

'Confederacy' of satire and nihilism

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Since the cold reality of my graduation draws nigh and this review stands as my last ever in the "Cap Times," I decided not to review a new release. Rather, I want to brush the dust off an old favorite for the benefit of my three to five loyal and constant readers.

Recently, one of my three to five readers asked if I had a favorite book. I wanted to respond with a title that seemed intelligent and a little bit book-snobbish like something by Dostoevsky, Camus, Melville or even Joyce, but it wouldn't have been the truth. My favorite book is and always will be "A Confederacy of Dunces" by John Kennedy Toole. Not exactly highbrow, but at least it is not something by V.C. Andrews.

The story behind the story of "A Confederacy of Dunces"

stands as a testament to the greedy blindness and absolute ineptitude of the publishing industry. John Kennedy Toole

poured his soul into "A Confederacy of Dunces" and the result was a comedic masterpiece, which "Simon and Schuster Publishing" displayed their ignorance by rejecting the novel. The rejection sent Toole into a downward spiral of mental anguish, which resulted in his suicide. Several years later, his mother found a carbon-copied draft of the original manuscript. Convinced of its greatness, she brought it to novelist Walker Percy who after much badgering

finally read it. Also convinced of its brilliance, Percy helped get the novel published. "A

Confederacy of Dunces" went on to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1981.

Not only was the world robbed of Toole's future work, but think about all the other masterpieces rejected by the publishing world. If "Simon and Schuster" failed to recognize a Pulitzer Prize winner, what else have they and others like them rejected? On that happy and inspirational note, let's get on with the review already.

In an effort not to give too much of the story away because part of the greatness of the novel comes from the discovery of the rich characters and unique plot, I will keep the summary brief.

"A Confederacy of

Dunces" chronicles the trials and tribulations of Ignatius J. Reilly who is a fat, lazy, often flatulent, mustachioed, green hunting capped, eccentric, unemployed, highly critical momma's boy.

Ignatius lives in New Orleans with his always-doting mother. After his mother wrecks her car into a building, she forces Ignatius to find employment. Eventually, he gets a job at Levy Pants where he leads a labor revolt. His next career is that of a hotdog vendor, which results in the consumption of his own product. Madness, alcohol, prostitutes, libel suits, a bird attack, hotdogs and Big Chief tablets are just a few things the reader can expect.

The character Ignatius has been compared to Don Quixote, and in a lot of ways they are similar. Ignatius is like a crusader with good intentions but the worst luck. "A Confederacy of Dunces" is a great read. Do not be surprised if you find yourself reading it more than once.



Photo courtesy of Pprize.com

'Quantum' provides a tougher Bond

By **JAMES COUCHE**
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Most movie franchises are lucky if they can make it past three films without falling apart; some struggle with making it past two. Don't tell that to James Bond who has reached his twenty-second film and is stronger than ever. Bond has the second longest film series in history (the current champ is Godzilla with 29 films). His latest may just be one of his best.

Quantum of Solace picks up roughly an hour after the events of Casino Royale. We are re-introduced to Bond in the classiest way possible: getting shot at in a high-speed car chase along the Italian coast. After evading his pursuers (see: shooting them in the face and sending them off a cliff) Bond takes a quick break to interrogate his new prisoner Mr. White. It is here that we're vaguely introduced to QUANTUM, a super-secret criminal organization with (you

guessed it) plans for world domination. Sadly, this little plot development session is cut short by an assassination attempt and an ensuing rooftop chase. A few dead bodies later and Bond has his newest target Dominic Greene, a shady faux environmentalist and all around creepy looking guy.

Of all the Bond films, "Quantum of Solace" is probably the least indulgent; it is lean, efficient,

and moves at a lightning pace. Clocking in at 103 minutes, this is also one of the shortest movies in the series. Gone are the long poker sequences of Casino Royale and in their place are rapid-fire action sequences; and what great action it is.

Some of the action set pieces are so intense and satisfyingly brutal you may just need a cigarette after watching them:

car chases, a rooftop chase, gunfights, fistfights, a boat chase, and a finale which takes place in a desert hotel that is in the process of blowing up. Some of these scenes feel a little over-edited and get a little confusing from time to time (a common practice in action movies these days) but overall this is some of the best of 2008. Some fans complain that the action is too Jason Bourne (Bond fans are a whiney bunch these days) and while that may be justified, Bond is ten times more vicious than Bourne ever was. If "Casino Royale" didn't make you think, "I don't want to mess with this guy" then "Quantum of Solace" definitely will.

The story of this film makes it stand out the most from other Bond films. The events of Quantum of Solace can be considered the aftermath of Casino Royale with Bond still

very conflicted by the death and possible betrayal of Vesper Lynd. Here, he is on a mission and needs closure. You really get to see his relationship with M grow into something genuine; something that could never be said of the Pierce Brosnan films.

If this film has one element that is just plain bad, it is the theme song "Another Way to Die" written by Jack White. Thanks to White's lack of range and the producer's poor judgment in choosing him, we now have a song to rival Madonna's "Die Another Day" as the worst Bond theme ever. The song is beyond inappropriate for the film its attached to and compared to Chris Cornell's "You Know My Name" it's downright laughable. The uninspired video that accompanies it doesn't help either.

Fortunately, the awful song does not destroy the movie and it comes highly recommended. Whether you are a Bond fan or just looking for a good action movie (it has been awhile since we got one of those) "Quantum of Solace" will serve you well.

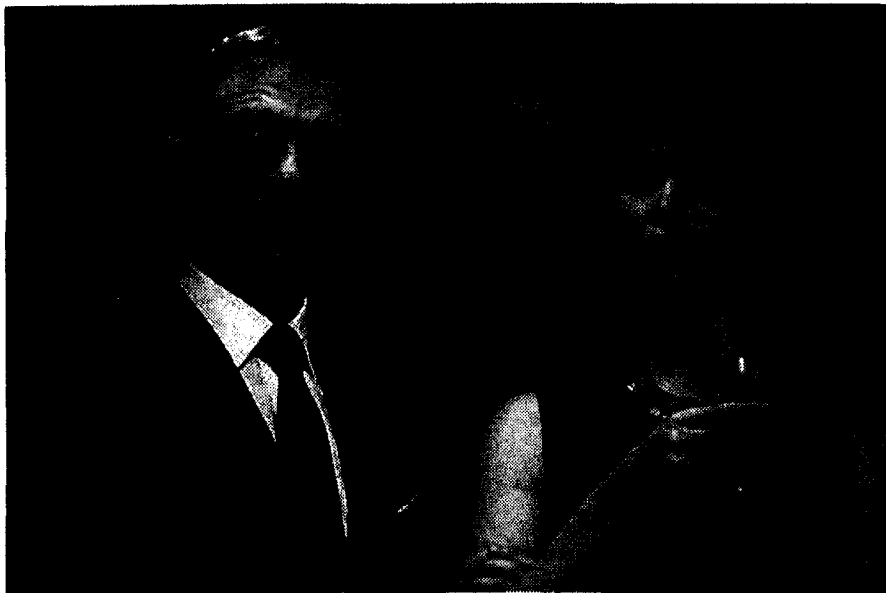


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