
INSURGENTS AND GUERILLAS, COWBOYS AND INDIANS, LIONS AND TIGERS AND BEARS

Film and History in Kansas and the Great Plains

edited and introduced by Thomas Prasch

For anyone wondering how committed Hollywood is today to the historical film, this year's Oscars provided ample evidence: four of the five pictures nominated for Best Picture (*Frost/Nixon*, *Milk*, *The Reader*, and *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*; indeed, all but the winning *Slumdog Millionaire*) were rooted in historical situations; add in a few stray nominations in other categories (Foreign Language Film, Costume Design), and it is ample testimony to the continued fascination of Hollywood with the historical past. And if none of the films reviewed in this year's selection for *Kansas History* quite made that grade (two of the films under review, *3:10 to Yuma* and *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford*, did garner nominations in 2008, but not for Best Picture), it is nevertheless clear that, as long as filmmakers continue to find in historical events a framework for understanding, Kansas and the Great Plains are bound to figure in the mix. Why? Just ask Bob Dylan.

Dylan, interviewed by the London *Times* about our new president, had this to say about Barack Obama and Kansas: "He's got an interesting background. He's like a fictional character, but he's real. First off, his mother was a Kansas girl. Never lived in Kansas though, but with deep roots. You know, like Kansas bloody Kansas. John Brown the insurrectionist. Jesse James and Quantrill. Bushwhackers. Guerillas. Wizard of Oz Kansas" (*Times Online*, April 6, 2009, with thanks to MSNBC's Rachel Maddow for catching it first). Dylan leaves some things out, even a few that might appeal to his outlaw sensibilities—Buffalo Soldiers and Exodusters, the conflict between American westward expansion and indigenous Native Americans, southeast Kansas socialists—and his overview scarcely notices the twentieth century, when Kansans would contribute to the Harlem Renaissance, Pentecostal religion, the Social Gospel movement, and the civil rights cause with the lead case in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, just to mention a few highlights. But still, his encapsulation is not a bad summary of the image of Kansas in American historical consciousness.

Thomas Prasch, a professor and chair of the Department of History at Washburn University, received his PhD from Indiana University. For almost a decade he served as contributing editor responsible for film reviews for the *American Historical Review*, and he has edited *Kansas History's* biennial film review section since 2001.

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Outside Topeka's Best Theater—where in the late 1930s Kansas moviegoers could take in the double feature *Highway Patrol* and *County Fair* for 10¢—a man hangs a poster.

In terms of film, nothing shapes that consciousness more decisively than the Western, a genre once again, after a few decades of neglect, in the foreground of filmmaking. Indeed, the Western has proved to be one of our most successful exports, with contributions playing in American theatres over the past couple years from places as distant from these plains as Poland (Piotr Uklanski's *Summer Love*) and Thailand (Wisit Sasanatieng's *Tears of the Black Tiger*). For our own survey, we will keep our attention stateside.

And we lead this year with an unusual feature. Since initiating film reviews in *Kansas History* in 2001, we have always begun with a look back at a film classic connected to Kansas/Great Plains history. This year, we do that with

a twist: fifty years after Delmer Daves directed *3:10 to Yuma* (1957), the film has been remade by James Mangold, and Cynthia Miller provides us with a comparative perspective on both films. Miller teaches at Emerson College and is film-review editor for *Film and History*, an interdisciplinary journal of film and television studies. She is at work on the forthcoming edited volumes *Encyclopedia of the B Western* and *Too Bold for the Box Office: A Study in Mockumentaries* and has presented work at recent conferences on Gene Autry and Will Rogers. Her essay on Autry's *Phantom Empire* serial (1935) appears in editor Lisa Detora's *Heroes in Films, Comics and American Culture: Essays on Real and Fictional Defenders of the Home* (2009).

Also in the Western vein, with a bit of extra historical depth brought by the outlaw's associations with William Quantrill, *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* provides the latest film addition to the extensive Jesse James archive; it is reviewed here by John Tibbetts. Appropriately, given James's background, Tibbetts will be remembered by readers of *Kansas History* for his essay "Riding with the Devil: The Movie Adventures of William Clarke Quantrill" (Autumn 1999). A professor of film studies at the University of Kansas, Tibbetts writes extensively about both film and music, and sometimes both (as in his *Composers in the Movies: Studies in Musical Biography* [2005] and his newest offering, *All My Loving?: The Films of Tony Palmer*, due out in 2009). Less Kansan in its roots, but still contributing to the Western genre, is *Appaloosa*, reviewed for us by Philip Heldrich, an associate professor at the University of Washington Tacoma and director of the Southwest/Texas Popular and American Culture Association. He is the author of two books, the most recent of which, *Out Here in the Out There: Essays in a Region of Superlatives* (2005), won the Mid-List First Series Award for Creative Nonfiction.

Where there are cowboys, there must be Indians. In this year's selection, we offer reviews of two films relating to Native American history. The first, HBO's film adaptation of *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, is reviewed for us by Kerry Wynn, an assistant professor of history at Washburn University. Wynn's dissertation work focused on notions of citizenship among the Cherokee in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Her article "'Miss Indian Territory' and 'Mr. Oklahoma Territory': Marriage, Settlement, and Citizenship in the Cherokee Nation and the United States" appeared in the collection edited by Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility, and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire* (2008), and she was co-editor of a special issue of *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* focusing on "Intermarriage in North American Indian History: Explorations in Power and Intimacy in North America" (2008). The second, the documentary *Lost Nation: The Ioway*, is reviewed for us by Joseph B. Herring, who teaches history at the University of Utah. Herring will be known to readers of *Kansas History* for his article "Selling the 'Noble Savage' Myth: George Catlin and the Iowa Indians in Europe, 1843–1845" (Winter 2006–2007). He is the author of, among other works, *The Enduring Indians of Kansas* (1990) and *Kenekuk, the Kickapoo Prophet* (1988).

More contemporary history also has a place in this year's selection of film reviews. From the beginning of the twentieth century, Kansas has been the site of important developments and debates about religion and the place of religion

in the political landscape, and these tendencies continue. Kansas has been the most noted site of contest in recent controversies over teaching Darwinian ideas or intelligent design in the classroom, and Jeff Tamblyn's documentary *Kansas vs. Darwin* examines one phase of that debate. Because of the especially active role of Topeka's Reverend Fred Phelps in protesting homosexuality at events such as soldier's funerals (as well as at this year's Oscars), Kansas also figures prominently in current debates about gay rights. K. Ryan Jones's documentary *Fall from Grace* takes us inside the Phelps family compound to examine his church and their activism. Reviewing both films for us is Alan Bearman of Washburn University's Department of History. Bearman's major research focus has been on Anglo-American religious currents in the seventeenth century, but he is also currently working on more recent territory in the history of religion, researching Billy Graham's London Crusade. His and Jennifer Mills's take on Topeka's religious history in the early twentieth century appears in this issue. And, from Dorothy's odyssey forward, tornadoes mark a key feature in popular consciousness of Kansas. Brian Schodorf's documentary *Greensburg* tracks an EF-5 tornado's impact on that town and its citizens' commitment to rebuild as a "green" community. Reviewing it for us is Jay Antle, associate professor of history and executive director of the Center for Sustainability at Johnson County Community College. *Kansas History* readers may remember Antle's article "Against Kansas's Top Dogs: Coyotes, Politics, and Ecology, 1877–1970" (Autumn 1997); it is reprinted in editor Rita Napier's *Kansas and the West: New Perspectives* (2003).

Of course, no film review section concerning Kansas would be complete without a nod to Oz, and this year our selection includes the SciFi channel (now the Syfy channel) miniseries *Tin Man*, a sort of punk/futurist reimagining of the classic. Tom Averill, reviewing it for us, returns to familiar ground: his article "Oz and Kansas Culture" appeared in these pages (Spring 1989), as have a range of his other works. Averill is a professor of creative writing at Washburn University, teaching, among other things, a course on Kansas in the movies. Along with other publications, he edited *What Kansas Means to Me: Twentieth-Century Writers on the Sunflower State* (1991), and his own most recently published fiction is the short-story collection *Ordinary Genius* (2004).

Finally, as has been argued in these introductions before, Kansas figures in popular consciousness as a sort of stand-in for middle America. Recent manifestations of that tendency range from the origin story of the family in the new version of the television series *90210* (the show's central family comes to Beverly Hills from Kansas, and the pilot's

Oz-referencing title was “We’re Not in Kansas Anymore”) to the setting of Showtime’s new serial about multiple-personality disorder, *United States of Tara* (the show’s title character, presumably along with most of her “alters,” hails from Overland Park). Another way to employ that Kansas-as-center metaphor is in futuristic projections, where Kansas serves as the convenient site on which to map apocalyptic tomorrows. The survivors of apocalypse are placed in Kansas territory in two recent works, the now canceled television series *Jericho* and Kevin Willmott’s film *The Battle for Bunker Hill*. Reviewing the two works for us is *Kansas History*’s own associate editor, Melissa Tubbs Loya. Tubbs Loya is well acquainted with apocalyptic themes, particularly of the biblical sort, as her dissertation work is on the undoing of the world as described in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. She reviewed Stephen W. Hine’s *Laura Ingalls Wilder, Farm Journalist* and Pamela Smith Hill’s biography *Laura Ingalls Wilder for Kansas History* (Summer 2008).

3:10 to Yuma. Directed by Delmer Davies; screenplay by Halsted Welles, based on the story by Elmore Leonard; produced by David Heilweil. 1957; black and white; 92 minutes. Distributed by Columbia Pictures.

3:10 to Yuma. Directed by James Mangold; screenplay by Halsted Welles, Michael Brandt, and Derek Haas, based on the story by Elmore Leonard; produced by Cathy Konrad. 2007; color; 122 minutes. Distributed by Lionsgate Films.

Fifty years can change a lot about a man . . . and a film. *3:10 to Yuma*, in its original and remade versions, gives testimony to both. Originally filmed in 1957 and updated in 2007, *Yuma* is, at its core, a story about what it means to be a man: about redemption, shared understanding, and the choice to act—or not—on the darkest urgings of one’s soul. Taken together, the two films demonstrate the ways in which time has deepened and shaded our interpretations of what all that means.

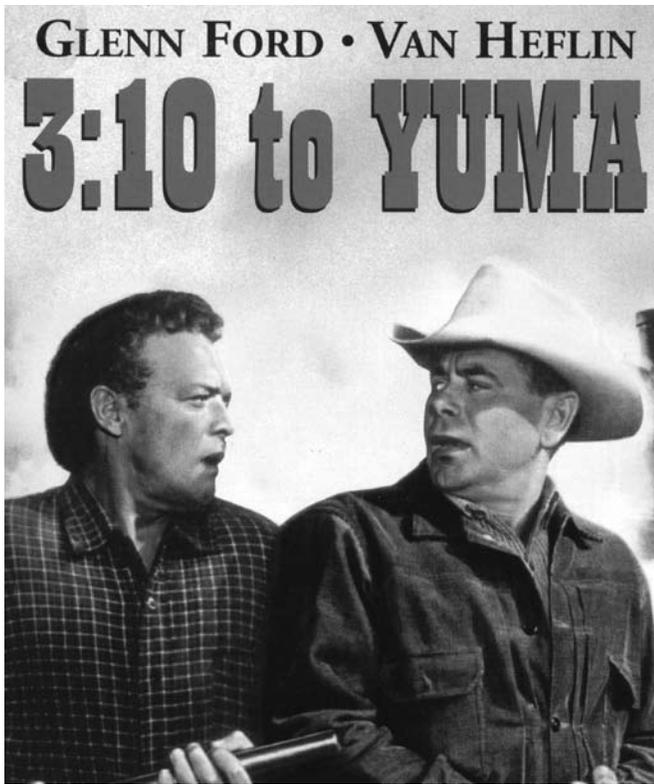
Based on the 1953 short story by Elmore Leonard, the original *3:10 to Yuma*, directed by Delmer Daves, starred Glenn Ford as the outlaw Ben Wade and Van Heflin as down-on-his-luck rancher Dan Evans. Wade is an infamous robber and killer, iron-fisted, quiet, circumspect, and always under control. Evans, on the other hand, teeters on

the brink of failure. He is on the verge of losing his ranch, his cattle, and the respect of his wife and children, not only as a result of his economic failure, but also because of his resigned, downtrodden demeanor. In the opening scenes, Evans and his boys witness a stagecoach robbery and the murder of the driver. The rancher takes no action, fearing for the lives of himself and his sons. Upon their return home his wife Alice questions him: “What did you do?” Evans replies, defensively: “There was twelve. What could I do?” Alice comments: “It seems terrible that something bad can happen and all anybody can do is stand by and watch.” When Dan replies that many things happen just that way, Alice retorts, “No, but to have you stand by *and the boys watch you*.” When Wade is captured a short while later in nearby Bisbee, Evans has little to risk, and \$200 to gain, by volunteering for the posse that will attempt to deliver him to the Yuma prison train to stand trial and hang for his crimes.

The remainder of the film chronicles the two men’s relationship as they pass the time in the bridal suite of the Contention City hotel, waiting for the train. One by one, Evans’s fellow posse members fall away, leaving him to lay claim to his lost manhood and a place in history as “the man who walked Ben Wade to the 3:10 to Yuma.” Wade, whose men easily outnumber, outgun, and outsmart the posse, recognizes and connects with Evans’s deep need to prove himself to his family; in an act of unspoken camaraderie, he submits to the rancher’s custody. Surviving a hail of bullets from Wade’s men, the two board the train.

The 2007 remake, directed by James Mangold, winds its narrative around the original like a double helix, going its own way for stretches at a time before once again intersecting with its source. The characters of the two men, played now by Russell Crowe (Wade) and Christian Bale (Evans), are deeper, more complex, and more reflective of contemporary understandings of troubled masculinity. Wade is as brutal as the desert landscape, yet at times, playful, wise, and possessed of a sharp intellect. In a confrontation with his long-time Pinkerton adversary Byron McElroy (Peter Fonda), Wade challenges: “I just don’t find you that interesting. Ever read another book in your life, Byron, ‘sides the Bible?”

While Crowe’s Wade is deeper and more nuanced than Ford’s, Bale’s Evans is more visibly damaged than Heflin’s—not only psychologically and economically, but physically, as well—creating a character eroded by the desert sun and changing times. He is a small rancher, lost in the vastness of the social and environmental landscape. When Evans appeals to banker Glen Hollander (Lenny Loftin) for



Fifty years can change a lot about a man . . . and a film, as can be seen in a comparison of these 1957 and 2007 advertisements for 3:10 to Yuma. In the original (video cover above by Columbia Western Classics) Glenn Ford stars as the outlaw Ben Wade and Van Heflin as down-on-his-luck rancher Dan Evans. The remake revolves around a more complex and reflective pair—Russell Crowe as Wade and Christian Bale as Evans (poster at right courtesy of Lionsgate).

water rights, Hollander reminds him of this: “Sometimes a man has to be big enough to see how small he is. Railroad’s coming, Dan. Your land’s worth more with you off it.” Lame after being accidentally shot by one of his fellow Civil War soldiers during a retreat, Evans struggles to hold his own.

Evans falters especially in the eyes of his fourteen-year-old son Will (Logan Lerman), whose belligerent grappling with his own incipient manhood leads him to resent his father’s failings and provide continual reminders of his lack of faith and respect. In the original version, the drama of the “failed provider” is carried out between Evans and his wife Alice (Leora Dana), but Mangold’s remake transfers the tension to father and son. Crowe’s Wade, on the other hand, captures the boy’s imagination; strong, masculine, adventurous, he seems a character straight out of the dime novels Will reads by lamplight. For Will, Wade stands simultaneously as idol and rite of passage, a means of proving that he will not follow in his father’s halting footsteps.

The struggle of negotiating masculinities plays out

through landscape and setting as well. While much of the drama to redeem Evans’s manhood in the original film happens in the civilized, feminine space of a hotel bridal suite, the updated version relocates most of Evans’s trials to the desert, a context as harsh and brutal as the characters’ worst selves. The West has long been portrayed in film as masculine terrain, a rugged, unforgiving natural and social landscape that tests intentions, defines character, and binds relationships. When new and old plotlines re-converge, Crowe and Bale, like their predecessors, pass their time in the bridal suite as they await the 3:10 train. There their relationship goes through its final transformations in ways that mirror and extend the final conflicts and silent complicity of the original characters. Wade’s subtle nod of assent to Evans unites the two men’s individual struggles in a shared mission as they make their way to the station.

While Heflin’s Evans boards the Yuma train with Wade, waving across the desert in success to Alice as she looks on, Bale’s Evans has a larger role to play. The new version of *3:10 to Yuma* reveals the legacy of the characters’ struggles with manhood, as both Wade and Will must react to Evans being fatally shot. In frustration and anger, Wade kills all of his men, offering Evans’s sacrifice a harsh, desert justice—traditional masculine justice—the only kind he knows. Will draws on Wade in fury and then lowers his weapon as he blinks away tears, kneeling to assure his dying father that he “did it.” And indeed, even as Wade symbolically boards the 3:10 train, whistling for his horse as he readies his escape, we see Will, the next generation of Westerner, acting on his father’s lessons of what it means to be a man in the West.

Cynthia Miller
Emerson College

The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford. Directed by Andrew Dominik; screenplay by Andrew Dominik, based on the novel by Ron Hansen; produced by Jules Daley, Dede Gardner, Brad Pitt, Ridley Scott, and David Valdes. 2007; color; 155 minutes. Distributed by Warner Bros.

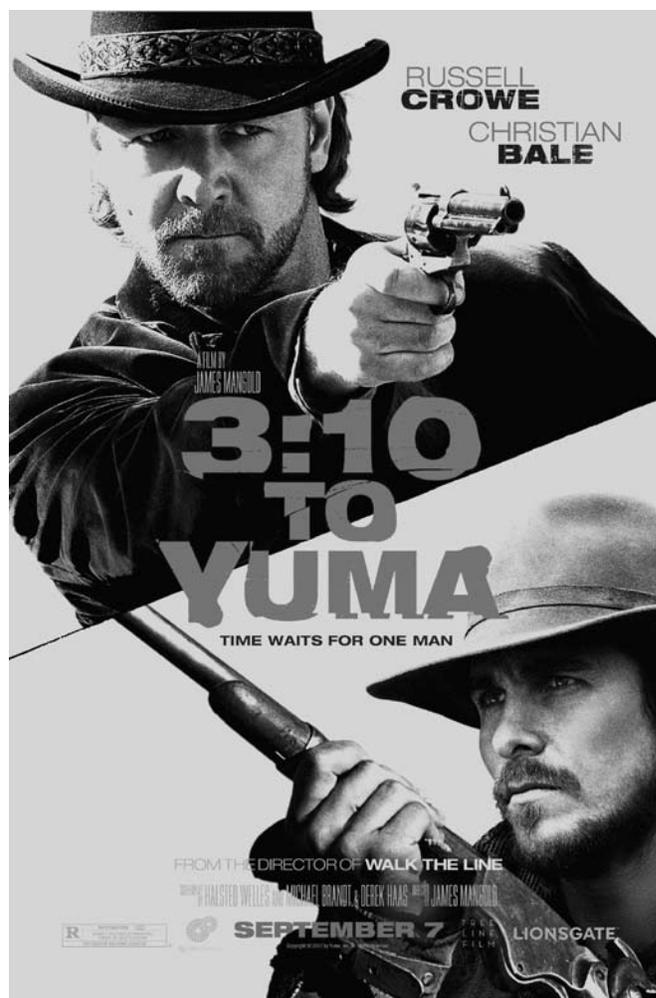
Hours before killing Jesse James with a single gunshot to the back of his head, the film adaptation of Ron Hansen’s novel *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* imagines, Robert Ford finds himself alone in the James home.

Settling his mind for the task before him, he begins a strange odyssey: “He walked into the closet and inventoried [Jesse’s] clothes on the hangers and hooks,” intones the narrative voice as Ford walks around the bedroom. “He slipped on one of Jesse’s worsted wool coats and inspected its tailoring in a mirror. He ironed the bed’s rumped sheets with his hands. He sipped from the water glass on the vanity. He smelled the talcum and lilacs on a pillowcase that was etched here and there with snips of cut hair. He reclined on the mattress so that he could be in meeting with it, and he rolled to his left as Jesse must have rolled to marry with his wife in the evening. He considered possibilities and everything wonderful that could come true.”

The very title of *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* links us to the two characters and the film’s central action. The union makes them inseparable. Not just the symbiosis of assassin and victim, bullets and blood, it is the homoerotic embrace of love and death. As startling as scenes like the above must have seemed to viewers of the film, it does not take more than a moment to reflect on the inevitability of its message. Andrew Dominik’s close and careful adaptation of Hansen’s novel continues the revisionist cycle of Westerns that began in the late 1940s with Samuel Fuller’s *I Shot Jesse James* (1949) and continued with Nicholas Ray’s *Johnny Guitar* (1953), Sam Peckinpah’s *Ride the High Country* (1962), Clint Eastwood’s *Unforgiven* (1992), Jim Jarmusch’s *Dead Man* (1995), and, most recently, Ang Lee’s *Brokeback Mountain* (2006). In such revisionist films, Western formulas—in particular, the dynamics and implications of men (and women) with guns—have been infused and examined with psychological probings, sexually transgressive energies, and meditations on celebrity culture.

If *Assassination*’s fictional glimpse into the mind of Robert Ford can lay claim to insight into the man’s meditations on celebrity, then a spate of movies that have appeared since 1950 have proven groundless Ford’s fears that he would die unremarked. Fritz Lang’s *The Return of Frank James* (1949), the aforementioned *I Shot Jesse James* (1950), and, most recently, *Assassination* (to name just a few examples) have brought Ford—portrayed, respectively, by John Carradine, John Ireland, and Casey Affleck—out of the shadows and into the glare of public notice. No longer can James be considered in isolation; now and forever, he and Ford are joined at the hip.

Even before his death on April 3, 1882, the Missouri outlaw Jesse James had already followed William Clarke Quantrill and Allan Pinkerton into the mythical regions of dime novels, and he figured in movies soon after. He was already the popular paradigm of the “good bad man,”



the prototype for so many Western heroes past and present. “Some of the guerilla-hero’s gifts became hallmarks of the movie-cowboy and gunfighter,” wrote historian Richard Slotkin, highlighting “his superb horsemanship and love for a favored animal, and his almost fetishistic preference for the pistol as a weapon and his ‘preternatural’ skill with it.” He became in the popular consciousness a figure of western and frontier mythology, “the hero of a national myth of resistance” (*Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* [Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998], 135, 137).

But what about his nemesis, Robert Ford? Since the day his thirst for fame led him to assassinate Jesse, he has been marginalized and demeaned in song and legend as no more than “the dirty little coward” of the James gang. Thwarted by the ignominy of a failed stage career and death from a bullet in a squalid Colorado mining town, his reputation lapsed into the obscurity he had envisioned and feared. Yet, thanks to Hollywood, Ford’s shadow has begun to lengthen. In Fritz Lang’s *The Return of Frank James*



The very title of The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford links the two characters central to Ron Hansen's novel and its film adaptation. The Jesse James story, in this telling, is also the Robert Ford story. Above the real Jesse James is prepared for burial. Image courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

(1940)—a sequel to Henry King's *Jesse James* (1939), wherein Ford had been given only token screen time—Ford figures as a fugitive presence throughout as he is pursued by the vengeful Frank James to a barn in Denver, Colorado, where he falls to the bullets of a member of Frank's gang. In Fuller's *I Shot Jesse James*, he gets star billing, and we follow his abortive stage career, a succession of temporary jobs, and his death in a gunfight in the streets of Creede, Colorado. Now, in Dominick's account, he is an outcast, a pariah, who comes to Creede only to be felled by a shotgun blast from Deputy Sheriff Edward O. Kelly, a man, according to the narrative voice, "with only a vague longing for glory."

The Fuller and Dominik films bear a striking similarity in their revelations of Ford as a sexually confused, fatally star-struck character who ultimately compels our attention far more than the mute and stiff James (who in both films enjoys relatively little screen time). In *I Shot Jesse James* Ford

indulges in a backrub with a nude James and dies with words of love for his hero on his lips, and in *Assassination* Ford shares intimacies with Jesse that are voyeuristic compounds of love, lust, and revulsion. How thin the boundaries are that divide those feelings is graphically suggested in a tiny scene when James tenderly massages Ford's head and shoulders only to suddenly twist his neck and push a knife blade against his throat. "How'd you reach your twentieth birthday without leaking out all over your clothes?" hisses James. And both films make it clear that James willingly, and with calculation, submits to the phallic blast of Ford's brand-new, nickel-plated revolver, a gift, significantly, from James himself.

The carefully choreographed assassination scene in the Dominik film seals the deal. As if in open invitation to Ford, James slowly unbuckles his gun belt, places his twin pistols aside, and turns his back to Ford as he mounts a chair to

reposition a picture. As Ford and his brother Charlie raise their pistols, James sees Ford's mirrored reflection in the glass (a detail not in Hansen's book). For just that one brief moment James pauses, fully recognizing what is to come, surrendering to it, consumed by it, welcoming it: a Love-Death quite Wagnerian in its proportions and significance.

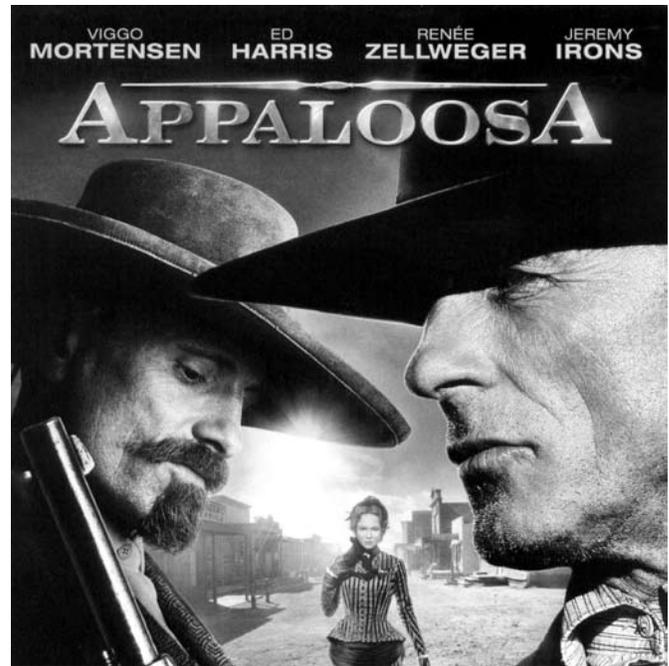
Now it seems, inevitably, that the Jesse James story is also the Robert Ford story. Neither outlaw can "quit each other," as the popular quotation from *Brokeback Mountain* goes. In Hollywood at least, they are transfigured and consumed. And history and myth must engage in their own embrace of love and death.

John C. Tibbetts
University of Kansas

Appaloosa. Directed by Ed Harris; screenplay by Robert Knott and Ed Harris, based on the novel by Robert Parker; produced by Ed Harris, Robert Knott, and Ginger Sledge. 2008; color; 115 minutes. Distributed by New Line Cinema.

When the town of Appaloosa in the New Mexico Territory of the 1880s finds itself at the mercy of an outlaw gang headed by Randall Bragg (Jeremy Irons), its merchant class hires the marshalling services of Virgil Cole (Ed Harris) and sidekick Everett Hitch (Viggo Mortensen) to deal with the crisis. Cole and Hitch immediately set to restoring a sense of order, as they have done previously in other similar new towns about the West. Quick to the draw and with a profound sense of justice, they make for a seasoned crime-fighting duo. *Appaloosa* follows a basic Western plot of righting wrongdoing by gunfight and horse chase. There are even marauding Indians and a significant love interest, Mrs. Allison "Allie" French (Renée Zellweger), who finds herself first and last drawn to Marshall Cole, but to many other men along the way.

The star-studded cast promises much but in the end delivers little in terms of furthering the Western genre, particularly the buddy films, which notably include Howard Hawks's *Rio Bravo* (1959) and *El Dorado* (1967), George Roy Hill's *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969), and Sergio Corbucci's *Compañeros* (1970). In many ways, *Appaloosa* might best be compared to more modernized Westerns such as the ground-breaking *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) or *The Cowboy Way* (1994) for its depiction of male bonding. This period film, as with *The Cowboy Way*, is what today



As a "bromance," *Appaloosa* offers plenty of good camaraderie, gunfights, and pursuit of outlaws. Video cover by New Line Cinema.

might best be called a "bromance." Attributed to author/editor Dave Carnie of *Big Brother Magazine*, the term originally suggested the strong male bonding of professional skateboarders on tour but has since come to define any strongly heterosexual male bond, or "man-crush," rooted in deep respect and understanding.

Appaloosa is the second directing attempt by Ed Harris after his Oscar-nominated film, *Pollock* (2000). Harris also produced the film and shares screenwriting credits with Robert Knott. Based on the novel by Robert B. Parker, *Appaloosa* focuses on the strong friendship and trust between Cole and Hitch, who might as well be Batman and Robin or the Lone Ranger and Tonto. Their friendship appears unabridged and their faith in each other well tested. The film seems to point toward an eventual loss of male independence and male bonding to wedded domesticity when Cole falls for the newly arrived Mrs. French. Cole is smitten with her talents as piano player and cook—unique, as he says, in this town of whores and squaws—but he must overcome her love-the-one-your-with ways.

More at the center of the film than the budding relationship of Cole and Mrs. French is the friendship between Cole and Hitch. As Everett explains to Allie: "You're with Virgil [Cole], so am I. . . . We're not with each other. We're both with him. . . . Do you understand what I'm saying?" As Allie pursues marriage, domesticity threatens to tie Cole to

home and town. Such domesticity similarly threatens the male bond, suggestive of endless adventure in the wild, masculine world of the Wild West. Cole himself expresses this opposition after Allie is taken hostage as part of a ploy to ensure the recently apprehended Bragg will be released to another set of now former lawmen in order that he can pay a debt owed to them. Cole declares to Hitch: "I cared about Allie in town, and I'll care about her when I get her back." On the frontier in pursuit of Bragg, he is foremost a lawman in a tight male bond with Hitch.

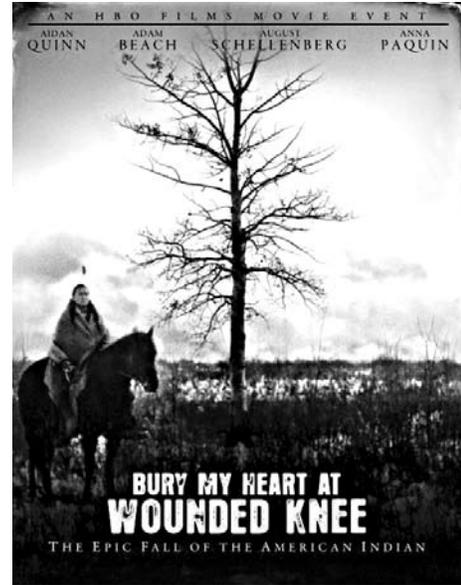
At the end of the film we should be drawn to the reunited and potentially settled Cole and Mrs. French, but the focus turns to Hitch, who, after solving the problem of Bragg, must now ride off alone into the sunset. As a "bromance" or buddy film, *Appaloosa* offers plenty of good camaraderie, gunfights, and pursuit of outlaws. In the end, the film seems critical of the domestic bond, and even of women in general; they cannot be trusted, and they threaten to end the good times men have together way out West. Director Harris seems to be suggesting something less about the West than about the necessity of healthy male relationships, as important today as it seems they were before the settling of these frontiersmen.

Philip Heldrich

University of Washington Tacoma

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee. Directed by Yves Simoneau; screenplay by Daniel Giat, based on the book by Dee Brown; produced by Clara George. 2007; color; 133 minutes. Distributed by HBO Films.

Few historical events conform to the conventions of contemporary movie scripts, which leaves filmmakers to face the unenviable task of attempting to depict moments in history that are coherent, entertaining, and true to the past. Given these difficulties, it is reasonable that screenwriters and directors would seek innovative ways to explore the meaning of particularly important historical encounters. Unfortunately, in the case of HBO's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, the storytelling devices used by the filmmakers obscure rather than advance our understanding of a crucial era in the history of the North American continent. By inserting a real person into historical events he did not experience, portraying these events selectively, and forcing history into the conventions



To relate the story of the Lakota struggle to retain their homeland in the face of U.S. expansion in the 1880s, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*'s screenwriter chose to mingle fiction and fact. Video cover by HBO Films.

of made-for-television movies, the creators of *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* lost an opportunity to use the formidable talents of the cast to transport and transform audiences.

To relate the story of the Lakota struggle to retain their homeland in the face of U.S. expansion in the 1880s, screenwriter Daniel Giat chose to mingle fiction and fact by rewriting the experiences of Charles Eastman (Adam Beach), a Santee physician and writer. Giat inserts Eastman into the Battle of Little Bighorn, a conflict he did not witness, and portrays Eastman's relationship with his future wife, Elaine Goodale (Anna Paquin), as beginning long before their actual meeting on the Pine Ridge Reservation in 1890. The focus on Eastman and the rearrangement of his life need not automatically discredit Giat's vision, but the effects of these decisions are regrettable. Given that Eastman became an advocate for allotment policy, which is highlighted in this film, understanding his past might give us an insight on his position, but Giat's changes obscure that possibility. Shifting the timing of the Eastmans' relationship has a larger impact as well, as the movie then portrays Elaine, the white reformer, as Charles's instructor on the hardship of reservation life. In the end, was it necessary to co-opt the lives of the Eastmans in order to add a love story to the adaptation of Dee Brown's popular book?

In a sense, the use of Charles Eastman is understandable. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* is intended to present multiple perspectives on a crucial and often misunderstood era of history, but the film fails at many points to



*There are moments when the actors in *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* provide heart-rending portrayals of poverty, illness, dispossession, and loss. Real-life defeat is depicted in the image above, in which Lakota men and women surrender after the battle at Wounded Knee.*

truly integrate these perspectives. The filmmakers may be congratulated for refusing to portray the events of the U.S.-Lakota conflict as a binary between good and evil. The actors playing members of Sitting Bull's band, in particular, deliver wonderful performances that express the complexity of responses to colonization. There are moments, however, when the film reinforces the very stereotypes that Dee Brown sought to break. For example, acts of violence at close range, such as scalping and mutilation, are attributed to American Indians alone, and a meeting between Sitting Bull and General Nelson Miles that was reported in reality to have ended with the rapid surprise pursuit of Lakotas by U.S. soldiers is reconfigured in the film as a battle in which Lakota warriors attack American troops who stand in a line and fire at a distance. The massacre of hundreds of men and women by U.S. forces at Wounded Knee Creek is rendered as a flashback, decreasing its immediacy, and the characterization of the Battle of Little Bighorn as a massacre by American politicians receives only a weak rebuttal by the Henry Dawes character (Aidan Quinn).

Many of the problems noted above are a product of the film's awkward structure, which seems to follow the emotional highs and lows employed by most television movies. When Henry Dawes and Charles Eastman are depicted designing and lobbying for legislation that would carve up

the Great Sioux Reserve and allot tribal land to individuals, for example, the montage constructed by the filmmakers seems entirely familiar. It is a device more suited to portraying an ugly-duckling teen getting a makeover before a big date than for the passage of a major piece of legislation with dire consequences.

Although *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* is a problematic portrayal of history, to say the least, at times the actors provide heart-rending portrayals of poverty, illness, dispossession, and loss. There are moments in this film that are well worth watching, and it succeeds where other films have failed in depicting the extreme sense of loss that accompanied the beginning of the reservation era and the end of buffalo hunting on the Great Plains. In the extremely limited instances of joy and the overwhelming scenes of sorrow, several actors convey the beauty and devastation of this era in Lakota history. If the film had been more successful in escaping the conventions embraced by its creators, it may have been able to construct for contemporary audiences a more vibrant picture of the lifestyles that Lakota women and men fought to preserve.

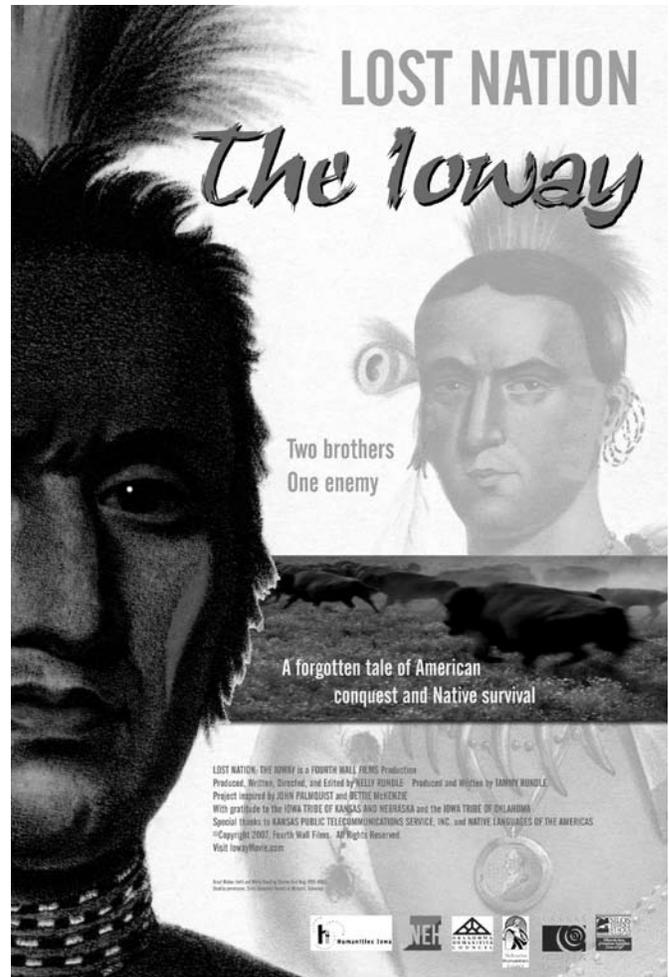
Kerry Wynn
Washburn University

Lost Nation: The Ioway. Directed by Kelly Rundell; written by Kelly Rundell and Tammy Rundell; produced by Tammy Rundell. 2008; color; 56 minutes. Distributed by Fourth Wall Films.

In *Lost Nation: The Ioway*, filmmakers Kelly Rundell and Tammy Rundell have created a compelling if incomplete portrait of the Ioways, or Iowas, a little-known American Indian tribe. Their film provides a succinct account of Ioway tribal life from 1650 to the present, combining scenes from tribal powwows, footage from archaeological and historic sites, interviews with scholars and Indian elders, music, contemporary and modern artwork, photographs, maps, and documents. According to the Rundells, because the history of this tribe “has been scattered to the four winds . . . this project provides an opportunity to draw key elements together in an accessible and interactive media project” (“The Film,” www.ioway-movie.com/film.htm).

Some important elements of the Ioway past and present are indeed revealed here. The best scenes involve interviews with tribal elders, who relate Ioway origin stories, trace clan and family relationships, and delve into what it means to be an American Indian in the twenty-first century. Many of these reflections, particularly the testimony of elders Pete Fee, Lance Foster, Joann Comer, and Joyce Big Soldier Miller, are poignant, compelling portrayals of Ioway history and culture. Interspersed with these stories are interviews with archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, and other experts who attempt to place everything into an historical framework. While providing good detail about the tribe’s early years, however, these scholars convey only an incomplete picture of subsequent Ioway history.

The Ioways were once part of the Oneota confederacy, which by 1650 had split into four separate entities: the Ioways, the Otoes, the Missouriias, and the Ho-Chunks. For the next 175 years, the Ioways farmed, hunted buffalo, followed traditional customs, and celebrated tribal religious ceremonies. By the early nineteenth century, however, increasing numbers of whites were trespassing on Ioway lands. In 1824 tribal headmen White Cloud and Great Walker traveled to Washington and signed a treaty that ceded most of their remaining land holdings, confining their followers to the Platte region of northwestern Missouri. Great Walker regretted signing the treaty, and he and several followers soon wandered away from the main



Lost Nation: The Ioway provides a succinct account of the tribe from 1650 to the present, combining scenes from tribal powwows, footage from archaeological and historic sites, interviews with scholars and Indian elders, music, contemporary and modern artwork, photographs, maps, and documents. Poster courtesy of Fourth Wall Films.

band. He was killed in 1831. Three years later, White Cloud was also killed. In 1836, his son, Frank White Cloud, agreed to relocate the band to a small reservation just west of the Missouri River along the present-day Kansas-Nebraska border.

Those who rely solely on the Rundells’ film for information might think the tribe then became, to history at least, a “lost nation,” but this is far from the truth. From the late 1830s until the end of the century, the Ioways undertook a long struggle to survive in their new homeland. They fended off attacks by Pawnees, Sioux, and other enemies. They were severely affected by sundry illnesses, particularly smallpox, and by alcoholism, and they faced an ever-increasing shortage of game, timber, and other resources. They sparred successfully with Presbyterian and other mis-



"I don't think I'm related to monkeys," asserts a woman interviewed in *Kansas vs. Darwin*, which documents the series of public hearings on state science standards held by a Kansas Board of Education subcommittee in 2005. "Anyone who wants to, feel free, but I don't think I am." Above, visitors to the "Explore Evolution" exhibit at the University of Kansas Natural History Museum compare their features to those of chimpanzees. Image courtesy of Unconditional Films.

sionaries who endeavored to convert them to Christianity throughout the 1840s through the 1860s. For many years, they fended off governmental agents and speculators intent on stealing even more tribal lands. Forced to break up much of the reservation and accept individual land allotments after 1887, the Ioways still persevered, steadfastly maintaining traditional cultural and religious practices well into the twentieth century. Many decided to move to Oklahoma, while others stayed in Kansas, where their descendants remain today.

The film also ignores some of the more colorful aspects of Ioway history. The fate of Great Walker's followers, for example, goes unmentioned. Members of this band, who settled near Council Bluffs, Iowa, later traveled to New York to perform dances and other ceremonies at Phineas T. Barnum's American Museum. In 1846, the group relocated to Kansas, reuniting with the main band. Meanwhile, in 1843, Frank White Cloud and several other Ioway men, women, and children sailed to London to join artist George Catlin's "Wild West" show. After performing throughout the British Isles, they crossed the channel to France, where they met with the king, queen, and other dignitaries.

Like most films about American Indians, *Lost Nation* relies too heavily on overly familiar clichés: flute music, rushing waters, etc. Nevertheless, through the on-camera interviews, the film succeeds in capturing the essence of Io-

way life in the twenty-first century. For this reason alone, it should prove especially useful to teachers, students, and others interested in American Indian history.

Joseph B. Herring
University of Utah

Kansas vs. Darwin: A Documentary about the Kansas Evolution Hearings. Directed by Jeff Tamblyn; written by Jeff Tamblyn and Mark von Schlemmer; produced by Jeff Peak and Jeff Tamblyn. 2007; color; 82 minutes. Distributed by Unconditional Films.

Fall From Grace. Directed, written, and produced by K. Ryan Jones. 2007; color; 71 minutes. Distributed by Docurama Films.

Rumor has it that Kansans dislike some dead guy named Charles Darwin and that they positively hate what they believe to be his theory of evolution. In addition, thanks specifically to the antics of the members of Topeka's Westboro Baptist Church, most Americans and many people globally view Kansas as full of people who hate not just Darwin but

also homosexuals, hate them so much that they are even glad American service people are dying from improvised explosive devices in Iraq. Indeed, Kansas is continually viewed as a state in the grips of wild-eyed fundamentalist Christians and as devolving in the face of modernity, an image most thoroughly encapsulated in journalist Thomas Frank's *What's the Matter with Kansas?* (2004). Thanks to the press, the fight in Kansas about science-education standards and the practices of the Westboro group are internationally renowned. Two recent documentaries about these controversies nevertheless stand out because they allow their subjects to speak for themselves: Jeff Tamblyn's *Kansas vs. Darwin: A Documentary about the Kansas Evolution Hearings* and K. Ryan Jones's *Fall From Grace*.

In 2004 the Kansas State Board of Education appointed a committee of twenty-seven to review and update standards for the teaching of science in Kansas schools. The events that followed helped to cement a view of Kansans as anti-intellectual. Sociopolitical forces led to a series of public hearings in 2005 that seemed to pit one brand of science against another in a debate over the validity of evolution. In reality, Kansas became ground zero, again, in the debate between proponents of evolution and advocates of intelligent design, a growing mini-industry in the United States.

Tamblyn chose to let a wide range of characters speak for themselves as he focused his camera lens on the hearings held in 2005. The choice was wise because it allows the viewer to appreciate fully the emotion of the event and to understand sympathetically the views of those involved. Creating a film through which one can experience sympathy for those whose agenda was clearly to rewrite the science standards without regard for science and who promoted a willful misunderstanding of the meaning of scientific theory is no small feat. Nevertheless, it is something the filmmaker accomplished. When *Kansas vs. Darwin* concludes, one can only feel a little sad for those who are so determined to find incompatible their theology and science without ever taking the time to read the standards proposed by the Kansas committee.

Jones initially came to his topic, the Westboro Baptist Church, as a student at the University of Kansas. Jones gained access to Pastor Fred Phelps and other members of his family who make up much of the membership of his church, and then he allowed them to speak to his camera unfiltered. Others, with views in disagreement with Phelps and his clan, also speak. Like Tamblyn, Jones allowed his characters to play the roles in which they were most comfortable, and he was as a result able to capture some fascinating footage of the Phelps grandchildren that provokes genuine sadness as one views *Fall From Grace*.



A member of Fred Phelps's Topeka-based Westboro Baptist Church chats on her cell phone while sporting a sign reading "God is America's Terror" and a t-shirt advertising godhatesfags.com at one of the church's infamous protests. Reflecting on the year he spent documenting the Phelps family for Fall From Grace, filmmaker K. Ryan Jones noted that "it was not the signs that began to wear on me personally, but . . . the fact that these people, who hate everyone, were being so kind to me." Image courtesy of Showtime.

Both *Kansas vs. Darwin* and *Fall From Grace* are well-produced, entertaining, and educational films that hold viewers' attention. *Kansas vs. Darwin* demonstrates many of the problems that proponents of intelligent design and other creationist ideas face as they try to convey their claims as serious scientific theory. They encounter challenges time and again because, no matter how much money is poured into supporting such ideas, they are seeking to win scientific arguments in the sociopolitical arena. To gain acceptance as science, their assertions need validation in the peer-reviewed world of scientific literature. Until this occurs, intelligent design and creationism do not belong in the science classroom. To those who suppose a worldwide conspiracy exists to prevent their gaining scientific legitimacy, I am with Rachel Robson, a University of Kansas graduate student in pathology. Interviewed for the film, she cannot help but laugh at the notion, and, like her, I love the idea of having a secret decoder ring.

Jones, in *Fall From Grace*, demonstrated significant maturity in taking a filmmaking risk. He understood that in making a serious documentary about this subject both he and the Phelps family had something to gain. The Phelps pursue any avenue that allows them to shout their message, and he wanted their cooperation in the making of his film. Therefore, he chose not to portray them as fools. Instead, he contrasts their thinking against that of the mainstream. What Jones accomplishes is a deep look at a family church that declares itself Baptist, fits most standard definitions of a cult, and clearly believes it is fulfilling its calling from God. The Phelps family is, to put it mildly, provocative, and they well understand this gets them media attention. This recognition helps the Phelps to obscure and control national and international understandings of both Kansas and Christian fundamentalism, allowing them to mold the place and the faith to meet their own ends.

Debates over evolution and the Westboro Baptist Church are here to stay. Fortunately, *Kansas vs. Darwin* and *Fall From Grace* provide useful examinations of the actors and arguments that exist within the realms that each inhabit. Both films share a place in the discourse over life in modern Kansas and of the particular role that Christianity plays in the state. Contrary to the general perception, it is inaccurate to portray the Westboro Baptist Church and/or Kansas as fundamentalist. Many observers might want to believe that the anti-evolutionists and the Phelps are simply the most extreme and visible members of the Kansas fundamentalist world, but such thinking is lazy. *Kansas vs. Darwin* demonstrates, for example, that the vast majority of the anti-evolution forces come from outside the state. Likewise, those interviewed in Jones's film state plainly that the Phelps are self-funded and not, as is often imagined, the beneficiaries of funds gleaned from a secret but wide-ranging network. To embrace the notion of a Kansas controlled by fundamentalism is to believe that there are more members of such groups than there truly are; is to ignore the significant differences between fundamentalists and evangelicals; and is to believe that Kansas is far outside the mainstream of America.

Kansans, like most Americans, want help understanding the modern world. As science becomes increasingly complicated, and as academics and particularly scientists choose to shun public discourse for fear of offending someone, people will look elsewhere for help in understanding their natural world. In such an environment, it is unsurprising that the religious turn for answers to their fundamental belief that God created the world. But such a turn does not inherently make them fundamentalists. To argue that the Westboro Baptist Church is representative of Christian



The 2007 tornado was not the first to hit Greensburg, though it was assuredly the most destructive. In this 1915 photograph a less significant forerunner threatens the city.

fundamentalism is intellectually bankrupt, too, because it is clear to even the most casual observer that there is more than one sort of Christian fundamentalism. *Fall From Grace* confirms that through their church the Phelps family pursues not a unified brand of fundamentalism but a narrow personal agenda.

Both of these films demand that their viewers stop and think. This shared characteristic means they will contribute to the discourse about the role of religion in Kansas for many years to come. Neither documentary allows the viewer to dismiss the religious as simply unimportant, and yet neither allows the religious off the hook simply because of their faith. Both *Kansas vs. Darwin* and *Fall from Grace* insist that complexity exists within Kansas, and for that the filmmakers deserve thanks.

Alan Bearman
Washburn University

Greensburg. Directed, written, and produced by Brian Schodorf. 2008; color; 60 minutes. Distributed by www.greensburgfilm.com.

The documentary *Greensburg*, the work of Kansas native Brian Schodorf, centers around the aftermath of the devastating tornado of May 4, 2007, which nearly wiped the town off the Kansas map. While the film covers the tornado itself as well as the recovery efforts over the following six months—including the decision to integrate environmentally friendly building principles in the town's reconstruction—the bulk of the documentary centers on the storm's immediate consequences,



A FEMA photo shows the devastation wreaked by the 1.7 mile-wide, EF-5 tornado that hit Greensburg, Kansas, on May 4, 2007. Director Brian Schodorf's documentary *Greensburg* covers the storm's immediate aftermath as well as the town's recovery efforts.

as townspeople react to the devastation wrought by the 1.7 mile-wide, EF-5 tornado and the enormity of the rebuilding to come. Throughout the film, Schodorf returns to the story of Sarah Schmidt, who lost her husband in the tornado. Her story provides the documentary a focus, whether the topic is personal loss, the resilience of the people of Greensburg, or the simple question of where one lives when 90 percent of the buildings in town are gone.

Greensburg excels at documenting the sense of chaos in the aftermath of the storm, how first responders managed that chaos, and how organizations came to help clean up and rebuild. The film consists mostly of interview material, and the people of Greensburg talk freely about the losses and the opportunities the tornado brought. Footage of meetings of small-business owners seeking to rebuild and of the landfill where debris from the town was burned are illustrative moments. One local, when looking at the smoke plume from the landfill, responds: "That is Greensburg burning there." Another evocative scene follows two

New York Fire Department volunteers as they descend into Greensburg's well-known tourist attraction, the world's largest hand-dug well.

One should look to this documentary as a primary source rather than a deeply analytical one. While the interviews and footage of the town shot after the tornado are compelling, no real analysis or narration is offered by the filmmaker to provide context for the interview material. At times, on-screen identifications of individuals and their affiliations are unclear. Greensburg's historic decision to build all city buildings to a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum standard—the first such decision made by any municipality faced with rebuilding from scratch—gets little attention or discussion. One can turn to Leonardo DiCaprio's *Greensburg* television series (on Discovery's Planet Green channel) for extended coverage of that topic. More could also have been said in the film about the difficulty the National Weather Service faced, once the tornado turned left toward Greensburg,

in declaring a “Tornado Emergency”—a rare alert added to a traditional “Tornado Warning” in cases of extremely destructive tornadoes approaching populated areas. Interspersed with interviews and footage from Greensburg are news reports from local stations as well as interviews with local National Weather Service and television meteorologists, former Governor Kathleen Sebelius, local legislators, and television journalist Bill Kurtis (who famously covered the 1966 Topeka tornado with the warning, “For God’s sake, take cover”). These additions provide some context to a documentary that often needs it.

Greensburg serves as an effective record of what happened to the people of Greensburg, how they made sense of the disaster, and how they responded in the first few months after the event as expressed in their own words and actions. In that sense, the documentary succeeds as a primary source, but extended analysis or context must be found elsewhere. Of course, any filmmaker can only do so much in an hour, and an understanding of the Greensburg story is greatly enhanced by a viewing of this film.

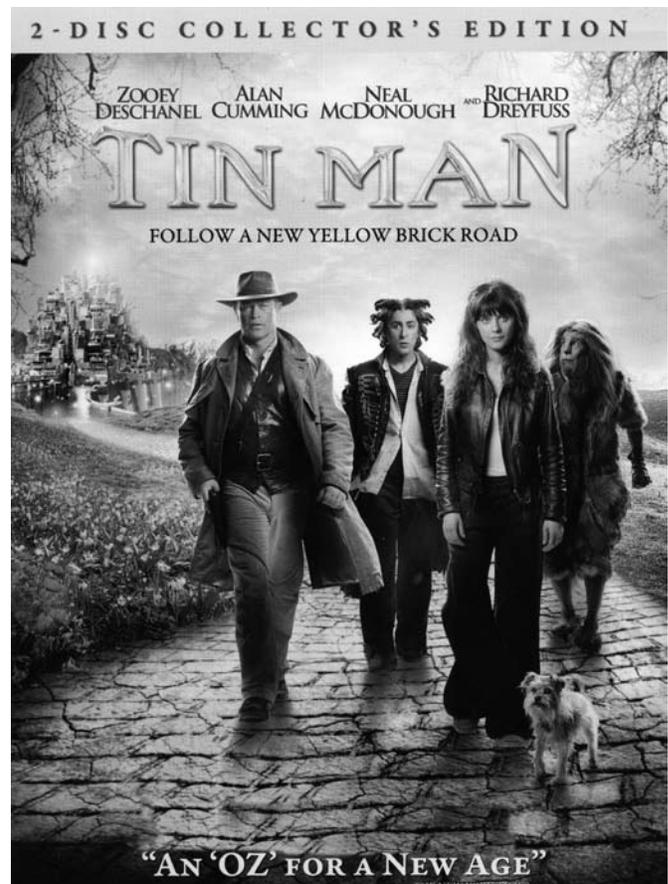
Jay Antle

Johnson County Community College

Tin Man. Directed by Nick Willing; teleplay by Jill E. Blotevogel, Steven Long Mitchell, and Craig W. Van Sickle; produced by Matthew O’Connor. 2007; color; three 90-minute episodes. Distributed by SciFi Channel; DVDs through Genius Entertainment and RHI Entertainment.

SciFi channel executives, maintaining that stories like L. Frank Baum’s *The Wizard of Oz* “deserve to be re-imagined for a new generation,” did just that in their 2007 *Tin Man*. They are not the first to reimagine, reinvent, and renew this classic American fairy tale. *The Wiz* (1975) was a hit on Broadway. *Nurse Betty* (2000) paid homage from Hollywood. Gregory Maguire’s *Wicked* (1995) and Geoff Ryman’s *Was* (1992) did the same in literature. All are adaptations that enhance and reflect on Baum’s 1900 novel. The retelling presented in *Tin Man*—a six-hour, made-for-television miniseries—was successful: the first episode became SciFi’s most-watched telecast and the highest-rated cable miniseries of 2007. This revival is clever, thoughtful, and well produced. Even when it does not live up to the best storytelling, it is at least engaging.

In the SciFi version, Oz is the O.Z. (Outer Zone) and D.G. (Zoey Deschanel) a descendent of the original Dorothy



The SciFi Channel’s recent retelling of *The Wizard of Oz*—a six-hour, made-for-television miniseries titled *Tin Man*—was successful: the first episode became the channel’s most-watched telecast and the highest-rated cable miniseries of 2007. Video cover by the SciFi Channel.

Gale. She is twenty, living in Kansas, a waitress in a blue gingham apron, bored and sensing she has another destiny. O.Z. is ruled by a Wicked Witch/Sorceress who, “fifteen annuals ago,” possessed a young princess of O.Z., Azkadellia (Kathleen Robertson), and forced her to kill her five-year-old sister. O.Z.’s then-Queen, Azkadellia’s mother, breathed all her magical power into her dying daughter (light and protection well beyond the kiss given Dorothy Gale in Munchkin Land by Glinda the Good Witch). She then sent her child, a fully restored D.G., to Kansas to be raised by android parents who helped prepare her for her destiny. Meanwhile, the still-possessed Azkadellia usurped her mother’s power and set herself over O.Z.

The grown D.G. is transported back to O.Z. on the wind of a tornado created by Azkadellia’s “Longcoat storm troopers” to disguise their attempt to kill her. She quickly finds her O.Z. companions, beginning with Glitch (Alan Cumming), the Scarecrow and a former advisor to the queen.

Half his brain has been cut out to help run a Sun Seeder machine he invented, which will soon be turned toward evil, enabling an eclipse to fix O.Z. in permanent darkness. D.G. rescues him from feather-bedecked Munchkins, their faces painted blue and red. Glitch has the best lines in this adaptation, as does Baum's original Scarecrow, as does Ray Bolger in MGM's 1939 classic film adaptation. The eponymous Tin Man is Wyatt Cain (Neal McDonough), who like other tin men in O.Z. is (or in Cain's case was) a police officer. Cain doubled as an agent of the resistance, trying to overthrow Azkadellia. His wife and son were tortured in front of him, and he was locked in a metal suit, doomed to view the torture in a continuous film loop until rescued by D.G. and Glitch. Soon, they are joined by Raw (Raoul Trujillo), the stand-in for the Cowardly Lion. Raw is half-man, half-lion, a seer who reads emotions and memories. They rescue him from the Field of the Papay, now a dead orchard.

Tin Man's plot is simple: the first to find the "Emerald of the Eclipse"—be it D.G.'s band or Azkadellia, who wants to use it to power her doomsday machine—will determine the fate of the Outer Zone. D.G., of course, is destined to find the powerful stone, once she knows who she is and begins to reassert her magic. And how to find the emerald? Follow the Yellow Brick Road, to Central City, not green but grey and dark, obviously ruled by fear.

In this adaptation, billed as "Beyond the Yellow Brick Road," the Wizard role is shared. The first incarnation is Mystic Man (Richard Dreyfuss). When Azkadellia finds that her sister is headed to Central City, she tells her henchman Zero: "The little bitch has gone to see the wizard." The second wizard figure is D.G.'s father, Ahamo (Ted Whitall), who lives in the Land of the Unwanted. He was one of the first to penetrate the skin between our world and the Outer Zone, in a balloon, of course, that set off from the Nebraska State Fair, so it is no coincidence that his name is Omaha spelled backwards. He flies D.G. to the ancestral tomb where Dorothy Gale, the "first slipper" herself, gives D.G. the magical gem. The sequence is set in Kansas and filmed in black and white.

Toto is Tutor (Blu Mankuma), once tutor to the young princesses D.G. and Azkadellia. Tutor shape-shifts between a huge man and a cairn terrier. He begins as a traitor, set free by the Sorceress only if he will pretend to help D.G.'s party while dropping discs that track their progress toward the emerald. Then, in true Toto style, he helps fight Azkadellia's Longcoats, thick-headed automatons like the Winkies. The Winged Monkeys are Mobats, who materialize from tattoos just above Azkadellia's breasts.

The parallels between Oz and O.Z. abound but, beyond adapting its source, *Tin Man* adds the story of the sisters' past. As they move into memory to reach their goals (for D.G., light and freedom; for Azkadellia, darkness and tyranny), they recover a time when the bond between them could protect them from all dangers, all evil. D.G. realizes that her adventurousness allowed Azkadellia's possession by the powerful witch. And, at the end, Azkadellia realizes she has been inhabited. So, without a moment to spare—yes, that breathless—each finds the strength to reunite, to hold hands. The possessing witch melts into a black puddle, the eclipse ends, and light transforms the O.Z. into fruitful green once again.

This second plot is sometimes slow in its development, but it also echoes L. Frank Baum in the books that followed *The Wizard of Oz*. *Ozma of Oz* (1907) tells the story of how the true Princess of Oz, Ozma, usurped by the Wicked Witches, lives in hiding as Pip, a boy. He is not initially happy to discover his true identity as princess. In other Oz tales over the nineteen-book series, Baum created magical creatures like H. M. Wogglebug, T.E., and Tik-Tok, who seem to combine as inspiration for a wise man among *Tin Man's* resistance movement whose body is part spider, part copper bowl. And Baum ends the Oz series in *Glinda of Oz* (1920) with a submerged, submarine-like world that is as fascinating as it is technologically impossible. Baum would have loved the setting of *Tin Man*, reflecting as it does his own fascinations with magic and machinery, fairy tale and technology, time warps and time travels, mysteries and puzzles.

Tin Man is sometimes a slave to the reinvention. Often the recognition is a delight, as with the "lions and tigers and bears" line from the 1939 film. But when Raw turns fearful before the group storms Azkadellia's fortress, Baum's Cowardly Lion, rather than Raw's character, dictates the action. Each viewer will have equal moments of delight and grimace at such genuflections to previous adaptations of *The Wizard of Oz*.

L. Frank Baum and his Oz have obvious power in literature and film culture. A quintessential belief and faith in home and family, and the triumph of simple good over complicated evil, make his an innocent and very American tale. His great triumvirate—heart, head, and the will to action—permeate all his work. *Tin Man* complements, even occasionally enhances, Baum's creation and his spirit in a new world, for a new audience.

Tom Averill
Washburn University

Jericho. Created by Stephen Chbosky, Jonathan Steinberg, and Josh Schaer; written by Stephen Chbosky, Josh Schaer, Jonathan Steinberg, Carol Barbee, Matthew Federman, Stephen Scaia, Dan Shotz, Michael Ostrowski, Robert Levine, Nancy Won, Joy Gregory, Frank Military; directed by Guy Norman Bee, Sanford Bookstaver, James Whitmore, Jr., Martha Mitchell, Jon Turteltaub, Steve Gomer, Seith Mann. 2006–2008; color; 29 one-hour episodes. Distributed by CBS Paramount Television.

The Battle for Bunker Hill. Directed by Kevin Willmott; screenplay by Greg Hurd and Kevin Willmott; produced by Kevin Willmott, Matt Cullen, Greg Hurd, and Scott Richardson. 2009; color; 110 minutes. Distributed by Micheaux Motion Pictures.

The only thing we have to fear, according to yesterday's news, is nuclear proliferation, climate change, global terrorism, pandemic flu, the earth-swallowing black hole being cooked up in the Large Hadron Collider, asteroids, sun storms, nanotechnological self-replicating robots, pirates, and high-fructose corn syrup. Quite a lot, although, as Frank Furedi argues, "compared with the past people living in Western societies have less familiarity with pain, suffering, debilitating disease and death than ever before. And yet, despite an unprecedented level of personal security, fear has become an ever-expanding part of our life" (*The Culture of Fear: Risk-Taking and the Morality of Low Expectation*, rev. ed. [London: Continuum, 2002], vii–viii). Recently, two Kansas-set screen offerings—the television series *Jericho* and the film *The Battle for Bunker Hill*—have asked: what will we do when something genuinely scary happens?

The question is not surprising. After all, we are less than a decade out from two undeniably terrifying events that linger in our collective unconsciousness. The aftermaths of the 9/11 attacks and Hurricane Katrina plainly stand behind both *Jericho* and *Bunker Hill*, shaping the fears of their Kansas townsfolk as they struggle to name what cut them off from the world. Like the doggedly hunted Roger Thornhill in Alfred Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* (1959) or the easily spooked neighbors in that famous episode of *The Twilight Zone*, "The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street"



At the center of television's *Jericho*, Kansas, lies a quaint main street, where all seems well until residents notice a mushroom cloud over what they guess was Denver. In the real-life Lawrence, Kansas, when members of the cast and crew of *Jericho* came to town in September 2006, former Governor Kathleen Sebelius declared North Lawrence "Jericho" for the day. Above Sebelius chats with Skeet Ulrich, one of the stars of the series that explores how a small town in Kansas copes after being cut off from the rest of the country. Image courtesy of the Lawrence Journal-World.

(1960), these citizens have been overwhelmed by unknown boogey men; unlike those cold-war stories, these modern postapocalyptic narratives reflect our current wars, both actual and cultural. Who and what, they ask, should we fear now?

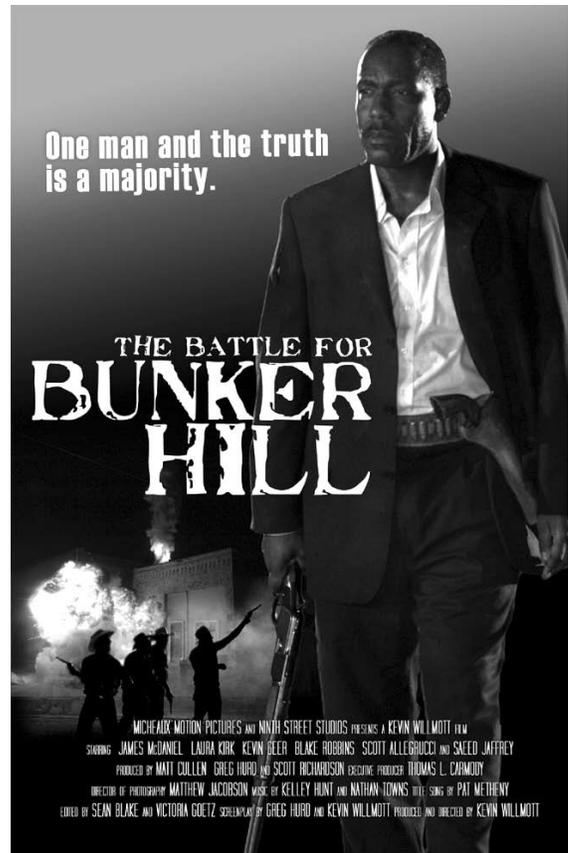
Jericho takes its name from its setting: a fictional Kansas town of about five thousand, founded in 1876 in "Fillmore County," just east of the Colorado border. The town's name recalls the biblical Jericho, home to an apocalypse of its own, though there was also an actual Jericho, Kansas, in Larrabee Township, Gove County, made up of not much besides a post office from 1905 until 1923. In the center of the televised Jericho lies a quaint main street, where all seems well at stores advertising "Guns, Ammo, & Gifts" and "Local Corn Oil" until residents notice a mushroom cloud over what they guess was Denver. They pull out the Geiger counters and set to work surviving. Although their radios, telephones, and televisions go down (as does, eventually, "everything with a circuit board," the result of the electromagnetic pulse that always accompanies nuclear explosions on film), Jericho residents soon learn that twenty-two other cities were also targets in the "September Attacks." Not until the show's finale do they discover who

is behind the bombings. From start to finish, then, the residents of Jericho are left to fend for themselves.

They do fairly well, sometimes too well. The town's residents are invariably clean, even after they lose the electricity necessary to pump fresh water. And they are, mostly, morally clean as well, almost always coming out on the right side of the difficult choices presented them. For the show's writers, this common cleanliness characterizes what it means to be from Kansas, and in this and other ways the setting can feel contrived. When, for example, every resident owns multiple firearms, or when the show's only non-white major character comes from out of town (although there are extras of all races), Jericho feels less like a real place. Kansans can be grateful, however, that we are not typecast as religious fanatics in Jericho; in fact, religion is almost entirely absent from the series.

Situating the show in rural western Kansas offers its writers opportunities they would not have if their characters lived in New York City, or even in Lawrence or Topeka (the former of which, sorry Jayhawks, was "nuked" in the attacks). Jericho, surrounded by farms, is uniquely positioned to survive but, when refugees begin to arrive, residents have to ask themselves how willing they are to share what they have. At its most engaging, *Jericho* depicts everyday people struggling to live in a world similar to yet very different from the one they knew. The difference is underlined when the town receives air drops of relief supplies from China, or when residents risk the drive on increasingly dangerous roads (although not yet as dangerous as in Cormac McCarthy's terrifying postapocalyptic novel *The Road* [2006]) to get to the regional trading post, where people from nearby towns and refugee camps share news via a giant bulletin board. The border skirmishes that Jericho's "Rangers" fight with the neighboring town of New Bern also raise interesting questions about who is and is not "one of us." Ultimately Jericho, with its levelheaded governance and mostly calm and generous townsfolk, would not be a bad place to spend the end of the world.

The same cannot be said for Bunker Hill, the town at the center of Kansas filmmaker Kevin Willmott's recent picture. Filmed in Bunker Hill, Nortonville, Lawrence, Coffeyville, West Mineral, Gove, Sedan, and Edna, this postapocalyptic Western radiates Kansas, from the ambient noise of locust calls to the observable heat that squeezes the town's frayed citizens. These folk initially keep their composure when, on a sunny, cloudless, midsummer afternoon, the town's emergency sirens go off. But within twenty-four hours, after they lose all communication with "the outside world" and their cars conk out, many residents begin to panic, theorizing about biological warfare (spread via the water



In local filmmaker Kevin Willmott's postapocalyptic Western—which radiates Kansas with its scenes shot in Bunker Hill, Nortonville, Lawrence, Coffeyville, West Mineral, Gove, Sedan, and Edna—the citizens of a small, stranded town quickly learn that they should not fear the end of the world nearly as much as what they are willing to do to one another to survive it. Poster courtesy of Kevin Willmott.

system or by crop dusters), anthrax, a dirty bomb, or the Rapture. It becomes clear that the town's citizens should be afraid, not of the apocalypse, but of what they are willing to do to one another to survive it.

Stranded along with natives of Bunker Hill is Peter Salem (James McDaniel). Salem's name thickly hints at the film's themes, conjuring up witch-hunts and the Arabic and Hebrew words for peace, although the character was surely named after the slave-turned-freeman who fought in the Revolutionary Battle of Bunker Hill. Recently released from prison, where he served time for insider trading, Salem catches a bus to town in an attempt to reunite with his estranged family. He has already had his own brush with apocalyptic history, surviving 9/11 because he was late for his job in "Tower Two" after a night of binge drinking. Salem is less than welcome in Bunker Hill, making quick enemies of the town's token rednecks and refusing to accept the bribe to leave offered him by his ex-wife's new beau Jim

McLain (Kevin Geer). Once they are all trapped together by the seeming end of the world, the film focuses as much on McLain's increasingly violent attempts to hold onto Hallie (Laura Kirk) as on the town's larger predicament.

Bunker Hill asks tough questions of contemporary America, a fear-fueled country that remains confused about the causes of 9/11 and the effects of Katrina. Stark lines are drawn by many in Bunker Hill between "us" and "them." Sometimes "they" are easily spotted, as in the case of the town's only Muslim residents, Mr. Farook, a South Asian Indian who wants to be a cowboy (played by the scene-stealing Saeed Jaffrey), and his son Nadim (Ranjit Arab), called "Pakis" and "al-Qaeda piece[s] of shit" by their fellow Bunker Hillians. At other times "they" have to be hunted, because the townspeople are not certain who caused their current crisis. One resident insists that they are "at war." Asked "with who?" he replies, "We'll find somebody." The film repeatedly reminds us of our real-life war

on terror, as when Salem acts as a suicide bomber or when a local landmark of concentric stone circles (Kansas artist Stan Herd's *Prairiehenge*) is shot to resemble the burning Twin Towers.

Jericho and *The Battle for Bunker Hill* distill our growing list of modern fears into one concentrated terror. Why worry, after all, about mercury in our fish or lead in our toys when the world has just ended? After the final shootout in *The Battle for Bunker Hill* the townspeople shuffle off to their homes, still in the dark about what caused the lights to go out. As they wander away, a question asked earlier in the film hangs over them: "Do you know what's out there?" Both *Jericho* and *The Battle for Bunker Hill* make the case that what is in here, in the hearts and minds of our fellow Americans, should concern us most. [KH]

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