

FILM REVIEW: Joseph Gordon-Levitt Plays Infamous Whistleblower in Reverential 'Snowden'



'Snowden' repositions a supposed traitor as an altruistic hero of the highest order

By Kam Williams
For The Skanner News

Earlier this year, the film *Citizenfour* won the Academy Award in the Best Documentary category. But given how the movie made less than \$4 million worldwide, one might reasonably conclude that the details of Edward Snowden's (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) dump of National Security Agency documents remains substantially unknown.

This is ostensibly the thinking of three-time Oscar-winner Oliver Stone (for "Platoon" and "Born on the Fourth of July") in turning the story into a cloak-and-dagger drama about the NSA whistleblower-turned-fugitive's leak of classified information before going into hiding from the U.S. government. The movie unfolds in June of 2013 in the Hong Kong hotel room where Snowden met with journalists Glenn Greenwald (Zachary Quinto) and Ewen Macaskill (Tom Wilkinson) along with Laura Poitras (Melissa Leo), the eventual director of "Citizenfour."

We learn that following four days of interviews, Greenwald published his first story in the British daily newspaper, *The Guardian*. The Pulitzer Prize-winning series related in stunning detail the extent of NSA surveillance of American citizens in direct contradiction of a recent denial uttered under oath to Congress by James Clapper, the nation's Director of National Intelligence.

Because the articles identified Snowden as the source of the information, he immediately became the subject of an intense international

manhunt. He somehow managed to slip through the dragnet and boarded a commercial airliner bound for Moscow, despite the fact that his passport had been revoked and the U.S. had requested his extradition from Hong Kong.

Upon landing in Russia, Edward was awarded temporary asylum and he has languished there ever since. Lucky for him, this movie has revived interest in his case, inspiring him to recently make a public appeal for clemency.

But a presidential pardon is unlikely to be forthcoming, even though President Obama considered the apprehension of the "29-year-old hacker" a very low priority back in June of '13. So today, Snowden remains a fugitive from justice charged in absentia with theft, espionage and conversion of government property.

Via a variety of empathetic flashbacks, we are informed by the film that Edward was a high school dropout who suffers from epilepsy. He also enjoys a very loving, enduring relationship with Lindsay Mills (Shailene Woodley), the loyal girlfriend who followed him from Virginia to Hawaii to Moscow. More importantly, the movie establishes Edward as so patriotic he was willing to jeopardize his future to sound the alarm about the surreptitious NSA's widespread violations of our Constitutional rights.

Congrats to Oliver Stone for crafting a reverential biopic which convincingly repositions a supposed traitor as an altruistic hero of the highest order.

Excellent ★★★ 1/2

Rated R

FILM REVIEW: 'The Magnificent Seven' a Worthy Overhaul of Kurosawa Classic

By Kam Williams
For The Skanner News

Directed by the legendary Akira Kurosawa in 1954, "Seven Samurai" was a groundbreaking film which had a profound influence on the evolution of cinema for generations to come. Superficially, that seminal work merely reads like a martial arts epic set in 16th Century Japan. Yet, over the years, it has spawned a cottage industry of knockoffs trading in the picture's novel narrative revolving around a rag-tag team of selfless heroes recruited in service of some lofty goal.

In 1960, "Seven Samurai" was remade as "The Magnificent Seven," a sprawling Western co-starring Steve McQueen, Yul Brynner, Charles Bronson, Eli Wallach, Robert Vaughn and James Coburn. Today, that classic has been refreshed by Antoine Fuqua in an outing reuniting the director with Denzel Washington following successful collaborations on *The Equalizer* (2014) and *Training Day* (2001) for which the latter won an Academy Award.

This incarnation of "The Magnificent Seven" does feature a few variations on the theme. For example, the picture's dastardly bad guy is now an avaricious white man intent on seizing a mining town's gold instead of a Mexican bandito simply staging a series of border raids. And the good guys enlisted to engage the greedy gringo



This incarnation of "The Magnificent Seven" does feature a few variations on the original

are a politically-correct, rainbow coalition reflecting every ethnicity.

Otherwise, the essence of the original plot remains intact. As the film unfolds, we find the folks in the frontier settlement of Rose Creek living in fear of Bartholomew Bogue and his gang of marauders. Bogue is your stereotypical, bloodthirsty villain, straight out of central casting, played to perfection by Peter Sarsgaard.

It is established early on just how low the diabolical Bogue will stoop to achieve his evil ends, between murdering an innocent woman and burning the church to the ground. That makes the arrival of bounty hunter Sam Chisolm (Washington) all the more welcome by the time the exasperated and intimidated local yokels are at their collective wit's end.

They also have no idea that Chisolm isn't merely motivated by altruism but has his own revenge-fueled reason to tangle with Bogue. Regardless, once

See SEVEN on page 11

Have you used this potentially dangerous L'Oréal hair relaxer?



CALL
503-201-4570

Class Action Attorney Advertising Material.

OlsenDaines
Attorneys at Law
PO Box 2316, Portland, OR 97208

IN MY LIFE
A MUSICAL THEATRE TRIBUTE TO THE BEATLES

FEATURING RENOWNED TRIBUTE

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND! **ABBEY ROAD**

MONDAY, OCTOBER 10 | 7:30PM | ALL AGES

NEWMARK THEATRE • 1111 SW Broadway | Portland, OR
\$40-\$60 tickets available at TicketsWest.com, Portland5.com,
by phone (800.273.1530) and at the Portland's Box Office

Anyone can become addicted to pain pills... Anyone.

Anyonepdx.org
800.923.HELP

lines of life
Preventing Substance Abuse & Addiction

Multnomah County Health Department