

# EDITOR'S CORNER

## The 2004 Esterline Movie Awards

By Matthew Esterline

### FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



#### Dear Reader,

First of all I would like to apologize for the delay in publishing THE DECREE this semester. The delay was caused due to health issues with me. We are in the process of training additional staff so that these sorts of problems will not happen again. I hope that if you have become a regular reader, you will welcome the return of your campus paper.

We will be playing catch up for a while, and a few of the stories you will read are not exactly today's news; however, the stories are presented to you because of their importance, which in some cases is more important than timeliness.

Thanks for your patience, your loyalty, and your support.

Keep Reading,

Ron



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The movies of 2004, in a nutshell, sucked. The uppity cracker intellectuals are cheering movies like "Sideways", "Vera Drake", and "Closer", the political mongoloid crowds are cheering "Fahrenheit 9/11" (Not a bad movie, but I preferred "Team America: World Police"), and idiots are cheering "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" (The only movie with less diversity in its casting was "Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow", the whitest movie of 2004). To be honest, I had trouble coming up with ten good movies to put on this list (Numbers 10 through 6 are mainly for show). TV shows like "The Wire", "Scrubs", "Deadwood", and "Rescue Me" were ten times better than most of the movies released this year. However, I tried my best and picked out what I feel are the best nuggets of the crap pile that were the films of 2004. The only criteria for making the list was that the film had to be released in a U.S. theater in 2004 and that it didn't completely suck.

#### The 2004-05 Esterline Awards

10. "Ray" or "The Aviator" - It doesn't matter which one I pick, since they're essentially the same movie. They both look good, they both have very strong performances, but over all these movies are annoying and have terrible endings. "Ray" and "The Aviator" just stop without delivering anything when the credits roll, although I did learn that drug use and insanity are two great things to draw inspiration from. The only reason these two are on the list is because of the admirable starring performances. Other than that, these movies suck.

9. "The Assassination of Richard Nixon" — A real man named Sam Bicke tried to kill Nixon with a plane. This movie plays out like a watered down "Taxi Driver" and tries to describe the man's state of mind. Luckily, Sean Penn is able to pull something out of this crap-hole and make the movie worth watching. Also, Don Cheadle and Naomi Watts give strong supporting performances in what little screen time they have. The movie's not great, but it

works as a minor character study.

8. "Blueberry" - This American western stars a French actor as a sheriff who defeats his archenemy by doing an enormous amount of peyote. Instead of fighting, the hero and the villain both do peyote, and only one man comes back from the drug trip alive. This movie is on the list because it is unique. I haven't seen a bigger waste of talented actors, crew, and special effects since, well, ever. Seriously, find this soon-to-be cult movie and watch it. It's like watching "Vanishing Point" or "Two-Lane Blacktop" with horses.

7. "The Motorcycle Diaries" - Road movies rock. Road movies in South America also rock. This movie tells the true story of two men who will have very different paths in life by the time the movie ends. Both men decide to travel through South America on motorcycle to perform their medical residency. Along the way, the two listen to stories from various people and see the poor conditions many people are living in. This movie deals with politics and society and does a good job of setting up what the future holds for Ernesto "Che" Guevara, one of the two men.

6. "Dogville" — Dogville tells the story of a stranger who wanders into a small town in depression-era America while on the run from gangsters. The town welcomes her at first, but begins to take advantage of the stranger. The stranger (Nicole Kidman) finds herself between a rock and a hard place as she is forced to submit to the will of the town in order to remain hidden from the gangsters. This movie is most notable for the strong performance by Kidman, which is amazing considering how every other movie she's been in sucks hard. Also, the ending is amazing as the stranger finds herself in control over the fate of the small town.

5. "The Machinist" — Brad Anderson is one of the best directors of the last twenty-five years. Check out "Next Stop Wonderland", "Session 9", and "Happy Accidents". "The Machinist" is one of those *Memento*-type movies where some things are real and some aren't. Trevor, the lead character, hasn't slept in one year. As a result, he has lost nearly a third of his body weight and is extremely paranoid. As the movie progresses, Trevor (Christian Bale) begins to realize what the cause of his insomnia is, and what he has to do to stop it.

4. "Twilight Samurai" — This movie was made in 2002 but not released in the U.S. until 2004. Still, it technically counts as a 2004 movie. This movie deals with real samurai, not that bull that we all saw in "The Last Samurai". The plot deals with a samurai in the twilight of the samurai era. He must perform menial tasks to provide for his loved ones. His sense of honor returns as he defends a battered woman who wants to divorce her abusive husband. As commercial as movies are this year, this movie probably has the closest true

depiction of a historical era. It's worth watching.

3. "Finding Neverland" — "Peter Pan" was written by James Matthew Barrie. Until I saw this movie, that fact never concerned me. This is the only movie out of the group of so-called Oscar contenders that is worth remembering. "Ray" and "The Aviator" had great performances from their respective stars, but those movies sucked. Johnny Depp gives a perfect performance as Barrie, a struggling playwright who looks to friends and acquaintances for inspiration. Depp was denied yet another Oscar because of the low exposure this film has had.

2. "Carandiru" — In 1992, there was a riot in the overcrowded Sao Paulo penitentiary. The rebellion was a direct result of the horrible living conditions the prisoners had to put up with, as well as the rampant disease that was the prison population. The police were forced to kill over one hundred men to stop the riot. This movie tells the story of the riot from the perspective of a doctor who was working on AIDS prevention in the prison. As the doctor gains respect from the inmates for his work, the doctor learns about the lives of individual prisoners and begins to see them as more than just patients. This film perfectly shows the personal stories of inmate and deals with topics of violence, disease, and sexuality as the tension builds towards the film's violent climax.

1. "The Reckoning" - I saw this movie early in the year and did not see a better movie once the year was over. This murder-mystery deals with a Priest-on-the-run who joins a group of traveling performers in the 1300s. During their travels, the Priest attempts to solve the murder of a child in order to redeem himself for his past crimes. This movie featured great acting from Paul Bettany as the Priest and Willem Dafoe as the leader of the traveling performers, and there was never one boring moment in the whole thing. In a year of crappy movies, this movie is one of the few I found myself wanting to watch again.

**And now, the biggest crapfest of 2004 was...**

"Ocean's Twelve" — For most of 2004, "The Manchurian Candidate" was the worst movie I had seen. Movies like "Closer," "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," "Saw", and "Blade: Trinity" were also in the running. I went into "Ocean's Twelve" thinking that it would be bland and at least slightly entertaining. I was way the hell off. This movie pissed me off more than any other movie this year. How damn stupid do you have to be to not hire the same writer of the first movie? Some kind of steal-off occurs in the movie where all of "Ocean's Eleven" have to go against one Frenchman, who played the awesome sheriff in "Blueberry". Anyway, Tess (Julia Roberts) has to help

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