



sounded higher than when it started. That was how it was described on the radio. I brought that sort of thing up at the table and nobody particularly commented on it. Years later I found out that my father, at least, thought I had made them all up. Well, ... maybe one in five I did make up but what can you expect--I was just a kid and was not really worried about high standards of truth of

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the sort that I have today, but still nobody believes me. Incidentally, I eventually heard this tone played on the radio and it didn't really sound to me as if it were descending.

Anyway, I was listening to the radio this morning, and in among the stories of people squabbling over how to spend the "Peace Dividend," which high Pentagon officials now estimate to be over \$3.17, was one of those stories such as I would bring up at the dinner table. A very important person in New York (sorry, I would have listened closer if I had known what was coming up) has said that inmates in the state's prison system should not be allowed to watch cable television and should have to read instead. People on the street would be less likely to commit crimes if they knew they would be going someplace where they would have to read. That's what she said. I wouldn't have thought it possible. How can one person make a statement about a controversy I didn't know existed and at the same time make both sides sound as if they have a total IQ of 87?

What I learn from this is that our prison system considers a fitting punishment for violent crime that people be forced to watch movies such as  R a m b o and  D e a t h W i s h I I I and some crusader is

popping up and saying, "No, it is a worse punishment to make hardened criminals read." I guess if I were to take sides (and I feel like a jerk for doing it), I agree with our crusader. This could start a whole revolution in our penal system. I think hardened criminals should be forced to read Dickens and Shakespeare and then be tested on what they have read. Parole hearings can change from asking stupid questions such as "Have you rehabilitated yourself?"--and what criminal ever says "No" to that one?--and ask instead that the prisoner explain the symbolism of the whale in  M o b y D i c k.

I personally think that Manuel Noriega should be punished by ten years of wearing thick glasses with paper clips in the hinges, a pocket protector full of pens, and white socks, and carrying a Depression-era briefcase full of books. Let's see if it will scare lawbreakers to know that if caught they will be sentenced to long terms of being nerds.

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Understanding does not cure evil, but it is a definite help, inasmuch as one can cope with a comprehensible darkness.

-- Carl Gustav Jung

## GHOST

A film review by Mark R. Leeper  
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Capsule review: Patrick Swayze as a yuppie sort of ghost trying to save the life of his girlfriend (Demi Moore) with the help of a not-so-fake medium (Whoopi Goldberg). This is a slick film with a few nice moments, but not a great ghost story. Rating: +1.

Things were going really well for Sam Wheat (played by Patrick Swayze). He had a great new yuppie apartment reclaimed from a really ugly building. He had a live-in roommate who would have looked like Demi Moore if she would only have let her hair grow a little. She is Molly Jensen (played by Demi Moore). He had a high-paying job as some sort of funds executive at a major bank. His only problem was that he had a stupid name like "Sam Wheat." Then it all sours when he is killed by a hood on the street and has to get used to being dead. You know, it

is not all pranks and chains being a ghost. First of all, there are very few people who can hear ghosts and who want to admit they can hear ghosts. Then you have a really hard time interacting with matter. Generally you go right through matter: walls, tables, doors, subway trains ... it makes no difference. Floors seem to stop you but, hey, who wants to invest in a film about a dead bank executive falling to the center of the earth, right? Anyway, there is more to Wheat's killing than meets the eye and his ghost wants to find out what it is. His first big break is finding a kooky spiritualist medium who thinks she is a fake until she starts hearing the voice of one real ghost. Oda Mae Brown (played by Whoopi Goldberg) wants nothing to do with Sam and her newly found powers.

Bruce Joel Rubin's script in the hands of Jerry Zucker (who co-wrote K\_e\_n\_t\_u\_c\_k\_y\_F\_r\_i\_e\_d\_M\_o\_v\_i\_e and co-directed A\_i\_r\_p\_l\_a\_n\_e! and T\_h\_e\_N\_a\_k\_e\_d\_G\_u\_n) has some nice shifts in mood. These shifts from somber to funny have been criticized by some critics, but given the subject matter are not unbelievable until the last five minutes or so. The ending is saccharine, not unexpectedly, but up to that point the film's tone follows Wheat's emotions at being dead and, let's face it, finding yourself dead is one of life's more difficult moments. Zucker did not have many somber moments in his previous films but he handles them well. There is also a nice erotic scene with clay sculpture. There is another love scene that might have broken new ground for a major release film had Zucker not copped out (much to the indignation of the audience). There is also a rather unexpected and nice scene involving a grungy subway rider.

G\_h\_o\_s\_t is not really very good as a ghost story. There is maybe one decent chilling scene in the film. Next to L\_a\_d\_y\_i\_n\_W\_h\_i\_t\_e or T\_h\_e\_U\_n\_i\_n\_v\_i\_t\_e\_d it pales considerably. But it is reasonable as a slick Hollywood production with (of course) effects by Industrial Light and Magic. I rate it a +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

NO ENEMY BUT TIME by Michael Bishop  
Timescape, 1983 (c1982), ISBN 0-671-83576-9, \$3.50.  
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper  
Copyright 1990 Evelyn C. Leeper

John Monegal has dreams of roaming prehistoric Africa, so a scientific research group decides to send him back in time (somehow using his dreams) to determine which of two theories of the origins of humanity is accurate. And right away, I have a problem with this. If they are dreams, why do they have any validity as far as science goes? To the best of my knowledge, "racial memory" is not considered supporting evidence for scientific theories. Even if they are precognitive dreams of Monegal's future when he travels to the past, they aren't more valid as dreams, so why does Bishop spend so much time presenting them as memories rather than precognition?

So Monegal finds himself in the past, but how can he prove it's the past rather than a dream? Well, Bishop pulls a bit of a deus ex machina out of the hat for this, just the sort of thing that the planners couldn't have predicted. Because of this, I found the whole concept of the scientific effort unconvincing. And because the reader spends so much time trying to figure out if they are seeing something real, or just Monegal's dream of what he thinks prehistory is like, I would have to say this book seems to have inspired the "holodeck syndrome" of S t a r  
T r e k: T h e N e x t G e n e r a t i o n.

Maybe I'm being too picky as far as the science goes. It's true that the childhood of Monegal is interesting, and even the period spent in the past has some interest value, but still I have to say that as an overall history of the character it is not enthralling.

[This book has recently been re-issued in the Bantam Spectra Special Edition series.]