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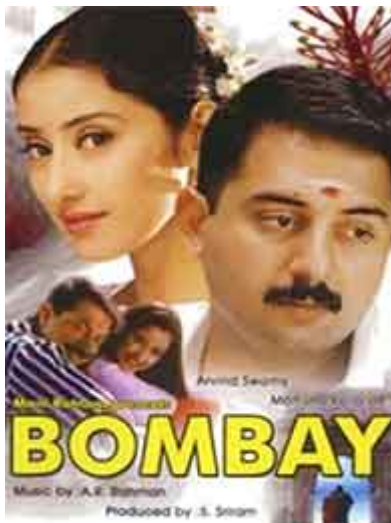
THE BEDLAM FILES

With Adam Groves

“Just get rid of however you thought it should be, forget about standardization, forget about compatibility, just junk all that stuff and let’s start with something fresh and new that really works right.”

— Douglas Trumbull (RIP)

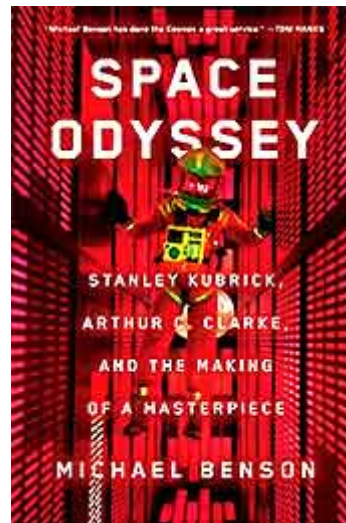
Streaming Now



1. **BOMBAY**

The good news: Netflix is now acquiring Bollywood films. The bad news: Most of those acquisitions suck. This 1995 Tamil language epic, thankfully, is one of the better examples, blending romance, slapstick, action and politics into an insanely melodramatic, wildly energetic stew with (of course) quite a few large-scale musical numbers. At 140 minutes, BOMBAY is shorter than most Indian films, but director Mani Ratnam has nonetheless turned out a

Adam's Picks



1. **SPACE ODYSSEY: STANLEY KUBRICK, ARTHUR C. CLARKE AND THE MAKING OF A MASTERPIECE by MICHAEL BENSON**

Published on the fiftieth anniversary of Stanley Kubrick’s 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, this 2018 book can lay claim to being the definitive resource on the making of that classic. Quite a few never-before-told-stories about the film’s production are aired, as is the odyssey of its recently deceased visual effects supervisor Douglas Trumbull and his relationship with

fully satisfying Bollyweird blast.
NETFLIX



2. WATCHMEN

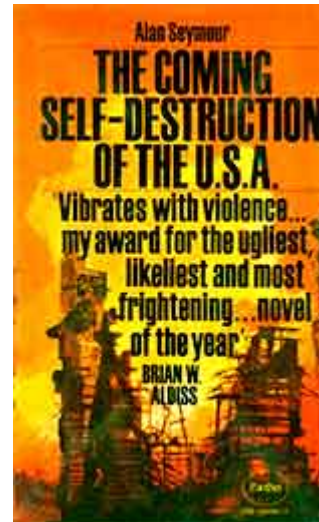
Anyone remember this film? The first attempt at adapting the seminal Alan Moore/Dave Gibbons comic series to the screen, it was one of Warners' major 2009 tent poles, and not the massive hit everyone was anticipating. WATCHMEN is, however, among the very few films from the aughts that's improved with age, offering up a scrupulously faithful, unapologetically R-rated rendering of its source material with (thankfully) no concessions to modern-day politics.
NETFLIX



3. I SAW THE DEVIL

This nastier-than-expected 2010 offering from South Korea's Jee-woon Kim, of **A TALE OF TWO SISTERS** and **THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE WEIRD** fame, contains more bloodletting than I can recall seeing in any other recent film, horror-themed or otherwise. It features a renegade cop (Bynug-hun Lee) willfully blurring the lines

Stanley Kubrick, which went from hostile to (following Kubrick's death) retrospectively affectionate.
BOOK



2. THE COMING SELF-DESTRUCTION OF THE U.S.A. by ALAN SEYMOUR

Of the many **urban apocalypse fantasies** that appeared in the late 1960s and early 70s (**SIEGE**, **MEETING THE BEAR**, etc.) this is the most outrageous. Written by an Australian playwright, it's an epistolary novel consisting of letters and diary entries detailing a black uprising that reduces America to a state of total anarchy. Let's hope this conception doesn't come true, although it seems increasingly likely that we'd all be well advised to start hunkering down.
BOOK



3. WOLFGUY: ENRAGED LYCANTHROPE

Kung Fu and lycanthropy: an irresistible combination if you ask me, and this 1975 Sonny Chiba

between good and evil in his all-consuming quest to avenge the murder of his daughter at the hands of a depraved serial killer (OLDBOY'S Min-sik Choi). The film is exciting and impressively lensed, but the ridiculousness of the plot blunts its impact.

AMAZON



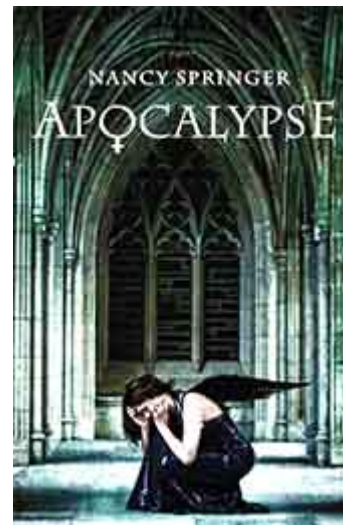
4. **PAM & TOMMY**

A miniseries that has plenty of problems, including a wavering quasi-comedic tone (with a talking penis bit that doesn't work at all) and distracting camerawork (in the first three episodes, at least) that's constantly trying to out-Steadicam itself, but PAM & TOMMY is compelling nonetheless. About the creation and dissemination of the infamous Pamela Anderson-Tommy Lee sex video, it boasts great performances by Lily James as Anderson, Sebastian Stan as Lee and a near-unrecognizable Seth Rogan as the disgruntled contractor who stole, and profited from, the offending video.

HULU

vehicle proves it. WOLFGUY is certainly one of the most unique and fascinating of Chiba's 200-plus films, with him playing a tough cop who happens to be a werewolf. This makes for a film packed with gore, explosions, Sam Peckinpah-esque gunplay and Kung Fu fighting--enhanced, as was the case with most old school Chop Sockey films, by outrageously over-modulated whishing and thwacking sound effects

FILM



4. **APOCALYPSE by NANCY SPRINGER**

An early novel by the prolific fantasist Nancy Springer that reads like a more fanciful variant on THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK. APOCALYPSE contains many pleasingly imaginative touches and an enjoyable feminist-minded narrative, plus it's packed with a goodly amount of death, destruction, nightmarish visions and scary monsters, all set in a depressed mining town where male-female relations are stuck in the eighteenth century.

BOOK



5. **BIG BUG**

A sci-fi satire by France's Jean-Pierre Jeunet that's received downright venomous reviews, with "Dreadful" and "Scatterbrained" being among the nicer invectives hurled at it. About that first adjective I disagree but the second is on point, as **BIG BUG** is indeed scatterbrained--and also vastly overlong and uneven--but its heart is in the right place. Featured are a group of mismatched people trapped in a futuristic suburban house after the robots regulating everything go haywire, leading to much comedic desperation and perversion (the element that more than anything else seems to have set off so many reviewers).

NETFLIX



5. **SON OF INGAGI**

An ersatz sequel to the 1930 exploitation atrocity **INGAGI**, **SON OF INGAGI** is of note primarily because it was the "first" all-African American horror film (if you don't count **THE DEVIL'S DAUGHTER** from 1939), and also because of its unprecedented-for-1940 portrayal of a brilliant woman scientist. Just don't expect too much.

FILM

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The Blair Witch P...

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Posts with movie trailers attached!

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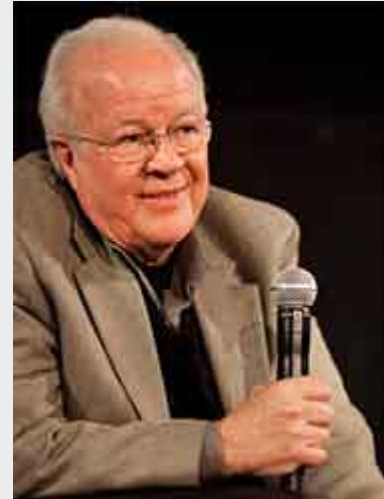
The Bedlam Files enews is now archived on the website!

Same links and information you've come to expect, just a lot easier to find.

Newsletters!

Insider Info

My connections to **Douglas Trumbull**, who died on February 7, go way back. Firstly, I can recall a grade school chum bragging about being part of the California Boys Choir heard on the soundtrack of Trumbull's 1983 film **BRAINSTORM**. A few years later I paid multiple visits to the Culver City headquarters of the Trumbull created Showscan, which employed my dad, and the Trumbull headed Berkshire Motion Picture Company in Massachusetts. There's also the fact that in his early years Trumbull attended El Camino College, as I did, and was employed at the late Hermosa Beach, CA based Either/Or Bookstore, as I was (my sister, furthermore, attended a shindig held at Trumbull's house, where she claims to have watched SALAAM BOMBAY). In short, I'm in an ideal position to answer the frequently posed question, "Whatever happened to Douglas Trumbull?"



Trumbull was one of Hollywood's key special effects masters, starting on **2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY** (which he later called the "Stanley Kubrick School of Film"), and then on **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND**, **STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE** and **BLADE RUNNER**, all of which were groundbreakers in the FX field. His self-directed features **SILENT RUNNING** and **BRAINSTORM** weren't as successful, although the former was reportedly a heavy inspiration on **STAR WARS** (with George Lucas, according to Trumbull, asking for permission to borrow certain elements, specifically a pair of cute robots) and the latter's fraught production inspired Trumbull to quit Hollywood in favor of the Berkshires.

I remember Trumbull as a friendly but extremely reserved individual,

in whose company I viewed several Showscan promo films (the best of which was LEONARDO'S DREAM, scripted by *mi papa*, about Leonardo Da Vinci time travelling to late 20th Century Rome). The Showscan process, which utilized seventy frames per second in place of the standard 24, remains the most striking film projection I've ever experienced, outdoing 3-D, IMAX and DV in clarity, depth and every other conceivable aspect. Of the Berkshire Motion Picture Co. (later called The Trumbull Company), I remember it as a veritable mini-community that may not have been Skywalker Ranch but wasn't too far removed, nestled amid highly rustic New England scenery.



Of Trumbull's final years, they're covered quite well in the 2018 French TV documentary **TRUMBULL LAND**. It shows an elderly Trumbull, still ensconced in the Berkshires, working on a never-completed science fiction feature and reflecting on his past life. After the events depicted in TRUMBULL LAND, alas, the man's health declined precipitously, so it's great to have this document to show that even in his twilight years Douglas Trumbull's energy and ingenuity were without parallel.

[I'm done reading. To the website!](#)

The Bedlam Files, 02-2022

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