

# Send in the clowns

At one time most people thought of clowns as those funny guys who somehow emerged by groups from very little cars at circuses. I realize that some small children were scared of the wild antics of clowns at circuses. This probably was the driving force of the dark turn that clowns took in movies. The latest clown prince was of course [Heath Ledger's "Joker" in "The Dark Knight"](#). But to keep your interest in clowns going, here is [EW's list of 18 TV/Movie Clowns](#).

I remember Bozo from my youth. One not listed was a local clown, I remember seeing him as a kid in his clown suit and in normal person form. He would always take time to talk to me in his clown voice, and he always had balloons to make balloon animals. His clown name was Quacky the Clown. I found a site listing for the for [Quacky](#) and a picture at the bottom of this [page](#), but I don't think it would be the same Quacky from my youth.

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## I found it... News story to share

Ok, all you Dark Knight fans, I want to know who would dress up as one of the Batman bad guys and then try to rob a movie theater of its Batman posters? Maybe he thought there would be many other dressed the same way, but this wasn't the first weekend of the show. Most of the movie goers that dress in costume will go on the first day, or at the very latest the first weekend. Well, it happened [in Detroit](#). What was he thinking?

Now most who know me, know that I love to talk about ways to commit crimes. Someday, when I grow up, I would like to write a decent mystery/murder story. I just have some problems with developing characters, that is a story for another day. I can come up with good plots, and even a way to write about the crime and throw out a few false clues. But never in my wildest dreams would I come up with this sort of crime. I mean at the very least this guy should have been robbing a bank, but no, he wants Batman stuff. And how does he try to get it? Dress up as the Joker, and steal it during the Sunday Morning show... Hmm... There are a lot less people at the movie theaters for those early Sunday shows, but guess what guy, you're going to stand out like a sore thumb in that Joker getup. He would have had a much better chance putting on a pair of Dockers and a dark shirt. That would have given him a chance of looking like one of the theater workers.

Oh well, it takes all kinds. I think he could make it in a Dumb crooks list somewhere.

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## **The Dark Knight – Review (finally)**

Well, it took me two takes of this movie to feel comfortable writing much about it. The way I was thinking, watching it the first time, made me fail to see some of the better qualities of this movie. Hint to self, if you are going to see a midnight show, take a nap first. I didn't fall asleep, but my mind was thinking of different things way too often (see [here](#) ).

Now on to the movie itself. The Dark Knight's title says it

all, this movie was dark. The character of Batman is dark, the character of the Joker is extremely dark. The City of Gotham and its police force is dark. The only light in the movie is the new District Attorney, Harvey Dent. The unmasked hero Gotham needs.

The show starts with a mid-day bank robbery, by guys in clown masks. One by one the clowns off themselves and others. A Joker run scheme to rob banks that hold mob money. This was a great introduction to the character of the Joker. Harking back to various stages in DC comic book history, this Joker is not just a raving lunatic, he is also a cold and calculating killer. Anything that will forward his plans is OK with him. This is the darkness that the Joker brings to the movie.

Batman and his past bring up his dark side. His actions may be making the criminal element of Gotham react with the likes of the Joker. Confronting these inner demons is the life of Bruce Wayne/Batman. This Batman has depth. The perfect counterpoint to the Joker. He says he has one rule, where the Joker has no rules. This one rule separates Good from Evil, and Order from Chaos.

In watching this movie it is easy to be taken in as to exactly what the Gotham Police, DA's Office and Batman are fighting. The movie is about the confrontation between Batman and The Joker. Every other plot device, and character development drives home that point. Batman on one hand is trying to protect the people and City he cares about. The Joker is trying to destroy the same. A big game devised by The Joker to test the mettle of Batman. The Joker and Batman are polar opposites again, destined to battle for the control of the city of Gotham.

To get this across the acting need at a very high level. The main actors all portrayed there parts very well. I really think the 'new' Rachel Dawes was a much better fit. She seemed more like a hard nosed attorney to me. I don't think I would

have wanted to get in her way. Lt. Gordon (Gary Oldman again) again made this role his. Even the minor roles were good, I really liked the fake cop Rachel Dawes, he seemed like someone the Joker would hire.

Now my biggest concern of this movie is that it is 2 1/2 hours long. That is a very long movie. I saw this movie the first time at our little local theater for the Midnight show. At the prices that you pay for a movie, the \$5 and \$3 matinee prices usually make up for the fact that this is not the latest in movie theater seating or comfort. For this movie it was definitely a factor. The second time I saw this movie was at a newer theater with full stadium seating. The extra room and comfort of the chairs made the movie fly by. I no longer had the feeling that the movie should be ending soon, based on the number of times I shifted in my seat. I'm sure that seeing the movie once before helped to keep my attention up too, but I know the seating comfort helped a lot.

The sick and twisted plot of the Joker is to cause as much panic and chaos as possible in the City of Gotham. He is working to get control of all of the Mobs in place. He is working to cause panic in the streets. He is working to destroy Batman and the New DA. And for most of the movie it appears that he succeeds. Destruction, violence, murder and mayhem are his stock and trade. He robs a Mob bank and then breaks into their meeting saying he wants to be hired to kill the Batman. He then takes over one of the mobs.

Many people die until the Joker finally reveals most of his plan to Batman just after he is captured. The end of the show Batman is in a different place than he was at the beginning. At the beginning he is an overlooked vigilante, at the end a hunted vigilante, never to be overlooked again. Did the Joker win this battle?

The saddest part of the movie is this line from the Joker:

*You just couldn't let me go could you? This is what happens when an unstoppable force meets an immovable object. You truly are incorruptible aren't you? You won't kill me out of some misplaced sense of self-righteousness, and I won't kill you, because you're just too much fun. I think you and I are destined to do this forever.*

This looks like a lead in to a certain sequel, but with the death of actor Heath Ledger, if one comes about it, this quote will remain just that a quote. I can't see them putting another actor in the place of this Joker. Played in a way never seen on the screen before, and probably never seen again.

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## **American Psycho Hellboy... Never Mind**

We managed to fit in some movie watching this week while the kids are with Grandma, and I was attempting to put them all together in a clever blog post title, but it wasn't to be. Probably my lack of sleep with the new baby and my recovery process has inhibited my creativity. I hope to be back in full swing soon, but it will probably take a few months, especially because once I'm feeling better, I have lots of stuff around the house I need to catch up on and as much as I would like blog posting to come first, it doesn't. As people keep reminding me oh so helpfully, a c-section is major surgery ☐ Don't I know it.

So the 3 movies we saw this week are Hellboy 2, American Psycho, and Fortress.

I did not like [Hellboy 2](#). I actually would have left the theater, but I never got around to asking my husband if he wanted to and that was a good thing because he liked the movie. It gave me a good laugh when we were walking out of the theater and he told me he liked it because we always have the same taste in movies and I really didn't like this one. That also means I don't have much to say about it except that the Abe fish-like character reminds me of C3PO from Star Wars, and I can't believe the actor who plays Hellboy, [Ron Perlman](#), was also Vincent the Beast in the old [Beauty and the Beast tv show](#) from the 80's with [Linda Hamilton](#). I thought he was going to be some Andre the Giant huge guy wrestler type, but it turns out, he is just a regular actor. I suppose my impatience with this movie had to do with the fact that my infection flared up and I was raging with fever yet again in the movie theater. So even though I felt crappy and wanted to leave, I could not pass up a night out with hubby while the kids were away. Even if it was to see Hellboy 2... I'm just glad one of us enjoyed the movie.

Next up is a movie from the early 90's called [Fortress](#). It's set in the future – and it's always fun to see what people thought the future would be like when the movie was made over a decade ago – and revolves around a corporate owned underground prison (think Walmart does Alcatraz). The main characters are sent there when they break the “one child per couple” rule. They had lost their first child, and now they've been caught trying to have another, so they are both sent to prison, even though she is pregnant. This is a fun action-packed movie. When I looked it up on [imdb.com](#) after we watched it, I learned that it is actually a kind of cult classic movie and there are actually multiple endings. Our version was the less happy of the endings, but I still liked the movie. It's kind of violent for early 90's, and if you look it up on [imdb.com](#), don't let the keywords fool you. Let's put it this way, if I had seen the keywords first, I wouldn't have watched this movie, but in retrospect, I

don't think there was really much adult stuff in it – just violence and gore, but they didn't overdo it like they do in some movies nowadays, like the Saw movies for instance. [American Psycho](#) on the other hand...

I will start by saying that [Christian Bale](#) was excellent in this movie. I wasn't so impressed by him when he was Batman in [The Dark Knight](#), but he definitely shows versatility and depth in this movie. He plays a Wall Street executive who is just about as big a jerk as one can be. Also, he has blood lust and likes to kill people in his spare time. The movie is very strange for reasons I can't quite put my finger on. For one, I was confused about what the movie was trying to be. I guess it's just a story about this man, an American Psycho. But at times throughout the movie, the music was strange, and it just didn't play like a normal movie. And then there were the constant 80's references. I guess it was supposed to take place in the 1980's, given the characters' huge cordless phones and constant talk of musical artists such as Phil Collins, Huey Lewis, and Whitney Houston. Why they would change the time period of the movie, I don't know, but they did a good job because if [Reese Witherspoon](#) (who is about my age and would have been a kid in the '80's) wasn't in it, I would have been convinced the movie was actually filmed in the '80's. And I have to say the end confused me a lot. I won't say more because I don't want to spoil anything, but if anyone who reads this has seen this movie, maybe you can answer a question I have. I don't think I'd recommend this movie since there are many disturbing scenes and it didn't seem worth it to me to sit thru them for what you get from the rest of the movie. I don't think I'm going to put it on my list of baddies however, but then again, Hellboy 2 isn't going on there either. Just 2 movies I didn't really like and wouldn't see again, but I don't feel like I wasted my time watching either of them, and that's always a good thing.

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## A TROUBLED BAT?

While reading headlines today, I came across the arrest of Christian Bale that happened on Sunday following the phenomenal opening of *The Dark Knight*. I have two different reactions to this. First, it seems quite interesting that mum and sis would report an assault by a 34 year-old man and then have their son/brother (a 34 year-old man) go in for questioning in conjunction with the crime. This happened the day before the London premiere of the biggest blockbuster of the summer. That sounded rather suspicious to me. Were the two attempting to ride the coattails of the actor?

On the other hand, Mr. Bale may be feeling a bit upstaged by the performance of the late Heath Ledger in the role of the sadistic, immoral Clown Prince of Crime. The Joker seems to be getting all the attention this time around and leaving Batman in the shadows. But as I have always thought, the hero is only as good as the villain playing opposite him. Hopefully, Bruce Wayne did not crack and attack those he swore to protect after he witnessed the murder of his parents in the dark, back alleyways of Gotham City.

Read the full article by [clicking](#)

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## Bale Bails Out

I couldn't resist re-printing the following news item about the star of *The Dark Knight*, Christian Bale. Note the part about police not wanting to question him so they don't



interfere with the premiere of the movie. Seems he took his Batman fight training a little too seriously?

**LONDON, England (AP)** – Batman star Christian Bale was arrested Tuesday over allegations of assaulting his mother and sister, police and British media said.

*“Dark Knight” star Christian Bale pictured in London Sunday ahead of the movie’s European premiere*

The 34-year-old actor spent four hours at a London police station before being released on bail.

British media had reported that Bale’s mother and sister complained he had assaulted them at the Dorchester Hotel in London on Sunday night, a day before the European premiere of his latest film, “The Dark Knight.”

The Sun newspaper said police did not question the actor Monday because they did not want to interfere with the premiere of the movie.

Asked Tuesday whether Bale had been arrested, a London police spokesman did not refer to him by name but said: “A 34-year-old man attended a central London police station this morning by appointment and was arrested in connection with an allegation of assault.”

The spokesman spoke on condition of anonymity because force policy did not authorize him to be identified. British police do not name suspects before they are formally charged.

The force later said in a statement that the man had been released on bail pending further inquiries and told to return on an unspecified date in September.

U.S.-based representatives for Bale didn’t immediately return messages seeking comment. Repeated phone calls to Bale’s London representative went unanswered.

Wales-born Bale first made a splash as the child star of

Steven Spielberg's "Empire of the Sun" in 1987. His screen credits also include "American Psycho," "The Machinist" and "Batman Begins."

In "The Dark Knight," Bale reprises the role of wealthy playboy Bruce Wayne and his crime-fighting alter-ego Batman, a brooding vigilante superhero still scarred by the murder of his parents.

The Warner Bros. film, which stars the late Heath Ledger as Batman's nemesis The Joker, took in a record \$158.4 million at the box office in its opening weekend in the U.S. last week.

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## The Dark Knight

We ventured out to see the midnight showing of [The Dark Knight](#) last week, and I haven't written about it until now because I've been so busy, but I figured I better make some time for it before I forget, so here it goes...

It all began when we found out our little local theater would be showing it at midnight, and since we're usually up with the new baby at that time, we figured why not be in a movie feeding the baby instead of at home? So we got together a group who wanted to see it, and that's when we found out the movie was 2 hours and 40 minutes! Oops, the baby is never up THAT long but too late to back out now! Besides, after all the hype involved, I was actually looking forward to it.

Since almost a week has passed and I'm on little sleep, some of my memory of the details have faded, so this will be a very vague review. I'd have to say the movie was exactly what I was expecting. I was hoping it would be a little better, especially after all the media hype, but it was exactly what I

thought it would be – and that's not anywhere NEAR the 9.6 people gave it on imdb.com. Since I'm not a huge fan of superhero / comic book movies (yet I keep going to see them; not sure what's up with that), I really wasn't expecting this to be one of my favorite movies ever. [Heath Ledger](#) did have a VERY good performance as the Joker, but was it Oscar-worthy? I personally don't think so. I do think he will win it though, but let's just wait and see if he is nominated and who he is up against. And it's not like I ever agree with who wins those things anyway; for me it's just a good excuse to throw a fun party ☐

But back to the movie... there was a lot of violence. I can't believe what they're allowed to call PG-13 these days. Although I suppose it wasn't really anything short of what you'd see on tv, and there was actually little to no blood and gore, so maybe that explains it. The children I saw in the theater were all asleep by the time the movie was over anyway. And yes, I did think the movie went on too long – it wasn't a short 2 hours and 40 minutes, and it didn't really fly by. As my husband pointed out, way too much dialogue for a superhero movie; friends agreed and added that the Batman movies are like that. I've only seen the Tim Burton [Batman](#) from 1989, which I'm told is just a different take on the whole thing and doesn't really fit into the timeline anywhere, and I've also seen [Batman Forever](#), which I really enjoy. So that brings me to my 2nd favorite villain next to the Joker – Harvey "Two-Face" Dent. I just love what [Tommy Lee Jones](#) did with the character in Batman Forever, and I was pleased when I realized that Harvey Dent was going to turn into Two-Face in The Dark Knight, but overall I was disappointed because [Aaron Eckhart's](#) Two-Face was pretty lame compared to Jones'. The makeup was pretty good, although I actually enjoy the more comic book look that they gave Tommy Lee Jones versus the scary look they gave Eckhart for the newest film.

[Christian Bale's](#) Batman was alright, though I couldn't stand

his gravelly Batman voice – it reminded me of the Friends episode where Joey is selling cologne at a department store... If you're a fan of the show and you know what episode I'm talking about, find it and listen to his cologne adversary say "Hombre?" – sounds just like Christian Bale's Batman and every time he spoke in the movie I was tempted to giggle as I thought of that hilarious Friends episode. [Maggie Gyllenhaal](#) was pretty good too; although in scenes with both her and Heath Ledger's Joker, it was weird for me to think that he played her brother's gay lover in [Brokeback Mountain](#), but that's Hollywood for you, it's cyclical.

And since we're on the subject of Heath Ledger's Joker, it was very impressive. Not the kind of movie or role I'd pick for being Oscar-worthy, but that's my personal opinion and like I said, we'll just see happens as Oscar time draws near. He was pretty scary, and I'd have to say Hollywood can mourn him as a good actor because when I was in the hospital less than a week ago, I watched [10 Things I Hate About You](#) (the hospital's limited cable selections + baby up at night = what else do I watch but this bad movie?). Ledger was in that movie, and he couldn't even shed his Australian accent back then! Seeing where he was in that movie versus the Joker did give me appreciation for his work (as the Joker, not in 10 Things...).

And another reason I was excited to see this movie was that I had heard that 80% of it was shot in my former hometown (well, sort of, I grew up in the suburbs), Chicago. It was neat to see all the familiar landmarks, although they did try to anonymize the city so it could be recognized as Gotham City instead of Chicago. I was especially looking forward to the special effects involved in the Gotham City Hospital scene since I read an article about it ahead of time, but I have to say I was a little disappointed in how it actually looked on screen. I don't want to spoil anything for anyone who hasn't seen this movie yet, but I will say that the vacant Brach's Candy Factory on Chicago's west side doubled for the Gotham

City Hospital. And seeing the Joker in a nurse's dress was pretty funny in itself...

Overall, I had a lot of fun seeing this movie. I think much of it had to do with the midnight showing and attending with a large group of friends. The movie was exactly what I expected, although I can say I was hoping for better... but again, I'm not a fan of comic books, and I've never read one in my life.

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## Early Morning BatPost

Before I get into the meat of my post, I would like to apologize to my new theatre chum whose name I could not remember until tonight. All I have to do is recall the name of a state capitol that shares its name with an omelet... hopefully, it does not come to that. I am terrible.

Anywho, *The Dark Knight* is an interesting problem. There are pros and cons to the latest caped crusader adventure. As anyone who has access to any type of media knows, this is Heath Ledger's swan song. His Joker is the highlight of the movie. Everything about him just reeks of sadistic villainy. Just looking at him is enough to send chills up and down one's spine. But more than that, his entire characterization was evil to the core. I am sure that there will be parallels drawn to the performance (there already have been) and his untimely demise; yet, he was utterly phenomenal and should be remembered for it.

I found one aspect to be both a plus and a negative. I actually liked some of the depth of the key players. However, there was a bit (or A LOT) more than we needed. It seems that we knew the life story of EVERY character who has a name and

this made the movie drag at times. Anyone who is remotely familiar with Batman knows that he fights to clean up the corruption within Gotham City... However, it seemed you could only count on one officer to be totally uncorruptable. I will say that it is a case of too much of a good thing. That being said, I believe that Mr. Nolan has gotten the characters and the overall atmosphere right in this film as well as *Batman Begins* (there are no nipples in the batsuit, and Bruce Wayne IS a playboy millionaire... although it is probably billionaire by now... and who is not above falling asleep in his own board meetings after an evening of "fun").

So, while it was lengthy and had lots of down time between action pieces I did consider it worthwhile to be among the first to see *The Dark Knight*. The major action scenes were fun to watch and as I keep commenting, Heath Ledger was phenomenal as the Clown Prince of Crime. The hype about that is totally true. Plus, it was awesome just to be among friends old and new (if I can just remember names). Also, I was the only person brave enough to bring my bucket for BYOB night at the movies. We did arrive before midnight after all ☐ .

I almost forgot to mention my favorite bit. DA Harvey Dent's line:

*You either die a hero or you live long enough to see yourself become the villain.*

Prophetic sentiment.

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# Hancock a different kind of superhero

This show has already be hit hard by the critics. Again it was one I thought looked interesting in the reviews. It was almost exactly what I was expecting. There was a surprise or two in the movie, that I will not give away here.

Anyway the basic story is a superhero with a drinking problem. Like superman he can fly, is very strong, and bullets don't seem to hurt him. He tends to do more destruction than most superheroes and is not in good favor of the city officials. In fact there is a warrant for his arrest.

He does save a struggling ad man who decides to revamp his image. I liked the struggle Hancock had with his personal problems. Even though he was physically superior to normal humans, his emotional levels are not up to normal human par. A good portion of the movie is dealing with this emotional problems, and this did make it slow at times , but I did like that part After Hancock works through his problems, the movie takes off again. And into the couple of surprises I mentioned.

Anyway I think for adults this is just a fun movie. It really won't get you thinking, it is way to spend an afternoon or evening. There is some adult humor, and some violence. The main character is a drunk at the beginning of the movie, so that may be a factor in your viewing pleasure.

So all in all it is a good movie, not up to par with the best superhero movies, but definitely well above the worst. If you don't go into it looking for too much, you may have as much fun as I did.

The surprise plot twists are also interesting.

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# Believe It...Or Not

In almost every film made, there are casting issues. The actors seen in the final product are not necessarily the people originally chosen to fill the roles. Well known to most trivia buffs, Shirley Temple possibly would have been Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* had she not been under contract to MGM rival Fox at the time. Buddy Ebsen was cast as the Tin Man until he discovered that he was allergic to makeup used in the costume.

-Imagine how different *Gone with the Wind* would have been if Lucille Ball had been cast as Scarlett O'Hara or Groucho Marx as Rhett Butler.

-Moving forward a few decades, the Bruce Willis starring action movie [Die Hard](#) was originally planned as a sequel to that fine Arnold Schwarzenegger masterpiece, *Commando*. However, after the Governator turned the role down, the film was changed and eventually starred Mr. Willis after four other casting attempts.

-Speaking of Ah-nuld, could you possibly imagine O.J. Simpson as *The Terminator*? Seriously, it could have happened.

-Bill Murray was considered for the role of [Batman](#)/Bruce Wayne in the 1989 film. Has Mr. Murray ever done a non-comedic movie? Or maybe, the movie was originally supposed to be lighter in tone and closer to the ['60s television show](#). Robin Williams was considered for the role of the Joker in both the original Tim Burton directed movie and also for this summer's *The Dark Knight* (which will be Heath Ledger's swan song).

You can view other possible casting choices for your favorite movies at [notstarring.com](http://notstarring.com).



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