

FILM

# Alexander the Straight?

It's all Greek to me

BY JIM RADOSTA

I was eagerly prepared to analyze the whole controversy about whether a new biopic rewrites history regarding Alexander the Great's bisexuality. See, I even wrote a clever headline!

Instead, I've decided to share the story of one truly miserable night at the movies.

As the ugly opening titles announce Oliver Stone's *Alexander* (his name isn't actually in the title, but it should be), I'm already unnerved by the mob mentality of folks at the press screening clawing for promotional key chains that essentially offer free advertising to help a media giant extend its world domination. And we mocked the Palestinians at Arafat's funeral?

Sorry, back to the movie: After suffering through dull, lazy exposition from Ptolemy (Anthony Hopkins), I yawn through young Alexander's blatant foreshadowing that—gasp!—he's gonna be a world leader someday. Gee, that Alexander sure is...great.

When he ages into Colin Farrell, I'm intrigued by a promising premise that Stone quickly abandons: Alexander was simply a product of his environment. He was an imperialist because he was taught that his race is superior, he disrespected women because he witnessed the rape of his mother (Angelina Jolie), etc.

Unfortunately, the dialogue is equal parts dumb and incoherent. This film is so awful that it gives both history and art a bad name.

It's so awful that an attempted sexual assault draws no emo reaction from me other than: "Damn, Rosario Dawson is stacked! Does this mean I'm bi?"

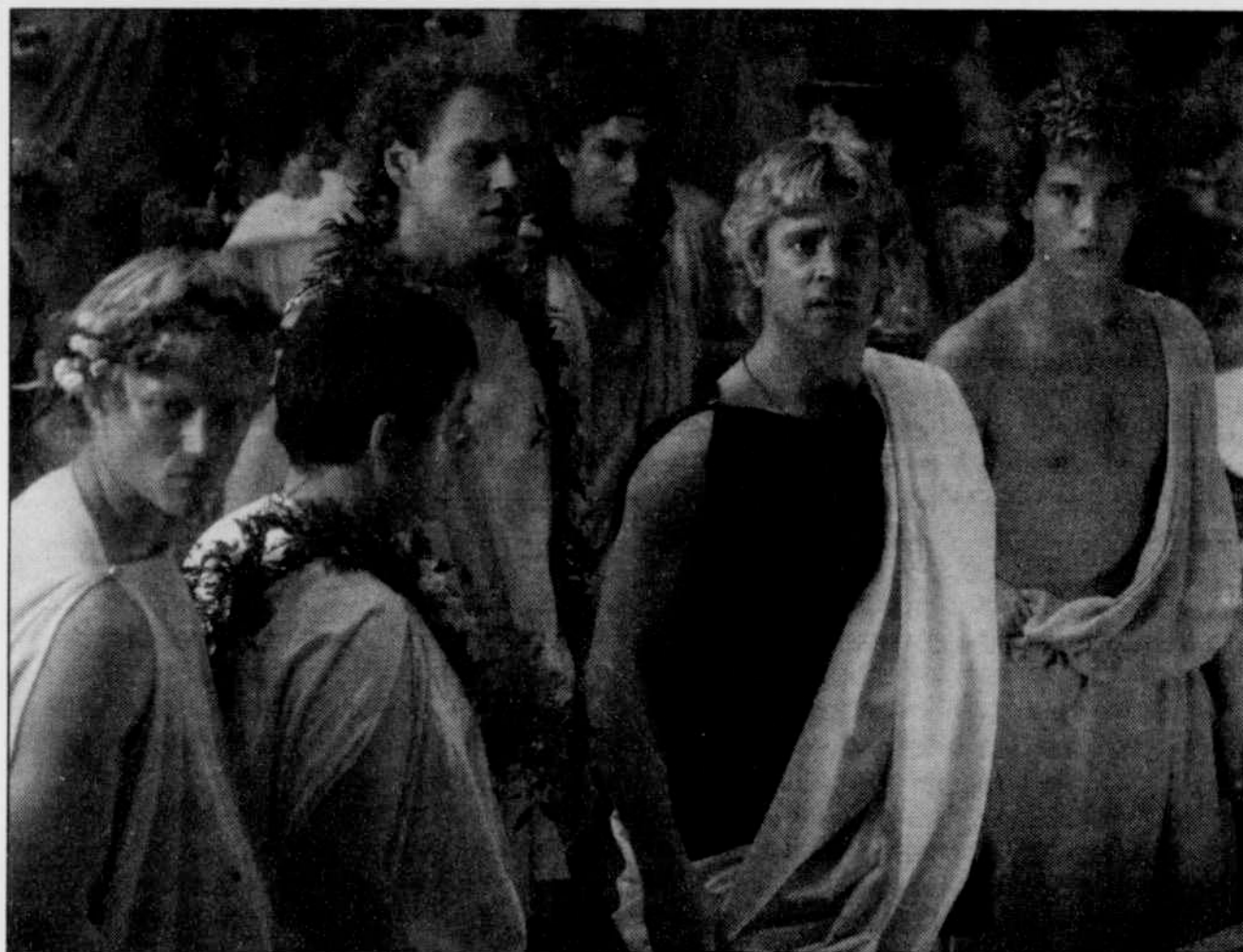
It's so awful that Colin's battle howl of "Riiiiide!" made me long for the relatively subdued bombast of Kevin Costner's *The Postman*.

It's so awful that I'm jealous of the mother bolting for the door with a bawling baby. Shucks, I wish I had a kid.

It's so awful that lines like "Have I become so arrogant that I am blind?" and "It was the worst blunder of his life" apply more to Ollie than Alex.

We haven't even reached act two, and I have no idea what's going on. All I know is lots of characters have their right eye sealed shut for some reason.

A hooker strokes her pussycat. Subtle. I begin to ponder whether the auteur



Worst film ever: Colin Farrell throws a hissy fit in *Alexander*

behind *JFK* and *Nixon* is Stone cold crazy or just plain dumb. It's so hard to tell the two apart in 2004.

Ready to give up on this altogether, I swoon when Alexander and Hephaestion (Jared Leto) start flirting with each other. All is forgiven. O my goddess, this is getting HOT.

Oops, I spoke too soon. Here come the incomprehensible combat sequences. Back to reality.

OK, our boys are headed for bed. My whole life has been leading up to this moment: a mainstream, Oscar-baiting action movie with two leading men who are about to go at it.

My rapt attention is disrupted by the noise of squirming seats behind me. Several audience members have decided to verbalize their discomfort with queers. I turn around, look them in the eye and plead: "Do you mind? You're sitting next to people who are gay."

At one point I try plugging my ears to save my sensitive drums for the sweet cymbals of *Le Tigre*. (By the way, I ended up missing the concert for this 173-minute monstrosity. I hope you're happy.)

Ooh, a rear-frontal angle of Colin's cock! Wow, I didn't see that coming after the uproar over his excised pickle shot in *A Home at the End of the World*.

Later, Jared dies because someone got their water into his wine. Not sure if that was supposed to be a reference to Reese's Peanut Butter Cups or some stab at biblical symbolism. Either way, I'm kinda impressed.

Not so fast, honey. When the climactic action sequence devolves into a slo-mo cheese-fest, my jaw hits the floor: "Aw, no you didn't!" This is a new low—even by Oliver Stone's *Alexander* standards.

(I realize I'm being a spoiler, but that's a loaded term. It shouldn't apply when the film is already rotten, right? Look at it this way: I'm taking one for the team. Please spend those three hours doing something more worthwhile—like clipping your toenails. Besides, *Moulin Rouge* director Baz "The Spaz"

Luhmann's upcoming version will be far superior, assuming he tones down his chaotic editing.)

For what it's worth, the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation gave *Alexander* a green light on the queer stuff. "Our visibility continues to be one of our most vital tools in creating understanding and acceptance of our lives," the media watchdog yipped.

Sorry, but I'm not exactly GLAAD to see this kind of visibility. By the end of the film, Colin is sporting a Whitesnake wig and an unflattering outfit—another angry old queen who turned gay 'cuz he was too close to Mommy. This is progress?

And why am I the only one laughing? Don't tell me people actually buy this nonsense. Oh, wait....

This is a world where Bible bangers are protesting a biopic about Alfred Kinsey because of his revolutionary sex research from 1948. (Pop quiz: What other publication was written that year? Bingo: 1984.)

And did you hear about the Greek lawyers who are threatening to sue Stone for depicting a bisexual relationship that might have taken place, I dunno, 2,300 YEARS AGO? Get a life, people!

If I sound agitated, I apologize. As John Lennon sang in a forgotten release from, naturally, 1984: Nobody told me there'd be days like these.

(What makes this especially spooky is that I feel like I've just had my worst film experience within one week of my best. Go see *In Good Company* when it opens Jan. 14!)

The real problem, seriously, is that Oliver Stone has lost his marbles. I've heard whispers that he's a sex addict, but I'm basing my diagnosis solely on the fact that he considered this ratty terry cloth to be fine Oscar material. Ha!

Stone brings out the worst in all of his actors: the blond blandness of Colin Farrell, the inherent creepiness of Angelina Jolie and the unmistakable desire to retire exuding from Anthony Hopkins.

In the boring closing scene, Hannibal the Cannibal mutters, "The truth is never simple, but it is." Finally, some dialogue I can relate to. [F]



Oliver's twisted

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