

The MOVIE MAN

Are you hunting for well-worded film reviews? Look no further than Astoria's Video Horizons

O browsed the aisles of new releases at Video Horizons in Astoria. Behind me, a dot matrix printer chugged out a receipt, a soothing tactile sound in a world gone digital untouchable mad.

A yellow sticky note with some handwriting in ink caught my eye. It was a review — a 50-word review of a Sean Penn action thriller totally unknown to me, “The Gunman.” I started reading it: “I’ve always been a sucker for action movies. Cheap ones. Expensive ones. Good and bad alike...”

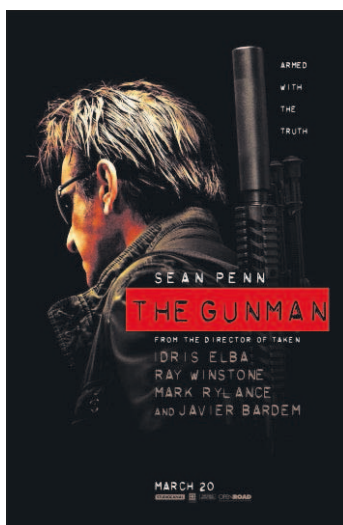
Hey, me too! I thought. I had to see this film, but not today; I wasn’t in the mood for violence.

I kept browsing. Another review. I read that one too: for a Western I’d never heard about, “The Salvation.” I love Westerns! I miss Westerns! Shane come back! The review opened with this zinger: “Part Leone, part Eastwood, a dash of Tarantino, and a couple of shakes of Chuck Norris. Pure awesome.”

What a great description! I thought. I’ll see this film too, but later. I wanted something a bit more quiet, introspective.

I kept moving, more browsing, more reviews. I read them all and quickly recognized I was reading a master terse movie reviewer. In longhand! You can say a lot in 50 words if you know how to write and care about the subject. These reviews were living proof of that axiom.

His byline read “Wayne.” Who was this fantastic reviewer? This Wayne, The Movie Man?



Submitted photo

“The Gunman,” a film starring Sean Penn, is another pick by Wayne.



Submitted photo

“The Salvation” is a Western pick by Wayne.

I had to know, so I went up to Neal Cummings, owner of Video Horizons, and asked about Wayne.

Neal told me that a while back he asked his employees to sit down and write a review of a new release on an index card. In short time, Wayne emerged as a prolific reviewer. “Wayne is by far the

best,” said Neal. “Many people ask who Wayne is, and they follow his work. You’re not the only one.”

Wayne used to work Sundays at Video Horizons but had to quit after getting more hours at his other job in Seaside. That didn’t curtail his passion for movies, however. Wayne wanted to keep seeing new releases, so he now picks out a few when they arrive on Thursday and has until Tuesday when the new release hit the shelves to turn in two or three reviews. He’s a writer with a deadline, and he always delivers.

After browsing for 20 minutes, I settled on “Rudderless,” the story of a father whose musician son is killed in a college campus shooting. The father falls apart after the murder but slowly puts himself back together through playing his son’s songs solo, and then later, with a band.

Wayne opened his review of “Rudderless” with this, “I didn’t see this movie coming.”

Neither did I.

“Rudderless” was one of the best understated films I’ve seen in a long, long time, and a handwritten review sold me on it. You don’t get that from an algorithm off Netflix or Amazon and never will. Thank you Wayne.

By the way, in all the reviews I read, I didn’t encounter a single grammatical error or typo. As an English teacher, I appreciate that. It makes me trust Wayne’s opinions all that much more.

Matt Love lives in Astoria and is the author/editor of 14 books about Oregon, including “A Nice Piece of Astoria: A Narrative Guide” and “The Great Birthright: An Oregon Novel.” They are available at coastal bookstores and through www.nestuccaspitpress.com.

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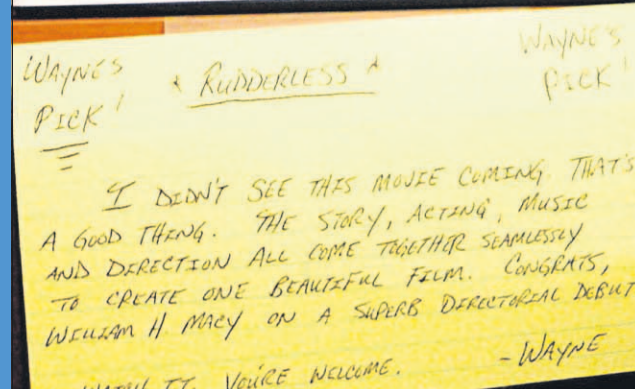


Photo by Matt Love

While browsing movie options at Video Horizons in Astoria, Coast Weekend contributor Matt Love stumbled upon “Rudderless” — and a hand-written review by Wayne that reads, “I didn’t see this movie coming. That’s a good thing. The story, acting, music and direction all come together seamlessly to create one beautiful film. Congrats, William H. Macy on a superb directorial debut. Watch it. You’re welcome.”

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