

August 29, 2012

# HUFF POST ENTERTAINMENT

Edition: U.S. ▾



FRONT PAGE POLITICS BUSINESS MEDIA CELEBRITY TV COMEDY FOOD STYLE ARTS BOOKS LIVE | ALL SECTIONS

Entertainment | Celebrity TV Political Hollywood Features Hollywood Buzz Videos

## THE BLOG

Featuring fresh takes and real-time analysis from HuffPost's signature lineup of contributors

### HOT ON THE BLOG

Bill Moyers  
John Hillcoat

Dean Baker  
Bobby Bowden

HuffPost Social Reading



**Michael Giltz**

GET UPDATES FROM MICHAEL GILTZ

Freelance writer

Like 102

## Theater: *Storefront Church* Testifies! Can I Get an Amen?

Posted: 06/12/2012 1:09 am

React > Inspiring Funny Hot Scary Outrageous Amazing Weird Crazy

Follow > Theatre, Video, Breaking Bad, Giancarlo Esposito, John Patrick Shanley, Drama, Off-Broadway, Entertainment News

SHARE THIS STORY

---

Submit this story

**STOREFRONT CHURCH** \*\* 1/2 out of \*\*\*\*  
**LINDA GROSS THEATER FOR ATLANTIC THEATER COMPANY**

John Patrick Shanley's new play focuses on storefront churches -- those optimistic, home-grown, sometimes shady, often ramshackle but sincere houses of worship

that spring up in poorer neighborhoods. Someone feels the spirit calling them and they rent a space and set out a few chairs and commence to testifying. Maybe people show up. Maybe they don't. Sure they're businesses, but done right they're in the business of saving souls, not making money.

Shanley is a lucky fellow. Thanks to his talent, when the spirit moves him and he has something to say, a

### SPONSOR GENERATED POST



**Help Us Write 'The Words'**

Quick Read | Comments (27) | 08.20.2012

### FOLLOW US

### MOST POPULAR ON HUFFPOST

1 of 2

**Chipotle Busted For Cheating Customers Out Of Pennies**  
Like 1k

**Republican Attendees Thrown Out After Racist Attack On CNN Worker**  
Like 13k

**PHOTO: The Queen Rolls In A Range Rover Wearing A Hoodie**  
Like 1k

**RPatz Agrees To Meet KStew But Is Selling Their Home**  
Like 105

**Deaf Boy Asked To Make Controversial Change (VIDEO)**  
Like 4k

**MAP: Hurricane Isaac's Path Aims For Gulf Coast**  
Recommend 295

talented cast will walk into his store and pitch in. Shanley won the Oscar for *Moonstruck*, the Pulitzer and Tony for *Doubt* and directed Meg Ryan to to her delightful best in the cult favorite movie *Joe Versus The Volcano*. But he's probably smart enough to value above all the artists who always show up for the long shot that is a new play.

He certainly felt the need to witness. Not to the travails of the Church, as in *Doubt*, but the travails of people, especially those swept away by the financial meltdown of the last few years. His new work is set in 2009 and begins with an old man (Bob Dishy) trying to convince a loan officer (Zach Grenier) to give his wife an extension on her mortgage. The officer refuses to engage the old man as a human being and sticks to his script -- catch up on your mortgage payments or the bank will foreclose -- and the old man fails spectacularly, collapsing in a heap on the office floor.

The next scene finds the old man's wife Jessie (Tony winner Tonya Pinkins in full comic mode) pleading with Bronx Borough President Donaldo (Giancarlo Esposito of *Breaking Bad*) to please help her before she's kicked out of her home. Slowly, the story comes into focus. Jessie took out a second loan to pay for renovations on her home, money spent by a tenant named Chester Kimmich. Chester (Ron Cephas Jones) is a preacher and he wants to open a storefront church in her ground floor. But Chester isn't paying his rent and he hasn't begun preaching and Jessie is at the end of her wits. Chester has the Spirit in him, Jessie believes, so she won't confront him. But maybe Donaldo could help with the bank? Donaldo doesn't want to get involved but when he finds out his mother has co-signed the second mortgage, he agrees to go see Chester.

Until now, the play has wavered in and out of focus. Shanley is too talented not to provide some humor and vivid characters. But the tone is all over the map and some of the characters -- especially the twitchy, facially deformed loan officer who was shot in the face by his (now ex-) wife -- feel like "characters" instead of people.

Then Donaldo walks into the storefront church where Chester sits quietly in the dark, struggling. In an electrifying and absorbing scene, these two sterling actors confront each other. Here's what's happening, we think: Chester is having a crisis of faith and Donaldo has been sucked into his life so Chester can be woken out of his slumber.

But the Lord works in mysterious ways and in act two our understanding of what happened in that scene is upended. Donaldo is the one having a crisis of conscience and Chester has been placed in his path to save the politician. Donaldo is doing business with the bank CEO (a not overly oily Jordan Lage) who wants Donaldo to support a \$300 million mall in the Bronx. Chester knows it's a soul-sucking enterprise with minimum wage jobs that in a way is exactly what his community doesn't need. But making such a high-profile project work could be his stepping stone to the mayor's office or even the governor's mansion. And of course once he's in power, then Donaldo could really make a difference. So why not compromise now?

(By the way, I don't necessarily agree with the show's economic outlook about a new mall in a depressed neighborhood. But then proposing a waste treatment facility or some such thing would have been too heavy-handed, so there's no pleasing some people, is there?)

Also floundering is that loan officer. He feels literally dead inside, lost and alone, stumbling through the detritus of his life and waiting for the release of death.

Those are weighty ideas but *Storefront Church* only really finds its footing in that wonderful scene at the end of the act one and during part of the climactic sermonizing that ends the show. In between Pinkins and Dishy and the rest nail their comic lines and try to anchor the broad moments in reality.

But the play feels too schematic, as if Shanley decided he wanted to talk about the real estate bubble and then worked his way backwards to these people, this story. Grenier is a wonderful actor but he can only do so much to humanize the broad brushstrokes that are the loan officer, though God knows he makes the most out of lines like "I really don't understand." Lage is good as the wily capitalist but having him demolish a gingerbread house piece by piece with rapacious glee is hitting the nail on the head too neatly.

The play goes for a cinematic effect during two awkward scenes: in each one, a character (first the loan officer and then Donaldo) are seen outside by a bench, wordlessly dealing with their pain and confusion as music swells in the background (one song is by Antony and the Johnsons, the other was unknown to me). It didn't help that the background showing the city skyline by set designer Takeshi Kata was a little too stylized for my tastes. I was too aware of it as a pretty backdrop. The sets in general were solid, but cinematic-like scenes such as these either work completely or don't at all. These didn't.

While it was good to see Donaldo taking up the mantle of his father and preaching, if only for a little while, where was Chester's big speech at the end? It seems anti-climactic that Chester was more like a counselor leading an AA meeting than a preacher. He was opening his church at the finale, set free by a God who had a plan for him and had finally revealed it. Jones was so good in act one, I was waiting to hear him unleash some Holy Ghost Power at the end. His moment never came.

Shanley is blessed with an ideal cast and directs them ably moment to moment; they elevate this work



[GOP Approves Abortion Ban](#)

Recommend 9k



[Slash Caught Fellow Rocker Naked With His Mom](#)

Like 251



[The Most Awkward Wedding Photobombs](#)

Like 1k

DON'T MISS HUFFPOST BLOGGERS 1 of 5



**Bill Moyers**

[WATCH: Both Parties Give Invisible Americans the Silent Treatment](#)



**Dean Baker**

[Poverty: The New Growth Industry in America](#)

TOP VIDEO PICKS 1 of 6

[Ann's Love For Mitt, Jon Voight on Jolie-Pitt Kids and Politics](#)



[Where Are They Now? The Cast of Dirty Dancing 25 Years Later!](#)



[Elizabeth Olsen Sports Pink Hair](#)

MOST DISCUSSED RIGHT NOW 1 of 2

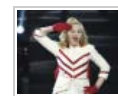


[Guess Who's Playing Reagan Now](#)



[What's Your Favorite Michael Jackson Memory?](#)

HOT ON FACEBOOK 1 of 3



[Madonna's Message For Americans: 'Don't Get Fat And Lazy'](#)



[WATCH: Raging Grannies Have Some Words For Todd Akin](#)

with their full-hearted performances. With their help, maybe he can refocus and find the right tone and story. When it comes to the predatory loan practices of the meltdown or the faceless greed of Big Business, maybe a little less preaching? Because when Shanley puts all those machinations aside and finds two men in a room, struggling with themselves to understand what God wants from them (or even just what they want from themselves), why that's when you hear the rhythm of that old time religion, the one Shanley believes in: theater.

#### THE THEATER SEASON 2012-2013 (on a four star scale)

[Chimichangas And Zoloft](#) \*

[Cock](#) \*\* 1/2

[My Children! My Africa!](#) \*\*\*

[Once On This Island](#) \*\*\*

[Potted Potter](#) \*

[Storefront Church](#) \*\* 1/2

[Title And Deed](#) \*\*\*

Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the cohost of [Showbiz Sandbox](#), a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's [available](#) for free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his [website](#) and his [daily blog](#). Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called [Popsurfing](#) and also [available](#) for free on iTunes. Link to him on Netflix and [gain](#) access to thousands of ratings and reviews.

**Note:** Michael Giltz is provided with free tickets to shows with the understanding that he will be writing a review.

Follow Michael Giltz on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/michaelgiltz](http://www.twitter.com/michaelgiltz)

#### FOLLOW ENTERTAINMENT

Like 75k

GET ALERTS

[More in Entertainment...](#)

[Guns N' Roses  
Slash Once Caught  
David...](#)

[Samuel L. Jackson:  
'Unfair' Hurricane  
Isaac AVOID...](#)

['2016: Obama's  
America' Fact-  
Check](#)

[Rachel Weisz &  
Terrence Malick: 'To  
The...](#)

## Comments

1

Pending Comments 0

[View FAQ](#)

Comments are closed for this entry

View All

Recency | Popularity

[apgold](#)  
12 Fans

02:45 PM on 06/23/2012

I saw this last night and I think your review articulated what was wrong with the play. I also thought the mixture of comedy and drama was off balance. But the cast was wonderful, either way. Oh and the song in the first act when Zach Grenier was crying on the park bench was "Into My Arms" by Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds.

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

 HOT ON TWITTER

1 of 2



[ricky\\_martin](#)

Make Room for (the New) Daddy  
<http://t.co/Q6eIDokm> via  
[@huffingtonpost](#)

Retweet

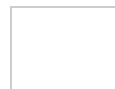


[feliciaday](#)

Think on it: Cambridge scientists say all mammals, birds, many others including octopi, have human-like consciousness.  
<http://t.co/aF6W2ZQh>

Retweet

#### HUFFPOST'S BIG NEWS PAGES



[Celebrity babies](#)



[John McCain](#)



[Mitch McConnell](#)



[Strange Crime](#)



[Rand Paul](#)



[Ron Paul](#)



[Social Media](#)



[Paul Ryan](#)



[Oasis 2012](#)

[MORE BIG NEWS PAGES »](#)



August 30, 2012

# HUFFPOST ARTS & CULTURE

Edition: U.S. ▾



FRONT PAGE ENTERTAINMENT ARTS BOOKS TV SCIENCE STYLE NEW YORK LOS ANGELES DETROIT LIVE | ALL SECTIONS

Arts & Culture · Painting Film Design Photography Theater Dance Architecture Female Artists Art Meets Science



Featuring fresh takes and real-time analysis from HuffPost's signature lineup of contributors

### HOT ON THE BLOG

Bill Moyers  
John Hillcoat

Dean Baker  
Bobby Bowden

HuffPost Social Reading



**Michael Giltz**

Freelance writer

GET UPDATES FROM MICHAEL GILTZ

Like 102

FOLLOW US

## Theater: FringeNYC RoundUp -- Country Gals, Crime Scene Photos, Convents and More

Posted: 08/26/2012 4:16 pm

React > [Amazing](#) [Inspiring](#) [Funny](#) [Scary](#) [Hot](#) [Crazy](#) [Important](#) [Weird](#)

Follow > [Video](#) , [Broadway](#) , [Fringenyc](#) , [Off-Broadway](#) , [Arts News](#)

SHARE THIS STORY

Submit this story

FringeNYC is an annual festival filled with new works -- plays and musicals and puppetry and one-person shows, all with dreams of catching the eye of producers and finding further life at other fringe festivals around the world (where some of these shows began) or heading to Off Broadway or even Broadway. The best new show I

saw was [Independents](#), which is reviewed here. Below is a roundup of some other highlights.

### BLANCHE: THE BITTERSWEET LIFE OF A PRAIRIE DAME \*\*\* 1/2 out of \*\*\*\*

I first saw Blanche at the New York Musical Festival -- [here's my original, very enthusiastic review](#). It was a treat to see the show again some months later and a second visit only reinforced my initial impression about the strength of the songs and the story's overall appeal. I fear 440 Studios did not have great acoustics for a musical work (though it did have a house manager who offered succinct, original and engaging introductions for the shows he was hosting). But the quality of the piece by [Onalea Gilbertson](#) shone through again.

### CITY OF SHADOWS \*\*\* out of \*\*\*\*

I saw this song cycle right after revisiting Blanche and they made an excellent double bill. Artist Rachael Dease drew inspiration from a series of police photographs taken in Sydney during the turn of the century (that does still refer to 1900, doesn't it? Someday soon we'll have to make clear we don't mean 2000.) She wrote a batch of story songs and then set them aside; returning to them later she wrote another batch of less detailed, specific tunes and the result is this show. Dease stands on one side of the stage with a quartet of musicians lined up on the other. Behind them flash a series of police photographs (and, I assume, other photos from the era with street scenes and the like) while Dease belts out her songs. She's a striking performer with a commanding voice and your attention is held throughout. The photos, sometimes quite graphic in their capturing of the recently dead, were mesmerizing. My favorite showed a body mostly hidden on the other side of a wall, with feet peeking out around the corner and a streak of blood showing how the body had been dragged mostly out of sight. It was an intelligent, effective performance though the songs were so general in their nature that they needed the specificity of the photos to ground the evening. Perhaps one or two of those more narrative-driven songs would have provided a better balance to the tunes. But your attention never wavered, Dease was a striking vocalist and I look forward to checking out her other endeavors down the road.

### MOST POPULAR ON HUFFPOST

1 of 2

[Chipotle Busted For Cheating Customers Out Of Pennies](#)  
Like 1k

[Republican Attendees Thrown Out After Racist Attack On CNN Worker](#)  
Like 16k

[PHOTO: The Queen Rolls In A Range Rover Wearing A Hoodie](#)  
Like 2k

[RPatz Agrees To Meet KStew But Is Selling Their Home](#)  
Like 131

[Slash Caught Fellow Rocker Naked With His Mom](#)  
Like 339

[Deaf Boy Asked To Make Controversial Change \(VIDEO\)](#)  
Recommend 5k

[Yahoo News Bureau Chief Fired Shocking Romney Comments](#)  
Like 1k

[George W. Bush All But Erased From Republican Convention](#)  
Like 2k

[President Obama Holds A Reddit 'Ask Me Anything'](#)  
Like 2k

### DON'T MISS HUFFPOST BLOGGERS

1 of 5

[Bill Moyers](#)  
[WATCH: Both Parties Give Invisible Americans the Silent Treatment](#)

Dean Baker  
Poverty: The New Growth Industry  
in America

MOST DISCUSSED RIGHT NOW



Jon Hamm Is Hiding In  
This Photo

HOT ON TWITTER

1 of 2



ricky\_martin  
Make Room for (the New) Daddy  
<http://t.co/Q6e1Dokm> via  
@huffingtonpost

Retweet



feliciaday  
Think on it: Cambridge scientists  
say all mammals, birds, many  
others including octopi, have  
human-like consciousness.  
<http://t.co/aF6W2ZQh>

Retweet

HUFFPOST'S BIG NEWS PAGES



Celebrity  
babies



Rachel  
Maddow



Natural  
Disasters



Afghanistan



GOP



Mitt Romney



NY News



Photo Galleries



Barack Obama

MORE BIG NEWS PAGES »

AN INTERROGATION PRIMER \*\*\* out of \*\*\*\*

This show was a lifesaver at FringeNYC for me. After a rough start with four or five shows that didn't engage and a feeling of despair, my faith was restored by this solid, well-done 35 minute piece. It's based on a piece written by Mike Nowacki, a soldier who served in Iraq as an interrogator. The presentation is straightforward: actor Sean Bolger walks out and begins to talk, with merely a desk and a chair onstage to frame his lecture on how interrogation works. "You start by taking off his blindfold," he says matter of factly. In the context of this speech, when Bolger firmly shuts the door to the theater where he's speaking, it becomes a notable statement of control and isolation. As they say in the show notes, the piece is delivered in the second person, which avoids the confessional, first person stance of a memoir and the objective third person perspective of journalism. Without condemning or justifying, the show lays out the experience of interrogation as conducted by a good soldier who is trying to do a good job. Frustration, lack of preparation (thanks to instructors who have never conducted a real interrogation in their lives), confusion, boredom, anger and more all come into play. It builds to the interrogator understanding how some others might lose control and go beyond the pale, bending and breaking the rules or simply not caring about whether or not a particular person is guilty or innocent. You gain insight into the guys doing their job as well as they can and those that do not, making the abuses and inevitable failings when humans are under pressure in a war zone easier to understand. It ends with our protagonist back in the US, shadowed by the experience and not quite fitting in, maybe not ever. It's compact, trim and effective, accomplishing its objectives easily, thanks to Bolger's no-nonsense performance and sympathetic direction by the adaptor and director Eric Ziegenhagen. It comes from Chicago and when a show travels from that excellent theater town to New York, it's often a sign of good things and [An Interrogation Primer](#) is the latest example of that.

MAGDALEN \*\*\* out of \*\*\*\*

I admit to a bit of trepidation about seeing a one-woman show concerning the Magdalene Laundries, the workhouse run by Irish Catholic nuns that was built on the sweat and tears of whores, runaways, sexually abused and physically challenged girls and young women. These outcasts were abused by the world and then abused again by their terrible treatment in this Dickensian institution and I'd heard the stories in film (*The Magdalene Sisters*) and song (Joni Mitchell's album *Turbulent Indigo*). But good art can reinvigorate any story, no matter how familiar. *Magdalen* -- written and performed by Erin Layton and directed with care by Julie Kline -- has a traditional documentary feel to it. It begins in the present with a person who has purchased the property where the now infamous laundries were once located and then leaps back into time, bringing to life priests, nuns (neither villainous though not terribly likable either), the neighbors who looked down on the inmates and the girls themselves. We see a variety of women but soon focus in on one girl who was sexually assaulted by her father and in the twisted logic of the day is now unclean and an outcast. She prays daily to a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, goes to confession daily and yearns to become a nun of the order herself so she can be good and get into heaven. While the outlines were familiar, Layton gave the performance of the festival by embodying with ease all these many disparate characters and making them all flesh and blood people, from a physically challenged girl to little kids who mock the girls with glee because at least there's someone in the world these poor lads

with no future can look down upon. It's a solid showcase for an excellent actor.

**PAPER PLANE \*\* 1/2 out of \*\*\*\***

I'm a sucker for simple theatricality of the sort embraced by 3 Sticks, the company behind this show. A ladder becomes a tall tree, a rolling metal frame becomes a train, a guy walking on buckets taped to his feet becomes a scary "bull" determined to beat up anyone attempting to ride the rails for free and so on. In this tale, a young boy whose mother died long ago discovers she was a daring performer, a wing-walker who performed at county fairs and the like. Up for adventure, the child heads off to the county fair to see another pilot who might have known his mother. Along for the ride is his best pal and another slightly older kid who is always up for adventure. They hitch a ride on the trains, evade the bulls, head to the circus, ride in a plane and generally have a scary and exciting time of it. The pleasure is all in the telling and 3 Sticks have inventive minds and some evocative tunes by Andrew Lynch that create a wistful mood. Their cast information is almost willfully uninformative so I can't be certain who did what. The handsome devil who played Hank, the best pal in the world to Joseph our hero, was especially engaging throughout in that and other minor roles, though almost all the cast was solid in their roles, including the other young pal who loved adventure. It was made very clear that Joseph wanted to head off to see the aeroplane stunt pilots. But it took me quite a while to realize the show was also suggesting that a paper plane sent aloft by the kid was also teasing him along, providing a guiding light of sorts. This became increasingly important at the finale but it wasn't clear to me that in the mythology of the show paper planes have a mind and life of their own. Maybe I missed some key lyrics in an early song but this could be spelled out quickly and simply, maybe by Joseph's father. And the paper plane he's chasing could reappear a little more often, though this all seems to be redundant since we already have motivation for his adventure. Another small point is that the "bull" who is sniffing out and tracking down Joseph feels like a plot twist; if there was more of a sense of him stalking the kids throughout, rather than just a late story reappearance, this would be more effective and create a better sense of danger. My central problem is with the performance of the actress who played Joseph. Everyone else who plays kids in the show just plays characters. Granted they're a little older but that's no reason to play a "kid," with bug-eyed reactions and little boy mannerisms that always seem to hammer home how this is a child, as opposed to a specific child. She's playing to the idea of little children and since everyone else is more naturalistic it throws off the balance of the show. Simply toning it down and trusting that the character will reveal himself as a little kid without underlining and highlighting that immaturity would work much better. Still, those songs and the general appeal of the storytelling shine through and it's a company whose work I hope to see again soon.

**RATED M FOR MATURE \*\* 1/2 out of \*\*\*\***

This play by Greg Ayers has a promising setup and some very good scenes until it drops genuine drama for highly improbable and unconvincing plot twists. Mom (Jamey Hood) and stepdad Larry (Brian Munn) are worried about her teenage son Eric (Ben Hollandsworth). The school thinks he's a drug addict and they're tossing his room looking for Eric's stash when they come across a journal and realize he's deeply addicted to online gaming. With Eric failing three classes, Mom just yanks the computer out of his room, freaking out Eric so much (his clan has a massive raid planned for tonight against their arch enemies in the online game Call To Arms) that he literally throws himself at her feet weeping. She stands firm and Eric is soon an outcast even among his gamer friends, the volatile Pete (Nick Vennekotter) and hanger-on Danny (Patrick Harman). It's a story about addiction and bullying (match) and high school and step parents, but unfortunately it becomes a thriller when Pete hatches an absurd plan to blackmail Eric's stepdad so they can run away to California. That devolves into a kidnapping and guns and a stand-off with police so the bad seed Peter (his dark home life is merely hinted at) can go truly nuts. This is a disappointing turn for a show that was fresh and believable when it stuck to reality. Ayers does a very effective job of showing the swagger and confidence Eric and his friends feel in their online world. The brief scenes of them in their virtual world are funny and effective in showing the appeal of a second chance for a newer, stronger personality. A few more moments of them escaping into that fantasy realm would have been welcome. The best scene in the show involved Eric and a counselor. Urged to just talk without any fear of judgment, Eric talks about how his friends were bullied and administrators did nothing. The counselor nitpicks at his comments, blithely dismissing them since he wasn't involved and then again urges Eric to open up.

It's a damning moment that reveals even a well-intentioned official can let kids down. (The fact that he doesn't ask Eric if he's being bullied is telling. More hard to swallow is Eric's mom embracing the idea of rehab when she thinks the problem is drugs but scoffing at the idea of therapy, even after her son practically has a nervous breakdown over losing his computer privileges.) The less convincing their characters' actions, the less effective the actors. So the parents have the least satisfying parts. Vennekotter must shoulder the burden of Pete's wildly unconvincing evolution into unhinged lunacy, though he's good earlier on as just a pushy jerk. Harman is good in the minor role of loser among losers. Playwright Ayers has potential -- he just needs to trust his characters more and the drama of real life versus Hollywood. Above all I'll remember Rated M For Mature as a showcase for Ben Hollandsworth as Eric. He gives a subtle, empathetic, grounded performance throughout, funny in the virtual world scenes without ever making fun of his character's passion, vulnerable, sweet, and even makes you almost believe in the over-the-top plot twists towards the end. It is indeed a mature, memorable performance.

**THE GREAT PIE ROBBERY** \*\* 1/2 out of \*\*\*\*

This show is a genial goof, a send-up and celebration of melodramas that used to pepper the stage around the turn of the last century. The townspeople of Skunk Valley, USA are quite happy and looking forward to the annual pie-eating contest. Then the evil Vincent Von Villanueva (Mike Quirk) comes in, buying up half the town and threatening to turn their idyllic paradise into an early Las Vegas. While the villain triumphs? Will our hero Chicken Farmer John (Seth Grugle) save the day and realize shopgirl Clementine (Jennifer Bissell) is his true love? Will Junior (Doug Goldring) avoid the drudgery of life as a baker and take to the stage? Stop asking so many questions! In case you're not certain of what to do, castmembers hold up signs telling you to hiss the villain, cheer the hero, sigh over the maiden and so on. This sort of nonsense seems easy in the abstract but there's a skill to mining obvious jokes for new humor and playwright/director Ben Tostado and Playlight Theatre deliver a very promising first effort. The entire cast is game but especial note must be made of Trip Plymale as Pa Baker, whose deadpan delivery is priceless. He knows that you don't need to mug to put across a joke.

**BOMBSHELTERED** \*\* 1/2 out of \*\*\*\*

Four young people decide to trip acid in the bomb-shelter of one of their dads. A random radio announcement convinces them that the end of the world is nigh and a chance to start from scratch is theirs. First they just trip out for a while, which grows tiresome very quickly to watch, just as in real life. There's nothing more boring than being sober or straight in a room full of people on acid. But they soon begin a mock satire of political structures, with one person announcing he's the king of their new society, another one overthrowing the king for a communistic government, a third pushing for free elections and so on. You get a modest backstory about a potential love triangle, but this is essentially a mockery of different forms of government and how human passion for power and control and freedom can corrupt and distort almost any system. If that sounds a bit dry, you're not far off. Playwright Adam Harlan has delivered a tightly written piece that handles the shifts in moods and explicates economic theory via Monopoly money (for example) quite nicely. But there's no real story beneath the satire and spoofery, no characters to care for that change and grow or are revealed via their shenanigans. The four actors are solid throughout, tossing off the sometimes explanation-heavy text with ease. But there's too much head and not enough heart for them to bring these people wholly to life. It's telling that the finale -- in which characters give us an update on what happened to them in years to come -- is uninteresting. We don't really know them as characters so their fates feel merely random. You can't really dislike a show that warms up the audience with the second half of Bruce Springsteen's *Born To Run* album and there is care and craft on display. When Harlan grapples with characters as deftly as he handles concepts, it will be worth checking out.

**SHEHERIZADE** \*\* out of \*\*\*\*

This production via students at Carnegie Mellon makes a worthy addition to FringeNYC with a show that demonstrates a lot of promising talent. It tackles the familiar tale of a woman who puts off a murderous king by spinning tales that are so captivating he can't bear to kill the storyteller until he's heard the end and keeps putting off her death night after night until he falls in love and has a change of heart. Playwright Aidaa Peerzada emphasizes Sheherizade's desire to protect all the other women who would be killed by this king on their wedding nights, one after the other. And the direction by Priscila Garcia and choreography by the director of movement/artistic director Anne Marie Bookwalter keep the story flowing smoothly. Like many classic tales, this one allows actors to double and triple in various roles. But it was a mistake, I think, to allow the two central roles of Sheherizade and the king be doubled in the same way. This lowers the tension of her fate and the drama of seeing the king slowly fall in love. Also, the cliffhanger approach to storytelling is dropped I believe after just one night, so the driving pull of the narrative is undercut as well, along with her teasing refusal to finish a tale because she's tired, forcing the king to spare her life yet again each night. None of this diminishes the solid cast. One or two minor parts are stumbled over, but the direction and choreography keep the entire production moving along nicely. It's a good showcase for some young talent.

**THE DICK AND THE ROSE** \*\* out of \*\*\*\*

This show with puppetry tries to make sense of how a parent could kill their own children via a story that escalates from sexual desire to marriage to kids, to annoying kids that constantly complain and bicker and moan and beg and plead until the parent(s) feel so overwhelmed and overwrought that they snap. It's not as dark as this sounds, thanks to the puckish presence of writer and director Robert Biggs as the master of ceremonies. The problem is that while intellectually it's easy to see how the scenes link together and the show builds to a finale, in practice each section feels like a separate piece not really connected to the whole. It doesn't build emotionally even though that's the clear intent. The song in which



---

the mother feels harangued by her kids is perhaps the most effective. Throughout there are fine touches by the multi-talented cast. (And the "ministering angels" offer attractive and multipurpose support, especially Jake Elitzer.) It's a serious effort with some evocative music that simply never quite comes to life.

**STORYTIME WITH MR. BUTTERMEN** \*\* out of \*\*\*\*

Homeless people in Central Park maintain their dignity and sanity by recasting classic folk tales for the modern world. So Aesop's "The Tortoise and the Hare" becomes more about how the tortoise gets soused on liquor while "The Grasshopper and the Ant" lands firmly in the camp of the grasshopper and having fun while you can. Conceived and directed by Christian De Gre with numerous writers chiming in on individual tales, *Storytime with Mr. Buttermen* has a very confused and dark trajectory that is unearned and unsatisfying. But that shouldn't obscure the fact that the talented cast, strong choreography by Paula Wilson and excellent direction by De Gre are all noteworthy. The main problem is that the modern retellings invariably fall flat or make points so banal they're hardly worth hearing. "The Emperor's New... Weapon of Mass Destruction" is against escalating military expenditures. "Pigmailman" warns that it's not nice to disdain people for their physical appearance. And "The Girl Who Cried Rape" says it's not nice to falsely accuse people of rape because of course that's wrong and then when someone else finds the courage to say they've been raped they might not be believed. But "Pigmailman" is a good example of why the show wasn't a waste of time, despite growing less interesting as it went along. The actor Nathan Winkelstein played our Christ-like mailman with verve, the song accompanying it was satisfying and the choreography and direction kept it lively. It's only the book that let this and so many other pieces down. The cast was solid throughout, though Mr. Buttermen (Anthony M. Lopez) was burdened with the most explicit messages and banal exposition so he struggled a bit. Winkelstein and Ashley C. Williams were among the many fine talents. But Justin Anselmi shone most of all. He nailed his lines throughout, mining them for humor and anger and genuine emotion. He also played a homeless person who improv'd before the show by interacting with audience members as they filed in. Few things send me running for the doors faster than improv and castmembers that interact with the audience and demand some participation. But darned if Anselmi wasn't exceptionally funny and in character. I especially enjoyed his lightning fast switches from self-deprecation to defiance and his offhanded comments were so amusing I was actually delighted to see he'd do the same schtick during the intermission. Discovering a talent like his that you want to see again in the future would make shows far less ambitious than this one worth watching.

**MORMON IN CHIEF** \*\* out of \*\*\*\*

This comedy by Matthew Greene is admirable in its desire to paint a complex picture of people rather than indulging in easy satire or cheap shots at Mormons and political bloggers. However, it's ultimately so timid in its fairness that it becomes as dull as our hero, Connor (Jesse Liebman). He's a modest guy

---

who attends the same temple as the current candidate for President. After the candidate gave a speech to his fellow faithful, Connor tweeted that the guy wants to save America from the gays and other sins. Somehow, this innocuous tweet launches a political firestorm with the candidate insisting his words were taken out of context and every media outlet in the country trying to track down this anonymous tweeter. The tweet even inspires a question at a Presidential debate in which the Mormon candidate blanks out for an eternity (10 or so seconds) while trying to answer it. Throughout all of this, Connor remains oblivious, which stretches disbelief even for a fundamentalist. He's finally tracked down by a blogger Lydia (Nicole Rodenburg), who pushes Connor for a statement but ultimately sees him as a nice if misguided guy she may disagree with politically but can't demonize personally. A side plot has Connor as the shoulder to cry on for his friend Kate (a very good Karis Danish), whose marriage is rocky and whose husband is competing for the same promotion as Connor. Will Connor apologize for accurately describing what he believes to be the candidate's position on hot-button social issues? Will he stand up for himself and possibly prevent a man he believes in from becoming President? Or is that man not worth believing in any more? And while Connor stand up for himself at work or step aside so his friend can get the promotion he wants and maybe save a marriage? None of this is as remotely interesting as it might be. Connor is bland in the extreme, a polite and friendly guy who is modest but no pushover. He's not terribly political at all and so his back and forth with Lydia on politics isn't engaging in the least. he doesn't seem like a mouse so Kate's outrageous request that he refuse a promotion so her husband can get it hardly seems like a proposal even the quiet Connor would agree to; we don't believe her marriage depends on it so very little is at stake. So there's very little drama on display here. Liebman is solid as the likable Connor; it's not his fault the character is bland and rather dull. The play is the same with Greene not really wanting to grapple with the issues at hand but merely show an even-handed appreciation for everyone's point of view. That he does, in an evenhanded, unexciting manner. The actors are generally better than the material and with confidence the playwright might be as well.

**DARK HOLLOW** \* 1/2 out of \*\*\*\*

This overwrought, uninvolved staging of *Woyzeck* in the Appalachians during the Depression is filled with traditional tunes and a few originals, but the cast has no feel for these songs. The exception is Nick Mason as Andy, who delivers his solo numbers with a verve and authenticity akin to the plainspoken decency he brings to his relatively minor character.

**NON-EQUITY THE MUSICAL!** \* out of \*\*\*\*

A poor showcase for actors who don't have their Equity cards that tries and fails to mine the daily travails of theater hopefuls trying to make it for humor and pathos. Emily Swan has some fun as The Monitor, the varied personalities who oversee the cattle calls that actors endure every day. But you should never dismiss someone in a bad show, because you never know. Just when it seemed the cast had nothing to offer, there was a brief sketch in which they got to audition for a kid's theater piece. Suddenly the actors who'd been asked to sing banal songs and voice platitudes came alive. Joe Donnelly was funny as the pig. Nichole Turner got a chance to do more than be sassy and Pierce Cassedy delivered an hilarious cartoon voice as one of the other farmyard animals. That's why struggling actors commit to most anything they can get cast in: you never know when the right moment with the right material can make you stand out (even in a so-so show) and help you catch the eye of a casting agent or director or playwright who might just remember you down the road. The dream lives on....

**THE THEATER SEASON 2012-2013** (on a four star scale)

*As You Like it* (Shakespeare In The Park w Lily Rabe) \*\*\*\*  
*Chimichangas And Zoloff* \*  
*Closer Than Ever* \*\*\*  
*Cock* \*\* 1/2  
*Harvey* with Jim Parsons \*  
*My Children! My Africa!* \*\*\*  
*Once On This Island* \*\*\*  
*Potted Potter* \*  
*Storefront Church* \*\* 1/2  
*Title And Deed* \*\*\*  
*Picture Incomplete* (NYMF) \*\*  
*Flambe Dreams* (NYMF) \*\*  
*Rio* (NYMF) \*\*  
*The Two Month Rule* (NYMF) \*  
*Trouble* (NYMF) \*\* 1/2  
*Stealing Time* (NYMF) \*\*  
*Requiem For A Lost Girl* (NYMF) \*\* 1/2  
*Re-Animator The Musical* (NYMF) \*\*\*  
*Baby Case* (NYMF) \*\* 1/2  
*How Deep Is The Ocean* (NYMF) \*\* 1/2  
*Central Avenue Breakdown* (NYMF) \*\*\*  
*Foreverman* (NYMF) \* 1/2  
*Swing State* (NYMF) \* 1/2  
*Stand Tall: A Rock Musical* (NYMF) \* 1/2  
*Living With Henry* (NYMF) \*  
*A Letter To Harvey Milk* (NYMF) \*\* 1/2  
*The Last Smoker In America* \*\*  
*Gore Vidal's The Best Man* (w new cast) \*\*\*  
*Into The Woods at Delacorte* \*\* 1/2  
*Bring It On: The Musical* \*\*  
*Bullet For Adolf* \*  
*Summer Shorts Series B: Paul Rudnick, Neil LaBute, etc.* \*\*  
*Harrison, TX* \*\*\*  
*Dark Hollow: An Appalachian "Woyzeck"* (FringeNYC) \* 1/2  
*Pink Milk* (FringeNYC) \* 1/2  
*Who Murdered Love* (FringeNYC) no stars  
*Storytime With Mr. Buttermen* (FringeNYC) \*\*  
*#MormonInChief* (FringeNYC) \*\*  
*An Interrogation Primer* (FringeNYC) \*\*\*  
*An Evening With Kirk Douglas* (FringeNYC) \*  
*Sheherizade* (FringeNYC) \*\*  
*The Great Pie Robbery* (FringeNYC) \*\* 1/2  
*Independents* (FringeNYC) \*\*\* 1/2  
*The Dick and The Rose* (FringeNYC) \*\*  
*Magdalen* (FringeNYC) \*\*\*  
*Bombsheltered* (FringeNYC) \*\* 1/2  
*Paper Plane* (FringeNYC) \*\* 1/2  
*Rated M For Murder* (FringeNYC) \*\* 1/2  
*Mallory/Valerie* (FringeNYC) \*  
*Non-Equity: The Musical!* (FringeNYC) \*  
*Blanche: The Bittersweet Life Of A Prairie Dame* (FringeNYC) \*\*\* 1/2  
*City Of Shadows* (FringeNYC) \*\*\*

Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the cohost of *Showbiz Sandbox*, a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's [available](#) for free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his [website](#) and his [daily blog](#). Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called *Popsurfing* and also [available](#) for free on iTunes. Link to him on Netflix and [gain](#) access to thousands of ratings and reviews.

**Note:** Michael Giltz is provided with free tickets to shows with the understanding that he will be writing a review.

Follow Michael Giltz on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/michaelgiltz](http://www.twitter.com/michaelgiltz)

**FOLLOW ARTS**

Like · 25k

GET ALERTS

Read more from Huffington Post bloggers:



**Gregory A. Prince, Ph.D. and Helen C. Whitney: Mormons and Polygamy: Truths, Lies and Ambiguities**

While the Church has renounced polygamy politically, it has never done so theologically. This ambiguity has haunted them ever since.



[More in Arts...](#)

[Can You Spot A Star? Photographer Chris...](#)

[Andy Goldsworthy's Ephemeral Rock Sculpture 'Strangler Cairn'...](#)

[Bentley Meeker, Lighting Designer For Burning Man,...](#)

[Sam Shepard Brings Surrealism to Familial Dysfunction...](#)

**Comments**

1

Pending Comments 0

[View FAQ](#)

## HuffPost Social News

**To reply to a Comment:** Click "Reply" at the bottom of the comment; after being approved your comment will appear directly underneath the comment you replied to.

[Preview Comment](#)

[Post Comment](#)

**Share your Comment:**

Post to Facebook.	Post to Blogger.	Post to Twitter.
Post to WordPress.	Post to TypePad.	Post to Tumblr.

View All

Recency | Popularity

**pa ul2011**  
**2 Fans**

5 minutes ago ( 5:22 AM)

Your post is great to read. I was wondering why people of today enrolls in an online art school, I bet it will be the best to learn.

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

[Advertise](#) | [Make HuffPost your Home Page](#) | [RSS](#) | [Careers](#) | [FAQ](#)

[User Agreement](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Comment Policy](#) | [About Us](#) | [About Our Ads](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright © 2012 TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. | "The Huffington Post" is a registered trademark of TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. All rights reserved.

Part of **AOL Lifestyle**

August 30, 2012

# HUFFPOST ARTS & CULTURE

Edition: U.S. ▾



FRONT PAGE ENTERTAINMENT ARTS BOOKS TV SCIENCE STYLE NEW YORK LOS ANGELES DETROIT LIVE | ALL SECTIONS

Arts & Culture · Painting Film Design Photography Theater Dance Architecture Female Artists Art Meets Science



Featuring fresh takes and real-time analysis from HuffPost's signature lineup of contributors

### HOT ON THE BLOG

Bill Moyers  
John Hillcoat

Dean Baker  
Bobby Bowden

HuffPost Social Reading



**Michael Giltz**  
Freelance writer

GET UPDATES FROM MICHAEL GILTZ

Like 102

FOLLOW US

## Theater: *Independents* Sails to Success at FringeNYC

Posted: 08/22/2012 1:19 pm

React > [Amazing](#) [Inspiring](#) [Funny](#) [Scary](#) [Hot](#) [Crazy](#) [Important](#) [Weird](#)

Read more > [Marina Keegan](#), [Fringenyc](#), [Independent Theater Nyc](#), [Independents](#), [Independents Play](#), [Theater Nyc](#), [Arts News](#)

SHARE THIS STORY

Submit this story

**INDEPENDENTS** \*\*\* 1/2 out of \*\*\*\*  
**THEATRE 80**

The premise sounded a little jokey -- stoners hanging out and taking part in a Revolutionary War reenactment. But the moment the first song begins -- "Fare Thee Well" -- you immediately sit up straight in your seat. The

song by Stephen Feigenbaum (music) and Mark Sonnenblick (lyrics) is thoughtful and moving, an ancient-sounding lament about war and peace and trying to break away from the ties that bind. Despite modest resources, the music is nicely orchestrated, the melody catchy but with an undertone of mournfulness and the cast slowly joins in until the tune swells and catches your breath. This could be good, you think.

And it is. Easily the best show I've seen at [FringeNYC](#) this year, *Independents* is exactly why you stumble through a dozen or so shows during the fest, sometimes watching three in one day in hopes of this: a show with talent on stage, talent behind the scenes and a piece that isn't just promising but already a satisfying work, albeit with room to become even better.

Liam (Jacob Roa) is our hero, the leader of a ragtag group of just-out-of-college buddies who are living on his parents' Revolutionary War-era sailing ship. Liam's parents are dead and he wants to get his little brother out of foster care. They have a vague idea of making some money by getting customers onto their ship by offering reenactment tours. But mostly they sit around getting stoned and trying to figure out what to do about the bales of marijuana stored in the hull of their ship. They're even more amateur at drug-dealing than playing dress-up American soldiers and it's the missing Chris who holds the key to moving the pot, making some money, allowing Liam to pay off the mortgage on the ship and let everyone continue their carefree existence.

Act One is lighter as we realize Liam and his girlfriend Isabel (Summer Broyhill) are drifting apart while he and Grace (a lovely Lilli Cooper of *Spring Awakening*) are drifting together. The gang is whipped into shape by the arrival of the unpaid intern Carl (an amusing Corey Desjardins in a role that might easily have been stereotyped), a gay would-be actor passionate about getting the details of the 18th century correct. Before they know it, the group -- including heavyset butt of jokes JT (Tom Sanchez), amiable Ari (Ethan Slater, who invests his character with immense likability), man of few words Kyle (Adam Weppeler), lesbian refugee from the military Johnson (Emily Jenda, who shines on the lovely "Shelburne," another tune that sounds like it's been around for 200 years) and pill-popping partier and best pal to Liam Jaimy (Kevin Hoffman) -- is actually drawing crowds and making money. Then Chris shows up.

### MOST POPULAR ON HUFFPOST

1 of 2

[Chipotle Busted For Cheating Customers Out Of Pennies](#)  
Like 1k

[Republican Attendees Thrown Out After Racist Attack On CNN Worker](#)  
Like 16k

[PHOTO: The Queen Rolls In A Range Rover Wearing A Hoodie](#)  
Like 2k

[RPatz Agrees To Meet KStew But Is Selling Their Home](#)  
Like 134

[Slash Caught Fellow Rocker Naked With His Mom](#)  
Like 340

[Deaf Boy Asked To Make Controversial Change \(VIDEO\)](#)  
Recommend 5k

[Yahoo News Bureau Chief Fired Shocking Romney Comments](#)  
Like 1k

[George W. Bush All But Erased From Republican Convention](#)  
Like 2k

[President Obama Holds A Reddit 'Ask Me Anything'](#)  
Like 2k

### DON'T MISS HUFFPOST BLOGGERS

1 of 5

[Bill Moyers](#)  
**WATCH: Both Parties Give Invisible Americans the Silent Treatment**

Act Two is darker as Chris (Christopher Burke, bringing a nice sense of menace and darkness to show) rather predictably is in deep with drug cartels and they need to suddenly cough up \$50,000 or they're all going to be in serious danger. Toss in romantic entanglements and a bungled review to turn their rogue reenactment tour into a legitimate, licensed business and you've got yourself a show. I have no song listings, but you can hear modes [audio recordings of three of them at the show's website](#).

I will say that throughout the show the songs are consistently witty, sophisticated and hummable, ranging from sea shanties to romantic duets to the humorous "Here" sung by Jaimy. The cast is appealing from top to bottom, with director Charlie Polinger doing sterling work at managing the shifting moods and keeping the large cast moving about the tiny stage with grace and purpose. With very limited resources, the handsome musical director Ben Wexler (who also handles vocal arrangements and the orchestrations) does full justice to this very promising score.

The book is very solid, though there are certainly areas it can be tightened and improved. The subplot about Jaimy's addiction to pills is rather abrupt and pointless. It's probably the vestige of a much bigger subplot from earlier drafts and should be dropped completely. We can see Jaimy indulging too much so don't really need more than that to know he's a bit lost. They walk a fine line with the gay Carl but do a nice job ultimately of not making him too much the comic relief. (He does have the show's funniest line.) Not every character can be fleshed out completely and the actors make them wholly alive, but JT and Ari could use just a touch more backstory to explain who they are and why they're just frittering away their time like this.

The drug subplot feels too familiar, but then the book by Marina Keegan surprises you with how its handled. I'm not quite sure why just selling the boat might not be as helpful as claiming the insurance on it after an "accident" but then drug dealers like Chris don't always think straight. But once the story moves into this rather pedestrian avenue, the show pivots very nicely. Jaimy has been a one-note character of sorts (despite his addiction) but late in the show he has a monologue that is a genuine highlight and a rather bold mood stylistically, given where it falls in the show. We soon realize this isn't Jaimy talking but the words of the Revolutionary era figure he's been reading the journal of throughout. The wording doesn't quite convince as the thoughts of someone from that period, but it's a wonderful piece that Hoffman delivers superlatively.

Full credit to the lighting (Gary Sloatski), sound (Emily Auciello), costumes (Isabelle Simone) and set design (Brian Dudkiewicz). When a show is going well, even minor distractions prove a boon. The theater is so intimate and the cast standing offstage so nearby that you can hear the creaking of their feet on the wooden boards -- but thanks to the setting, it actually sounds like the creaking of a sailing ship and adds to the atmosphere.

Of course in a show like this you immediately dive into the credits and bios of everyone involved (something I usually avoid until the show is over). That's when I discovered the bittersweet news that *Independents* unfortunately has a *Rent*-like backstory since book writer [Marina Keegan died while working on this, her first musical](#). She was clearly a talent who made the most of every opportunity that came her way (a Yale student, she had already been published in the *New York Times* and had a short story heard on NPR). We'll never know what was lost with her early death, but this work and the talented people involved have clearly made the most of what she helped create.

#### THE THEATER SEASON 2012-2013 (on a four star scale)

[As You Like it](#) (Shakespeare In The Park w Lily Rabe) \*\*\*\*  
[Chimichangas And Zoloft](#) \*  
[Closer Than Ever](#) \*\*\*  
[Cock](#) \*\* 1/2  
[Harvey](#) with Jim Parsons \*  
[My Children! My Africa!](#) \*\*\*\*  
[Once On This Island](#) \*\*\*\*  
[Potted Potter](#) \*  
[Storefront Church](#) \*\* 1/2  
[Title And Deed](#) \*\*\*  
[Picture Incomplete](#) (NYMF) \*\*  
[Flambe Dreams](#) (NYMF) \*\*  
[Rio](#) (NYMF) \*\*  
[The Two Month Rule](#) (NYMF) \*  
[Trouble](#) (NYMF) \*\* 1/2  
[Stealing Time](#) (NYMF) \*\*  
[Requiem For A Lost Girl](#) (NYMF) \*\* 1/2  
[Re-Animator The Musical](#) (NYMF) \*\*\*  
[Baby Case](#) (NYMF) \*\* 1/2  
[How Deep Is The Ocean](#) (NYMF) \*\* 1/2  
[Central Avenue Breakdown](#) (NYMF) \*\*\*  
[Foreverman](#) (NYMF) \* 1/2  
[Swing State](#) (NYMF) \* 1/2  
[Stand Tall: A Rock Musical](#) (NYMF) \* 1/2  
[Living With Henry](#) (NYMF) \*  
[A Letter To Harvey Milk](#) (NYMF) \*\* 1/2  
[The Last Smoker In America](#) \*\*

Dean Baker  
[Poverty: The New Growth Industry in America](#)

#### MOST DISCUSSED RIGHT NOW



[Jon Hamm Is Hiding In This Photo](#)

#### HOT ON TWITTER

1 of 2



[ricky\\_martin](#)  
 Make Room for (the New) Daddy  
<http://t.co/Q6elDokm> via  
[@huffingtonpost](#)  
[Retweet](#)



[feliciaday](#)  
 Think on it: Cambridge scientists say all mammals, birds, many others including octopi, have human-like consciousness.  
<http://t.co/aF6W2ZQh>  
[Retweet](#)

#### HUFFPOST'S BIG NEWS PAGES

<a href="#">Celebrity babies</a>	<a href="#">Rachel Maddow</a>	<a href="#">Natural Disasters</a>
<a href="#">Afghanistan</a>	<a href="#">GOP</a>	<a href="#">Mitt Romney</a>
<a href="#">NY News</a>	<a href="#">Photo Galleries</a>	<a href="#">Barack Obama</a>

[MORE BIG NEWS PAGES »](#)

[Gore Vidal's The Best Man](#) (w new cast) \*\*\*

[Into The Woods at Delacorte](#) \*\* 1/2

[Bring It On: The Musical](#) \*\*

[Bullet For Adolf](#) \*

[Harrison, TX](#) \*\*\*

Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the cohost of [Showbiz Sandbox](#), a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's [available](#) for free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his [website](#) and his [daily blog](#). Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called Popsurfing and also [available](#) for free on iTunes. Link to him on Netflix and [gain](#) access to thousands of ratings and reviews.

**Note:** Michael Giltz is provided with free tickets to shows with the understanding that he will be writing a review.

Follow Michael Giltz on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/michaelgiltz](http://www.twitter.com/michaelgiltz)

#### FOLLOW ARTS

Like · 25k

GET ALERTS

[More in Arts...](#)

[Can You Spot A Star? Photographer Chris...](#)

[Andy Goldsworthy's Ephemeral Rock Sculpture 'Strangler Cairn'...](#)

[Bentley Meeker, Lighting Designer For Burning Man,...](#)

[Elgin James, 'Little Birds' Director, Out Of...](#)

**Comments** 0 Pending Comments 0 [View FAQ](#)

## HuffPost Social News

To reply to a Comment: Click "Reply" at the bottom of the comment; after being approved your comment will appear directly underneath the comment you replied to.

[Preview Comment](#) [Post Comment](#)

#### Share your Comment:

Post to Facebook.	Post to Blogger.	Post to Twitter.
Post to WordPress.	Post to TypePad.	Post to Tumblr.

View All

Recency | Popularity

[Advertise](#) | [Make HuffPost your Home Page](#) | [RSS](#) | [Careers](#) | [FAQ](#)

[User Agreement](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Comment Policy](#) | [About Us](#) | [About Our Ads](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright © 2012 TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. | "The Huffington Post" is a registered trademark of TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. All rights reserved.

Part of AOL Lifestyle

August 30, 2012

# HUFF POST ENTERTAINMENT

Edition: U.S. ▾



FRONT PAGE POLITICS BUSINESS MEDIA CELEBRITY TV COMEDY FOOD STYLE ARTS BOOKS LIVE | ALL SECTIONS

Entertainment | Celebrity TV Political Hollywood Features Hollywood Buzz Videos

## THE BLOG

Featuring fresh takes and real-time analysis from HuffPost's signature lineup of contributors

### HOT ON THE BLOG

Bill Moyers  
John Hillcoat

Dean Baker  
Bobby Bowden

HuffPost Social Reading



**Michael Giltz**

GET UPDATES FROM MICHAEL GILTZ

Freelance writer

Like 102

## DVDs: Is "Jaws" The Most Influential Film of All Time?

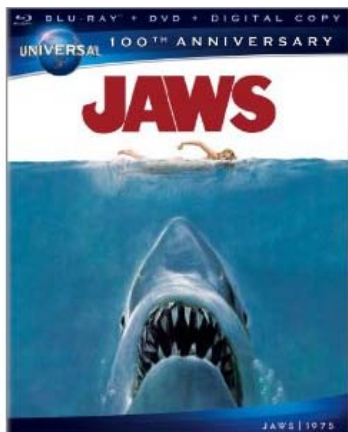
Posted: 08/17/2012 3:58 am

React > Inspiring Funny Hot Scary Outrageous Amazing Weird Crazy

Follow > Movies, Steven Spielberg, TV Shows, Dvds, Jaws, Entertainment News

SHARE THIS STORY

Submit this story



### SPONSOR GENERATED POST



CBS Films

Help Us Write 'The Words'

Quick Read | Comments (27) | 08.20.2012

### FOLLOW US

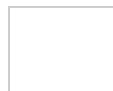
### MOST POPULAR ON HUFFPOST

1 of 2



Chipotle Busted For Cheating Customers Out Of Pennies

Like 1k



Republican Attendees Thrown Out After Racist Attack On CNN Worker

Like 16k



PHOTO: The Queen Rolls In A Range Rover Wearing A Hoodie

Like 2k



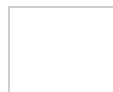
RPatz Agrees To Meet KStew But Is Selling Their Home

Like 140



Slash Caught Fellow Rocker Naked With His Mom

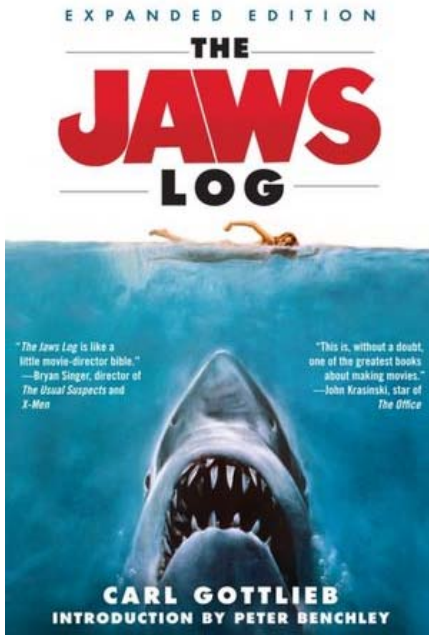
Like 371



Yahoo News Bureau Chief Fired Shocking Romney Comments

Like 1k





**JAWS UNIVERSAL 100TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION** (\$29.98 BluRay combo; Universal)  
**THE JAWS LOG** (\$16.99; Newmarket Press) -- Few films if any have proven so influential in so many areas of the movie industry as *Jaws*. It established Steven Spielberg as the wunderkind filmmaker; he would go on to become the most well-known and popular filmmaker since Alfred Hitchcock. *Jaws* pioneered the wide release approach to distribution which -- combined with TV ads, another major innovation, given their frequency and effectiveness -- is the template for most studio films today.

It turned summer into the prime time for major movies, which seems obvious now (kids are out of school! people want to avoid the heat!) but back then summer was for dumping schlock. It shot on location on the water, something that studios avoided like the plague for 70 years until Spielberg came along and decided that was the only way to make it right. *Jaws* pushed the boundaries on technology and far more importantly demonstrated how creativity and cleverness were far more important than special effects.

It turned composer John Williams into a pop star, the most recognizable composer of his era and probably in history, just as Spielberg is the most famous filmmaker of our times. The music entered pop culture forever.

The making-of book by Carl Gottlieb which was tossed off almost as an afterthought, is a model of its kind. *The Jaws Log* -- which I read for the first time this month -- must have been revelatory in the 1970s for its peek behind the scenes. Audiences today are much savvier and I do wish more time were spent on creative decisions. But as a record of how movies are made and life on the set, it is great fun and as accurate today as it was then. (Just add some zeros to the various costs involved.)

*Jaws* was the first film released on laserdisc in North America. The making-of documentary by Laurent Bouzereau in a later laser disc edition also set a high standard. The film has been celebrated and discussed online by fervent fans since the internet began and in fact a new documentary called *The Shark Is Still Working* is a crowd-sourced labor of love kickstarted by that online community and in the works for seven years. Testimonials from numerous younger filmmakers prove what a seismic effect it had on Hollywood's future generations. Both documentaries are available on this new BluRay edition.

In short, *jaws* changed the way movies are made, when they're released, how they're released, how they are marketed and sold, how they're packaged for home entertainment and how they're remembered online. As a bonus, it's also a great film -- adult, smart, terrifically fun and filled with marvelous performances from Richard Dreyfuss and Roy Scheider on down.

None of this would matter half as much to most people if the movie itself weren't indeed Hitchcockian in its innately cinematic approach to telling the primal story of a monster on the loose. Other films will always rank higher on the list of all-time best films. (Heck, it's not even my favorite Spielberg movie.) But *Jaws* in many ways can lay claim to the most influential movie in Hollywood's history.

Navigation icons: back, forward, search, etc.

---

 [Deaf Asked To Make Controversial Change \(VIDEO\)](#)  
Recommend 5k

---

 [George W. Bush All But Erased From Republican Convention](#)  
Like 2k

---

 [President Obama Holds A Reddit 'Ask Me Anything'](#)  
Like 2k

**DON'T MISS HUFFPOST BLOGGERS** 1 of 5

---

 [Bill Moyers](#)  
[WATCH: Both Parties Give Invisible Americans the Silent Treatment](#)

---

 [Dean Baker](#)  
[Poverty: The New Growth Industry in America](#)

**TOP VIDEO PICKS** 1 of 7

[Cheryl Cole and Will.I.Am Injured in LA Car Crash](#)

---

 [How Technology Helped John Mayer Brake Up With Katy Perry](#)

---

 [Katy Perry Shows Off Her Hot Body in Workout Clothes For New Popchips Campaign](#)

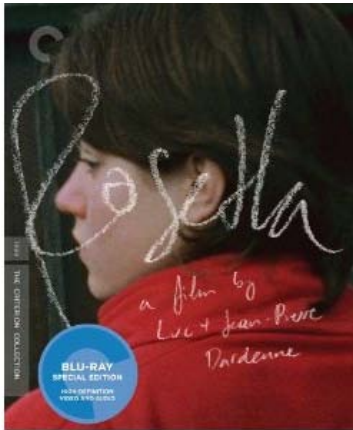
**MOST DISCUSSED RIGHT NOW** 1 of 2

---

 [Will Clint Eastwood Speak At The RNC?](#)

---

 [Leonardo DiCaprio Will 'Bare It All' In 'Wolf of Wall Street'](#)



**LA PROMESSE** (\$39.95 BluRay; Criterion)

**ROSETTA** (\$39.95 BluRay; Criterion) -- Since 1996, the Dardenne brothers have delivered six feature films. (Their careers began with documentaries in the 1970s and they've made one or two in that time as well, not to mention a short or two.) I suppose different critics would debate which of those films is the best. I, for one, think *Lorna's Silence* is the weak link. The other five all made my list of the best films of the year when they were released. As a body of work, those six films are simply astonishing. It's clear the Dardenne brothers are easily among the most talented filmmakers in the world working in the last decade and a half.

Their debut feature *La Promesse* is an excellent starting point. Like all their films, it focuses on people in the margins, in this case a teenage boy who slowly comes to realize his father isn't merely partnering with undocumented workers but taking horrible advantage of them. It's a moral awakening with the force of Huck Finn's in Mark Twain's classic and painful and wonderful to watch.

Moving on with *Rosetta*, again and again the Dardennes use handheld cameras to stay right on top of their characters, inexorably drawing us down into their world like a whirlpool of emotion. We meet Rosetta as she desperately strives to support herself and her drunken mother. We see each painful decision leading to the next and the next. How easily the poor and vulnerable can slide into despair.

The movies are gripping and rich, from *La Promesse* to their current marvel *The Kid With A Bike*. You owe it to yourself to see their films and Criterion's editions, presented with care and thoughtful extras like interviews with the filmmakers and actors, are the ideal place to begin.

#### HOT ON FACEBOOK

1 of 3



**Slash Caught Fellow Rocker Naked With His Mom**



**Why We Aren't Playing at the RNC**



#### HOT ON TWITTER

1 of 2



**ricky\_martin**

Make Room for (the New) Daddy  
<http://t.co/Q6elDokm> via  
[@huffingtonpost](http://t.co/huffingtonpost)

Retweet



**jilevin**

Unemployment In Europe By Country  
<http://t.co/ckVtqKJX> via  
[@huffingtonpost](http://t.co/huffingtonpost)

Retweet

#### HUFFPOST'S BIG NEWS PAGES



[Celebrity babies](#)



[John McCain](#)



[Islam](#)



[Miami Dolphins](#)



[Television](#)



[Maggie Furlong](#)



[Elections 2012](#)

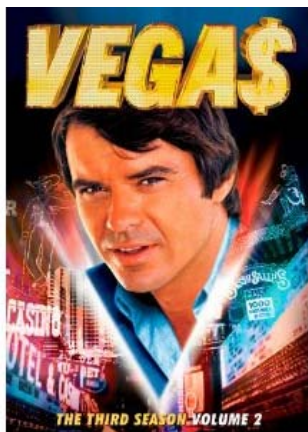
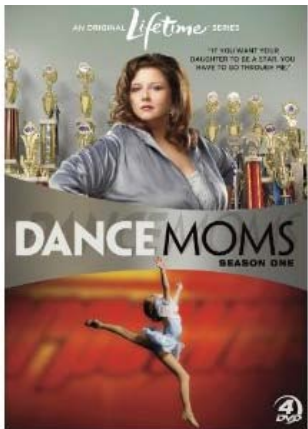
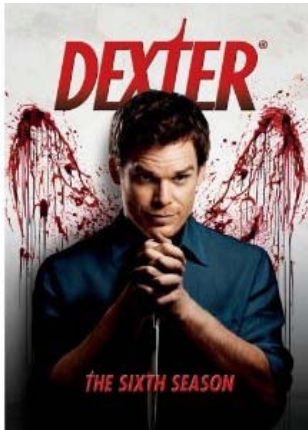
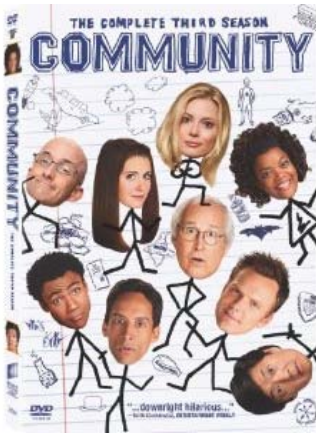


[Rihanna](#)



[Careers](#)

[MORE BIG NEWS PAGES »](#)



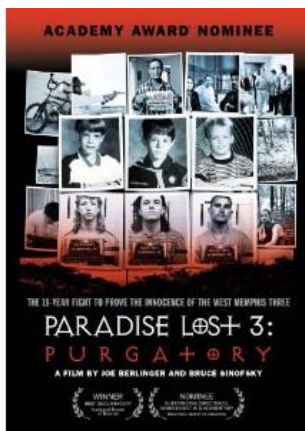
**COMMUNITY THE COMPLETE THIRD SEASON** (\$45.99 DVD; Sony)

**DEXTER THE SIXTH SEASON** (\$54.99 DVD; Showtime/CBS)

**DANCE MOMS SEASON ONE** (\$ DVD; Lifetime)

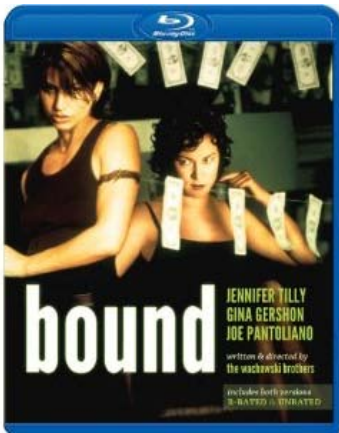
**VEGAS THE THIRD SEASON VOLUME TWO** (\$ DVD; CBS/Paramount) -- The third season will always be the "final" season for many fans of *Community*, now that NBC has dumped the show's creator

Dan Harmon. At least he went out with its nutty, self-referential, TV-spoofing flag waving high. *Dexter* is still going though it should have called it a day a season ago, when Dexter had seemingly found the perfect damaged girlfriend. I couldn't bear to watch this season yet when the series that had pushed its premise far beyond what I imagined had clearly found the ideal ending. But it's very very hard to walk away from a hit and they're going to keep on going and I'll eventually give in and see how they've handled the pressure. Yet another terrific season-defining poster image, by the way. The women involved in *Dance Moms* really should take a look in the mirror -- when you're more hateful than a serial killer (albeit a lovable serial killer played by Michael C. Hall), something is dreadfully wrong with how you behave yourself on camera. A guilty pleasure for some, but just tiresome and annoying to me. *Vegas* was a modest hit series back in the day and like most shows of its ilk from the late 1970s/early 1980s, it has not aged well. But Robert Ulrich leaves no doubt as to why he has been a major TV star for so long: the camera simply likes some people more than others and he is one of them.



**PARADISE LOST 3: PURGATORY** (\$29.95 DVD; Docurama) -- This series is messy and long and frustrating and absorbing and angry and triumphant. It has taken up almost 20 years of the filmmakers' time to find justice for the West Memphis Three and the simple fact that you might know the name "the West Memphis Three" is a testament to their work. And it actually changed lives. What more powerful words could a documentary filmmaker hope for? Any caveats about structure and the rambling nature of some episodes pale beside that fact. And overall, the films are a hypnotic look at the criminal justice system and the fact that no laws or good intentions can keep a community from looking the other way or demanding blind justice because a terrible crime has been committed. Ultimately, only vigilance can ensure justice is done. And that's exactly what these films have provided.

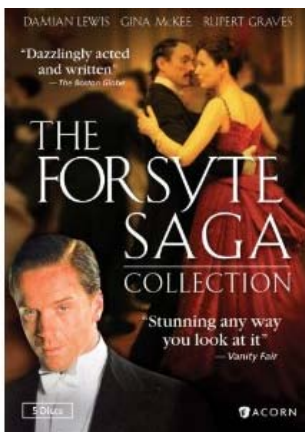


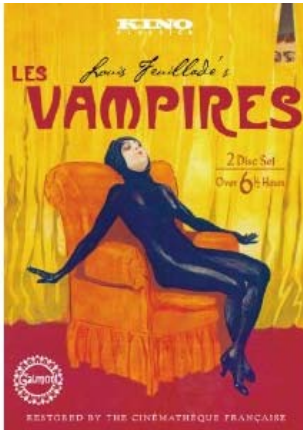
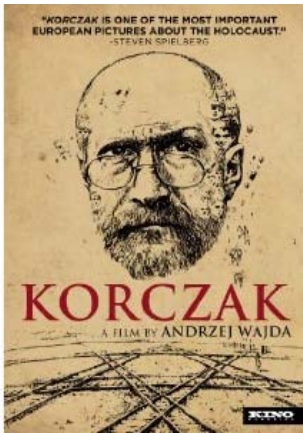


**GROSSE POINTE BLANK** (\$20 BluRay; Hollywood/Disney)

**BOUND** (\$29.95 BluRay; Olive/Paramount)

**ADVENTURES IN BABYSITTING** (\$20 BluRay; Touchstone/Disney) -- A deliciously offbeat crowd-pleaser from John Cusack. *Grosse Pointe Blank* is the nutty story of an assassin who ends up attending his high school reunion while on the job and falling in love all over again with the one that got away, Minnie Driver. Here's hoping the seven or so films he's completed or working on or about to work on will pull Cusack out of his rut and back on top as one of the most interesting and smart actors of his generation. *Bound* is a nifty B movie caper with sapphic overtones. It's tremendous fun and gave Jennifer Tilly one of her best showcases ever. You knew the Wachowskis were ones to watch but it took Joel Silver to say, Hey, here's a ton of money. Go make a sci-fi spectacle. Finally, I probably overpraised *Adventures in Babysitting* a tad when it came out and I'm almost afraid to rewatch this trifle and see how it's dated. But boy Elizabeth Shue was adorable in it. I was certainly right about her.





**THE FORSYTE SAGA COLLECTION** (\$79.99 DVD; Acorn)

**KORCZAK** (\$29.95 DVD; Kino)

**LES VAMPIRES** (\$34.95 DVD; Kino) -- Anyone who has become enamored of Damian Lewis because of Showtime's acclaimed *Homeland* should of course check out *Band Of Brothers* and this high-toned soap opera. The original *Forstye Saga* was a groundbreaker, albeit a creaky one by today's standards. This remake is essentially unnecessary but polished fun, with a top notch cast including Lewis and the always indispensable Rupert Graves. I'm just catching up with the great director Andrzej Wajda and his extraordinary body of work. Here's another gem -- *Korczak*, from 1990 when it shouldn't have missed my attention. It's the true story of a man who ran an orphanage for Jewish orphans who stood by his children after the Nazis came. Sad and beautiful. Finally, for pure cinematic fun *Les Vampires* is one of the landmark serials that prove the format was not just for silly escapism but could in fact contain significant works of art. The battle-scarred landscape alone (courtesy of WW I) makes this a valuable work but the 10 part gangster tale will grip you all on its own.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Most titles listed here will be available in multiple formats and in multiple combinations, including DVD, Blu-ray, digital download, video on demand, streaming and the like. The format listed is the format provided for review, not all the formats available. It is often the most expensive version with the most extras. Do check individual titles for availability in all their various guises and price points.*

*Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the cohost of [Showbiz Sandbox](#), a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's [available](#) for free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his [website](#) and his [daily blog](#). Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called [Popsurfing](#) and also [available](#) for free on iTunes. Link to him on Netflix and [gain](#) access to thousands of ratings and reviews.*

**Note:** Michael Giltz is provided with free copies of DVDs and Blu-rays with the understanding that he would be considering them for review. Generally, he does not guarantee to review and he receives far more titles than he can cover.

**Follow Michael Giltz on Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/michaelgiltz](https://www.twitter.com/michaelgiltz)

**FOLLOW ENTERTAINMENT**

Like 75k

GET ALERTS

Michael Douglas As  
Reagan In  
'Reykavik': Can...

Samuel L. Jackson:  
'Unfair' Hurricane  
Isaac Avoid...

Clint Eastwood &  
Republican  
Convention:  
Conservative  
Actor...

Rachel Weisz &  
Terrence Malick: 'To  
The...

**Comments** 7 Pending Comments 0

[View FAQ](#)

## HuffPost Social News

**To reply to a Comment:** Click "Reply" at the bottom of the comment; after being approved your comment will appear directly underneath the comment you replied to.

[Preview Comment](#)

[Post Comment](#)

**Share your Comment:**

Post to Facebook.	Post to Blogger.	Post to Twitter.
Post to WordPress.	Post to TypePad.	Post to Tumblr.

[View All](#)

Recency | Popularity

HUFFPOST SUPER USER

**GaryNOVA**

*Fear My Micro-bio!!!!!!!*

**553 Fans**

10:14 PM on 08/21/2012

I love films that practically invent a brand new genre. Jaws is one of them. Alien

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

**whatsthatssound**

*ferret in a beret*

**719 Fans**

This user has chosen to opt out of the Badges program

10:08 AM on 08/18/2012

Yep, you are right. Jaws is responsible for everything that came after it. It is pretty much of a B.C./A.D. marking point. And much of what came after it was horrible, while much of what came before it was great. So, Jaws, Steven, Mr. Williams, etc., not to mention author Mr. Benchley; you accomplished something absolutely amazing and you did it to the hilt. Now please go back and UNDO it.

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

HUFFPOST SUPER USER

**SuzyScorp**

*If opportunity isn't knocking, build a door!*

**134 Fans**

10:02 AM on 08/17/2012

imho, Jaws set the bar for summer blockbusters. According to 1975 ticket sales, it was the highest grossing movie, during the summer, for a long time.. Hence, how summer blockbuster got it's title from... Jaws was also the first to film in the real ocean.. So many studios wanted to play it safe and use a large pool, but Steven Spielberg was adamant that they go in the salt water, to make it more authentic.. It was pretty much the introduction (at least for me, as I was only 11 back then) to Richard Dreyfuss, such a gifted actor, that would go on to make a couple dozen more movies! lol

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

---

HUFFPOST BLOGGER

**Michael Giltz**

*freelance writer*

**127 Fans**

02:18 PM on 08/17/2012

I ran out of room but you're definitely right about the movie launching Dreyfuss into the stratosphere where he would remain for years, with Close Encounters of the Third Kind, The Goodbye Girl, Whose Life Is It Anyway, Down & Out In Beverly Hills, Tin Men and beyond.

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

**simmersck**

**297 Fans**

04:54 AM on 08/17/2012

Maybe Lawrence of Arabia? It sure made me understand the cut throat, murdering, mentality of the middle east.

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

HUFFPOST BLOGGER

**Michael Giltz**

*freelance writer*

**127 Fans**

02:15 PM on 08/17/2012

Thanks for commenting. Of course, please note that I am not discussing the most artistically satisfying movies of all time, but the most influential in terms of the movie business. Lawrence of Arabia is a great film but it's one in a long line of epics of that sort, though most not made with such artistry and success. I can't think of any particular impact of Lawrence beyond making a star forever of Peter O'Toole and being the latest success for David Lean. It wasn't an independent production, for example, nor did it mark an actor or director breaking away from a studio system or demanding a cut of the grosses, like Jimmy Stewart in his westerns. "Jaws" was so influential in so many areas ("Star Wars" came in its wake) that I'm hard-pressed to find its equal. But as a film, Lawrence of Arabia is indeed a masterpiece.

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

**simmersck**

**297 Fans**

04:06 PM on 08/17/2012

Well said Michael!

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

[Advertise](#) | [Make HuffPost your Home Page](#) | [RSS](#) | [Careers](#) | [FAQ](#)

[User Agreement](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Comment Policy](#) | [About Us](#) | [About Our Ads](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright © 2012 TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. | "The Huffington Post" is a registered trademark of TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. All rights reserved.

Part of **AOL-HuffPost Entertainment**



August 31, 2012

# HUFF POST ENTERTAINMENT

Edition: U.S. ▾



FRONT PAGE POLITICS BUSINESS MEDIA CELEBRITY TV COMEDY FOOD STYLE ARTS BOOKS LIVE | ALL SECTIONS

Entertainment | Celebrity TV Political Hollywood Features Hollywood Buzz Videos

## THE BLOG

Featuring fresh takes and real-time analysis from HuffPost's signature lineup of contributors

### HOT ON THE BLOG

D.L. Hughley  
Cheech Marin

Dr. Dean Ornish  
Bill Moyers

HuffPost Social Reading



**Michael Giltz**

GET UPDATES FROM MICHAEL GILTZ

Freelance writer

Like 107

## DVDs: Why Dr. Seuss Movies Suck

Posted: 08/08/2012 12:45 am

React > Inspiring Funny Hot Scary Outrageous Amazing Weird Crazy

Follow > Movies, Dr. Seuss, Johnny Cash, Marilyn Monroe, Mumford & Sons, TV Shows, Blu-ray, Dvds, Grimm, Entertainment News

SHARE THIS STORY

Submit this story



### FOLLOW US

### MOST POPULAR ON HUFFPOST

1 of 2

**Fox News: Paul Ryan's Speech Was Full Of 'Blatant Lies'**

Recommend 22k

**Paul Ryan Speech Built On Demonstrably Misleading Assertions**

Like 15k

**Friar Suggests Teens Seduce Priests In A Lot Of Sex Abuse Cases**

Recommend 8k

**Republican Attendees Thrown Out After Racist Attack On CNN Worker**

Like 18k

**Anti-Obama Signs Create Controversy**

Recommend 1k

**Isaac Continues To Present Life-Threatening Weather**

Recommend 89

**WATCH: Why Michael Moore Thinks Romney Will Win**

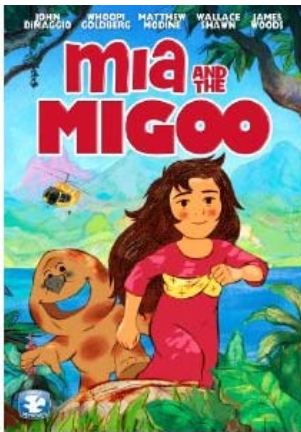
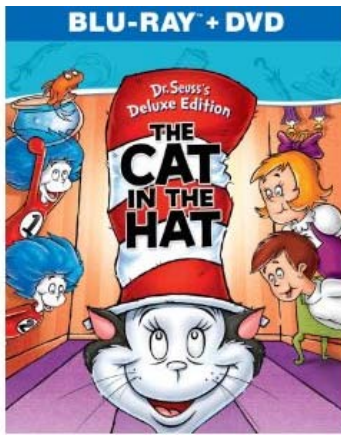
Like 2k

**Chipotle Busted For Cheating Customers Out Of Pennies**

Like 1k

**9 Other Individuals, Companies And Organizations Besides Chick-Fil-A That Have Funded Anti-LGBT Politics**

Like 1k



**THE LORAX** (\$34.98 BluRay combo; Universal)


**THE CAT IN THE HAT DELUXE EDITION** (\$24.98 BluRay combo; Warner Bros.)

**MY LITTLE PONY: ROYAL PONY WEDDING** (\$14.97 DVD; Shout)

**MIA AND THE MIGOO** (\$19.98 DVD; EOne) -- Hollywood keeps making movies based on books by Dr. Seuss and they keep sucking. It's not hard to understand why when you see something like the 85 minute, padded out Hollywood flick *The Lorax* (complete with celeb voices like Zac Efron, Taylor Swift and Betty White) side by side with *The Cat In The Hat*, the 1971 TV special that's a trim and tight 25 minutes and features voice actors like Allan Sherman, Daws Butler, Thurl Ravenscroft and other people you've never heard of before. The Dr. Seuss books are typically 32 pages long (like most picture books) and contain very few words. Padding out those minimalist stories to feature length means adding in unnecessary chase scenes and subplots and other gilding that obscures the haiku-like masterpieces Seuss created. Mind you, even keeping it short doesn't guarantee success; the TV special version of *The Lorax* back in 1972 is better mostly because it's shorter than the film. The preachiness of one of Seuss's more didactic books comes through even more clearly. But there's no question you'll get much more value out of watching and rewatching *The Cat In The Hat* than the latest stab at puffing up a Seuss tale into a movie. That won't stop kids from wanting to see them; if you've got a little girl, it's quite likely you've had to endure *My Little Pony*. It's kind of cute that *Royal Pony Wedding* is tied into the Royal Wedding but comes out so long after Will and Kate tied the knot it seems sweetly out of step. But that's where the cuteness in this banal series ends. (Carterlot? Really?) Take a stab at a lesser known property and check out *Mia and the Migoo*. It too has a nature-friendly tale, just like *The Lorax*, not to mention a star-heavy cast including Whoopi Goldberg and Wallace Shawn. But the personal nature of this story and the care



**DON'T MISS HUFFPOST BLOGGERS** 1 of 5

 **D.L. Hughley**  
[A Question of Legitimacy](#)

 **Dr. Dean Ornish**  
[A Radical Alternative For Democrats And Republicans](#)

**TOP VIDEO PICKS** 1 of 6

[Stallone's Cause of Death Revealed](#)

 [Simon Cowell To the Rescue](#)

 [Mila Kunis Shows Her Bare Midriff](#)

**MOST DISCUSSED RIGHT NOW** 1 of 2

 [Country Singer Calls Clay Aiken A Racist For RNC Tweet](#)

 [16 Celebrities Who Shill For Politicians](#)

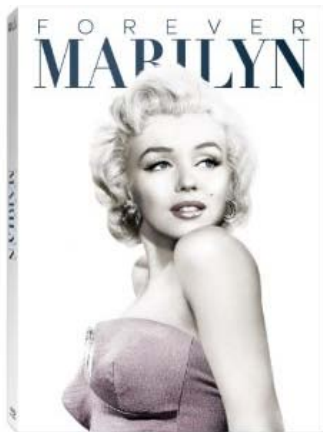
**HOT ON FACEBOOK** 1 of 3

 [Slash Caught Fellow Rocker Naked With His Mom](#)

 [Hip-Hop Manager Dies Of Apparent Suicide](#)

 **HOT ON TWITTER** 1 of 2

with which the hand-drawn animation was created make this far more distinctive and engaging. And if your kid becomes crazy about it, you won't mind seeing it repeated a bazillion times so very much.



**FOREVER MARILYN** (\$99.98 BluRay; Fox) -- By now, the starlets who are famous for their breasts and their pin-ups have been reduced to a few iconic images. The actresses with genuine talent and star quality are remembered for their films. Hence this seven film collection of Marilyn Monroe which contains five movies new to Bluray and yet still has fans asking why was this movie left out and why was *that* movie left out and so on? At less than \$15 per film, this is a modestly packaged set with a cardboard case and those annoying sleeves in which you slide discs in and out and try not to scratch them. But where it really matters -- the quality of the images on the discs themselves. Her greatest film -- *Some Like It Hot* -- looks as good as recent reissues. The bauble *How To Marry A Millionaire* may be dated in its would-be modern sensibility but that makes its essentially romantic heart even more endearing. *There's No Business Like Show Business*, *River Of No Return* (with Robert Mitchum) and the truly dated *The Seven Year Itch* (a tiresome conceit that has not stood the test of time) are all fine looking and Monroe looks even better and is the best thing in them. But her last completed film *The Misfits* -- with Monroe holding her own next to Clark Gable and Montgomery Clift -- shows Monroe maturing beautifully. And *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* is just stunning. For those like me who prefer their movies in compact cases rather than say a pink powder puff that you'd end up storing in your closet anyway, this is a solid introduction to a major talent.



**ricky\_martin**  
 Make Room for (the New) Daddy  
<http://t.co/Q6eIDokm> via  
 @huffingtonpost  
 Retweet

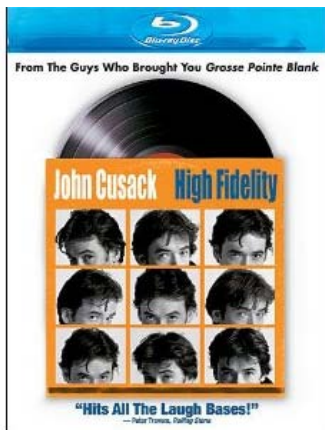
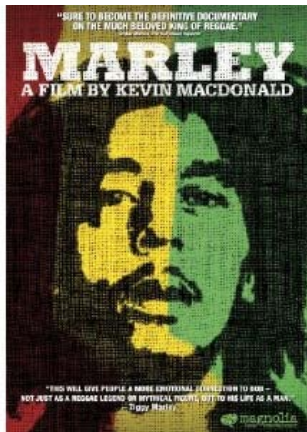
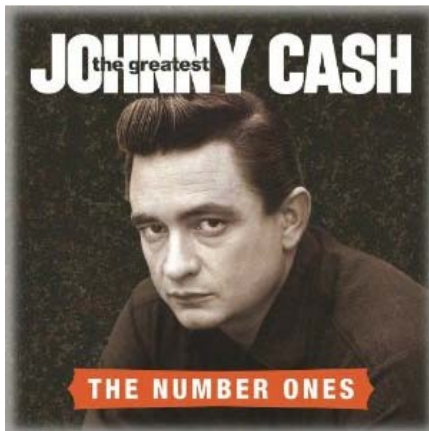


**aol**  
 Join the conversation! @huffpostlive  
 starts now: <http://t.co/uuxl5lCg>  
 Retweet

**HUFFPOST'S BIG NEWS PAGES**

<a href="#">Video</a>	<a href="#">Celebrity babies</a>	<a href="#">Kanye West</a>
<a href="#">Elections 2012</a>	<a href="#">Mitt Romney</a>	<a href="#">AP</a>
<a href="#">Virginia</a>	<a href="#">NFL</a>	<a href="#">Tennis</a>

[MORE BIG NEWS PAGES »](#)



**BIG EASY EXPRESS** (\$16.99 BluRay; Alliance)

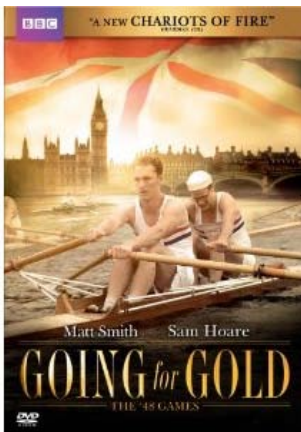
**JOHNNY CASH: WE WALK THE LINE** (\$24.98 DVD; Legacy)

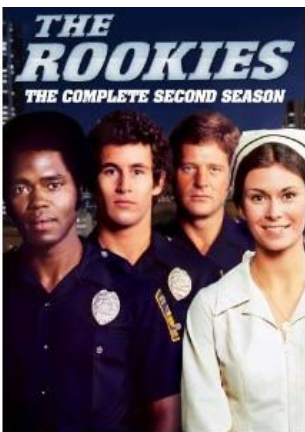
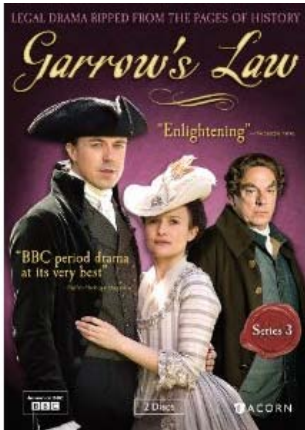
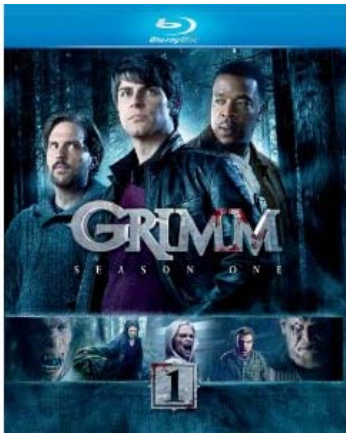
**JOHNNY CASH: THE GREATEST -- THE NUMBER ONES** (\$7.99 CD; Legacy)

**MARLEY** (\$26.98 DVD; magnolia)

**FELA KUTI DOUBLE FEATURE** (\$24.96 DVD; Lorber)

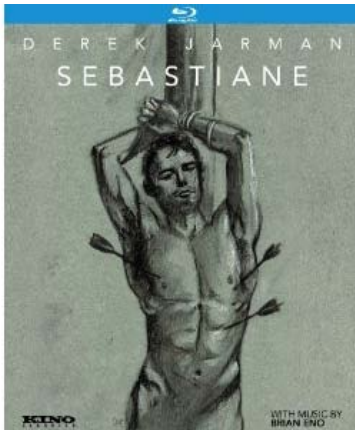
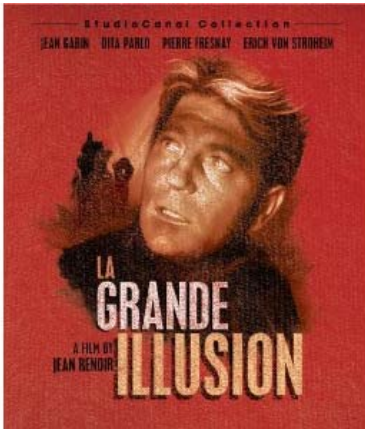
**HIGH FIDELITY** (S20 Blu-ray: Touchstone) -- *Big Easy Express* is an all-too brief concert film/documentary about a concert tour featuring Mumford & Sons, Edward Sharpe and Old Crow Medicine Show, three simpatico bands drawing upon Americana. The gimmick was that they rode the rails, traveling on a special train the entire way. It sounds like a blast. Unfortunately, for a fair amount of the 66 minute film everyone keeps telling us what a great time they're having and/or expounds on the meaning of it all. When the filmmaker stays in the corner and just observes everyone jamming, it's a delight akin to *Festival Express*. Modest highlights on this strictly for fans release include watching Mumford & Sons rehearse with a high school marching band and then cutting to the live performance where the kids are having the time of their lives, as well as a raucous finale on "Bound For Glory." Next time, more music please. *Johnny Cash: We Walk The Line* is a tribute to the Man in Black. These shows are a dime a dozen but the artists are especially focused and on their game, with Carolina Chocolate Drops a delight on "Jackson" and Kris Kristofferson the magnetic elder statesman on a few numbers. Also out are a string of nicely priced Cash compilations, led by *The Number Ones* (which contains 19 hits), *Duets*, *Gospel* and *Country Classics*. Each is just \$8 on their own and a good buy. Buy them all and mix them up and you'll have a pretty good introduction but the uninitiated are still better off with a Sun classics compilation and the live album *At Folsom Prison*. *Marley* is about two and a half hours long but Bob Marley's life and music and impact is so rich you almost wish it were a six hour TV miniseries instead. Fela Kuti was the Bob Marley of Africa and this useful two-fer is a good introduction to those who saw the Broadway show or have heard some of his magnetic music and want to know more. *Teacher Don't Teach Me No Nonsense* is an hour long documentary at its best when Kuti is talking or singing, the nearly 90 minute concert film from 1978 shows Kuti in fine teacher form, taking ten minutes for a glorifying introduction, a lecture on who he is and what he's going to do before actually getting down to sing. The sound quality isn't great but Kuti surely is. Finally, if you've read this far you're a true music fan so you're sure to enjoy John Cusack's *High Fidelity*, a fine translation of the novel to America and a love letter to music with some classic scenes in the record store that make it essential. Sadly, Cusack has hit a wall in the last decade and hasn't really done anything of more than modest interest. Maybe he *should* run for President...





- MISFITS SEASON ONE** (\$24.98 DVD; BBC)
- GOING FOR GOLD: THE '48 GAMES** (\$19.97 DVD; BBC)
- GRIMM SEASON ONE** (\$69.98 BluRay; Universal)
- GARROW'S LAW SERIES 3** (\$39.99 DVD; Acorn)
- STRIKE BACK SEASON ONE** (\$59.96 BluRay combo; HBO/Cinemax)

**THE ROOKIES SECOND SEASON** (\$44.99 DVD; Shout) -- *Misfits* is a UK show about teens who suddenly develop supernatural powers and use them to protect their home town. *Buffy For Brits?* *Chronicle The TV Series?* Take your pick. It was initially seen here only on Hulu, which let this witty if modest show feel just right -- finding it on Hulu made it unique and surely Hulu is where a lot of its core audience lives. (Watching TV shows live is *so* 2008.) Some of those kids love *Dr. Who* so Matt Smith might lure them to this sports films about an unlikely duo competing in the 1948 Games. *Going For Gold* fine for those with an Olympics hangover, love *Chariots of Fire* or simply crush on Smith. *Grimm* is a show I watched for a few episodes and then moved on. TV has so much to offer it's hard to commit to a new show that doesn't wow you. but friends who love this sort of programming insist it found its footing about halfway through the season so if the mythology isn't too complicated, I'll catch up. *Garrow's Law* isn't nearly as interesting as the historical figure William Garrow that it's based on. But this legal period thriller is fine fare for those crazy about the genre. *Strike Back* is really season two, but it's the first one seen in the US (on Cinemax). A more action-oriented, more humorous spin on *24* and the frenetic UK show *Spooks*, it's good mindless fun the British accent makes you pretend it's more sophisticated than it actually is. Plus, I love their new tagline: Diplomacy Is Overrated. (And Season One was a stand-alone storyline so you won't be lost at all.) Finally, *The Rookies* was a typical Aaron Spelling offering with a patina of social concern by humanizing the LA police force. It's mostly fun just to see Kate Jackson of *Charlie's Angels* and Michael Ontkean of *Twin Peaks* in this early commercial success.





**LA GRANDE ILLUSION** (\$29.99 BluRay; Lionsgate)

**SEBASTIANE** (\$29.95 BluRay; Kino)

**THE TEMPEST** (\$29.95 BluRay; Kino)

**JOHNNY GUITAR** (\$29.95 BluRay; Olive)

**RIO GRANDE** (\$29.95 BluRay; Olive)

**LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY** (\$24.95 DVD; Kino) -- Some acclaimed movies to wind up the column.

La Grande Illusion often makes short lists of the greatest films of all time. But it drops out of the Top 50 in the latest Sight & Sound poll. Did they make a mistake? You judge via this fine looking print. Derek Jarman sees two early films get a BluRay release -- Sebastiane is a spin on Billy Budd that mythologizes a Christian saint and gay icon. The Tempest is Shakespeare on a dime with a musical finale Busby Berkeley would be proud of featuring "Stormy Weather," natch. Many aficionados consider Johnny Guitar one of director Nicholas Ray's greatest. I think they're out of their mind and the only real pleasure to derive from it is its campy goofiness. Joan Crawford agrees with me and who'd disagree with her (at least to her face)? Rio Grande is the soft landing for John Ford's Cavalry trilogy, whose first two films are classics. Still it has John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara in a dry run for The Quiet Man. Finally, Little Lord Fauntleroy is a predictable programmer despite its high-toned pedigree but it's clear even 76 years later why Freddie Bartholomew and Mickey Rooney were such huge child stars.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Most titles listed here will be available in multiple formats and in multiple combinations, including DVD, Blu-ray, digital download, video on demand, streaming and the like. The format listed is the*



format provided for review, not all the formats available. It is often the most expensive version with the most extras. Do check individual titles for availability in all their various guises and price points.

Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the cohost of [Showbiz Sandbox](#), a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's [available](#) for free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his [website](#) and his [daily blog](#). Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called Popsurfing and also [available](#) for free on iTunes. Link to him on Netflix and [gain](#) access to thousands of ratings and reviews.

**Note:** Michael Giltz is provided with free copies of DVDs and Blu-rays with the understanding that he would be considering them for review. Generally, he does not guarantee to review and he receives far more titles than he can cover.

Follow Michael Giltz on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/michaelgiltz](http://www.twitter.com/michaelgiltz)

#### FOLLOW ENTERTAINMENT

Like 75k

GET ALERTS

[More in Entertainment...](#)

---

Movie Review: Side  
by Side...

Movie Review: For a  
Good Time, Call.....

Future of Film: What  
Is a Movie's...

## Comments

22

Pending Comments 0

[View FAQ](#)

## HuffPost Social News

**To reply to a Comment:** Click "Reply" at the bottom of the comment; after being approved your comment will appear directly underneath the comment you replied to.

[Preview Comment](#)

[Post Comment](#)

#### Share your Comment:

Post to Facebook.	Post to Blogger.	Post to Twitter.
Post to WordPress.	Post to TypePad.	Post to Tumblr.

View All

Favorites

Recency | Popularity

**Joseph Schmoe**  
336 Fans

This user has chosen to opt out of the Badges program

11:17 AM on 08/09/2012

Every Seuss movie sucks. He and Bill Watterson (of Calvin & Hobbes fame) were struck from the same mold: no product line, no crappy merch based on wonderful characters who lived on the page, and that was enough.

Ted G. wasn't cold in his grave yet when his wife and family inked deals to market the heck out of every Seuss property, plus terrible cutting-room floor stuff such as "Daisy-head Maisy." It's all garbage.

Go back to the books; that's all any child needs for wonder, imagination and creativity.

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

**BlackJAC**

*It's better to be a black king than a white knight*

## 1309 Fans

07:19 PM on 08/08/2012

You're aware that the target audience for Dr. Seuss movies is children whose ages are still in the single digits, right?

Also, it's technically Season 2 of *Strike Back*, for there was a six-part first season released only in the UK: <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Chris-Ryans-Strike-Back-DVD/dp/B0039WHKE0>

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

### HUFFPOST BLOGGER

**Michael Giltz**

*freelance writer*

127 Fans

11:48 AM on 08/11/2012

Hi Blackjac, I can't change the packaging on the DVDs or what the studio calls it but I did indeed make that very point in my review of *Strike Back*. Thanks for the info and link anyway. However, as for the audience of Dr Seuss being little children, there are excellent movies and TV shows and books geared towards little kids and there are pieces of junk for little kids. Some might satisfy kids but bore adults, some might satisfy adults but be too sophisticated for kids and the best ones of all either have an enduring simplicity and artfulness (like say the TV special *Cat in the Hat* or *Winnie the Pooh*) while others resonate differently at different stages of your life (like the novel *Peter Pan*). But just because a kid is 7 years old doesn't mean you have to settle for them watching junk.

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

### BlackJAC

*It's better to be a black king than a white knight*

1309 Fans

07:22 AM on 08/12/2012

Like a 7-year-old's going to know the difference anyway. They just want to laugh and have fun.

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

There are More Comments on this Thread. [Click Here To See them All](#)

---

### leskataus

257 Fans

02:28 PM on 08/08/2012

The reason these movie adaptations are so awful is because they are trying to extend books that can be read in as little as 10 minutes into two hour movies. As a result, unnecessary subplots and characters have to be added to fill out the movies. I thought "The Cat In The Hat" was especially unfunny.

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

### Ilisa

1684 Fans

02:23 PM on 08/08/2012

The best movie made from a Seuss book is the cartoon version of "How The Grinch Stole Christmas". No Seuss movie should have ANY words added to those from the book, and NO Seuss movie should star real people dressed up.

The movie adaptation of Maurice Sendak's "Where The Wild Things Are" also did a great disservice to a beloved writer's vision.

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

### GraceNotes

*We live for books.*

251 Fans

04:22 PM on 08/08/2012

The original made-for-TV version of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* is still shown every year, for good reason. The music is fantastic, and holds up better than some of the old Disney stuff.

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

**Ilisa**  
**1684 Fans**

06:19 PM on 08/08/2012

Totally agree!

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

**BlackJAC**

*It's better to be a black king than a white knight*

**1309 Fans**

07:24 PM on 08/08/2012

But the live-action Jim Carrey one restored Seuss' original intent to denounce the commercialism of Christmas: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C\\_4LmbuSmpl](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_4LmbuSmpl) It gave the Grinch actual motive beyond simply being a jerk.

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

**Ilisa**  
**1684 Fans**

03:07 AM on 08/09/2012

That was the whole point of the book and the cartoon that reproduced the book exactly--with great music. The live action was awful, and Cindi Lou Who was WAY more than two.

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

There are More Comments on this Thread. [Click Here To See them All](#)

---

There are More Comments on this Thread. [Click Here To See them All](#)

---

**HUFFPOST SUPER USER**

**Sally Barry**

**20 Fans**

09:33 AM on 08/08/2012

That Grinch movie with Jim Carrey? That is the Stuff of Nightmares. Just ghastly, major FAIL.

Marilyn Monroe's movies have been shown this month, and it seems they (and she) are criticism from some wet-behind-the-ears people who just don't see it. They focus on her voluptuous figure and pointy bras! The movies are all we have, of course they are kind of dated, and she didn't have any attractive compatible male stars to be romantic with (Tom Ewell?? Joseph Cotton?? Ew.). But there was only one Marilyn Monroe, and she will forever be THE icon. Who else could be on her level? Angelina Jolie, that weird bag of rattling bones?

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

**brenstwits**  
**0 Fans**

07:49 AM on 08/08/2012

WE loved the Lorax. And all Dr. Seus movies. must be a man writing this.

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

**HUFFPOST BLOGGER**

**Michael Giltz**

*freelance writer*

**127 Fans**

11:53 AM on 08/11/2012

Huh? What does being a man have to do with anything? If you liked ALL feature film adaptations of Dr Seuss you must be an uber fan -- even the estate didn't love all the movies, despite the money they've pulled in. But I appreciate good children's programming and even better children's programming that transcends the needs of kids and prove an enduring work of art. Certain shows on the Disney Channel and Nickelodeon might not be shows I'll watch regularly but I can appreciate them as appropriate for kids and much better than low bar fare that peddles cereal and is just stuffed with dumb action and humor. Naturally, the best stuff can appeal to kids and adults...even if one of the adults is a male. Do you really think only women can appreciate and understand movies and TV shows and books made for kids and which ones work?

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

**HUFFPOST SUPER USER**

**johnpezzu**  
19 Fans

07:44 AM on 08/08/2012

"your not a kid anymore"

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

**HUFFPOST SUPER USER**  
**Kelly Groves Scott**  
14 Fans

07:29 AM on 08/08/2012

I liked The Lorax and Horton Hears a Who was awesome. The only ones that sucked were the Jim Carrey Grinch and Mike Myers Cat in the Hat.

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

---

**Maki Maus**  
33 Fans

04:46 AM on 08/08/2012

As someone who grew up on Dr. Seuss, I have to agree with the assessment that, apart from the original Chuck Jones rendition of "The Grinch that Stole Christmas" and the sometimes unfocused but basically intact "Cat in the Hat" (short cartoon version), adaptations of Seuss have been inferior to the point of insulting. But then again, the movies were evidently done by individuals who wanted to cash in on the popularity of the good 'Doctor' without trying to understand, let alone capture, his elfin sense of humor.

[Permalink](#) | [Share it](#)

[Advertise](#) | [Make HuffPost your Home Page](#) | [RSS](#) | [Careers](#) | [FAQ](#)

[User Agreement](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Comment Policy](#) | [About Us](#) | [About Our Ads](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright © 2012 TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. | "The Huffington Post" is a registered trademark of TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. All rights reserved.

Part of **AOL-HuffPost Entertainment**