

MOVIES

Moore, Roberts sink in late summer screen entries



JOHN MONAGHAN

Despite being two of Hollywood's most popular actresses, Demi Moore and Julia Roberts have a knack for picking doomed projects that serve neither their talents or their audiences. This summer's examples: Moore baring brawn over breasts in "G.I. Jane," a grueling Navy training film directed by Ridley Scott. Then Roberts plays government agent to coverup-crazy Mel Gibson in "Conspiracy Theory," which, if not the worst film of the summer, is certainly the most misguided. "G.I. Jane" recounts the trials and tribulations of the first woman inducted into the elite Navy SEALs. She's given the opportunity by a vote-hungry senator (Anne Bancroft), who makes the progressive gesture assuming the woman won't stick it out. And we have our doubts as well. The training is the kind of sadistic onslaught that is supposed to toughen up a young recruit for combat. The Master Sergeant, while calling you a maggot, will push your head into the mud with the steel toe of his boot and then justify it with, "What I'm doing could save your life."

Three quarters of the film is taken up by this kind of punishment, to the point where not just Moore, but the audience, feels like it has been standing out in the cold with a water-filled raft over its head. Do we really want to go through the ordeal? Stanley Kubrick trod similar ground in the first half of "Full Metal Jacket," but there was a moral accepting via a MasterCard. Now accepting via a MasterCard NP Denotes No Pass Engagements

The Navy SEALs have one idea right: when you get too tired to continue the program, simply ring a bell three times and you're out. Moviegoers have an even simpler option. They don't have to show up at all for this cinematic ordeal.

"Conspiracy Theory" If it wasn't for her charming performance in "My Best Friend's Wedding," Julia Roberts would be in big trouble. Her latest film would be just another in an uninterrupted series of bad movies ("Mary Reilly," "I Love Trouble," "The Pelican Brief" and a half dozen others) designed to display her questionable range. "Conspiracy Theory" is the worst of the bunch, an idea that obviously spun out of control since its original inception. Is it an eccentric black comedy? A nail-biting thriller? An unethical love story? The filmmakers apparently didn't know either, giving test audiences the final say by filming two different endings.

Mel Gibson plays an unlikely New York cabbie who sees government coverup around every corner. In his cluttered, Mylar-papered apartment where even the Tupperware containers are kept under lock and key, he pounds out a newsletter about his latest suspicions.

He does manage to get the ear of an attractive young government agent (Roberts), who doesn't necessarily believe him but listens anyway.

When the CIA-connected Patrick Stewart threatens the cabbie's life and those associated with him, both are forced to run for their lives.

Gibson's performance borders on the embarrassing. Even Roberts seems to stand off to the side, looking on like a deer in the headlights, as he goes into his overwrought version of Rain Man with a toothpick and stocking cap.

Just how sympathetic is his character supposed to be when he spends most of his nights peeping into Roberts' apartment with binoculars?

Any good conspiracy theorist will give you a thread of truth to make you at least want to buy their story. "Conspiracy Theory's" nonstop rambling of coincidence, government idiocy and lame explanations makes even Roswell believable in comparison.



Suspense thriller: Julia Roberts and Mel Gibson in "Conspiracy Theory."

John Monaghan welcomes your calls and comments. To leave John a voice mail message, dial (313) 363-2047 on a touch-tone phone, mailbox 1866.

GUIDE TO THE MOVIES

General Cinemas	Star Theatres	United Artists Theatres	MEN IN BLACK (PG-13)
Bargain matinee daily plus 13.25 (Two late show daily)	The World's Best Theatres Bargain Matinee Daily \$4.00 All Shows Starting before 6:00 PM Now accepting Visa & MasterCard NP Denotes No Pass Engagements	Bargain Matinee Daily for all shows starting before 6:00 PM Same day advance tickets available NV: No VIP tickets accepted	CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES
Canton 6 Ford Rd., 11 W. of I-275 981-1900 Advanced same-day tickets available *Desires VIP restrictions Friday thru Thursday	Star Line 14 32389 John R. Road 545-2070 CALL FOR SATURDAY SHOWTIMES FRIDAY-THURSDAY No one under 6 admitted for PG-13 & R rated films after 6 pm	United Artists Theatre Fair Lane Center Vista Parkway Available 313-593-4790 ALL TIMES FOR THIS THEATRE MIDNIGHT SHOWS FRIDAY AND SATURDAY ONLY	MJR THEATRES 991 Livonia Mall Livonia Mall at 7 mile 313-476-8800 ALL SEATS \$9.95 ALL SHOWS FREE Admission to 6 & 8 pm FREE SHOWS DAILY FOR CHILDREN 12 & UNDER ADULTS \$9.95 THESE FEATRE ONLY
*SPAWN (PG-13) AIR FORCE ONE (R) NOTHING TO LOSE (R) PICTURE PERFECT (PG-13) GOOD BURGER (PG) AIR BUD (PG)	Star Line 1.5 Telegraph Sq. Lake Rd. W. side of Telegraph 810-331-0241 Bargain Matinee Daily + All Shows Until 6 pm Continuous Shows Daily	United Artists Theatre Fair Lane Center Vista Parkway Available 313-593-4790 ALL TIMES FOR THIS THEATRE MIDNIGHT SHOWS FRIDAY AND SATURDAY ONLY	CONSPIRACY THEORY (R) MIRACLES (G) FACE OFF (R) MY BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING (PG-13) HERCULES (G) ULIZ'Z GOLD (R)
CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES
Howl Town Center 8 New Rd. South of I-96 344-9077 Advance same-day tickets available FRIDAY THRU THURSDAY *DESIRES VIP RESTRICTIONS	Star Rochester Hills 200 Barclay Circle 813-2360 FRIDAY THRU THURSDAY No one under 6 admitted for PG-13 & R rated films after 6 pm	United Artists Theatre Fair Lane Center Vista Parkway Available 313-593-4790 ALL TIMES FOR THIS THEATRE MIDNIGHT SHOWS FRIDAY AND SATURDAY ONLY	Waterford Cinema II 7501 Highland Rd. S.E. corner M-39 & Williams Lake Rd. 24 Hour Movie Line (810) 666-7900 \$13.25 (TWILITE) SHOWS DAILY
*187 (R) PICTURE PERFECT (PG-13) CONTACT (PG) MEN IN BLACK (PG-13) GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE (PG) MY BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING (PG-13) OUT TO SEA (PG-13) HERCULES (G) OPERATION ANCHOR (PG-13) AIR BUD (PG)	Star Rochester Hills 200 Barclay Circle 813-2360 FRIDAY THRU THURSDAY No one under 6 admitted for PG-13 & R rated films after 6 pm	United Artists Theatre Fair Lane Center Vista Parkway Available 313-593-4790 ALL TIMES FOR THIS THEATRE MIDNIGHT SHOWS FRIDAY AND SATURDAY ONLY	FREE WILLY 3: THE RESCUE CONSPIRACY THEORY (R) PICTURE PERFECT (PG-13) AIR BUD (PG) SPAWN (PG-13) AIR FORCE ONE (R) GOOD BURGER (PG) NOTHING TO LOSE (R) GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE (PG) CONTACT (PG) MEN IN BLACK (PG-13) HERCULES (G) FACE OFF (R) MY BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING (PG-13)
CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES
Keego Twin Cinema Orchard Lake Rd. at Cass Lake Rd. 813-1900 All Seats \$11.50 before 6 pm Family Matinee Daily \$4.95-5.95	Star Southfield 12 1/2 mile between Telegraph and Northwestern 814-656-248-353-STAR No one under 6 admitted for PG-13 & R rated films after 6 pm	United Artists Theatre Fair Lane Center Vista Parkway Available 313-593-4790 ALL TIMES FOR THIS THEATRE MIDNIGHT SHOWS FRIDAY AND SATURDAY ONLY	Terence Cinema 3000 Woodward Rd. 313-261-3330 All shows \$11 except shows after 6 p.m. + All Shows \$11.50 *Desires VIP restrictions Would you like to see free movies? Then become a "FREQUENT VIEWER!" COME IN AND FIND OUT HOW
CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES
National Amusements Showcase Cinemas	Star Southfield 12 1/2 mile between Telegraph and Northwestern 814-656-248-353-STAR No one under 6 admitted for PG-13 & R rated films after 6 pm	United Artists Theatre Fair Lane Center Vista Parkway Available 313-593-4790 ALL TIMES FOR THIS THEATRE MIDNIGHT SHOWS FRIDAY AND SATURDAY ONLY	Terence Cinema 3000 Woodward Rd. 313-261-3330 All shows \$11 except shows after 6 p.m. + All Shows \$11.50 *Desires VIP restrictions Would you like to see free movies? Then become a "FREQUENT VIEWER!" COME IN AND FIND OUT HOW
SHOWCASE Michigan Hills 1.4 2150 N. Oakdale Rd. Between University & Walton 810-373-2660 Bargain Matinee Daily All Shows until 6 pm Continuous Shows Daily Late Shows Wed. Thurs. Fr. & Sat.	Star Southfield 12 1/2 mile between Telegraph and Northwestern 814-656-248-353-STAR No one under 6 admitted for PG-13 & R rated films after 6 pm	United Artists Theatre Fair Lane Center Vista Parkway Available 313-593-4790 ALL TIMES FOR THIS THEATRE MIDNIGHT SHOWS FRIDAY AND SATURDAY ONLY	Terence Cinema 3000 Woodward Rd. 313-261-3330 All shows \$11 except shows after 6 p.m. + All Shows \$11.50 *Desires VIP restrictions Would you like to see free movies? Then become a "FREQUENT VIEWER!" COME IN AND FIND OUT HOW
CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES
SHOWCASE Westland 1.8 6800 Wayne Rd. One block S. of Warren Rd. 313-729-1060 Bargain Matinee Daily All Shows until 6 pm Continuous Shows Daily Late Shows Wed. Thurs. Fr. & Sat.	Star Southfield 12 1/2 mile between Telegraph and Northwestern 814-656-248-353-STAR No one under 6 admitted for PG-13 & R rated films after 6 pm	United Artists Theatre Fair Lane Center Vista Parkway Available 313-593-4790 ALL TIMES FOR THIS THEATRE MIDNIGHT SHOWS FRIDAY AND SATURDAY ONLY	Terence Cinema 3000 Woodward Rd. 313-261-3330 All shows \$11 except shows after 6 p.m. + All Shows \$11.50 *Desires VIP restrictions Would you like to see free movies? Then become a "FREQUENT VIEWER!" COME IN AND FIND OUT HOW
CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES
SHOWCASE Bloomington 1.8 Michigan & Telegraph 313-661-3449 Bargain Matinee Daily All Shows until 6 pm Continuous Shows Daily	Star Southfield 12 1/2 mile between Telegraph and Northwestern 814-656-248-353-STAR No one under 6 admitted for PG-13 & R rated films after 6 pm	United Artists Theatre Fair Lane Center Vista Parkway Available 313-593-4790 ALL TIMES FOR THIS THEATRE MIDNIGHT SHOWS FRIDAY AND SATURDAY ONLY	Terence Cinema 3000 Woodward Rd. 313-261-3330 All shows \$11 except shows after 6 p.m. + All Shows \$11.50 *Desires VIP restrictions Would you like to see free movies? Then become a "FREQUENT VIEWER!" COME IN AND FIND OUT HOW
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COMING ATTRACTIONS

Scheduled to open Friday, Aug. 15

"COOL LANE"  
Sylvester Stallone and Robert DeNiro star in this drama about a partially deaf sheriff who discovers a band of racist cops which challenges him to do the right thing.

"KISS ME, GUIDO"  
Film about a 24-year-old Italian-American man who in his quest to leave the Bronx for an acting career, knowingly signs to be a roommate with a gay choreographer.

"EVENT HORIZON"  
Self-action-thriller centers around a spaceship that surfaces near Neptune after having disappeared for seven years.

"STEEL"  
Blue collar metals specialist discovers top secret weapons he helped design are being used for crime. Due to the sensitive security he forms a team and creates an amazing suit of armor and mythic alter ego - Steel. Together, Steel and his team must solve the weapons problem. Stars Shaquille O'Neal, Anna Belash, Steve Douglas Spain.

Scheduled to open Wednesday, Aug. 20

"MONEY TALKS"  
Action comedy about a fast talking ticket scalper and an investigative journalist who try to clear the con man's name while searching for some hidden diamonds. Stars Charlie Sheen.

Scheduled to open Friday, Aug. 22

"DIRTY DANCING"  
Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey are back in the original that took the country by storm.

"MASTERMINDS"  
Action comedy adventure about a rebellious 14-year-old who finds himself in a battle of wits over a school being held for ransom. Stars Patrick Stewart.

"MIMIC"  
Two young scientists team up to save New York City from an epidemic that was killing thousands of children, but the miracle of their genetic engineering comes back to haunt them as the balance of nature has been altered, and not in their favor. Stars Mira Sorvino, Jeremy Northam, Josh Brahm, Charles Dutton.

"STAR MAPS"  
The story of a handsome, precocious 18-year-old with dreams of becoming a movie star. His greatest obstacle, however, is not breaking into the business, but breaking free from an oppressive family. Stars Douglas Spain.

Scheduled to open Friday, Sept. 19

"LA CONFIDENTIAL"  
Three LAPD officers become separately entangled in a web of intrigue and deceit that threatens to destroy them. Set in the early 1950s. Stars Kevin Spacey, based on novel by James Ellroy.

SCREEN SCENE

A sampling of what's playing at alternative movie theaters across metro Detroit as reviewed by John Monaghan.

Detroit Film Theatre Detroit  
Institute of Arts, 6200 Woodward, Detroit. Call (313) 833-2323 for information. (\$5.50; \$4.50 students/seniors)

"A Chef in Love" (Georgia/France - 1996). Friday, Aug. 15 through Sunday, Aug. 17 (call for showtimes). Filmed in Paris and the former Soviet republics, this French masterpiece focuses on a French master chef whose love for a Georgian woman culminates in a tapestry of love, revolution, and food.

"Mandela" (USA - 1986). 7 p.m. Monday, Aug. 18. An Oscar nominated documentary portrait of the famed African leader. Produced by Jonathan me, with lots of rare footage only recently made available.

Main Art Theatre 118 N. Main Street at 11 Mile, Royal Oak. Films play through August 14. Thursday, unless noted otherwise. Call (248) 542-0180 for information and showtimes. (\$6.50; \$4 students, seniors and matinee; \$3 twilight)

"Ulee's Gold" (USA - 1997). Peter Fonda provides an understated performance as a Florida bookkeeper who reluctantly agrees to retrieve a family member from thugs. From Victor Nunez, the writer-director of the surprise independent hit "Rubin Paradise."

"Shall We Dance?" (Japan - 1997). A Japanese businessman breaks-free of the monotony of life when he spontaneously decides to take a ballroom dancing class.

"Mrs. Brown" (Britain - 1997). When Britnita Queen Victoria meets the loss of her husband Albert, she formed an unconventional friendship with a Scottish Highlander. Judi Dench and Billy Connolly star.

"Dream With the Fishes" (USA - 1997). After a man's aborted suicide attempt, he meets someone who gives him a crash course on living life on the edge.

Magic Bag Theatre 22920 Woodward, Ferndale. Call (248) 544-3030 for information. (\$2)

"Chasing Amy" (USA - 1997). 9:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 14. The third in Kevin Smith's trilogy about life in suburban New Jersey finds a young comic book artist attracted to a female colleague who just happens to be gay.

"Monty Python and the Holy Grail" (British - 1974). 9:30 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 20. The best of the Python's big screen excursions turns the King Arthur legend on its ear. Still among the highlights: a killer bunny and a knight who continues to fight even after most of his limbs have been lopped off.

Millennium Theatre Center  
Northland Center (8 Mile near Greenfield), Southfield. Call (248) 552-7000 for information. (\$6.50)

"The Incorporated" (USA - 1997). Thursday, Aug. 14 through Sunday, Aug. 17 (call for showtimes). Shot mostly in Fenton, with additional shots in Northville and Ann Arbor, this locally-produced thriller finds a physicist (John Rennaud) targeted by a secret government agency who wants to destroy his work.

Redford Theatre 13671 Lahser (at Grand River), Detroit. Call (313) 537-2560 for information. (\$3.50) Andy Hardy double feature.

"Love Finds Andy Hardy" (USA - 1938) and "Andy Hardy's Private Secretary" (USA - 1941). Starting 8 p.m. Friday, Aug. 16; 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 16 (organ overture begins a half hour before showtime). Judge Hardy's family is featured in this slice of pre-war apple pie, starring Mickey Rooney. In the first (and some would say best) entry, Andy falls