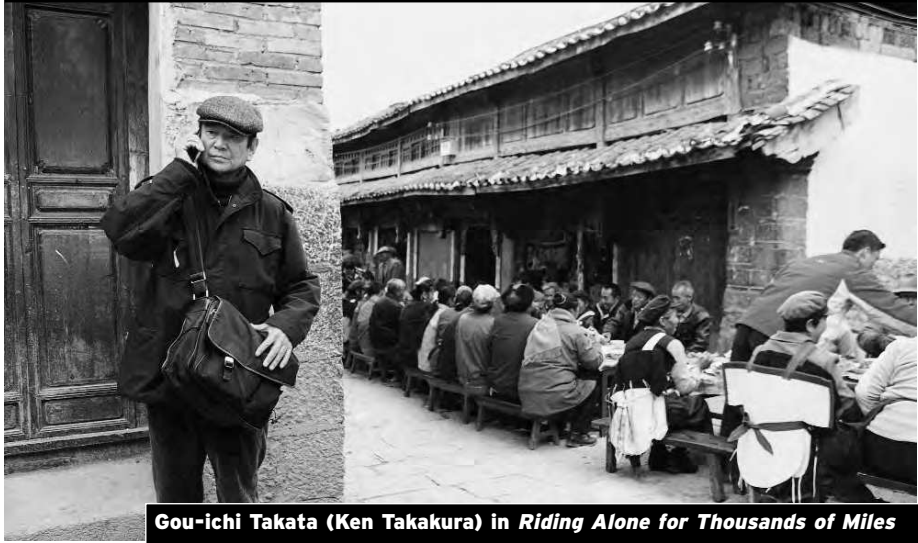




Gou-ichi Takata (Ken Takakura) in *Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles*

Just a Little Distance

Twice-lost in translation

RIDING ALONE FOR THOUSANDS OF MILES:

Directed by Zhang Yimou. Screenplay by Zou Jingzhi, based on a story by Zhang Yimou, Zou Jingzhi and Wang Bin. Cinematography, Zhao Xiaoding. Starring Ken Takakura, Shinobu Terajima, Li Jiamin, Qiu Lin, Jiang Wen and Yang Zhenbo. Sony Pictures Classics, 2006. PG. 108 minutes. ★★☆☆☆

Breaking from the high-flying spectacle of his *Hero* and *House of Flying Daggers*, director Zhang Yimou ventures into quieter territory with *Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles*, a story of fathers and sons, forgiveness and connection. Gou-ichi Takata (Ken Takakura) is a fisherman in a remote Japanese village, solitary in a tiny, beautiful house, the first of many striking settings against which the nearly silent figure stands. News comes from Tokyo; his son’s wife, Rie (Shinobu Terajima), calls to say that the younger Takata, Ken-ichi (Kiichi Nakai), is seriously ill. Father and son have been estranged for years, but when Takata learns of his son’s unfinished work he sees a chance for redemption: Ken-ichi had spent time filming

folk opera in China, but never caught one specific opera as sung by a particular performer.

The opera Ken-ichi hoped to film shares a title with the film, and involves a man traveling many miles to help a friend. It’s no surprise, then, that Takata travels many miles, overcoming several obstacles, in hopes of connecting with his son. Taciturn and reserved, Takata speaks mostly in introspective voiceover, relying, during his journey through China, on the translation skills of a warm young woman and her friend, Lingo (Qui Lin), who has more enthusiasm than fluency in Japanese. English-speaking audiences then find ourselves at another remove as we depend on subtitles to understand what’s already been translated for Takata. With the film’s grave pacing and lengthy, meditative shots, the story seems at arm’s length, too distant to really connect with the viewer. But Takakura’s somber, solid presence and the beautiful Chinese scenery help make *Riding Alone* a lovely trip, if a long one. **EW**

Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles opens Friday, Oct. 20 at the Bijou

Piece by Piece

Putting 9/11 together

9/11: PRESS FOR TRUTH: Directed by Ray Nowosielski. Based in part on *The Terror Timeline* by Paul Thompson. The Disinformation Company Ltd., 2006. Not rated. 125 minutes. ★★☆☆☆

The ambitious *9/11: Press for Truth* follows two central stories, that of the so-called “Jersey girls,” New Jersey women widowed on 9/11 who had questions about their husbands’ deaths and were instrumental in the formation of the 9/11 Commission, and that created by author Paul Thompson, whose *The Terror Timeline* uses stories from numerous sources to paint a larger picture of the events of 9/11 than is often presented. Thompson, whose timeline began as a website before being published in book form, pieces together story after story, offering a composite that will either seem familiar or shocking, depending on your level of media saturation. There are a few embarrassing shots of administration members bumbling their way through press conferences and interviews, but the film isn’t meant for a laugh; it’s much more interested in how evi-

dence stacks up, for example, against Pakistan.

What makes this film’s combined story particularly interesting is that it’s not based on conspiracy theories or reports from unknown sources; it’s based on stories in the major news media. So it’s a bit odd when the film then changes tack again, taking on the question of why the media haven’t pushed harder for answers. It’s a legitimate complaint, and, like the story of the eloquent, determined Jersey girls, one that could fuel a separate film or two. But coming at the end of *9/11: Press for Truth*, this line of investigation somewhat derails the film, which depends on stock news footage and information garnered from major news sources to give weight to its points. It’s a distracting close, but if you can overlook it (and ignore the heavy-handed score), *Press for Truth* does have, at its heart, important points: Five years later, we don’t really know what happened or what’s still happening. And our government needs to be held accountable. **EW**

9/11: Press for Truth plays at 7 pm Sunday, Oct. 22 at Cosmic Pizza

OPENING OR RETURNING:

Beerfest: The Broken Lizard comedy group (*Super Troopers*) offers this tale of American brothers who discover an underground beer games competition at Oktoberfest. Jay Chandrasekhar (who directed), Kevin Heffernan, Jürgen Prochnow and M.C. Gainey (“Lost”) appear. R. Movies 12.

Blue Bird, The: 1976 Soviet-American coproduction retells the story of the bluebird of happiness. In Russian with English subtitles. 7 pm Oct. 24, 111 Pacific, UO. Free.

Ei Topo: Chilean director/writer/actor Alejandro Jodorowsky’s cult classic screens as part of DIVA’s Classic Film Seminar series, with discussion led by Steve Poizat-Newcomb to follow. 7 pm Oct. 21, DIVA. Free.

Farmingville: Documentary look into shocking hate-based attempted murders of two Mexican day laborers in suburban Long Island. Special Jury Award at Sundance. Directed by Catherine Tambini and Carlos Sandoval. 3 pm Oct. 22, Downtown Library. Free.

Flags of Our Fathers: Clint Eastwood’s new film explores the story behind the iconic image of the flag-raising on Iwo Jima during WWII. “A film of awesome power and blistering provocation,” says Rolling Stone. R. Cinemark.

Flicka: The remarkably ageless Alison Lohman (*Matchstick Men*) once again plays a teen, this time one who would rather work on her father’s ranch (and work with wild mustang Flicka) than go to college. PG. Cinema World. Cinemark.

Half Nelson: Ryan Gosling offers a breakout performance as a drug-addicted high school teacher who forms a friendship with a young student. R. Bijou. **See review this issue.**

Marie Antoinette: Sofia Coppola’s third movie follows Marie Antoinette (Kirsten Dunst), who became the queen of France as a teenager. The film is said to be a confection, a romp, anachronistically set to ‘80s New Romantic tunes and with the actors (including Jason Schwartzman and Asia Argento) using their own accents. PG-13. Cinemark.

Material Girls: Hilary and Haylie Duff learn it’s possible to live without being totally rich. The audience ponders more complex questions: What are Anjelica Huston and Lukas Haas (so good in *Brick*) doing in this movie? PG. Movies 12.

Nightmare Before Christmas, The: Tim Burton’s delightfully macabre stop-motion animation film, in which Jack Skellington and his ghoulish companions try to take over Christmas, comes to life bigger and brighter in 3D. “What’s this? What’s this! There’s magic in the air,” indeed. PG. Cinemark.

Off Road to Athens: Eight mountain bikers compete in a series of world races, hoping for one of three spots on the 2004 U.S. Olympic team. Not rated. 7 pm Oct. 26, 177 Lawrence, UO. \$3.

Prestige, The: Two magicians (Christian Bale, Hugh Jackman) have been rivals since childhood in Christopher Nolan’s (*Batman Begins*) new film. Competition grows as the men do; the preview suggest that Bale’s magic is no mere sleight-of-hand. With Scarlett Johansson, Michael Caine and ... David Bowie? PG-13. Cinema World. Cinemark.

Protector, The: A Thai fighter (Tony Jaa) must travel to Australia to reclaim his family’s elephants, which were stolen by a gang before they could be given to the king of Thailand as a sign of devotion. R. Movies 12. ★★☆☆☆ (9/14)

Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles: Director Zhang Yimou’s (*Hero*) tale of a father trying to reconnect with his dying son by following in the son’s footsteps is quiet and slow, a meander through a lovely Chinese landscape that takes a little too long to get anywhere, while the emotional aspects remain just out of reach. PG. Bijou. **See review**

this issue.

Silkwood: Meryl Streep, Kurt Russell and Cher star in the story of union activist Karen Silkwood (Oscar-nominated Streep), who died under suspicious circumstances while working to uncover the dangers of a nuclear power plant. R. 7 pm Oct. 25, 180 PLC, UO. Free.

Warren Miller’s Off the Grid: Around the world, winter sports enthusiasts search out “the deepest snow, the steepest mountains and the world’s gnarliest snowball fight.” Attendees get the usual batch of swag: lift tickets, coupons and more. 6 pm & 9 pm Oct. 24, McDonald Theatre. \$16.50.

Films open the Friday following EW publication date unless otherwise noted. See archived reviews at www.eugeneweekly.com

CONTINUING:

Another Gay Movie: Four gay boys look for “butt love” in the summer before they start college. Immense hilarity, sweetness and hot sex ensue. Not rated. Bijou LateNite. ★★☆☆☆ (10/12)

Ant Bully, The: Nicolas Cage, Julia Roberts and Meryl Streep lend their voices to the animated tale of a kid shrunk down to bug-height and put to work by the insects he used to torment. PG. Movies 12.

Barnyard: When the farmer’s away, the cows will ... order pizzas and throw a party? Don’t think too much about this animated feature or you might begin to wonder why Otis (Kevin James) has udders. PG. Movies 12.

Cars: The animation wizards at Pixar (*Toy Story*, *Finding Nemo*) team up with Disney for the story of a rookie race car (voiced by Owen Wilson) taking an unexpected detour on his way to a big race. Bonnie Hunt and Paul Newman also voice characters. G. Movies 12. ★★☆☆☆ (6/29)

Click: Christopher Walken gives Adam Sandler a truly universal remote: it lets him put the wife on fast forward, put the boss on pause, help the kid get even ... until the remote goes all TiVo on him and starts making decisions on its own. PG-13. Movies 12.

Departed, The: Martin Scorsese’s new film is a remake of the 2002 Hong Kong thriller *Infernal Affairs*. Leonardo di Caprio plays a cop undercover in the mob; Matt Damon is the gangster mole in the police force. Jack Nicholson and Mark Wahlberg round out the stellar cast. R. Cinema World. Cinemark. ★★☆☆☆ (10/12)

Employee of the Month: Dane Cook and Dax Shepard are two slacker clerks working to become the employee of the month in hopes of getting in Jessica Simpson’s pants. Ah, cinematic brilliance. PG-13. Cinemark.

Grudge 2, The: Amber Tamblyn (*Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*) stars as the little sister of Sarah Michelle Gellar’s character from the first film, who’s gone off searching for big sis. Haunted houses and creepy children abound. PG-13. Cinema World. Cinemark.

Guardian, The: A hotshot young Coast Guard rescue swimmer (Ashton Kutcher) learns how to be a real hero from a retired swimmer who lost his team in an accident (Kevin Costner). PG-13. Cinema World. Cinemark.

Inconvenient Truth, An: Following the 2000 election, Al Gore changed tack, turning his focus to the worldwide crisis that is global warming. Director Davis Guggenheim combines footage of Gore’s traveling multimedia presentation on climate crisis with Gore’s personal story, creating an effective and engaging film. PG. 6:30 pm Oct. 25, Temple Beth Israel. Free. ★★☆☆☆ (6/15)

Iraq for Sale: The War Profiteers: Director Robert Greenwald (*Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*) explores the stories of those whose lives have been affected by war profiteering in Iraq. 7 pm Oct. 19, Cozmic Pizza. Free.

Jackass: Number Two: Johnny Knoxville, Steve-O, Bam Margera and crew regroup for more nasty, brutal, naked, crude, snortingly funny pranks and stunts. Don’t try this at home. R. Cinema World. Cinemark. ★★☆☆☆ (10/5)

Little Miss Sunshine: Directors Valerie Faris and Jonathan Dayton guide a stellar cast (particularly Paul Dano, Steve Carell and Abigail Breslin) through a quirky family trip on the road to the titular beauty pageant. Sweet, smart and funny, though you can see the road bumps coming a mile off. R. Bijou. ★★☆☆☆ (8/24)

Man of the Year: Supposedly, Robin Williams’ unlikely president in this film, a satirical comedian who ran as a joke, is partly based on Jon Stewart. Which is odd, because the previews aren’t nearly as funny as “The Daily Show.” With Christopher Walken and Lewis Black. PG-13. Cinema World. Cinemark.

Marine, The: The WWE’s John Triton plays a Marine who, upon his return (against his will!) from Iraq, sees his wife kidnapped by a gang leader and ... no. Just no. PG-13. Cinemark.

Monster House: Three kids face off against a creepy neighborhood house that’s something other than haunted. With the voices of Maggie Gyllenhaal, Steve Buscemi and Jon Heder. PG. Movies 12. ★★☆☆☆ (7/20)

Mr. Sean’s Cartoon Club: Crazy, weird and old cartoons featuring anchor tattoos, partying cats and dancing buildings. Noon-2 pm Sundays at the Bijou. Program consists mostly of shorts, so punctuality is not essential. \$4.

9/11 – Press for Truth: Ray Nowosielski’s documentary takes Paul Thompson’s *The Terror Timeline* and the stories of several women widowed by 9/11 as its central threads. Not rated. 7 pm Oct. 22, Cozmic Pizza. Free. **See review this issue.**

One Night With the King: The biblical story of Esther is twisted into a manipulative teen movie about learning that “all of life is under God’s command.” We wish we were kidding. PG. Cinemark.

Open Season: Sony breaks into the animation game with the story of a clueless grizzly bear (Martin Lawrence) whose friend Elliot (Ashton Kutcher) lures him into the wild life. PG. Cinema World. Cinemark.

Science of Sleep, The: Director Michel Gondry (*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*) goes back into the human brain – this time exploring the largely interior life of Stéphane (Gael García Bernal), who mixes up dreams and reality. Sweet but slight, the film charms with quirky visuals and natural performances. R. Bijou. ★★☆☆☆ (9/28)

Step Up: A kid from the wrong side of the tracks brings hip hop to a ballet school – chiefly, to a privileged dancer whose main problem in life is finding a partner for her senior showcase. Goodness! What will happen? PG-13. Movies 12.

Superman Returns: At long last, the man of steel returns to movie screens – and to Earth. In director Bryan Singer’s new film, Superman’s (Brandon Routh) been gone five long years, during which his former flame Lois Lane (Kate Bosworth) has had a son and found a new fellow. Oh, and Lex Luthor (Kevin Spacey) is out of prison. PG-13. Movies 12. ★★☆☆☆ (6/29)

Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby: Will Ferrell and NASCAR. What more do you need to know? OK, well, Ricky Bobby (Ferrell) and his racing partner face a new challenge when a French Formula One driver (Sacha Baron Cohen) arrives on the scene. PG-13. Movies 12. ★★☆☆☆ (8/10)

Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Beginning: Gore, chainsaws, pretty girls in distress ... and the backstory about why ol’ Leatherface the way he is. R. Cinemark.