

Re: for all mankind, another crappy mooe from 1989

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- *From:* OM <om@xx>
  - *Date:* Fri, 15 Dec 2006 19:32:54 -0600
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On Fri, 15 Dec 2006 21:18:42 GMT, Alan Jones <alanvj@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Fri, 15 Dec 2006 03:01:57 -0600, OM <om@xx> wrote:

On Thu, 14 Dec 2006 23:27:18 GMT, Alan Jones <alanvj@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

You're probably right. I'll try and watch that movie again, when I have time.

...The movie and the book both need to be read so you can get the main message that Walter Tevis was trying to get across.

I suspect so, but I rarely read a novel after I've seen the movie.

...This one I recommend. It's actually fairly entertaining, and Tevis really hit the nail on the head about how the gummint would treat a true alien who was posing as human with a hidden agenda.

The movie does reveal that Newton made the record album for his wife, believing that it would broadcast on earth radio stations and received by his wife.

...Right. I went back and watched that one this afternoon, and he does state that it got some airplay for that reason.

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Little, if anything, is said in the movie about Newton's government, or his mission. He is simply trying to save his family, and he knows that Earth has water and perhaps enough advancement to be of some help.

....The book is clearer. Anthea is dying, and the only chance is to get the Antheans to Earth. However, Anthea's resources are shot, so they have to get Humanity up enough to their level so we can build more ships to bring them here. In the movie, the viewer is left wondering whether that's the goal, or if Newton is intending to take water back to his unnamed home "just down the road".

The movie tries to be a mystery where the viewer slowly figures out what it is all about as it progresses. However, it fails in that regard. It is more like a fish out of water story, except that Newton is too well adjusted and in control.

The film was essentially a cinematic orgy of artistic scenes poorly integrated together.

....Nicholas Roeg, natch.

David Bowie was perfectly cast, and he delivered. However most of his acting is passive, and Mary Lou (Candy Clark) seems to deliver more acting and dialog.

....And that, IIRC, was the last time I recall Clark having a role of note until she played that waitress in the 1988 "Blob" remake.

Indeed, you could look at it as the Mary Lou Story: How I fell in love with a married space alien.

....Yes, but then you wouldn't have had "Starman" :-)

I was also surprised that they did not work in an actual David Bowie musical performance scene.

....Roeg wanted one, or at least a cameo scene. Bowie declined, but did do the never-released soundtrack. On a side note, I've heard there's a fan-reworked version out there somewhere, where the soundtrack save

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for Bowie's cover of "Hello, Mary Lou!" was completely replaced with Bowie's other works. "Space Oddity" being the opening theme, "Ashes to Ashes" being the closer, and others like "Sound and Vision", "Heroes" and "Life on Mars" being worked in as well. Never have been able to find that one.

I never saw this in a theater. I would have been studying to learn how to design spacecraft, or earning the money to do so. I did eventually rent a VHS edition. I found it so bad that I fast forwarded through some sections. I was particularly put off by the gay sex scenes, and even the straight scenes had little to do with the story. I'm not sure what version I actually viewed on VHS. The version above, claims to be about a 20 minute longer original version, and it lacks the gay scenes.

....I saw it on HBO for the first time in late '78, about three years after the film left the theaters. The only "gay" scenes that I recall weren't even involving sex per se – they were between Farnsworth and his partner having a drink in the stereo room. I'll have to do some digging, but I don't recall any other "gay" scenes than those. But then again, think about it – this was 1975 when this came out. Had there been any scenes of anyone doing the bumbutter sambo, not only would it have gotten an X rating, Buck Henry's career would have been shot temporarily, resulting in his hosting SNL at least four extra times :-)

This is not one of my favorite movies, and I'm not inclined to research and differentiate the difference versions. I do get the sense that it could be edited, perhaps with some off camera narration added, to make a vastly better movie. The basic premise is good, and I think most aerospace engineering students fantasize about earning a gazzillion bucks and starting their own space program.

....And especially if being given those bucks also came with the guarantee that you'd be doing something you not only wanted to do, but was probably drastically different and more rewarding than what you were being forced to do in your current job. Tell me what engineer worth his slide rule would turn down a job to help design a new spacecraft in order to continue working on F/A or Ergo for a Dremel Moto-Tool.

On the earlier nit, based on the movie, It would seem that just as in reality, some of the public supported Newton's space flight, and others did not. Even some of his trusted friends turned on him. It is true that the "government" shut him down, but it seemed to be more at the whim of few "loose cannons" (possibly implying J. Edgar Hoover

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would so such a thing).

....This was more "black ops" than the Efraim Zimbalist types.

It is also unbelievable that the government would examine Newton in a lab, and later just release him into the public.

....Actually, under the circumstances, it made a lot of sense. Here's how you need to view what happened: Newton had sprung out of nowhere, bringing with him at least nine basic patents – mostly related to electronics, photography, metalurgy and chemistry, IIRC – that turned the entire core of the entertainment and media delivery system inside out, upside down, improved a hundredfold, simplified by at least half, and all at an implied cheaper cost to consumers. This in turn made him one of – if not \*the\* – richest men in the world almost overnight. It made him popular to a superstar level, and while he was somewhat of a recluse from people he didn't allow himself to become a myth. You knew he was there, even if you couldn't touch him per se.

In other words, David Bowie being Bill Gates, but with better fashion sense and the ability to sing \*and\* play the sax.

....Ok, so the feds start looking into this guy because they're naturally paranoid about anyone getting this much power that quickly. Rest assured that the whole ball got rolling in two directions: 1) those who were forced out of business – read: Eastman Kodak, for one – got their representatives looking into whether Newton was violating the Sherman Anti-Trust act with any of his actions, while 2) some weenie paper-pusher at the IRS discovered that Newton didn't exist. While all this was simmering, Newton starts his space program, which gets the DOD and probably NASA involved, and quite probably ever Spookshow Organization as well.

Of course, we can't forget those x-ray photos, which no doubt got leaked.

....Newton's fame is growing, especially since during all this it's clear that nobody's been able to find any clay under those ankles. Which is why when the Feds en masse decide to move, they stage what's more of a kidnapping than an arrest, and all in the middle of a public unveiling of Newton's brand-new spaceship. They take him back to a lab, run him through all kinds of tests to see whether he's an alien or an Alien, and somewhere along the line he's injured. Word gets out, and the press starts tearing the gummit a new asshole the size of which hadn't been seen since Nixon was in office.

....So here's the US Government and all its public and private agencies with the biggest egg on their face since the Pentagon Papers. They've

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taken what the entire world perceives as being an innocent, highly successful, well-respected businessman whose only crime \*might\* have been that he was not a legal US citizen residing w/o a visa in the US, incarcerated him w/o benefit of trial or legal council, and during the incarceration managed to cause him some degree of bodily harm. Had this been some Joe Punchclock, they could have simply picked him up at home, figured out who/what he was, and probably just disposed of him with nobody the wiser. But with a megastar such as what Newton had become?

....So, the only thing for the feds to do was what they did in the book and the movie: sweep the question of whether he's an alien or an Alien under the carpet permanently – with blowing up his rocket being the carpet – grant him special citizenship dispensation, apologize for what happened to him, acknowledge that his fortune was destroyed by a government fuckup and grant him one hell of a pension for the rest of his natural life to compensate, and let him go about his merry way. The alternatives would have had far more negative repercussions, because it would have either forced the feds to admit they kill "innocent citizens" they don't trust, or admit that Newton was a Little Green Man from Alpha Centauri and that life exists on other planets. Neither one is acceptable even today, hence the decision that was made.

....Think about it this way: Newton's plans to save his people are foiled. The ship he arrived in was a one-way ship, the one he was building is now destroyed, the companies he built to fund all this are either gone or O&O'd by someone else, and his fortunes were neutralized by the Feds pulling their dirty tricks. Add to this – and let's just talk the movie here – he's stuck in a human disguise he can never remove thanks to those lab tests. For all practical purposes, he's now just another human. Without money – and lots of it – he isn't much of a threat on a global scale. If he were, he wouldn't have gone through all the motions of building his finances from scratch; he'd have just nuked us from space and let his people take over what was left. He's broke, busted and disgusted, but since he's still viewed by the public – read: taxpayers – in high regard and esteem, the Feds have to do some damage control to save their collective asses. So they take damn good care of him and basically let him retire in public, with the unspoken implication being that he'll simply be retired for the rest of his natural life. Newton realizes this, accepts it, but it obviously doesn't prevent his breakdown.

It was nominated for a Hugo drama award, but was not beaten by another movie, rather it was withheld.

....And the Hugo committee got lambasted for that one, too, IIRC.

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