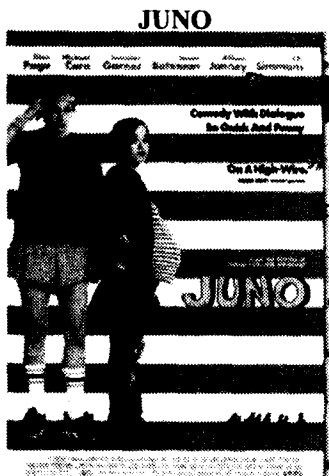


ENTERTAINMENT

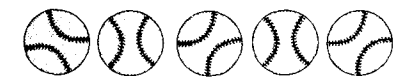
AUMILLER PICKS

By **KRIS AUMILLER**
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Another semester down and by another stroke of magic, I'm still here reviewing movies for all of you. I made my way to the movie theatre several times over the break and everything was good. Not to mention, Santa brought me a lot of good DVDs for Christmas this year. At the top of the list – not that I'm bragging because I'm using it to review – is my Playstation 3 with a Blu-Ray player in it. Therefore, I got to have my first Blu-Ray experience over the break.



JUNO
Ellen Page, Michael Cera; 1 Hour, 36 Minutes



I saw four movies over the break and this had to be one of the reviews since it is up for four Oscars and all, including one for best picture. The previews for this movie looked like a smart comedy and it had a production company that I had never seen before. Therefore, I looked into it (since I have that kind of time). Turns out, it was one of those independent films that critics seemed to like a lot so the producers rolled the dice and broke the bank to

put it in theatres nationwide. (Sound like "Little Miss Sunshine"?) The movie's budget was \$7.5 million and as of Jan. 27, it has made over \$100 million.

"It all started with a chair." Juno MacGuff (Ellen Page, "X-Men: The Last Stand") is a 16-year-old girl who had sex with her very close friend, Paulie Bleeker (Michael Cera, "Superbad"), on a chair in her basement. After three positive pregnancy tests in one day, she calls her best friend to talk about what her options are. After that talk, she decides to schedule an abortion at the local clinic. Outside the door, she runs into a pro-life classmate (who happens to tell her that her baby has fingernails which I thought was pretty funny) protesting alone at the clinic.

After becoming completely overwhelmed at the clinic, she goes back home to tell her parents about her pregnancy and how she wants to carry it to term and give the baby up for adoption to someone who can't have kids. Juno looks through the want ads and finds Mark and Vanessa Loring (Jason Bateman, "Arrested Development;") and Jennifer Garner, "Alias"). Mark and Vanessa offered an open adoption (in which they send letters and pictures) for Juno, but she turned it down in a heartbeat. Juno signs the proper legal agreements and the adoption is underway.

I was more than blown away by this movie. It was a brilliantly written comedy and not to mention the stink-eye (those that have seen it already know what I'm talking about). It had its fair share of gag jokes as well, but it tugged on the emotions towards the end. It really should get serious consideration for best picture from the academy. Then again, I just want to see a comedy win for once. What would be the harm in that? Everybody loves them.
RATING:

Five out of five – the first five-balls of 2008! Well, I guess that didn't take too long. I still haven't learned to not take a date to a movie about pregnancy. Talk about an awkward conversation afterward.

RAMBO



Sylvester Stallone, Julie Benz; 1 Hour, 33 Minutes



Anyone else excited? JOHN RAMBO IS BACK! This is like when Rocky came back last year. What did everyone say?

"C'mon, man, Stallone is 900. It's gonna be terrible." Then John McClane came back in "Live Free or Die Hard" and how good was that? A little farfetched, but it was still good. Stallone made "Rocky Balboa" the second best Rocky movie. (Yeah, I said it – who wants some?) I know he could still do this. Also, here's to Harrison Ford making a new Indiana Jones this summer, while I'm ranting good actors still having it in them.

Burma is in the middle of a civil war. Maj. Tint is destroying the country day and night, going into villages and taking the young boys to enslave as his soldiers. John Rambo (Stallone, obviously) has drawn back to a simple life in rural Thailand near the border of Burma. He spends his time capturing snakes for local entertainers and transporting people in his rickety, yet engine-powered boat.

After returning from capturing a cobra, he is approached by a man named Michael Burnett (Paul Schulze, "Panic Room") to take his missionary group into Burma and help a group of people with food and medicine. Rambo refuses based on the fact that the missionaries aren't taking any weapons with them. The woman, Sarah Miller (Julie Benz), asks him again, and once again he refuses, telling her she can't change the world and tells her to go home. She asks him one more time at night (with a compelling little speech that I can't remember) and Rambo reluctantly agrees. He is taken with her determination and takes Sarah and her group up the river but only answers to her.

While going up the river at night, they pass a camp of Burmese pirates, who see Sarah and will exchange everyone's freedom for her. Knowing that he had to save her, Rambo pulls out the gun he had and kills the three pirates to save her life. Michael scolds Rambo, saying that no life should be taken for any reason. Rambo yells back that Sarah would've been raped 50 times over if they took her. Then, the morning after the altercation, Rambo finally drops the missionaries off at their destination and returns "home" to Thailand. Of course, he had to make a pit stop and burn the bodies and blow up the boat of the guys he killed first.

If you want a gory, "Shoot 'em Up" and an exploding good time, then this is the perfect movie for you. "Rambo" won't disappoint. Everyone played his or her character beautifully. (Thank you, Stallone and Art Monterastelli.) There is nothing but hate for the dictator in the film. Anytime he is onscreen, he is bad news. In some movies, the dictator has a human element to make you feel bad for him in some way, but not in this movie whatsoever.
RATING:

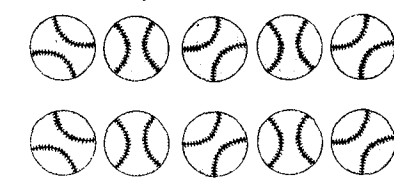
Five. Hey, look at that. The second five out of five of the year. Well, "Juno" did come out first I guess...

DVD REVIEW: PSYCH SEASON 1

psych



James Roday, Dulé Hill



Feel it upon myself to tell people about this show. I've been watching it since it came on TV and it has been one of my top three favorite shows since (next to "South Park" and "Scrubs," of course). For the last four months, I got no "yes" when I asked the question, "Have you seen 'Psych'?" So, if I get my layout girls and my usual readers to watch one episode each, that's like 12 people!

Shawn Spencer (Roday) was being trained to be a detective from his childhood. His policeman father, Henry (Corbin Bernsen, "L.A. Law"), made his son run drills using his genetic gift of "awareness." Shawn would close his eyes and his dad would say, "How many hats are in the room?" Undoubtedly, Shawn would get it right. Unfortunately for a detective. Twenty years later, he had about a 100 jobs and never held one for more than two weeks.

However, he would watch the nightly news and call in tips to the police based on the guilt he could

read off of a suspect on TV. In one of these calls, he is asked to come down to the station. Shawn gets called into an interrogation room where he is asked how he knew the information that he knew. When he is threatened with collaborating on the crime and being the "inside man," the first thing that Shawn spits out is that he is that he is psychic.

When he was in the waiting room, he noticed a cop practicing dancing, another cop with some voodoo-like earrings and a soon to be booked convict with some broken taillight fragments on his sleeve. When he told the con about it, the con brushed them off and they went in his shoe. So, to prove he was psychic, he has "visions" about the one cop being a great dancer at his wedding. Then, another vision about how proud her mother was of her. Finally, he starts kicking his foot and says to check the con's boot for the taillight pieces. After all of that, Shawn is set free. Then, he goes and finds his best friend and pharmaceutical salesman Burton "Gus" Guster (Hill) and says that they are opening their very own private detective agency.

I can't say it anymore bluntly than this: I love this show. Shawn is practically a stand-up comedian throughout every episode and he is perfectly offset by every other character. Gus is a cool, I hate to say, nerd, but he really is on the show and he still gets his fair share of punch lines. Henry doesn't make that much airtime on the show, but when he does he steals every second of the air. Lassiter (Timothy Omundson, "Judging Amy") and O'Hara (Maggie Lawson, "It's All Relative") balance each other out perfectly and make the show smoothly.

RATING:
Ten out five – because I can. It's like "Who's Line is it Anyway?" Points don't matter.

"Cloverfield" comes up short

By **MATTHEW SHORTALL**
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It's amazing that the entire country didn't fall prey to the hype – a puzzling trailer for an unknown movie shot from a shaky digital camera, revealing the head of the Statue of Liberty rolling through a ravaged New York City. There was not even a title attached to the mayhem; the teaser simply ended with an ominous "1-18-08", prophesizing the fateful day of destruction.

The movie, which came to be known as "Cloverfield" (a title initially used as a codename to prevent the leak of plot information) sent hungry fans scrambling like the doomed Manhattanites depicted in the film, frantically searching for any morsel of information in an effort to uncover the secrets of the event. A monster in its own right, the hysteria surrounding the movie spiraled feverishly out of control, as fans eagerly speculated as to what "Cloverfield" was about. Some guessed that it was simply a revamped "Godzilla," others thought it to be about a gigantic Asian robot, and some even (incorrectly) surmised that the film was based on the fiction of H.P. Lovecraft.

The only thing people could agree on was that it had to be good. "Cloverfield" was produced by one of the most talented men in Hollywood, J.J. Abrams (known for creating and producing the cult-hit "Alias" and the juggernaut that is "Lost" – merely whisper his name

and nerds will salivate), and written by clever Drew Goddard (a former writer on "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "Alias", he now serves as Co-Executive producer on "Lost"). This tandem led fans to believe that the movie, much like Abrams' and Goddard's past work, would include all of the familiar staples: a plethora of compellingly complex characters, a sophisticated, intriguing plot and perhaps most important, it would display the trademark witty dialogue which makes "Buffy" and "Lost" so beloved. It seemed that the movie would be a reinvigoration for monster movies, perhaps serving as the much-needed adrenaline shot the dying genre so desperately needed.

Speculation ended, however, when "Cloverfield" finally loomed into theaters. The film opens on a lavish party brimming with young, attractive New Yorkers, celebrating the promotion of their friend Rob (Michael Stahl-David) to a vice president position in Japan. To preserve the memory of the night, friends take turns imparting their farewells to Rob via digital camcorder. Throughout this painstaking introduction, the audience is introduced to the main characters: Rob, Jason (Rob's brother, played by Mike Vogel), Lily (Jason's

girlfriend, played by Jessica Lucas), Beth (Odette Yustman

– playing the object of Rob's affection), casual friend Marlena

(Lizzy Caplan) and "Hud" (T.J. Miller), the mysteriously arthritic cameraman. Beth upsets Rob when she arrives at the party with a male companion, and it is soon revealed that Beth and Rob spent an intimate day together, though several weeks have passed since then and they have barely spoken a word. Beth, resenting Rob's behavior, leaves the party, leaving Rob to be consoled by Jason and Hud. Suddenly, a skyscraper explodes off in the distance, showering debris among the partygoers as a grotesque howl can be heard in the distance.

This opening explosion, clearly evoking 9/11 parallels, provides the film with a promising start as a horror movie for the YouTube generation, capturing how today's technology allows us a more intimate view of the victims of tragedies (Sept. 11 imagery aside, the film also calls back memories of the cell phone footage of the London Subway Bombings), providing a new level of voyeuristic-horror.

The concept is an admittedly fantastic idea. By shooting the film in the style of a personal camera, "Cloverfield" attempts to underscore the importance of each life tragically lost in a catastrophe (whether it be fictional or real); by depicting the ensuing drama of the band of survivors, the film perfectly demonstrates the individual



"Cloverfield", a monster-takes-on-city movie directed by JJ Abrams, used a notorious ad campaign that refused to show the creature in any promotion.

struggles and yearnings that are carelessly snuffed out during acts of terrorism. At the same time, it had the potential to revive monster movies as a genre, by reminding the audience that there is indeed something at stake in these movies, that the city is more than a collection of corny cardboard buildings that the monster falls into.

"Cloverfield" ultimately undermines its agenda by providing characters who are utterly forgettable. Besides Marlena, who (spoiler alert!) does not prove to be a core character, the rest of the gang consists of nothing more than tragically hip 20-somethings who, underneath their generic club-wear and designer stubble, are hopelessly boring in their uselessness. Though there is obviously little room for background information, the plot nevertheless invites infinite potential for character development. Unfortunately, there is not one memorable piece of dialogue throughout the entire movie.

Character development aside, the film even fails to find its feet as a solid B sci-fi movie. Running at a mercifully swift 84 minutes, "Cloverfield" is sparse and light on the scares, especially considering a large portion of the film consists of an agonizingly slow beginning and end. From this point on, the victims of monster movies should stay relegated to the role of little-butts-that-go-squish. Avoid the bells and whistles of this movie. Go see "Juno" instead.