

R21

Inconvenient Truth, An (2006)

reviewed by
Steve Rhodes

(M1SUB1S1)**AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH**

A film review by Steve Rhodes

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RATING (0 TO ****): * 1/2

(M1SUB1S2)

The problems with AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH, the ~~documentary about Al~~ Gore's long winded lectures on global warming, start with the title. The film would have more aptly been titled A VERY CONVENIENT THEORY. Parroting the conventional wisdom is anything but inconvenient, and, no matter how religiously you present your vision, a theory is not the same thing as a fundamental truth.

(M1SUB1S5)(M2S1)

As Gore drones on and on, promising gloom and doom if we don't believe him and do what he says, it is easy be seduced by his pictures of disasters and his ominous graphs. Since he has no doubt about his scary theories of climate change, we aren't encouraged to think either. We are lulled into a sense of impending and certain cataclysmic change, with the oceans about to drown us all.

(M3S1)

This propaganda piece is slick -- it is directed by Davis Guggenheim, who directed the "Uncertainty" episode of NUMB3RS, a television drama that tries to convince viewers that math can predict absolutely anything. AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH's purpose appears to be as much about bolstering Al Gore's presidential prospects as it is about seriously examining climate change. From watching hanging chads to visits to Gore's boyhood home to sad stories about his family's tragedies, the movie has everything that any campaign video would want.

(M2S1)

But, let's be honest, the "sky is falling" always sells, both books and politicians. Looking at only the past century, we have had warnings every decade that oil was about to run out in the following decade, but the proven reserves stubbornly just keep going up rather than being exhausted as predicted. In the middle of the last century, it was the so-called "population bomb," which was predicted to soon cause widespread famine. And, most germane of all, the media in the early 1970s was full of dire predictions by "all of the experts" that we were entering the next ice age and that mankind was responsible. Contrast this with today, when the media is just as full of predictions that the opposite is about to occur. The only constant is that "we" are still to blame, so we are told that we have to fix it.

Gore claims that the scientists' elaborate computer models predict that absolute disaster is coming and is already underway. What he doesn't remind you is that your local meteorologist can't even predict whether it will rain tomorrow with much accuracy. Yet, we are supposed to believe that these models, which once predicted global cooling and are now predicting global warming, are to be taken as gospel.

(Continued M2S1)

Remember Long Term Capital Management? They hired some of the smartest Ph.D.s in the entire world in order to build a super-sophisticated stock market model. In the end, it proved to be an abysmal failure, with its collapse rippling through the world's financial markets. Models that attempt to predict the world's long-term climate are a pipe dream, with accuracy parameters so low as to be nearly useless.

(M3S1)

The shapes and directions of many of the graphs that Gore produces as facts are in dispute, and on some of them, the root cause of the graph's direction is anything but conclusively known. Sometimes, he widely labels things as being a consensus, which they aren't, and, at other times, he misstates the consensus. He says, for example, that the experts predict that global temperatures will rise a minimum -- a "minimum," he repeats -- of five degrees, whereas most reports have scientists predicting an average of a modest one degree rise over the next hundred years -- an amount very close to the error variations in the data.

As another example, Gore produces a graph showing that Japanese car companies are much more profitable than American ones. He attributes this solely to American auto companies refusing to make the fuel efficient cars we really want. With many "American" cars containing more foreign parts than "foreign" cars, which are increasingly made right here in America, the most obvious difference is that Japanese car companies are in right-to-work states which don't require union membership as a precondition for employment. What the graph really shows then is mainly the cost of union labor, not some sinister plot by American car companies to force their customers to buy gas guzzlers.

Professor Richard Lindzen, the head of atmospheric studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is one of many scientists who don't believe in the religion of global warming, as preached by Gore and others. Professor Lindzen acknowledges that there has been some warming in the past few decades, just as the period of 1940-1970 featured cooling temperatures worldwide. What isn't clear, as Professor Lindzen has pointed out, is to what extent man has been the cause, and whether we can do much to change the temperature in the future.

Moreover, it isn't clear that slightly warmer temperatures are bad. Some studies have suggested that it would produce a longer growing season, thus being a net plus for the planet. Of course, none of these opposing theories are presented in Al Gore's documentary, other than the times he ridicules those who disagree with him with a mocking tone, suggesting that they must be idiots.

Others have argued that, even if we aren't sure whether man is the cause or not, we should immediately take action. Gore keeps pressing the point that fighting global warming isn't a political issue but a "moral imperative."

(M4S1)

Taking the wrong action, even for the best of intentions, can be worse than inaction. We banned DDT in order to attempt to save some animals and have killed millions of humans in Africa due to malaria, an inconvenient truth that African leaders keep trying to impress upon western do-gooders.

(Continued M4S1)

"What gets us in trouble is not what we don't know. It's what we know for sure that just ain't so," Mark Twain told us. Gore uses this quote early on in the film. Although Gore thinks it applies to those who disagree with his theories. The most obvious application of Twain's quote is to the global warming zealots who believe in their theory with unquestioning and religious intensity.

AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH runs a long 1:40. It is rated PG for "mild thematic elements" and would be acceptable for all ages. - (M4S2)

The film is playing in nationwide release now in the United States. In the Silicon Valley, it is showing at the Century theaters and the Camera Cinemas. (M5S3)

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Failure to Launch (2006)

R22

reviewed by
Steve Rhodes

(M1SUB1S1)

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FAILURE TO LAUNCH

A film review by Steve Rhodes

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RATING (0 TO ****): ***

(M1SUB2S1)

Okay parents of America, it's time to come clean and admit your inner fears. Confess! What keeps you awake at night isn't the worry that your teenagers will get pregnant or do drugs. No, what really frightens you the most is that, when it comes time to bid your newly adult children adieu, they won't leave! Now you've said it. You've gotten a load off of your mind. Nothing like a little honesty to clear the air and improve your emotional disposition.

(M1SUB1S2)

FAILURE TO LAUNCH, by director Tom Dey (SHANGHAI NOON), is a romantic comedy about what happens when parents' worst fears are realized and they find that their thirty-five-year-old son is still enjoying the same free room, board and maid service that he did when he was a toddler. Although it could have been a horror movie for parents, this charmer of a picture is lighthearted fun, thanks to a wonderful ensemble cast, who manage to outshine the film's stars, Matthew McConaughey and Sarah Jessica Parker.

(M1SUB1S5)

(M2S1)

Trip (McConaughey), who dresses like a beach bum, is a guy with classic commitment issues. He tells his 35-year-old buddies, who also live with their parents, "I'm not afraid of love. I love love," which, of course, really means that he doesn't want to get within a mile of it.

(Continued M2S1)

Figuring that only a lovely woman will be able to lure Trip away, his parents, Al (Terry Bradshaw) and Sue (Kathy Bates), hire a "professional interventionist" named Paula (Parker) to entice Trip to vacate the premises. Since she is a professional, she does not fall in love with her clients and certainly doesn't sleep with them. But, since this is a movie, she violates both rules. Since both share golden tans and beautiful bodies, it is obvious from the casting where the story must be heading.

(M3S2)

In a movie with many delicious lines, my favorite came in a bit of boomer philosophy from Trip's almost 60-year-old dad. "When I was growing up, nobody had self-esteem, and we turned out okay," he points out.

The secret to Paula's success is that she always figures out what her clients want and gives it to them. And the secret to FAILURE TO LAUNCH is the subtle scene stealing performance by ELF's Zooey Deschanel as Kit, Paula's roommate. Even in silly setups, as when Kit tries to kill a blabbermouth mockingbird that won't let her sleep, she is both sweet and believable. My favorite scene of hers comes when she tries to buy a shotgun and a single bullet or shell, as the discombobulated sales clerk tries to explain.

(M4S1)

Sometimes a movie works because all of the ingredients come together so well. FAILURE TO LAUNCH is one of those movies.

(M4S2)

FAILURE TO LAUNCH runs a breezy 1:37. It is rated PG-13 for "sexual content, partial nudity and language" and would be acceptable for kids around 10 and up.

(M5S3)

The film opens nationwide in the United States on Friday, March 10, 2006. In the Silicon Valley, it will be showing at the AMC theaters, the Century theaters and the Camera Cinemas.

Web: <http://www.InternetReviews.com> - (M5S1)

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Failure to Launch (2006)

<u>R23</u>

reviewed by
Jerry Saravia

(M41SUB1S1)

FAILURE TO LAUNCH (2006)

Reviewed by Jerry Saravia

RATING: Two and a half stars

(M1SUB1S3)

Sometimes there is a movie that pops up that doesn't work on any level, yet it still surprises you in the end. Hollywood has its share of such passable follies, such as "Boys and Girls" (yes, that Jason Biggs comedy). Notably romantic comedies can fall

(M1SUB1S5)

(Continued M1SUB1S5)

under such a pattern. "Failure to Launch" looks like a cookie-cutter, cut-and-paste romantic comedy that shouldn't work because it looks like any other romantic comedy. Yet, for some reason unbeknownst to me, this movie got under my skin. Who knew?

(M2S1)

"Failure to Launch" stars Matthew McConaughey as Trip, a 35-year-old boat broker who seems to have everything he wants in life. He is carefree, loves the idea of being in love, has his own house, his parents cook his meals and do his laundry for him and, wait a second. No, he does not own his own house at all. He lives with his parents (played by the charming Terry Bradshaw and Kathy Bates)! Trip has never moved out! When he brings a date over to his bedroom, he has sex before being interrupted by his dad and, well, the date is supposed to be horrified that Trip still lives with his parents. It is an easy maneuver for a break up.

Trip's parents, however, are tired of their son living at home. So they hire a "professional interventionist," Paula (the always electric Sarah Jessica Parker) to date Trip and pretend to fall in love with him so he moves out! Of course, this movie has an idea that hasn't been considered - what if the parents just told Trip to move out! Ah, but that would be a different movie altogether and would effectively delete the Parker character and her offbeat, kill-a-mockingbird-with-no-shame roommate (Zooey Deschanel)!

(M3S2)

"Failure to Launch" is hardly anything but a completely formulaic and foreseeable comedy at its every turn. A little surprise here or there would've been welcome, including more scenes with Paula's kooky roommate. Too many scenes focus on Trip's buddies' who of course, well, get wind of what Paula is really up to. There are also scenes of mammals biting Trip...I know why they exist in terms of the main character's evolution but they nevertheless feel distracting. And McConaughey, a handsome, charismatic actor, seems miscast in the role of a 35-year-old slacker (at first glance, the part seems tailor made for Jack Black). That is until you discover why he lives with his parents. Plus, his timing is impeccable when he utters the only F-word in the entire PG-13 movie.

(M3S1)

(M4S1)

"Failure to Launch" has a few funny lines, some ideal chemistry between McConaughey and Parker, a hysterical butt shot with Terry Bradshaw, and a sappy finish that seems earned, no matter how many times you have witnessed it in the past. It is an agreeable, pleasing comedy that leaves me with a certain impression. It is Zooey Deschanel (who was wonderful in "The Good Girl"). Give this girl a chance to make a romantic comedy with Jack Black, and you really might have something than the normal romantic confection.

(M5S1)

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(M5S2)

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(Continued M5S2)

R24

Basic Instinct 2 (2006)

reviewed by
Ryan Ellis

(M1SUB1S1)

Basic Instinct 2 (2006)
reviewed by Ryan Ellis
July 18, 2006

(M1SUB1S3)

Basic Instinct 2 hits its peak during an exchange between Sharon Stone (as Catherine Trammell) and David Thewlis (as Detective Washburn) that leads to one of the most hilarious punchlines of 2006, whether it was intended to be funny or not:

(M3S1)

Washburn: What were you doing at 100 miles per hour? Catherine: He was making me cum. And it was 110. We must've hit a pothole. Washburn: Kevin Franks died. You don't seem very worried. Catherine: I'm devastated. I may never cum again.

After hearing those lines in an early scene in Basic Instinct 2, I was ready to have a great time with this DVD. Bad reviews to hell, this was going to be a hoot & a half. Even some of those who spit venom all over this follow-up to the 1992 smash hit admitted that people might have a campy good time. Sadly, after that hysterical deadpan exchange that had me snickering like it was a Coen Brothers movie, the fun was just about used up. Most of the cast play it like they think they're making a taut thriller, rather than acknowledging that they're in a trashy pic that really had no reason to be made in the first place. And because director Michael Caton-Jones and his screenwriters (Leora Barish and Henry Bean) seem to think we'd rather watch David Morrissey clenching and glowering instead of letting us feast our eyes on that evil genius Sharon Stone, well, who gives a rat's balls anyway?

All I wanted to do was to watch Catherine Trammell fuck men and maybe kill some of them, not to follow the dull exploits of Morrissey's Dr. Michael Glass. He's the least believable shrink since, oh probably ever. Not since Paris Hilton took a large pipe through the head in House Of Wax has there been louder cheering in this boy's living room for someone to die than when Morrissey has a leather strap cinched around his neck. Deep sigh of depression, he had more uncharismatic things to do in this story and didn't choke to death right then. Dr. Glass has a knack for turning up after the fact at the death scenes of other people, yet he just wouldn't cooperate and join them on a slab. Where IS that damn ice pick?

This idiot is clearly no match for devil-lady Catherine. Our heroine/villainous has her reasons, but I'm still puzzled about why she even bothers to strip down for the guy...except because the screenplay says, "They bone now." We know from the '92 edition that Catherine does everything for her own pleasure and she'll manipulate

(Continued M3S1)

anybody to get what she wants. Maybe that's just it. What better challenge than to mess with the head of a guy who gets paid to mess with heads? Like Hannibal Lecter, Catherine is a virtuoso in the field of puppetmastering. She does it to get herself off. Actually, you'll have a hard time figuring out a reason why she does anything in this movie. Sometimes she's just kinda there...like Lecter was in his own sequels.

Not that it's a total loss. We do get some nice nekkid glimpses of a woman who was 47 when they shot this picture. Sultry Stone does a bang-up job in the seduction scenes. She doesn't seem very motivated, though. Maybe Catherine just misses her ex-boyfriend. Remember that intense young man---well, old man---from the '92 picture? The studio could have at least anted up and paid Michael Douglas a tidy penny to come in at the end and shoot the dude who was bangin' his girl. Or did Catherine kill Douglas' Nick Curran character somewhere back in Frisco? Don't know, don't really care enough to say more about it.

(M2S1)

Okay, the story. Novelist/sexaholic/murderess Catherine now lives in London, having gotten away with multiple murder in the original Basic Instinct. She Evil Kneival's her car into a river in the opening scene and her soccer-playing lover (who was drugged to the hilt) dies while still buckled up in the passenger seat. Dr. Glass is asked to evaluate if Catherine is too dangerous to be let out on bail. His claim that she has a risk addiction (one where her only limit would be her own death) matters not when the case is thrown out of court. Skip ahead, skip ahead. She becomes his patient. He nails a couple of other chicks. She taunts him by being nailed by other guys. Finally, they do it. More stuff happens. Sex, violence, dialogue that isn't as funny as "I may never cum again", then the big shootin' showdown where Charlotte Rampling lolls around in a "what am I doing in this movie" stupor. And that, kids, is the end result of a project that earned only 10% of its budget during its theatrical run.

(M4S1)

Did anybody learn anything from the experience of Basic Instinct 2? Well, give us what we paid for---Sharon Stone. Let's see her killing rock stars and buddy cops and ex-girlfriends and that sort of thing. Let's see her camp it up and vamp it up. Then again, she sometimes seemed to be slightly aware of what kind of movie she was making, even if no one else was. An actress this intelligent can't possibly have thought this film was worthy of the infamous Catherine Trammell character, right? Nah, this was simply a payday. Too bad Caton-Jones couldn't even ball up and make a sexy murder mystery, as Paul Verhoeven did 14 years ago. The original Basic Instinct gets 2 Boners Up. This one just leaves a guy flaccid.

Epilogue: What about Catherine Trammell and her grievous concerns about not being able to have another orgasm? I'm sure she'll live to moan another day. Maybe she should stick to masturbation, though. She works better alone anyway.

(M5S3)

To icepick me right in the noodle, write to ryan222@rogers.com

Poseidon (2006)

R25reviewed by
Sam Osborn(M1SUB1S1)

Poseidon
reviewed by Sam Osborn of www.samseescinema.com
rating: 2.0 out of 4

(M1SUB1S2)

Director: Wolfgang Peterson Cast: Josh Lucas, Richard Dreyfuss, Emmy Rossum, Kurt Russell Screenplay: Mark Protosevich (based on the novel by Paul Gallico) MPAA Classification: PG-13 (intense prolonged sequences of disaster and peril)

(M1SUB1S3)

Wolfgang Peterson's drowning at the deep end now. After bombing the \$150 million Troy in 2004 and losing the studios more than \$50 million, the hawks surrounding Hollywood doubted any studio would ever have the chutzpah to hand ole' Wolfy another \$100+ million project. But somebody was feeling lucky in L.A. and had pockets deep enough to afford Poseidon a \$160 million and risk with Mr. Peterson. This producer must now be tightening the noose as he watches Wolfgang's final cut. \$160 million is a lot to pay for colossal mediocrity. Hell, it's a lot to pay for a quality film. But Poseidon won't even pull through at the box office. Despite having nothing to do with its predecessor, the 1972 Poseidon Adventure, the stigma of "yet another remake" is growing tired among audiences. And with lukewarm star power and probable critical lashings, Mr. Peterson's career, for all intensive purposes, should be considered over.

(M1SUB1S5)

Poseidon has so little to do with The Poseidon Adventure that parallelisms are more appropriately launched towards James Cameron's Titanic. To get your bearings straight, think Titanic with flashing neon lights, sans romance and naked portraits, and with a whole lot more claustrophobic suspense. But Poseidon can't be criticised for turning a cold shoulder to its roots; The Poseidon Adventure wasn't much fun anyhow. The bitter truth to that statement, though, is that this newfangled, highly-priced remix is just as mediocre.

(M3S1)

As it opens, we immediately encounter screenwriter Mark Protosevich's clunky approach to character development. We flit about a ballroom lobby, the camera swinging to each of Protosevich's stock characters and are introduced to their hackneyed emotional issues in sore attempts to draw our sympathy. But this is a disaster flick; we're all aware this is just the obligatory lull before the storm and the scenes only muster up a sincere form of apathy for these cramped characters. But a stumbling in these opening segments is excusable as long as Peterson can cover up Protosevich's banality with heaping piles of excitement.

(M2S1)

And so the "rogue wave" hits the ship and flips the behemoth on its top, leaving the survivors huddled in the temporary sanctuary of the lobby. But for hardened Navy

(Continued M2S1)

veteran Dylan Johns (Josh Lucas), waiting to be saved isn't enough. He makes an attempt to sneak away from the lobby and is followed by five others. Later we meet up with Elena Gonzalez (Mia Maestro), Jennifer Ramsey (Emmy Rossum) and her boyfriend Christian (Mike Vogel), who've been trapped in the discotheque. Jennifer's father, Robert (Kurt Russell), makes the rescue, and takes them to join Dylan's group.

(M3S1)

>From there, the suspense snowballs, and the group is soon fighting off the water with dizzying speed. These scenes of suspense are hit and miss, hinging mostly on how inventive Protosevich becomes. David Koepp, a master of writing big-budget suspense, drove last year's War of the Worlds with incredible fluidity, hurling his poor characters into increasingly hideous situations devoid of happenstance, convenience or contrivance. Protosevich would do well to study Koepp's methods, as his scenes are based more on structure than invention: the group must reach the top (or bottom, depending on how you see it) of the ship before the water catches them. Like a video game, each level contains a new challenge and puzzle for our characters to defeat. And also like a video game, some of the levels are fun and some, well, aren't. Poseidon often runs into tired bouts of contrivance, where the characters' survival swings in the balance of a convenient happenstance.

(M3S2)

But even despite some monster contrivances, there are still scenes of authentic excitement. In one, the characters crawl through a vertical ventilation shaft rapidly filling with water. At the top, they find a steel covering blocking their escape. Stacked upon one another and soon to be drowning, they scramble to find an exit. It's claustrophobic and exhaustive with suspense.

(M4S1)

These scenes, however, aren't enough to mask Poseidon's hulking fault lines. These characters are no better than those we found in the same ship in 1972. They just dress better. It doesn't help that Peterson's direction is desperate and unremarkable. Emmy Rossum is delectable throughout, but this may just be my little crush (what can I say?). The budget shows off some spectacular sets and some fancy footwork with lighting, stunts, and CGI, but this is its slick veneer. Poseidon's the first big disappointment of the Summer. And although it's not a full-fledged disaster, the studio has paid a steep price for mediocrity.

(M5S1)

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