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Super mario bros 2 japanese box art

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BOX=ART BOX=ART is a site dedicated to the history of video game box art/ cover art and the artists responsible for them. Box arts are profiled from a variety of angles using high guality scans and with the intention of acknowledging the men and women who have played such a major role in shaping our gaming
experiences. Not only for video game enthusiasts, BOX=ART is for all who enjoy quality artwork. Series box arts 1985 > Super Mario Bros. 2 (JP) Famicom Disk System. (YK) 1987 > Super Mario Bros. (EU/ NA) NES. 1988 > Super Mario Bros. 2 (EU/ NA) NES. (SM) > Super Mario Bros. 2 (JP) Famicom Disk System.
Mario Bros. 3 (JP) Famicom. (YK) 1989 > Super Mario Land (worldwide) Game Boy. (YK) 1990 > Super Mario World (EU/ NA) NES. (YK) 1992 > Super Mario Land 2 (worldwide) Game Boy. (YK) > Super Mario USA (JP)
Famicom. (YK) 1994 > Wario Land: Super Mario Land: Super Mario 64 (JP) Nintendo 64. (YN) > Super Mario 64 (EU/ NA) Nintendo 64. (YN) 1995 > Super Mario 64. (YN) 1995 > Su
Bros. Deluxe (EU/ NA) Game Boy Color. (YK) 2002 > Super Mario Sunshine (worldwide) Gamecube. 2004 > Super Mario 64 DS (JP) Nintendo DS. 2006 > New Super Mario Bros. (worldwide) Nintendo DS. 2007 > Super Mario Galaxy (worldwide) Wii. 2009 > New Super Mario
Bros. Wii (worldwide) Wii. 2010 > Super Mario 3D Super Mario 3D Super Mario 3D World (worldwide) Wii. 2011 > Super Mario 3D World (worldwide) Wii. 2011 > Super Mario 3D Super Mario 3D World (worldwide) Wii. 2011 > Super Mario 3D Su
Miyamoto (SM) > Yoichi Kotabe (YK) > Yusuke Nakano (YN) BOX=ART series > Super Mario Overview. In Nintendo's portly plumber, video gaming had its first mega star, and the Super Mario series would be home to his most iconic box arts. Mario's global endurance can be partly accredited to his strong characterisation
designed in the mid-80's by the legendary Shigeru Miyamoto. The debut box art, on the Famicom, would almost have Mario's look pinned down, but it would take the famed animator, Yoichi Kotabe to set it in stone by changing the plumbers colour scheme. Yoichi's redesigns for Princess Peach and Bowser would end
up being more radical, and have been the template ever since. No other character of such longevity in gaming has retained his original design by Miyamoto in creating such a gloablly appealing and brand- centric character. Super Mario's debut box art in the States
- Super Mario Bros. - would use the same pixel design all in-house Nintendo titles were using at the time, and so it would be Super Mario's Japanese characterisation on a box art for the first time. It would be a direct lift from the Famicom debut set against a bold background
and really expounded the difference between American (direct, clear, larger than life) and Japanese (chaotic, cluttered, character heavy) cover art design at the time. Box arts since Super Mario 64 (1996) have all been designed around the in-games use of 3D (or not). Cover arts for full 3D games such as Super Mario
64 and Super Mario Galaxy depict a depth of field that isn't there in box arts for 2D games such as the New Super Mario Bros. Deluxe. In between the two are the 2.5D games Super Mario 3D Land and World, both with a slight isometric view to their respective cover arts. The clean,
simple design of Mario, and most of his contempories, would carry well when series box arts made the jump to computer rendered art with Super Mario Bros. Deluxe, in 1999, all box arts post 64 have been computer generated. Notable Super Mario box arts. Updated - 31/8/15, by Adam
Gidney Japanese artwork, first published by Nintendo of Japan in 1985. Designed for the Japanese Famicom market. Also available on na. > Debut box art. > The only series box art to designed by the legendary, Shigeru Miyamoto. > Introduced stable series characters, Toad, Bowser, Koopers, Goombas and Peach. > The
cluttered art design would be replicated for both Famicom sequals and would influence the handheld covers. Further influencing can be found in Rock Man's Famicom box arts. Super Mario Bros. by Shigeru Miyamoto Japanese artwork, first published by Nintendo of Japan in 1989. Designed for the worldwide Game Boy
market. Also available on na. >The first handheld Mario box art would carry on the character heavy look that the Japanese had now become accustomed to. >It would be the first box art in the series to be used worldwide with no changes made to the art design. > Super Mario Land by Yoichi Kotabe Japanese artwork.
first published by Nintendo of America in 1990. Designed for the EU/ NA NES markets. Also available on na. >This iconic and highly recognisable box art would styalistically carry on in the vain of predecesor Super Mario Bros. 2, giving clear emphisis to Mario fixed on a bright background with a bold title. >The Mario
characterisation would be directly cut from the Japanese version. >> Super Mario Bros 3. by Yoichi Kotabe/ NOA Japanese artwork, first published by Nintendo of Japan in 1991. Designed for the Japanese Famicom market. Also available on na. >The artwork would orgininally be designed for the game, Yume Kōjō: Doki
Doki Panic sans Mario characters. This original was also a Kotabe artwork, First published by Nintendo of Japan in 1996. Designed for the worldwide Nintendo 64 market. Also available on na. >Debut series box art by Yusuke
Nakano. >The first cover art to be designed using computer art. Super Mario 64 by Yusuke Nakano Japanese artwork, first published by Nintendo of America in 1999. Designed for the worldwide Game Boy Color market. Also available on na. >Possibly the final series box art by Yoichi Kotabe. >The game would not see a
physical release in Japan making it the only game in the series to miss out on a Japanese box art. >Final box art to date to be designed without the use of computer renders. Super Mario Bros. Deluxe by Yoichi Kotabe Japanese artwork, first published by Nintendo of Japan in 2007. Designed for the worldwide Wii
market. Also available on na. Japanese artwork, first published by Nintendo of Japan in 2012. Designed for the worldwide 3DS market. Also available on na. North America in 1987. Designed for the EU/ NA NES markets. Also available on Game Boy Advance. >Debut
western box art. >The iconic design would in it's simplicity be a reaction to the overly complicated and misleding cover arts of the period pre-video game crash of 1983. >More information available HERE. Hot on the heels of our popular dive into The Legend of Zelda franchise, we now jump, stomp, and dive into the most
iconic and popular video game franchise ever, the Super Mario Bros. series. Each week, we'll take a unique look at the Japanese version of Super Mario Bros. 2 for the Famicom, a maddeningly difficult game that is in
many ways an anti-Nintendo game. Chalk It Up To Mario Madness Maybe it was all a dream. Maybe there never was an adventure where the brothers Mario went off to some dreamland called Subcon, to fight an obese frog, with his friends. Maybe none of that happened—even though Shy Guys were still a thing
afterwards. Oh well, best not to think too deeply on all this. I assume even now when people think of Super Mario Bros. 2, they still think of Mario, Luigi, Princess Toadstool, and Toad all having the same dream about pulling veggies out of the ground, fighting egg-producing champion, Birdo, and seeking Wart—the one-
time-only Big Bad of the Mario franchise. I'm paraphrasing the plot, but the part about them all A Nightmare on Elm Street-ing the same dream is true. While some are aware the sequel we got in America was actually a reskinned version of a Japanese game called Doki-Doki Panic, except with Mario characters replacing
the original playable characters, that's only part of the story. There actually was a true sequel to Super Mario Bros., and it was only released in Japan. It was deemed too hard for Western audiences and was even rejected by Nintendo's official president of mirth, Howard Phillips (the bow-tie guy from Nintendo Power!), for
simply not being fun to play. While some may think they've played The Lost Levels via the SNES version from Super Mario All-Stars, they haven't gotten the full experience Japanese gamers got back in 1986. The original version is something altogether different. It's the Same, but Different Super Mario Bros. 2 looks a lot
like the original game. Sure, the shrubbery is teased out a little bit more, and the clouds all have these silly grins now, but this is still Super Mario Bros. If you look at the start screen, the level format, the Koji Kondo score, it's all the same. Mario still runs and jumps just like he did in the last one, which means he doesn't
have his helpfully-tweaked, 16-bit-remake moves that provide a bit more margin for error. Nope, these are good old fashioned original-recipe Mario controls. I don't know about you, but I still have no idea why sometimes I'll bounce off something and shoot 50' into the air and sometimes I just go ploop and barely get any
height at all. "Uh, hold the button in." - some speedrunner reading this, talking out loud like some know-it-all "I'm holding the button in, Hypothetical Speedrunner Know-It-All!" Whatever, it doesn't matter. The point is, this version of the game is a bear to control and the people who designed the levels knew that. At every
turn this game is trying to sucker you into a trap. It's trying to subvert your every expectation and lure you into certain death. Then, the game often does not exactly play fair. Maybe Howard Phillips was on to something. The game puts you into unwinnable
circumstances where you have no chance of success without psychic knowledge or blind luck. Then the game punishes you and basically tells you it's your fault. Merciless unfair gameplay and possible emotional manipulation? I'm not the fun police, but that doesn't sound like a good time to me. This game was marketed
as a game for "Super Players" in Japan and was designed to be a sort of Hardcore Mode, or whatever they call the really tough modes in game for the first time when it came out on the WiiU. I had played through the Super Mario All-Stars version on the SNES, and I remember not
having too difficult of a time. This, of course, was because that version had a lot of little helpful tweaks the original game doesn't, such as being able to adjust your jumps on the fly, as the SMAS game uses the same basic physics as Super Mario Bros. 3. Like Ms. Jackson says, it's all about control. First World Problems
Usually, the first few levels of a game are spent getting the player acclimated to their surroundings. Even in a sequel, where the assumption is the player knows the basics from having played the previous game, you usually get a slow drop into a warm bath reintroduction to the game world. Not so in Super Mario Bros. 2.
The opening game of the level is on par with a late level in the original. You got your poison mushrooms, both above and below in so-called Bonus Areas, which were considered safe zones in the original. Are those clouds smiling? What's there to smile about? These Scarface mushrooms are made of poison! Right from
the jump, you get the vibe that this game not only doesn't come with training wheels, but it's also offended you would even suggest such a thing. Where Super Mario Bros. was all about establishing clear rules and testing your knowledge of those rules, SMB2 is more like a pop quiz with all trick questions. Or would you
prefer an analogy where I compare swimming lessons to your dad just tossing you into the lake? My point being, NES era games had a difficulty curve, yes, but they all obeyed certain rules of fairness. This game cares not for such rules. Some subversions are not troll jobs. Take World 1-2 for example, which features
multiple Warp Zones. You can jump over the exit wall (akin to SMB) and proceed to a Warp to World 2, but there is also a pipe you can go down that leads you to a sub-subterranean section, where a Warp Zone takes you to World 4 instead. This is a clever move as it expands on an idea from the first game. Any Mario
gamer worth their salt knows of the Warp Zones hidden over the exit in World 1-2. What they don't immediately think is that there is another potential step to discovering something even better. The game rewards you for thinking outside the box, which is a mindset this game doesn't always hew closely to. Kaizo Mario
series a little. There are so many little "traps" this game sets for you; it's hard not to see the person behind the level design snickering and laughing when you waltz right into a precarious situation and have an "Oh [expletive-of-choice deleted]!" moment. Mario discovers a poison mushroom and runs into a tricky obstacle
trying to avoid it. While not "unfair", the level design is often deceptive, cruel even. Were it not for the rewind feature I had access to playing this game online to refresh my memory. Far too often you are caught midair in a situation that spells
unavoidable death. Usually, I would rewind the game and discover that to successfully progress, I would have to come to a full stop and slowly inch forward to trigger certain off-screen hazards. Or to reveal a turtle I needed to jump on at just the right height to bounce to a tiny platform (Ah! But not so fast that you
overshoot the tiny platform, or slip off!). I would certainly be turned off playing this having to repeatedly play through levels just for another, singular chance at success. There is an early Mega Man vibe to the deaths in this game. You have to die a lot of times to learn the layout of the level, recognize the patterns, and then
retry. That vibe doesn't mesh with what we know Mario games to be. Sure, as the series progressed, later levels (and more so, post-Bowser levels, but there is a gradual uptick in that difficulty, whereas here it's more like this game is less a
seguel to the original game, and more like mean-spirited DLC. You see the wall. You know what the risk is. You know what will probably happen. But you leap nonetheless. Kaizo Mario is a well-known unofficial mod of Super Mario Bros. where the levels made are intentionally maddening. Mario Maker content creators
have run with this idea, and there have been some truly inspired levels made because of it. However, there are still unofficial rules of fairness would be having Mario go down a pipe that, unbeknownst to the player, drops you into a room of spikes.
Does Super Mario Bros. 2 make such callous choices? Not exactly... Welcome to Praw Zones, Where You Go Backwards So there's this warp Zone. When I encountered it during my playthrough for this article, I chuckled. "Oh yeah," I said to myself, "I remember this." I smiled and held down the L and R triggers on my
Nintendo Switch and went back in time right before I made that fateful choice. It's in World 3-1. The location: A pipe, one that leads to a secret area mind you. A place one could only find by being curious and thorough, both admirable traits in a video gamer. It's something that is usually rewarded, whether it be with coins
or a power-up. It almost certainly never leads to a Warp Zone that sends you back to the beginning of the game! OK, maybe I'm over-blowing this whole thing. It's not as if you aren't given a choice. If you don't want to go back to the beginning of the dang game, you can always let time expire, or hop into the conveniently
placed pit in the corner of the Warp Zone. "Choices". That's not even the half of it. If you don't take the pipe, there is also a trampoline near the end level flagpole and find yourself arriving at the same pipe that leads
you to the Warp Zone that sends you back to the beginning of the game. So basically, there are two ways to be punished for doing something. Eat your heart out, Super Mario Maker content creators. Nintendo is the Original Gaming Troll. That is some Jigsaw bull right
there, where your "choices" almost always somehow involve maiming yourself before ultimately dying anyway. "Hello, Mario. For years you've circumvented channels in order to cheat time. Now, time will cheat you. Before you is a pipe. Enter the pipe and you'll return to the beginning of the game. If you choose not to,
you can always jump into the bottomless pit that I intentionally placed there. Or, you can let time itself kill you. You have 279 seconds...live or die...make your choice..." Oh, brother. Speaking of flawless, not-forced-at-all segues... The Luigi Factor Luigi was just a palette-swapped version of Mario in the original game, but
to make since his move set unique. There are many situations where jumps are difficult for Mario, whereas Luigi can reach them without much difficulty. However, those same jumps were often two singular blocks hovering in midair over bottomless pits, so Luigi is much more apt to reach the landing, but not stick it. While
Mario can only jump over a few flagpoles, Luigi can overshoot a bunch of them. Again, no promises you're going to want to see what's beyond the normal exit. That sort of positive reinforcement happens later in the series. I personally love Luigi as a character and am currently playing the exceptionally fun Luigi's Mansion
3 on Switch, but I've never been a fan of playing games as him. He's too slippery. To each his own, Luigi just hits a little different. Random Acts of Cruelty Playing Super Mario Bros. 2 with an open mind, and a preexisting knowledge of what it's like will go far in enjoying the game much more. Risk vs. Reward is a
recurring theme. This block contains a Super Mushroom, but could just as easily contain a Poison one. World 2 brings back janky trampoline jumping, only now you're required to execute jumps with airtight precision in life and death situations. You will die. The game also introduces gusts of wind in certain areas, making
already frustrating jumps just that much more maddening. Death is inevitable. And let's not forget World 5. Notice the lack of a bottomless pit. You'll have time to think about what you've done this time. "So is it more or less cruel without a
pit?" I guess would be the guestion. The Ending Defeating Bowser at the end of World 8-4 will lead you to a door. Inside, Princess Toadstool, still her ginger-haired self, rewards you with a clumsy poem, and a potential mild seizure from a flashing screen where all 7 Mushroom Retainers return to celebrate your
accomplishment. Welcome to Friend Zone. We Present You New Worlds Bypass all Warp Zones, and you are rewarded access to "9 World". Beating Super Mario Bros. 2 will net you a trip to World 9,
where you will play through 4 extra levels. The challenge of these levels is actually not too steep, and the final stage 9-4, is basically a curtain call, where you swim through the level as all the enemies in the game pass by. The blocks in the level spell out "Arigatou!" in Japanese, or "Thank You!". Before I looked up what
the blocks were spelling, I just assumed (based on the tone of the game) that it spelled out "Bad End. You Sicken Me." If you beat the game eight times (if that's something you're into), you can access four whole bonus levels from the start menu by holding in the A button and hitting Start. Levels A, B, C, and D play very
similar to the other levels in the game but are a healthy mix of fun levels peppered in with the more rage-baiting ones. Every time you beat the game, and you can – and should – use Warp Zones. In some ways, Super Mario Bros. 2 has more of a replayability factor
than the original. The challenge is frustrating, but for those gamers that relish such things it's a welcome change from the original game. I would say this game is worth a playthrough. You may not beat the game, depending on your threshold for pain, but you will find it to be a unique experience. The game is currently
available for the Nintendo Switch Online to anyone with an active membership. And use the rewind function, no judgment, Lost Musings Previously, we looked at the influence of the original Super Mario Bros. and its masterful level design. Takashi Tezuka, who worked on the original game, took over the reins of this
game, while Shigeru Miyamoto worked on a little game called The Legend of Zelda. Mentioning Howard Phillips, the bow-tie clad Nintendo Fun Club president, has got me thinking, 'What happened to Nester?' Remember, Nester, the wild-haired, wisecracking sidekick from Nintendo Power? I suppose once Ness from
the Mother/Earthbound series became well known, there was no room for him, Next time, we will travel to Subcon and explore the American Super Mario Bros. 2, which began the NES tradition of making direct seguels wildly different from the classic games they followed up. Page 2 This story doesn't begin with a live
recording of a podcast like it should. Instead, it begins in a 1993 Toyota pickup truck, attempting to climb its way through the Sierra Mountains. What should have been a four-hour drive from Reno to San Francisco turned in to an eight-hour snowy trek through the mountains. It was only by some small miracle that my
partner and I arrived just as the show was beginning. Behind The Bastards is a comedy/history podcast produced by iHeart media. According to its website "Behind the Bastards dives in past the Cliffs Notes of the worst humans in history and exposes the bizarre realities of their lives. Listeners will learn about the young
adult novels that helped Hitler form his monstrous ideology, the founder of Blackwater's insane quest to build his own Air Force, the bizarre lives of the sons and daughters of dictators and Saddam Hussein's side career as a trashy romance novelist." The podcast is typically split up into two episodes which air weekly on
Tuesday and Thursday. It is hosted by journalist and author Robert Evans who is joined in the sidecar by a stand-up comedian. This results in an entertaining show which combines strange history and comedy. On January 26th, Behind The Bastards hosted it's second ever live show at the 19th annual SF Sketchfest, a
comedy festival based in the greater San Francisco area. In this episode, Evans is joined by David X. Cohen, who wrote for The Simpsons, Beavis and Butthead, served as the head writer and executive producer of Futurama and helped produce Disenchantment. The focus of this episode was Robert Brown, creator,
editor and publisher of the Soldier of Fortune magazine. The episode focused on Brown's work creating the magazine, and the controversies surrounding it. The episode is wonderfully in-depth and sheds light, not only on how awful Brown was but the crimes the magazine effectively endorsed through its classified ads
section. Evans' work putting together all of the information contained within the episode should be commended. It's a comprehensive piece of work, with every claim backed by reputable sources. Cohen adds some much-needed lightness to the episode and is consistently hilarious throughout. Both keep up their pace for
roughly an hour and a half, putting together a wonderful show. The show ended with a light-hearted game of Bagel Tennis, which is featured below, and encouraged the audience to participate in Machete-Bagel Skeet. There's a lot to be said about watching a person responding to such a horrible thing not only with
comedy but repeatedly, twice a week for the past TWO YEARS. Behind The Bastards releases episodes consistently, which requires a large amount of dedication from its host. The amount of dedication from its host mental state. And
yet, he meets this with comedy. This dedication to a task brings to mind the play Waiting For Godot by Samuel Beckett. If you don't know, Waiting For Godot by Samuel Beckett. If you don't know, Waiting For Godot is a short two-act play that details two men complaining about how their legs hurt and swapping bowler hats. It makes light of the tragedy of their two lives. It's
widely considered the defining play of the absurdist theater. Perhaps Evans would be frustrated at being called an absurdist. Beckett despised being called an absurdist and seemed to be frustrated at being pigeonholed into any genre. In the episode of the This! podcast he guested on, Evans described himself as a
"Cheerful Nihilist", and on he has repeatedly claimed that the purpose of the creation of Behind The Bastards was not merely to inform his audience, but to bring them to the conclusion that it is not people who are inherently evil, but power. He also suggests that society can be changed, and we are not condemned to
endure the bastards of history forever. This philosophy fits well into Absurdism, which suggests that the world is inherently absurd as it exists, but that absurdity can and should be challenged. Within this view, Behind The Bastards is not only a comedy podcast that deals in history, or vice-versa, but a form of Absurdist
performance art. The idea of repeatedly facing the awful facts of the world not just to entertain, but to encourage others to change these awful histories mirrors the mission of the Absurdist philosophy through theater. It is to hope for an
end, but given all context surrounding both, hopes do not seem to have any chance of coming to fruition without audience, begging that they don't waste their lives on monotony. Behind The Bastards does something similar, asking its audience to recognize the
traits which create the bastards the podcast focuses on, and do their best learn from history's mistakes. Both force the audience to plunge into the ability of comedy to help people face the evil in the world earnestly. A note: To SF Sketchfest, thank you for providing me with
tickets for the event. To the readers, thank you all for standing by and watching while I crawled up my own ass while writing this article. Hopefully, I'll be able to find my way back out. Page 3 Hey, remember last week when I was all "Who knows where this season of Doctor Who is going?" And the Master's warning at the
end of "Spyfall Part 1" about how everything the Doctor knows is actually a lie? About that: Chibnall didn't come to play this season and I'm shook even if I'm not sure where we're headed or how this will change Doctor Who canon (which, let's be honest, is a loose concept at best). But I'm getting ahead of myself
"Fugitive of the Judoon" starts out simply enough and opens on the morning of Gloucester tour guide Ruth Clayton's (Jo Martin) birthday. Her husband Lee (Neil Stuke) promises to make good on getting her a cake and all's right with the world—until the Judoon show up. Meanwhile, the thirteenth Doctor is having a bout of
doubt and still trying to find signs that the Master has escaped. The TARDIS fam is waiting for her to snap out of her funk when she hears the Judoon's call and she springs into action, with her faithful companions up for another adventure. Looks like the Judoon are out to capture someone. At first, it seems that they are
after Lee (who seems to have mysteriously popped up in Gloucester with no previous history.) The Doctor does her best to stall for time and figure out what's going on, but it doesn't help that her companions get snatched up on a shoddy spaceship by a very familiar face. Graham is the first to get beamed up and that's
when we hear that voice—the one and only John Barrowman. That's right, it's Captain Jack Harkness, back at last after how many years and news cycles of rumors. Of course, he mistakes Graham for the Doctor, which Graham quickly clears up and Jack's reaction is 100 percent fan service and in character: "This I've
got to see." Ryan and Yaz are next because Jack can't get a lock on the Doctor, who's helping keep Ruth safe. Although there's a moment where another personality breaks through and Ruth attacks a bunch of Judoon, including ripping off the leader's horn (a massive sign of disrespect.) It's also a good time to mention
that Lee's toast, but before he's killed, he sends Ruth a cryptic message and she has a vision of where she needs to go (an abandoned lighthouse). So that's where we're off to next. Meanwhile, Jack is losing control of the ship so he decides it's time to cut the Doctor's companions loose, but he leaves them with a
warning: "Beware the lone cyberman." (As if the Master's "timeless child" riddle wasn't enough!) Once at the lighthouse, Ruth mentions she'll get a fire going and the Doctor decides to check out the property for clues. She comes across a blank gravestone. As the Doctor digs through the unmarked grave, I got the biggest
Ashes to Ashes feels (and I really hope that was a hat tip because it took me emotionally to the place I needed to be for the next moments to play out and I need more people to watch that show). There's not a body in the grave...it's a TARDIS. And it's Ruth's. Because Ruth is the Doctor, too. Confused? So am I. (Feel
free to grab a drink. I'm having a bourbon, neat.) It turns out this Doctor became Ruth to hide from someone named Gat (perhaps the equivalent of the Master in a different universe? Another yet-to-be-known adversary in this timeline?) Gat is also who killed Lee, who we can assume was Ruth!Doctor's companion. (Think
Martha Jones in "Human Nature.") Speaking of Gat, she and the Judoon find Ruth!Doctor and the two face off, but not before Thirteen shows her a destroyed Gallifrey (via that mind trick we saw in "Spyfall Part 2"). Gat decides it's time to take Ruth!Doctor out except the laser gun backfires (just as Ruth!Doctor wanted it
to). Afterwards, Ruth!Doctor drops a shell-shocked Thirteen off and it's up to the TARDIS fam to pick up the pieces. Chris Chibnall and Vinay Patel packed a huge sucker punch with this episode. I took a look over at Twitter after the episode aired in the UK and everything was burning. (And there was the usual yelling
about ruined childhoods. To quote the War Doctor, for God's sake...Gallifrey Stands...just not in this universe.) The best part, though? The return of Jack Harkness was the red herring. There's a joke in there somewhere. (I'm too blindsided to make it.) Things that aren't a joke: We have two female Doctors now, and one
is a woman of color. And she's the exact opposite of everything the Doctor we've slowly been getting to know over the past two seasons and it's amazing about destroyed childhoods. Deal with it, lads.) Now, don't trip—there are plenty of times I watched Steven Moffat be clever
for the sake of showing off said cleverness, but it's almost always paid off. Can Chibnall spin this twist? (And that's not to say Moffat always succeeded. See the end of Series 4 of Sherlock and the third episode of Dracula as examples of spun out insanity.) While "Human Nature" (the Russell T Davies-era episode and
New Adventures novel) introduced the concept of Time Lords becoming human, it was the New Adventures novels that wove the concept of pre-Hartnell Doctors through its backstory. (Let's not forget the Morbius Doctors from the classic series.) Add in the fact that Ruth!Doctor's outfit recalls not only the current Master
but the various Doctors from "The Curse of the Fatal Death" (which ended with the joke of the Doctor being a woman) and well, damn, it's just a lot, okay? Chibnall tried to steer the show's last series into monsterless territory with a "humanity is the biggest threat" angle, and people were angry (or bored). This year, he's
decided to take the series Bible, pour lighter fluid on it and torch that sucker. It's a glorious mess and I've never felt so conflicted as I did when I saw Thirteen looking sad and confused whilst in a TARDIS that could have been hers but wasn't. (Also, why didn't Jodie get that killer set design? The round things! All that
white space and light!) Everything's off-kilter, but at least the TARDIS fam is standing strong next to Thirteen. No matter which companions stand by their Doctor, they've always been the best of her (or him), and it's never been truer than today. "We do know who you are. You're the woman that brought us together. The
woman who saved us and loads of other people. You're the Doctor. Whoever you were in the past or are in the future, we know who you are right now...the best person we know." I'm off to pour myself another round, and I can't wait till next Sunday (something I haven't felt since Peter Capaldi left the TARDIS.) Page 4
In 1995, nerds and geeks worldwide were largely still spending time in darkened bedrooms and basements. There was this brand-new thing called the World Wide Web, and gaming was showing the early signs of what we recognize today. Video game consoles were still largely the gaming devices of choice—the Sega
Genesis and Super Nintendo were thriving, and by the end of the year, the original PlayStation would appear, PC gaming was also starting to gain more immersive experience than the 16-bit consoles of the time were capable of providing. Hollywood, of course,
paid attention. In an effort to get the nerd out of the basement and into a cinema, several studios decided to try to capitalize on a version of the internet go mainstream. We had seen the deeply flawed The Lawnmower Man (Brett Leonard, 1992)
three years earlier with its at-the-time dazzling depiction of virtual reality. In short order, in 1995 we got lain Softley's Hackers, Leonard's Virtuosity, Kathryn Bigelow's underrated masterpiece Strange Days, and a sequel to The Lawnmower Man subtitled Beyond Cyberspace directed by Farhad Mann that was apparently
unwatchable. Hollywood had, at this point, nearly exhausted all of the Philip K. Dick stories (Total Recall, Blade Runner) it could misunderstand and turn into glossy action flicks, so it needed a new author to mine for material. In 1984, William Gibson published the seminal science-fiction novel Neuromancer, and a sub-
genre was born. Winning several awards, Neuromancer struck a nerve with the nerd populace. Here was a story set in a plausible future that seemed to predict a human reliance on technology, corporate control, and the underground criminal element that resisted this. It was somewhere between a great work of literature
and a trashy noir thriller. It was, guite simply, something new and exciting. Gibson's work is not the easiest to adapt to the screen; it's not actually the easiest to adapt to the screen; it's not actually the easiest to adapt to the screen; it's not actually the easiest to adapt to the screen; it's not actually the easiest to read for the casual reader. It took me about three tries to get through Neuromancer the first time, and the film version has been in development hell for close to
40 years. Luckily, Gibson had a collection of easier-to-digest short stories, Burning Chrome. One of these shorts was "Johnny Mnemonic," and it became the first Gibson work to be adapted into a movie. Originally it was conceived as a low-budget mood piece rather than an action movie, with a budget in the low millions
and filmed in black-and-white. Val Kilmer was at one point attached to the title role, and visual artist Robert Longo was signed to direct from a screenplay by Gibson had flirted with Hollywood—his was one of many versions of Alien 3 (1992) that was abandoned. Once Keanu
Reeves, then hot after Speed (1994), signed on the dotted line, the budget ballooned with the backing of a major studio, Johnny Mnemonic courier, Johnny (Keanu Reeves) living a selfish existence in and out of hotels being paid a fortune to transport sensitive
data in a wet-wired brain implant in his head. Due to the space needed to complete this task, Johnny had to dump a chunk of long-term memory and thus has no memory of his childhood. However, he has almost raised enough money to have it restored through an operation, and his agent, Ralphie (Udo Kier), convinces
him to do a lucrative last job for mysterious people in Beijing. Johnny takes the job and uploads the data, even though the size of it exceeds his storage capacity in terms of gigabytes. The yakuza show up and kill his clients, who it turns out have betrayed the corporation Pharmacom, and Johnny narrowly escapes back
to Newark as the data causes him intense pain and threatens to kill him. As the yakuza and a cybernetic street preacher/bounty hunter (Dolph Lundgren) close in, Johnny teams up with an assassin afflicted with Nerve Attenuation Syndrome (NAS or the "Black Shakes") named Jane (Dina Meyer) who leads him to
underground cyber doctor Spider (Henry Rollins) and the Lo-Teks led by J-Bone (Ice T), who might be his salvation. Somewhere between Keanu's growth in popularity, the budget going up, and studio interference, the intent behind Johnny Mnemonic was completely lost. I've tried and I've tried over the years, but I simply
cannot defend this as a good film; it is not a good film. But I can pull things from it as a fan of William Gibson, mostly its depiction of the internet in the future and how it is navigated. You can see in a few fleeting moments (less so in the theatrical cut) that there was a low-budget meditation on memory and morality
somewhere in there. Johnny is an asshole—when we first meet him he is just getting done with a high-class hooker—and seems to have a general attitude of unpleasantness and sarcasm towards everyone he meets. He is a character motivated by purely selfish reasons, but he is suddenly faced with his own mortality
and an actual level of responsibility for the human race when it turns out what he is carrying is the cure for NAS. Keanu tries, but he is not one of his better antihero roles, aside from the much loved "I want room service" scene, which is legendary. Total
Recall had been a big hit in 1990, and several sci-fi films over the next few years chose to imitate it. Johnny Mnemonic sadly falls into this category, lacking faith in its own original murky underworld and shaky morality. It's telling that the pre-release posters all had Keanu holding a gun, when in the actual film he holds the
gun for about one minute. The production design and the hardware are straight out of Gibson's work, and some further dwelling on this would have gone a long way. No amount of strange new worlds or stunt-casting can disguise a plot that is a simple man-on-the-run riff. Added to which, the decision to turn it into an
action film with an untested artist at the helm works out about as well as you would expect. The action is poorly staged in every scene, oddly framed, and just never gets the pulse going the way it should. At some point in the final moments leading up to Johnny Mnemonic's release in May 1995, it was decided to trim 15
minutes from the running time and hastily record a brand-new score by Brad Fiedel (Terminator 2). As a result, the theatrical cut received by the West has major sudden lapses of coherence, especially towards the end when a certain junkie dolphin is introduced. Japan received the original cut of the film that has so far
not been released in the West. This version has the original score by Mychael Danna and includes additional footage of "Beat" Takeshi Kitano (Battle Royale, 1999) as the bereaved yakuza boss. This version still isn't a great film, but it is better. You can see more of the intent behind the film, and it feels like it flows better
overall. This version isn't widely available, but you can track down a copy if you know where to look. As this is the best cinematic representation of Gibson's work we have so far (such as it is), I would strongly urge you to watch this version if you have to watch this film at all. When the film was released, it was absolutely
savaged by critics. "Johnny Moronic" was the headline, and people loved the fact that "dumb" Keanu was lumbering around moaning about his brain exploding. The film died at the box office, grossing just $6 million domestic in its first weekend off a $26 million budget. Robert Longo never directed another feature, but
none of the cyber fantasies released in 1995 set the box office alight; its audience remained at home gaming on their PCs, and cyberpunk was declared dead until The Matrix reinvented the subgenre four years later. Cyberpunk was declared dead until The Matrix reinvented the subgenre four years later.
Even though in a sense we live in that cyberpunk world Gibson wrote about with the Anonymous movement, WikiLeaks and the Facebook debacles, the concepts described in Gibson's seminal genre work are kind of dated, and any straight adaptation has to reinvent the source material. Neuromancer lost director
Vincenzo Natali (Cube, 1998) a few years back, and seems to be officially dead. Abel Ferrara (King of New York, 1990) adapted New Rose Hotel in 1998, and that film has barely been released. Adaptations of his more recent, less obvious sci-fi work have been mooted, and Pattern Recognition is likewise stuck in
development hell. It feels more and more that we are never going to get a true and successful adaptation of Gibson's work, and Johnny Mnemonic is the most we can hope for. The concepts and themes of his work have influenced other filmmakers who have run with it and presented visions that feel fresh. I mean,
nobody seems to have noticed but, Neill Blomkamp's Elysium (2013) actually had the same plot as Johnny Mnemonic, but presented the story in Blomkamp's own version of the cyberpunk aesthetic mired in the downtrodden, collapsing world he has favoured in all his work. Blomkamp has a far better grasp of how to
stage action and violence than Robert Longo, as well. One day, maybe someone will find a way to do Gibson justice on the big screen. Right now, Johnny Mnemonic is an interesting failure, but a failure nonetheless, and a reminder of what could have been. Page 5 Some shows start off great but end up sticking around
too long. Whether they jump the shark, or just otherwise overstay their welcome, this is the theme of 25YL's Cancelled Too Late series. This week E. Jay Viera looks at the NBC sitcom Veronica's Closet. After several years starring on Cheers as Rebecca Howe, Kirstie Alley had become an actress with qualities to play a
lead, even in an ensemble show. In 1997, she got that lead in the quirky NBC sitcom Veronica's Closet, created by legendary duo David Crane and Marta Kauffman (who created NBC's other hit series Friends). The show featured Alley playing former model Veronica "Ronnie" Chase who started a lingerie company called
Veronica's Closet. The series was similar to the NBC sitcom Suddenly Susan in that it centered on a woman who is looking to be independent after being in a long-term relationship. In terms of art imitating life, the character of Veronica was also portrayed as having to struggle with her weight and using food as a coping
mechanism. One of the great moments of this is when she finds herself wanting to get back with her philandering soon-to-be-ex-husband, Bryce, and in a brief panic says, "I have a tremendous amount of self-control. I need a cupcake!" This became a running aspect of the show, which focused on how standards in the
fashion industry are geared toward the skinny. Pilot The show begins with Veronica's failing marriage to Bryce Anderson (Christopher McDonald), who regularly cheats on her despite having been caught several times. However, she refuses to leave him because she has built her business on being "The Queen of
Romance" and recently published a book called The Guide to a Fairytale Marriage. Rather than expose her marriage as the sham that it is, Veronica stays with Bryce in the hope that he will change his ways. Her co-workers, CFO Olive Massery (Kathy Najimy), publicist Perry Rollins (Dan Cortese), her assistant Josh
Blair (Wallace Langham)—who denies he's gay despite obvious signs—and marketer Leo Michaels (Daryl Mitchell) all tell her to leave him, but she refuses. Instead, Olive tells Veronica to cheat, though Veronica says she can't bring herself to do it. However, an encounter with a hunky physical trainer makes her briefly
think otherwise. After rejecting her fitness instructor, Veronica is informed of her husband's latest affair, and Perry comes up with a PR strategy to counteract this. Bryce and Veronica decide to have a night out—as damage control in order to prove that they are still in love—where she questions why he does cheat on
her, thinking it's her neglectfulness as a wife. However, at dinner, she finds out he had another encounter moments after deciding to stay with Veronica leaves her husband and starts down the road to becoming a divorcee. Season 1 The first half of Season 1 is spent on Veronica
becoming used to the idea of being a divorcee and getting back into the dating game. However, Bryce uses several underhanded tactics to try and win Veronica back, though she knows he will never change regardless of what he says. Parts of the season are spent on Veronica embracing her newfound independence
and finding things to do on her own, as well as spending time with Olive. However, the last two episodes of the season show the beginning of a plotline that would last the remainder of the season. Episode 20 ("Veronica's All Nighter") features a problem of a rival company, Pandora's Boxers, stealing ideas from
Veronica's Closet. Though Veronica can't find a leak in the company, she realizes that in order to do more business, she would have to sell it to Millicent Barnes (Holland Taylor), who agrees to just give Veronica the money needed to expand
the company. However, after several wild sexual encounters with Josh, she dies in bed with him. This leaves complete control of Veronica's Closet to Millicent's dim-witted son, who knows very little about anything. Season 1 was amazing because the premise explored the raw emotion of leaving a toxic relationship that
still has a spark left in it. Alley's portrayal of a neurotic woman looking to reclaim her life is inspiring and shows there are plenty of challenges on the legendary James Burrows, provides a minor amount of drama to an otherwise interesting comedy. Kirstie Alley as Veronica
Chase Season 2 Season 2 Season 2 begins with Millicent's son being relinquished of his duties by his stepfather, Alec Bilson (Ron Silver). Unlike Millicent, Alec Bilson (Ron Silver). Unlike Millicent, Son being a creative head of the company with Alec
running the business side. Over the course of the season, a romance develops between the two. This ends with Alec asking Veronica decides against it as she is unsure of how to confront her feelings towards him. It's around this point where the show seems to
soften from the comedy that kept it together during the first season. Alec and Veronica's hostile feelings to each other turn into a passionate relationship that's slightly nauseating as it is a sitcom trope of the ages. Kirstie Allev should have known better considering she was on the show that originated the trope: Cheers,
Other storylines in the show focus on Josh dating a woman with the intention of marrying her. Watching Veronica's Closet turn its focus towards the relationship between Alec and Veronica is excruciating and is exactly what happened to Cheers during its second season. The show is at least watchable but did lose some
of its luster. Most people felt the addition of Ron Silver to the cast was a horrible move for the show, which would be proven right after the third season (which would be its last). Season 3 During the last season, Veronica finally decides to confess her feelings to Alec and take the plunge with him. Unfortunately, he took a
plunge—into a volcano! However, prior to his death, Alec married a woman named June (Lorri Bagley). She is not necessarily an archetypical "dumb blonde" but rather a Marilyn Monroe type of character. She is dumb but has moments where her unique brand of knowledge comes in handy. In her role as the new co-
owner, June remodels the office from its classic look to something more fitting of the late '90s/early 2000s. This season also focuses on Josh's new life as an openly gay man. The series comes to a conclusion with Olive buying out June's share of the company after Olive sells her Internet company for several million
dollars. Perry and Veronica also begin a new relationship that, at first, they attempt to keep discreet. Later on, they decide to be more open about it to the rest of the staff. The show ended the long arc of someone else owning Veronica's Closet. June also admits she pushed Alec into the volcano. However, the show was
cancelled before it could get back to its original plot. Veronica's Closet was a cut above the rest in its youth. Falling into the same patterns that made Cheers thrive during its first five seasons killed this show with the same effectiveness as a dagger through the heart. The ending, though neat and clean, is rushed and
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slapped together. The show could have run another two or three seasons with its original plot as the central story of the show. Plans for a reboot have not been discussed, but with Victoria's Secret in financial decline, that is the final nail in the coffin for Veronica's Closet. Like Cheers, Veronica's Closet was an ensemble-
style show that focused too much on one character in the later seasons. In Season 1, there was a plotline about Leo being engaged and breaking up with his girlfriend Tina after she isn't sure she can go through with it. And where did Olive suddenly get an Internet company? There are several parts of the characters'
lives that are never truly uncovered or told. Veronica's Closet had a great deal of potential that was wasted on taking the easy way out. In some shows, like Seinfeld or The Newsroom, season-long arcs can be effective plot devices to enhance the show's plot, but in this case, it's the opposite. Veronica's Closet suffered
from using the same season-long arc that didn't have enough power to sustain the series. Page 6 The films of Tim Burton are a part of me. He's not even my favorite director by any stretch of the imagination, but I do respect his work. I've read books on him, and I've seen every movie. Starting with Pee-wee's Big
Adventure, to Beetlejuice, Batman, and Edward Scissorhands; his style made an imprint on my mind. These were images, sets, and characters like nothing I had ever seen before. I had already gravitated to the man-child that was Pee-wee Herman, watching his playhouse every Saturday morning, playing with the action
figures, and buying the stuffed dolls. It was easy for me to love and laugh at Big Adventure. It was Beetlejuice that truly had me take notice. It was probably too young to see it the first time I did. Then Batman took off, putting a spin on
the caped crusader like never before, and cementing a director that had made four fantastic movies in a row. That's something that not many directors can say. Then the dust settled. Burton made more great films in the coming years, arguably his best in Ed Wood, but then came critical flops such as Mars Attacks! and
Planet of the Apes and the shine of Burton had seemed to wear off. Maybe audiences grew tired of the style? Or had Burton just become a massive sellout? Making Disney movies (Alice in Wonderland) with large budgets, too much CGI (Charlie and the Chocolate Factory), and no substance was where he drifted. Either
way, things changed for Burton and his popularity faded. Although that love and general respect among film critics became damp, I've still gravitated to Burton's entire body of work. Although few seem to notice, Burton has made three films in a row in the back half of his career, each one impressive, still flawed, but
uniquely connected to the tall man from Burbank, California. Big Eyes, Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children, and Dumbo has been a crescendo of cinema. Starting with doubt, running away to escape, and rising to top again, and it has all been done in the Tim Burton way. Big Eyes — Hiding Behind the Eyes of
an Artist There's a scene in Big Eyes where Margaret Ulbrich (played wonderfully by Amy Adams) is selling her art on a gravel path in San Francisco. A cacophony of artists surround her, each person passing her work by without a glimpse. Yet, it is the work of Ulbrich that is the most unique, entirely her own. The man
selling his art next to her, Walter Keane (a slimy Christoph Waltz) expresses, "You're better than spare change, shouldn't sell yourself so cheap", which Margaret responds with, "Oh, I'm just glad they liked it". It's in that moment where Tim Burton seems to be commenting on himself, wanting his work to be liked, but
fighting not to sell himself in the process. In Big Eyes, Burton is the devil and the angel, both Keane and Ulbrich. He is a magnificent painter of odd-looking children and also a fraud. Big Eyes seems to be the first film in his career where he is confronting this demon and in the process
made one of the best films of his career. Big Eyes is easily one of Burton's most accessible films, called "strangely conventional" by Sheila O'Malley of RogerEbert.com, but a story ripe with controversy, and still made in Burton's auteur style. It begins in suburbia, a woman escaping her husband, protecting her child, and
doing things in her own courageous way. In her pursuit of freedom, however, she forgets herself, loses sight of what has made her special, and allows her greedy husband to take credit for her art. The narrative of Big Eyes makes it impossible not to look at the subtextual psychologically, a window into the mind of all
artists, and the struggle that pushes Burton to be himself. In any directors process of filmmaking, he/she is always searching to find that initial punch audiences got, and for Burton, it is no different. His is a style that separated him from the conventional, leading him to bigger budgets, larger scales, and more commercial
productions. All of those goals still didn't come without seeking the praise of critics and his peers. With more money came greater risks, with a higher chance for self-doubt, more money in his pocket, no doubt, but at what price? Who was this Tim Burton? What had he become? That's why Big Eyes was an awakening, a
new first step — starting with him brightening up his pallet and casting Amy Adams as his lead. You could mention that it was the first film void of death or the oddities of Edward Scissorhands, but the biggest change in Big Eyes was the
absence of Johnny Depp. Burton had made five films in a row with the Pirates of the Caribbean star, and the two have made a total of eight films together. They are practically synonymous with one another, a bond that is part of Burton's auteur style, but something that had become incredibly stale. Big Eyes has Amy
Adams and her performance is a vision, earning her a golden globe award, bringing Margaret Keane's struggle to life, in her face, in her guiet strength. And in each Tim Burton film is a character that is representative of himself. He is Margaret Keane. A person that doubts their art, hiding behind the facades of makeup,
and feeling the sting when critics call his work commercial. Then he turned a corner, making this fresh, bright film, California sunlit, with pastel-coloured sets, gorgeous costume design from Colleen Atwood, and that dash of Tim Burton strangeness in the eyes of the children in a Keane painting. The third act is where
Margaret Keane finds the ability to stand up for herself, speak her truth, and be the artist that she always was. Big Eyes was a revival for Tim Burton's career, but like any conflicted artist, he still needed to escape. He would find a fresh new place where outcasts such as himself could go. Burton would take his talents to
the home for peculiar children. Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children — Back at Home With All My Misfit Friends Before Big Eyes, Burton directed Dark Shadows. Based on the 1960's TV show, which lasted for six seasons, and he makes it in 2012 when general audiences had no idea the movie was even
founded on something from prime-time television. It just looked like another Burton movie, once again starring Johnny Depp. Although the narrative of that film never gelled, the one thing that rose to the top was the performance by Eva Green, which was both deliciously wicked, and delightfully funny. You might call it a
blessing in disguise. Amy Adams rightfully had the role for Big Eyes, but Green had truly cemented herself as a muse for Tim Burton. Finding the right vehicle for Green did not take long, as Burton had read Ransom Rigg's novel, about a home of children with odd-like abilities, and nobody better could play the title role of
Miss Peregrine. Yet, similar to all of Burton's films before, he would need to make sure the themes still aligned, telling a story that begins in the Florida suburbs, with mint-green homes, and follows a high school boy that always feels out of place. As a Butterfield is Jake, a boy that grew up listening to stories from his
grandfather (played by the legendary Terrence Stamp). Tales about a home off an island in Wales, with children that can float away, one that has bees in his stomach, or a headmistress with the ability to turn into a bird. The character of Jake is the voice of Burton—a boy that wishes to be acknowledged. Noticed by his
peers, his parents (Chris O'Dowd playing a perfect aloof father), or anyone who is just like him, Jake's search becomes his journey to find that home, to discover if his grandfather's stories are even true, taking him to a place of mystery, a bit of time travel, and running from haunting tentacled villains. This was another Time
Burton movie, yes, but a picture that combines all of the styles in Burton's past works, while right in step with his new direction. It is the dark mixed with the colorful. It is a path between the past and the present. It's disturbing in nature and whimsical like a fantasy. Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children might be the
most fun Tim Burton has had since making Beetlejuice. And it shows. It starts with a bigger cast of actors, including new faces that add energy to a Burton film. The likes of Samuel L. Jackson playing the villainous Barron—with teeth as sharp as razor blades, and Judi Dench, later adding her grace to any role she is in, all
bringing a matter of respect to the film. It's especially important to have the right cast when dealing with a story that involves time travel is involved. In Miss Peregrine's story, the element of time travel is a major plot point, but
evidently a constant argument in Tim Burton's head. Does he want to stay in the past? I think that's true. The majority of his films involve escape, an ability for him to get away from the things that disappoint. It's not a far stretch to say that Burton wanted to escape the conventional ways of living, making it more apparent
that Big Eves was a new beginning. A reset to his career, allowing him to find room for a film of this nature. Having not read the source material, there still seems to be a bit of originality in Burton's portraval of this universe. He's making a film with similar themes, but with a clearer mind of what he wants. If the Asa
Butterfield character is a representation of Burton, then it makes sense. The person that Jake is at the beginning is timid, shy, afraid to get out of the doldrums of life. By the end, he is a leader, someone just as peculiar as the next person, both inside and out. Eva Green is his muse, but Burton is ready to take the baton
and draw inspiration from everything that is a representation of his present. What was interesting to me was how much more I enjoyed the Home for Peculiar Children on second viewing. Granted, I still think the third act is messy, but even that part makes sense when you study Burton's influences. If you were going to
compare it to any of Burton's other films, the obvious answer is Edward Scissorhands. A welcoming home that takes in the peculiar person would certainly find a place for a man with cutting sheers for paws, but it's not as in your face for Burton's influences are in the details. Miss Peregrine's home is similar to the castle
where Edward was created, including massive topiary trees, and one character that likes to put hearts into things, which makes them come to life. Along with similar details from past works, Burton uses most of his cast of production teammates, with costumes designed by Colleen Atwood, consistent editor Chris
Lebenzon, and cinematographer Bruno Delbonnel, who had worked with Burton on his last three films, all bringing something to the table. What they have a grasp on are the things that inspired Burton as a director. Various scenes with claymation figures and an army of skeletons are direct reminders of Burton's love for
visual effects legend Ray Harryhausen. The climactic battle between the peculiar children and the long, slenderman-like creatures known as Hollows, all takes place at a theme park, reminiscent of classic films such as Carnival of Souls or Disney's Pinocchio. Unlike Big Eyes, this is far from conventional, its spot-on
Burton, made in his fresh new way. As for that ending taking place at a carnival, well that was just a hint from Burton on where he was headed to next, putting his own spin on the flying pachyderm—Dumbo. Dumbo — Joining the Circus and Tearing It Down I think a few film critics and those that know the work of Tim
Burton will see the irony in his production of Disney's Dumbo. Others will be blinded by the glitz and glam. Critically panned and brushed aside by anyone who holds the 1941 version in their heart, this was not a movie that should have been expected to fly. There is already a major problem with Disney hoarding all of
their properties and then re-doing them simply for the sake of adding money to their overflowing pile of profits. It is because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because this is only slightly like the others and because the other slightly like 
the eye of his financiers; making a story that is not entirely about the flying, floppy-eared elephant, but about a misfit circus family coming together, all at the expense of burning down the evil corporate machine. If there are constant complaints about the originality of Jon Favreau's Lion King or the mangled re-creation of
Guy Ritchie's Aladdin, so it's odd to see that Disney for once let a director have creative inspiration for this version of Dumbo. It's a combination of being lightly Disnified while being entirely Burton. The cast—filled with Burton regulars Eva Green, Michael Keaton, Danny Devito, and Alan Arkin; The sets grander than ever
with large scale circus tents. The costumes once again beautifully constructed by Colleen Atwood and a score by Danny Elfman that could be some of his best work with Burton. It also became Tim Burton's most poetic film in years. Starting with Big Eyes, Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children, and now Dumbo,
there was a complete transformation of who this director is. Long gone are the weights of the Burton-Depp partnership. This was the unveiling of a Tim Burton we had never seen and a recharge of excitement for what movie will come next. Dumbo is not a gluttonous Tim Burton project (This is not Charlie and the
Chocolate Factory), but it is a journey back in time when the circus wowed us as children, or the concept of a flying elephant was as believable as Santa Claus. The star of the show is Dumbo and Burton has him soaring higher than ever. Before Dumbo could soar, Burton had to make sure he destroyed the very thing that
was trying to create him. It's extremely strange that anyone in Disney approved the final cut of this movie, but I am glad it was made. It's not giving too much away, but the climax involves the entire group of Max Medici's Traveling Circus bonding together to destroy the corrupt, greedy Dreamland amusement park. There
lies the conflict of Tim Burton. He wants to make movies that harness his appreciation for stop-motion animation. Films with beautifully constructed sets, whimsical magic, and unique looking characters. All of that comes at a cost. He wants the luxury of making his films easily, without the criticism of being called a sellout.
That's why Dumbo is a story that suits him. He feels like a weirdo with big ears, some people laughing at him, critical of him for tripping over himself. In reality, he is a prime example of an artist. Someone that must take great risk, with the possibility that he might not actually fly. He might need a feather. Or maybe he just
needs to let his true nature glide. While watching and writing about the last two films—Big Eyes and Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children—It was obvious which character was a representation of Tim Burton himself. Big Eyes was the Margaret Keane character, feeling like a phoney, pushed around by others, and
afraid to stand up for her own work. In Miss Peregrine, it is Asa Butterfield's Jake, a lonely boy, looking for his place, friends that can be just as peculiar as he is. In Dumbo, it took me quite a long time to find out which character was the representation. Was it Max Medici (Danny DeVito), the vaudevillian circus owner,
hoping to come up with anything that will keep his traveling troupe afloat? Holt Farrier (Colin Farrier (Colin Farrier), the once horse riding superstar that lost his wife, lost his arm in WWI, and then lost his pride to be a good father? Or maybe it is Keaton's V.A. Vandevere? He's the creator of a massive amusement park called
Dreamland, filled with everything a child could want, including an attraction called Nightmare Island, floating elephant bubbles, and more glamour than a New York fashion week. And in the end, it hit me. It was none of those people. It wasn't a person at all. It's the name up in lights—Dumbo. Here is a little boy that has
his mother ripped away from him, with no clue as to why, and now finds himself divided between the two worlds of entertaining people vs. this new wave of the future, an elephant soaring to new heights. This has always been the conflict for Tim Burton. He's made movies with no risk, no
budget, and had enormous success—Pee-wee's Big Adventure, Beetlejuice. He's made movies with massive budgets and fallen flat on his face—Planet of the Apes and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. He's the main attraction for his films, expected to fly, and if he does not perform the audience is going to want their
money back. This is what makes Dumbo Tim Burton's consummate topper film; it's a big scale production rooted in the past and flying off to a whole new level. I might be in the minority of finding these last three Burton movies to be some of his best work. Many people will disagree. I am willing to step to the edge and
take that leap. That's what a great artist does. Page 7 "He was never looking to be compared to any other lyricist, how much a fan I am of his intellect, his fierce, rigorous critique of culture." Nicky Wire "Youth culture has always been controlled by
the same people, selling the same goods at inflated prices – just more created products all the time. If you're told what youth culture is, it's not much use, Everybody knows what they want to do and then they're told to do something else and they do it. Youth is the ultimate product. We just wanna mix politics and sex, look
brilliant on stage and say brilliant things." Richey Edwards on Snub TV, 1991 On February 1, 1995, Richard James (like Rusty James (like Rusty James in the pantheon of existential heroes) and Richey Manic, lyricist, clothes horse, Minister of Propaganda and (arguably) quitarist with the Manic Street
Preachers, famously disappeared without giving any clue to his location or motivation for leaving. February 1, 2020 sees the 25th anniversary of Richey's disappearance. But rather than wallow in the mire of the details surrounding the disappearance.
(and something that we're unlikely to receive a definite conclusion on anyway)—I want to celebrate what made Richey such a unique figure of such fascination for so many people, myself included. A working-class autodidact from Blackwood, a
mining town in South Wales, he gave hope to people like myself who felt isolated from their own backgrounds by their love of literature, ideas and politics. I would come to realise later that working-class culture is a lot more complicated than that, but as an alienated teen, I needed the inspiration. His intimidatingly wide
world of ideas spilled out before me. Rock music became my secondary education and Richev was my favourite teacher. Treating rock music as an equal art form with equal potential for intelligence as literature, theatre and film, without losing its populist appeal, excitement or form (a technique known as 'entryism'), his
lyrics began as a cut and paste of Beat Generation stream of consciousness and tabloid sloganeering and became multiple-sourced, richly researched cultural and political dissertations, condensed in the flame of the form of the rock song and made streamlined and solid as tungsten. To see Richey's typewritten pages
from this time, you could equally believe you were reading experimental prose or free verse poetry; such is the high volume of ideas and the lack of regard for rhyme, metre or rhythm. As best friend and bandmate Nicky Wire stated, "He wasn't looking for an Ivor Novello, was he, the boy? He was looking for a Pulitzer
Prize...he just wanted to be J.G. Ballard." Such ambition, intellect and creativity should be celebrated. The Manics have often made a point of separating Richey, the myth of the tortured artist, and I aim to do the same here on the 25th anniversary of his disappearance. It's not always easy to do so.
as any writing can lend itself to its writer's introspections, but certainly, the artistry still shines through. So, in celebration of one of the greatest and perhaps most underrated legitimate artists in the pantheon of rock music, I present to you, dear reader, some of my favourite Richey writings and moments. I eat and I dress
and I wash and I still can say thank you / Puking / Shaking / Sinking / I still stand for old ladies / Can't shout / Can't shout
prostituting yourself in other ways—by being in a band for example and allowing yourself to be exploited by the accompanying media—offers one of the most concise descriptions of internalising mental pain or illness and presenting an image of 'normalcy' to the outside world as a coping mechanism. As someone with my
own, 'mild', mental health issues, I can relate to being able to function and generally keep to my commitments and keep to a routine and go about my everyday life. I can relate to the internal clawing of my emotions by my internal chemistry as I go about these things and the anxiety that simmers just under the surface,
undetected by the public. The mundanity of imagery of standing for old ladies on the bus perfectly demonstrates that ability to function in the everyday, while inside... "You know how Catholics always hate every other religion, or Baptists hate Methodists more than they hate the Devil? Well, we will always hate Slowdive
more than we hate Adolf Hitler." The Manics were known for their vitriol early on, but not necessarily for their sense of humour. Here, Richey's disdain for shoegaze's drifting, apolitical ambient noise finds perfect expression in one of his most vicious, over-exaggerated put-downs ever. Apparently, quite a few bands
wanted to fight the Manics in the early '90s. It's no surprise after perfectly formed verbal grenades like this. Oh the joy, me and Stephen Hawking, we laugh / We missed the sex revolution when we failed the physical (from "Me and Stephen Hawking," 2009) The Manics' 2009 album Journal For Plague Lovers was made
up entirely of lyrics Richey left for the band just before he disappeared. The new lyrics intriguingly seem to be less angry than the lyrics written for, The Holy Bible. They also have some surprising and refreshingly humorous lines, such as this one. On a track referencing
everything from genetic engineering's threat to humanity, to Giant Haystacks wrestling in Bombay, to—in unused lines—"plastic surgery for pubic hair" and the "Queen Mother stuffed for exhibition," perhaps one of the most surprising, and most amusing, is Richey's comparison of himself with Stephen Hawking to suggest
that he physically wasn't cut out for the sexual act. A tasteful image? No, not by a longshot. But an arresting and entertaining image in itself? Absolutely, I am an architect / They call me primitive / I am purity / They call me perverted... I know I believe in nothing / But it is my
nothing (from "Faster," 1994) It's one of the great self-manifestos wrapped inside a mantra of opposition, and one of the individual as to be found in pop and rock music ever. Defining himself in opposition to how his detractors describe him, his references to himself
as an architect, a pioneer and purity suggested a high-functioning ego indulging in a delusion of grandeur before the inevitable crash, something we know was sadly a reality. I always assumed his references to being a pioneer were in his high art approach to his lyrics, and purity a reference to his fascination with
puritanism (he couldn't decide ultimately if he was a puritan or not, but the concept obsessed him). But architect is a bit unclear. The opposite given—a butcher—is usually taken as a reference to his self-harm. How could he be perceived as an architect in this respect? It's still unclear to me, but the language and blunt
declarative force of his proclamations here remake his conflicts as poetry. By 1994. Richev was questioning everything and finding it nowhere. "I know I believe in nothing" is the nihilistic summary and admission to self of this process. But at the time of writing "Faster." Richev
was not in the mood for people's pity. "But it is MY nothing," he spits, affirming the right of the individual to believe in nothing if that is their conclusion. Strangely terrifying and life-affirming at the same time, never had an assertion of self been so powerful in rock music before. I would prefer no choice / One bread, one
food, one milk, one food, that's all / I'm confused, I only want one truth / I really don't mind being lied to (from "All Is Vanity," 2009) For a confused, anxious mind, one that cannot discern any concrete truths in the world, the idea of having one truth to focus on, to cling to as a way of making sense of the world, is highly
attractive. To suggest that to accept such a truth, even if it was a lie, betrays a sadness and desperation at the heart of the desire to rid oneself of such confusion. Richey nails such desperation here in clear, concise lines that paint a picture of someone so overwhelmed by the many, many consumerist options available in
the capitalist world that they would rather be reduced to a quasi-communistic state where there is no choice, and everything is decided for them. Such longing may seem reductive, resigning oneself to the erasure of individualism, but for Richey, it was about reducing the overload of choice that made straight thought
impossible. One man's Communism is another man's safe space; it would appear. Regained your self-control / and regained your self-esteem / and blind your success inspires / and analyse, despise and scrutinise / never knowing what you hoped for / and safe and warm / but life is so silent / for the victims who have no
speech / and their shapeless, guilty remorse / obliterates your meaning / o
popular historians of the time who were releasing books that argued that the holocaust of World War Two didn't happen or was at least greatly exaggerated. Rightly angered by such harmful nonsense, Richey wrote not one but two songs about the holocaust for The Holy Bible. The first song, "Mausoleum," contained this
damning indictment of everyone who got to live some form of everyday, normal life after the war. And that the mere fact of the dead, the victims of the victims o
example, but how can you feel such despair in the face of what the victims of the holocaust suffered? This is a sobering piece of writing that never fails to put me in my place. Shards oh chards / the androgyny fails / Odalisque by Ingres / extra bones for sale / Born-a-graphic vs. Pornographic (from
"Pretension/Repulsion," 2009) Demonstrating Richey's uncanny ability to apply a historical story he found through his reading, however obscure, and then apply this story to (then) contemporary culture, linking the relevance across time in exciting ways through his lyrics. The above chorus, from "Pretension/Repulsion," is
a prime example. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres' 1814 painting Grande Odalisque infamously depicted a concubine in what was said to be an unrealistic anatomical state. Ingres was said to be an unrealistic anatomical state. Ingres was said to be an unrealistic anatomical state.
normal. While the controversy then lay in the fact that Ingres was engaging in subtle sensual fantasy as opposed to accurate representation and imitation of form, as it was argued painting was supposed to do, Richey Edwards was able to see in the story that arguments about body modification and representation had
not changed in the 180 years since the painting was made. As James Dean Bradfield put it, Richey, writing this in 1994, was saying "how long have we been having this argument for... I suppose it would have been [magazines like] Loaded and FHM that captured his imagination as to the objectification of beauty et cetera,
but he was just saying, this has actually been going on for a long time. Ingres was actually inserting an extra disc in the spine, just to idealise the woman's body. People have always been obsessed with it." Since Richey's disappearance, the argument of female representation and objectification has become even more
prominent, and it has taken extremely dark moments like the actions of Harvey Weinstein for women to gain the confidence to speak out, the #MeToo movement demanding new, positive representation out of their shared trauma. Furthermore, the arguments over female representation have now moved on to the
question of gender identity and transgender people, where people, unfairly, argue to deny people the choice to modify or transcend their bodies in the name of 'accurate labelling.' Men must be men and women must be women. The androgyny fails, indeed. It takes a true artist to see the patterns in history and to connect
the dots in such a way that its language excites in the reader (or listener) the desire for debate and to ask further guestions. Richey saw the past. And uncannily, he was able to make the links that show us the future. A terrifying future, yes. But a future that is unnervingly coming to life before our eyes. And if nothing else,
"Born-a-graphic vs. Pornographic" is a hell of a line. What are your favourite Richey moments? Let us know in the comments and share in the celebration of one of rock's great artists! Page 8 There are several things I find compelling about the Battlestar Galactica episode "Scar" (S2E15), and these things combined
place it on the top of my "Best Of" list of BSG episodes. First, it's a Starbuck-centric episode, and any episode where Kara "Starbuck" Thrace (Katee Sackhoff) takes center stage will hook me immediately. She is hands down my favorite character, and this episode allows her (and Sackhoff) to shine. Second, "Scar"
(written by David Weddle and Bradley Thompson, and directed by Michael Nankin) uses an interesting narrative structure: it focuses almost solely on the experience of the Viper pilots on Galactica, with everyone else existing only on the periphery and included only for exposition purposes. It features a single battle with
the titular Raider named Scar, but switches between the present (the fight in progress) and flashbacks of scenes that took place in the days leading up to this fight. Third—and, to me, this is the most interesting of all—it provides us with insight into the minds of the Cylon Raiders and shows the Viper pilots (especially
Starbuck) coming to terms with the fact that not only are the human-model Cylons capable of complex thought and emotion, but so are the Raiders are far less human (more like intelligent trained animals), they are not machines. The Raiders are capable of tactical strategy. They feel rage, and they
feel pain. They, too, resurrect when they die, and—after the trauma of death and rebirth—they come back stronger, smarter, and angrier. Starbuck is no stranger to losing fellow Viper pilots—both longtime friends and "nuggets" (newbie pilots)—in battle against the Cylons since the war began. She was never particularly
good at processing and expressing her emotions to begin with, but the continuous losses have taken a psychological toll on her, and she has almost completely shut down. This coping mechanism makes her act cold to and distant from the nuggets who come in to replace her dead pilots, and it has affected her ability to
lead. This does not sit well with Louanne "Kat" Katraine (Luciana Carro), with whom Starbuck has had an adversarial relationship since Kat first came aboard Galactica as a nugget in "Act of Contrition" (S1E4). "Scar" shows us Starbuck and Kat at each other's throats almost constantly. Their history together has been
fraught with hostility, especially after Kat became addicted to stims and almost killed herself doing a basic landing maneuver she had done a hundred times before ("Final Cut," S2E8). The fascinating thing about Starbuck and Kat's relationship is that Kat is actually a lot like Starbuck. She's cocky and insubordinate, but
(after some hiccups early on) she's actually become one of the best Viper pilots in the fleet. Starbuck has always been Top Gun on the ship, and the fact that Kat is ready to take that title from her—and is vocal about it in front of the other pilots—doesn't help their already strained relationship. They have no choice but to
work together, though, because Galactica is currently on a protection mission, patrolling the debris-strewn atmosphere surrounding a planet where mining operations are underway. The mining project is essential to the survival of the fleet because they have discovered a rich vein of ore that will allow them to build two
new squadrons of Vipers to replace their many losses. Because there is so much debris in the atmosphere, Galactica's DRADIS cannot distinguish between it and any enemy Raiders. So they are stuck there, sitting ducks, while the mining operation drags on longer than it should. They have been there for almost a
month, and the only reason the mining mission is even remotely possible is because they have recently destroyed the Cylons' Resurrection ship ("Resurrection ship, Part 2." S2E12), and the Cylons' Resurrection ship ("Resurrection ship, Part 2." S2E12).
do in the past, a couple of lone Raiders with no base ship should be easy pickings—except one of those Raiders is Scar. Up until this point, the Raiders have all been identical, nameless enemies, and the pilots have fought and killed legions of them. They have always considered them to be a different kind of Cylon than
the human models they have discovered. What we learn in "Scar" is that this is not the case. Starbuck has more experience than anyone (at least, any human) with the inner workings of the Cylon Raiders. After crash-landing on a poisonous planet with no hope of rescue. Starbuck was able to cut open and figure out the
flight mechanics of the Raider she took down before she crashed ("You Can't Go Home Again," S1E5). She flew the Raider back to Galactica where Chief Galen Tyrol (Aaron Douglas) began trying to figure out its mechanics in more detail. Tyrol had no luck with it, but we did get a little hint to the nature of the Raiders
when Cylon sleeper agent Sharon "Boomer" Valerii (Grace Park) told him her "theory" on the Raiders. Of course, this is information that she knew deep in her subconscious as a Cylon, but she had not yet been revealed to be model Number Eight. In "Six Degrees of Separation" (S1E7), Sharon tells the Chief: It's not
really a thing, you know. It's probably a Cylon itself. More of an animal maybe than the human models. Maybe they genetically design it to perform a task. To be a fighter. Can't treat it like a thing and expect it to respond. You have to treat it like a pet. From her many run-ins with Scar, Starbuck already knows something
of his tactics and how he differs from the other Raiders. In "Scar," we see a scene in the mess where all the Viper pilots are drinking heavily after the loss of yet another pilot to Scar. Starbuck explains to one of the nuggets that Scar is so effective because he likes to hide in the debris field, laying in wait until the time is
right. "Scar doesn't like to fight until the odds are on his side," she tells him. When he responds that Scar sounds like a coward, Starbuck explains, "This is war. You never wanna fight fair. You wanna sneak up behind your enemy and club him over the head. You see, Scar understands that. And so do I." What the naïve
new pilots do not understand and a veteran pilot like Starbuck does is that Scar is an entirely different type of enemy than any they have faced before. Scar is smart and thinks strategically, which is what makes him so much deadlier than any other Raider they have encountered. But to learn exactly why this is the case,
she has to turn to Sharon, who has been revealed as a Cylon and is imprisoned in the Brig. Sharon (now the "Athena" version instead of the "Boomer" version) gives Starbuck even more insight into the Raiders' psychology. She tells Starbuck that the Raiders reincarnate just like the human models do and that Scar has
died many times (with Starbuck likely responsible for several of those deaths). She reiterates what Boomer told the Chief: that they are trained animals "with basic consciousness and survival instinct." However, things are different now after the destruction of the Resurrection ship because now when the Raiders die, they
are dead for good. It follows that the Cylons will not mount a full-scale attack on the mining operation because the risk is far greater than the reward. In order to help Starbuck understand the Cylons' reasoning, Sharon compares the mass casualties of Raiders to Viper pilot casualties: Makes sense, doesn't it? It takes
months for you to train a nugget into an effective Viper pilot. And then they get killed, and then you lose their experience, their skill sets. It's gone forever. So, if you could bring them back and put them in a brand new body, wouldn't you do it? Death then becomes a learning experience. Like many of the
other humans, Starbuck is still struggling with the whole concept of human-model Cylons. This is especially true of Sharon, who she has known a long time and had considered a friend. In fact, during this scene, she tells Sharon, "Sometimes when I look at you, I forget what you are." Starbuck has so many memories of
Sharon, and the "Athena" Sharon also has those memories even though they occurred when she was in the "Boomer" body. This is hard for Starbuck to come to terms with, and combined with the knowledge that the Raiders also reincarnate—especially her nemesis Scar—she is overwhelmed. She goes to leave but
Sharon issues her one final warning: "Be careful of Scar, okay? He's filled with rage... Dying's a painful and traumatic experience. Every time he's reborn, he's filled with more bitter memories. Scar hates you every bit as much as you hate him." In addition to the many Viper pilot losses she has suffered, Starbuck is
struggling with both a Cylon nemesis in Scar and a human nemesis in Kat. As a result, she engages in a lot of self-destructive behavior in order to mask her fear and grief. She has always used alcohol and sex as a crutch, but in "Scar" we see her in one of the darkest places she has ever been. She is still mourning the
loss of Samuel T. Anders (Michael Trucco), a Resistance fighter who she met and fell in love with while she was on a mission to retrieve the Arrow of Apollo on Cylon-occupied Caprica. In "The Farm" (S2E5), Starbuck made a promise to Anders that she would return with a rescue party—a promise she always intended to
keep. However, when she went to Commander Adama (Edward James Olmos) and President Laura Roslin (Mary McDonnell) asking to lead the mission back to Caprica, they would not allow her to go ("Pegasus: Extended Version," S2E10). Meeting Anders changed Starbuck in a very real way, and she carries intense
guilt for breaking her promise to him. She believes that, at this point, he must be dead, and she grieves not only for him but for the love that she could have had. Starbuck feels very much alone even though she does have people in her life who care for her deeply. Both Commander Bill Adama and Lee "Apollo" Adama
(Jamie Bamber) love Starbuck, albeit in different ways. Commander Adama loves her like a daughter, while Lee loves her in a romantic way. Because Lee and Starbuck's relationship is incredibly complicated, the only person she can really open up to is Karl C. "Helo" Agathon (Tahmoh Penikett). Helo was with Starbuck
on Caprica when she met Anders and the other Resistance fighters. They have known each other a long time and she considers him a friend (with no romantic feelings involved to complicate things). Helo is the only person that can really understand what Starbuck is going through with regard to Anders because he was
there with her. One scene in "Scar" shows Starbuck talking to Helo about Anders, but even here she is closed off and not fully honest with him. After a discussion about her issues with Kat, Helo points out that Starbuck was a lot like Kat before she met Anders. He asks her if she ever thinks about him, and she replies,
"What's the point? He's dead." As viewers, we know that this is a lie; she thinks about him constantly. Earlier in the episode, in the scene in the scene in the scene in the scene in the mess with all the Viper pilots drinking, Starbuck and Kat get into one of their verbal sparring matches. Kat is boasting that she will be the one to take down Scar. She calls
Starbuck a drunk and Starbuck calls her a stim junkie. As the night goes on, Starbuck proceeds to get extremely drunk while the other pilots cheer her on. Starbuck uses her ability to drink everyone under the table as a form of bravado, but inside she is hurting. When she jumps over a table and falls to the floor, the pilots
(except for a very concerned Lee) laugh and cheer. Initially, she laughs with them, but as she lays there, we see her having flashbacks of her time with Anders on Caprica, and she starts to break down. The only person who really sees what is happening with her is Lee. He sees that she is drinking too much and
completely self-destructing. As a veteran pilot himself, he can empathize with what Starbuck is going through, but he doesn't really understand or know the full extent of her feelings for Anders. The complicated nature of their relationship makes it nearly impossible for Lee to help her. She simply will not open up to him,
and while he knows it is all a defense mechanism, that doesn't change the fact that he is unable to penetrate the wall she's built up to protect herself. Starbuck's drinking is beginning to seriously impair her ability to lead the Viper pilots. Earlier in the episode, we see Kat leading one of the briefings, showing the cockpit
footage from the last pilot Scar killed. Starbuck is nowhere to be found in this scene, and since this occurs the morning after her drunken breakdown, it isn't a stretch to assume that she was too hungover to lead the briefing herself. As a lieutenant and the second-best pilot in the fleet, Kat took over. Later in the episode,
Starbuck is asked for advice by one of the nuggets, BB (Christopher Jacot). She is pretty harsh with him, telling him to just follow his flight training and giving him a textbook answer as to how to deal with Scar. Kat is nearby, listening to this conversation, and when BB walks away from Starbuck, Kat pulls him aside and
gives him the sort of encouragement that he needs as a newbie pilot about to go on a dangerous mission. The damage has already been done, though, and during the mission (which we only hear over Galactica's comms), BB follows Starbuck's instructions instead of listening to his experienced wingman, Duck
(Christian Tessier). They are low on fuel, which is one situation in which Starbuck's tactical advice does not apply. Instead of listening to Duck, BB insists on following Starbuck an earful about how BB's death is her fault
(and she's not entirely wrong). After BB's death, we see Starbuck and Lee in the mess alone, drowning their sorrows. They are drinking together here as friends and Viper pilots, not so much mourning the loss of BB in particular but the sad fact that they have lost so many that it is hard to even remember individuals at
this point. Lee tells Starbuck that he knows that he won't even remember their faces in two weeks, and Starbuck says that she doesn't even remember their names. Of course, as we will later see, this is a lie. She is painfully aware of everyone that she has lost, but she feels as if she needs to pretend that none of them
matter to her—that they are expendable. She has to pretend to forget names and faces in order to continue to lose people, though. Starbuck is, at this point, resigned to her own death. She has experienced so much loss and she knows that, day
after day, she puts her life at risk for the safety of the fleet. She tells Lee: The President says that we're saving humanity for a bright, shiny future on Earth that you and I are never gonna see. We're not. Because we go out over and over again, until some day, some metal motherfrakker is gonna catch us on a bad day
and just blow us away. It's a bleak and hopeless outlook, but it is a realistic one given their situation. Lee can see through her cavalier attitude, but he just goes along with it. At this point, Starbuck decides that she needs to live in the moment because they are all going to die anyway, and in that moment, she wants to get
laid. To this point, Battlestar Galactica has always played with that will-they-or-won't-they question regarding Lee and Starbuck, nothing is that simple. While they do both want to have sex, they want entirely different things from it. Lee
wants there to be emotion involved where Starbuck just wants the physical pleasure of it. She is trying to use sex to get out of her own head and distract herself from everything, especially the loss of Anders. Lee, on the other hand, is in love with Starbuck and wants this to be the beginning of something more—or, if not
that, at least something with some feeling behind it. Starbuck is incredibly aggressive with him, and that is not at all what Lee wants. He puts a stop to it, which frustrates her, and then they have an argument in which Starbuck admits that she is still hung up on Anders. This seems to be the first time that Lee truly
understands the depth of Starbuck's feelings for Anders, and he can't help but be hurt by it. When she says, "I'm hung up on a dead guys. It's the living ones you can't deal with." And that puts a quick end to that. After her failed attempt at a quickie with Lee, Starbuck
grabs a bottle of booze and heads to the briefing room to drown her sorrows while watching footage of Scar. This is her rock bottom. She sits alone, drinking down an entire bottle and crying. In this moment, you can see her totally and completely shattered and vulnerable, which she can only do alone and completely
intoxicated. At this point, her sole focus is killing Scar, She feels like she has nothing else in the world except the fact that she is Galactica's Top Gun, and that might bring her any peace and happiness (however brief). Throughout "Scar," Sackhoff does an incredible job of expressing
Starbuck's psychological turmoil without saying a word, and this scene is an exceptional example of that. Every single ounce of Starbuck's anguish is written on Sackhoff's face. Given the sheer amount of alcohol she consumed the night before, it is no surprise that Starbuck cannot take the morning patrol that she's
assigned to. She has another pilot cover for her and takes his later patrol. Unfortunately, the early patrol resulted in the loss of another pilot, Jo-Jo, and she would have been his wingman had she not been too hungover to fly. In the briefing after, she is clearly hungover, and at this point, Kat has had enough. She calls
Starbuck out in front of all the pilots in the briefing room, blaming her for being too much of a drunk to make her patrol and saying that Jo-Jo's death is on her. While Kat is not entirely wrong, she has crossed the line, and Starbuck clears the room so the two of them can have it out one last time. The faceoff between Kat
and Starbuck is vicious, and each tells some hard truths about the other. Kat tells Starbuck that she is an embarrassment: "You used to be the hottest stick on the fleet," she says. "Now, you're just a reckless drunk who sends other people out to get killed." Starbuck responds with an equally harsh truth about Kat: that she
is afraid all the time, not only of Scar but of her own mortality. The thing she is most afraid of is being forgotten. At the beginning of "Scar," when the group is packing up the possessions of the latest dead pilot. Reilly, Kat becomes obsessed with a picture of Reilly's girlfriend and the fact that no one can remember her
name. Starbuck latches on to this and tells her, "You're afraid that you're going to end up like that picture of Reilly's girlfriend. Some little forgotten picture that nobody really remembers." This is the last straw for Kat. It hits too close to home, and she punches Starbuck in the face. Starbuck is no stranger to insubordination
and assaulting a superior officer—she punched Colonel Saul Tigh (Michael Hogan) in the face in the Battlestar Galactica miniseries that kicked off the BSG reboot. While I don't think that Starbuck would have thrown Kat in the Brig for what she did, Lee interrupts before things can escalate any further. Starbuck has a
bloodied lip and it is obvious to Lee exactly what has gone on. It was sort of inevitable, given the bad blood between the two of them and the increasing tensions as the crew suffers more and more losses to Scar. Lee decides that the two of them will be flying the next patrol together, which is the only way to force any
unity between them since, even though they hate each other, they are the best Viper pilots in the fleet and would never allow their personal differences to affect the mission. Before she sets off on the final showdown with Scar, we see Kat take the picture of Reilly's girlfriend and pin it to the wall of remembrance. To this
point, the narrative structure of "Scar" has shown us small pieces of Starbuck and Kat's showdown with scar intercut with the events of the days leading up to it. At the end, we see the full battle play out with no interruptions. As they first set out on their patrol, Kat is still asking after the name of Reilly's girlfriend, but
Starbuck doesn't know or care and wants to focus on the mission. Kat spots a Raider she thinks is Scar and they go after it, but Starbuck can sense that the real Scar is hiding, watching Kat and Starbuck as they go after the decoy
Raider, and then starts to follow behind them. Starbuck trusts her gut and decides to turn her Viper around to check their tail, at which point, just a second too late, she discovers that Scar has been trailing them, obscuring himself in the glare of the Sun. Starbuck takes a hit from Scar, but not enough to put her out of
commission. Kat has lost visual contact with Starbuck, who has decided to take Scar on alone. She ends up in a game of chicken with Scar and is on her way to back her up. Knowing what she now knows about Scar, this time it is personal for Starbuck. As
Sharon told her, Scar hates her as much as she hates him, and only one of them will make it out of this fight alive. Kat is screaming at her over comms that Scar is a machine and he won't break—but Starbuck knows better than that. More importantly, though, at this point. Starbuck
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doesn't care if she lives or dies, as long as she takes out Scar. She is willing to go out in a blaze of glory, as Top Gun, because she has nothing else. Just as the two are near the collision point, time stops in the narrative and we see Starbuck thinking about Anders and the promise she made to him. The camera lingers
on a close-up of Starbuck's face, with a few flash-cuts to scenes from "The Farm," as she comes to the realization that she does not need to die here. Kat is close enough that she can put Scar right in front of her. It means giving up the glory (and the title of Top Gun), but Starbuck realizes that she wants to live. Deep
down, she is still holding on to the hope that Anders could be alive, and if she dies killing Scar, she will never be able to keep her promise to him. And so she breaks off, and she lets Kat take out Scar and get all the glory that goes with that. Of course, Kat is arrogant and obnoxious about it later on in the mess when
Starbuck has given her the Top Gun mug and has to pour her drinks, but Starbuck—although she hates to lose to Kat—knows that she made the right call in calling in her wingman. Starbuck does manage to steal Kat's moment, though it's not in a spiteful way. After pouring Kat's drink, she raises a bottle and takes the
opportunity to salute everyone they have lost. One by one, she says the names of the fallen pilots, and Lee realizes that she was lying when she callously stated she didn't remember their names. In fact, she knows every single one of them, and it is deeply moving to everyone in the room to see her finally embodying the
kind of leadership that Kat has so desperately wanted her to take. In this moment, Starbuck has brought them all together as a team—a family even. Despite their many differences and interpersonal problems, they are all pilots of the fleet, and that experience is something that no one else in the universe can understand
except the people in that room. Even Tigh, her longtime enemy, is visibly moved by her and truly respects her in that moment. Starbuck is determined to live now, but before she does, she must honor the dead. She starts to falter towards the end, though, and when she can no longer remember names, Lee steps up to
save her: "To all of them." he savs. So say we all. Page 9 PopCulture25YL looks back at the music and shows from the month that was January of 1995 to explore why they're still relevant to us 25 years later. This week brings us the last episodes of Liquid Television. WWF Royal Rumble 1995, and Leftfield's album
Leftism. VHS In The VCR Liquid Television by Rob King Liquid Television ran for three seasons from 1991 to 1995 on MTV. It heralded Avant-guard American adult animation at a time when The Simpsons (1989-present) had only recently picked up the torch from the last syndicated adult sitcom in memory, The
Flintstones (1960-1966). Ren and Stimpy (1991-1995) was testing the waters of Nickelodeon's evening audiences alongside Liquid Television, but MTV was looking for a different demographic. Liquid Television was bringing their Avant-quard sensibility cut with the lowest-brow of postmodernism to the last bastion of
Generation X. Notably, Ren and Stimpy's John Kricfalusi was solidly rooted in the classical schools of Filmation, whereas Matt Groening earned his chops cartooning for Wet: The Magazine of Gourmet Bathing and animation for The Tracy Ullman Show. Wet was a magazine
that incorporated innovative graphic art stylings to portray cultural issues imaginatively, and there was inevitable overlap with the new wave underground comix movement as seen in Art Spiegelman and Françoise Mouly's Raw comix; they shared talent. In the summer of 1991, MTV's Liquid Television was being billed as
"an animated variety show."[1] and while that sold well in the television 'zines, MTV creatives were allowing a more unique show that looked to the talent of this comix movement and post-modern literature. It is well-documented that David Lynch said his inspiration for directing his earliest short films came from an
experience where he saw them as moving paintings. If we can separate that notion from general movie or television production, we could then begin to see Liquid Television boasted the talents as seen in "Stick
Figure Theater" shorts, Bill Plympton shorts, Bill Plympton shorts, Peter Chung's Aeon Flux, and the serialized Winer Steele. Season 2 doubled down on talent from Art Spiegelman and Françoise Mouly's Raw comix introducing Mark Beyer's "The Adventures of Thomas and Nardo" and Charles Burns's "Dog Boy" cited in an early article as
"Raw Dog." [2] Aeon Flux returned, and the world was introduced to the cartons of Mike Judge with Office Space and Beavis and Butthead. In its final season, Season 3, most of the notable titles above were gone. "Stick Figure Theater" would continue to run the course of the series. and the notable additions were "Crazv
Daisy Ed," "Brad Dharma: Psychic Detective," and "The Blockheads." Aeon Flux and Beavis and Butthead would go on to their own highly popular series, but those who caught Liquid Television late at night, changing the channel over from TNT's MonsterVision or USA Network's Silk Stockings or simply awaiting the
Headbanger's Ball with Matt Pinfield would probably remember the more obscure shorts in their memories. Those obscure shorts included.[3] Another famous short is titled "Human Bomb," which is narrated by Mark Leyner, who was making a
reputation on college campuses with his short story collection My Cousin, My Gastroenterologist. "Human Bomb" was adapted from his story "i was an infinitely hot and dense dot." Ultimately, Liquid Television confused critics but remains uniquely its own, and while we now have Adult Swim and innumerable adult
cartoons spun out of Jananimation, no following animated series has been successful in imitating the plotless inventiveness of the anthology series. [1] Solomon, C. (1991, Jun 01). MTV's 'Liquid' A Cut Above Saturday Cartoons. Los Angeles Times (1923-1995) Retrieved from [2] Rhea, M. (1992, 10). Animation
Highlights Television Production. American Cinematographer, 73, 14-21. Retrieved from [3] Kelly, M. (2008, Spring). Art Spiegelman and His Circle: New York City Comix and the Downtown Scene. International Journal of Comic Art, 10, 313-339. WWF Royal Rumble 1995 by Chris Flackett 25 years ago, on 22nd
January 1995, the WWF presented arguably their second most important event of the wrestling year (with the winner of the Rumble traditionally getting the main even slot at Wrestlemania, although not so generally with the early Rumbles). It's an interesting event in hindsight. 1995 saw the WWF have a poor year in
terms of product, the superstars of yesteryear having moved on (to WCW in a lot of cases) and quality replacements—outside of Bret Hart, Shawn Michaels, Diesel and Razor Ramon—were had to come by. This was the year of awful gimmicks like Bob "Spark Plug" Holly (a racing driver) and Mantaur (well...you figure it
out). Vince's obsession with monsters (any big, imposing men, regardless of talent) led to jobbers like Mabel headlining major Pay-Per-Views, to mass apathy and a major drop in profit. There was a period of time, in fact, at least for a couple of years, where the WWF were dancing on the edge of collapse. The Attitude
era would save the company but before then we had this, "The New Generation," to contend with. The worst of the worst is The Undertaker, back when he was a better gimmick, IRS. That the match led to King Kong Bundy
stealing Undi's urn, setting up a Wrestlemania match between the two, is just sour icing on an already burnt cake. Razor Ramon's intercontinental title loss to Jeff Jarrett showed a commitment at least to building new stars, even if interference runner The Roadie (later Road Dogg) drew more heel heat than Jarrett did.
New WWF champion Diesel took on former two time champion Bret "The Hitman" Hart in the best match of the failure of Diesel's reign is that he often had poor opponents that failed to elevate him. You are only as good a babyface champion as your heel opponents, to paraphrase Adrian Street. It also
didn't help that while Diesel's face turn at the end of 1994 got him over with the fans, he lost the edge that had piqued their interest in the first place (see also: Roman Reigns). Being forced to utter banal babyface platitudes did Diesel no favours. Thank God for Bret. He always had great chemistry with Diesel, and while
this is not their finest hour, due to an overbooking of interference that leads to a no contest, it is still a compelling contest that demands another look. The Rumble match itself is memorable for being the only Rumble to have 60 second intervals between entrants, leading to an over-quick match that only highlighted the
lack of depth on the roster at the time. Hell, they brought back Dick Murdoch for God's sake! The lack of big superstars hurt any excitement there might have been and the 60 seconds idea was scrapped for future Rumbles. The eventual winner though, Shawn Michaels, was the right call on the day. He entered at number
one and hung on until the end with number two entrant the British Bulldog, "skinning the cat" to avoid elimination by mere inches of space between foot and floor and taking Bulldog by surprise to eliminate him and claim his spot in the main event of Wrestlemania. This was a big moment for Michaels, starting the wheels
moving towards his face turn and becoming the face of the company the following year. In the meantime, the Rumble exposed a classic Vince tactic, one he uses often but was more noticeable here due to the poor roster. Celebrity involvement. Pamela Anderson, hot on the heels of her success in Baywatch, engaged in
some "titillating" skits (changing behind a screen whilst interviewer Todd Pettengill laughed nervously, anyone? Jesus...) but otherwise looked awkward and like she'd rather be anywhere else. There to promote that she'd walk the winner of the Rumble to the ring at Wrestlemania, she added nothing of value to
proceedings at all. Laurence Taylor on the other hand... A legendary footballer, he was by no means the first celebrity to involve him physically in a wrestling match or angle, but in his pull-apart confrontation with Bam Bam Bigelow, furious at having lost his match and lashing out at Taylor, it led to the first celebrity to ever
wrestle in a singles main event headliner at a Wrestlemania. It was big news at the time and was repeated later in WCW with varying results. CDs On Rotation In Our Six-Disc Leftfield- Leftism by Laura Stewart The '90s brought alternative music of all styles together. It was great for us teens as clubbing covered every
genre. Skaters, goths, punks, indie kids and ravers were all friends and had a real sense of community and enjoyment of everything that came within the culture together. When Leftfield released their debut album in 1995, it changed dance music and the clubbing scene forever. Leftism never settled on a single genre.
Instead, it was an eclectic mix of tribal, trance, dub, house and ambient music. The quality never dipped, proving that a dance record—one that worked as a coherent album of music rather than a collection of 12-inch singles—was possible. It was among the first British albums to bring the club into the living room, along
with The Chemical Brothers. Underworld, Goldie and The Prodigy, The two men behind Leftfield, Neil Barnes and Paul Daley, had started out in punk bands, and lived by the ethos that "music that takes from other places but moves on". To that end, they borrowed from Afrobeat, indie and punk itself—even seducing
former Sex Pistol John Lydon into singing the album's breakout single "Open Up". I preferred PIL to the Pistols, and I think Lydon's voice works perfectly for dance music. I remember hearing it for the very first time on the dancefloor and everyone rejoicing. Timeless albums like Leftism have a rare thing in common;
fearlessness to bring a brand new sound and without it then sounding dated. That's certainly not what feels fresh at the time and using current instrumental sounds. There's no denying that elements of acid house, jungle and big beat still sound
fantastic... but they're coated in nostalgia, taking us back to a place in which they first emerged. It's unusual to discover a dance album that sounds just as relevant today as it did decades ago. There are few that manage it, Tricky's Maxinquaye remains a hypnotically seductive listen, with enough sonic curveballs to
prevent it from getting stale. Portishead's Dummy has similar DNA, its cinematically intense atmospheres still difficult to define. Yet, as enduring as they both are, they're not exactly albums you can dance to. Leftfield's Leftism is the exception. Nowhere is this more apparent than on the opening track "Release the
Pressure". It begins stirringly, like an awakening in space, before beaming down the velvety reggae tones of Earl Sixteen. As each minute layers sound after sound, the quest for peace and unity leaves you with an impression there's a cosmic fuse out there waiting to be ignited. Another single, and probably my favourite
track of the album, is "Original", featuring Toni Halliday of the band, Curve. I loved Curve, and Halliday was my girl crush back then so to see her on the album was a real treat. "Melt" does exactly what it says on the tin, and melts you away into cosmic space. Come down music for sure. Leftism was definitely an after-
party album as much as it was a club album. It gets the balance of the evening's festivities just right. There is a confidence to the album, too, which seemed to grab you by the ears and demand that you listened. This brashness sat well with the era in which Leftism was released. The 1990s were a good time to be British,
as rave's optimism fed into political change and the Conservative Party's decrepit leadership finally breathed its last in May 1997. You can feel this optimism surge through Leftism, an album that seemed to know instinctively you were going to like it and wouldn't budge an inch even if you didn't. Leftism felt like rave's
burly big brother. This was rave that had grown up, bought a solid pair of shoes and a warm jacket but still liked to party; rave you could listen to while washing the dishes or in the car with your mum. Leftism was a hit in middle-class dinner parties, dingy student digs and big house clubs, at home in all three without ever
really belonging to anyone. Leftism was re-released in 2017 with eleven "brand new" remixes, which all sound superb and add a sprinkling of modern magic to the sound. There's no doubt that this album will still be sexy in 25 years time. Page 10 It is the dreaded (but very clean) year 2018. The world is run by
corporations and all is organized and prioritized according to business models and efficiency reports. Male human assets are assigned women when the company sees it as beneficial to public perception and in said male's best interest. Television is state-run and there is only one event that matters to the people of the
entire, united world: the bloody Rollerball league. Rollerball league. Rollerball league. Rollerball is yet another '70s science fiction dystopian film that manages to predict, almost to the date, the value of bloodsport and corporatism in entertainment in the United States. But unlike other dystopias we've looked at in the previous entries of this column, Rollerball
is shown from the shinier, cleaner side of metaphor: the perceived utopia. For the world of Rollerball is one of pristine towers, lovely gardens, and streets that haven't seen a drop of blood in ages. But it all seems a bit too perfect. So inoculated to the machinations of corporate governance are the people that violence has
become one of two things: either a hysterical pastime worth giggling over and/or the sport of choice on TV with Rollerball matches. In one scene, a rich man at a party shows off his antique gun. Most stare in wonder, marveling at the alien nature of the item, and later go out into the backyard and shoot some trees,
obliterating them into balls of fire, reveling at the destructive power of such a small object. First-hand violence is certainly a thing of the past for the population, but this scene reminds us that it is something that keeps the people's interest when seen from the outside looking in and unable to feel its effects. Nothing speaks
more to this than the USA's obsession (though it is implied that it is worldwide) with the fictional Rollerball, a sport where men can assault each other in order to score points, one must go
through rollerskating marauders and motorcycled goons that protect a tiny hole where the titular rollerball goes) but when the corporations to literally maul their opponents, literal lives are on the line. The players of Rollerball are mostly anonymous
cannon fodder, but Jonathan E (James Caan) has become a superstar for the Houston team. He is revered worldwide and Energy Corporation Chairman Bartholomew (John Houseman) not only wants Jonathan to retire but to go out with a worldwide reality show depicting his final days in the league. For the
corporations, any sign of cult of personality that is not them is to be smashed and since Jonathan won't retire... and is too good to be killed under the traditional rules... They'll keep upping the ante on Rollerball until all signs of individuality are erased. Rollerball's explosive climax is not only an adrenaline-packed thirty
minutes of rollerskating mayhem but is also the perfect metaphor for corporate cynicism vs individuality. Though Rollerball sequences provide thrills as well as something worth talking about. In a time before Carter's "malaise" speech and the self-indulgent
economy of the 1980s, there was fear of the future, Rollerball is those fears made flesh, And also, shockingly, mostly made true. It is the dreaded... well, more spoiled... vear 1983. Any pleasurable whim man can conjure in their minds can be purchased for the right price. Got a few grand to spend? Go to one of the
highly specialized theme worlds provided by the Delos corporation. Fancy a joust and a roll in the hay with a lecherous queen? Go to Medieval World, where knights and vassals serve you drumsticks of turkey while you plan your next sexual conquest. Perhaps too Renaissance Faire for you? You can always engage in a
Senate debate, complete with toga and grape-serving pleasure maids, in Roman World where political machinations and sexual intrigue take precedence over historical accuracy. Far too civilized? Of course, if you are really looking to rough it, hitch over to the nearest Brothel/Inn in West World on your best steed and
face off with the best sharpshooters in the world. I'm sure you don't mind shooting robots but are you okay with sleeping with them? Of course you are. Westworld (1973) is an exciting sci-fi/fantasy film that takes a look at a more ethically bankrupt world, a moral dystopia, where the upper crust of society can escape to
literal fantasy worlds and indulge themselves in untoward pleasures denied them in reality. Man's inherent guest for bloodshed and sex is a simmering reality in this film where those desires can be acted out on unfeeling, unknowing robots. And while there is a metaphor for man's baser nature on the overt surface of
Westworld, the more subtle allusions are to class warfare. The robots are basically servants and they continually get shot or screwed to literal death. Westworld's big twist is when the robots' restraints come off and they start to really kill those that threaten them. It becomes a bloody Upstairs/Downstairs with androids and
it is a really good time. Almost intentionally, the "heroes" of our story are mostly undersized, fairly attractive men (though my mother would argue that were blessed with being rich but used to being pushed around or
emasculated. For the first hour of the film these men are fighting with physical specimens like Yul Brynner (and winning) and having sex with buxom, but braindead, hotties who require nothing of the man but their presence. And though Peter Martin (Richard Benjamin), the audience avatar, is likable enough, his depiction
comes off as slightly skeevy. His buddy John Blane (James Brolin) doesn't come off as much better. They just appear to be too pseudo-lecherous guys looking to blow off steam. They are only our heroes because the story demands it, but there is a sick sense of satisfaction when Peter and John, among other like-minded
quests, are sought for destruction by the very robots they were abusing. The final thirty minutes of the film becomes a grand chase as Brynner's character, now able to fulfill his true identity as The Gunslinger without limitations, hunts down Peter. His internal operations were always to kill and the blocks in his
programming always led to his death. Now he has control of his destiny and the smarter, faster, stronger Brynner is taking no guff from Peter. And does the good guy really is. Westworld did have a seguel (Futureworld, which I haven't seen) as well as a
successful television series on HBO (which I also haven't seen). But based on the praise I've heard for the latter, it appears Westworld's broad themes of violence and class systems are expanded upon. And that can only be a good thing. But if you are looking for a little social commentary in your rock 'em sock 'em robot
sci-fi film, look no further than 1973's original Westworld. Both Rollerball and Westworld are available as part of the "'70s Sci-Fi" collection on the Criterion Channel. Also available wherever digital or physical media is sold/rented. Page 11 Know your Buñuel from your Baumbach? Your Lanthimos from your Linklater?
25YL has always aimed to go that much further with its film analysis, and we're looking for film writers who want to join us in celluloid deep dives, picking apart the layers, and giving your angle on some of the best (and most interesting) films of all time. We have dedicated weekly Criterion Collection, World Cinema, and
Director Focus series, but welcome your ideas for anything that will intrique, excite, make people see things with fresh eyes, and of course, start conversations. We're only interested in one thing, Bart. Can you tell a story? Can you make us laugh? Can you make us cry? Can you make us cry? Can you make us want to break out in joyous
song? Is that more than one thing? Okay! We're particularly looking for writers with an interest in arthouse, world cinema, and thoughtful indie film from all eras, but, once on board and you find you also want to write about TV, gaming, music and sports, we've got you covered there as well! Experience with WordPress
would be a plus, as is experience writing with an editing team, but we're happy to ease you into the 25YL family if you are new to all this. All we ask is you can write well and have a good grasp of grammar! If you think you have what it takes and want to join 25YL's growing staff of rabid film freaks, then just fill out the
application form. We'll see you on the other side! Everything I've written is personal—it's the only way I know how to write. Page 12 Welcome to the first edition of Music25YL. Every month, we'll be looking back at the music from 1995 to explore why these albums are still relevant to us 25 years later. This month brings us
Jewel's Pieces of You, Tricky's Maxinguaye and The Fall's Cerebral Caustic. Jewel—Pieces of You, Reviewed by Rachel Stewart I'll start by saying I'm not having a midlife crisis (although who knows, it might strike at any moment) but sometimes it felt
like literally yesterday. There are a few albums. So let's get the obvious out of the way: the singles "Who Will Save Your Soul" and "You Were Meant For Me" were everywhere and unavoidable when this album dropped.
They've entered the lexicon to become karaoke fodder (even for Jewel herself in Funny or Die's Undercover Karaoke video). In my day, they ended up on mix CDs alongside the likes of Sarah McLachlan, Sheryl Crow, and Heather Nova. But there's something more organic about this album, and it's something Jewel has
never really recaptured again (for me), even though I've liked a few of her other efforts (Spirit and 0304). Prior to signing in coffee shops, and a few of album cuts were actually recorded live, showcasing her powerful, raw vocals, buoyed by just
her acoustic guitar and her eclectic vocal training (yodeling and opera). The spare liner notes are peppered with poems, long before her now-infamous chapbook dropped (of which I was so jealous, with my own battered composition books full of scribbles taking up space alongside rejection slips). The proof was in her
songwriting, though, and her storytelling abilities are striking in songs like "Painters" (about an aging couple) and "Adrian" (about a boy who was in a canoe accident). "Morning Song" straddles the same universal lines as "Who Will Save Your Soul" and "You Were Meant For Me" with her begging her lover to call into work
and come back to bed. Then there's the longing of songs like "Don't" and "Foolish Games," which with its lush piano is better set next to the likes of Fiona Apple and Tori Amos. In my eyes, "Foolish Games" is the showstopper of the whole damn album, and I will never ever in a million years understand why it ended up
on the Batman & Robin soundtrack, other than it was supposed to be the next "Kiss From A Rose." But it's much more than that. It's the exquisite longing of wanting someone who can't commit and all those shared moments crystallized deep in your heart: "You're always brilliant in the morning Smoking your cigarettes
and talking over coffee Your philosophies on art, Baroque moved you You loved Mozart and you'd speak of your loved ones As I clumsily strummed my guitar You'd teach me of honest things that were daring, things that were clean Things that were the contract things that were daring that were darin
my back Somewhere along the line, I must have gone off track with you Excuse me, guess I've mistaken you for somebody who gave a damn Somebody more like myself And for all Jewel's quirks and earnestness, she's not without anger, as the title track and "Daddy" both deal with deep seething hate
and the injustice it brings. (I often think of Jewel's "Daddy" as a spiritual companion to Sylvia Plath's poem of the same name.) The album closes with two tracks that almost skew as spiritual ("Angel Standing By" and "Amen") but ends up feeling more ethereal and calming. When I spin this album these days, it stands out
as raw and seemingly fragile. But it's on repeated listens that you can feel its true strength and structure. It reminds me of rainy weekends filled with frantic writing and teenage longing as well as summer singalongs in the back of my friends' cars. This is the Jewel I'll always love the most, "somebody more like myself."
Tricky—Maxinguaye, Reviewed by Laura Stewart Genre-blurring seemed like a revolutionary thing in the '90s. "Alternative Music" bled from rock to rap and metal to reggae. Beck and the mid-'90s Beastie Boys and the Orange-era Jon Spencer Blues Explosion all made great music, but at that time, they were a bit of a
novelty. Tricky's Bristolian pals Massive Attack and Portishead merged their styles, too. Dub was mixed with Bondesque strings with breathtaking results. Blues and punk mixed together like coffee and cream. But there wasn't anything fun about Tricky, and there didn't seem to be anything calculated about his fusions. In
might have seemed like an attention-seeking move to cover Public Enemy's "Black Steel In The Hour Of Chaos" as a damaged postpunk hymn, with a sultry woman whispering where Chuck D had boomed. But from Tricky, it felt like something that had bubbled up from a fertile subconscious. And Maxinguaye, Tricky's
first album, released 25 years ago, remains Tricky's defining work because it's the purest dive into that mind. Tricky's mystique is a great place to start. He had grown up in a white Bristol ghetto and spent time in prison. He wore dresses and smeared eyeliner. Onstage, he looked like he was built of pure sinew, and he'd
do whole shows without looking at the audience. His was the most oppressive, dark voice on Massive Attack's Blue Lines, an album full of heavy and dark voice—murmuring and rasping, creeping and insinuating, like the devil talking you into
selling your soul. The things he said were so layered with ambiguity that they seemed to radiate mystery, "Reduce me, seduce me, dress me up in Stussy." He met Martina Topley-Bird—the singer whose soft and intimate notes gave Maxinguaye much of its dynamism—when she was 15. She was still a teenager, and the
mother of Tricky's child, by the time Maxinguaye was released. Topley-Bird deserves nearly as much credit as Tricky for how potent Maxinguaye turned out. She has all the most piercing and evocative moments, like the "I think ahead of you / I think instead of you" on "Suffocated Love." For much of the album she
reduces Tricky to a mumbling hypeman. But then, mumbling and gazing at your shoes is kind of the point of Maxinguaye. It's an album of enchantment mixed with samples and live musicians, and nobody ever used Isaac Hayes' tingling oft-sampled "Ike's Rap II" better than Tricky on
"Hell Is Round The Corner." Tricky recruited co-producer Mark Saunders because he'd worked with The Cure, and the album's smothering atmosphere has a lot more to do with The Cure's gloominess than it does with any rap music that's ever been made, before or since. Samples are eked out, time-shifted until they
become otherworldly moans and death-rattles. For most of its hour, Maxinguaye is a pure apocalyptic mood piece. For a few years after Maxinguaye, Tricky really did seem to be the future. He dated Björk, which seemed perfect and which maybe would've been if Tricky hadn't been a terrible boyfriend—something he
later owned up to being. (If the Tricky/Björk/Goldie love triangle happened today, it would set the internet on fire.) But trip-hop, as it morphed into vaguely hip boutique music, turned out to have little use for an artist as grim and messy as Tricky. Portishead and Massive Attack at least held onto their audiences. Tricky,
wary of labels and distrustful of his own fame, made music that was increasingly intimidating and paranoid. He made one or two more great records—Pre-Millennium Tension and Angels With Dirty Faces—but he wasn't interested in holding on to the vibe he'd conjured on Maxinguaye, and before long, he had
disappeared from view. A revival of that early, murky strain of trip-hop could come along at any second and Tricky is still out there, still one of the most gorgeous albums of the '90s and still sounds as seductive today. The Fall—
Cerebral Caustic, Reviewed by Chris Flackett What do you do if you're The Fall: You're just a couple of years shy of your 20th year and you've hit a bit of slump. No, Mark E. Smith didn't fire his band, not this time. Instead, he brought somebody back to "The Group" (the word "band" was forbidden). Not just anybody,
either. This was somebody MES knew intimately well. His ex-wife, Brix Smith, It's funny to think that for all the talk of firings (exaggerated to a point; a lot of people like Steve Hanley, Craig Scanlon and the last Fall Group were there for years), a couple of people were actually invited back. Tony Friel, the group's first bass
quitarist, came back for a spell in the early '90s. And now here was Brix, rejoining her former spouse against the odds. The first fruits of the reunion were 1995's Cerebral Caustic. MES had a fascinating attitude toward sound. He believed in feel and instinct; he knew when something sounded right. Influenced by '70s
German sound experimenters Can as much as by the tough, working-man rock 'n' roll of the likes of Link Wray, he abhorred slick, shiny, radio productions, happy to embrace the murk and strangeness if it sounded right. Which is a shame for Cerebral Caustic. Because the sound here isn't experimental or strange (with
one exception, which we'll come to). No, the record sounds paper-thin and flat. While the guitars have a little bit of bite on occasion, the whole effort is pulled back by a firm and insurmountable hand. Regardless, how about the songs themselves? Honestly, a mixed
bag. While an improvement on the previous year's underwhelming Middle-Class Revolt, the album underwhelms as much as it excites. Brix brings a welcome alt-rock/college rock feel to proceedings, which, while not in line per se with a good chunk of her previous work in The Fall, was a natural progression from her
work in the late '80s with The Adult Net, slotting nicely alongside the feminine L.A. power-pop work of The Bangles and The Go-Go's. Yet the songs hit the target, an argument can be made for The Fall to soften their more obtuse edges and play to the
college rock crowd; there's an aptitude for it. "Feeling Numb" has a great singalong chorus that soars from the tension of its verses. "Life Just Bounces," a re-recording of a slightly older song, sees MES revel in the excitement of its dizzying ascending and descending quitar lines and relay an obscure tale of "Doctor
Boring" and the pharmaceutical industry. But safe college rock is not what many people listen to The Fall for and, when married to weaker material, such as "Pearl City," "The Aphid" and "I'm Not Satisfied," it presents a forgettable collection that is not bad as it is inoffensive—a larger crime in the world of The Fall.
Divisively, MES tried to shake things up by taking one of Brix's favourite songs from the sessions, "Shiny Things," a slow, anthemic strumalong with a big chorus, and proceeded to pitch shift Brix's vocal to chipmunk levels, put strange phase effects all over the music and add his own description of a mundane music
festival ("Would all people who want vegetarian burgers go on the left and those who want meat burgers on the right"), naming the resulting experiment "Bonkers indeed. But would you have expected anything less from The Fall? Page 13 Welcome to What's the Buzz, 25YL's feature where members
of our staff provide you with recommendations on a weekly basis. In our internet age, there is so much out there to think about watching, reading, listening to, etc., that it can be hard to separate the wheat from the chaff, filter out the noise, or find those diamonds in the rough. But have no fear! We're here to help you do
that thing I just described with three different metaphors. Each week a rotating cast of writers will offer their recommendations based on things they have discovered. They won't always be new to the world, but they'll be new to us, or we hope new to you. This week, Stephanie Edwards is watching Cheer on Netflix, Hawk
Ripjaw is enjoying Harley Quinn, and Jason Sheppard recommends the latest season of Curb Your Enthusiasm. Cheer Stephanie: Since we are currently in the height of Oscar season, it takes a lot for me to divert my attention away from film and turn it towards television during this time. When I saw a mutual of mine of
Twitter post about how they'd just finished binge-watching a show about competitive cheerleading on Netflix, I knew I had to check it out for myself. That show is Cheer, a six-part Netflix documentary series that follows the Navarro College cheerleading squad as they prepare to win their 14th national title. I have always
been a fan, never a participant, of competitive cheerleading so this show was right up my alley. I expected to see cheer squad rivalries, gravity-defying stunts and enough drama to keep me satiated. What I didn't expect was to be willing to give my life for Navarro coach Monica Aldama and her squad of misfit kids by the
end of the series. Yes, the show is about cheerleading, but it doesn't sugar coat the sport and instead showcases those who participate as the elite athletes that they have worked their whole life to be. Cheer could easily be classified as body horror with all of the falls, breaks, tears, fractures, and screams of pain that
echo across the series' run-time. It left me wincing in my seat multiple times and by the end I could swear my ribs felt every basket toss. One of the show is how director Greg Whitely and his crew masterfully and subtly weave in commentary on a number of issues like mental health, social
class, homophobia and suicide. The editors do a spectacular job cutting together scenes in a way that makes the viewer take a step back and re-evaluate the scene that came before in a way that feels meaningful rather than preachy. But the ultimate selling point for the show is the cast, headed by coach Aldama: a take-
no-prisoners powerhouse who guides her squad through life as deftly as she guides them on the mat. The show focuses on five members of the squad: La'Darius Marshall, Morgan Simianer, Lexi Brumback, Gabi Butler and Jerry Harris. These five could almost perfectly fit into Breakfast Club-like stereotypes but once you
get a little deeper into their stories, you feel like you've intimately known these people all of your life. Although Jerry is a crowd favorite, and I will admit to loving him as well (how can you not!?), the story that touched me the most was Simianer's: a girl abandoned by her parents, forced to live in a trailer and scavenge for
food, until she is finally taken in by her loving grandparents. Although she finds a loving home, she doesn't have the money to buy the finer things in life and in cheerleading like some of her squad mates. We watch her embark on her second year at Navarro, going from an insecure alternate (someone who doesn't
perform in competition) to heroic underdog as she steps up at every turn and grows into a confident top girl. I honestly can't recommend Cheer enough; even if you aren't a fan of sports documentaries or you think cheerleading is "boring," try it out and thank me later. You can, you will, you must watch this show! Harley
Ouinn Hawk: The post-Justice League DC Universe is doing some great things, not the least of which is taking significantly more interesting avenues in tone and style. Marvel is great, but the Disney regime has been nearly surgical in ensuring a consistent and family-friendly vibe across nearly every aspect of the
onscreen universe. The new animated series Harley Quinn, like much of the DC Universe streaming platform originals, goes defiantly in the opposite direction. Harley Quinn follows the titular villainess as she realizes that her relationship with the Joker is deeply abusive and he doesn't care about her at all. She breaks up
with him and sets out to make a name for herself as a real villain instead of a sidekick, setting her sights on membership to the Legion of Doom. With her best friend Poison Ivy, she recruits Dr. Psych, Clayface and King Shark to make a name for herself. In every episode they do, in brazenly R-rated fashion. It's crass,
vulgar and extremely violent, making it abundantly clear that the creative team is completely off the leash. This show is hilarious, smoothly transitioning between wacky cartoon antics, non seguiturs, creatively vulgar sexual humor, pop culture references and mild political humor that riffs on some of the more baseless
miscalculation in developing the show would have resulted in a Frankenstein's monster of a mess, but Harley Quinn storms forward with a level of confidence and grasp of tone and style that absolutely works as its own thing. Bane's voice is cribbed from Tom Hardy's interpretation in The Dark Knight Rises. A character
grapples with his robotic arm, Dr. Strangelove-style, to attempt a chef's kiss motion. King Shark is essentially a murderous version of Kenneth the Page from 30 Rock, and Jim Gordon is a disheveled, ranting nihilist suffering from a sexually dysfunctional relationship with his wife. It's so bizarre, but it works so, so well.
Through all of the anarchic humor and graphic violence, it's the friendship between Harley and Ivy that prevails. Ivy especially consistently has Harley's best interests at heart, and there's a general care throughout the ragtag team that makes them surprisingly lovable. There's even a discussion around the difference
between a "bad guy" and a "bad person" that makes for some interesting character work about Harley's desire to be a renowned villain, but not an actual evil human being. Harley Quinn is already set for a second season, and as one of the most unique Batman properties to come out of the pipeline in some time, there's
high potential for it to get even wilder as it goes on. Curb Your Enthusiasm Season 9 Jason: Arriving on HBO just a little over two years since Season 9, Larry David is as adept and brilliant at plotting as he was since his
dizzying Seinfeld days. Considering the events and movements which have transpired in our society since Curb's last episode in 2017, it's no wonder David wanted to journey in the sandbox and offer his uniquely comedic insights into where we are as a society. Seinfeld may have only occasionally waded into topical
situations during its long run but Curb has often tackled them while they were fresh. This season's opening episode dove right into our worldly issues without hesitation at all. At the forefront is the mighty #MeToo movement and it now seems that David (the character) now has to face up to decades of acting like the jerk
he's always managed to get away with being. The current political divide polarizing the country is also explored in comedic fashion as David without hesitation dons a Trump "Make America Great Again" hat in order to get out of nuisance lunch meetings. It's humor that doesn't Insult a particular political side. It's just
showing the hilarity in how serious the divide has all become. With this new jam-packed season full of ideas, Curb Your Enthusiasm might be just the unlikely place where we can laugh at where we are. We can sure all use it. Those are our recommendations this week! What are yours? Let us know in the comments!
Page 14 I want to start this article by saving that I don't think of this list as a definitive ranking of which Studio Ghibli films are better than others, look at them more as just my personal recommendations. The order isn't set in stone and places could be swapped after repeat viewings. Trying to rate these films is a fairly
arbitrary exercise, as I believe they're unique in their ability to stir heartwarming feelings of wonder and awe in viewers. Those emotions are very personal and each of them can resonate differently from one person to the next. A film that may strike a chord with someone may bemuse the next. I've seen many rankings of
this studio's titles, and they vary wildly. I've seen some films at the bottom of one person's list, that are at the top of another's. How you view them is even a matter of personal preference. I prefer the English dubbed versions as the voice casts are always impressive and it allows me to relax and really enjoy the
mesmerising animation. To others, this is unthinkable and they must be viewed in the original Japanese language with subtitles; as I said, to each his own. If you haven't seen any of them before, I'm seriously jealous, you're in for many treats. As all of the films will be dropping on Netflix in the coming months, I'd urge you
to watch as many as possible, as they're all worthy of your time for the incredible animation alone. Then you can make up your own mind, in the meantime, here's a rough guide to the major ones to look out for: 10. Ponyo ('08) Ponyo is the first film on the list written and directed by Ghibli's own Walt Disney: Hayao
Miyazaki. He's responsible for most of the studio's output over the years and therefore most of the titles on this list. This film is a loose interpretation of the biggest difference being that the main characters are young children. Forget Stranger Things;
this film contains the sweetest child romance you'll ever see. Most Ghibli films fall into three categories, the more adult ones, coming-of-age and those aimed at children. This one definitely falls in the latter, but there's always something for the grown-ups in each of these films and it's perhaps only them that can fully
appreciate the cutest love story ever. The English voice actors include a perfectly cast Cate Blanchett and Liam Neeson, along with Matt Damon. 9. Whisper of the Heart ('95) Written by Miyazaki, Whisper of the Heart is based on the Manga of the same name by Aoi Hiiragi and Directed by Yoshifumi Kondō.
Unfortunately, it would be his only directing role before his untimely death at the age of 47, due to an aneurysm. Tragically, the Doctors said that it was brought on by overworking himself. He was the only person other than Miyazaki and Isaho Takahata to helm a film for the studio for over seven years until the film's spin-
off: The Cat Returns. The hope was that he would become the successor to both, but sadly, it wasn't meant to be. At least he was able to leave this gem behind, a coming-of-age love story between two creatives. The boy, Seiji's dream is to become a master Luthier (violin-maker) and the girl, Shizuki's is to be a Writer.
She writes stories based on a cat statuette called "The Baron," that she sees in Seiji's Grandfather's antiques shop. The story is tender, touching and inspirational. It was the highest-grossing film in Japan in '95 when it was released and also features a whimsical Japanese cover of the song "Country Roads." The spin-off
goes full fantasy and focuses on one of The Baron's adventures, it's also one to watch that only just missed out on this list. 8. My Neighbour Totoro ('88) Totoro is Japan's equivalent of Mickey Mouse. He's a big, furry, loveable wood spirit who can take you on a magical ride when he summons the Cat Bus. It's the most
iconic film that Miyazaki both wrote and directed from his own original ideas. The film was critically acclaimed, has won many awards, has a cult following and grossed over $1 billion in merchandise alone, $1.5 billion when including home video sales and box office. It's always featured in top animated film lists, even
being ranked number 1 by Terry Gilliam in one he made for TimeOut. It was also ranked the highest-rated animated film of all time by critics in Sight & Sound in 2012. The story is based around two young sisters who are struggling with their Mother being hospitalised long-term. Totoro and his wood spirit friends help them
to cope in various ways, becoming loving companions to them. It's just as sweet as it sounds, if not more so. Of all the Ghibli films, this one really gives you those warm, fuzzy feels in all the right places. It would be higher in my recommendations, but this is definitely one for the kid's category (even though grown-ups love
it just as much) and I prefer the more adult films. I wouldn't argue with anyone who says that this is their favourite though, it's easy to see why. Credit is due to Art Director Kazuo Oga, whose animation style for this film would go on to be the trademark for the studio going forward. The film captures the simple, innocent
joys of childhood, much like a Japanese equivalent to Winnie the Pooh but much more sophisticated. The character is credited as being responsible for much positivity in Japan and has even been a mascot for preserving rural areas there. Also, Totoro's theme song is so catchy but you won't mind it being stuck in your
head, it's just as endearing as the character. The English voice cast includes the very fitting Dakota and Elle Fanning as the two young sisters. 7. Kiki's Delivery Service inhabits a similar space to Totoro and feels like a spiritual seguel. It's a heart-warming story that follows a young, teenage
witch as she leaves home for the first time. The sense of adventure and unbridled possibility is palpable as Kiki sores through the sky on her broom, looking for her new home. I can't emphasise enough how it captures those feelings of flying the nest. Whenever I watch it, all the emotions I felt when I first moved to
London come flooding back and I remember just how potent they were. She settles on a picturesque port town and very quickly makes a splash. Kiki puts her flying skills to good use as a delivery girl and befriends a geeky boy, Tombo, who has a passion for aviation and is therefore in awe of her ability. All seems well
until she falls ill and loses her powers, no doubt a metaphor for acclimating to a new environment. The story then addresses the question of whether Kiki can get her life back in order in time to help her friends when they need her most. Again, written, directed and produced by Miyazaki, but this time based on a novel of
the same name by Eiko Kadono. The book was based in Northern Europe, so Miyazaki and his team travelled to Stockholm and the island of Gotland in Sweden for inspiration; this really shows in the fresh look of the town. The themes of independence, self-doubt and growth are as powerful as they are timeless. Anyone
who has ever ventured far from home for the first time can relate. This film is life-affirming and an absolute delight in the way it tackles these issues. The English voice cast is fun and includes Kirsten Dunst and the late Phil Hartman, of The Simpsons fame, in his final speaking role. 6. Howl's Moving Castle ('04) I see
Howl's Moving Castle as the wild card of the pack that is the Ghibli films, as this is by far the most polarising one. I've seen it towards the bottom and at the top of lists more than any other in the series. It was the first of the studio's titles I saw at the cinema and I clearly remember taking my little brother with me to see it.
We both loved it and for him, it ignited his passion for the Ghibli films, I believe the reason that it fails to strike a chord with some is that the story is as sporadic as the opinions are of it. It's very fast-paced and each event mounts on top of the last to create a sprawling structure of a story. I see all of these films as very
dreamlike and therefore think that as a one-off, this works in conjunction with the other elements. If all of the films were like this, it'd be an issue, but as this film tackles the more adult matters of war, I believe it ends up capturing a similar spirit to the Lord of the Rings films. As suggested by the title, the characters are
always on the move in the exquisitely designed castle, encountering new places, people and hardships. It's a very unique film from the studio in this respect and perhaps the same reason why some have taken a bit of an affront to it. Despite this, It's still very critically acclaimed, won many awards and even an Oscar
nomination. Miyazaki is once again Writer and Director, adapting the story from a British book by Diana Wynne Jones. As mentioned before, this film has deep anti-war themes and an underlying message about compassion. This was Miyazaki's response in opposition to the United State's invasion of Iraq, which he "had a
great deal of rage about." He has also said that it's his favourite creation as it "conveys the message that life is worth living." It went on to become one of the most financially successful Japanese films in history. The English voice cast includes a very suitable Christian Bale, with Emily Mortimer and Billy Crystal. 5. The
Tale Of The Princess Kaguya ('13) Right, now we're in the Top Five and regardless of where you would rank these, nobody can deny that they're all nothing short of masterpieces. This film is the first and only in my list that has no involvement from Miyazaki, just to prove that it's not all about him. It comes from the
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studio's second in command: Isaho Takahata, who co-wrote and directed this beauty. Once again, sadly, it would be his last role as Director before his death from lung cancer at the much more acceptable age of 82, though still sad nonetheless. He was honoured in the Ghibli Museum by his colleagues, one of the first
places I recommend anyone goes to if they visit Tokyo. Based on an oddly anonymous literary tale titled: "The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter," it became Japan's most expensive film to date and also secured an Oscar nomination. The story follows the life of a baby girl who appears in the bamboo one day through some kind
of divine power along with gold and fine clothes in much the same way so she can dress like a Princess. Her father uses the wealth from these resources to move their family to the city so she can become a real Princess, tearing her away from her friends and all she knows. She struggles with being thrown into nobility
headfirst from one day to the next and resents its restrictions. After being named Princess Kaguya, she has many male suitors who come calling, including the Emperor himself. The story becomes about how she tries to avoid an arranged marriage and whether her auspicious origin will come back into play. This is
possibly the studio's film that has the most depth and deals with real, heart-wrenching situations. It becomes a commentary on how childhood should be spent, the trappings that wealth can entail and true happiness. It's hard for me to convey just how tragic this story is, yet it's told in such a beautiful way. The animation
is made entirely from watercolours in a very abstract and minimal style. The definition and detail of each frame also fluctuate in response to the content of the scene, a genius idea that's executed perfectly. Takahata deserves a lot of credit for his ambition in trying something so radically different and fresh. Miyazaki is a
master at what he does, so it's only through this daring attempt to push boundaries in both story and animation that this film shoots up the list straight into the upper echelon. The English voice cast is the most impressive vet and includes a pitch-perfect Chloë Grace Moretz, with James Caan, Mary Steenburgen, Lucy Liu
and James Marsden. 4. Nausicaä of The Valley of the Wind ('84) Although not strictly a Ghibli film as it was made by the same team before the studio was founded, it's considered as such and has been included in releases of their full collection. Nausicaä of The Valley of the Wind was written and directed by Miyazaki
and also produced by Takahata. It was based on the Manga of the same name that Miyazaki wrote and illustrated himself. It really ticks all the boxes as it's a post-apocalyptic, sci-fi, fantasy, adventure film. The duo chose a smaller studio, Topcraft, whose work they were familiar with and who they knew had the talent to
translate the sophisticated Manga to full effect. This team included Hideaki Anno, who was assigned the task of drawing the difficult God Warrior's attack scene, one of the most important parts of the film. He would later go on to write and direct Neon Genesis Evangelion. The whole film was made in just nine months with
a budget of only $1 million. The film was critically acclaimed and a commercial success. It would go on to be a seminal piece that informed anime going forward and spawned several studios, including Ghibli. It often tops polls of the best anime films, especially in Japan. The story's set after an apocalyptic war, that's left
the land as a poisonous jungle. Some are doing all they can to carry on the fight and finish it, despite the damage already done. Nausicaä explores the jungle and tries to connect to its creatures in hopes of finding a way for them to co-exist. In doing so, she discovers something revelatory that could restore the
environment to its former glory, if only she can put a stop to the politics and battles of the powers that be first. Many of Miyazaki's film address man's relationship or lack thereof with nature. As this was one of his first projects, the message is less subtle or nuanced and more direct than in his later projects. I think of it as
Ghibli's answer to Star Wars by way of Dune, which is ironic as Rey from the recent instalment The Force Awakens is very similar to this one as well. Also, the gliders used in the film are so slick, even for a sci-fi film, so much so that they've
even been developed in real life. The film is the foundation of not just Studio Ghibli, but anime in general, the intricate detail and hard work shows in every frame. A monumental achievement, especially for the time. The English voice cast includes Uma Thurman, Patrick Stewart and Shia LeBeouf. 3. Spirited Away ('01)
Spirited Away was the film that announced the studio to the rest of the world. Written and directed by Miyazaki yet again from his original ideas, it won the Oscar for Best Animated Feature (still the only foreign and hand-drawn film to do so), is frequently ranked among the best animated films of all time and was the
highest-grossing Japanese film in history upon its release. It was voted the fourth best film of the 21st century in 2016, in a poll of hundreds of critics from around the world, making it the top animated entry in that list. It's the ninth-highest rated film ever on Metacritic, again making it the top animated entry on the site. It
also won all but a few of the numerous accolades that it was nominated for. The story is about a young girl who accidentally enters the Japanese world of spirits and Shinto folklore with her parents. Due to their rude and greedy behaviour after trespassing, her folks are turned into pigs, and it's up to their daughter.
Chihiro, to get by in this alternate reality until she can find a way to transform her parents back and return to the human world. The narrative can seem deceptively simple but is actually a very layered exploration of themes such as consumerism, capitalism, corruption, generational differences and environmental issues. I
believe it's from this ambiguous depth that it's universal appeal stems. The spirits represent all the living things and parts of the environment in our world. Most of the environment in our world. Most of the establishment is run
ruthlessly to benefit from the wealthy is what ties all the themes together. The film contains one of the studio's biggest icons in the form of the mysterious spirit No Face and also one of its most memorable scenes, where Chihiro travels with him by train further throughout this surreal world. It's visually stunning, and the
magical ability it has to capture dreamlike scenes is enchanting. The scores for Ghibli films are always brilliant but this one, by Miyazaki's regular collaborator Joe Hisaishi, is particularly exquisite. Quite simply, it has it all and it needs to be seen to be believed. This may be the studio's best film, but it relies mainly on
visuals and its ethereal dream world, as well as falling in the aforementioned kid's category. In this respect, it acts as the Japanese answer to Alice in Wonderland but with more substance. However, the remaining two films on the list have these qualities as well as epic stories to tell. 2. Laputa: Castle in the Sky ('86)
Laputa: Castle in the Sky is the first official film from the studio with the same dynamic duo of Miyazaki on writing and directing duties, with Takahata producing. It encapsulates everything Ghibli's about, while also showcasing their incredible talents. It remains one of their most unique, as its story combines elements from
their coming-of-age and more adult titles. The central characters are two young teenagers who find themselves embroiled in a conflict between a military force and pirates. The boy, Pazu, comes across the girl, Sheeta, while she is being pursued relentlessly by both parties, as she holds a special amulet that can lead
one to the legendary castle in the sky. The story is fairly classic, fantasy fare but the way in which it's told is so rich and textured in both plot and presentation. It was a critical and commercial success, won numerous accolades, as well as often being voted one of, if not the best animated film of all time (something you
may be getting tired of hearing in this list but tells you something in itself). However, the film's true success lies in how influential it's been in anime, video games and indeed film in general. With its perfect use of retro-futuristic steampunk technology, it's considered to be a milestone in the genre and its first modern
classic. This sits in a rich tapestry of styles that includes medieval castle architecture, Gothic buildings and Welsh mining towns. After visiting Wales and witnessing the miner's strike firsthand, Miyazaki admired them and was inspired to tell a story about this strong, dying breed of fighters. The film even makes use of the
Sumerian script Cuneiform, the earliest system of writing for Laputa's interactive panels and also references Hindu legends. A genius move when you think about it, as it adds substance to the castle's ancient, mythical status. The film also boasts one of the studio's most iconic creations in the form of the Laputa robots;
they're equally badass as they're zen, depending on the situation. They also seem to be a strange hybrid of technology with emotions combined. This is just one example of mixing the old with the new that's the trademark of the film and adds mystery to the lore of the story. In essence, this is what makes the film so
appealing. The English voice cast includes Anna Paquin and Mark Hamill. 1. Princess Mononoke ('97) Princess Mononoke was the first anime films in general that I saw. Even then, at an early age, it blew my mind. I remember watching it in awe and thinking that I'd never seen
anything like it before, it was like being able to watch a dream back at your leisure; as bizarre as it was engrossing. The film's set in a period when humans are starting to have a damaging effect on the environment, due to the increased consumption of its resources. The main conflict is between the Forest Spirits and a
flourishing settlement called "Iron Town," that manufactures weapons. Our protagonist, Prince Ashitaka is trying to find a way to weather the storm and also connect with a girl raised by wolves, the iconic San, who acts as a human embodiment of the forest's fury. Everything builds to a climactic final battle between the
town, a clan of boar and samurai. It's just as awesome as it sounds and the stakes are high. Things aren't so black and white however, there's no clear hero or villain and both sides are complex characters with shades of grey. The film also contains more memorable characters than any other in the series including the
Great Forest Spirit (in both forms), the Wolf Goddess Moro and my own personal favourite of all the Ghibli creations: the adorable, yet very cool Kodama. Written and directed by Miyazaki (one last time), it was the highest-grossing film in Japan upon its release, a title it'd hold onto until passed on to Spirited Away four
years later. This was one of the studio's first to be dubbed in English and subsequently get a proper release in North America via Miramax. However, the treacherous Harvey Weinstein wanted to edit the film for the American audience. The producers responded by sending him a katana with the message: "No cuts," a
brilliant, perfect riposte. This may have stunted its theatrical release at the time but, in the end, it was the right move. It went on to sell very well on home video and significantly increased the studio's popularity and influence outside of Japan. It's one of the most compelling animated films ever made and if you only watch
one Ghibli film, make it this one. The English voice cast is also very impressive and includes Billy Crudup, Claire Danes, Billy Bob Thornton, Gillian Anderson, Keith David and Jada Pinkett Smith. All of the Studio Ghibli films are coming to Netflix from February 1st (not in the USA though sorry folks), released as follows:
February 1st Castle in the Sky My Neighbor Totoro Kiki's Delivery Service Only Yesterday Porco Rosso Ocean Waves Tales for Earthsea March 1st Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind Princess Mononoke My Neighbors the Yamada Spirited Away The Cat Returns Arrietty The Tale of The Princess Kaguya April 1st Pom
Poko Whisper of the Heart Howl's Moving Castle Ponvo From Up on Poppy Hill The Wind Rises When Marnie Was There Let us know which are vour favourites, and if you haven't seen any vet, now is your chance. You won't regret it, Page 15 In The Outsider S1E5, "Tear-Drinker," the web of murders surrounding Ralph
Anderson and Holly Gibney becomes even more entangled. In last week's episode, Holly connected a third murder to the mix, when she tracked down Maria Caneles in New York City. This week, she returns to Dayton, Ohio to fill in some of the missing pieces. Throughout the episode, we are introduced to a friend of
Heath Hofstadter, the nurse who scratched Terry Maitland. And as it's revealed that the man has a bad case of burn blisters on the story in Cherokee City. Jack has the same blisters on his neck, suffered after he was touched by the spirit in the barn. So this man in
Dayton and Jack, what exactly is their role in all of this? Is it possible they are the ones who actually committed the murders? Or are they simply accomplices who planted incriminating evidence for this mysterious monster, the El Coco mentioned in Episode 4? Based on the evidence we've seen for these cases, I don't
think they personally committed the murders. But what is their main purpose? Jack seems desperate to appease the invisible presence, including sacrificing all kinds of lamps and lights for some reason (what is going on with that, exactly?). We don't know what Heath's friend did, exactly. Whatever it is, he feels
remorseful. We see him sweeping up and making the bed (sans mattress) in Heath's now-abandoned house. When Holly meets him at Heath's gravesite, the man tells her, "He f*cked him over good. He f*cked me over too." Having served his purpose, the man commits suicide by instigating a police shootout. With these
events in mind, things aren't looking good for Jack. He's similarly exhibiting remorse for his actions, as he attempts to make amends with Ralph after Tamika's baby shower. He says he's been having personal problems lately and is looking for an opportunity to help with Ralph's investigation. I'm not sure if this is genuine
or if it's simply that El Coco wants Jack to get close to Ralph and lull him into a false sense of security, but I'm leaning toward the latter. Feeding on Grief Holly identifies another constant within the different murder cases. We've already seen that these murders have had residual, deadly effects, as family members close
to the murders have gone on to die as well. The Peterson family has been all but wiped out. Same for Heath's family. The monster feeds on grief, a "tear-drinker." Holly uncovers areas near the cemeteries where the victims of these cases are buried that would make ideal hideouts for El Coco. An abandoned factory.
Broken-down houses. And, as Ralph, Jeannie, Glory, and Sablo discover, the barn in which Terry Maitland's clothes were found is conveniently located within sight of Terry Maitland's grave. I really enjoyed these scenes with Holly in the cemeteries, as they gave me True Detective Season 1 vibes. Holly and Andy I liked
how Andy and Holly's relationship blossomed in Episode 4. But after this week's episode, it appears Andy probably can't be trusted. After they spend the night together in Holly's hotel room, Holly sneaks out early in the morning, on her way to Cherokee City. Holly leaves Andy a sweet note, "I'll always remember you, so
don't forget me." Andy returns the favor by snooping around her things and uncovering some of her case notes. The murder involving Maria Caneles occurred on Feb 11—23 days before the murder involving Heath on March 6. Terry Maitland's murder
happened on March 30—24 days later. Holly notes that 20 days have passed between Terry's crime and the day she wrote up this outline. Seems like we're about due for another killing fairly soon then, doesn't it? Andy appears very interested in these notes, as he checks them against online stories. Who is Andy
working for? Have we seen the back of his neck? Green Hoodie Man Appearances We haven't seen much from the man wearing the green hoodie since the first couple of episodes, but he popped up multiple times this week. Jeannie, while working at New Leaf Recovery Center, became very unnerved by someone
wearing a green sweatshirt in the waiting room. Later, at home during the middle of the night, Jeannie is visited by the monster wearing a green hoodie. It delivers a message to her: Ralph needs to stop his investigation into Frankie Peterson's murder. This is a similar message to what we heard from Jessa Maitland, and
Jeannie is now convinced of its seriousness. However, Ralph remains dubious, Jessa had a bad dream, and so did Jeannie, The Peterson murder has brought back painful feelings similar to the death of their own son. Derek, At least that's what Ralph is thinking. He has not bought in to the unexplainable conclusions that
Holly believes in. However, as Sablo tells Ralph, "Dreams are messages, bro." Based on what we see in the conclusion of Episode 5, perhaps we will see a shift in Ralph's belief in the Green Hoodie Man and his message. The episode ends with Ralph lying on the bed in Derek's room. Whether it is a dream or Ralph's
imagination—or an actual ghost—Derek appears behind Ralph and tells him, "Dad. Look at me. You need to let me go." If Ralph is able to move past his son's death, how will that affect his investigation of the Terry Maitland case? Will he be able to stop blaming himself for his mistakes? Will he give in to his skepticism
and let go of getting to the bottom of the case? Will he listen to the messages from Jeannie and Jessa? I don't think Ralph will ever forget the tragedy of his son's death, but if he can separate Derek's death from the murder of Frankie Peterson, perhaps that will help him see more clearly and figure out what really
happened. Book Differences Let's check back in on how The Outsider is differing from the book, Holly ones from the book, Holly comes from Stephen King's Mr. Mercedes trilogy. In those books, Holly works with retired
detective Bill Hodges to solve a number of crimes. Through this work, Holly is exposed to the unexplainable, which helps make her perfect for the mysterious facts of the Terry Maitland case in The Outsider. I wasn't surprised to see this change in the show, as there is already a Mr. Mercedes TV show and I figured
licensing issues would prevent HBO from using the details of that story. However, based on how many names have been changed in The Outsider, I'm a little surprised they used Holly's full name from the book. Despite these changes, Holly's character in the book and show are the same at the core: she is a quirky
private investigator who is damn good at her job. Holly's trip to New York to visit Maria Caneles does not occur in the book, but I think it really adds to the story. It makes sense to try and trace things back to before the nurse in Dayton, I'm wondering if there will be any connection between Maria being in New York and trace things back to before the nurse in Dayton. I'm wondering if there will be any connection between Maria being in New York and trace things back to before the nurse in Dayton.
the fact that the white van used in the Frankie Peterson case was from New York. It seems very possible. The Andy Katcavage character does not appear in the book, so I'm interested to see how his story plays out. I haven't quite figured out what his angle is yet. I'm not sure if there is some sort of history between Jack
and Tamika. She seems very concerned about him acting distant toward her and her new baby. This relationship wasn't explored in the book, so I'm not sure if there's anything behind this. Now that we're halfway through Season 1 of The Outsider, how are we feeling? A lot was packed in to the first couple of episodes,
and I worried it may lag in the middle episodes. But I think the action is still moving along nicely, and I'm enjoying the aspects of the show that were not in the book. Let me know your thoughts in the comments. Page 16 Many viewers fell in love with Twin Peaks as soon as they heard the first three notes of the now
classic opening theme during the title credits—credits which during the title credits—credits which during the original pilot ran for an incredible three minutes! There were many other musical pieces heard throughout the two hour episode, most notably "Laura Palmer's Theme" and vocalist Julee Cruise performing "Into The Night" and "Falling" inside the town
hangout, The Roadhouse. Over the course of the original series, more than 200 pieces of music would be written and performed by composer Angelo Badalamenti who previously worked with David Lynch on Blue Velvet. So choosing less than ten out of 200 wasn't easy and while we all love "Laura Palmer's Theme" and
"Audrey's Dance", for this piece I wanted to showcase more lesser known or varied selection of music. Some are light and some are heart—wrenching but each are uniquely important to the world of Twin Peaks. Twin Peaks Theme", as its listed on the official original soundtrack album, is actually
the instrumental version of "Falling," a song created in collaboration between Badalamenti and Lynch with lyrics sung by vocalist Julee Cruise from her 1989 album Floating Into the Night. The song was recorded in New York with synth music maker Kinny Landrum creating the twangy signature sound of the Twin Peaks
theme using an Emulator II. Once that sound was captured, "Falling" was completed and the instrumental version was used for the show's opening credits. That theme then became one of the most best-selling TV themes in history and earned Badalamenti a Grammy for Best Pop Instrumental Performance in 1991
Along with the show's soundtrack album becoming a huge seller, its music became an inspiration for artists such as Moby, Paul McCartney, Lana Del Rey and even metal band Anthrax. When Twin Peaks returned in 2017, the visuals might have changed but the theme remained and its no wonder; Twin Peaks just
wouldn't be Twin Peaks without it. Dance of the Dream Man In "Zen, or the Skill to Catch a Killer," or Episode 2, Agent Cooper (Kyle MacLachlan) stirs restless in his bed in room 315 of The Great Northern Hotel clearly having an uncomfortable dream. This dream takes place in a room with red curtains and a floor
straight out of Eraserhead. Within the room, Cooper sits in a chair and is aged considerably. Here we are introduced for the first time to The Black Lodge, also referred to as the "red room," Inside the room, Cooper is joined by an elegant Laura Palmer and a diminutive man (Michael J. Anderson) with a penchant for
speaking backwards. After a brief exchange between Cooper and Laura, music starts to play from somewhere, strobe lights flicker and the man begins to dance and with this particular music playing, who can blame him? Badalamenti's "Dance of the Dream Man" is a delicious fusion of groovy jazz featuring drums, finger
snaps, bass, vibraphone and sax that accomplishes something most great visual art does; it transports the viewer into another world. This was the point in the series where audiences decided to stick with the show or not and obviously, they did—for a while anyway. Nevertheless, the music lived on and whenever this
tune fills the air, it would be hard for anybody to resist the urge to start dancing. Attack of the Pine Weasel Season 2 of Twin Peaks is certainly full of some of the series most shocking and terrifying moments. However it also contains many moments of pure lunacy. One of these more outrageous moments occurs in the
James Foley directed Season 2 episode "Wounds and Scars." During the Stop Ghostwood Fashion Show organized by Dick Tremayne (lan Buchanan), a pine weasel is presented to him by Mr. Pinkel (David L. Lander) but the rodent decides to cause chaos when it bites Dick on the nose. Then the pine runs loose
frightening everybody in attendance except of course John Justice "Jack" Wheeler (Billy Zane) who is happy when Audrey (Sherilyn Fenn) falls right into his arms. Badalamenti's pine weasel music is perhaps the most zany thing he's written for the series. Incorporating a kazoo underneath a pulsating baseline, the pine
weasel music sounds like a comedic riff of Of Booker T, and the MG's classic tune "Green Onions" (a song actually used vears later in an episode of Twin Peaks: The Return), Hook Rug Dance In this Season 2 episode titled "Drive With A Dead Girl" (Episode 15), Ben Horne is being held in a cell inside the Twin Peaks
Sheriff's Station under suspicion for the murder of Laura Palmer. He is visited by brother Jerry who informs Ben he will be his legal council as Ben's regular attorney, Leland, is himself charged with murdering Jacques Renault. Unfortunately Jerry is of little help to Ben legally speaking and to temporarily help take Ben's
mind of his current situation. the two reminisce about the babysitter they had as kids, Louise Dombrowski (Emily Fincher, who is yes, the sister of Fight Club director David Fincher) who with a flashlight entertained the boys by dancing dancing in silhouette for their amusement. The visuals may look like something out of a
Fellini film, but Badalamenti's music incorporates the twangy flourish of the main theme into a '50s style Doo wop. This little bit of delightful music would show up again when Cooper flirts with Annie in the Double R Diner. No wonder everybody wound up smiling by the time the song was over. Who wouldn't? The World
Spins When I think of Twin Peaks (the original run), the final ten minutes of this superlative episode from Season 2 titled "Lonely Souls" is the one which encapsulates why I have loved this series so much for the past 25 years. Sure, the coffee, the pie and the donuts are all charming but for me, the real power of the
series lies in its darker, even terrifying moments, and none were as dark and terrifying as the shattering revelations, surprises and horrors presented to us at the conclusion of this episode. Chances are if you're reading this article, you know exactly what I'm talking about. "The World Spins," written in collaboration
between Badalamenti and Lynch was another song featured on Cruise's album Floating Into The Night (personally one of my favourite albums ever). While "Falling" moves the heart, "The World Spins" pierces it. Featured immediately after the terrifying murder of Maddy (Sheryl Lee) at the hands of BOB, Cruise is seen
onstage at the Roadhouse performing this song in front of a visibly affected Agent Cooper who senses something tragic has just happened. With a sorrowful visit from the Great Northern waiter and everyone around him sobbing just from the helpless awareness of the unspeakable terror in the world, Cooper looks
helplessly upon Cruise as visions of the red room fill his mind. This is Twin Peaks at its most powerful, haunting—and magical. Blue Frank (The Pink Room) Here's a song which wasn't featured in the series but was in Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me. This music plays in a dingy bar called the Pink Room where Laura and
Donna joins Ronette Pulaski to take drugs and party. The sequence begins in the Roadhouse where Laura watches Julee Cruise's voice may represent an angel who watches over Laura, "Blue Frank" is the musical equivalent of the character's ultimate
descent into Hell. One can almost smell the stubbed-out cigarette butts and spilled beer in the floor from listening to this music. With its thumping bass and wild guitars, the music can be seen as a representation of Laura's heart practically on the verge of exploding while the guitar represents her cries for help. As tragic
as it all is, "Blue Frank" is the perfect music to accompany a soul careening towards tragedy. If Hell has a bar you can bet this is the music that plays there at least once per night. By the time the song is over, one can sense that the devil himself has gotten a hold of Laura's soul and he's not about to give it up. The only
missing from this sequence is a visit from Blue Velvet's Frank Booth. Dark Mood Woods/The Red Room I have previously mentioned on this site that my favourite scenes of Twin Peaks were when we ventured inside the strange, red-curtained, other-worldly place known as the Black Lodge also commonly referred to "the
red room." In the Season 2 finale "Beyond Life and Death," Agent Cooper descends into the Black Lodge to rescue Annie Blackburn from Windom Earle. The Black Lodge is a place where one enters to confront their shadow self and as we learn, sometimes the shadow self is the entity which ultimately emerges. To fit
the strange world visually, the music had to be strange as well but its instruments were reality-based. The sound is made up of random bass instruments plucking at various intervals. If the world of Fellini's Satyricon were to be performed by a jazz guartet it would sound like this. At times inside the Lodge, Cooper seems
unaware where to turn as it is easy to find oneself lost among the intersecting halls which lead into the same rooms of red curtains and zig-zag floors. What can you do when one is in this strange world but follow the music? Occasionally, the screams of the Lodge's other inhabitants (Laura, Windom Earle) pierce the air
but after those, the music becomes the character's guiding sound. This episode is without guestion, one of the music accompanying Cooper's journey was no less strange. It's funny to think that in The Return, these sounds actually became a source
of guidance and comfort for Cooper/Dougie Jones and it once again proves that in the world of Twin Peaks, beauty can often arise from the 1990s, before MADtv premiered but during the same time Saturday Night Live was in a minor slump, in terms of viewers, one of
the funniest sketch comedy shows premiered on FOX; In Living Color. While it is one of the shorter sketch comedy shows out there, in terms of how long it ran, it's widely remembered for an array of quotably comical characters and as the launching pad for several great careers in comedy, music, acting and
dance. However, this show is responsible for turning the Super Bowl Halftime Show into one of the most widely watched events in television history. During the third season of the show, 1992, FOX decided to program it against the Super Bowl Halftime Show. The game was intense as it was the fourth time and final time
the Buffalo Bills went to the Super Bowl. It tracked a massive audience of 79.6 million viewers, according to the Nielsen ratings. For any show to go up against the most-watched television event of the year, would be normally be considered ratings suicide, but then it was a little easier. The theme for the 1992 halftime
show for the Super Bowl was more of an ode to the Winter Olympics, titled Winter Magic, which Disney helped produce. Unlike the more on classical music and marching bands than on a single pop artist. Prior to that in 1991, the Halftime Show was led by an
Elvis impersonator named Elvis Presto. Other times, the halftime show featured artists from years ago like Chubby Checker, George Burns, Mickey Rooney, Up With People, and predominantly college marching bands. The episode was called the In Living Color's "Super Bowl Halftime Party" and primarily featured
sketches about football or was directly about the Super Bowl. Just to make sure people knew when to turn their channels back to the Super Bowl, there was a clock put on the screen counting down thirty minutes. The episode was a hit, though, it was not without a minor controversy. It was one of the "Men On..."
sketches, with that week's episode being "Men On... Football," featuring Damon Wayans as Blaine Edwards and David Alan Grier as Antoine Merriweather. "Men On... Football," featuring Damon Wayans as Blaine Edwards and David Alan Grier as Antoine Merriweather. "Men On... Football," featuring Damon Wayans as Blaine Edwards and David Alan Grier as Antoine Merriweather. "Men On... Football," featuring Damon Wayans as Blaine Edwards and David Alan Grier as Antoine Merriweather. "Men On... Football," was
noted for making a joke about Olympic track and field runner Carl Lewis being gay and another about actor Richard Gere. Rumors of Lewis to lose plenty of endorsements. Considering the popularity of a show like In Living Color, jokes like that made things harder
for him, however, the later rumors subsided. Lewis is still remembered for his achievements as an Olympian, but repeats of the show entirely. Richard Gere's agent threatened legal action against the show, but that never materialized. If there was
something to say about In Living Color it was how the show had a talent for being controversial without incurring legal action. Some people have argued this is the reason the show began to decline in later seasons. Network censors were always leery about this show, though others like Married... with Children were seen
as lacking in censorship. However, after this joke, the censors were apparently around all the time. It would be in the fourth season concluded, all members of the Wayans family, including creator Keenen Ivory Wayans, left the series and had nothing to
do with it. Other sketches featured on that episode include "The Homeboy Shopping Network" holding a special Super Bowl party in a bar, and Jim Carrey as "Background Guy" during a Super Bowl interview. Closing out the show was musical guest
Color Me Badd, who sang their hit song, "I Wanna' Sex You Up." In Living Color's "Super Bowl Halftime Party" drew in almost 22 million people switched from the Super Bowl Halftime
show was headlined by none other than Michael Jackson. Since then, every Halftime Show has featured one of the most popular artists of the time such as Katy Perry, Beyonce, Lady Gaga, etc. For 2020, Jennifer Lopez and Shakira will be taking the stage for the 54th Annual Super Bowl Halftime Show. That was the
first time that Super Bowl counter-programming was a success and since then other shows have joined in such as Saturday Night Live, Glee, Animal Planet's Puppy Bowl, the Lingerie Bowl and a variety of others. In the years since the Super Bowl Halftime Show would be the source of controversy in its own right, such
as Janet Jackson's wardrobe malfunction during the 2004 Super Bowl Halftime Show. In Living Color was a remarkable catalyst for comedy and managed to save the Super Bowl Halftime show from the humiliating fate of remaining dull and uninteresting. Page 18 Welcome back, dear reader, as we continue to review
Star Trek: Picard with Season 1 Episode 2, "Maps and Legends." As explained in several interviews, this episode is really part two of what could be viewed as a three-part pilot. As such, it is still heavy on the exposition and light on the action. There were a surprising amount of answers to guestions raised last episode, as
the new questions lead to a widening and deepening of the series' overall mystery. The cover image from Star Trek: Picard - Countdown Issue #3. "Very bright indeed." We're going to talk briefly about the comic first this week, since the final Issue #3 was just released on January 29. If you don't want to be spoiled, just
jump ahead to the next section. I already gave a brief recap of Issues #1 and #2 in my pre-series article "Preparing for Picard." Issue #3 picks up where we left off at the Romulan Colony on Yuyat Beta. Zhaban and Laris bring Picard and Commander Raffi back to the governor's palace under the guise of escorting them
as prisoners (the oldest trick in the book). After diplomacy fails, they take control of the command center and Picard contacts the Verity, only to find the Romulan Governor in control. She's barely done making threats when the crew regains control behind the scenes and the Romulan intruders are all beamed to the brig.
Picard extends the offer to Laris and Zhaban to beam up to the ship for their own safety. Aboard the Verity, a Romulan vessel (Tal Shiar more specifically) uncloaks and contacts Zhaban and Laris. We find out that the Tal Shiar have had agents embedded on multiple colonies waiting for this moment. Zhaban takes
control of the ship once again and is ordered to engage the self-destruct, leaving Picard and crew behind to die. Zhaban, moved by what he has seen of Picard's sincere desire to protect the citizens of this colony, Romulan and native, betrays the Tal Shiar and gives control back to Picard. Sometime later as the
evacuation is underway again, Picard extends the invitation to Zhaban and Laris to go into hiding from the Tal Shiar at his vineyards back on Earth. The comic ends with him contacting Geordi once more, relaying that "the future is bright, Mr. La Forge. Very bright indeed." Reading this now, that comes off as very
poignant, knowing that the attack of the shipyards is probably only days or weeks away from this happy ending. One moment that stands out in this issue happens when Picard beams back aboard the Verity and the Lieutenant who was left in charge tries to apologize. Picard tells him, "You did precisely the right thing, Lt.
Newton. You offered to help people in need. That those people would then betray you was no fault of yours. More importantly, you must maintain that impulse to help, Do not let suspicion undermine it." This insight seems very much so in line with the picture of Picard's character that is being formulated in the series. The
synthetic workers stand in storage awaiting orders. "Good morning, plastic people." At last, we get to see a bit of the Mars attack and not just hear about it secondhand. That was brutal. F8's human co-workers really didn't stand a chance. The way F8 terminates himself in the end would seem to rule out the idea that the
synthetics were rebelling to free themselves. They were used as weapons. We see a brief flash in his eyes before he goes "roque"—being "activated," to use a term we heard last episode. It's interesting to note here that the synthetics working at Planitia are not just deficient in human mannerisms and humor, they are
given a specifically dehumanizing appearance. Shaved heads. Non-descript jumpsuits. A number for a name. Just like prisoners in a jail or concentration camp. "They're not people," as one of F8's co-workers says when he's not in the room. Exactly how you would want to treat your slave labor force. Given the date on
the title card at the beginning of this episode ("Mars, 2385—14 years ago"), we now know when Star Trek: Picard is set. To put it all into context: 2379: Star Trek: Nemesis 2385: Countdown (comic), Children of Mars 2387: Star Trek 2009 (Romulus
supernova) 2399: Star Trek: Picard Speaking of synthetics, we learn that Dahj's entire identity was built from scratch three years ago. She was set up to be the perfect candidate for the Daystrom Institute, and no doubt Soji's credentials are equally impressive for the work she's doing at the Romulan Reclamation Site. So
we have one sister planted within the Federation researching synthetics, and the other planted within the Romulan Free State researching the Borg. Hmm, interesting. Commodore Oh would know if the Romulans were running clandestine operations on Earth. "Request denied." Almost as brutal as that opening scene
was the dressing down Picard received at the hands of Admiral Clancy. First the setup, as he's checking in at the security desk. "It's nice to see you up and around, Admiral." And without his walker even! Ouch. Then he comes waltzing into the Admiral's office, thinking they'd just let him check out a ship and crew like it
was a library book. As if the last 14 years, and more importantly the widely broadcast interview of the previous day, never happened. And thus we get our first F-bomb of the series (Discovery has had a few), and to be frank, it was kind of well deserved. The attack on Mars put the Federation in a bad place and decisions to be frank, it was kind of well deserved.
had to be made. The Federation does indeed make life and death decisions about entire species every day. Even by their inaction, i.e. the Prime Directive, they are often making such choices. Now, she does go a little too far in calling his story "the pitiable delusions of a once-great man desperate to matter." To her credit
though, the Admiral clearly has some reservations about that and checks in with Commodore Oh "out of an excess of caution." Here's where the plot thickens. It looks like the reason the Zhat Vash are able to operate so freely within the Federation is that they have well placed operatives within Starfleet security. Their
"deep, unassuageable loathing" of synthetics definitely shows, as Commodore Oh refers to Dahj as "the thing" and Lieutenant Rizzo talks of Soji's "fellow abominations" to her brother. For his part, Narek must not share their loathing, given that his plan for finding the synthetics' "nest" involves sleeping with the enemy,
literally. There may be hope for him yet though. The look he gives Soji when she shows compassion for the ex-Borg they just freed—could he be falling for her? There's definitely some foreshadowing with the "profound reservations" his cohorts have with his methods. This facility is overdue for an assimilation. Easter
Eggs Raffi's place is in Vasquez Rocks Natural Area Park, also known as "Kirk's Rock" because of all of the times it was used as a filming location in the original Star Trek scenes filmed at "Kirk's Rock" was his fight with
a Gorn in ST:TOS S1E19 "Arena." The title of this episode has the same name as one of writer Michael Chabon's books, "Maps and Legends." Benayoun's medical assessment of Jean-Luc includes a defect in his parietal lobe that could lead to any number of syndromes, all of which end badly. This confirms the
diagnosis Beverly Crusher gave him in ST:TNG S7E25-26 "All Good Things," after Picard lived through a future timeline in which he contracted Irumodic Syndrome. Benayoun also speaks of secret missions that he and Jean-Luc took on the Stargazer. This was Picard's first command, as mentioned in multiple ST:TNG
episodes. Commodore Oh has a replica of the Kir'Shara from Star Trek: Enterprise. This is a Vulcan artifact that contains the teachings of Surak. (Source: Reddit) One of the shipyard workers complains about the replicators no longer using the "Una-Matrix Formula." This was something Spock and Number One
discussed in the Short Trek episode "O&A." (Source: Reddit) The first person killed in this series (Dahi's boyfriend) was wearing a red shirt. That cannot be a coincidence. (Source: Reddit) I mentioned last week that Laris and Zhaban were featured in the Picard: Countdown I failed to note that Raffi Musiker, his first officer
aboard the Verity, was also featured. I'm looking forward to hearing her call him "JL" again. Dr. Benayoun still makes house calls. Quick Takes A couple of quick takes on the rest of the episode: Soji understands and can speak Romulan. That's not the only alien tongue she knows, as revealed in this week's The Ready
Room. Commodore Oh knows things that Picard and Admiral Clancy talked about in private, indicating that she has the Admiral's office bugged, at least. Picard "never really cared for science fiction," which explains why it took a real-life Dixon Hill novel to finally break him out of his reverie. Speculation is that
Commodore Oh is actually Vulcan, given the artifact on her desk. If so, the inclusion of both Romulans and Vulcans in the Zhat Vash could mean they predate the split between the two species (estimated to have occurred around the 4th century Terran time). Because it is First Contact Day, a holiday akin to our own
Independence Day here in the U.S., the people workers are down to skeleton crews at the shipyards. Perhaps this day was picked purposely to limit the number of casualties. Does this indicate that the attack was an inside job? (Source: My own post on Reddit) We found out the "broken people" Soji spends all day fixing
(from Episode 1) are ex-Borg, reclaimed from the "Artifact." Of course, the big mystery opened up in this episode is what could this "secret so profound and terrible just learning it can break a person's mind" be? One line of speculation varies from the Romulans actually being a synthetic race created by the Vulcans, the
Vulcans being a synthetic race created by the Romulans, or all the species seeded throughout the galaxy by the Progenitors being synthetic. Another line says that maybe the Romulans, or all the species seeded throughout the galaxy by the Progenitors being synthetic. Another line says that maybe the Romulans, or all the species seeded throughout the galaxy by the Progenitors being synthetic.
part of this secret war between synthetics and the Zhat Vash? The best lines of this episode: "You find vulnerability and brokenness beautiful." "For a relic, you're in excellent shape." "The Federation does not get to decide if a species lives or dies." "Yes, we do. We absolutely do." "So do what you're good at: go home"
"People in the synthetic humanoid field tend to get a little secret-planny." "I didn't know Romulans could be so hot." "Me neither." "She's not wrong. You can't go without us." "Idiot!" Maybe she should have read this before working on creating autonomous androids. In The News Here I try to point you to a few of the more
interesting and informative news items over the last week related to Star Trek: Picard or just Star Trek in general: In an interview for JOE, writers Akiva Goldsman and Michael Chabon explain how Laris' line, "cheeky feckers," got added to the script. And yes, that is the line, it's not another F-bomb, as incorrectly indicated
in the closed captions. While not exactly an interview, a post on the r/startrek sub-Reddit has a long quote from Trent Pehrson about the foundations of the Romulan language he created for Star Trek: Picard. This is from last week, but in an interview with Yahoo!, Patrick Stewart reveals that he was personally responsible
for inserting the "decaf" joke in Episode 1. In more general Star Trek news, Daily Star Trek News reports that the upcoming animated Star Trek series from Nickelodeon has been given the title Star Trek: Prodigy. This won't be airing until 2021 most likely. CBS All Access is streaming the pilot episode for free on
YouTube, so it's an excellent time to get your friends and family hooked on the show. This is only going to last "for a limited time." That's all for this week. Please let me know your thoughts and feelings about this week's episode, and any theories you have on what's to come, in the comments below, or catch me on the
r/Picard sub on Reddit as u/catnapspirit. Remember that 25YL will provide continuing coverage of Star Trek: Discovery and Star Trek: Discovery and Star Trek in general. Page 19 report this ad 25 Newsletters Later Sign up for highlights and exclusive content Back to Top
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