

# The Book of Snark



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**gnud**

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*“I wrote the damn plays! Bacon was hired to fix up the iambic pentameter in a couple spots.”*  
— *William Shakespeare*

(Quote unverified.)

## *A Peaceful Prelude*

**I**t is with great pride and no small measure of reverence that I bid you welcome to a shared adventure, a new life path, a communal escapade that now begins with the most magical phrase in all of literature, “Eat your ‘shrooms and strap in, motherfuckers.”

You say this is not the venerated phrase you were expecting? You say these are words that give you a case of the vapors? Is that what’s bugging you, Bunky?

The sad trombone sound is spelled womp-womp. If you can’t handle basic statements in the English language, you’re a namby-pamby itty-bitty baby who should curl up in bed and suck your thumb.

However, if you possess maturity, humor, perspective, irreverence, and sarcasm, we can agree to move forward with that other revered and captivating phrase, “Once upon a time...”

# Cinematics

Musings on Movies by  
Jimmy Ray Filmbuff



**W**hen college degrees began to be offered in “Film Studies,” that’s when I began a contemptuous reappraisal of college degrees. When essayists began scribbling about “Cultural/Historical Consequences of Motion Pictures in America,” that’s when I began reconsidering the sincerity and sanity of essayists.

Flicks are hardly a suitable subject for classroom studies, literary doodling, or speechifying at hoity-toity seminars. Flicks are suitable for zoning out while you’re high.

Yeah, I called them flicks. You have a problem with that? If so, take it up with my publisher. C’mon people, movies are not “art.” They are simple photoplays. Shadow dances. Picture shows. There are silents, and there are talkies, and that’s all there is to it. Movie nights are not for intellectual pretensions, they’re for trying to convince your date that it’s time to fuck.

Sure, flicks have value besides being a prelude to sex and an escape from reality. They

can lead to friendly arguments at parties and unfriendly bets at bars, but there's no point in treating them as if any scholarship is required. They're just "moom pitchers," no more, no less.

Look, I know that a ton and a half of effort goes into putting together a motion picture, but the basic elements in the production of mass-market movies can be easily catalogued, as I shall now demonstrate.

Herewith, the Jimmy Ray Filmbuff easy-to-follow and soon-to-be-patented *Guide to Hollywood Movie Making*.

1. Come up with a story that can be summarized in one sentence. "It's like *Die Hard*, but in a Quonset hut," for example. Or: "It's like *The Avengers*, but with sock puppets." You know you've got a great concept when it sounds amazing if you're shouting, whispering, or speaking at a normal level. Try this one: "It's like *Avatar* meets *Lawrence of Arabia* in a duck pond." See? Solid concept. This part of the process is what Hollywood calls creative thinking.

2. Raise an immoral amount of cash for the production of your epic. There cannot be too much money. Don't worry, you'll figure out a way to spend it. You always wanted to add a wing to your house and put in a private tennis court. And even if you don't pay out all of the moolah, you take whatever's leftover, put it into an offshore bank account, and write it off as "development." Note: it is important for producers to employ layers of lawyers and several CPAs.
  
3. Whoever contributes a measly million or two to the budget gets a producer credit, which greatly increases one's ability to pick up aspiring starlets at parties. This practice means that producer credits are being handed out like candy corn at bad Halloween parties. *Sahara* had twenty producers. *Narc* had twenty-three. *Lone Survivor* had thirty-four. *The Butler* had forty-two. Sooner or later, we will see a Hollywood flick with more producers than actors and crew.

4. You should cast several good-looking and highly popular twits to play the lead roles. With enough money, you can get *anybody* to star in your movie. Sandra Bullock agreed to do a craptacular embarrassment called *Speed 2: Cruise Control* in exchange for a zillion bucks plus her own production company and a distribution deal for *Hope Floats*, a film she actually wanted to make. This is called exercising your clout.
  
5. For the supporting roles, you'll want to cast bunches of humorous schlumps and adorable geeks. You don't always have to hire actors — you can give parts to film critics, disgraced bank presidents, and socialites recovering from rehab. This is known as stunt casting, and the studio's public relations dweebs will be pleased with you for engaging in it.
  
6. Produce your cinematic concoction using every computerized gimmick you can afford. This is called embracing the



technology, and those aforementioned PR doofuses will be thrilled to generate a great deal of hype about it. (“Eleven bazillion pixels were harvested and killed in order to bring you this landmark in motion picture entertainment!”)

7. When editing the flick, you can go in one of two directions. Make it as short as possible if you want to entertain people (car chases and romantic montages are permissible and/or advisable, depending on genre); or edit it to be glacially slow if you’re going for the “important filmic event” thing.
8. Fill your soundtrack with the weirdest music you can find. Get wild and go crazy. You can use absolutely anything, whether the music supports your imagery (*2001: A Space Odyssey*) or not (*Shutter Island*).
9. Promote the ever-loving crap out of the flick. Send everyone to TV talk shows with clips and outtakes from the movie.

Invite everybody who is anybody to a series of “premiere showcase events.” Just don’t expect me at one of them. Those things are a pain. If you want Jimmy Ray to help hype your flick, invite me to an early screening that is hidden from the general public. Hint: I’ve always enjoyed watching movies with members of the Foreign Media Kickback Society, or whatever it’s called. Trust me, there’s nothing quite like a FMKS screening. A palpable aroma of avarice permeates the theater, and the attendees are easily as bizarre as audiences at the opera.

# Angsty is as Angsty Does

Jimmy Ray Filmbuff  
Strikes Again



**S**ofia Coppola is the monarch of a weird realm. She wrote and directed two of the most neurotic of all the nifty-sick, no-holds-barred, king-ass malaise movies in the history of the world. One, *Lost in Translation*, was great; the other, *The Bling Ring*, was greatly anesthetizing. If there had been a sympathetic character in the latter movie, it very well might have become another unexpected hit.

Both *Lost in Translation* and *The Bling Ring* seem like multiple fusions: filmic fantasy butting up against harsh reality; art director's wet dream interfacing with therapy session confession; overly perfect interlocking story arcs embracing the randomness of life; total artistic commitment peacefully coexisting with a documentarian's starchy coat of honor. I have to say, if Sofia Coppola is anything like her movies, she must be the most fascinating woman in the world. Based on those two flicks, she should be of interest to every conversationalist on the planet. Be that as it

may, her film work is mostly enjoyed by flick freaks.

And just what can we say about flick freaks? A great many things, none of them good. Flick freaks are appalling! These people are an abomination, an unholy terror, and a dreadful stain on humanity. I know this for a fact because I am one of them.

Flick freaks are guys (we're mostly guys) who pad out our video collections with lots of esoteric rubbish in a fruitless attempt to impress our imaginary friends and brain-dead relatives.

For example, I've got a Blu-ray of *Battleship Potemkin* sitting next to a DVD of *Leave Her to Heaven*. I've got a Blu-ray of *Vertigo* nuzzling up against a DVD of *Who is Killing the Great Chefs of Europe?*

And if that's not enough, I own a Blu-ray of Jean-Luc Godard's *Goodbye to Language* in 3D despite not having the glasses or the gizmology necessary to experience the extra dimension.

When it comes to motion pictures, I'm really just a Philistine. When I watch Otto Preminger movies, I bark orders to the actors

in a bad German accent. (“You will be brilliant or you will be pounded into schnitzel!”) When I watch Charlie Chaplin movies, I hum cheesy Great American Songbook cliches with every close-up involving furrowed brows or sweaty faces. And when I watch Tyler Perry or Jerry Lewis movies... Okay, I do not watch Tyler Perry or Jerry Lewis movies. Life is too short for that sort of thing.

My own personal flick freak quirk is kicking back while viewing movies that are unintentionally funny, especially when made by people with inflated reputations. There is nothing as entertaining as seeing a successful director fail on the big screen.

No matter how many marvelous movies a director makes, sooner or later each one of them is responsible for films with absurd plots, inept acting, and unmotivated injections of unwanted emotion. Think back to when Rob Reiner was making hit after hit: *This is Spinal Tap*, *The Sure Thing*, *Stand By Me*, *The Princess Bride*, *When Harry Met Sally*, *A Few Good Men*.

And then came *North*.

Sheesh.

True, he rebounded with *The American President*, but since then he's churned out a bunch of stuff that we will not mention out of respect for What Once Was.

**L**et us now praise some of the greatest involuntarily humorous flicks ever made. The first three are by Ron Howard, an otherwise competent director of bourgeois entertainment who has made several marvelous documentaries (*Pavarotti*; *We Feed People*; *Rebuilding Paradise*) but who often helms pure hogwash like *Hillbilly Elegy* and the following truly terrible troika of Dan Brown drivel.

*The Da Vinci Code* ~ Before going any further, let me praise the production aspects of this movie and its two sequels. All work in the craft and technical categories is magnificent. Everything about the way things look in these flicks is absolutely first-class.

Unfortunately, the story, dialog, and acting are a combination of treacle and swamp dust. (Swamp dust is like regular dust but soggy and containing a wider range of active bacteria.)

I did enjoy the babe in this flick. Audrey Tautou is able to keep a straight face when her character is required to ask questions of her male costars. She also displays an admirable ability to sound plausible while forced to recite expository material that is necessary to dry hump the story forward. In addition, she appears dutifully concerned as she attempts to sprint along cobblestoned streets wearing fashionable high heels.

Thanks to an ungodly amount of torturous plot twisting, there are arcane riddles with enigmatic clues for Tom Hanks to figure out. One might enjoy oneself a teeny bit by counting the number of times Hanks puts a faraway look on his mug and ruminates out loud as he solves each conundrum. I am certain that both director and writer thought it would be a genuine delight to watch him reach the answer Just In The Nick Of Time every single goddam time!

The reason Hanks has to solve each puzzle is that there's some sort of ancient religiosity treasure hunt going on, but with very high stakes. Only by solving the mystery can our intrepid hero manage to Save The



World. Or maybe he's going to save all of Christianity while allowing other religions to expire. Or maybe the point is to save the International Pedophile Association, which is otherwise known as the Catholic Church. Or something.

The flick is reasonably well-paced and genuinely handsome, but totally devoid of any import.

Oh, there's also a villain who's an albino because, well, because cheap fiction frequently uses physical aberrations to suggest evil. You know, just like kids in elementary school.

*Angels & Demons* ~ This is the one where members of the Illuminati get the band back together in order to infiltrate and destroy Vatican City using the most unlikely explosive device in the history of movies, and quite frankly, I was rooting for the bomb. Watching this highly polished turd made me hope the explosion would annihilate everything so the world could start over again.

Photography of the sets, locations, art, vehicles, artifacts, and crowds is impressive, and the babe in this one (Ayelet Zurer) is also lovely to gaze upon, but her character, too, is

reduced to asking plot-prodding questions while looking suitably anxious.

*Inferno* ~ Cleverly hiding behind the same title as Dario Argento's most stilted horror film, *Inferno* proceeds to pummel viewers like one of those endless and glossy and endless and pretentious and endless and incoherent and endless Christopher Nolan budget-busters that are glossy and pretentious and incoherent. And endless. This time, the babe is Felicity Jones, who gets to perform some of the violence, but who is sometimes glimpsed in the background calculating the amount of her paycheck.

**W**e turn now to the sordid case of Hans Detlef Sierck, or Douglas Sirk, the one-time king of the Hollywood melodrama. In the 1950s, there was no more prominent creator of lurid and lugubrious slop.

Sirk directed such mindless domestic tragedies as *Magnificent Obsession*, *All That Heaven Allows*, *Written on the Wind*, and *Imitation of Life*. Each is decidedly dreadful, with preposterous plot twists, wall-to-wall orchestral sludge, and almost non-stop over-

the-top thespian ravings that must be seen to be believed.

In recent years, far too much of Sirk's tripe has received praise from writers who really should know better.

**T**here is one bright light in the cinematic darkness of movies-so-bad-they're-good, and his name is Robert Aldrich. Here was a man whose career was a testament to kitsch. The precursor to Tarantino, Aldrich never found a threatening situation he couldn't stretch out far beyond its necessary length.

The western *Vera Cruz* was ripe revisionism, the Micky Spillane mystery *Kiss Me Deadly* was a smarmy send-up of noir, and the distasteful shock-fest *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* was theater of cruelty at a snail's pace. Flush with undeserved acclaim, Aldrich made *The Dirty Dozen*, raked in loads of cash, bought his own studio, and proceeded to direct twelve more films, most of them ghastly, but none as gloriously rank as:

*The Legend of Lylah Clare* ~ Messy, noisy, ugly, convoluted, and crass, *Clare* was a blunder from start to finish. It is possible to

fitfully enjoy some aspects of the tacky dialogue, lousy accents, cliché music, murky photography, and inept direction, although the flick never reaches the lofty realm of a cherished gem such as *Plan 9 from Outer Space*.

**F**inally, we turn to a director who is taken far too seriously by far too many people, which is funny in and of itself, but also dispiriting. No one in Hollywood is as universally admired or as monumentally overrated as John Ford, a well-paid studio hack who has been extravagantly lionized for decades. Yeah, I said hack, but I meant it in the nicest possible way. Okay, I acknowledge that he selected some of his movie projects, but when you make certain that your ideas are ones that are embraced by the studios, you are definitely hack-adjacent.

Every one of Ford's eleven dozen feature flicks was crafted to appease plebeian tastes, which is another way of saying they were made with moronic minds in mind. Almost all of them offer a blueprint of how to appeal to an audience of chowderheads.

In Ford's movie world you will find: (1) a steady-eyed hero, (2) a snarling villain, (3) a silly sidekick, and (4) a motley assortment of various and sundry cliché characters. The latter two categories have been staples of stock theatrical troupes ever since reprobates took up acting as a profession.

Whenever Ford feels the need to goose the emotional barometer of a sequence, he has the music department lay on some cloying folksy ditty like "Old Kentucky Home" or "America the Beautiful" as he cuts to a close-up of someone getting misty-eyed. Once you have caught onto his game, you cannot watch any of his cornpone claptrap without muttering oaths to yourself while heading for the nearest exit.

Most of Ford's work is insufferably pretentious, but he had his slumming moments. He helmed a couple of Shirley Temple projects that gave filmgoers diabetes. He is credited with directing one comedy, *Mister Roberts*, which screeched to a halt every time James Cagney appeared. Cagney has never once been called a subtle actor, but under Ford's indolent eyes he launched into such orgiastic scenery

chomping that it should have resulted in warning signs being posted around theaters.

The true horror of the Ford touch is most evident in a fitfully funny but often catatonic concoction from 1962:

*The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* ~

Here, a story with intriguing ramifications is turned into a turgid tale in which everyone yaks about their motivations while doing little or nothing about them. Shot in black-and-white on clunky sets and in front of back projection screens, every set-up is lit like a TV sit-com from the nineteen fifties. Other than the wonderful “When the legend becomes fact, print the legend” line, which we don’t get until 120 minutes into the damn thing, the dialogue is slow and often repetitious (John Wayne calls Jimmy Stewart “Pilgrim” twenty-five times). If not for several incidents of sadistic violence, the film would be famous only as a soporific.

**P**eople accuse me of TMS (too much snark), and I always ask if there is such a thing as too much snark. After that, they frequently ask me if there are any movies I like, and I tell them that I like a whole slew of

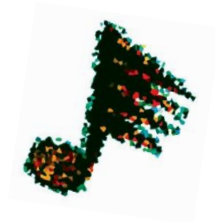
terrific flicks. They usually ask me to name one, and I say I'll name two: *Citizen Kane*, the most entertaining great movie ever made, and *Last Year at Marienbad*, the most boring great movie ever made.

Yeah, I know that my likes and dislikes sometimes appear to have no rhyme or reason, but I possess many good qualities, a number of which I will now reveal to you. First, I hate a great many more films than I love. Second, I admit that my tastes are not appreciated by the cognoscenti. Third, I think that two reasons are more than enough.

Let's cut to the chase here. My wants are simple. Just let me enjoy a Godzilla flick with help from some decent cannabis (at least 30% THC), and I'm a happy camper.

# Soundtracking

Son of the  
Return of the  
Prequel to the  
Origin Story of  
Jimmy Ray Filmbuff,  
The Musical!





There have been many instances where superb music made a nifty-keen flick seem nifty-keener. *Duplicity* is one (shout-out to James Newton Howard). *The Social Network* is another (kudos to Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross). *The Ghost Writer* is a third (lovely job by Alexandre Desplat). (Note: this is not the cretinous *Ghost Rider*, but the political mystery-suspense drama directed by convicted child molester Roman Polanski. I have my standards, after all.)

Let's also acknowledge those times when a terrific soundtrack made cinematic silliness seem acceptable:

- Robert Wise's ungainly *The Andromeda Strain* was greatly bolstered by the darkly pulsating electronic tracks of Gil Mellé.
- The inane kiddie flick *Journey to the Center of the Earth* achieved a bit of stature and gravitas through the haunting

orchestral mini symphonies of Bernard Herrmann.

- The mundane and middlebrow *Moonraker* was elegantly cloaked by John Barry's lush score.
- Dario Argento's messy *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* became a noted example of Euro-porn thanks to the genre-defying soundscapes by Ennio Morricone.
- There were a number of oppressive *Omen* flicks that were almost lifted out of the muck by Jerry Goldsmith's frightening compositions.

Let us also not overlook the way in which Erich Wolfgang Korngold added both thrills and status to such cornball swashbucklers as *Anthony Adverse*, *The Sea Wolf*, *The Sea Hawk*, *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex*, *Juarez*, *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, *Another Dawn*, and *The Prince and the Pauper*.

Although Korngold was more highly respected as a composer of opera (*Die tote Stadt, Das Wunder der Heliane, Die Kathrin*), he was better known for creating marvelous soundtracks. His music made boring films exciting and exciting films colossal. In a world where movie scores too often consist of rehashed classical themes, Korngold created actual classical themes.

We now make what is sometimes called a “smash cut,” an abrupt change that may cause the viewer to flinch, at least allegorically.

Suddenly, we are examining a college thesis paper entitled “Hollywood Motion Picture Soundtrack Scoring and the Use of Purloined Musical Themes.” In this erudite dissertation, the author makes a number of outrageous and entertaining assertions. The thesis claims that John Williams augmented a number of his soundtrack creations with other composers’ orchestral ideas, including works by Korngold, Gustav Holst, Frederic Chopin, and Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky.

Another claim of the thesis is a harder sell, namely that one bit of a composition by Charles Mingus and Max Roach was utilized

in the soundtrack of *Jaws*. The album is *Charles Mingus Quartet and Max Roach*, and the music starts to get very interesting around the 3:50 mark of the track entitled “Drums.” I just listened to it again, and damn if it doesn’t sound like the shark theme.

Maestro Williams, according to the thesis writer, also “showed inordinate affection for” Richard Wagner’s Act Two Prelude to *Siegfried* when composing music for *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

With a mind-numbing number of other examples, the thesis writer demonstrates that this “borrowing” of thematic musical material is not uncommon:

- Michele Legrand was apparently unduly impressed by J.S. Bach’s concerto BWV 1052 for keyboard (harpsichord or piano) and string orchestra when composing music for the original version of *The Thomas Crown Affair*.
- Jerry Goldsmith displayed excessive affection for Ernst von Dohnányi’s Sextet for piano, violin, viola, cello, clarinet &

horn in C major, Op. 37 when composing the soundtrack for *The List of Adrian Messenger*.

- A portion of the Introduction and Allegro from Maurice Ravel's String Quartet in F major was repurposed by Miklos Rozsa for *Spellbound* and by Bernard Herrmann for *Psycho*.
- Louise Farrenc's Trio in E-flat major Op. 44 was utilized in part by Maurice Jarre for his score of *Lawrence of Arabia*.
- Giuseppe Verdi's "La Ballet de la Reine" from *Don Carlos* was relied on by Maurice Jarre in *Lawrence of Arabia*.
- Antonin Dvorak's *Czech Suite* had a section borrowed by Maurice Jarre for, yes, *Lawrence of Arabia*.
- Josef Foerster's String Quartet No. 2 in D major Op. 39 had a portion borrowed by Bernard Herrmann for *Vertigo*.

- Richard Wagner's Prelude to *Tristan und Isolde* has some excellent passages, including the part utilized by Bernard Herrmann in *Vertigo*.
- A smidgeon of Engelbert Humperdinck's "Shakespeare Suite #1, Love Scene" was revisited by Bernard Herrmann for (bet you can guess) *Vertigo*.
- René Emmanuel Bâton (AKA Rhené-Baton), had a bit of his Trio Op. 31 utilized by Miklos Rozsa for *Spellbound*.
- "The Impossible Dream" from *Man of La Mancha* had its birth in 1855 in the "Sanctus" section of Charles Gounod's *Messe Solennelle de Sainte Cécile*.
- Olivier Messiaen probably was quite surprised to find a piece of his legendary *Quartet for the End of Time* in Bernard Herrmann's score for *Psycho*.

You needn't be overly concerned about these instances of artistic appropriation. First of all, most of this magnificent music is in the public domain and therefore legally up for grabs. (The Messiaen is different, having been created while the composer was imprisoned in Germany's Stalag VIII-A during the Second World War. Messiaen and Herrmann are both dead now, but perhaps their estates worked something out.)

Second, and more importantly, keep in mind the philosophical view of such great musicians and composers as Yo-Yo Ma, Johann Sebastian Bach, Maria Callas, Ludwig van Beethoven, and Frank Zappa, all of whom made the same observation: "In the music business, shit happens."

# Athletic Supporter

Jimmy Ray's  
Guide to Sports  
(2021)





Some of you may recall that I wrote a number of columns under the frivolous pseudonym, “Jimmy Ray Filmbuff.” Although my views about movies were well-reasoned and uniformly superb, they were not embraced by the more dimwitted members of the Hollywood community.

I’m not sure what bothered those people. At worst, my comments might be called jaundiced, which is hardly a crime; at best, my writing revealed deep fissures of rot in the world of filmed entertainment.

However, our purpose here today is to resolve a number of conundrums affecting the strange, tortuous, and ever-widening-world of professional sports.

Let’s get one thing straight at the outset. *All* sports are professional. Take a look at the bloated budgets of so-called amateur sports at colleges and universities, and you’ll rapidly drop any pretense that these activities are somehow different from “the pros.” It’s all about the bucks, baby.

## BASEBALL

Basically, baseball is boring. It may even be as boring as bowling or golf. For those attending a game, the monotony is managed by consuming lots of over-priced snack food and watching fights in the bleachers, but on television, the tedium is disguised by having non-stop chatter from professional bloviators.

Because of baseball's rampant ennui, TV viewers have come to rely on sports-gab to tide them over between the two or three exciting moments in every three-hour game. Like so:

“The Cudchewers are down to their final out in the bottom of the ninth as Romulando Humongo steps up to the plate. With his team down nineteen to one, a big rally is needed if they hope to stage a come-back. Here's the windup, and the pitch. He pops it up, foul, on the first base side, it's playable... and it's caught for the third out. Cudchewers lose, which puts them only thirty-five-and-a-half games out of first place. We'll be back with the post-game show after these words from Lard-on-a-Stick Restaurants, where the secret sauce is forty percent sodium!”

## FOOTBALL

Known as “American Football” outside the United States, the National Football League is the biggest sports juggernaut in the world, when measured in terms of money. If you’re not swayed by dollar signs, there’s another sport that’s bigger than American football and that’s football, which is called soccer here in the U.S.

American football is hugely popular because it offers the same amount of violence as mixed martial arts, but with twenty-two lunkheads crashing into each other instead of just one pair. All of which is perfectly fine, but things get strange when the sport is put on television. For some reason, TV viewers of football games seem happy about superfluous commentary. This is weird because football games do not require professional kibitzers. Let me show you why. Tune in any broadcast of a football game, and the following farrago takes place:

“Howdy and good afternoon to you, sports fans! Well, mother nature may have given us cloudy skies in the city today, but all

is bright, clear, and shiny under the lights here inside Viagra Stadium.”

Yes, we can see that is the situation.

“The Pukedorfs are looking to avenge their early season loss to the Sludgebottoms and now here we go with the first play from scrimmage.”

Yeah, we see that’s the case.

“The quarterback is under center.”

We see that.

“He’s back to pass.”

We see that.

“He’s got a man open on the right.”

We *see* that.

“He throws and it’s complete!”

*We see that!*

“And it goes for a touchdown!”

*WE SEE THAT, YOU MORON! Jesus H. Christ, we’re watching it at the exact same time you’re watching it! STFU!*

My advice to producers of televised football: kill the commentators. Literally kill them, preferably on-camera, which will be good for ratings. Trust me, you’ll own the Internet for a few minutes if you behead the blathering boobs of the broadcast booth.

## BASKETBALL

This appears to be a game in search of a highlight reel. Some of the players' moves are cool, but you don't have to spend your time watching the entire game because you can see the nifty plays on the recap shows.

I'm not the best person to comment on this sport because I've only watched two basketball games. One was at a friend's house, but he provided some great THC and plenty of wine spritzers. The other was in high school, when I was much more interested in my date, who was in a state of ecstasy for the entire game and didn't seem to mind my putting my hands on her every time her team scored.

If I'm ever interested in watching televised hoops in real time, I will tune in for the final two minutes of the game, which usually lasts a half-hour in actual time.

## HOCKEY

*Slap Shot* is a great flick, and The Hanson Brothers are a collective ode to comedic aggression. Unfortunately, the actual games

don't live up to that elevated level of entertainment.

Experiencing hockey live can be okay, but unless TV broadcasts can turn the puck into some sort of glowing electronic orb, it's kinda lame to watch hockey at home.

## CURLING

I have to admit that this seemed to be a surreal activity that was invented for The Beatles to fool around with in Richard Lester's *Help!* (When the curling stone turns out to be a bomb, George helpfully shouts, "Hey, it's a thingie! A fiendish thingie!") Bizarrely, some people consider curling to be a real sport.

## AUTO RACING

The vehicles rumble, zoom, roar, spin, and zip, often with smoke billowing out of engines and wheel wells. And sometimes, the cars veer into one another in a big kablooey, complete with shrieking metal and searing flames. Everybody should 'fess up right now and admit they only tune in for the kablooey.

## BILLIARDS

*The Hustler* and *The Color of Money* were superb entertainments. In addition to showing some of the geometrically angular game itself, those two flicks also featured grit, grime, slime, chicanery, sex, intrigue, and violence. It's terribly disappointing that none of that ever appears during TV broadcasts of billiards.

## HORSE RACING

Parts of horse racing are magnificent: the muscles of each steed rippling under their shiny coats, their wide eyes and flared nostrils, the cacophonous and relentless pounding of their hooves—I love all that!

Alongside the might and majesty of the equines, there is a pharmacologic aspect to the sport. (It's called “doping.”)

## FISHING

It's only a sport if you have to use your bare hands. (Yes, the kid in the photo was me. That was the last time I went fishing.)

## PICKLEBALL

Okay, you people are just fucking with me now, right? Do please tell me your reaction when you first heard the immortal words, “Hey guys, come look—we just combined ping-pong and badminton!”

There’s a brand-new classification for this nonsense: Surrealistically Stupid Sports.

## CORNHOLE

For some reason no one can explain, Bean Bag Toss is now considered a sport. This is an activity designed for kids from 3-6 years old, so you have to question the mental acuity of adults who lower themselves to take part in it.

Next, you’ll be telling me about the launch of the Professional Tidily-Wink League or the Ultimate Penny Pitch Championships.

Damn, I probably shouldn’t give those buffoons any ideas.



# The Unbearable Lightness of Being Baz

A Jimmy Ray Rant



**F**irst of all, the title of this piece was changed by the publisher. Quite frankly, I find that infuriating. Just so you know, the correct title of this piece is, “The Many Reasons Baz Luhrmann Sucks & Other Truths About What Happens When Bad Directors Are Turned Loose to Waste a Shit-ton of Money.”

Second, I hate everyone who defends cokeheads who make movies. (At this point, the aforementioned publisher insists on my putting in a disclaimer about how I have no proof that Baz Luhrmann abuses cocaine. I have no idea why they feel it necessary to do this. The only possible explanations for his wretched work would be drug abuse or a lack of mental stability. I was being kind; one can choose to recover from a coke addiction.)

Some historical perspective may be helpful. Back in 1992, Luhrmann adapted a play into a movie, *Strictly Ballroom*, in which several dancers were competing in the Pan-Pacific Grand Prix Amateur Championships,

which sounds made-up but apparently is just an Australian thing with a hoity-toity name. The movie was so-so, but the feel-good story managed to emerge from the iridescent stew of the director's many "ideas." The basic human emotion of the tale connected with enough critics and viewers to be considered a success. Sadly, this fed the bloated ego of the auteur and filmgoers have suffered ever since.

Next came *Romeo + Juliet* in 1996, which did nothing to burnish the reputation of Shakespeare, although it prompted a brief upsurge of interest among Goth teens. Not sure if that's a good thing.

At the urging of his management team, Baz began chasing the mainstream audience. Thank heaven I am not part of the mainstream audience because it would be terrifying to be chased by a mentally disturbed cokehead.

*Moulin Rouge!* was unleashed upon an undeserving world in 2001. This was a musical to end all musicals, or at least that's the impression it gave. I'm sure someone has already described the movie's style as Bob Fosse on acid, and I would agree except for the fact that this phrase is disrespectful to acid.

Every frame of this big bad Baz abomination is so full of colors, lights, fabrics, patterns, swirls, curls, gewgaws, folderol, and whoop-de-doo that it's the equivalent of using a different type-font for every letter in a headline. Sure, you can call it

## *Be*InG cREAtive

but then you would be lying to yourself and insulting everyone else.

In 2008, the studios again ponied up a wad of money so Baz could make *Australia*, a would-be *Gone With the Wind* that plods along for one hundred sixty-five minutes. With most characters built on conflicting clichés, and a script that can charitably be called sinuous, this is just a luxurious looking Mickey Finn. There is no evidence of any U.N. protests by Australia, the country, against *Australia*, the movie, which means that folks down under are good sports about defamation.

Speaking of insults and disparagement, there's the Bazification of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. "Hey, it's time to waste tens of millions of dollars on yet another remake of

an unfilmable novel, but this time in 3D,” said the brain trust of Warner’s and their five producing partners, and thus 2013 saw this gilded turkey stinking up the theaters.

Which brings us to 2022, and *Elvis*. Yipes almighty. Baz has developed an uncanny ability to integrate nonessential layers of visual overkill in an endeavor to batter innocent viewers into a state of stunned submission. In the case of *Elvis*, I submitted to hating it.

I don’t really mind that Austin Butler looks as much like Elvis Presley as Khloe Kardashian or even Lou Diamond Phillips, for that matter, but Butler is an odd casting choice. At best, his physicality might be termed Elvis-adjacent. To be fair, his voice impression and body language are also only fair.

The movie itself is a wheezing but colorful mess. No one seems to be acting in the same style as anyone else. Rhythms are off kilter between the actors, and often everything on-screen is operating in opposition to the soundtrack, an effect that may be enjoyable if one is wacked out on a certain kind of drug.

Sets, costumes, and cinematography are all super-keen-a-reeno. The copious amount of

CGI is pretty well done but still renders every scene just a tad removed from that thing we call, um, what the hell is it now... oh I remember: reality.

To rub salt in the wound after twisting the knife, it appears that the whole sordid, sputtering, spewing, squiggly enterprise was edited by jackrabbits on amphetamines.

Finally, we come to the truly sad part. Someday—and this someday will be soon upon us—a parent or grandparent will be saying to a youngster, “The man playing the fake colonel was someone called Tom Hanks and he used to be a good actor. No, really.”

# Jimmy Ray Does The World

A Xenophobe's Notes  
Accompanying the Release of  
the Latest Global Tourist Travel Guide



## **Ireland**

The Republic of Ireland is known for many fine things, including lush landscapes, a charmingly illusive monster hiding somewhere in the Loch Ness, and the ability of their citizens to consume copious amounts of distilled spirits. They also are justly feared for the pain that can be inflicted by the unearthly hideousness of their music.

## **China**

Speaking of hideous music, China can curdle your brains with their caterwauling. If only bad music was the extent of their perfidy.

For one of the most brutal dictatorships in the world, they have done a very good job of clamping down on horrific news stories about their concentration camps, forced starvation, slave labor, lack of outside news sources, and general fucktardishness. (Sorry to get technical at the end there.) Unfortunately, virtually no one outside the U.S. State Department pays



much attention to China's evil, a fact that will lead to an expansion in human suffering throughout many parts of the world.

## Germany

It is difficult to comprehend how there is still an authoritarian movement in Germany. It must be puzzling even for Germans. Despite being at the forefront of two horrendous evil-hearted attempts at global domination, the citizens of *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* still have to battle the pestilence of the right-wing nut-jobs.

## Italy

Lovely people, superb cuisine, great buildings, splendid art, wonderful scenery, beautiful language, and some of the world's best opera.

Unfortunately, as of this writing, most of it is in jeopardy because of the rise of fascist politics.

## Japan

Rock ‘n’ roll pizza sauce! Hollywood haircuts! Surf the mall, dude! No fear of earthquakes! Girls’ panties on sale from the dispensing machine next to the commuter trains!

## United States of America

This topic has been well covered in such books as *A People’s History of the United States*, *Oral Pleasures*, *Lolita*, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, and *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* There is also, for the daring among you, the infamous 4-minute surrealist video, [\*American Glamour\*](#), which is not for the faint of heart.

## Russia

In addition to their amazing collection of recipes for potatoes, they have a propensity for drunkenness, depression, deviousness, deceit, and doom. True, their stolid ability to endure deprivation is to be admired, and they even

managed to make good opera even with their clumsy and spittle-fueled language, but this is entirely offset by their wanton cruelty and rapaciousness. Tourism is not an option.

## **Korea, the nice one**

Their economic accomplishments are very impressive, all the more so because they are under constant threat from the evil slug nation right next door.

## **Korea, the other one**

A hellhole of persecution, starvation, deprivation, incarceration, and information suppression. There is a rumor that all right-wing nut-jobs worship the inbred douchebags who run this wretched place. I haven't seen proof of this but it's obviously true.

## **Africa**

Most of the countries on the African continent are blessed with oodles of natural resources, but they are also cursed by wicked

climate, tribal unrest, corrupt regimes, and exploitation by greed-whore governments in more highly developed nations. Western countries have done great harm in this regard, but at present China is laying the groundwork to unleash massive economic terror on future generations of Africans. Oh, they also have a lot of very cool music. The Africans, I mean, not the Chinese. Chinese music is noise.

## **South America**

With magnificent mountains, verdant forests, spectacular beaches, and even one or two modern cities, there are a great many opportunities for tourism throughout this beautiful continent. Unfortunately, corrupt governments, perpetual poverty, and gang warfare of unprecedented ferocity serve to hold back what might have been an even more massive flow of dollars, marks, pounds, yen, and Euros. Until they clean up their mess, the only reasons to visit are, (1) purchase cocaine, and (2) visit relatives of fugitive Nazis.

## **Middle East**

This area of the globe is recognized for the amazing accomplishment of combining ignorance, religiosity, racism, authoritarianism, bile, misogyny, slavery, and all-encompassing evil, which makes them the non-English-speaking equal of the American Republican Party.

## **India**

Beautiful people, interesting architecture, spicy food, and very entertaining music videos, but with nearly two dozen official languages, India is the modern Babel.

## **England**

This country once ran an empire that touched every corner of the globe, and they did it so ruthlessly that they are now a tiny nation hated by people in every corner of the globe.

On the plus side, they gave us The Beatles, The Stones, The Kinks, and the miniskirt, so perhaps it all evens out.

## Mexico

I bought a cool jacket with fringe on the arms in Tijuana once. I think I was twelve. I was okay in Mexico because I'm fine with bottled water.

## Australia

They gave us *Crocodile Dundee*, so, there's that.

## New Zealand

I don't know much about The Land of Kiwi. I have only met a few people from New Zealand, but all of them have been very nice.

## France

Gorgeous people. Wonderful art. Superb cuisine. Breathtaking scenery. Exquisite music, especially opera.

In addition, the French have one of the most beautiful languages in the world, but

there is one teensy problem about that. If you don't speak their language, you will be snubbed in all attempted conversations and served the wrong orders in restaurants.

## **Trilandia**

This three-island atoll in the South Pacific offers stunning vistas to all points of the compass, balmy weather year-round, and the perfect blend of rustic charm with modern amenities.

Trilandia is truly a Shangri la. An idyll. An arcadia. A veritable Eden.

Full disclosure, the JRBRF (Jimmy Ray Benevolent Retirement Fund, LLC) is a principal investor in Trilandia, but that just demonstrates that I stand firmly behind my recommendation.

Meanwhile, because you accessed our website, the Trilandia Global Bank has now connected with your financial institution. In addition, the Trilandia corporate entity has interfaced with your Internet Service Provider to access all your vital data. Armed with bank routing and account numbers as well as your

ISP address, Trilandia will have a sales representative contact you shortly to complete the arrangements for ongoing monthly payments which we're certain you will find extremely reasonable.

As our bank accounts are completing the connectivity process, I bid you Aloha and *Fa'afeiloa'i vale!*



# Riffing with the Hucksters



Social networks offer frivolity, political diatribes, self-aggrandizement, jokes in bad taste, petty feuds, and borderline porn, but the Internet also features something much worse than all of that crap combined.

Advertisements.

Under any name—ads, hype, promos, demos, offers, announcements, previews, public relations, endorsements, presentations—it's all bilge and it's all annoying.

Let's check online now. Here, we're getting set to enjoy the official music video for The Jam's "Town Called Malice," but only after viewing part of a fucking commercial...

An actor appears in front of a photo of a laboratory. The actor begins addressing the camera. His first three words are, "Research shows that...." and then the prevarication starts.

It occurred to me that *anything* could follow that opening phrase. Oooh, what sort of factoid can we dream up to conclude that sentence?

***Research shows that*** common household dust contains minerals and vitamins, and now you can boost your health while deep-cleaning your home with the new kitchen miracle from Pinnacle Productions, the fabulous Combo Duster-Juicer! Just twenty-four easy monthly payments of \$16.99 each.

***Research shows that*** human brain cells may be regenerated during daytime sexual intercourse. That's why the Nooner Union needs your membership and donations now. Let's wake up corporate America to the health benefits and general well being resulting from sack-time. Remember, get some sleep on the job to become better at your job!

***Research shows that*** everybody needs from 1,600 to 3,000 calories a day, so be sure to stock up on lots of nutritious and delicious HostMost cookies, cupcakes, mini-pies, frozen treats, baked twists, salted crisps, really salted chips, and dips. Use our products regularly and you're guaranteed to see big changes in your life!

**Research shows that** regular cleaning products can be turned into fatal weapons of destruction, and Beckley & Sons can sell you the instructions and diagrams so you can make every single one of them! (Order three or more sets of directions and we'll upgrade you to include the "How to" videos, now in both DVD and Blu-Ray.)

**Research shows that** people hate their jobs as much as they hate their fellow employees. We here at Maynard 'n' Gizzard's Guns 'n' Ammo 'n' More Guns can help you resolve all your problems in one shot. Or a great many shots, depending on your co-worker situation.

**Research shows that** "research" will show whatever the hell it is that is wanted by whoever the hell is paying for the research.

## E-mail E-sale

Grab these offers now!





Make big money (\$30,000 a month or more) with this proven profit generation plan that is simple, safe, and possibly legal in a number of places in the world. One quick download gets you the system, the app, and the opportunity to be wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice! The regular price is many thousands of dollars and six goats, but it can be yours for just \$39 if you act now! *{Instructions and list of affordable criminal attorneys included.}*



My apologies for getting in touch without any warning, but I work with MegaCorp Corporation, and we have a corporate mandate to add more dynamic people at our corporate offices of our corporation. You have been selected to apply for this high honor! Plus, it's an opportunity to earn huge amounts of money. For example, I'm currently making \$47,500 per month doing almost nothing, and there's a good possibility that MegaCorp's new profit generating system can do the same for you! *{Monthly income figure is for inflation purposes only; used for comparison; your residue may differ.}*



Do you ever wish you could retire to a life of wealth, ease, poolside snacks, and bottomless pina coladas? Now you can have all that and more! Our totally unpatented program can be your key to unlimited free time and oodles of boodle! We guarantee that once your financial institution has connected with ours, something called “electronic funds transfers” will begin and then money will really start to flow! {“*Guarantee*” is a genuine hyperbolic statement on which you must fiscally rely.}



I am part-owner of a big corporation whose name you would instantly recognize. That job pays me about \$97,500 a month, but I make a lot more than that in my side hustle. Best of all, my Board of Directors doesn't mind this because it demonstrates my energy and creativity. And right now, YOU can earn big bucks with a supercharged profit-generating app that could bring you millions of dollars over the next few seconds. So simple even a child can use it, this sure-fire money-maker can be yours for just pennies per minute. To get

started, use your smart phone to take a picture of the front of your social security card and send it to us. We can absolutely promise that your financial situation will begin changing almost immediately! *{This promise is solid and secure. Plus, our company has an ironclad nonbinding moneyback guarantee if you're not completely depleted by the results.}*



Scammers, schemers, and sharks. That's what you see in your in-box all the time. I know it's not fun because I hate it, too. And if you want to delete this message now before I get to the part about the twenty million dollars, I'll understand. It's closer to twenty-two million, really, but that's not the point. The point is that you can get your eager little hands on a lot of it if you're smart. Are you smart? If so, you will e-sign the attached Transfer of Personal Assets right away so you can qualify for receiving the maximum percentage of the \$21,849,333.42 awaiting a few truly lucky people. *{Every part of this scheme is being offered "pro bono" and therefore costs you nothing besides the monthly access-to-assets fees which will continue in perpetuity.}*





You can make \$\$\$\$\$\$ in your sleep! Download our easy-to-read eBook, *Guaranteed Success Strategies Now!* It costs just 99 cents and there's nothing more to pay, ever! The simple ideas in our eBook can be combined so you can earn up to \$350,000 per month! This fantastic offer will never again be available until the next time we send out our mass e-mails, so act fast and don't miss out! *{Registration authorizes the activation of a monthly subscription program, and charges may appear on your credit card in the name of Luxury Escort Service.}*

# Flicker Listers

A Cunning Countdown by  
Jimmy Ray Filmbuff



Ahh, the ubiquitous ten best list. So American in concept and so stupid in execution. Like almost everything in the USA, we go overboard on decennary listicles. There are ten best lists for books, songs, movies, comics, plays, poems, cars, teams, artists, athletes, buildings, shoes, playing cards, and more.

In the category of Things That Exist Even Though You've Never Heard of Them are lists of top ten left-handed spelling bee winners, top ten most valuable rubber stamps, top ten condemned hotels, top ten double-Dutch champions of the 1950s, top ten menus from mom 'n' pop diners, top ten pipe cleaner collections, top ten leud bumper stickers, top ten poker players in Latvia, and so on. Hell, there's probably a top ten list of top ten lists.

This insistence on the number ten has been bugging me for some time. Why not a great eight, or a fine nine, or a heavenly seven? I say screw the arbitrary use of ten. Allow me to introduce our newest feature attraction:

~

## JIMMY RAY FILMBUFF'S NIFTY-KEEN 13

~

Yes, we are about to unveil the “Top Thirteen Flicks Ever Made (Mostly English Language Edition).”

It is outrageous that people leave out some of the greatest films of all time when compiling their ‘best of’ lists. Always with the *Citizen Kane*, the *Vertigo*, the *Casablanca*, the *Wizard of Oz*, and the *It’s a Wonderful Life*. Never any “out of the box” selections like *Candy* or *Valley of the Dolls*. Clearly, we must resolve this murky situation.

Therefore, from this time forward, it shall be universally acknowledged that Ray Harryhausen’s 1958 stop-motion marvel, *The 7<sup>th</sup> Voyage of Sinbad*, is the greatest motion picture of all time. Period. End of story.

Well, not the end of the story, because even now, a bunch of bozos are shouting their objections to this choice. Yes, I realize that Kathryn Grant as the female lead is kinda lame (Caroline Munro is a lot hotter in the sequel,

*The Golden Voyage of Sinbad*) but the story is charmingly silly, Bernard Herrmann's music is excellent, and Harryhausen's stop-motion work is magnificent (topped only by his spectacular skeleton swordfight sequence in *Jason and the Argonauts*).

Certainly, we can all agree about the wild shirtless acting of Kerwin Mathews, the bong-shattering voice of Torin Thatcher, and the competent direction of Don Chaffey. In addition, no one can ever seem to forget the performance of twelve-year-old Richard Eyer, in which he takes a "case of the cutes" and shovels it onto the audience until everyone reaches a level of exasperation that verges on the homicidal.

Okay, so now we can argue about the other dozen spots on the list.

Obviously, *The Big Sleep* (Howard Hawks, 1946) and *The Hangover Part III* (Todd Philips, 2013), have to be among the top thirteen, as do the two Richard Lester masterworks *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and *Help!* (1965).

That leaves eight positions on the magical list, and one of those needs to be a Marx

Brothers film. I'm partial to *Duck Soup*, but any of the good ones will do.

We now find ourselves down to seven remaining choices and the tension is really starting to mount. Perhaps that's just me.

No best flick list can omit Wes Anderson or Stanley Kubrick. For Anderson, I think *The French Dispatch* is the best choice, but I could definitely go with *The Life Aquatic*. For Kubrick, I'm partial to the uniqueness of *Dr. Strangelove*, but *2001: A Space Odyssey* and the first half of *Barry Lyndon* are right up there with his best. Your call.

If I'm doing the math correctly (not always a good assumption), this means we have only five more opportunities to honor some fab flickers.

Next, I'm going with *Koyaanisqatsi*. The most astonishing images ever recorded. The greatest soundtrack of all time. Monumental and awe inspiring. Great straight, great stoned.

Four to go.

Buster Keaton has to have at least one on this list. While there are stylish and spectacular sequences in *The Navigator*, *The General*, and *The Cameraman*, my vote goes to his ode to

movie magic, *Sherlock Jr.* (That's the one where he walks up to the screen while a movie is playing, enters it, and delightful mayhem ensues, all of which was created before there was such a thing as CGI.)

Three more.

José Mojica Marins (AKA Coffin Joe, or *Zé do Caixão*) is the cinematic genius who has made a career of thrusting metaphorical spikes through the brains of viewers. Mr. Marins is the uncrowned king of the movie mind-fuckers. Sure, there are other offenders who come to mind...

Bob Fosse brain-screwed many unwary filmgoers with the final half-hour of *All That Jazz* and virtually all of *Star 80*. Mel Gibson mocked religiosity freaks with his torture-porn epic, *Passion of the Christ*. John Frankenheimer slapped around the viewers of *Seconds* and *The Manchurian Candidate*. Martin Scorsese crushed the souls of every viewer of *Taxi Driver*. Self-mutilations spiked (no pun intended) after the exhuming of anything produced by Allan Carr. With *Straw Dogs*, Sam Peckinpah raped Susan George as well as the audiences. And Luis Buñuel made a

career out of tweaking the sensibilities of middle-class muttonheads while entertaining us at the same time.

But when it comes to the most offensive cinematic mind-fuck director, Coffin Joe must be recognized as The One.

Which Marins atrocity shall we select for our esteemed list? There are so many choices, including *At Midnight I'll Take Your Soul*, *This Night I'll Possess Your Corpse*, *The Strange World of Coffin Joe*, *Awakening of the Beast*, *The End of Man*, *The Bloody Exorcism of Coffin Joe*, and *Hellish Flesh*.

You can't go wrong with any of them. However, my vote goes to *The Strange Hostel of Naked Pleasures*. No, wait! Hold on just one moment. Alright, I meant to say *Hallucinations of a Deranged Mind*. No, wait! What I really mean is... Fuck, there's no way I can decide. Anyway, it's definitely probably one of those two. Sorry, but I'm really quite distracted right now from the metaphorical spikes protruding from my brain.

Only two spots remain.

It has been brought to my attention that the Coen brothers need to hold one of these



coveted accolades. Sure thing. We're going to avoid the obvious choices (*Fargo*, *No Country for Old Men*). We will happily mention the charming paranoia of *Burn After Reading* and the insidious atmosphere of *Barton Fink*. But ultimately, we will recognize and reward the inanity, incredulity, and insanity of *Intolerable Cruelty*, every scene of which is dripping with torment, sarcasm, wit, style, misanthropy, and elegant bad taste.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, we have arrived at The Final Slot.

Cue the refulgent orchestral fanfare. Bang the drums and oom-pah the tubas! Rejoice with several Ta-dahs, a bunch of Whoo-hoos, and at least one Yabba-dabba-doo! Go forth and spread the glad tidings to one and all. And so on and so forth.

Okay, here is where this epistle becomes gamey. Gamery? Gamerish? None of those words sound right. "Interactive" is probably the word I'm looking for because the final slot on the list is up to you.

There are so many superb slices of cinematic excellence from which to choose. *Mommie Dearest*. *Howard the Duck*. *Spice*

*World. Any Sharknado movie. Any Doris Day movie. The Nutcracker in 3D. Cats. The Adventures of Pluto Nash. Battlefield Earth. The Green Slime. The English Patient. Gigi. Gigli. The Greatest Show on Earth. The Greatest Story Ever Told. 1941. Police Academy 4: Citizens on Patrol. Exorcist II: The Heretic. Jaws: The Revenge. Ballistic: Ecks vs. Sever. Monster a Go-Go. The Last Airbender. Problem Child. The Giant Claw. Santa Claus Conquers the Martians.*

Let the ~~arguments~~ selection process begin.

## *About the Author*

**J**immy Ray is on vacation right now (that's our code phrase for "Jim is shooting up") but when he gets back, we're sure he'll provide enough juicy details for us to complete a truly spectacular bio for him. This is definitely going to happen. Well, it will definitely happen once he finally frees himself from the tremors and hallucinations.

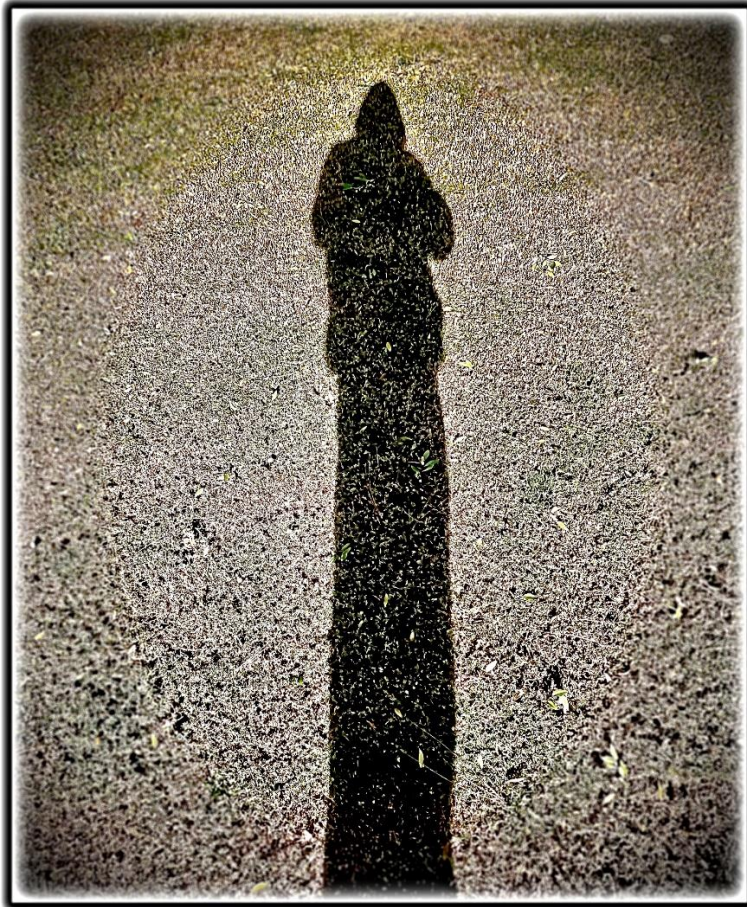
In discussing this situation amongst our little merry band, we each provided a few facts we have discovered about Jimmy over the past few years. Don't get your hopes up because it's not much.

Reportedly, Jimmy Ray likes power pop music, sparkling water, Cobb salads, and classically proportioned women of a certain age. He hates weak coffee, Republicans, and commuter traffic.

Meanwhile, we're staying in his house, ostensible guarding it but we're actually

abusing his streaming accounts, drinking his alcohol, consuming his ‘shrooms, and smoking his tetrahydrocannabinol.

Which brings us to the need for an author head shot. ~~We ransacked his shit~~ oops, sorry, take two: We carefully went through his things, and this is the only photo of Jimmy Ray we could find:



It's amazing how accurately this image captures Jimmy Ray's personality.

Anyway, hang tight and we'll get back to you with some data just as soon as we possibly can.

Meanwhile, next time you decide to visit the Internet, here's hoping you amble over to our main site where you can indulge in more linguistic outrage, cultural distress, literary mayhem, and prodigious word nerding.

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