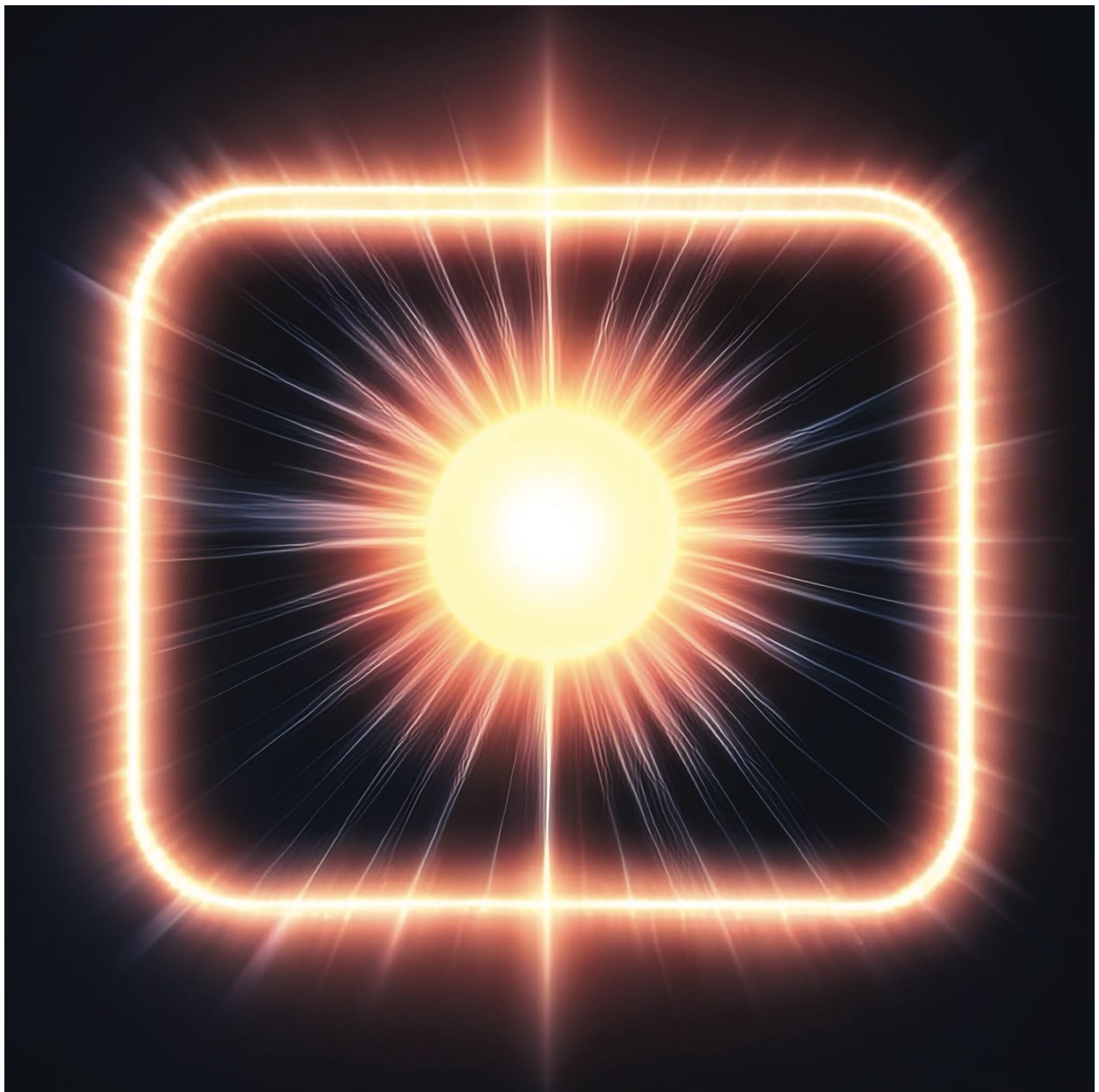


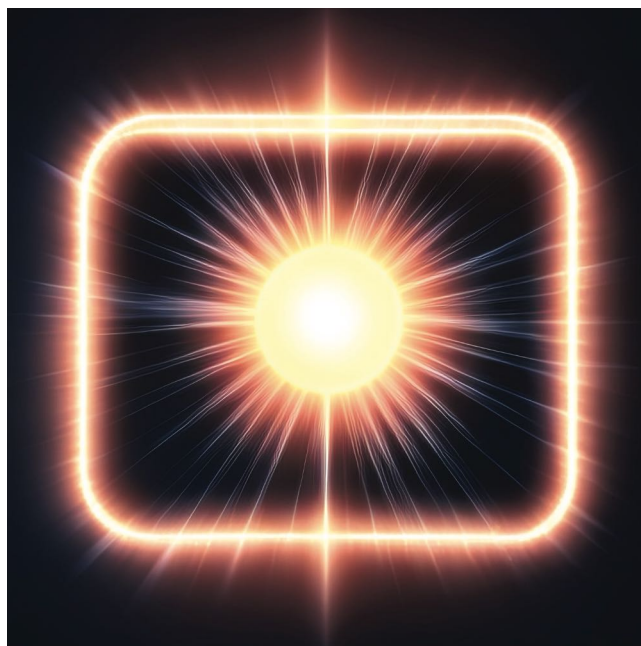


Issue 2
The Vision Splendid



The Vision Splendid

Season 2 Episode 2: February 25, 2025



Colophon

Two Chairs in Print is published by David Grigg and Perry Middlemiss.

—

All textual content in *Two Chairs in Print* is © Copyright 2025 by David R. Grigg and Perry Middlemiss, and is licensed under Creative Commons License CC BY-ND 4.0.

Cover image generated by Dream by Wombo AI.

—

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the members of the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which this publication is produced in Mill Park and Hawthorn, Victoria, and we pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

—

Website

<https://twochairs.website>

—

Email

twochairstalk@gmail.com

Introduction

Perry:

Hello and welcome to season 2 episode 2 of this little podcast we call Two Chairs Talking. My name is Perry Middlemiss and I'm here as always with my good friend David Grigg. Hello David.

David:

Hi Perry, how's things?

Perry:

Not bad. Glad that the hot weather is slowly leaving us behind and we don't have to worry about that too much more.

David:

Well, we might have a few more bursts of hot weather before the year is out.

Perry:

Well, yeah, as we're recording this in late February, we've probably got, well... the summer seems to have drifted into March a bit these days. So we're probably got two or three weeks where we'll have to keep our fingers crossed that we don't get fried, but I don't think we'll get to 40 degrees any more.

David:

Not this year!

Perry:

I hope that the autumn rain starts so I don't have to spend so much time out in the garden watering.

David:

That's a good thing!

Perry:

It is a good thing. One of the things that being out in the garden watering does is it gives me time to sit there and think about things David. Things like what I'm going to review and what I'm going to say on a podcast such as this, while I'm listening to other podcasts; but we won't be dealing with podcasts this time.

David:

Okay.

Perry:

We might have a few notes about a few podcasts in some later episodes because you and I have been listening to a number of different podcasts. Some of them I think our listener might be interested in. We'll talk about those at another time, not this time. We've got a lot to talk about.

David, we really do need to speed things up a little bit. Last episode, well over two hours, not good. We got an email from a good friend, Carey Handfield, who was almost exasperated thinking how long it was. He thought we should have split it in two. Probably should have split it in to thirds.

David:

[talks at very high speed] Perhaps we'll just have to talk like this very very quickly and then nobody has to worry about how long it takes...

Perry:

I'm glad *you* said that. People can of course actually speed up their podcasts and

then we will exactly sound like that.

David:

But we'd sound like chipmunks, that would be the problem.

Perry:

Even more than we currently do. So yes, we got a note from Carey saying it was too long. I spoke to Chong, a good friend, and he mentioned the podcast and he just looked at me and shook his head. I thought, "Okay, I've been told. Silent criticism, but that'll do. I've got the hint." I think we should speed up this time, David, as best we possibly can.

David:

So we should get on with it!

Perry:

Oh, okay, I'm just rambling and using up time when I shouldn't be. Yeah, no, fair enough.

Best Films Seen in 2024

Perry:

Okay, so as is usual at this time of year, last episode we dealt with our best reading of the year, what books we'd got through. Yes, you could almost say that it took about as long to listen to that episode as it would take to read a novel, but there we go. This time we're dealing with our best films and television of 2024.

Now, I know, David, that you've been watching a fair bit more than you have in the past, which is a good thing.

David:

Well a fair bit more for me is like still a tiny amount compared to you. I really still don't watch a lot of movies and or a lot of TV really but maybe in a year's time I'll have more to talk about but during 2024 there wasn't vast amounts but there's simply one or two things I can mention.

Perry:

Okay, well, that's good. It's always good that if you've got something that you saw that stood out.

So let's get into it, David, and talk about our best films of 2024. We'll deal with these in categories and then build up to our best overall films of the year and then move on to television and do the same. So we'd better get into it and start moving through it.

Actually talking about films during the year, I actually had a much better year in 2024 than I did in 2023. I mean, 22 films in 2023, 86 in 24. Now a lot of that was basically because I decided right, I'm definitely going to start going back more to the cinema, which I did. And I went to the cinema, which is, luckily for me, within 10 minutes walk of my front door. And I was up to 26 visits. So once a fortnight in 2024, and that was up from a grand total of seven in 2023. So much, much better in 2024 than 2023. And I saw some damn good films, but let's get into those and have a look at it.

So to our first category, drama.

Drama

Perry:

Some people are going to basically say that some of the films here might have fitted into other genres. Well, yeah, okay, fair enough. But hey, this is where I put them in as genre and as I picked them as I went along. So there we go.

So I've actually got six for my top five and that being because the bottom two I've actually listed as being the same rating.

Now they are *Barry Lyndon* by Stanley Kubrick, which was made in 1975. This is a bit like walking through an art gallery. Very long, very slow, but very interesting film. And I was very glad that I saw it on the big screen. I hadn't seen it for ages, since almost when it first came out.

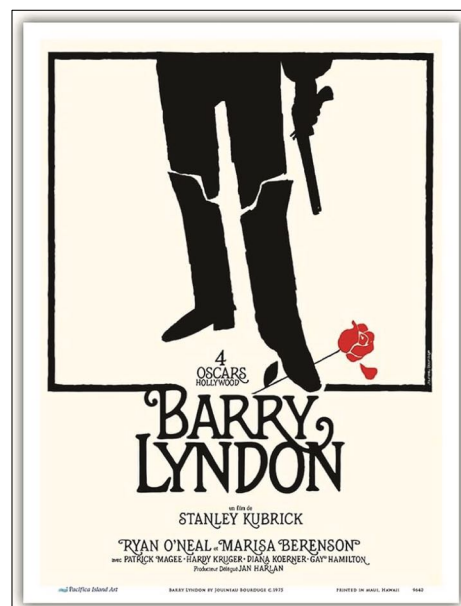
Equal, equal fifth, shall we say, *American Fiction* directed by Cord Jefferson. This came out in 2023, nominated for an Academy Award from the USA. It's a very interesting look at how African American writers survive in the current publishing world in the US. Cynical, sarcastic, funny, dramatic. Good stuff. I really liked it.

Number four, *Ikiru*, directed by Akira Kurosawa from 1952. This is one of his non-Samurai films and follows an Asian public servant who decides that he wants to do something good in his life rather than being, you know, just basically sitting there and doing nothing, especially after he's been given a diagnosis of cancer and he hasn't got long to live. So he wants to achieve something by building a children's playground in the middle of Tokyo and he does and it's fantastic.

It was remade a few years ago with Bill Nye in the lead role and was made under the title *Living with a Screenplay* by Kazuo Ishiguro. Interesting.

All right. Number three on my list, *The Red Shoes*, Powell and Pressburger from 1948. Powell and Pressburger made a large number of films under the grand title of The Archers as their production company. The two of them mostly wrote and directed together. Wonderful stuff. Has a minor part with Australia's Robert Helpmann in it. And this is from 1948. So it came out just after the Second World War. Good stuff. Saw this on the big screen and that was the major thing.

Number two, and this will be a bit strange for people who think that this probably shouldn't be in this area. Anyway, *Rashomon* by Akira Kurosawa. I put this down as drama. You can almost put it down as an action film. This is really a very, very interesting film about an incident where a rogue warrior samurai attacks a man and a woman in a forest. She's sexually assaulted. He is murdered. But is he? Because





when they come to actually talk about this and they all are discussing this during the trial, everybody's got a different view about what happened, including the people that come in and see what happened, or do they see it? Wonderful stuff. It has a huge, massive influence on films for quite some span outside Japan as well as all the way right across the West. Certainly one of those ones that you have to go and see at some time or other.

But my best film of the year was from France, subtitled, called *The Taste of Things* [directed by Tran Anh Hùng]. This is set in about 1889 where a wealthy French chef and gourmand is living in his manor house in a French countryside with his cook and her assistant. For 20 years he's been designing menus for the aristocracy of the people around him and she's been helping him prepare them. They've been in a long-term romantic relationship and although he's asked her to marry him on a number of occasions, she's always refused.

Now one day, Villette brings her young niece Pauline along to the house to see how a large kitchen works and the chef and his cook — the cook is played by Juliette Binoche, the chef is played by Benoit Magimel. Now the interesting thing about these is these two actors a long time ago were married but they separated and have a child together and you might have thought that there would be a little bit of tension between the two of them. But it doesn't seem to be here. It sort of seems to work along very well.

This is a phenomenally good film. Do you remember the film *Babette's Feast* from the late 1980s?

David:

I know of it, but that's about all I can say.

Perry:

Okay, well that's about the only other film that I know of that deals with the making and preparation of food in such a gorgeous way. When my wife and I left the cinema, she said, you know, that was absolutely fantastic. I'm really glad we went. She said only the French could have made that film. Now she's perfectly correct. It just looks gorgeous. Looks fantastic. If you get a chance to see it on a big screen, I would heartily recommend you do so.

It was films like this that make me keep going back to the cinema because it's got all that I want. It's not a lot of big action. There's a lot of people talking, but you know, just the way the film's made and the photography and the cinematography, the setup. There's a scene at one point where three of them, for five or even eight or ten minutes are walking, moving around a kitchen, cooking this big meal. And it's like a large ballet where they're walking around, going to all the different parts of the kitchen, mixing, preparing, cooking, looking things on the stove. Nobody runs into each other, not a word said, and it's just stunningly good. Absolutely fantastic.

I just loved it. And so that was my best drama film of the year. So over to you, David.

David:

Well, in most categories I'm just going to have probably only one movie and it may not even have been the best movie, but it's the only one I've seen so... Well, okay, so drama. The only one I've got in this category is *Oppenheimer*, directed

by Christopher Nolan, and I thought this was terrific, sort of a masterful look at a complex person. And Cillian Murphy could have been born for the role. I thought he looked perfect in it, and his representation at different ages, was convincing too. They did a very good job of aging him backwards and forwards because as you know the film cuts backwards and forwards in time and I thought they did a very good job of keeping that up. I also thought it was fascinating to see Robert Downey Jr. in a very different role from Iron Man as we've seen him in so many Marvel movies but he's actually a very good actor when he gets the chance, I think, so, yeah, that was good.

I don't have much else to say about it other than that I really enjoyed it. It's a very good, what would you call it, biopic of a very interesting man, a very crucial person, I suppose, in history. all the acting was very good. That's about all I can say.



Perry:

No, I agree. I thought that it was spectacularly good. Cillian Murphy has been appearing in a number of Christopher Nolan films over the years. And as you say, he seems to have been made for the part. There's that. There's the look on his face where you know that the weight of history is all over him. And he struggles with what he has to do, but he knows that he doesn't really have a choice and he just has to get on with it and do it. Great film. I really enjoyed it. I think I saw it the year before, in 2023. And I thought was probably one of my best of that year. So yep, good choice. Good choice.

Science Fiction and Fantasy

Perry:

Right, moving on to science fiction and fantasy. And now in this, I'm including horror, Marvel and DC films. And so I'll get back to this. I've got, well, I've got one that stands out which I'll mention and I've got four that are all at the same rating of 4.2.

And I'll go from the bottom because I think this is just in the order in which I saw them or maybe just the order that I listed them. It doesn't matter.

First one is *Alien* by Ridley Scott. What can we say? I think everybody's seen this. This is an all time classic science fiction film, but it's actually an all time classic horror film as well. Because it's the monster in the cupboard and you never see the monster until right at the very end. It's really well made.

I know that a mutual friend of ours, Julian Warner, has told me recently that he thinks there are plot holes all over the place. I don't care. It looks good. It looks gritty. It's just a good film. And going back and seeing it again, you actually appreciate how bloody good it is.

David:

Yeah, yeah. Some beautiful... There's some brilliant cinematography in it, really. Yeah.

Perry:

It really is good. Oh yeah, wonderful stuff. Really good.

Next one, *Mad Max Fury Road*. So this is from 2015 and I had never seen this

before. And I decided I'd best go out and see it because there was a new Mad Max film released during the year, *Furiosa*, which I enjoyed, but not as much as this. And *Furiosa* is the immediate sequel to this particular film.

Now, I believe that in *Mad Max Fury Road*, Miller wanted to do an action film where it was almost real time. So that if the film lasts over two hours, the action of the film lasts about two hours and he pretty much does it.

Wonderful, wonderful cinematography. Just an astounding piece of filmmaking. I really like this film. Thought it was great. Action sequences are just stunning, stunningly good.

Next one, *The Shining* by Stanley Kubrick from 1980. I saw this as part of a Kubrick retrospective. I didn't get to as many of those as I wanted to for various reasons last year.

Yeah, so look, it's another great horror film. I know Stephen King doesn't like this version of *The Shining*, but seeing it on the big screen, I really do like it. I used to think it was really slow and then I went to see this again. Now I think, no, it's not. It actually ticks along very, very nicely. I know Kubrick was an absolute bastard to all of the actors, particularly Shelley Duval, but what he gets in the end is a pretty damn good film.

Next one, *Poor Things* by Yorgos Lanthimos. This was from 2023. Very strange little film that is sort of steampunky alternate universe, but very interesting, very interesting indeed.

David:

Yeah, I want to see that. I definitely want to see that.

Perry:

You should catch up with that. Lanthimos' follow-up film to this was just nowhere near as good. That came out the end of last year. It was a sort of episodic film, split into three parts, just not quite as good as this one.

Anyway, my top film of the year, *Dune Part 2*, which I thought was excellent, it follows on pretty much straight after where *Dune Part 1* finished.



That was from a couple of years ago. Since then, we have learnt that he is going to be making *Dune Part 3*. The end of this film basically flows straight into what would hopefully be the ongoing action of *Dune Part 3*, which I think is going to be based on *Dune Messiah*, the second of the books by Frank Herbert.

You can rant and rave about this film, about what you like and what you don't like. I'm fully aware that there are big problems with the book *Dune*, which we have discussed in the past, but if you basically suspend your disbelief about a lot of that, it looks phenomenally good. This whole thing just looks spectacular.

See it if you can on a big screen, Denis Villeneuve is really becoming the guy for science fiction films now. *Arrival* was spectacularly good. I really liked it. I also liked, although a lot of people didn't, *Blade Runner 2049*. And these two *Dune* films, I think are probably about as good a version of it as you can get. I know some things were left out of the book, but hopefully that is because they will get a much bigger part in the third episode of this.

I would recommend people seeing it on a big screen and I thought it was just wonderful.

Over to you, David.

David:

Well, I actually watched my way through the entire Marvel, what's it called? The Infinity Stone Saga. The entire lot.

Perry:

All right.

David:

Which is 19 films, I think. Something incredible. I almost binge-watched it, one film a night one after the other, just filling up my brain space, which I felt the need to do last year.

Anyway, I'm not going to talk about any of those because none of them rose to the level of being really good stuff.

Now, my best film for the year is a fantasy film, well, two films. *Dune Part 1* and *Dune Part 2*. And I thought it was a terrific production. It was as faithful a treatment of the novel as anyone could expect. All the acting was good. So, I don't have much more to say about it than what you did. I didn't like the second part as much as I liked the first part. I'm not quite sure why.

Perry:

Okay.

David:

I think maybe I found some of the... I think I thought it stretched my sense of belief a little bit much with all these attacks on the harvesting vehicles. I'm sort of thinking to myself, where do they get all these bloody weapons in order to be blowing up these huge vehicles?

David:

And of course, the other thing is that I do have problems with the novel itself, and so some of those things came out. But nevertheless, it was definitely the best SF film or films that I saw during the year. So, that's me for that.

Perry:

It certainly looks spectacular, doesn't it? I mean, the color palettes are really terrific, they did a lot of work here in the production design.

David:

Oh yeah, fantastic. Brilliantly done.

Perry:

People did a lot of work in ensuring that they had exactly what it was they wanted. And the contrast between Arrakis and the Harkonnen home world is stunning. Yeah, lots of good things to have a look at and people can yell and scream about it all they want. But let me tell you, it was bloody spectacular watching it.

David:

Sure. Yeah.

Action/Thriller

Perry:

Okay. So moving on to action thriller films. I've only got three on my list. So you'll be happy to know I'll be able to get through these fairly quickly.

The first one of these is *Casino Royale*, directed by Martin Campbell from 2006. This is the reboot after, this is about the third or fourth reboot, but this is a complete reboot of the James Bond sequence with Daniel Craig as James Bond. And I thought it was really well done. They were able to handle the action sequences quite well.

He's probably, in my view, probably about the best of the Bond actors for me. I know that sounds a bit of a sacrilege for people that liked Sean Connery and I'd take Connery as number two. But Craig just looks the part. He can wear a suit and he can run and he can act. And he's quite ripped as well. So he's quite athletic. He can do all of the stuff that he needs to do. And while I'm sad that he's decided to give it up, I can absolutely and utterly understand exactly why he did so. I've been watching a few interviews with him, every now and again, he turns up on something that I've seen, like The Graham Norton Show. And he talks about all the bones that he's broken while he's been playing this part. And it's just worn him out.

David:

Oh my gosh.

Perry:

And it's time for him to move on, give it to somebody else. And the whole of the James Bond thing seems to be up in the air because it looks like the production company that was running it out of the UK have now sold it to Amazon and moved on. Nobody in that family wanted to keep it up or they were made an offer they couldn't refuse David. And anyway, it's gone.

David:

Hmm.

Perry:

So we'll just have to see how that goes sometime in the future.

Number two, *The French Connection* by William Friedkin from 1971. This won the Academy Award for Best Film for the Year.

David:

Yeah, I remember that.

Perry:

It's got a very much documentary style feel to it, very gritty, very down to earth.

And it's about the investigation of a shipment of heroin that's coming in from France into New York with Gene Hackman in the lead role.

I also saw *French Connection 2* during the year, but that wasn't anywhere up to this level. It's still good and still interesting, but not to the level of the first one, which was quite astounding in its, well, the plot's good, the way that it's all all hangs together. It's all great stuff. I really enjoyed it.

But my number one, what can I say about this? *Seven Samurai* by Akira Kurosawa. Probably one of my top three favorite films of all time. I was really pleased to be able to see this on a big screen for the first time in 30 or 40 years, I guess. It was part of a Kurosawa retrospective held at the Lido Cinema in Hawthorn near me. So there was a couple of Kurosawa's in the drama section and a couple that I could have had as honorable mentions. He's just a spectacularly good director. This has got everything I wanted in a film. It's got widescreen. It's got an interesting plot. It keeps moving. It's epic in scale, but it also deals with the interactions between people at a very basic level. And it's just wonderful. Of course, it's been remade a couple of times in Hollywood, but they were never as good as this.

And this just stands out to me as one of the all time great films. And if you can get a chance to see it on a big screen, you absolutely should do so.

David:

Yep.

Perry:

And from 1954, it's just stunning. And it was interesting that it's three and a half hours long. And this was the very first one they had in the Kurosawa retrospective. And so the cinema was, you know, it was sort of Monday night. It was probably 80% full, which is pretty good for the Lido. And they had it in one of the big cinemas that they have down there. And about halfway through, there's an intermission.

And everybody is sitting there going, "Oh, oh, oh." I knew it was coming. Oh, yeah, I thought I'll get up. I'll just go out and visit the little filmgoers room out the back and then come back again. And people were sitting around, "What am I supposed to do now?" Because they don't get intermissions anymore. And, you know, suddenly you get this, and then it was great. So you basically go out and a bit of a break, come back again and off you go.

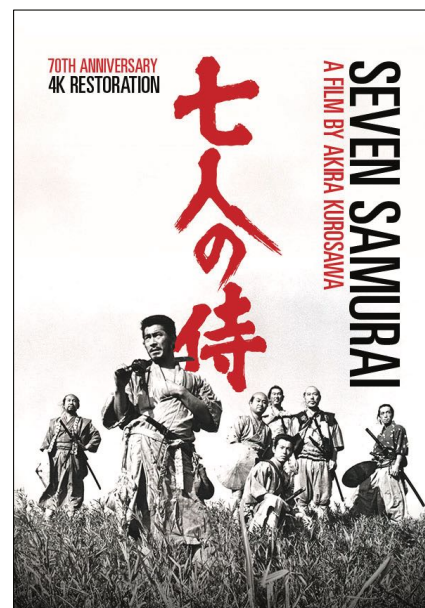
So it's three and a half hours, including the intermission. It's a long film, but by God, is it worth it? Absolutely. It's got drama, melodrama, comedy, tragedy, action, suspense, pathos, romance, big wide screens, big close-in scenes, everything, everything.

David:

Good stuff. I agree.

Perry:

All done. Yours.



David:

Mine, well I'm not even sure this fits in the action thriller category, but anyway, it's what I've got. *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* with Gary Oldman as George Smiley.

And I wanted to see it as much as anything, I wanted to compare it with the TV series which had Alex Guinness as George Smiley. And also sort of to compare Gary Oldman's role in this with his role in the *Slow Horses* TV series, which is kind of diametrically opposite.

Perry:

They are the opposite ends of the ruler, aren't they? They're complete opposites, but it's the same ruler.

David:

I mean, what a fantastic actor he is. He's just the best, I think, he's terrific.

Perry:

Oh, yeah.

David:

It's like, I enjoyed it, but because it's only a film and not a TV series, it has to whizz through things and leave heaps out. Unless you were familiar with the book or with the previous TV series, I think you'd be very confused about what's going on. But nevertheless, it's the best in that category I've got because it's the only one I've got in that category.

So there you go.

Perry:

Okay. All right, so we're finished with the action thrillers. Yeah, I'd put that more as drama, but you know, I'm okay. I'm all right. Thriller. Yeah, okay. Yeah, I'll go with thriller. Well, we might talk about the TV series a bit later on, but that's just a precursor to what's happening.

David:

Well, whatever.

Comedy**Perry:**

Okay, so moving on to comedy. I didn't see many films in the comedy category this past year, only three. I find there's not really many comedies around that I like or I can find.

The two that I have, the first one is *The Death of Stalin* by Armando... Oh, God, I'm going to get this one wrong... Armando Iannucci from 2017, and this deals with the black comedy of what happens inside the Soviet Union High Council when Stalin drops dead. The funniest thing is when he's actually there and he's on the floor and all the guys are standing around him looking at him and saying, well, we're going to get a doctor in. Well, which doctor? We get the best doctors. Oh, we've purged all of them, we've killed them all. So he's been going through killing off everybody for, I don't know, for whatever reason. They don't actually give a reason at all. But it's all very much a black humor, but behind the black humor, there's this sort of absolute and utter tragedy that's sitting there. And you know that some things have changed, but they have been absolutely horrendous inside the Soviet Union up until then.

Look, you have to go and see it. It's got a great cast. Jason Isaacs comes in as the



head of the Soviet Army. And while he's got this big chest, and it looks like his shoulders are padded out, they're almost not quite wide enough to fit all of the medals across because it seems to go off and then go around under his armpits. He's got so many. Look, it's just, it's very funny, but very black. And you come out of it at the end knowing it is a comedy, but oh God, it's very, very serious as well.

But my best comedy of the year from 1983, *Local Hero*, edited by Bill Forsyth. What a wonderful film.

David:

That's about my favourite movie of all time, I think.

Perry:

Really? Okay, I can certainly understand that. I mean, when people refer to things as being a gentle comedy, this is it. There's not a bad word said about anybody here. I mean, except maybe the psychiatrist for the Knox Oil executive played by...

David:

Burt Lancaster.

Perry:

Burt Lancaster. Maybe he's the only one that gets a bad shrift in this particular film. But oh dear... I told my wife that we were sitting down, she said, "Oh, what do you want? Well, I don't know." She says, "I don't know what I want to watch."

And I said, "Oh, we haven't seen *Local Hero*." Oh yeah, let's watch that. And we loved it. Absolutely loved it.

David:

Yes, that's a great movie.

Perry:

Yeah, it's a small film, but it's just got a good nature to it and it's just got a good sense of camaraderie between all the people that are working in it and oh, there's some lovely scenes.

And it's got Mark Knopfler's soundtrack to it. Yeah, but it's interesting. I was listening to it and I was thinking, right, okay, because I've been listening, oddly enough, I've been listening to a bit of Mark Knopfler before this.

David:

Oh, the soundtrack, which is fantastic.

Perry:

And that may have been the reason that gave me the hint to go and have a look at *Local Hero* again. Anyway, I'm listening to it. I'm thinking, right, okay, they're going to have the soundtrack, you know, the classic coming, going home song.

You only get that over the end credits. You get a little bit of snippets of it here and there. Some guy plays it on a flute at a social get-together.

David:

Yes.

Perry:

And that's it. And I thought, hmm, bit of a waste. I was a bit sad about that because I think that it is that song actually that is the middle piece actually really fits this and it's just a wonderful, wonderful piece of work. If you haven't seen it for a few years, go back and see it again. It'll make you feel better about life. Absolutely.

David:

Oh, yeah. I think I re-watch that every four or five years.

Perry:

Smart move.

David:

I think it's a fantastic movie. It's so good. Everyone in it is so good. And how do you like the early role for Peter Capaldi?

Perry:

Yes. Yes.

David:

You know, very different from his later roles.

Perry:

Probably, yeah, probably very, he plays as, you know, a very young gormless, young guy that's tasked as being the assistant to the visiting Knox Oil guy played by Peter Riegert, who's come over to try and purchase all this land to build an oil refinery on the coast of Scotland.

David:

Yeah, yeah.

Perry:

That was also probably the other reason because it was the coast of Scotland. I wanted to go and have a look at it. And it was in an area that we sort of skirted around. It was on the coast and we sort of went inland around that. It's on the Northwest. I think it was filmed on the Northwest. But anyway, good stuff. Yeah, really good.

David:

Great stuff. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Wonderful stuff.

So that's your comedy, yeah?

Perry:

Yep. That's my comedy.

David:

Mine is a movie I saw with my my daughter and her family while we were away in Sydney, we watched it on the TV. A movie called *Big Eyes*. It was directed by Tim Burton, released in 2014. It's based on a true story, set in the 1950s and 60s, the story of Margaret Ulbricht who's an American mother in her 30s. She's an artist, or she tries to



be an artist, and she's painting all these pictures of children, pathetic children with large, super-large eyes, unrealistically large eyes. It's very sort of kitsch sort of stuff. So anyway she leaves her husband and ends up in Hawaii and she meets this guy Walter Keane who expresses admiration for the work that she's done. He's an artist himself, he tells her. Anyway to cut a very long story short he basically ends up taking credit for her work and making a huge amount of money by printing posters and prints of these pathetic children, but tells everyone that it's his work and he sort of forces her to go along with this and to conceal her role even from her own daughter. It is a comedy nonetheless! Eventually she gets her vengeance. Right at the end there's a wonderful court scene where he gets his comeuppance and it's great.

Amy Adams plays the role of the woman, Margaret Ulbricht, and she won a Best Actress in a comedy role at the Golden Globes in 2015. Look, it's a feel-good movie, but... I needed to feel good at the end of last year, so that was good.

And the second one, I actually do have two in this category, is *Ant-Man* out of the Marvel series. That's the one movie I liked because it's designed as a comedy. It's actually quite funny, I think, in parts. Look, I enjoyed it a lot. I'm not going to talk much about it, but I just thought it was very funny in many places and very enjoyable for that reason, and that's it, that's my comedy.

Crime

Perry:

Okay. Alright, so moving on to crime as our next category.

I watched ten films in this category, but I'm only going to deal with three of them. I've got one out the front and two that are equal second.

And the two that are equal second, the first one of those is *Heat* by Michael Mann from 1995. This was actually the first time, I believe, that De Niro and Al Pacino had appeared in a film in a scene together. They'd both been in *Godfather Part 2*, where Pacino had played the part of Michael Corleone, and De Niro had played a younger Vito Corleone, but they were in two separate timelines in that bit, so they never actually were in the same scene together.

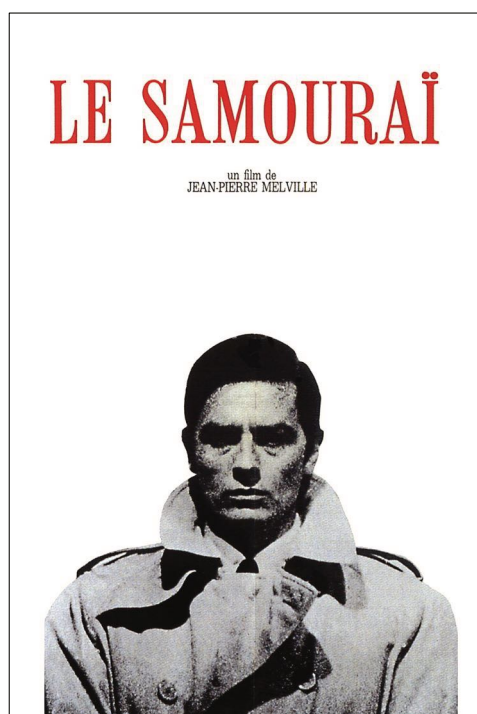
But here they are. And it's a very interesting film, quite stylised from the mid-1990s. Certainly worth having a look at.

And another one, which is not so much a companion piece, but made a couple of years later in 1997, directed by Curtis Hansen, features two Australians in the lead roles. And that is *LA Confidential*, so we get Russell Crowe and we get Guy Pearce as two of the lead roles with Kevin Spacey as being one of the others.

It's based on a book by, is it Elmore Leonard? Possibly Elmore Leonard, I'm not sure, I can't remember. But it is a gritty 1950s LA crime story. Very well made, very well acted, good script. It keeps you thinking all the way right through. Certainly one of those ones that you need to have a look at at some point and you won't be disappointed if you see it, put it that way.

But my favourite of the year from 1967 from France, so in French with subtitles, *Le Samourai*, directed by Jean-Pierre Melville. This is, well it features Alain Delon, who is a character by the name of Jeff Costello, who's a hit man for hire, who's contracted to kill the owner of a nightclub in Paris.

And he takes meticulous care with his preparation and finally gets him. But as he leaves the nightclub he's seen by a nightclub singer, he just walks off and she sees him. The police decide that it was a really good idea to figure out who



undertook this killing and do a roundup. And Costello happens to be unfortunately playing a game of cards when he's rounded up. When the nightclub singer comes in to possibly identify the person that she saw, she looks straight at him and you realise that she knows and he knows that he was the one and she said, "No, he is not there." So it all becomes very interesting as to why she did this and what he's going to do.

It's Paris in the 1960s, a neo-noir-ish film set mostly at night, absolutely wonderful. It's just undergone a recent 4K restoration. So it stays mostly in the darker end of the spectrum, you know, blues, blacks, white and cream and that sort of stuff. It basically is very contrasty in terms of its colour. The whole way it's filmed gives this enhanced sense of gloom and foreboding that you know something is basically going to go wrong.

Delon is just absolutely wonderful in this. He probably... he says very, very little but he doesn't

have to because all he's got to do is be there and he's got to be menacing and he does that really incredibly well.

This is one of the classics and a number of directors, you know, John Woo and Tarantino among them have cited this film as a major influence on their careers. And if you look at it and I was lucky enough to have seen *French Connection* earlier, I spoke about *French Connection* earlier on in this podcast. If you see that and then you see *Le Samourai* later on, you go, "Oh, that's where he got that sequence from." Because there's a sequence that's sort of taken, one that goes off a train when in *French Connection*, Popeye Doyle sort of tracks somebody, his big car chase and gets to the end and the villain gets off the train. That looks to me like it was taken from *Le Samourai*. Maybe not, but it certainly looked like it. This is great. And if you're looking for a good and noir-ish French film, see if you can get a hold of this one.

I saw this on the big screen. Again, excellent stuff on the big screen. Just wonderful. It changes your attitude and it changes your approach to what you're seeing when you see it up there. It just looks, that's what it's made for. And it looks just wonderful. And they're restoring a whole lot of these older films now, David.

All the Kurosawa ones I saw have all gone through lots of restorations. I saw the *Red Shoes* that I mentioned earlier by Powell and Pressburger. People are putting money into restoring these old films. People like Scorsese and the British Film Institute and the American Film Institute are putting money into restoring these old films. So we're getting a chance to see them on a big screen again. It's fantastic.

That's me done.

David:

I don't have anything at all on crime. No.

Perry:

You don't have *anything* on crime? After all the crime novels you read! You're going to have to get into it.

David:

I just haven't watched anything in movies that fit into the crime genre.

Perry:

Well, we're just going to have to get you to do that a little bit more next year.

David:

I'd agree.

Perry:

Or this year. What am I talking about? Not next year. This year. OK.

Other

Perry:

So now we move on to a category of Other. This is our last one before we get to our overall best films. This one's sort of a bit of a catch-all of everything that we haven't covered up until now. But oddly enough, both of the films that I have listed into the other categories are both war movies and both set in the First World War.

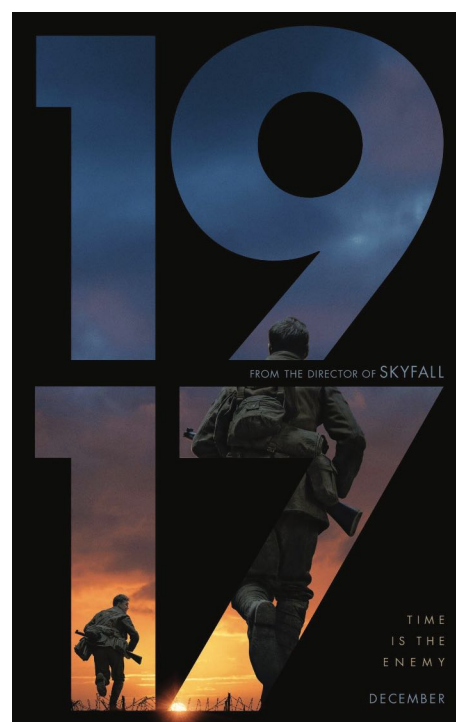
The first one is *All Quiet on the Western Front*, directed by Edward Burger from 2022. People might know Burger's name now because he is the director of *Conclave*, which just won the BAFTA Award for Best Film and is up for an Academy Award coming up. A film that you should go and see David, if you possibly can. Get out there and have a look at it. It's really, really good.

This is a very long version of the novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* that was originally filmed in Germany, again way back in about the 1920s, 1930s, I think. And this is an updated version of that. Interesting because of the way that it treats or looks at what the German soldiers were suffering through during the First World War. And it was pretty much exactly the same as what the Allied soldiers were suffering through during the First World War in the trenches.

And that's when we get to *1917*, the film directed by Sam Mendes in 2019. Now, this is currently available on Netflix and there's one that I would heartily recommend that people will see it. Unfortunately, I saw it on Netflix and not on a screen in the cinema because I really think that it would look fantastic in that medium.

So during the First World War, it appears that at one point the Germans have pulled back from one section of the front line. The Allies think, "Oh, beauty. Now we have the ascendancy. We can bore our way through this and bore a hole through." And it's all a bit of a ruse. The Germans have pulled back expecting the Allies to basically push through and then they're going to surround them and destroy them.

Aerial reconnaissance has revealed this to Allied HQ, but unfortunately all of the communications are down so they have to send two runners from one place where the information is over to the place where the attack is going to start. And so this follows those two runners who are going from one place to another and it was originally intended as much as possible to be told in one take, to follow them in real time. From this particular point, it



takes them about an hour, hour and a half or in fact it takes them a bit longer than that, but it was going to be that way but it just turned out to be impossible I believe. But it's got really, really long sequences of them moving through,...well firstly being told that they have to go and see the commander. You follow them all the way right through down into the trenches. They go off and see the commander, the commander basically gives the word, the commander at this point is played by Colin Firth who's in it for like two minutes and then he's gone. And all these actors are in it for like two minutes and then they're gone except for the leads. And then you follow them out, they get their gear, they go all the way down through the trenches and then they go over the top expecting they're going to get shot at but there's nobody there.

And then off they go and they just, it follows them through the countryside. It's a stunning piece of work. The production design, this is just outstanding. And it just goes on and on.

David:

Mmm.

Perry:

Now for a little while you can basically get the point, you say, well how they're doing that? And that sort of takes you out of what's happening and what you're seeing on the screen. But after a while that goes away and suddenly you're just there and you just follow how it goes and it just keeps on going on and on and on and on.

And it's just a wonderful, wonderful piece of work.

I was blown away by this and being up on there on Netflix, put it on, turn all the lights out, get the biggest screen you possibly can and watch it. Wonderful stuff.

David:

Okay, I don't really have any Other, I will say though in this point that the one and only movie that I saw in a cinema during last year was *Moana 2* in an IMAX cinema. My family, my grandkids wanted to see it and for some reason they decided they wanted to watch it in an IMAX cinema and that was kind of interesting, except the volume of the sound coming out of the screen, I had to put my fingers in my ears, it was so painfully loud.

But anyway, so that's, yeah, that doesn't fit into a category of best of anything, it was just, I went to see it. That's the only thing I've seen in a cinema.

Perry:

Alright, well you're going to have to start thinking about taking along some earplugs of some sort or cotton wool to stick in your ears for some of these films because some of them are very, very loud. I don't mind much, I don't have a problem with that. But if you do, some of the sound systems now are pretty spectacular so they blow you away so you've got to be a bit careful about it.

Okay, so we come to our best films overall for the year.

Best Films Overall

Perry:

So shall I count down by five down to...?

David:

Yep. You can count down, I'm not going to be doing much counting.

Perry:

Alright, okay. Right, number five.

The last film I just spoke about, *1917*, directed by Sam Mendes from 2019, a war movie. That's around on Netflix and I gave that a 4.5 out of five.

All these out of five again. Now, all the rest of them four down to one, I saw in the cinema.

Number four, *Rashomon* by Akira Kurosawa from 1950. I gave that 4.6.

Number three, *Dune Part 2*, directed by Dennis Villeneuve from 2024. I gave that one 4.7.

Number two, *The Taste of Things*, directed by Tran An Hong from 2023. I gave that one 4.8. Oddly enough, it was not France's choice for the best international foreign language film at the Academy Awards. I have no idea why, but there we go. I thought it was spectacular.

But unfortunately for *The Taste of Things*, it did come up against my favourite film of all time, or one of. And that is *Seven Samurai*, directed by Akira Kurosawa. And for the first time ever, David, I gave this one 5 out of five.

I could not find a single thing I disliked about it. Nothing at all. I couldn't mark it down. It's just, you know, I could keep on going back and watching this every year. And I reckon I would get something different out of it on every viewing. And I would love it every time.

So that's mine.

David:

Very good. Very good. Well, as I don't have much in the way of counting down, I will say probably second and third would be *Dune Part 1* and *Dune Part 2* and number one would be *Oppenheimer*.

Perry:

Alright.

Intermission

David:

That's the movies. So this is the point, listener, if you want to go away and have a cup of coffee and come back, you know, halfway through our episode, this is a good point.

But we're just going to keep on talking. So, you know, you can pause us and go up and have your cuppa and come back.

Perry:

Oh, that's very sociable and courteous. David, well done.

Now that you're back, now the listener has come back after having with a cup of tea,

David:

(Laughs) Now the listener is back, yes.

Perry:

...we can now move on to Best TV of 2024.

Best TV Series Seen in 2024

Perry:

And again, we've got a number of categories, although not quite as many as in the films, but we do have a number of categories.

The first one of those is drama, which always seems to be a good place to start.

Drama

Perry:

My number three, because I've only got three out of top five, is *Shogun*, which was shown on Disney+ this year. It's based on the James Clavell novel. The interesting and very good thing about this is that all of the main parts are played by the correct racial type, if you like. I don't know how to put that, if I put that badly, I apologise. What I mean is that Japanese characters are played by Japanese people. The English character is played by an Englishman. Maybe you could say that some of the Portuguese characters are not played by Portuguese, but you know, they're played by Europeans. The dialogue where it is required is all in Japanese with subtitles. The Portuguese don't speak in Portuguese. I suppose that's one thing you could say was wrong, they speak in English. But at least it was handled with a sense of care, much more so than the original version with Richard Chamberlain as the lead way back in the 1980s or thereabouts.

Really enjoyed this, thought it was great, but not my best. But there we go.

Second, now this is a bit funny because, well, number two for me was *The Bear* season three, ten episodes on Disney+. This is the third season following the exploits of a particular character, a Michelin-starred chef in New York and he's come back at the start of the first season to take over his family's sandwich shop in Chicago after his brother has committed suicide. And he's decided because this has been in the family for so long, he needs to basically get back there and fix it up. And he decides that he is going to start firstly improving the whole of the service as best they can, but realizes it's not going to fulfill what he wants to do.

The second season is about them all closing down the restaurant and all the different characters that were in the first season, he's tasked them with learning how to run a top class Michelin-starred fine dining restaurant, and in season three, it's how that fine dining restaurant comes to fruition. This has been nominated previously in a number of award categories in the comedy section. And it has some comedy sections to it, but by God, it's much more drama and there's some harrowing scenes in some of this. But really fantastic stuff. And it's one of those series that we, my wife and I sit there and the next one comes up. Yes, definitely going to watch this. As soon as it's available, we're going to watch it all the way right through.

Really fantastic stuff and I would recommend it to everybody. But it is sometimes difficult to watch. And I think it's one particular episode, maybe in the first season where it's a Christmas dinner and if you're going to be triggered by bad Christmas dinners and family family fights, don't watch it. It's very harrowing and a very stunning piece of work. Absolutely stunning, stunning television all around.

But my favourite for the year was on Seven Plus, oddly enough, because that's where it got picked up. *Mr Bates versus the Post Office* from the United Kingdom. This is based on a true story about the trials of Alan Bates, who he is played by Toby Jones, who was in *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, the film.



Now, this is how Alan Bates takes on the British Post Office. He's got a contract as a sub-postmaster, which is terminated by the Post Office after five years and a considerable investment by him and no reason is actually given, although they suspect that he may have been skimming off the top. Now Bates had been complaining about this new Horizon IT system and saying that it was faulty. And he starts an investigation of it when he finds out that he's not the only one who's had this trouble. And suddenly all these other postmasters all come together and take a class action against the British Post Office. This has only finally come through to fruition after about 20 years after there was a large investigation and finally it got through to the point that yes, the British government determined that the Horizon IT system was faulty, partly because it was possible, although they had absolutely not only denied it, it was possible for people that were running the IT system to be able to change live data in real time. And they were doing that to "fix problems" and I put fixed problems in inverted commas and causing huge numbers of others, which basically meant that some people got prosecuted and sent to jail. And one person committed suicide over the fact that they had been accused of skimming off the top.

This story reminded me very much of the Australian Robodebt scandal, which caused a lot of distress and suffering among welfare recipients who were accused of cheating the system by not declaring income. It's very emotional viewing, but it is certainly one that is handled as well as it could be and it is really worthwhile watching. Unfortunately, we haven't had the outcomes about Robodebt as much as I would like that we would have.

Happily, it seems to me that the post office scandal in the UK is finally getting fixed. But this is a very, very interesting piece of work for four episodes. I'm not sure if it's still on Seven Plus, but if it is, I'd suggest that people go and watch it.

David:

All right, my list is short. It includes yours, one of yours, *The Bear*, Season 3. I just wanted to say about that that Jamie Lee Curtis, the character that she plays in it, she's does such an extraordinarily good job of this neurotic mother. There's one particular episode, "Ice Chips," where her daughter is having a baby. That's the best episode of that show I've seen so far, I think. Although the one with the Christmas party was intense, but very good, too. So I just have to agree with you

about this. Terrific, terrific series, I really liked it. But I could do without the ludicrous antics of the Fak family and the comedy part. It's not funny. So anyway, that's it.



But top of my list for the drama category is a series on Apple TV Plus called *The New Look*. I thought this was just going to be about women's fashion because it's about Christian Dior. But my wife wanted to watch it and it's fantastic. It's all about the during the war, Paris during the war and women's fashion during that period. It's got Ben Mendelsohn plays Christian Dior and we also have Juliette Binoche as Coco Chanel and what a piece of work she's portrayed as, you know, vain self-interested but made use of by the Nazis. Oh, goodness me. Terrible. But Mendelsohn is great in the role. Maisie Williams is his sister, Catherine, who joins the French resistance and is eventually caught. It's terrific. It's really, really good show if you haven't had a chance to see it before. yeah that's my top in that category

Perry:

What streaming service was that on?

David:

Apple TV.

Perry:

I'll make a note of that that because I haven't heard of that one. I shall go and have a look.

David:

It's well worth watching. And very harrowing.

Perry:

Oh yeah. Well, yeah, we're talking drama and you've got to have... Yeah, you've got to have... things are not going to be... everything's not going to be bright-eyed, bushy-tailed. It's not going to be sunshine all the way, is it?

David:

Oh, the one thing I should say too about it is, which I'd forgotten, is that it's got John Malkovich in it. I haven't seen him for a long while. He plays a sort of senior fashion designer, but it's a while since I've seen John Malkovich in anything. So yeah, he was very good too.

Perry:

Okay. All right. All done with drama.

Science Fiction

Perry:

All right, moving on to SF. I've only got the one here because it's going to be concentrating on a whole lot of other things.

So, my best SF series of the year was *The Expanse*, Season 1. I went back and decided I'd better... I was skipping around, looking for something interesting to watch, and started watching this and skipped through the whole lot without any problem. It's a good-looking show. It really is. It's really well done. There's a lot of good use of special effects without it blowing you away, but the scenes are set up pretty well. We know the whole story. It's based on the... about roughly the half of the first book, *Leviathan Wakes*. And it really... look, the interesting thing that I like about this is it starts off as a missing person story. So, it's got something going on, though, right from the very beginning. And we all know that it's all set two or three hundred years in the future in the solar system, where there are three major political factions in the solar system: the Earth-Lunar Alliance, there's Mars, and then there's the Belters. And most of the... most of this is set either in or around the Belt, and includes sort of a rogue team headed by James Holden, who has a very high moral sense of what's right and what's wrong, which sometimes gets him into huge amounts of trouble.

And in the background there is a group that has discovered an alien proto-molecule, which seems to have originated from outside the solar system, which they are attempting to weaponize, which at one point they actually test on a very large number of people.

It's good stuff. It's gritty. Everything looks lived in, David. It doesn't look as though everything's pristine and working properly all the time.

And it's... yeah. Okay, we've spoken about this plenty of times on the podcast before, but this is probably my best series of the year. That's it.

David:

Okay, alright, well I've got a *lot* in this category.

Perry:

Oh, good.

David:

So, my first one is *Skeleton Crew* Season 1, which is on Disney Plus. It's the first *Star Wars* spinoff or sequel that I've been able to really enjoy for decades. In fact, probably since the first one or two of the *Star Wars* movies. Because it doesn't take itself seriously. And it's aimed at a younger audience. The kids in it, there are four kids in it, and they're pre-teens, or you know, sort of 12, 13, sort of year old. I won't go into details. They accidentally launch a starship that they find buried.

Perry:

As you do.

David:

And then they're out in space and they can't find their way back home. And on their way they encounter a pirate who has lost his crew, played by Jude Law. And Jude Law, the character he plays, tells them he's going to help them find their way back home. But of course he has ulterior motives.

I thought it was really excellent. It's good. I'm hoping there's going to be a second season, although I'm not sure. Because it ends up pretty much tying up all the



knots at the end of the first one. But good stuff, I thought. Excellent. Good fun.

As it's I aimed at a younger audience, I recommended it to my grandchildren.

Next one on my list is *Silo*, Season 2, I suppose, on Apple TV+. It's based on Hugh Howey's trilogy of books *Wool*, *Shift* and *Dust*. And it's all basically, all these people are in these deep, deep, deep pits that have been drilled into the ground. They're hiding away from some disaster that's happened on the world above.

And there's a lot of politics going on with the people in there. There's a lot of mysteries about why they're there and so on. Very well done, I thought. The second season wasn't as good as the first, though. It was a bit slow. It took a while to get anywhere.

Interestingly, the main character is played by Rebecca Ferguson, who plays the mother in the *Dune* series. She plays this engineer, Juliet Nichols.

I won't go into details about the plot.

Number two on my list is, again, on Apple TV+. *Dark Matter*.

It's based on a book, which I thought this was actually, I can't remember the name of the author of the book. [Editor: it was Blake Crouch].

The TV series I actually thought was better than the book. But it's all to do with quantum entanglement and parallel timelines. The basic story is that there's a protagonist Jason who's just a teacher, a science teacher. And he goes out one night to help his friend celebrate, who's won a major award for some sort of work in neurochemistry. And he gets abducted on the way home, violently abducted.

And this guy who abducts him is wearing a mask and he shoots him up with some sort of substance. And the next thing this guy knows, the character knows, is he wakes up in some sort of scientific facility. And all these people are saying to him, "Oh, you're back. Thank goodness you're back. Tell us about what happened to you. We really need to know."

And he sort of says, "Oh, I've lost my memory. I can't remember what happened to me," because he doesn't know what the hell is going on." Anyway, it turns out that another version of him in a split timeline is the person who's abducted him. I'm giving away spoilers here... And the first Jason's got to find his way back to his home timeline, of which there are many, because there's all these parallel timelines.



It's a really good series.

I'll mention a couple of characters in that. Joe Ledgerton plays the main character, Jason, and his wife is played by Jennifer Connelly. They were both pretty good. She was very good.

And my number one in that category is *Constellation*, again on Apple TV+. It stars the Swedish actor Noomi Rapace, who I remember for her role in *Prometheus*. And apparently she played the main character in the Swedish version of the Millennium Trilogy films, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* and so on. But in this one, she's an astronaut, a European astronaut, on the International Space Station, when there's a violent impact which destroys equipment and kills the station commander. And it also blows up a quantum entanglement experiment.

And again, I won't get into the details of the plot.

But when she gets back to Earth, eventually she gets back to Earth with great deal of difficulty. And she finds that things are not quite the same as she remembers, that things are just a little bit different. And so again, there's this sort of possibly multiple timelines thing going on.

It's very well done, I thought. I was really hoping there'd be a second season, but apparently there isn't going to be one.

Very excellent child actor, or actors, I should say, play her child in this, her young daughter. And it's obviously a pair of identical twins who are playing the two roles. And they're just enough different from each other that it kind of works in this show where you're trying to... You've got this sense of things not quite being right, she's not quite in her own world again.

I thought it was very good. As I said, a pity that there won't be a second season.

And that's my list in that category, my biggest category.

Action/Thriller

Perry:

All right okay so let's move on to our action thrillers: I'm basically including in this the spy espionage stuff so you may have some things in one category that's not in mine but well you know there we go.

First one I want to talk about is *Slow Horses* season three on Apple TV. Do we need to say anything more about *Slow Horses*? I think we've said quite a lot about it and I still think this is, it's just keeps on, it's just giving all the time. It's just good and there are further seasons coming out. All of the minor characters are really good and the main characters are great. You know, Kirsten Scott-Thomas is the MI6 female head or second-in-command, depending on how things are going, and of course, Gary Oldman as Jackson Lamb is just

astounding, and we'll get to a bit more about him and the character that he plays in just a minute. But he's just, you can't see anybody else doing that role, and it looks like he's loving it. He looks like he's just absolutely loving being in that farty, slovenly, alcoholic bloke that basically really cares about the people that are under him, but doesn't want to let them know that. But everybody seems to figure that out because he does look after them.

David:

Do you think so? I don't think he really cares for them. I think he thinks they're all terrible. I don't think he has a soft spot to...

Perry:

Well, I think deep down he does care for them because he just keeps on putting himself out to get them out of trouble. He doesn't say, "Oh, well, they've just gone rogue, I don't give a stuff and let them go." I think he does actually care for them, and I think we'll probably get a bit more about that later on as we go down the track.

My next one is *Smiley's People*. Now this was the follow-up to the *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* thriller, again starring Alec Guinness. This one was—*Smiley's People* was in 1982, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* was in 1979. There was *The Honourable Schoolboy* which was the book in the middle of this trilogy which they didn't film possibly because at that stage they would have had to spend a lot of it in the Southeast Asia and that would have probably been in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia that probably would have been a bit too expensive for them at that time. I don't know but whatever the situation or maybe even Alec Guinness said no I'm not doing it, and that would stymie that, who knows?

Anyway, *Smiley's People* was good but not as good as *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* but still good.

My next one is a new action thriller series *The Day of the Jackal* with Eddie Redmayne as the Jackal. This is a very much updated version of the Frederick Forsyth novel you would have remembered Edward Fox playing the Jackal in the film version which was really quite excellent, it was made soon after the book came out so that was in the early to mid 70s. This is a very much updated version of that, it goes pretty well I liked it a lot. My wife said that she absolutely hated the lead female character, though I didn't quite so much. I just wasn't completely convinced that she had the level of experience needed, but maybe

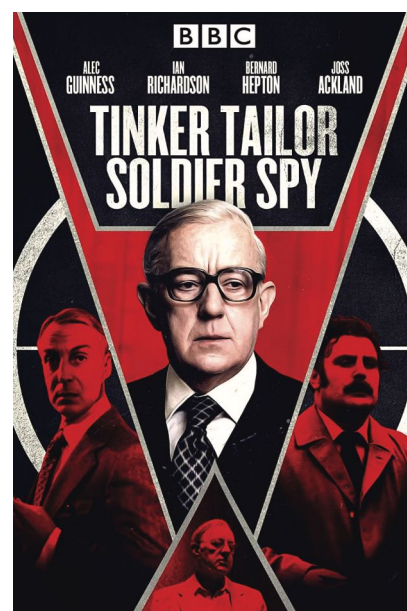


she did. I was willing to give her the go for that. But it looks like there's going to be a second season of this which will be quite interesting.

So in this series you learn early on that the main target of the Jackal is not a politician but a tech bro who is going to release some software into the world which big business does not want him to release because it is going to theoretically expose all of their financial dealings and make them all public and they don't want this to happen.

It's good stuff. It's on Binge in Australia. I would suggest it'll probably be out on a DVD quite soon. Redmayne is excellent in the main role as he is in a lot of things and he, in some ways, he does remind me of Edward Fox now that I've seen him in this role. He sort of looks... you can see that there are some similarities. Maybe there's just me. He doesn't look the same but he's got the same sort of physique because Eddie Redmayne's quite slim and smallish. I don't mean that badly but he is slim and he is fit but he's not six foot three and Edward Fox was of a similar size. Maybe I'm just rabbiting on here David.

Anyway my best of the year is, believe it or not, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*. This is on Prime TV at the moment but I watched it on the DVD that I had seven episodes from 1979. I gave this 4.9 out of 5 because, oh man, there's nothing here again that I dislike, it's just got everything in it that you want. Really good acting, good script, a lot of people might say, "Oh, it's a bit slow," but it has to be because things have got to build up. You have to get the sense of tension, you have to get the feeling that things are going to take a little while to be able to work out. As we know, it's about the discovery or the possible discovery of a mole inside the Circus, the top of the British Secret Service in the mid to early 1970s, wonderful stuff, really, really good. If you get an opportunity, I know that you bought up and you said you really liked the film, I do as well, but this is another level again, this is another level up, this is just...



David:

Yeah, this is, yeah, yeah, yeah. I agree entirely, yeah. It's really, everyone should see it.

Perry:

And it came out in 1970, the late 1970s, when British television was producing some phenomenal, absolutely phenomenal pieces of television: *Brideshead Revisited*, *The Boat Comes In*, *Serve Them All My Days*, *Boys from the Black Stuff*, *I, Claudius*, all this stuff, which I can watch again and again and again because it's just so well done. Production values not quite so good, especially with *I, Claudius* where you could see the walls bouncing around. I don't care! I just don't care, the acting is good and I just get taken up with the script and the acting and it's like watching it's like watching a really, really good play directly in front of you on the stage and you just marvel at what goes on, it's just fantastic stuff. So there we are, that's my thrillers for the year.

David:

Okay, well, all I have to say is that the only one I've got in this category is *Slow Horses* but I think you were wrong, it's Season 4 that just aired, not Season 3.

Perry:

Oh yeah, no, but no, I watched Season 3 and Season 4 last year, and I've just

realised one of my honourable mentions would have been Season 4, but it's Season 3 [I thought the best]. They are releasing two seasons a year

David:

Pretty good stuff. There's another one coming out, I think in September, the next season, I think. I read it somewhere, I think it's September. Anyway, we'll look forward to that. So yeah, that's all I've got.

So, over to you.

Comedy

Perry:

So now we move on to comedy.

The best comedy of the year. Mine are really... well, I saw three seasons of *Ted Lasso*. I finally caught up with that. This is a TV series that started in 2020. Three seasons, 2020, 2021 and 2023, and I also saw three seasons of *Upstart Crow* with David Mitchell, who plays William Shakespeare. Wonderful, wonderful stuff. David Mitchell is Shakespeare. But it's the *Ted Lasso* three seasons that I thought were really good, and I can't really separate seasons one and three. I thought [season] two was a little bit down, but season one and season three are just wonderful stuff. If you're not aware of this, this is...

What happens is that the Richmond Football Club, which I don't think actually exists, I think it's fictional, but anyway, Richmond Football Club, is in the Premier League, they sack their coach when the owner of the club divorces his wife, and in the settlement she gets the club, and he has to go off and do whatever he does. She sacks the coach and decides that she's going to... as you learn later on, her aim initially is to try and destroy the club, to make it basically collapse, because her husband loved it so much, and so she employs this guy Ted Lasso, who's never coached the roundball game at all. Soccer, association football, football, call it what you want, we call it soccer. So he's never coached soccer at all, and he just comes in and starts utilising his people management skills and his coaching skills, and it's following all the machinations that they go through with their star player, with their aging captain who finally succumbs to injury and has to leave the club. He basically has to retire because he just can't keep up anymore.



Lovely stuff. A lot of people have said, "Oh, I don't want to watch this because it's about sport." Well, yes, it is, and no, it isn't. It's a bit like *Moneyball* and a bit like a number of other sporting shows that you can watch. Yes, sport is the basis for how the whole of the drama of the comedy builds on top of things, but it's the base level. You don't have to know much about it other than to know that there are teams of people working to achieve a goal. In sporting arrangements they're actually competing against other people, other teams on a weekly or daily basis. It could very easily be the office where there's a team of people trying to produce something in a project and how the management and how the people in the team all come together and how they work together. Wonderful stuff. Really, really good. I'm glad I finally got around to seeing this after all this time. I'd been hearing a lot of people telling me how great it was and I should go and see it, and

we didn't have Apple or we didn't have something and I just didn't get to it, and then finally did, and then, oh yes, my wife and I just plowed away through it, loved it, absolutely loved it. So my best comedy for the year in descending, oh, in sort of ascending order, is *Ted Lasso*. So season two, then season three, and the best was season one. But season one and season three, pretty much on a par. Watch it, you'll enjoy it.

David:

I did! That's the only thing I've got in the comedy category was *Ted Lasso* season one. I haven't seen the other seasons as yet, but I will get around to them. My wife and I started to watch it quite a while ago, but she didn't like—we didn't get into it in the first, you know, five, ten minutes, I suppose, and we didn't watch it.

So I thought I'd give it another try and yeah it was a lot of fun. It's a bit saccharine and schmaltzy at times...

Perry:

[interrupting] Oh, yeah, in a couple of places, but...

David:

...but that's okay but other than that it's very amusing and very well done so yeah I will go on and watch the other couple of seasons. Definitely not only the best but the *only* comedy series I think I watched during the year. So there you go, but it was good. Yeah, that's it.

Crime

Perry:

All right. Now we move to crime. We seem to watch a lot of crime TV series in this house. My wife's a big fan of the crime stuff so we do keep an eye out for new stuff that we watch but maybe we'll probably be watching a bit too much and we need to spread things around a bit but it seems to be happening more this year so we're not watching quite as much crime stuff.

Anyway starting from the bottom my number five is *Only Murders in the Building* season four, this is been carrying on for four seasons now for Disney Plus. Steve Martin and Martin Short play two old friends who live in an apartment building with Selena Gomez who's the younger person. They decide that they're going to try and solve a murder in the first season of this and start a podcast called "Only Murders in the Building" and this is season four and in each of them somebody has died and they're basically concocting deaths and at the end of this particular season you do find that there is another death that they're going to have to solve in season five.

I like it because Steve Martin doesn't go over the top. I don't like Steve Martin when he tries to be overly funny. In this he plays it as a drama with some comic aspects and he's far, far better for that. Martin Sheen plays this sort of insecure Broadway producer who never seems to have had a hit anywhere at all, all the way right through. But look it's great. It's really ten half-hour episodes. Selena Gomez in the first season I didn't think was very good but she's actually got a heck of a lot better as the time's gone on and so it's good stuff.

First season of the new version of *Rebus* is my number four. This is the Ian Rankin series set in Edinburgh featuring John Rebus as his detective. This takes him back to earlier times but they've updated everything to move it up to the current time. There's a big difficulty about trying to make something these days in a large city that was set in the 1980s originally or 1990s. There's a whole lot of

things that you can't show and that it's close enough but not that different, so people start wondering "Why aren't they using mobile phones?" and all that sort of stuff, but you can't because they weren't there. So I enjoyed this, I really do like the Ian Rankin Rebus series so basically you know of course I'm going to like this.

Number three, *Case Histories* season two now you're a big fan of the *Case Histories* stuff...

David:

Based on the novels by Kate Atkinson.

Perry:

Yeah that's right. Jason Isaacs plays Jackson Brodie. I liked season two, there's only three episodes of this, so three long episodes you'd really like there to be more but there isn't unfortunately.

Number two [on my list] *Ludwig* starring David Mitchell. This is a new thing I believe I got it off BBC somehow and I believe it's now going to be shown here because I saw an ad for it just recently. It's going to be shown on Australian television.

David Mitchell plays a reclusive crossword or puzzle setter, lives on his own and late one night he gets a call from his sister-in-law saying that his brother, who's his identical twin, also played by David Mitchell, has gone missing. Now his identical twin is a detective inspector for the Cambridge Police Department and somehow or other his sister-in-law believes that there's something in the missing husband's office that she needs to get but she can't get in there and she doesn't want to go in and try and get it because then they'll take it and she won't know what's going on. So she sends David Mitchell, the brother, the puzzle solver, in to the Cambridge Police Department masquerading as his missing brother to pick up something from the office. He gets in and almost as soon as he gets in, there's a call coming in that there's been a homicide and the chief inspector comes out and sort of says "All right, you can do it" so Mitchell's the one pointed at. So off he has to go and he solves it. He solves this murder and of course the wife, when he gets home, says "what are you doing?" "Well I had no choice so I had to basically do it, and it was actually really interesting." So he solves this murder using this really strange way of trying to figure it out. Everybody's going, "What the hell is he talking about?" It seems to be weird in that they haven't picked up that he's not quite his brother, but he is. Anyways, this goes on for six episodes where he's trying to work out what's happened to his brother and why his brother's gone missing and why he's made no attempt to contact anybody at all. Good stuff. Really enjoyed it. You'd like it.

Best crime season of the year, *Case Histories* season one. So we do have a tendency, like most of us, I guess, to start off on a particular series, and if you've got more than one season, you watch the first one, give it a bit of a break and then get into the next one. So it's a really good series. It's really, really quite excellent and it's a pity there's no more than two seasons of it, unfortunately. But another private investigator and another one this time we're living and working in Edinburgh. It's a good city, it's a great place for crime obviously because I've got two seasons from two different series here, *Rebus* and *Case Histories* both set in Edinburgh..

David:

Crime. My crime category, I don't have anything.

I've got one particular show I'm halfway through which I stopped or paused watching because one of the characters is so horrible I just didn't want to keep

watching. Now that's *Bad Sisters* season one on Apple TV.

Perry:

Well, you can talk about that at some time later in this year because you can't really talk about it until you've actually finished the season.

David:

No, no, I agree. I will finish it during the year, but there's this particular character in it which I just find so terrible that... Anyway I don't have anything essentially, in crime.

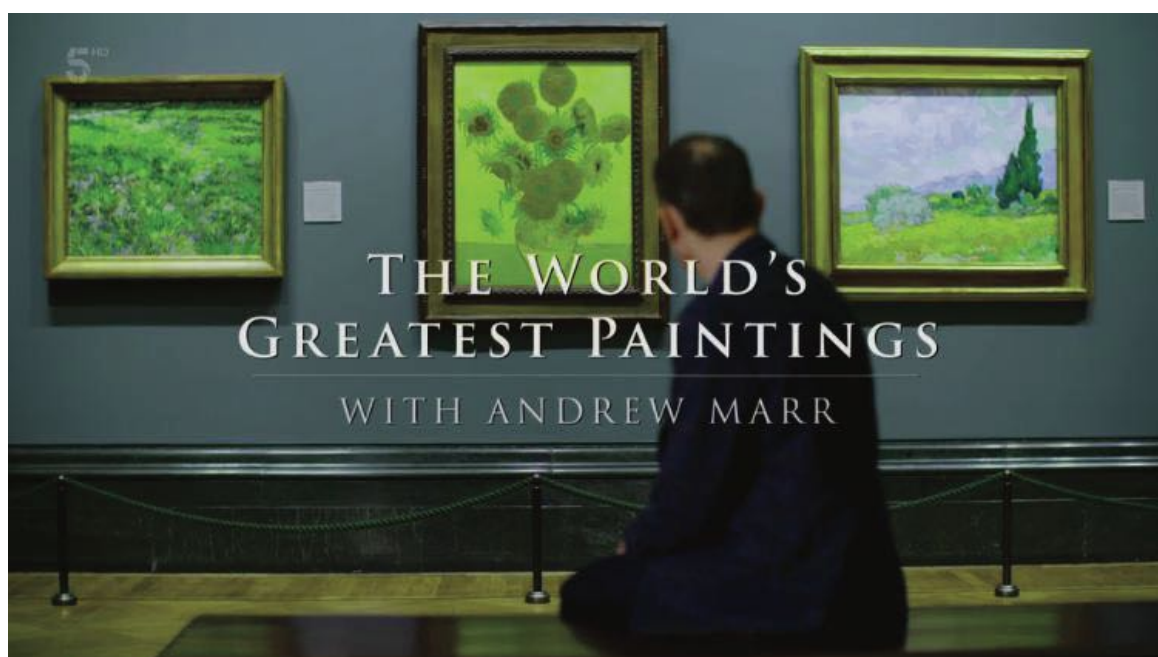
Documentary

Perry:

All right okay so for my documentaries then we're almost getting to the end we've got documentaries and then we'll do our overall best TV.

I've got two in the documentaries [category], one of them is *Great Paintings of the World* which is on Prime television and this is basically somebody going in and looking at ten major paintings of the world, basically having a look at, you know, all the usual suspects, Picasso, Gainsborough, Rembrandt, Van Gogh, and looking at the work and dealing with a half-hour or 40-minute episode on each particular painting, giving the background, explaining why it's good, why it works, and where it fits within that particular artist's work, but also in the wider world.

I like documentaries that get in and just dig down into one particular subject, don't try and cover things on too wide a level. But here we concentrate on a particular piece of art why is it so good. Now the good thing about paintings is it's there, you can see it all in front of you, it's not like somebody says oh let's go and have a talk about *Ulysses*. You think, oh bloody hell the only way that I'm going to be able to understand what this guy's doing talking about is to read it and that's gonna take me ten hours. I don't have ten hours, whereas you can see a great painting in five seconds. You'll just look at it and there it is or you can spend years studying it right down to the nitty-gritty detail but at least when you see a painting you can look at it and you can say I've got an appreciation of it why is it so great and this guy basically tries to tell you why these ten paintings are so



great. Good stuff

My best documentary of the year is one that our overseas listener ,if there is one, is probably not going to understand, this is *Nemesis* which is on ABC TV. This is a continuing run of documentaries that have been made every two or three years, three, four years maybe, about what's happened overall in Australian federal politics and it provides three episodes of about 90 minutes each. It describes the rise and fall of the three Liberal Prime Ministers of Australia between 2013 and 2022, those people being Tony Abbott, Malcolm Turnbull and Scott Morrison. In my review, I said I did have to rate two of them to be among the worst three Prime Ministers Australia has ever had, and so you'll get a view that... I found this very interesting and very enlightening to see them after they have left office, talking about what happened during the time they were there. These series of documentaries that have been happening, as I said, every three, four years have been run by the ABC over the last 30-odd years, and it's interesting to note that Tony Abbott is the only Prime Minister in those past 30-odd years not to consent to an interview. Interesting, interesting. Anyway, a very interesting program. very worthwhile watching and probably more specific for Australian audiences than for anybody else but still wonderful stuff.

David:

I only have one entry in the documentary category and that's *Great Australian Walks*, which is on SBS On Demand. It's a very pleasant, relaxed series with Julia Zemiro in which she ambles along various walks in Australia. She talks to First Nations peoples and others about the places that she's walking through. It's just a very relaxed sort of thing to watch. Very, very pleasant. That's all I have to say about it.

Perry:

Oh yes, I remember seeing that one. I'm not sure, did I see it last year? Maybe I didn't list it. Sometimes I see things and watch it over a period and then just don't get to remember to list it, David. So, but I remember seeing that and remember enjoying it quite a lot. So that was good.

Best TV Series Overall

So coming to our overall best TV, so the listener will be happy that we're getting closer and closer to the end of the episode without getting to the two-hour mark which is good.

So best TV overall top five I've got three at equal third. So I've got *Ted Lasso* season three, *Ted Lasso* season one, *Case Histories* season one. Number two, *The Day of the Jackal* as I spoke about this is a thriller, ten episodes, it's on Binge, certainly looks fantastic. I was quite happy to have seen that one, but as you might have guessed, my best for the year was *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, mini-series, 7 episodes, 1979, it's also on Prime TV, watch it. That's it, just watch it and be amazed.

David:

I don't have enough to do a list really. I would probably pick, if I was going to pick the best one of the year, the best TV series of the year, I would probably say *The New Look* about Christian Dior, but second maybe would be *Constellation* both of these on Apple TV+, but I won't list the others, there's not enough to choose between them.

Perry:

Okay, all right. Well, that's it. I think we've done our best for film and TV. So

everybody will be happy. We've got that past us.

Next Episode

Perry:

So now we can look ahead to what we're going to be doing in our next episode David. Shall we? Shall we give an overview about what we're aiming to do for the rest of the podcast?

David:

Yeah, so the idea really is that we're going to try and talk more about things that we've both read or both seen so there's more of a chat backwards and forwards between us about particular topics rather than just going through the things that we've read or watched in the previous few months. So we just think that'll be more interesting to do and also more interesting, we hope, to listen to. That's the plan.

Perry:

Alright, okay, so we're going to be doing one book and one film each episode. So this will help you get your film watching back up to speed again.

David:

Yes, it already has, I've watched several films this year on the basis of needing to talk about them in the future.

Perry:

Good, so each of us is going to be choosing a book and the other one will choose a film each episode. And then the person that has chosen the book will allow the other person to review it. And then they will come in and give their discussions on it as well. And then we'll have a conversation. And the same thing will happen about the film.

So do we want to give details of what it is we're going to be doing next time? That gives everybody an opportunity if they want to rush out and read it or watch it.

So the book that we're going to be dealing with in our March episode is an Australian book called *This Kingdom of Dust* by David Dyer. Now, just up front, could you put this into a genre?

David:

I don't believe you can. It certainly doesn't fit into the genre that you would think it would fit under.

Perry:

Yes, okay, alright, well we shall talk about that because that is going to be an interesting question as to whether... Well, I see a lot of these things, the books, if they do well, it's a matter a lot of times in terms of which awards they're going to end up being nominated for. Is it eligible for this one because it's in this genre or is it too much over here or where does it fit? Anyway, we'll cover that next time.

And the film that we're going to be seeing or watching, which I haven't watched yet but I believe you have already, is *Never Let Me Go*, which is based on the novel by Kazuo Ishiguro. This is a film from around about 10, 12 years ago, I believe.

Maybe in the show notes for this episode David, we can state where the film is available in Australia. So the people can...

David:

It's on Disney Plus.

Perry:

There you go, so that's it, so you can watch it there without any problems.

Alright, I think that's it, we're about done.

We're going to finish up, we'll be back in about a month dealing with those.

I think we should also at the end of the episode each month maybe mention the high points of what we've seen or read, but we won't dig into them in a big way, but it's good to do that because that way I might mention something and you go, "Oh, okay, yeah, that sounds interesting, I might go and watch that." And so we'll just do small little basic reviews about each one as we go.

Alright, David, I think we're done. I'll talk to you in a month.

David:

I hope I will see you before that but I will talk to you on the podcast again in a month.

Perry:

Alright. Thanks very much, we'll talk then. Bye.

David:

Bye.

The Lists

Perry's Best Films Watched in 2024

Drama

The Taste of Things (directed by Tran Anh Hùng)
Rashomon (directed by Akira Kurosawa)
The Red Shoes (directed by Powell and Pressburger)
Ikiru (directed by Akira Kurosawa)
American Fiction (directed by Cord Jefferson)
Barry Lyndon (directed by Stanley Kubrick)

Science Fiction and Fantasy

Dune Part 2 (directed by Denis Villeneuve)
Poor Things (directed by Yorgos Lanthimos)
The Shining (directed by Stanley Kubrick)
Mad Max Fury Road (directed by George Miller)
Alien (directed by Ridley Scott)

Action/Thriller

Seven Samurai (directed by Akira Kurosawa)
The French Connection (directed by William Friedkin)
Casino Royale (directed by Martin Campbell)

Comedy

Local Hero (directed by Bill Forsyth)
The Death of Stalin (directed by Armando Iannucci)

Crime

Le Samourai (directed by Jean-Pierre Melville)
LA Confidential (directed by Curtis Hansen)
Heat (directed by Michael Mann)

Other

1917 (directed by Sam Mendes)
All Quiet on the Western Front (directed by Edward Burger)

David's Best Films Watched in 2024

Drama

Oppenheimer (directed by Christopher Nolan)

Science Fiction and Fantasy

Dune Part 1 (directed by Denis Villeneuve)

Dune Part 2 (directed by Denis Villeneuve)

Action/Thriller

Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy (directed by Tomas Alfredson)

Comedy

Big Eyes (directed by Tim Burton)

Ant-Man (directed by Peyton Reed)

Perry's Best Television Watched in 2024

Drama

Mr Bates versus the Post Office (Seven+)

The Bear, Season 3 (Disney+)

Shōgun (Disney+)

Science Fiction

The Expanse, Season 1 (Prime Video)

Action/Thriller

Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy (1979 DVD)

The Day of the Jackal, Season 1 (Binge)

Smiley's People (1982, DVD)

Slow Horses, Season 3 (Apple TV+)

Comedy

Ted Lasso, Season 1 (Apple TV+)

Ted Lasso, Season 3 (Apple TV+)

Ted Lasso, Season 2 (Apple TV+)

Crime

Case Histories, Season 1 (DVD)

Ludwig, Season 1 (BBC)

Case Histories, Season 2 (DVD)

Rebus, Season 1 (SBS On Demand)

Only Murders in the Building, Season 4 (Disney+)

Documentaries

Nemesis (ABC iView).

Great Paintings of the World (Prime Video)

David's Best Television Watched in 2024

Drama

The New Look (Apple+)

The Bear, Season 3 (Disney+)

Science Fiction

Constellation (Apple TV+)

Dark Matter, Season 1 (Apple TV+)

Silo, Season 2 (Apple TV+)

Skeleton Crew, Season 1 (Disney+)

Action/Thriller

Slow Horses, Season 4 (Apple TV+)

Comedy

Ted Lasso, Season 1 (Apple TV+)

Documentaries

Great Australian Walks, Season 1 (SBS On Demand)