

# The Man Who Saw It

Will Smith in a robotic future

**I, ROBOT:** Directed by Alex Proyas. Written by Jeff Vintar and Akiva Goldsman, from a screen story by Vintar, suggested by Isaac Asimov's 1950 science fiction stories. Produced by Laurence Mark, John Davis, Topher Dow, Wyck Godfrey. Executive producers Will Smith, James Lassiter, Michel Shane, Anthony Romano. Cinematography, Simon Duggan. Production design, Patrick Tatopoulos. Editors, Richard Learoyd, Armen Minasian, William Hoy. Music, Marco Beltrami. Visual effects supervisor, John Nelson. Costumes, Elizabeth Keogh Palmer. Starring Will Smith, with Bridget Moynahan, Bruce Greenwood, James Cromwell, Chi McBride and Alan Tudyk. Twentieth Century Fox, 2004. PG-13. 110 minutes.

Production designer Patrick Tatopoulos worked with director Alex Proyas on his creepy 1998 sci-fi film, *Dark City*, where a bleak future cityscape dominated whatever the characters were trying to accomplish, which was annoyingly murky. In this collaboration, the director and Tatopoulos imagine a more light-filled urban environment for 2035, one both closer to our own time and alien in a delicious, forbidden sense. Genderless human-like robots nearly outnumber people, and automobiles have become sleek, omnidirectional machines that speed through claustrophobic tunnels.

Homicide detective Del Spooner (Will Smith) doesn't like robots. He doesn't trust them, and his strong feelings border on racism. While investigating the suspicious suicide of scientist Dr. Alfred Lanning (James Cromwell), Spooner thinks one of Lanning's experimental robots murdered the good doctor. But when he tries to follow

his hunch, he runs into Lawrence Robertson (Bruce Greenwood), chairman of USR, United States Robotics, for whom Dr. Lanning worked. USR is about to roll out a new line of robots that will place a personal robot in every home in the country, and a killer robot would mean very bad press.

Spooner also meets Lanning's colleague, Dr. Susan Calvin (Bridget Moynahan), a specialist in humanizing robots. She's all business until Spooner's convictions begin to make sense. Spooner's boss, Lt. John Bergin (Chi McBride) also doubts the premise that robots can kill, but he, too, respects the detective's position. Sonny (Alan Tudyk), a feeling robot, comes to Spooner's aid in unexpected ways.

The sight of row after row of silent robots is both frightening and thrilling. Such visuals are the film's strongest attraction. Maybe because I read Isaac Asimov and scads of other science fiction writers at an impressionable age, the spectacle satisfies some long-held expectation — oh, that's what it

would feel like to walk down a city sidewalk with robots. I've read psychological reports that people do not want to live with robots that look like humans, but from the more innocent era of belief in flying saucers, the sexless, metallic, robot shape seems just right for useful household servants. Jeeves, you might call your butler.

In part, the violence in the film is also less disturbing than usual because robots don't bleed, they just fall apart. Like the far superior *AI*, which approaches understanding one of the most profound human-robot questions, *I, Robot* attempts to close the gap between our antipathy toward intelligent machines and our desire to create an ethical simulacrum to carry out tasks we no longer want to do.

Asimov introduced the idea of robot ethics in his many stories. His "Three Laws of Robotics" is as thoughtful now as it was then, and his stories were about robots hardwired with these fixed laws: 1. A robot may not injure a human being, or through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm. 2. A robot must obey orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the first law. 3. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the first or second law.

But in each of Asimov's stories, the laws are challenged by a robot's actions, giving rise to unforeseen difficulties. So it is here. *I, Robot* is now playing at Cinemark and Cinema World. Recommended for your sci-fi summer fix. **EW**



Homicide detective Del Spooner (Will Smith) on the trail of a renegade robot.

AWA GERLITZ, TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX, 2004

## movie clips

**OPENING OR RETURNING:**  
**Bourne Supremacy, The:** Paul Greengrass (writer, director of *Bloody Sunday*) directs Matt Damon as assassin Jason Bourne in the second installment of Robert Ludlum's espionage thrillers. Also stars Joan Allen, Brian Cox, Julia Stiles, Kurt Urban and Franka Potente. PG-13. Cinema World. Cinemark.  
**Catwoman:** Halle Berry makes her action debut as a stunning looking action figure, Catwoman, with Frances Conroy, Benjamin Bratt, Lambert Wilson and Sharon Stone. PG-13. Cinemark. Cinema World.  
**Dead or Alive 2:** Takashi Miike's sequel to his explicitly violent parody of Hong Kong gangster movies also embraces black humor but moves into a more sentimental action film, giving the major character a chance to reflect on what went wrong in their lives. NR. Adults only. LateNite Bijou.  
**De-Lovely:** Kingsmith Cole Porter is played by Kevin Kline, with Ashley Judd as his wife. Said to be more honest in its look at Porter's homosexuality, the film also features performances by Elvis Costello, Alanis Morissette and Sheryl Crow. PG-13. Cinema World.  
**Harry and Kumar Go to White Castle:** Summer sleeper, this road film has some critics smiling. R. Sneak 7/22 at 10 pm. Cinemark.  
**Jaws (1975):** Early Steven Spielberg film has lost some of its shock value as Richard Dreyfuss, Roy Schneider and others try to kill a giant renegade whale terrorizing Amity Island. PG. At 8 pm on 7/23. Broadway Plaza outside. \$2 donation requested.  
**Napoleon Dynamite:** Jared Hess' indie comedy stars Jon Heder as a high schooler who lives in Idaho with his grandmother. The *Village Voice* says "the film is an epic, magisterially observed pastiche on all-American geekhood, flooring the competition with a petulant shove."

PG. Cinema World. Cinemark.  
**No Choice:** An action-packed drama about a woman accused of a murder is a locally produced film by Joseph Mungra, a filmmaker and screenwriter from India now living in Eugene. Actress Linda Burden Williams stars. Actors, crew and locations all Eugene. Reception 5:30 pm. Feature at 6:30 pm on 7/23 in McDonald Theatre. \$10.  
**Raising Helen:** Directed by Garry Marshall, starring Kate Hudson, John Corbett, Joan Cusack. After her sister and brother-in-law die in a car accident, a young woman (Hudson) becomes the guardian of their three children. Recommended. PG-13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**  
**Refrigerator Mothers:** Now known to be a neurological disorder, autism was thought to be the result of bad mothering from the 1950s through the 1970s. David E. Simpson, J.J. Hanley and Gordon Quinn take a look at one of today's fastest growing disorders, affecting 1 in 500 people. On "POV" at 11 pm on 7/27 on OPB, but check listings.  
**Stevie:** Steve James (*Hoop Dreams*) has made a compelling documentary about a troubled young man he mentored as a youngster. When James returned to see Stevie after 10 years, he saw the heartbreaking results of poverty, neglect, and abuse. At 7:30 pm on 7/27, repeats on 8/10 on Cinemax. Check listings for time.  
**Troy:** Wolfgang Petersen directs ancient Greek tale of great warrior Achilles (Brad Pitt) and the lovers Paris (Orlando), Prince of Troy, and Helen (Diane Kruger), Queen of Sparta, whose passions ignite a war that destroys a civilization. Also with Brendan Gleeson, Brian Cox, Peter O'Toole and Eric Bana. R. Movies 12. **Online archives.**  
**Films open the Friday following EW publication date unless otherwise noted. See archived reviews at www.eugeneweekly.com**

**CONTINUING:**  
**Anchorman:** Subtitled "The Legend of Ron Burgundy," this comedy stars Will Ferrell as an unctuous, untalented newscaster who's a legend only in his own mind. PG-13. Cinema World. Cinemark.  
**Chronicles of Riddick, The:** Riddick (Vin Diesel) ends up on a multicultural planet invaded by a despot planning to subjugate everyone with his non-human warriors, the Necromongers. (Named for a bad rock band?) Also stars Thandie Newton, Alexa Davalos, Colm Feore, Linus Roache and Judi Dench. PG-13. Movies 12.  
**Cinderella Story, A:** Teen romance comedy stars Hilary Duff, Jennifer Coolidge, Chad Michael Murray and Regina King. Mark Rosman directs. PG. Cinema World. Cinemark.  
**Clearing, The:** First-time director Pieter Jan Brugge takes a minimalist approach to the difficult human situation three fallible people find themselves in. Stars Robert Redford and Helen Mirren as a successful couple and Willem Dafoe as the kidnapper who changes their lives. Highly recommended. R. Bijou. **Online archives.**  
**Day After Tomorrow, The:** Directed by Roland Emmerich, starring Dennis Quaid, Jake Gyllenhaal, Emmy Rossum, Sela Ward. A climatologist (Quaid) tries to figure out a way to save the world from abrupt global warming. He must get to his son (Gyllenhaal) in New York, which is being taken over by a new ice age. PG-13. Movies 12.  
**Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story:** Can social rejects save their small local gym from gentrification? Only director Rawson Thurber and his stars Ben Stiller, Vince Vaughn, Christine Taylor and Rip Torn know for sure. PG-13. Cinemark.  
**Fahrenheit 9/11:** Winner of the Palme d'Or at Cannes 2004, Michael Moore's nonfiction film is more restrained than his later films and better for it. The film is respectful,

moving and informative, as well as opinionated and occasionally heavy handed. Don't miss. Highest recommendations. R. Bijou. Cinemark.  
**Online archives.**  
**Garfield, The Movie:** The poster promises "frisky business" as Garfield, the smarty pants kitty, makes his film debut. PG. Movies 12.  
**Harry Potter & the Prisoner of Azkaban:** Alfonso Cuarón directs the third film based on the series by J.K. Rowling. Harry (Daniel Radcliffe), Ron (Rupert Grint) and Hermione (Emma Watson), now teenagers, return to Hogwarts, where they face their darkest fears. The very best so far. Highly recommended. PG. Cinemark. **Online archives.**  
**Hidalgo:** Based on autobiography of distance rider Frank T. Hopkins, played by Viggo Mortensen, this epic action-adventure takes place during a 3,000 mile survival race across the Arabian Desert in 1890. PG-13. Movies 12.  
**Home on the Range:** Disney animated film features voices by Roseanne Barr, Judi Dench, Jennifer Tilly, Cuba Gooding Jr., Randy Quaid, Steve Buscemi, Carole Cook and Governor Ann Richards., while singing comes from k.d. lang, Bonnie Raitt, Tim McGraw and The Beau Sisters. PG. Movies 12.  
**I, Robot:** Alex Proyas (*Dark City*, *The Crow*) directs Will Smith as a police detective investigating a crime thought to be perpetrated by a robot. Also stars Bruce Greenwood, James Cromwell, Chi McBride and Bridget Moynahan. Based on Isaac Asimov's classic sci-fi stories. PG-13. Cinemark. Cinema World.  
**Kill Bill Vol. 2:** The Bride (Uma Thurman) pursues her next foes, Budd (Michael Madsen), Ellie Driver (Daryl Hannah) and finally, Bill Moore's nonfiction film is more restrained than his later films and better for it. The film is respectful,

who kill, but to what end, besides his own self-gratification? R. Movies 12. **Online archives.**  
**King Arthur:** Excellent cast includes Clive Owen, Keira Knightley, Stellan Skarsgard, Stephen Dillane, Ray Winstone, Ioan Gruffudd. Directed by Antoine Fuqua and produced by Jerry Bruckheimer, this revisionist history, action adventure is not your great-great grandpa's Arthurian tales. PG-13. Cinemark. **Online archives.**  
**Mayor of Sunset Strip:** George Hickenlooper's profile of Rodney Bingenheimer, formerly an LA nightclub owner and influential deejay. As a self-made social icon, B. made friends with celebrities such as David Bowie, Mick Jagger, Cher, Sonny Bono, Courtney Love, Brian Wilson and the Doors. NR. LateNite Bijou.  
**Mean Girls:** Lindsay Lohan plays a high-school student raised by zoologist parents in the African bush, who falls for a popular girl's ex-boyfriend. PG-13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**  
**Notebook, The:** Nick Cassavetes directs Gena Rowlands and James Garner, Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams in the screen adaptation of Nicholas Sparks's best-selling romantic novel. With Sam Shepard and Joan Allen. Deserves to be seen for its depiction of real first love, with a great performance by McAdams. Recommended. PG-13. Cinemark. **Online archives.**  
**Scoby Doo 2 Monsters Unleashed:** Some scary action, rude humor and language. PG. Movies 12.  
**Shrek 2:** Mike Myers returns as Shrek, Cameron Diaz is his new wife, Princess Fiona, and Eddie Murphy's his sidekick, Donkey. Now the newlyweds face Queen Lillian (Julie Andrews) and King Harold (John Cleese). Fairy godmother (Jennifer Saunders), Prince Charming (Rupert Everett) and the

ferocious Puss in Boots (Antonio Banderas). So-so sequel. Cinemark. **Online archives.**  
**Sleepover:** Teen comedy adventure pits two rival groups of girls against each other in an all-night scavenger hunt. PG. Movies 12.  
**Spider Man 2:** Peter Parker aka Spidey (Tobey Maguire) returns as a college student by day who still loves Kirsten Dunst and a superhero when needed against his new nemesis, Otto Octavius (Alfred Molina). Sam Raimi directs. Looks great! PG-13. Cinema World. Cinemark. **Online archives.**  
**Terminal:** Steven Spielberg directs Tom Hanks as a tourist who has to live at Kennedy airport because his homeland disappeared in a civil war, so his passport is no good. He falls in love with Catherine Zeta-Jones, whose comic talent is wasted in a dumb-dame role, while Hanks only works part-time. Too long and too cute. PG-13. Cinemark. **Online archives.**  
**Thirteen Going On 30:** Jennifer Garner goes to bed 13, wishing she were older. Wakes up 17 years later, and she is. Directed by Gary Winnick, also stars the always excellent Mark Ruffalo, Andy Serkis and Kathy Baker. High recommendations. PG-13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**  
**Two Brothers:** Jean-Jacques Annaud (*The Bear*) directs this adventure story about the power of friendship between twin tiger cubs. Stars Guy Pearce, Jean-Claude Dreyfus and Philippine Leroy-Beaulieu. PG. Movies 12.  
**Van Helsing:** Monster killer Van Helsing (Hugh Jackman) teams up with Kate Beckinsale in Transylvania to bring down Count Dracula (Richard Roxburgh). PG-13. Movies 12.  
**Bijou Art Cinemas (686-2458) Cinema World 8 (342-6536) Cinemark 17 (746-5202) Movies 12 (741-1231)**