the best monster movie in years -- was so much fun I can't help being a bit let down by his new film, even though it has merit. A mentally challenged young man is railroaded by the police into confessing to the murder of a high school girl that has shocked the community. He was seen in the area where the body was found, drinking and flirting with another high school girl just hours earlier. Finding a golf ball with his name on it near the body didn't help his case either. What's to investigate? But the young man's determined mother wants to clear his name. She starts by hiring the most expensive attorney in town but he's too dismissive. So Mother stars investigating on her own, discovering that the murdered girl was famously promiscuous and had a cell phone with pictures of all the men that slept with her. Wouldn't any loving mother hide in the homes of thugs to get evidence, hire people to beat up potential witnesses and get information or do just about anything to free her son? Both the mother and her son are well-acted, but after the fifth or so shocking revelation, the story becomes both more far fetched and more predictable. That doesn't take away from the central appeal of the revenge/justice engine that drives the film. But it's ultimately more of a melodrama than a gripping portrayal of what love can drive people to do.

SAMSON & DELILAH -- *** (out of four) One of my most anticipated films of the fest isn't a home run but it's unquestionably an accomplished debut and the start of a promising career for director/writer/editor/cinematographer/composer and for all I know caterer Warwick Thornton. This Australian talent has crafted an almost silent film about two young people who fall in love -- one warily and one guilelessly. Samson is a huffer (a kid addicted to breathing in toxic fumes from paint or gasoline or anything else that can get you high); he's got a brother in a band who plays the same damn song with his mates over and over again. Delilah is a capable girl taking care of her aged grandmother while they craft lovely art sold far from their aboriginal home for a lot more money than they are paid. Scene after scene unfolds with virtually no dialogue, though no big deal is made about this and it's done so artfully you won't think much of it until you're halfway through the film and realized how little dialogue is actually spoken. Samson brings his bedroll over to Delilah's home. She tosses it over the fence. He puts it back over the fence. She tosses it out again. He wears her down and sleeps by the fire far from where she rests. But in the morning his bedroll is right next to hers. She tosses it onto the fire. It doesn't stop him. The sweet, almost comic tone of the film slips away when Delilah's grandmother dies and a burst of violence sends them far from their aboriginal community into town where we realize how outcast they truly are. If they walk into a supermarket, the guards follow them around suspiciously. Even walking down the road they are targets for disdain and violence. Numerous tragic turns -- including one major "cheat" by the film; that is, a misleading plot twist where we are denied information to create undue suspense -- give this once romantic tale a very sober, dispiriting tone. But the leads are winning and the film is

Queen And Anne Hathaway's White Queen: FIRST LOOK (PHOTOS)

The Tim Burton...

Mark Sanford: Where Is He? "Hiking"

COLUMBIA, S.C. — South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford has been hiking along the Appalachian Trail,...

Bruno In Berlin: Dons Pink Bodysuit With Nipples And A Penis (PHOTOS)

Sacha Baron Cohen's Bruno continued his ridiculous...

Bernard-Henri Lévy The Swan Song of the Islamic Republic

Whatever happens from this point on, nothing will ever be the same in...

Dr. Mark Hyman The 7 Keys to UltraWellness: Discover Why You are Sick and How You Can Heal

Frank Serpico NYPD in Black and White

"What did you think of the shooting in the city the other day?" my friend on the other end of the line asked....

The Sexiest PETA Ads Of All Time! You Choose The Winner! (SLIDESHOW) (POLL)

In the wake of Lydia Guevara, Che's Granddaughter,...

McCain Hits Obama On Iran Again, Joe Klein Tells Him "Be Quiet" (VIDEO)

Sen. John McCain continued to rap President Barack...

Obama Father's Day Treat: The Dairy Godmother Visited By Sasha, Malia And Obama For Treats (PHOTOS)

SCROLL DOWN FOR PHOTOS ALEXANDRIA,

Perez Hilton Called Will.i.am A "F*gg*t" Pre-Fight

TORONTO — Police have charged the tour manager of the Black Eyed Peas with...

Unemployment: The Hardest-Hit States (CHART)

Michigan has the highest unemployment rate of any state at 14.1 percent,...

beautifully shot. Not an image is wasted or out of place in this confident, fine film. And who knew that aboriginal convicts are big fans of country and western singer Charley Pride? You learn something new every day.

KINATAY -- * 1/2 (out of four) No normal person would enjoy *Kinatay*, a slight, unremarkable movie about a young police officer in training dragooned against his will into the horrific killing and dismembering of a stripper by his fellow cops. And yet, in the context of a film festival, I can find myself saying, "Yes, of course, it was better than his last film *Serbis*." (Low bar. Really low bar.) Or something like, "And yes, now that you mention it, I DID find a bit of tension out of the 45 minutes devoted to a simple car ride from one city to another shot in murky darkness and with minimal dialogue." It is indeed more coherent than Brillante Mendoza's earlier work. The storytelling was more vigorous and focused before it devolved into one simple action told at ponderous length. And as Mendoza overcomes the countless obstacles to a vibrant film community in the Phillipines, it makes sense that smart programmers would take notice of his movies and continued development as an artist. But trust me, you don't want to see it.

Related News On Huffington Post:



Heath Ledger's Final Performance Screens At Cannes
CANNES, France — Heath Ledger's zeal roused his co-stars to up their game in his final film, and his death inspired them _ and three...



CANNES: Ang Lee's 'Taking Woodstock' Premieres (PHOTOS)
(AP Article, Scroll for HuffPo Slideshow) CANNES, France - Ang Lee views his 1970s drama "The Ice Storm" as a representation of the disillusionment of...



CANNES: Jane Campion's "Bright Star" Premiere With Star-Studded Red Carpet (PHOTOS)
(AP Article, Huffington Post slideshow) CANNES, France - Jane Campion figured the best way to get modern audiences to love John Keats was to present...



CANNES: Festival Opens With Glamour, Stars And 3-D (PHOTOS)
(SCROLL FOR PHOTOS) CANNES, France — The evening gowns glittered, the red carpet was unfurled _ and the 3-D glasses were at hand as the...

Related Blogs On Huffington Post:



Michael Giltz: Cannes 2009 Exclusive: *My Neighbor, My Killer* Director Anne Aghion On Rwanda (Video)
Coming to Cannes is usually a no-brainer for any film that gets invited. But for film-maker Anne Aghion, accepting an invitation to bring her documentary...



Michael Giltz: Cannes 2009 Day Six Reviews: Football, Fascism, Death and Porn
It remains a quiet fest in the market and late at night but definitely exciting and vibrant when it comes to the new films screening in and out of Competition.



Karin Badt: Cannes Buzz: Which Film Will Win?
All charismatic, powerful men ruthlessly destroy other people's lives as they cheer on "Vincere!"



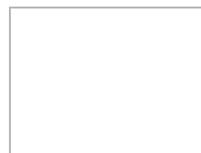
Karin Badt: Cannes 2009: The Underside of the Philippines
What I want to show in my film is the abuse of power; the police are like god. They can butcher people. I don't expect people to like the film, but I want them to think about it after they go to bed.

More Blog Posts: « First Prev 1 2 3 4 5 6 Next Last »

Around the Web:

- [Festival de Cannes - Du 13 au 24 mai 2009](#)
- [Cannes - A Festival Virgin's Guide | Festival and travel advice ...](#)
- [Festival de Cannes - Du 13 au 24 mai 2009](#)
- [Cannes 2009: Fun in the sun - Features, Films - The Independent](#)

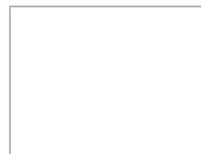
More in Entertainment...



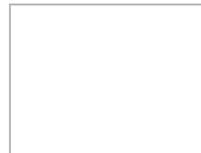
Top Ten Things You Don't Want To Hear From Your Kids On Father's Day (VIDEO)
Letterman explained this week that Father's Day is the superbowl...



Elisabeth Hasselbeck Sued For Plagiarism Over G-Free Diet Book
BOSTON — Elisabeth Hasselbeck, a co-host of ABC's "The View," has been...



Sarkozy: Burqas Are 'Not Welcome' In France
PARIS — President Nicolas Sarkozy declared Monday that the Islamic burqa is not welcome in...



Here's To You, Dad: HuffPost Readers Share Their Father's Day Stories
On Thursday, we asked for your stories about your dads affected...

HUFFPOST'S BIG NEWS PAGES



Barack Obama



Video



Iran



Sports



HIV/AIDS



Dick Cheney



Jon & Kate Plus 8



Photo Galleries



Somalia

[MORE BIG NEWS PAGES](#)

Crocodile Alert For French Village

French Burqa Ban Commission Created

Sarkozy: Burqas Are 'Not Welcome' In France

Johnny Depp As Mad Hatter, Helena Bonham...

digg™ HuffPost Stories Surging Right Now

40 diggs

digg it

World Of Warcraft FREAKOUT: Boy Films Brother Going Insane After Parents Cancel His Online

16 diggs

digg it

Bruce Wilson: Defense Department-Certified Agency Newsletter Suggests Killing Democrats

65 diggs

digg it

McCain Hits Obama On Iran Again, Joe Klein Tells Him "Be Quiet" (VIDEO)

32 diggs

digg it

Chris Weigant: Barney Frank Introduces Marijuana Legislation

Ads by Google

Background Checks

Get A Great Local Choice Of Background Checks.

BackgroundChecks.Go-Co.net

Comments **2** Pending Comments **0**

[FAQ: Comments & Moderation](#) [FAQ: HuffPost Accounts](#)

[Get the HuffPost iPhone App.](#)

Want to reply to a comment? Hint: Click "Reply" at the bottom of the comment; after being approved your comment will appear directly underneath the comment you replied to

View Comments: [Newest](#) [Expand](#)
[First](#) [All](#)

Arthur Lefebvre *I'm a Fan of Arthur Lefebvre* [permalink](#)

I know this was probably posted before you saw it but, what did you think of Anti Christ that seems to be the one that the blogs are talking about?

Favorite Flag as abusive Posted 11:54 AM on 05/18/2009

AContrario *I'm a Fan of AContrario* [permalink](#)

"But when a film is specific and true, when its characters come alive, it doesn't matter if you're watching boy meets girl or a mother fighting to keep her family together or a triumph over adversity. When it's done well, it becomes fresh all over again."

You nailed it.

Favorite Flag as abusive Posted 09:52 AM on 05/18/2009

Comments are closed for this entry

You must be [logged in](#) to reply to this comment. [Log in](#) or

Ads by Google

Background Checks

Get A Great Local Choice Of Background Checks.

BackgroundChecks.Go-Co.net

Google™ Custom Search

[HOME](#) [POLITICS](#) [MEDIA](#) [BUSINESS](#) [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [LIVING](#) [GREEN](#) [STYLE](#) [WORLD](#) [CHICAGO](#) [COMEDY](#) [FUNDRAISE](#)

[Advertise](#) | [Log In](#) | [Make HuffPost your Home Page](#) | [RSS](#) | [Jobs](#) | [FAQ: Comments & Moderation](#) | [FAQ: Huffpost Accounts](#) | [Contact Us](#)
Copyright © 2009 HuffingtonPost.com, Inc. | [Archive](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Comment Policy](#) | [About Us](#) | [Powered by Movable Type](#)