

BIJOU ART CINEMAS
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 Advertise on our BIG SCREEN! It's fun and effective!
 For the week of Friday, January 26th!

JONESTOWN: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple
 Sat & Sun Mat 12:15

Academy Award Nomination- Penelope Cruz-Best Actress!
VOLVER
 4:40, 7:10 & 9:35 Nightly
 Sat & Sun Mat 2:10

THE PAINTED VEIL
 7:00 & 9:30 Nightly Sun Mat 2:15
 6 Academy Award Nominations!

THE QUEEN
 4:50 Nightly Sun Mat 12:05

BIJOU LATENITE only \$4 includes FREE popcorn!!
 from surrealist master Jan Svankmajer (LITTLE OTIK) is based on short stories by Edgar Allan Poe and inspired by the works of the marquis de Sade
LUNACY fri, sat & sun 12:00 am
 Sat Mat 2:25

James Brown In memory of the King of Funk
 2 vintage unreleased concerts!
 Boston 1968 w/ Maceo Parker-Paris 1971 w/ Bootsie Collins!
 Don't miss this rare opportunity to see this rare JB!
 11:55 pm
 fri, sat & sun

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THE QUEEN PG13 12:15, 2:55, 5:25, 8:00, 10:35	ALPHA DOG R 7:15, 10:15
SMOKIN' ACES R 1:35, 4:20, 7:35, 10:20	STOMP THE YARD PG13 12:40, 3:40, 7:45, 10:30
VOLVER R 1:00, 3:55, 7:10, 10:05	ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES PG 1:05, 7:20
DEPARTED R 12:00, 3:30, 6:50, 10:30	CHILDREN OF MEN R 2:20, 5:05, 7:50, 10:35
CATCH AND RELEASE PG13 1:10, 4:00, 7:25, 10:10	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM PG 12:50, 3:35, 7:00, 9:55
BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE PG13 12:05, 2:40, 5:15, 7:45, 10:25	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM DIGITAL PG 1:50, 4:35, 7:30, 10:15
LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA R 12:35, 3:50, 7:05, 10:20	PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS PG13 1:20, 4:15, 7:40, 10:40
THE HITCHER R 12:45, 3:20, 5:45, 8:10, 10:45	ERAGON PG 3:45, 9:55
DREAMGIRLS PG13 12:10, 3:15, 7:05, 10:10	HAPPY FEET PG 12:55, 4:05
FREEDOM WRITERS PG13 12:25, 3:25, 7:00, 10:00	

MOVIES 12 - SPRINGFIELD
 Gateway Mall - Bellline @ Gateway 741-1231 • 1/26-2/1

No children under age 6 will be admitted to any R-rated feature after 6:00 PM
 Friday & Saturday after 6pm \$2.00

THE GOOD SHEPHERD R [11:10] 3:00, 6:30, 10:00	FLUSHED AWAY PG [11:25, 12:00] 2:10, 3:10, 4:20, 5:15, 6:50, 7:30, 9:25, 9:45
VAN WILDER DEUX: RISE OF TAJ R [12:10] 2:30, 5:00, 7:45, 10:30	STRANGER THAN FICTION PG13 [11:30] 2:15, 4:50, 7:35, 10:20
THE FOUNTAIN PG13 [11:40] 2:25, 4:45, 7:25, 10:10	SANTA CLAUSE 3: THE ESCAPE CLAUSE G [11:15] 2:20, 4:55
RUNNING WITH SCISSORS R 7:15, 10:25	OPEN SEASON PG [11:20] 2:00, 4:25, 7:00, 9:20
FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS R [11:50] 3:15, 7:10, 10:15	BORAT R [11:35] 2:05, 4:35, 7:20, 9:55
DÉJÀ VU PG13 [11:55] 2:55, 6:55, 9:50	THE PRESTIGE PG13 [11:45] 3:05, 7:05, 10:05

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EPIC MOVIE (PG-13) DIG	(1140 225 550) 720 950
DEPARTED (R) - ID REQ'D DIG	(1145 440) 805
THE HITCHER (R) - ID REQ'D DIG	(1155)
LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA (R) - ID REQ'D DIG Fri.	(1220 450) 810
BABEL (R) - ID REQ'D DIG	(1215 430) 800
CHILDREN OF MEN (R) - ID REQ'D DIG	(220 500) 730 1000
DREAMGIRLS (PG-13) DIG	(1200 300) 655 950
LAST KING OF SCOTLAND (R) - ID REQ'D DIG	(1205 305) 650 935

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SMOKIN ACES (R) - ID REQ'D DIG	Fri. (255 525) 755 1025
	Sat. & Sun. (1225 255 525) 755 1025
EPIC MOVIE (PG-13) DIG	Fri. & Sat. (1245 305 520) 735 950
	Sun. (100 305 510) 745 950
DEPARTED (R) - ID REQ'D DIG	Fri. (320) 630 945
	Sat. & Sun. (1210 320) 630 945
THE HITCHER (R) - ID REQ'D DIG	(130 545) 750 1000
DREAMGIRLS (PG-13) DIG	(145 430) 720 1010
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM (PG) DIG	Fri. (215 450) 725 955
	Sat. & Sun. (1150 215 450) 725 955
PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS (PG-13) DIG	Fri. (220 455) 735 1015
	Sat. & Sun. (1145 220 455) 735 1015
CHARLOTTE'S WEB (G) DIG	(330)

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SMOKIN ACES (R) - ID REQ'D DIG	Fri. (220 450) 720 950
	Sat. & Sun. (1150 220 450) 720 950
NOTES ON A SCANDAL (R) - ID REQ'D DIG	Fri. (250 510) 730 1000
	Sat. & Sun. (1230 250 510) 730 1000
DEPARTED (R) - ID REQ'D DIG	Fri. (430) 800
	Sat. & Sun. (100 430) 800
BLOOD DIAMOND (R) - ID REQ'D DIG	Fri. (350) 650 940
	Sat. & Sun. (1240 350) 650 940

Times For 1/26 - 1/28 ©2007 www.REGmovies.com



Ken Watanabe in *Letters From Iwo Jima*

Misfire

The companion film to *Flags of Our Fathers*

LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA: Directed by Clint Eastwood. Written by Iris Yamashita. Cinematography, Tom Stern. Music, Kyle Eastwood. Starring Ken Watanabe, Kazunari Ninomiya and Tsuyoshi Ihara. Warner Bros., 2007. R. 140 minutes. ★★☆☆☆

In his book *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*, Chris Hedges writes that combat friendships are rare because “comrades seek to lose their identities” in battle. It’s a remarkable insight into the emotional toil of war, particularly how sublimation is an act of survival. At the heart of *Letters from Iwo Jima*, the story of the pivotal 1945 battle from the Japanese perspective, three men — a general, a colonel and a private — find honor in the face of defeat. To say they develop friendships is misleading, although each risks his life so that others might live.

The Japanese faced overwhelming odds at Iwo Jima, a fact that *Letters From Iwo Jima* never lets you forget. True, of the 22,000 Japanese infantry, almost 21,000 perished. (The U.S. sent more than 100,000 troops, of which 6,000 died.) But the impression one gets while watching this film is that the U.S. has more battleships than there are men in the Imperial Army. When General Kuribayashi (Ken Watanabe) addresses his men before battle, there can’t be more than 200 soldiers present. Toward the end, the film depicts Japan’s last survivors making a final, desperate surge, but we know that more than 1,000 Japanese soldiers survived Iwo Jima. The odds were already long, but *Letters* stretches them beyond all reason.

For such a minimally constructed film — note the single melody that comprises the soundtrack — that *Letters* manages to be so sentimental is astonishing. Whether it’s the corny bookend scenes that provide the film’s title or the incessant references to malnourishment and dysentery, *Letters* essentially grafts a spare, ashen look to a very bleeding heart. (The film uses filters for a matte grey appearance.) In a single scene, a beloved cavalry horse gets strafed by a U.S. fighter plane, while nearby, Private Saigo (Kazunari Ninomiya) falls for the old corpse-and-switch trick. Dating back to at least Hitchcock’s *Psycho* but popularized by cheap

horror films, a corpse-and-switch is when a character approaches another character from behind — usually with a crude remark — only to find upon getting a better view that the character’s face is completely blown off. For example.

Granted, as a political collaboration, *Letters from Iwo Jima* is extraordinary. Clint Eastwood, an American icon, directed what is essentially a foreign (to Americans) film based upon a book by Gen. Kuribayashi himself. But that doesn’t make the film an artistic triumph. Therefore, praise for *Letters from*

Letters From Iwo Jima essentially grafts a spare, ashen look to a very bleeding heart.

Iwo Jima feels politicized, even self-congratulatory. Are we to heap praise because we’re supposed to rather than because a film warrants it? I think *Letters* is one of the most overrated films of last year. It’s not even among the ten best films of 2006.

That’s a pity, because despite its flaws, there’s plenty to appreciate in *Letters From Iwo Jima*. The film is about how all soldiers — but particularly the Japanese, bound by *seppuku* and other warrior codes — battle themselves during combat. On the one side is the will to survive, to see family and friends again; on the other, a culture that esteems suicide over defeat. Die, you’re a hero. Live, you’re a coward. What one takes away from *Letters From Iwo Jima* — again, in heaping doses — is that all of us are equally savage for the wars we pursue, equally stricken by the horrors of combat. The historical portrayal of Japanese soldiers as pitiless and vengeful fighting machines was, in the end, one of the many stories we told each other to live with ourselves at night. **EW**