

MOVIES

Nolan's 'Memento' will keep you guessing

BY RICHARD S. HANSEN
SPECIAL WRITER

First of all I want to make a promise: I will not ruin this movie for any reader that has not seen it. It's got twists like *The Sixth Sense* and turns like *The Usual Suspects*.

Suffice it to say you don't want to know what happens until you're watching the movie. Then again, you're either going to love it or hate it. Like anything else that's "different," opinions will be split no matter how tricky the plot twists are.

Memento concerns itself with Lenny (Guy Pearce), a man searching for the murderer of his beloved wife. But there's a catch (actually there are a lot of catches...) Lenny has no short-term memory. He knows who he is



Memory loss: Guy Pearce stars as Lenny, a man searching for his wife's murderer in "Memento."

and where he's from but every so often, and whenever he goes to sleep, he loses all knowledge about what has happened to him since the head trauma which caused his condition.

As one might suspect this

makes it quite difficult to track a killer — forgetting all your clues every few minutes. Lenny is careful to take Polaroids of key people and places, scribbling simple notes on them so he has an easy access guide every time he wakes up. When clues to his

wife's brutal rape and murder materialize, Lenny tattoos them on his body, which not only personifies the drive of his quest but also creates striking images for the camera.

Hooked yet? There's more.

The movie is told in reverse. The first scene is the last. Thus we watch Lenny's quest unfold backward learning more about him and his motivations as the plot journeys on toward its beginning. The audience is captured by learning about how Lenny's relationships with the other characters developed, by learning who's helping him and who's lying.

Interested or baffled? If this description doesn't pique your interest, the film never will. It is, however, the best kind of mystery — one that can catch you off guard even though you already

know the end.

By choosing to structure the film in this manner, director Chris Nolan has created something tremendously hard to follow. He forces the viewer to pay close attention and stay involved.

When key memories begin slipping away from Lenny, you too feel desperate, horrified and even frustrated. Not only because Lenny is back to square one, but because as an observer of his obsessive quest you must struggle to regain footing just like he does.

Unfortunately, Nolan has chosen style over substance. Some of the plot twists and character motivations are pretty thin. But it's incredibly difficult to tell.

Thus when the reasons for character's actions seem strained, it's hard to put your finger on why because you're so wrapped up in trying to uncover what's going on.

You can't help but feel the story wouldn't be half as satisfying if it were played in the correct order. That isn't the point. Nolan is more concerned with commenting on the subjectivity of memory and how it effects our life decisions than he is in giving Lenny's friends and enemies rock solid motivations for their actions.

Regardless of *Memento's* successes as a well-plotted mystery, it should be celebrated for the uniqueness of its structure and design. We could all do with a few more movies that break the mold.

CD REVIEWS

Black Rebel Motorcycle Club
BRMC

Hailing from England, the B.R.M.C. have dropped on our sweet shores one of the most aggressively psychedelic records in recent memory. Sounding like the perfect mix of the Jesus & Mary Chain, Love & Rockets and early Verve if only they had been recorded in an acid-fueled frenzy in Friesco during the '60s, B.R.M.C. have managed to channel the analog trip of our collective musical past to fill our futures with soaring choruses and distortion.

The only thing that will keep this from being the hit it would have been 10 years ago (when people actually listened to bands that sounded different from one another) is the spotty production. While the fuzzed out guitars, tripped out effects and low-in-the-mix vocals will be honey to the ears of aficionados of psych-rock, it may take a little easing into for the uninitiated. Either way B.R.M.C. is perfect for zoning out in the middle of

the night or a road trip on a sunny day.

—By Richard S. Hansen

No More Shall We Part

Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds

Following in the footsteps of 1997's *Boatman's Call*, and seemingly ignoring the raucous, comedy-thriller of the 1998's *Murder Ballade*, Nick & Co. turn in the tenderest album of their 20-year career. Characterized by sparse arrangement and backed by lush strings, Nick delivers his dependable lyrical directness while crafting songs both tender and heartbreaking.

Many songs begin quietly, building over extended track times and gaining in claustrophobic atmosphere. Cave has never been one to beat around the bush lyrically and the Bad Seeds backing music provides a potent metaphor paralleling Cave's songs about crippling relationships and love torn asunder. Relief is however provided in the gentle and compassionate

love songs *God is in the House* and *Love Letter*.

While perhaps not the best place to start for those curious about Nick and his Bad Seeds (that would be the recently

released *Best of* or the impeccable *Tender Prey*), *No More...* stands as yet another elegant accomplishment in a long and generally overlooked career.

—By Richard S. Hansen

THE #1 MOVIE IN AMERICA!

Roger Ebert, "Ebert & Roeper and the Movies"

"SPY KIDS IS BRILLIANT! IT'S ONE OF THE MOST WONDERFUL VISUALLY INVENTIVE AND EXCITING MOVIES I'VE SEEN IN A LONG LONG TIME!"

—New York Post

"ENTERTAINING AND SMART!"

A breathless, rollicking adventure!

—Los Angeles Times

"WINNING AND CLEVER!"

A lively and imaginative movie with a sense of humor!

—The Oregon News

"A WINNER! THE SECRET'S OUT: 'SPY KIDS' IS FANTASTIC FAMILY FUN!"

Wildly inventive and hip! It has wit, edge and heart! Antonio Banderas and Carlos Guejra are outstanding!

—New York Post

REAL SPIES...only smaller

SPYkids

AMC FORUM 30 AMC LAUREL PARK AMC LIVONIA 20

BIRMINGHAM 8 BIRMINGHAM 8 PHOENIX AT BELL AIR CENTER

MJR SOUTHGATE 20 NOVI TOWN CTR. 8

SHOWCASE DEARBORN 10 SHOWCASE DEARBORN 10

SHOWCASE DEARBORN 10 SHOWCASE DEARBORN 10

STAR GRATIOT 10 STAR GRATIOT 10

STAR LINCOLN PARK 10 STAR LINCOLN PARK 10

STAR ROCHESTER 10 STAR ROCHESTER 10

STAR TAYLOR 10 STAR TAYLOR 10

UA COMMERCE STADIUM 10 UA COMMERCE STADIUM 10

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"A KNOCKOUT WITH A SURPRISE TWIST THAT I DIDN'T SEE COMING."

Spins a chilling web of mystery, tension and intrigue—Don't miss it!

—A clever web!

—Gene Siskel, Today

"YOU'VE HEARD OF A GRABBER? THIS ENDING IS A GASPER."

—Gene Siskel, Today

"A TAUT, SUSPENSEFUL THRILLER THAT'S JAM-PACKED WITH SURPRISES."

Morgan Freeman's like a finely tuned Ferrari running on all cylinders. The man's in a league unto himself and he's turned in yet another winner.

—Sigmund Romberg, Entertainment Weekly

"THIS YEAR'S BEST SUSPENSE THRILLER. Thought-provoking suspense at its best. You won't want it to end. Do your friends a favor, don't give away the plot twists."

—Jim Farber, USA Today

"Morgan Freeman SPEAKS VOLUMES EVEN IN SILENCE."

—David Karger, Cleveland Plain Dealer

along came a spider

THE GAME IS FAR FROM OVER.

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"BLOW" IGNITES THE SCREEN!

—Sara Kott, VOGUE

"Blow" will knock your eyes out. It scorches the screen with a bravado all its own. Smart, sexy, funny and dangerous, this high-wire act is a movie and a half.

Johnny Depp steps up to a once-in-a-lifetime role. He's dynamic. Pezando Cruz is a smoldering lion de force.

With "Blow," director Ted Demme scores a career high. "Blow" is touched by greatness.

—Rolling Stone

"One of the best movies I've ever seen!"

—Howard Stern

Blow

based on a true story

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THIS FRIDAY, BE BOLD. BE BRAVE. BE BRIDGET!

"WILDLY ENTERTAINING!"

The makers of "Four Weddings... and "Notting Hill" have done it again!"

—Rolling Stone

"BRIDGET JONES'S DIARY DELIVERS FRISKY FUN! THE PAYOFF IS DELICIOUS!"

Hugh Grant is suavenly hilarious. Renée Zellweger is irresistible.

—Film Forum, Rolling Stone

RENEE ZELLWEGER COLIN FIRTH HUGH GRANT

BRIDGET JONES'S DIARY

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