

TCM_2023_JusticeList_mixdown_for Descript

[00:00:00] **Clip:** I Mean, what do you think? You think they stand a chance? Well, you're on their side, aren't you? Who are you betting on? Hmm.

[00:00:15] Magic

[00:00:15] mirror on the wall.

[00:00:17] Who is the

[00:00:18] fairest

[00:00:19] one of them? Look at these lies.

[00:00:25] One shall stand, one shall fall even if one of them survives. The only way to stop is to make another movie.

[00:00:38] **sean:** Welcome people who are watching

[00:00:41] **Nicole:** Welcome, welcome patrons to this, this special inaugural live episode of The Celluloid Mirror. We have never recorded live in front of an audience before, and we're doing that now for, for our Patreon subscribers. So if you're listening to this [00:01:00] on your podcast platform of choice and you don't subscribe to our Patreon, just just think of the joy you could have been experiencing watching us babbling live.

[00:01:11] You could see our virtual backgrounds those listening at home without the visual won't be able to see that. I, I have the condiment king.

[00:01:21] **sean:** You do quite possibly one of the greatest kings of all time.

[00:01:26] **Nicole:** My favorite king. And, and Sean, what do you have behind you? I have

[00:01:30] **sean:** a promo shot from the 1997 Failed Justice League of America pilot, which happened to just sort of relevant to the news right now.

[00:01:42] CoStar right here over my shoulder in green Michelle Hurd, who's one of the sag aftra negotiators for the uh, when it comes to the current strikes. So, you know, that's cool. And then the other people did stuff too, I'm sure.

[00:01:58] **Nicole:** I'm sure

[00:01:58] **sean:** they did. The only one, the other [00:02:00] character that's in that, that is also in this movie in this version that we're gonna talk about in this picture anyway, is that fella right there.

[00:02:08] It's the, the terribly costume of flash. So there you have it.

[00:02:15] **Nicole:** There you have it. And we don't have any music queued up, do we?

[00:02:20] **sean:** We'll fix it in live post, live

[00:02:23] **Nicole:** post, live post. So there's Imagine the music.

[00:02:35] Welcome to The Celluloid Mirror. I am one of your hosts, Nicole,

[00:02:40] **sean:** and I am Sean, the other host on the Celluloid Mirror. We take two films and look at what they reflect about each other, the audience, and our culture at large. Today we're talking about Zach Snyder's Justice League,

[00:02:58] justices Gray [00:03:00] Edition, and Steven Spielberg's Schindler's List.

[00:03:04] **Nicole:** We will start by giving a brief synopsis of each film. We'll discuss our responses to the films as well as the critical response, and then we will dive in on what these films say about each other and the audience watching.

[00:03:18] **sean:** So say a lot about the audience watching.

[00:03:21] **Nicole:** So we have to give quick synopsis of these two very long films. And I guess I'll, I'll kick it over to you, Sean, if you would like to tell our viewers and listeners at home what the fuck happened in Zack Snyder's Justice League Justice's Gray Edition? 'cause God knows, I actually I can, but you're gonna have

[00:03:41] **sean:** to do it instead.

[00:03:42] I died more than a little bit. That's what happened in Zach Snyder's Justice League. I died more than a little bit, I'll talk more about my reaction to the film later 'cause that's part of the show. But I'll just synopsise briefly. Now. It's four hours of four hours [00:04:00] of screen time. It is not four hours of story, which is fortunate for us because I can summarize it a little bit more easily.

[00:04:07] Basically what happens in Justice League is Superman is dead. He died in a previous film, Batman versus Superman. We see a shot at that at the beginning and that his death's cry, I guess, awakens these alien devices called mother boxes, which I would have many things to say about later. And then they uh, they call in some aliens and the aliens are like, sweet, there's no Superman.

[00:04:34] Even though we never met him. Now we don't have to worry about him. There's no Superman and we're gonna invade because Earth is a special magical place that needs to be invaded for this really poorly explained reason, at least in the movie. So Batman, for whatever reason, realizes this is coming and starts trying to put together the [00:05:00] Justice League team because he is aware that some of these people exist.

[00:05:04] He'd met Wonder Woman in the previous film. And I and then there is also Barry Allen, the Flash, who is this sort of bumbling science kid who kind of wants to, who, who really wants to save his dad from prison for killing his mom, but he doesn't think his dad killed his mom. That's a whole other thing that I'm not gonna get into.

[00:05:30] There's a super Broey Aquaman played by just big slab of man meat. That is Jason Momoa. And there is the terrible c g I on Ray Fisher that they're using as an excuse for Cyborg. And as he's trying to put them together, most of them tell him to go fuck off because they're like, we all just kind of do our own thing, and none of us really do much of anything for anybody except for Aquaman brings people some fish [00:06:00] and the flash saves a lady from a car crash and wonder Woman was there when Superman died, I guess.

[00:06:09] I don't know. I didn't watch that movie. And Cyborg is just sad. Probably because of his terrible c g I they all tell him to fuck off. And then through various little plot things, they kind of all come together way too late in the movie, decide that the only way that they're going to really stop these invaders from the planet apocalypse after they have a single showdown with them, is that they have to bring Superman back to life.

[00:06:41] So they do that. Superman just lays the beat down on them as he awakens, he's just like, I'm gonna fuck everybody up. Then Lois shows up and he is like, oh, My boner made me peaceful. He flies off with Lois while everybody [00:07:00] else is like, well, fuck, what are we gonna do? Maybe he'll show up at the end.

[00:07:03] They go off to stop the final zappy thing, which is basically which is basically that it's basically the same as the Avengers moving. Like he's gonna bring a whole army through a gate. He's already got some army there, but he is bringing a whole army through a gate. So they're fighting that off somewhere in eastern Europe, I think.

[00:07:23] Then Superman decides to show up, lays the beat down on the aliens they win. And kind of threaten the uh, aliens with, don't come around here, we'll fuck you up too. And then the aliens are like, well, fine. Well, we don't have the portal to go through. We'll just fly there because that's what we're gonna do.

[00:07:45] And then there's like 20 million epilogues, including one that I'll have things to say about later, where it's basically some post-apocalyptic thing that happens later [00:08:00] on where they're all running away from a Superman who is who is like working for the villains. And the Joker is there and it's stupid

[00:08:12] **Nicole:** and it's a dream.

[00:08:14] **sean:** Is that the one, oh, that one's a dream. Right? Right, right, right, right.

[00:08:17] **Nicole:** They made, I gotta, I gotta bite my tongue, but I, I will just say, this is of the 25 Epilogues. This is the one where Batman says the fuck word. And they brought back Jared Leto as the fucking joker. Yeah. And then it wasn't even something that really happened.

[00:08:36] It was just Batman's stupid nightmare. And I'm like, I can't believe you made me watch like 20 minutes of this garbage,

[00:08:44] **sean:** man. I, I have notes about that, but yeah, no, it's just, it goes on and on. But that's really like, that's as much plot as there is, which you could do. And they did end up doing in like half the time.

[00:08:57] Like I'm not really selling it short [00:09:00] by describing it like that. That is, I I, in fact, maybe I'm getting it. Too much credit for having a plot.

[00:09:06] **Nicole:** Yeah. So that's what happened in that movie. Yeah. The other movie we're talking about today is Steven Spielberg Schindler's List.

[00:09:19] **sean:** What happens in that movie,

[00:09:21] Nicole?

[00:09:22] **Nicole:** Well, it's World War ii. We're in Krakow. Jews are all in the Crackow ghetto. Oscar Schindler comes to town. He's a not Jewish German dude, war profiteer. Basically, he wants to set up an enamel factory. He wants to hire Jews to work there 'cause it's cheaper. Um, He hires a accountant named Isaac Stern, who's played by Ben Kingsley.

[00:09:53] Andler is, is famously played by Liam Neeson to help arrange this.

[00:10:00] And so, initially a business relationship born of greed and opportunism, slowly over the course of the three plus hours of this movie, turns into him actually giving a shit about what his party, he is a member of the Nazi party. He's wearing the pin and everything.

[00:10:20] He's kind of like, oh, this is pretty bad, isn't it? Oh, they're, they're not really gonna just chill out a little bit. This, this is, this is really bad. And he, he discovers it's really bad in the massacre of the ghetto, especially because he sees this one little girl who he takes interest in and then later sees her corpse.

[00:10:40] So he's like, oh my God, they, they killed this special little girl I cared about for some reason. I realize I sound very dismissive while talking about Schindler's List, and I feel a little bit bad about that. I'm not trying to be glib about it or not take it seriously. I do have a lot of criticisms of this film, which [00:11:00] we'll get into.

[00:11:00] There's a reason I had not seen it until now. But let's get through the synopsis first. So after that, Schindler's like, I'm going to have a munitions factory, and I want, I wanna have Jews there. And so he bribes this like, really sadistic Nazi guard, which you know, is redundant, obviously. Played by Ray Fines, goth is his name, I think.

[00:11:25] Right? Am I pronouncing that right? Yeah. It's

[00:11:27] **sean:** g it might Beth, the way it's pronounced, I can't remember

[00:11:29] **Nicole:** Goth. So Amon g I think his name is he has to bribe him to be able to keep his Jews like the special Jews. He gives a shit about, because

they were working in his other factory. He wants as many of them as possible to come work at this munitions factory.

[00:11:48] And because he gets the sense that he can save them from the camps, because it's clear now that like, oh, they are actually just bringing Jews to extermination camps and just fucking straight up [00:12:00] murdering people right and left. Oh, well this isn't, this isn't civilized. This isn't what I signed up for when I signed up to be in the, like, you know, Genocidal Nazi party, but not, you know, murdering children in front of me.

[00:12:12] Genocidal. That's just distasteful. So he, in this film, you know, develops a list in real life. This happened very differently, but um, tries to get as many of his, the quote unquote Schindler Jews to come work at this factory as possible. At one point, the women get put on the wrong train and sent to Auschwitz in one of the more notorious sequences in the film, where there's basically very classic Hollywood movie suspense about like, oh no, are these women gonna get gassed or Is Schindler gonna save them?

[00:12:49] And they all get herded into the fucking showers and it's like, oh, is water gonna come out of the shower heads or is it gonna be gas? And we'll talk about that sequence [00:13:00] later. I have some problems with that sequence. But water comes out, yay. So the special Jews we're supposed to care about because Oscar Schindler knew them are okay for the moment.

[00:13:10] And then Schindler shows up and takes them back to the munitions factory where everybody works intentionally making munitions that aren't, do not work. Like they, they intentionally are producing stuff that's not gonna actually help the Nazis. And perhaps the only nod to the kind of sabotage that was happening against the Nazis in World War ii coming from Oscars Schindler, of course.

[00:13:33] 'cause according to this movie, Jews don't do anything for ourselves. And you know, they continue doing that and eventually the World War II ends and Schindler's like, I gotta go 'cause I'm a Nazi. And we're not in charge anymore. And then he has this like breakdown scene by his factory that I really hated, where he's like self pityingly crying about how he didn't do enough and all his [00:14:00] Jews come around him and hug him and comfort him and everything.

[00:14:03] And then they're like, well, where, where are we gonna go? And then we cut to present day. In Israel I think it right outside Jerusalem is where Oscar Schindler is buried. I think so, yeah. Oscar Schindler's actual grave. And this

song from the Six Days War of 67 Plays, even though that was from a long time after the Holocaust doesn't really have anything to do.

[00:14:27] But we'll get into the Israel politics of Schindler's List later. And all the, in, in a scene that was very moving to me, like the real life people, the real life survivors who survived the Holocaust in part through their affiliation with Oscar Schindler. Some of the characters we've seen earlier in the film, the actors who played them and the real life elderly survivors go to Schindler's Actual grave and, and put down stones and were [00:15:00] in color now and that's the end of the movie.

[00:15:04] So that's what happens in Schindler's

[00:15:06] **sean:** List. Alright. So the connections between Justice Le and Schindler's List, if they're not already obvious first of all, are patrons voted on us doing this one? Our patrons have been voting for us to do Zach Snyder's Justice League for like, basically since it came out

[00:15:27] **Nicole:** we had an idea of doing it with First Cow at one point because of the aspect ratio.

[00:15:32] Yeah.

[00:15:33] **sean:** Which honestly, I think that there's a better conversation around these two. Like, I'm not gonna say that this is not, I think that there's a lot that we are gonna be talking about here that I think is very interesting. But our patrons have been trying to force me to watch this fucking movie. But basically connections in the, in the broad terms are that they're both high profile, beloved and very long black and white movies.

[00:15:55] Well, and we, I just to specify, we watch the Justices Gray version of [00:16:00] Justice Leagues, which makes it a black and white movie. It, it's arguable whether or not all Zach Snyder movies are black and white because he seems to hate color, but that's a different thing. And there were cultural events upon release.

[00:16:13] Zach Snyder's Justice League was really a major part of like pushing H b O Max before it became Max. And obviously Schindler's List was a huge thing in the nineties. I was quite young at the time, but I do remember it coming up a lot in the episode of Seinfeld. And also personally we both have not watched the movies until now.

[00:16:36] I think I was definitely avoiding Justice League actively Schindler's. This was more of, for me personally, a very passive sort of like, I, I know it's supposed to be a good movie. I have complicated feelings I can get into later about movies, surrounding events like this and specifically the Holocaust.

[00:16:58] That I'm not [00:17:00] trying to go out and I'm not trying to go out and watch them, but I'm also not explicitly avoiding them. Um, And I know you have similar, you, if you wanna chime in about your avoiding,

[00:17:15] **Nicole:** I mean, I avoided Zach Snyder's Justice League 'cause just why would I watch that? Like, I, I had the misfortune of watching Batman versus Superman once upon a time, and it was, I.

[00:17:28] God awful. I honestly do like Zach Snyder's Justice League more than Batman versus Superman. But that's not,

[00:17:35] **sean:** well, you didn't have to suffer through much Jesse Isenberg in

[00:17:37] **Nicole:** this movie. That's true. There was only a little bit, and that was bad enough. That was, yeah, bad enough. But yeah, I just, I didn't care.

[00:17:45] I'm like, wow, I didn't watch the theatrical version of this movie and now there's one that's twice as long. Why would I watch that? The, you

[00:17:53] **sean:** know, and I did watch the theatrical version and I was also like, what the fuck would I watch more of that?

[00:17:58] **Nicole:** Yeah, exactly. [00:18:00] I have sense watched the theatrical version though.

[00:18:02] 'cause that's the kind of cinematic I told you not to, you did tell me not to, but I am, I am a masochist of this sort and I just wanted to know. I just needed to know. And then I needed to watch it so I wouldn't wonder anymore. And now I know, and I never need to watch anything related to this property again, is my feeling.

[00:18:20] But so yeah, so that's why I didn't watch Justice League. I'm not a fan of Zach Snyder. I'm not any kind of a comic book film completist. So whatever Schindler's List is a film I've kind of meant to see for a very long time. 'cause it seemed like a film I just should see. I had some negative feelings towards it based on my impressions of what it was about.

[00:18:52] But I also, once upon a time, used to be a Spielberg hater, which I'm now not, I I really enjoy Steven Spielberg. I've [00:19:00] been trying to watch the films of his that I haven't seen before. When I was like, you know, when I was in high school and stuff and I was like, Steven Spielberg makes Schmaltz about Daddy issues and like, look at these tropes and Hook isn't very good.

[00:19:17] So I'm gonna like, you know, try to have,

[00:19:20] **sean:** I'm not tolerate hook hate.

[00:19:22] **Nicole:** Speaking of films that end like 25 times, that's

[00:19:27] **sean:** Oh yeah. That ends, I mean, I haven't watched it much as an adult, but I loved it a lot as a kid. Well, when I saw

[00:19:32] it

[00:19:32] **Nicole:** as a, just putting it out there, when I saw it as a kid, I was disappointed.

[00:19:36] And that kind of led to my like, Hey, everyone loves Steven Spielberg. I'm a teenage hater. Maybe my thing will be, I don't love Steven Spielberg, and I'm over that kind of reactionary impulse now. And I, I love, I love Jaws, I love dual, I love Jurassic Park. I, he's made a lot of great movies. I think he's an incredibly [00:20:00] talented director.

[00:20:01] I think his talent and skill is on display in Schindler's List. Whether I think it's being in directed in ways I think are good is a different matter. But there is a lot of skill and filmmaking prowess on display in that film. I do feel that Spielberg did what he was trying to do. What I think of that project is a different question.

[00:20:22] But I, I. The other reasons I hesitated to watch it, I think are just the obvious reasons of it's a three hour long movie about the Holocaust. That's not exactly, that's not light viewing. Right? That's something I need to prep myself for. Find a time where I just have a block of time like that, that I am prepared to invest in a way that's gonna be emotionally taxing, you know?

[00:20:48] And so that's not something where on a weekend I'm just like, oh, what should we watch tonight? Let's just throw on Schindler's List. Like, that's not gonna happen. So I was a, I was somewhat grateful that our patrons

[00:21:00] voted for this. It, I believe it was the pairing was my idea. And I was kind of kidding at first.

[00:21:06] But then the more I thought about it, I was like, actually, I kind of think this is a good idea. And it is a good idea. It, it is a good idea. And I hope the pairing doesn't come across as like lighthearted and glib. Just like I o I Schindler's List and Justice League Ha ha the Holocaust or something like that.

[00:21:24] That's

[00:21:24] **sean:** not, I mean, I think that's what everybody thinks of you in general,

[00:21:28] **Nicole:** but, you know, you know me, that's kind of my brand. But, so this was a good opportunity for me to make the time, make the focus, to actually watch Schindler's List. And I went into it wondering if all these impressions I'd built up in my ignorance over the past decades, right, of like what this film's project was, what my issues with it were gonna be.

[00:21:54] I really went into it with about as open a mind as I could. [00:22:00] And for a while I was like, am I gonna love this movie? Maybe I'm gonna love this movie. I'm gonna just give Spielberg the benefit of the doubt and go along for the ride of what he's doing here. And I, I do think on a technical level, There is a ton to admire.

[00:22:19] You know, on a, on a filmmaking level, if you are a filmmaker or if you are a person who is interested in and loves the medium of film, there is a lot to geek out about in this movie. There is a lot of interesting and well executed film craft for sure. I left as the movie went on, I kind of liked it less and less.

[00:22:51] As it more and more becomes the story of Great Man Schindler, it becomes more and more clear that we don't really have Jewish characters [00:23:00] in this movie. It becomes more and more clear that the movie really subscribes to a lot of really damaging anti-Semitic tropes. Like honestly, if I did not know who directed this film and I watched it, I would think it was not a Jewish person who directed this film because it comes across as so just straight up antisemitic to me in terms of how Jews are portrayed as abject victims.

[00:23:29] There is no discussion or even reference in this film to any Jewish resistance,

[00:23:36] **sean:** which was, there's the whole character who's in the Jewish resistance. There's the guy with the, he's got that, they got the underground tunnel that he's trying to get the woman to go through. Isn't he

[00:23:44] **Nicole:** part of the resistance?

[00:23:45] We don't see any of that. It's only like a, well, you don't see any of it, but he's there. But does he explain any of that? Does he, do they talk about the Warsaw Ghetto uprising or any ghetto uprisings? Do you see any armed Jewish people? Do you see any, the one

[00:23:59] **sean:** thing, I mean, I'm [00:24:00] not trying to argue with you that it's not there.

[00:24:01] I'm just saying that like there, I mean there was some

[00:24:04] **Nicole:** reference. Okay. I mean, I feel you can watch that film and if you don't know some of the context, you would have no idea. That Jews were organizing amongst themselves and getting anything

[00:24:17] **sean:** done. Yeah, that's, I mean, that's definitely possible in the context of the film to miss that.

[00:24:24] I don't think it's, I, I am, I'm not disagreeing that it is extremely minimal. Like what, what is shown and it's just that one guy who seems to be motivated towards it and he's connected with, with Schindler there. But,

[00:24:41] **Nicole:** Yeah, I mean part of it's also in real life there was a lot of connection and discussion between Nazi resistance and Schindler.

[00:24:52] He wasn't like this one guy working by himself. He was talking and meeting and discussing things openly of the sort that you don't hear him say [00:25:00] in this film. Mm-hmm. I feel like the film makes him more enigmatic than he actually was in real life, which I think is a problematic choice. Um, The Jewish characters we see are largely portrayed as very passive.

[00:25:13] There. There's a lot of like, I don't appreciate the, like, money lenders in the fucking church, like having their little like financial conversations. Not because that shit didn't happen, but because basically all the stuff we see of Jewish life is these stereotypes. Mm-hmm. You see, when the Nazis are coming, you see people like making their kids swallow jewels.

[00:25:39] Mm-hmm. And things like that. You see people scrambling to protect their possessions. There are multiple scenes where somebody Jewish is trying to hide and other Jews are like, get outta here. There's only space for us. You see Jews repeatedly acting selfishly and greedily, and those are human behaviors.

[00:25:59] [00:26:00] My argument isn't that nobody behaved that way or you can't depict that. My problem is that you don't see very much else. Hmm. And that paints to me a really disturbing picture that left me feeling really angry. And I know Steven Spielberg had a big, like, experience reconnecting with his own Judaism through directing this movie.

[00:26:30] This movie was originally supposed to be directed by Martin Scorsese. Like the, the story was kicked around a lot. There was a biography of Oscar Schindler that came out, and there was a lot of discussion of a film being made. At one point, Martin Scorsese was gonna do it, but he felt, and I give him credit for this, that it should be a Jewish director.

[00:26:48] He basically convinced Steven Spielberg to direct it. They traded Cape Fear for Schindler's List. Spielberg was originally gonna direct Cape Fear. I think that impulse to give it to a Jewish [00:27:00] director is great. A part of me feels that Martin Score says he might've made a much better movie, that I would've liked more with this material than Spielberg did.

[00:27:09] I don't want to try to psychoanalyze Steven Spielberg, but I can't help but wonder if maybe he should have worked through some of the stuff he was working through before he directed this movie. Because like, like I said, I'm sorry, but it comes across to me as, as antisemitic in a way that makes me wonder what was going on with, with him internally.

[00:27:36] I also don't appreciate the way it explicitly wraps up with this very Zionist bow about like, oh, and the solution to the Holocaust is Israel. Mm-hmm. That which is a narrative a lot of people subscribe to. That's a very dominant narrative and. I thought it was completely unnecessary and [00:28:00] unfortunate that that was how the film chose to resolve.

[00:28:03] **sean:** Well, and, and, and we were just talking about the connections.

[00:28:06] So just before you continue and pick up on those personal reactions to it the other connection is that they both raise questions about how to engage

with fascism, fascism as a subject into aesthetic and film. Yeah. Yeah. Just wanted to touch on that, 'cause we're gonna talk about that a lot.

[00:28:21] Yeah. But please continue with your reaction to Schindler and then jump on Justice League. I, I

[00:28:27] **Nicole:** just, I think as many people have pointed out that doing like traditional classic Hollywood drama around real life atrocities, whether it's the Holocaust or, or anything else, you know, whether it's the genocide of indigenous people or, you know, chattel slavery or any of the other like atrocities genocidal atrocities that have occurred, that happened to real people and are real people's history.

[00:28:54] Like this is within living history for my family, you know? Mm-hmm. This, this is, this is my [00:29:00] family's history to a degree here. This is, this is real life stuff. And I think turning it into suspense, there is something really, you know, usually when I say perverse, I mean it in a good way, but I'm gonna say perverse in a bad way, just for lack of a better word right now about that.

[00:29:21] That's hanukkah's criticism of the film basically is that, and I. Agree with it. I don't necessarily, we're gonna talk about some other critiques of the film later. I don't necessarily subscribe to, for example, Claude Lanzman, the, the director of Showa, he trashed Schindler's List and has a lot of very, very specific ideas about how you should or should not make movies about the Holocaust.

[00:29:48] I don't necessarily have some posi rigid position like that of like, you have to do it this way. If you do it this way. It's counterproductive and bad. I, I'm a lot more [00:30:00] open. I don't really know. I have questions. I think these are difficult things to think through and, and talk about and artistic responsibility and how to wield that.

[00:30:11] You know, I, I don't think I have the answers but I have a lot of problems with how Schindler's List chose to approach this material.

[00:30:21] **sean:** And, and, and what was your reaction to

[00:30:23] **Nicole:** Justice Lee? I mean, I thought it sucked. I thought it was really long. I watched it over the course of like four different days. I could wa I'd watch like an hour of it at a time and I thought it sucked, and I thought it was Fassy.

[00:30:36] I don't think Zach Snyder is a fascist. I don't think Zack Snyder is trying to make right wing propaganda. I think Snyder is a meathead who likes what he likes, has absorbed a bunch of cultural stuff and hasn't spent two seconds thinking about or analyzing any of it. And so he ends up making this fucking Justice League movie that looks like it was shot by [00:31:00] Lenny AI.

[00:31:01] That's what I think about Justice League. Okay.

[00:31:05] **sean:** Yeah. I, I'm gonna, I'm gonna talk about my reactions to these in the, in the opposite order justice League. I, as I said, I was avoiding it. I am not Comic book movie Completist anymore because one of the things that I think is nice is I don't really feel like I need to be anymore.

[00:31:22] They were about 10, 12 years ago. It was not as dominant as it is. But now as a lifelong comic book fan, I feel like I kind of benefit from that. There's so much of it. 'cause now I can just be like, you know what? I'm not interested in that one. I don't have to, I don't have to feel like I'm missing out on the, these adaptations of something that I really enjoy because there are many options now, which is nice for me in that sense.

[00:31:55] Also, just Zach Snyder has been sort of, has [00:32:00] been diminishing returns since Dawn of the Dead. I watched 300 when it came out and I fucking hated that movie. Like I saw it like midnight showing opening night. I did that a lot back then. When that movie came out, that movie sucked and I was so bored and the Battle of Thermopylae should not be boring, but that was such a boring movie.

[00:32:26] I gave Watchmen a try and his style, his choices I did not like. The way they changed the story didn't have a problem with it. There's some stuff they changed about the ending. I think it worked for what they did. I know that was a sticking point for a lot of fans, but it was his style and his fundamentally missing the point, which really reinforced for me.

[00:32:49] I didn't wanna see as movies. Then they gave him Superman. And I love Superman, which is going to become very apparent later because I will probably be talking [00:33:00] at length about some of my opinions on that character and his history. And I dug up this paper presented at the PacRim 2006 PacRim Literary Conference.

[00:33:10] Which I haven't thought about. Well, I've thought about off and on, but I haven't really, I never really went looking for it again until basically

yesterday. But like I, I had to give it a shot. And also, like, I liked some of the cast for that. Like he chose, like, I never would've thought of choosing Kevin Costner and Diane Lane to play his parents, his, his human parents.

[00:33:34] But as soon as I heard that casting, I was like, that's a really good casting choice for Mon Pa Kent. Amy Adams is an excellent actress. She could be in less movies. Like it wouldn't hurt her to say no to some things. And or for people to just pick somebody else. But, you know, she's a good actress.

[00:33:51] So I was like, all right, fine, I'll, I'll see it. And there were bits of it that I was like, you know what? There's some really pretty bits of this. And then, but the [00:34:00] story overall was just crap. So when the next one was coming, Batman versus Superman, I said, no, I'm not gonna see that. When he, they announced Justice League, which I will note, which you may appreciate, Nicole, I forgot to mention this to you.

[00:34:14] You may or may not be aware that before all of this, all of the Man of Steel and Zack Snyder being involved, there was going to be a Justice League movie directed by George Miller of, of of Mad Max and, and all that. I would watch that it was very close to getting made, like it was like weeks from starting shooting.

[00:34:34] And that would've been in very, very different. Sort of thing before Man of Steel came out. Anyway so I skipped Batman versus Superman. I, I skipped Justice League in, in the theaters because it was also Joss Whedon, and I was kind of down on Joss Whedon at the time as well. I watched it. I'm unlike now.

[00:34:54] Oh, I'm very well, no, like I had, I had become more down on him, and it was [00:35:00] before all of this stuff came out. But I watched it and like drunk tweeted it when it was available streaming. And then they announced that this was coming, and I was like, it was bad enough and it flopped hard when it came out in the theaters.

[00:35:19] Why are you launching your new streaming platform and like, touting this is your big thing and pumping more money into a pile of shit. So I was offended by its existence. I'm still offended by its existence as a film. I have a lot of problems with it from a craft perspective. It is not well written.

[00:35:37] It is not well directed. It is not well shot. A lot of the special effects are middling, at best at, and it's pumped full of little references for people like me with no substance to it like, and with no real purpose to it. And I find that

frustrating. I love, I [00:36:00] love layering in references to things and stuff like that when you've got 80 years of history with certain characters.

[00:36:07] There's a lot that you can put in there as subtle things. This, I, I, I, you know, it's, it's It's very shallow and I think it fundamentally misses what works about a lot of the characters. I think it fundamentally plays into some of the worst versions of these characters, most of whom have been around for decades, well, all of whom have been around for decades.

[00:36:30] It is an incre, it is an even worse depiction of Jack Kirby's fourth world than the theatrical version. And this is like the only like major live action version that we have of this. And that is a very vibrant sort of story world that's been reused over and over in the books and in cartoons to varying degrees of quality.

[00:36:54] But I'll talk more about that later. 'cause I think it's very relevant to the issues around fascism. I think [00:37:00] it is an artistic failure. I think it was not a, I mean, it was not an enjoyable watch. It was shockingly boring for most of it. And it's an ugly film both in, both in text and in how it looks.

[00:37:19] It's an ugly film and I don't care for it. I'm offended by its existence. I have softer opinions on Schindler's List. I was definitely like, on a certain degree, to a certain degree, worried about you know, I don't watch a whole lot of films that interface with the Holocaust because it's, I think there's a threshold for, and I put this in my letterbox review of Schindler's List.

[00:37:47] I think like, if you're gonna make a film, you're never gonna make something that's, even a documentary won't go that deep on it, but at least it's got this sense of being a, a [00:38:00] documentary which makes it, you know, maybe, maybe arguably a little bit. More responsible, but a fictionalized version or inter in interaction with the Holocaust?

[00:38:11] I'm honestly, I would be m I'm much more comfortable with when they do that and it's just purely fictional or it's o it's explicitly sensationalized and it's not trying to be real or depict something real about it, because then it's kind of, it's what you were talking about in a lot of ways is like, if you're gonna present it as a serious story and be fully serious about this, like there's no way, you're not also sensationalizing it.

[00:38:44] There's no way that you're also not fetishizing parts of it in ways because that is how film, especially mass market film, like what Schindler's List is designed to be, is going to work. That's part of the language of cinema does

these things. [00:39:00] It abbreviates and it simplifies it simplifies to convey meaning sometimes a lot sometimes to, in a way that's too simple.

[00:39:11] I think it ended up being until like the last third of the film, it ended up being better than I was expecting it to be. The end I think really kind of ends up in sometimes just to speak of Spielberg specifically. Sometimes Spielberg can't really end a film. He's sometimes he flops at the ending.

[00:39:36] I mean, there's a couple of other films like *AI* and *Minority Report* that immediately come to mind where it's just like he. He kind of flubs. I did find the very end at his grave moving, you know, to see the actual people. And but[00:40:00]

[00:40:01] by and large, like one of the things that I've been thinking about since I watched it is to a degree, like, who is this movie for? And like, I think that the movie in some of the ways it's approached and in how people are depicted

[00:40:29] very reasonably bothers a lot of people because I don't think it's actually made for them. And there's a very good argument that it should be made for them. But it's actually probably made more for people like me who don't have the family history with that for whom there isn't direct connections.

[00:40:53] And so the very reasonable, the very correct in in many ways criticisms [00:41:00] of the film that it is wrong to put it from the perspective of the people. It does, it puts it in the perspective of two Nazis. I think in some respects. It's designed to not put you in the place of the, the Jews in the film because it wants to put you in to put this audience that it's aiming at in the position of the people that they were more likely to have been.

[00:41:35] I, I don't know if that's a conscious choice, but I, I, that is the interpretation that I'm sort of landing towards. Sorry to interrupt. Go ahead.

[00:41:42] **Nicole:** No, I'm interrupting you just to say that I completely agree with you. I, I, I absolutely agree. I think it's not a film for Jewish people. I think it's a film for people who might have been Nazis in the hopes that they'll see it and feel bad and be like, I could be an Oscar [00:42:00] Schindler and be a great man like that.

[00:42:02] And that's, and I, I think that is kind of Spielberg's goal is to try to have the, you know whoever could have been on the oppressor side there, like, the next time this comes up, be an Oscar Schindler. And that that's part of why I

have such a problem with him, not explicitly including examples of Jewish resistance or fully developed Jewish characters or having the Jews depicted as full people.

[00:42:29] As opposed to, yeah, victims. 'cause I think if you're trying consciously or not, and I agree, I don't, I don't know if this was conscious on his part, but I think how it ends up, I, I think you're spot on. And that's part of why I think then you have even more responsibility to not just throw a bunch of Jewish stereotypes Sure.

[00:42:46] At people. And,

[00:42:48] **sean:** and I, and I will say that, and sometimes this is just my own, and actually I probably, and I'm not gonna say sometimes I would say that [00:43:00] this is definitely my own sort of not having interfaced with that as much in general in my life. A lot of those stereotypes didn't register for me.

[00:43:09] Hmm. Like like as I was watching it. Like, and it's probably just 'cause they're so embedded in a lot of culture that it just doesn't re that it just wasn't registering a lot of ways as being that. I will say that I think that there is an overall theme, and there was a couple of examples, but for some reason, I'm only thinking of the one where I think a big theme of it is when you, you can't always do something, but when you see the opportunity to do something, that you should take that opportunity.

[00:43:44] And the one specific example that was coming to my mind is there's the little boy right, somewhere around the middle of the movie who is, has been tasked, has been conscripted, essentially by the Nazis to help them with the rounding up and to point out the people who are getting away. And he helps the [00:44:00] little girl hide behind the stairs and he goes up and he doesn't just like, you know, shove her away and let her hide and then and then kind of do nothing.

[00:44:09] He, he actively goes and he tells 'em, there's nobody over here, everything's fine. And they go the other direction. Like he helps her and obviously he's helping her partly because of that personal connection, but but he was taking advantage of that opportunity. And I think that's really whether, and you know, there's a larger conversation to ha to be had about, and I think we, you and I have had this specific conversation maybe on Mike, maybe not about my opinions on whether or not a biopic or a film based on real world events, how much that should necessarily hold to those.

[00:44:46] Like I think that what, what they ultimately, what it ultimately was doing was saying that like, here's somebody who was in a position he was not helping, he was exploiting, and then [00:45:00] the moment came where he could make a choice about helping people. And he did. And I think it's trying to be like some Spielberg movies trying to be didactic in the sense of that you, this is what you should do is you should help when, when the time comes.

[00:45:16] You can't necessarily be the revolutionary who's running out there, you know, and, and doing that. But you may be in a position at some point to do a thing, and at that point you should do the thing. You should help people in what way that you can. Now I think that the very, that that, that bit that he has, like, I probably like that that's the bit that really I was just like real, and I'd seen this bits of this scene before where he's like, oh, all the other people I could have saved the movie would've been served better without that scene because it is a very, like, me, me, me.

[00:45:52] What could I have done? And that fits with the character as he's established. [00:46:00] But, and I think that there, there is some degree to which the film does do a reasonable job of showing him and the Nazi commandant as not being that different of people. Like it, it's shows them as being different, but in a lot of ways they're not. Like, I don't think it depicts 'em as being so different.

[00:46:23] It just kind of says that, that there's a choice to that they made there. I, I think, and I, I read you know, you found a lot of great articles that we can talk about and criticism of this movie. And I think that they're all excellent points that you know, not that anybody needs my, like, approval of them but I do see in what all of what they're saying that these are great points about the film, but I think it's, as you were saying, like there's, there's a larger conversation about.

[00:46:55] Like how do we even, or should we even make a, [00:47:00] make films about these topics, fictional films, about these topics, about real people around them? Like is it responsible at all? And you know, I think we can get into this a little bit later, but my argument I would be that we should, and that to a degree it may be not only a good idea, but very valuable for the long term to actually recontextualize certain people and certain actions for the purposes of saying what in, in, in fiction for the purposes of saying, this is what we expect from people because, and I, I started thinking about this because of conversation with your husband Sean, that is not super related.

[00:47:56] Like months back when we went to the Mets game and he [00:48:00] was talking about how that he was, he was working on a story that was reporting on a little bit like the origins of hip hop and how there are strong, like there are different people who say it started here. It started there, right? And we were kind of talking about it and like, this is obviously a less serious topic.

[00:48:22] It's still like important obviously like, like where does this very influential cultural phenomenon or come from, because that affects a lot of people. But at the same time history as we know it, even recent history is as much legend as, as much mythology is, as much like just what's useful. To teach us about where we are now as it is knowing about what really happened.[00:49:00]

[00:49:00] Because ultimately it's very difficult to know what really happened in any kind of context. Not that it's not accessible, but because the stories are told by people. And you know sometimes things are recorded and we can reference that back, but it's always going to be a particular perspective. It's always going to be a particular point of view, even if we, even if it was filmed, even if it was captured on film, like that's being captured in that moment at from one angle at a time.

[00:49:35] And that even that is ultimately that past is only accessible through to some degree, the stories that we tell. And, and maybe it is the right thing to do to tell the story that we think we need from what happened over the story of what actually happened. I [00:50:00] don't know. Maybe that's, I I think that there's potentially an argument for that, but that is also me just saying that maybe propaganda is good, actually, which is probably a bad thing for me to say.

[00:50:11] **Nicole:** I mean, so I'm in favor of propaganda in, in settings. I don't, I don't think propaganda is necessarily bad and I, I agree with a lot of what you're saying. I also think there are things that are, you know, established fact, if you wanna zoom in really close, of course, like it's about the angle and everything.

[00:50:27] And, and that's, that's. I, I, I think there's a lot of interesting stuff in what you're saying, and I'm not making the argument even on balance. Schindler's List is a bad contribution to our understanding of the Holocaust. I'm a little open on that and I obviously, I have a lot of criticisms of it. The fact that that film has become kind of the dominant cinematic holocaust narrative in all sorts of institutionalized ways, I think is a real problem.

[00:50:56] Yes. And one of the things I did when I watched it is [00:51:00] I'm not sure to what degree I can tease out analyzing the film in and of itself, if there even is such a thing from the role that film has come to occupy in our understanding of the Holocaust. I also don't know if teasing those things out even is a thing that necessarily makes sense or is valuable.

[00:51:18] But, but these are, you know, some of how, how I'm looking at it, and that's part of why I have such a problem with things like the fact that in real life, Oscar Schindler was ultimately saved by a lot of the Jews he had helped. I think that would've been an interesting thing to dramatize, I think so, as the climax of the film instead of just cutting it out.

[00:51:39] And obviously, yes, whenever you do a biopic. Things will be different. You can't contain everything. My problem isn't, this isn't exactly how it happened in real life. My question is always what was changed in towards what ends. Right? Yes. That said, I do so that I don't just monologue for a half hour now.

[00:51:57] I do wanna bring it back to one [00:52:00] point you made about Goth and Schindler kind of being similar, to tie it back into our other film. I found myself thinking a lot, watching this movie at a certain point, oh, Schindler's, Batman and Goth is the Joker. Like, it felt very much to me, kind of like the two sides of like the same coin thing that we get in over and over again in a lot of superhero movies about like, Batman and the Joker are actually more alike than they are different.

[00:52:28] And I'm like, that's kind of what's here and that's an uncomfortable thing to be thinking about. Um,

[00:52:34] **sean:** I have notes about that idea, but that's separate.

[00:52:36] **Nicole:** Before we talk more about what we think, I think it would be good to talk about a little of what the critical reaction was to, to these films. I think it'll come as no surprise that Schindler's List.

[00:52:49] Well, it had, I I do wanna say it was not universally beloved, it had its detractors mm-hmm. From the beginning. But it is [00:53:00] 98% fresh on Rotten Tomatoes, which I think is not a very unaccurate kind of depiction of

[00:53:07] **sean:** Yeah. I think that very much depicts like the broad response to it because honestly like a lot of the detractors and some of the things that you

shared that we can talk about, I think They, I don't think that entered a lot of the mainstream conversation about the film.

[00:53:26] Yeah. I, I agree. Yeah. And I think broadly it's very, like, that's one of the reasons why I actually kind of felt a little guilty about not watching it for a long time. Not just because of the topic and, you know, people going like, but it's about this and you can learn about it. And honestly, like, there wasn't like details about who Oscar Schindler was.

[00:53:45] I honestly didn't know very much about him as an individual. But like, details about the Holocaust that are in the movie, I had certainly heard about in school. Like you know, the, the showers and, and, and all of that. All of those kinds of details as a crackow or the, the Warsaw ghetto and, [00:54:00] and, and what was going on with those, those were all things that were covered in school, perhaps because around that time this movie came out because this movie came out when I was about 10 93, I think.

[00:54:12] Right? So I was 10 years old. So, you know, soon after that, like, there's more conversation about that in school, I think. But also just 'cause everybody talked about what a great movie it was. And so I felt a little like, yeah, I guess I haven't seen this great movie, so,

[00:54:27] **Nicole:** well, Zach Snyder's Justice League was 72% fresh on

[00:54:30] **sean:** Rotten Tomatoes.

[00:54:31] I don't understand it. How, how is it 72? How is it over

[00:54:36] **Nicole:** 50%? Because all his fucking stands like, well, I guess that's 72% fresh with critics. I take it back. That's not the audience reaction. Bunch of dumbass critics. I mean, to, here's the one thing I'm gonna throw out as an explanation. Remember when this dropped, right?

[00:54:53] This was earlier in the pandemic. People were not going out to theaters as much. [00:55:00] I mean, I'm still not going out to theaters, but lots of people are. And suddenly there's a big shiny thing on H B O Max that people can watch. I think some people were more forgiving and positive because of that.

[00:55:16] **sean:** I think they're just dumb.

[00:55:18] **Nicole:** Sure. Not gonna disagree with that.

[00:55:21] **sean:** Schindler's send us emails about how you hate me for hating that movie. Please.

[00:55:25] **Nicole:** And, and also just you can comment. We do have comments coming in on both YouTube and Streamy Yard Here. I'm seeing some, some of our listeners think it's just the fascists who are getting Justice League,

[00:55:38] **sean:** I believe I, I I

[00:55:39] **Nicole:** numbers inflated.

[00:55:41] And, and feel free to chime in. We are seeing your comments even if we're not responding to all of them. Live Schindler's List also won tons of awards. It won, you know, the Oscars for best picture directing, editing, adapted screenplay score should not have won SCORE cinematography, production design[00:56:00] plus like lots of BAFTAs and Golden Globes, London Critics Association, et cetera.

[00:56:06] It grossed \$322.2 million with on a \$22 million budget. So it was a very profitable movie. Zach Snyder's Justice League wasn't released in theaters. It was released right to H B O Max. It did win awards that I've never heard of, like the Alpha Pro Awards for best superhero, best female hero, and best actress in a superhero movie for gal Gato.

[00:56:36] Okay. It was nominated for best fight at the M T V Movie Awards. And it won. Zach Snyder's Justice League did win an Oscar. If anyone remembers this bullshit category, they had just that year of the Oscar cheer moment that was voted on by fans and it was the flash enters the speed force, [00:57:00] whatever that's worth.

[00:57:03] For what it's worth, Whedon's, the theatrical release of Justice League grossed \$6,657.9 million. And then Snyder's version was released to H B O Max

[00:57:18] **sean:** ALS on a \$300 million budget, which was then added to when they released it to Max. I think they added another \$20 million to finish it. So it's box office was what, slightly more than double, which for a superhero movie of that scale means they probably lost money on it.

[00:57:40] **Nicole:** Yay.

[00:57:41] **sean:** Um, Of the, of the original one. And then I doubt that they made like that money back on the H B O max version. So it's just a big like money pit, like, which honestly good, they deserve to lose money on that.

[00:57:56] **Nicole:** So. Yeah, I [00:58:00] agree. In terms of specific critics, we always look at Roger Rebert and the New York Times on this show as kind of like a barometer of kind of middle of the road mainstream film criticism.

[00:58:14] What did those outlets think of the films we're discussing? So like the New York Times, Janet Maslin loved Schindler's List. Some of what she says, I did you

[00:58:24] **sean:** freeze. I think you froze as a, did I freeze? There's your voice. Oh, there you are. I'm here. You, you froze for me for a second.

[00:58:30] **Nicole:** Oh no, I froze. The condiment king got me.

[00:58:33] You gotta watch out for him. He's got mustard and ketchup, so

[00:58:36] **sean:** that's true.

[00:58:36] **Nicole:** Even if you're immune to one, the other's gonna get you. Janet, I don't think I need to read these like lengthy reverent Schindler's List quotes. We can link them in the show notes. But I do kind of want to talk about the Justice League review.

[00:58:51] So like Janet Maslin loved Schindler's List. Roger Ebert loved Schindler's List. He gave it four stars. I disagree with some things [00:59:00] both of them say, but whatever. In the New York Times, Maya Phillips reviewed Zach Snyder's Justice League and she was less impressed. She said, for a film that's kind of like supposedly about hope, it didn't really pay off because hope isn't manufactured.

[00:59:17] It can't be limited to a shadow of a gesture or shouldered by one man whose extraordinary abilities are heralded in the super of his name. And it's definitely not in the cinematic equivalent of a four hour long video game cut scene, which Fair. Maya Phillips Matt Zoller cites gave Justice League three and a half stars on ebert.com.

[00:59:42] Ebert has obviously passed at the time. Zach Snyder's Justice League was released unless he was spared having to watch it. But that solar sight said my own feelings. I I give him credit. This is cute, but my own feelings are

summed up in the click hole Headline. The worst person, you know, just made a great [01:00:00] point.

[01:00:01] Bottom line, I don't see how it's possible to put this version of the project next to the 2017 version and not recognize it's superior in every way. It is not superior in terms of

[01:00:10] **sean:** runtime. It's not superior in terms of runtime. It's not superior in terms of like, just entertainment value. Like, like I was bored.

[01:00:21] Is long and boring and like at least the other one. Well, okay, I will give, I will give them this. I did, I was like really drunk when I watched the theatrical version and I don't do that anymore. So that does change my opinion of it. But like, I mean, they both suck. I, I just a shit show either way. I'd rather watch this version.

[01:00:43] I sure. I mean, so would I, which I've only seen shot seen like some little pieces of scenes from at least this ver at least this movie has Miguel Ferrere. Sean is

[01:00:51] **Nicole:** pointing to his background, just so you all know, of the not coming to fruition Justice League version from

[01:00:59] [01:01:00] what year?

[01:01:01] **sean:** Uh, 1997. Failed TV pilot.

[01:01:03] **Nicole:** More

[01:01:03] colorful than even the color version of Zach Snyder's Justice League.

[01:01:06] **sean:** Very colorful.

[01:01:08] **Nicole:** I I will say as somebody who did horrifically watch the theatrical Cut of Justice League after watching Zach Snyder's one, just 'cause I needed to for myself.

[01:01:20] **sean:** Sure.

[01:01:23] **Nicole:** I, it's kind of a toss up which one's better 'cause they both suck.

[01:01:26] Um, The Zack Snyder one is more coherent. The, like, the other one does feel like it went through a weed whacker. Like it's just missing chunks. But like, is that a, is that a bug or a feature? You know? 'cause it's certainly not like, I was like, oh man, I really missed that slow-mo shot of that sesame seed coming right at me when that random dude in the car.

[01:01:47] **sean:** I mean, that changes everything,

[01:01:49] **Nicole:** you know. I will say the film looks better in black and white, even though it was shot to be in color. 'cause it just is such an ugly, ugly

[01:02:00] film that it's, it's just like I tell students when I'm teaching beginners about like video projection and I'm like, you know what?

[01:02:07] If it looks like shit, if you put it in black and white, at least it'll look like you made an artistic choice. And you can play with the contrast a little maybe and like get something that at least looks,

[01:02:18] **sean:** if somebody

[01:02:19] could have told them they could do that, that would be great.

[01:02:21] **Nicole:** They didn't tell them they could do that.

[01:02:23] They

[01:02:23] didn't tell them

[01:02:23] **sean:** No, they just, they, they took the file, they threw it into QuickTime, they turned the saturation all the way down and that's all they did to make it black and white.

[01:02:29] **Nicole:** It is. You know what, I think it's time for though I don't even, it it time for an ad break. Yeah, we've got a lot more to discuss but I think it's time for an ad break.

[01:02:37] And on that note, we're back

[01:02:40] **sean:** and we're back

[01:02:42] **Nicole:** from, from paying our, our bills. Yes, they're all paid now. Good job everybody. Good job everyone. So now I think it's time to discuss

what these films reflect about one another. We have some specific points and um, can [01:03:00] also hear from the audience if I think if, if you have comments just go ahead and make them.

[01:03:07] So there are a few points of comparison we wanted to delve into. The first one on our list is the choice of black and white. Now obviously Zack Snyder's Justice League is not only available in black and white, but the version that was in terminally long that the two of us watched was in black and white.

[01:03:30] They are also in different aspect ratios for some fucking reason. Both Schindler's List And what's the aspect ratio on Schindler's List? Again? I think it's just like 16 nine. It's just

[01:03:43] **sean:** 16 nine, right? Yeah, I think it's 16, nine for a second. I was like, it's not four three, right? No it's not. No, no, no, no, no, no.

[01:03:49] And, and, and and Justice League isn't even actually four three, it's almost one. One. It's actually the or, or it's whatever the

[01:03:58] **Nicole:** what's it like academy [01:04:00] ratio

[01:04:00] **sean:** or whatever? No, it's whatever the I imax like full size ratio is. Oh, is

[01:04:05] **Nicole:** that why he shot it that way?

[01:04:09] **sean:** Yeah, it's like designed for like a full IMAX screen.

[01:04:14] So I remember reading about that when it came out and I was like, that's a really interesting choice for something that you're putting online for people to watch on their TVs that are 16, nine. Good job.

[01:04:23] **Nicole:** This is what I'm wondering. All it does, it does give it the feel of being an older movie. Right?

[01:04:34] Like a movie from like the thirties or something because the aspect ratio is closer to that. Yeah. I don't know why you would choose that. It's not a movie from the thirties. All I could get is this is like Zach Snyder's meathead way of being like classic.

[01:04:52] **sean:** Yeah. I remember reading some of his comments about why he did it.

[01:04:57] It had a lot to do with the [01:05:00] making the IMAX experience very immersive because the IMAX screen is very, very tall. So the whole idea was that you would kind of be looking like this as opposed to a normal movie screen where you might be looking like

[01:05:11] **Nicole:** that. So the whole movie was shot that way and they just cropped it for the theatrical release.

[01:05:17] Correct.

[01:05:18] **sean:** Oh, okay. I don't think the framing is particularly good for that, but whatever. As far as like the black and white for it, like, it seems like a stupid choice for Justice League to me because, I mean, it looks moderately better I'd say, but only because it's actually committing to being black and white instead of what he usually does, which is just desaturate things until might as well be but it's also a shitty looking black and white because the contrast isn't there.

[01:05:45] It's very just muddy. I they like it would not take that much I believe in the chat here, we, we got the comment, red filter which I think is, was a reference to the, the way to do the black and white. [01:06:00] Like it's just, Sloppy. Like you could go through, like if they'd, if they're spending this much money anyway, have the colorist go through and actually adjust the contrast.

[01:06:10] That's the thing that you can do. They didn't do that. I have mixed feelings about the Schindler's List, black and white. I think it's interesting. The, and the, and it's the same for the same reason. I have mixed feelings about it. And it's that it puts it in a context where it feels like an old movie.

[01:06:31] It looks like it's shot, like it has beautiful contrast. It's a beautifully shot movie. It is a beautifully shot movie and, you know, which you expect from Spielberg, right? Like I was, in fact, just the other day, I was just raving about the way that west Side story was shot, you know? And I wish that, like, honestly, I'm not generally a fan of the idea of digitally replacing actors, but man, if they could digitally replace Ansel Lort in that movie, that movie would be so [01:07:00] much better.

[01:07:00] I think we're all with

[01:07:01] **Nicole:** you on that. That's, it's, they're both Janice Kaminsky, right? Who's Spielberg's usual

[01:07:07] **sean:** cinematographer? I'm not off the top of my head. I'm not, I can't remember. But, but he

[01:07:10] **Nicole:** works with Spielberg a lot and it's, it's, it's beautiful. It looks like Citizen Kane

[01:07:15] **sean:** or something. And, and the camera's telling the story in, in, in the, in the movie, like it's doing a beautiful job of telling the story.

[01:07:21] The editing is telling the story. It's, it's, it's, it's beautiful. My problem with it. So I think it's I think it's great in that it creates that context. It feels like it's of the era that it's coming from in certain respects, visually for the black and white. At the same time, I have a problem with it because I think it creates a sort of distance.

[01:07:41] I agree. And, and this is related to the criticisms I've seen of, you know, a lot of the pictures that are shown from the civil rights era, or black and white even, which creates a distance in time. It makes it feel. Further away than it is. And, you know, I think, not [01:08:00] that, you know, I, I don't know that that is necessarily, I don't think that that's necessarily intended, but I do think that there is an effect of that.

[01:08:10] It feels like it was very long, very far away. I think they mitigate it in the end with the color scene and with the color scene and and all the people in, in Jerusalem putting the rocks on his grave, like they're, they're putting that context in of like, these people are still alive. But the larger narrative, I think it does create a certain distance for the audience which I would prefer it not, but it was still very pretty, it still looked very nice.

[01:08:39] Yeah. On the,

[01:08:40] **Nicole:** on the craft level, you can just look at it and yeah, it's, it's, it's beautiful. Which is arguably a, a problem. Um, I, we've got a couple comments on the black and white and Schindler's list I want to touch on before I add a couple things to what Sean said. Uh, We've got a comment that says, do you think [01:09:00] Schindler's List was made in black and white to appeal to people who think that everything before 19 I don't know why I can't read what the year 1964 or so actually happened in black and white.

[01:09:12] That's a very funny comment. Um, I think, honestly, From reading comments Spielberg made, I think it has to do with, he repeatedly said, and I, I think he's actually really wrongheaded in this way. He was like, we're not making a film. We're making a document. This is reality. And I'm like, no, it's not.

[01:09:30] And the fact that you're talking that way gives me a little less respect for the project. But I think the fact that all the documentary footage we've seen of the Holocaust and World War II was in black and white because that was the technology of the time. So I, I think that that is kind of the driving force between the black, the, the choice to do black and white, to make it be more real in terms of whatever reality we have of filmic depictions from the time.

[01:09:59] I [01:10:00] think that's why he did it. Um, I see a, another comment that says it maybe creates a certain distance for the filmmaker as well, which I think is a really interesting comment that,

[01:10:12] again, I don't wanna psychoanalyze Spielberg too much. I don't think I'm in any position to do so. But it, it does raise a question of, it maybe was helpful to him to get a handle on that material, to have that kind of distance that was created by the black and white, contextualizing it as in the past and having this like very clear stylistic break from what we see when we open our eyes in reality, he clearly was by his own admission, going through a lot of stuff, and I, I could see, I could empathize with that.

[01:10:47] Um, And I seen other comment and it's shot with this very formal deep focus cinematography, which is like a technical project outside of his normal modality. That's true. It looks different from how Spielberg [01:11:00] movies usually look. It looked, I was reminded of Fritz Lang's Manhunt. At various points, which is another Nazi related World War ii, black and white movie from the time.

[01:11:12] I agree. I think that's, that's a really interesting point. I think my issue with it is with this kind of blurring of like, even though it's not shot like a documentary, I saw a lot of people say it's shot in documentary black and white. And I'm like, what does that mean? Do you mean Holocaust documentaries from the time?

[01:11:33] Um, And I see another comment. I also remember Spielberg saying the thing about documentary footage of the era. Yeah. I think, I think that's why the choice was made. I, I will say I found the formal move from color to black

and White Wizard of Oz style. They do at the beginning when they show it's, it's Shabbat.

[01:11:55] There's some Jewish people say in the blessing, you say over the [01:12:00] candles on Shabbat and you see the candles burn down. And as the candles burn down, it goes from color to black and white stays in black and white until the war is over. And then there's a scene where Schindler actually says to some of the Jews working in his factory, like, don't you want to go like candles?

[01:12:18] It's Shabbat. And they light the candles and the candles come back in color. And that segues, that's the first color we have again, until we cut to the final scene of the real life survivors in color in or near Jerusalem. And I do want to say that I found that black and white to color and back metaphor using the Shabbat candles specifically to be incredibly moving for me about the perseverance of Jewish people.

[01:12:52] No matter how much people try to fucking stamp us out, that we just keep fucking. Trucking [01:13:00] basically. And however many of us, they kill whoever's left, guess what? We're gonna, we're gonna still fucking be here. Fuck you. Which I'm sure is exactly how Spielberg put it when he pitched that. But um,

[01:13:13] **sean:** he took off his hat when he did, and he was like, and fuck you,

[01:13:17] **Nicole:** fuck you.

[01:13:18] He said, fuck, just like Batman does in Justice League, but

[01:13:23] **sean:** fuck,

[01:13:24] **Nicole:** what does he say in Justice League? Oh, I'll fucking kill you. He tells the joker he will fucking kill him in his dream. Stupidest shit. Anyway, so I I, I have issues with the black and white. I have issues with how pretty it is for all the reasons we've discussed.

[01:13:44] I also wanna say, I think Justice League, I've mentioned Lenny Reinstall before. In fact, why don't I show some visual aids, Sean, why don't, why don't we have, can you not pull up your

[01:13:53] **sean:** visual aid? Yeah, I'm gonna pull up a visual aid. I'll add it to the stream when, when you got it up. Okay. [01:14:00]

[01:14:00] **Nicole:** Ready? Whoops.

[01:14:01] Yeah. Um, Here, let me make it full screen. I'm ready.

[01:14:05] **sean:** All right. Ready?

[01:14:05] **Nicole:** I'm ready.

[01:14:06] **sean:** All right. Here it is.

[01:14:07] **Nicole:** Okay. So what you're looking at viewers at home is a video I took on my phone of the screen in vertical for some reason. While I was watching Justice League, I even paused it and went back and watched part of Justice League more than once so that I could just grab this shot.

[01:14:27] 'cause I was so struck by it, right into Batman's shadowy crotch fu. All right, that's all you need to see. So this very extended, very low angle shot looking up at Batman. And it reminded me of Can I show another visual aid, Sean?

[01:14:47] **sean:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Pull it up.

[01:14:48] **Nicole:** I got another visual aid. It's not video, but just, there are better examples of this, but this is what I was able to [01:15:00] find quickly, if you want to just share this.

[01:15:04] **sean:** Yep.

[01:15:05] **Nicole:** Yeah. Here's some tr like triumph of the will. The way Lenny reinstall shot Hitler in Nazi propaganda is very similar to how Zach Snyder chooses to shoot his superheroes in Justice League. Do I

[01:15:21] **sean:** It's, go ahead.

[01:15:23] **Nicole:** No, you go ahead, please

[01:15:24] **sean:** . No, no. I was just gonna say, yeah, it's the c e o uh, portrait shot.

[01:15:29] **Nicole:** Yeah. Yeah. I don't think Zach Snyder was consciously trying to like, inject Nazi aesthetics. Again, I think he's just too incurious to

think about why he's getting hard, basically, when he sees that shot of Batman. I do wanna point out they do make a point that there's a big shadow on his crotch because I think Zach Snyder is very afraid of the human body.

[01:15:56] Yeah. He has a very interesting relationship [01:16:00] to the bodies of his male characters, where he's fetishizing aspects of them and terrified of other aspects of them. There are no butts in Zach Snyder's Justice League. You never see anyone in their form fitting costumes where their butt is shown. And in fact, I could show it later, but this has been a lot of, visually, it's so far, like the one time in the film, they actually had a shot of all our heroes lined up and they're showing them from behind their backlit, such that they're in so much shadow that you wouldn't even know any butts were there.

[01:16:34] **sean:** Mm-hmm.

[01:16:36] **Nicole:** Not giving Joss Whedon any credit to say his cut of Justice League is a little less phobic of the human body. Zach Snyder's a special case, but he does clearly really like having these shots of Batman, where he looks like a fascist figurehead. And I think that's worth noting. And the black and white only intensifies that because it just straight [01:17:00] up looks like some Nazi propaganda.

[01:17:02] **sean:** As, as George Lopez delightfully observes at the end of the very fun looking blue beetle trailer, Batman's a fascist. So,

[01:17:14] **Nicole:** I mean

[01:17:15] **sean:** I love that they actually put somebody saying that into a movie. Like DC was actually like, yeah, sure. We'll let some guy say, we'll let a Latino character say that Batman's a fascist.

[01:17:24] **Nicole:** Zach Snyder doesn't think

[01:17:25] Batman's a fascist

[01:17:26] though.

[01:17:27] **sean:** Yeah. And he's wrong

[01:17:28] **Nicole:** because

[01:17:29] **sean:** so

[01:17:29] **Nicole:** agreed.

[01:17:31] **sean:** Um, I can, I can cite many examples or at, or at least a few off the top of my head. I I

[01:17:36] **Nicole:** will say bad as Zach Snyder's Justice League looks, it does make the terrible c g I look less aggressively terrible.

[01:17:48] If for no other reason, then you just kind of can't

[01:17:50] **sean:** see it. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, some of it I think stands out a little bit, but Yeah. Like they just can't get [01:18:00] away from that. The tracking for Cyborg and honestly the animation for his body, like just really does not work that well. Like it just, that was something that just shocked me in the, theatrical cut.

[01:18:16] I was just like, they let something that looks that bad just go out to theaters 'cause it, I looked, I think they did improve it for the Snyder version. Or maybe I was just used to it. Chache on the on the chat here gave, gave one of the examples of Batman being a fascist. Remember that time that black billionaire Lucius Fox quit working with Batman? 'cause he just got, 'cause he just got a little too fahy uh, dark Knight reference.

[01:18:43] **Nicole:** Mm-hmm.

[01:18:44] **sean:** So

[01:18:45] **Nicole:** I, I do agree that the c g I looked better in Zach Snyder's version.

[01:18:51] And I don't know what exactly accounts for that. I don't know if they redid stuff or if it just looked better in black and white. Do you wanna
[01:19:00] see what I thought the coolest shot in the movie was when

[01:19:02] I was watching it?

[01:19:03] **sean:** Yeah. Let's, let's, let's see it up.

[01:19:05] **Nicole:** Let's see it.

[01:19:06] **sean:** Hold up. Cue it up. You ready?

[01:19:08] **Nicole:** Yeah.

[01:19:08] Not the part with Jesse Eisenberg. What they cut to for a second. I was like, oh, that looks kind of cool. It's already alright. This is more video of my TV screen. As I was watching Justice League all alone, because my husband wisely, absolutely refused to watch this shit with me.

[01:19:24] **sean:** Smart man.

[01:19:25] **Nicole:** Except for when he occasionally would wander in and be like, what the fuck is happening?

[01:19:29] And I'd try to explain. He'd be like, well, that sounds stupid. And I was like, it's so here we go. This, this is a scene that at one, at one point I was like, oh, that looks kind of cool.

[01:19:40] Not this. There we go. I thought the sparkly boxes. This is when I thought maybe it was in the Hellraiser universe.

[01:19:50] **sean:** I mean, yeah, I got, I got notes.

[01:19:53] **Nicole:** I liked, see how, because it's black and white, you can't see anything that's happening except [01:20:00] for like reflections and sparkly light. Yeah, I was like, oh, it's a Sena byte.

[01:20:06] And he is got three lament configurations and he is gonna juggle 'em and they're gonna, they're gonna suck the Justice League into, I've been so much better. Not Christian. Hell, it would've been so much better. This guy looks worse. This is the coolest shot of him. He Dark side. This is dark side, right?

[01:20:22] No, this is Steppenwolf. No, this is, that's Steppenwolf. That's Steppenwolf.

[01:20:25] **sean:** Yeah. Being used in a way that is not, yeah. I'm not gonna get into that yet. I'll get into that later. I'm, I'll, I'll touch on that later. But I'm coming back to that. I told

[01:20:34] **Nicole:** you what, when I was watching the theatrical version, my, my husband Sean did come in the room at one point and say that Steppenwolf looked like a Thanos Spirit Halloween costume, which is true.

[01:20:47] That's what he looks like in color. So this is better. At least this, you're like, this is a little mysterious. I don't know.

[01:20:53] **sean:** I, 'cause I can't, I think they did improve his c g i for the Zack Snyder version too. I think they changed his costume a little bit.

[01:20:59] **Nicole:** [01:21:00] People are asking, it's are these sugar cubes, disco cubes enter John cu cubes.

[01:21:05] They're not lament configurations, unfortunately, which is what I was hoping. It's

[01:21:09] **sean:** they're supposed to be Mother boxes. Mother boxes. Which I'll get, I'll get to it. I'm gonna get to it. Well, we'll get to it later. We got other things to talk about, but I will go full on rant about that

[01:21:23] **Nicole:** stuff. Let's talk about the duration of both films real quick.

[01:21:29] I'm sure we'll talk more about the black and white, but they're both really fucking long. I will say, for all my criticisms of Schindler's List, I don't actually think it's too long. I was not bored at all. I thought it needed to be that length. I would've liked to structure it differently. I would've liked to highlight.

[01:21:48] Other aspects of the actual real world story and all that. But in terms of like just plain old length, I thought the length was completely appropriate to the project. That is not one of my criticisms with it. Zach Snyder's [01:22:00] Justice League wasn't

[01:22:00] **sean:** a movie. Agreed. Zach Snyder's Justice League is actually a lot like, and this is just occurring to me right now.

[01:22:08] It's a lot like the TV shows that we're getting out of Marvel and Star Wars in that it's a movie that has been, that should just be an hour and a half maybe two hours that has been stretched out to be series length. You know, it's four hours long, you know, that's about a short miniseries. It doesn't have enough story to fill it.

[01:22:39] And I hate that because, you know, 'cause it is kind of designed with a little bit of like an episodic, like chapter one, blah, blah, blah. It's got multiple chapters. Six,

[01:22:49] **Nicole:** I believe, one for chapters. Each member of the Justice League with titles that I forgot existed until, and they're stupid. They are, I don't, it's like [01:23:00] the New Day Justice is here.

[01:23:03] I, I don't fucking remember it. Yeah. Nothing that added anything.

[01:23:06] **sean:** And the thing is, is that like the thing that bothers me about it and it's, it, it, this is related to like what's bothering me about TV a little bit in general or this kind of, that kind of TV is that it's a bunch of episodes that mostly have nothing happening.

[01:23:25] There's something, there's a larger st there's a larger overarching story happening, but it could be accomplished much shorter if you're just telling that one story. But like 15 years ago, I. We were getting TV series where I'd watch one episode and I'd feel, and I'd and I, and it would end and it'd be like, God, how long have I been watching?

[01:23:43] Did I just watch like four episodes? No, I'd watched one episode of a show, and it was just that packed with story like there was just that much going on, that much development going on, and it was still serving a larger arc for like a 20 episode season. So, [01:24:00] like, honestly, the writing for stuff like this, I mean, it's a Zack Snyder thing, so we're not gonna assume that the writing was ever gonna be any good.

[01:24:08] Um, But the writing for stuff like this has seriously gone downhill. Like they just don't develop enough with the story. You know and I wouldn't be opposed to doing like a four hour version of something like that if they really did the story, if they really went into it. And there's a lot you could do with what's there, not, not what they'd shot, but with the ideas and the concepts and the characters that are introduced.

[01:24:37] Like, you could do a big four hour thing around this story, and the story still sucks. But and I don't have a problem with the length of Schindler's List. I wasn't really bored during it at any point. Like it was very engaging. You know, I mean, it's, again, it's Spielberg. He knows what he's doing when, when he's making, when, when he cares, when he's engaged with making the film,
[01:25:00]

[01:25:00] **Nicole:** when it's not ready

[01:25:00] Player One Fuck Ready, or that fucking Indiana fourth Indiana Jones movie.

[01:25:06] **sean:** Yeah. When he gives a shit, like he knows how to tell a story on film he knows, he knows what he's doing. And he, he definitely knew what he was doing at that film. Um, I

[01:25:17] **Nicole:** think that's a good segue actually to the next kind of, topic of just the two films, relationships with fascism, because we were talking off mic earlier about, I mean, I think the relationship with fascism and Schindler's List is pretty clear.

[01:25:37] We'll go into what we think about it in a little bit, But I think the connection with Justice League, beyond what we've said about some of the aesthetics and the fact that Batman just is a fascist I think that might be a little feel a little more tenuous. But one of the things we were talking about just earlier today was like the, the villains

[01:25:58] **sean:** mm-hmm.

[01:25:58] **Nicole:** Their plan [01:26:00] in this movie, when it was explained, I was kind of like, oh, this kind of seems like an interesting storyline. It seems a little bit like it's an analogy for colonialism or fascism or some other sort of oppressive force that's coming in and taking the people who are already there and trying to convert them into perfect subjects.

[01:26:27] Right? Yeah. Like making them lose everything that made them themselves. And I was kind of like, oh, this, this is, you could do some interesting things with this. And then I felt like the film just a hundred percent dropped. All of that didn't explore any of it at all. And instead it just was another, the guys need to find the things so that they can, the world needs to be saved.

[01:26:53] Like just gen. Yes. But my understanding is there was more going on in the comic books with this [01:27:00] storyline that maybe does relate to fascism a bit. And Sean, Sean knows more about that than I do as someone who's never read the source

[01:27:07] **sean:** material. So I haven't read that much of the original source material.

[01:27:11] I've seen a couple of adaptations. I did go back and read the first couple issues of. Jack Kirby's new God. So context, dark Side Apocalypse Steppenwolf mother Boxes are all part of Jack Kirby quit Marvel kind of because they wouldn't let him do this story and took this story to DC and his idea was basically after the Old Gods die, and there's some writing about how like he's literally kind of contextualizing the story as after the Gods that he was depicting in the Thor stories he was doing Die in Ragnarok.

[01:27:53] Then from that is born what he refers to as the fourth world, which is sort of a new [01:28:00] era of New Gods. And the thing that's lost in this is that there's a greater dynamic that I think would play very well into exactly what you're talking about and exactly like things that they put in here that they just kind of like, you don't need to have all of it, but there are cartoon series, Superman, the animated series in the nineties did a very good job of just kind of bringing it in and not very much time and contextualizing it.

[01:28:28] But basically the idea behind it is he did have to integrate it into regular, like DC comics, and it was directly integrated into Superman comics starting. A lot of characters were initially introduced in Jimmy Olsson had a comic book back in the seventies, and a lot of the initial ideas were introduced there before the main series was introduced.

[01:28:48] But the, the idea behind the new Gods is that when, when the Old Gods die, that world, that plane that they exist in splits into two and there [01:29:00] is New Genesis and there is Apocalypse and New Genesis is essentially an Eden. It's a, it's a beautiful natural place, and everybody there is, is, you know, basically good or, their approach to things is to try to be a little bit more sort of peaceful.

[01:29:21] And then there's apocalypse and Apocalypse is basically a hellscape, it's usually depicted as covered in, in industry pavement, you know uh, factories, things like that. And structurally, when we encounter it it is ruled over by dark side, the big bad villain behind the scenes in this movie who is very much designed, explicitly designed to be a Stalin or Hitler like character with like enormous statues of himself everywhere, always sitting in well above everybody.

[01:29:55] He has his, his direct minions underneath him, including [01:30:00] like characters who are explicitly like his propagandists or his you know, his, his chief torturer who is in this movie, DAAD, is, was, you know, not cleverly or not, very subtly named after Marquis Daad. And you know, he, he's got sort of his you know, his secret police ish sorts, his enforcers in this group of female

warriors that is, that is trained by a character who shows up in the background of this movie.

[01:30:31] And then he's got his soldiers, which we see in this movie, the parademons who are just, they fly around. They're like the, they're the flying monkeys.

[01:30:38] **Nicole:** The Flying Monkeys. That's what I was calling them.

[01:30:40] **sean:** Which are very close. Like, one of the things I did like in this film is that the, the designs of those of those worked pretty well for me.

[01:30:48] And they also look relatively like what we get in the books, which was kind of nice. I thought they, I thought those, like, to give them credit, I thought those designs worked. But the other thing that's missing here, [01:31:00] if we're only going to put in the film apocalypse, if we're gonna completely ignore New Genesis and that dynamic and the whole mythology built in there is that, you know, apocalypse isn't just those people.

[01:31:13] It's not just this war machine. There are people, there are just people who live under them and who basically live in ghettos who are referred to not as like a people, but as hunger dogs. Specifically, like they're very depersonalized in it. Like in the context of it, it's a very crafted view of a fascist society and dark side's Ultimate goal, specifically with Earth is he's trying to find something that is referred to as the anti-life equation.

[01:31:51] And it's this very like sci-fi, very mythic sort of concept that Jack Kirby put in there. Where [01:32:00] the whole purpose of it is that if you can get all the pieces of it to together

[01:32:05] and put it out there in whatever way, and he never really expressed what it would be, but later writers later down the line have used it in different, have, have brought it in in different ways. It basically removes free will. It makes, it makes people just if they're exposed to it, just sort of subjects of use.

[01:32:24] So it's very much colonial, it's very much fascist. It's very much, and they refer to the anti-life equation in this movie as something that is carved into the surface of the earth, which I kind of, I guess, works in the books. It's something that actually is, pieces of it actually exist within people, like within their minds.

[01:32:47] And so there's a degree to which it's protected in that sense. Somebody has to choose whether or not to share it. Somebody has to choose whether or not to be part of that of facilitating that domination. I think that there is [01:33:00] thematically something very interesting with that. This, like, these characters have always been tied to Superman in the books because that's how they got them into you know, that's how we got them in there.

[01:33:17] And Dark Side is often depicted as, or Superman is often depicted as one of the few characters that can actually stand up to this dictator, this space dictator in dark side. And I mean there's a lot of ways that they're all depicted that, you know, there's decades of his stories, but that is one of the most common ones that come and popular ones that comes through.

[01:33:39] But the core of the story wasn't supposed to be that it wasn't supposed to be dark side Superman, like the original Jack Kirby was supposed to have an end and it, and it what she was never really allowed to publish because, and it was involved New Genesis and New Genesis was always sort of protective of Earth, like, and [01:34:00] there was a piece between these two, two places because they, they established a peace treaty, they exchanged sons.

[01:34:08] And the way that these sons were treated is very reflective of how these different two. Groups treat people

[01:34:15] **Nicole:** sun like offspring, not in the sky. Offspring. Yeah, exactly. Okay. I I, I had an

[01:34:21] **sean:** interesting idea a second. No, they, they're a second pre planets that orbit one another. Okay. And in order to secure a piece, it's like, okay, you take my son, I'll take your son.

[01:34:30] Um, And the way they treat them, the son of Dark Side initially when he is introduced does not know that that's his origins, but he's very different from everybody else. On New. Everybody on New Genesis is very peaceful. You know, they'll fight if they need to, but they're very peaceful and he's there and he's full of rage and he's gotta keep it under control.

[01:34:51] And, and eventually he finds out that Dark Side is his father, and that's where he comes from. And it, the destiny is that he is supposed to overthrow dark side and kind of [01:35:00] bring out a new age of peace even though he is a person who comes from this sort of warring community, but he was raised by peaceful people.

[01:35:12] Meanwhile, the, the son of high father who's the leader of the um, of the of the people of New Genesis is tortured, imprisoned. He becomes an escape artist. He escapes with one of the secret police ladies. Uh, he Goes and he hides out on earth as an escape artist named Mr. Miracle.

[01:35:30] **Nicole:** Mr. Miracle.

[01:35:32] **sean:** Yeah. It's funny. He is got a very colorful costume. It's very entertaining. His wife is like seven feet tall and they, you know, they don't really make fun of it. It's just kind of a fun thing. But it's, you know, the, these stories, like there's this sort of mythic quality to it.

[01:35:48] There's this sort of sense of that, like, ultimately, The fascism, the hate that is embedded in Apocalypse is not [01:36:00] something sustainable,

[01:36:02] **Nicole:** much like it is real

[01:36:03] life. Fascism is not

[01:36:04] **sean:** exactly

[01:36:05] **Nicole:** sustainable.

[01:36:06] **sean:** Yeah. It will collapse without the person who's keeping it, who's keeping it, who's holding it up. It will collapse.

[01:36:14] You know, the, the, the people who are supporting him and supporting it, and it's kind of shown in this movie to a degree, they're just very, very scared. And so they choose to be part of the oppression in order to kind of address that fear. This is all, like, there are hints of all of this in the film.

[01:36:37] It's not addressed. I think it's a real missed opportunity. I think it's disappointing that this is kind of the big budget version we get of these characters. The designs we're like, I mean, Jack Kirby designs sometimes translate well you know, we see in Thor, Ragnarok that, that that aesthetic, even if it's not the, his explicit designs can translate [01:37:00] well to films.

[01:37:02] But like, you know, with some modification like here and there, like it can really translate well and that I think that it could have in this. And instead we get something that looks very generic. I think that it lacks the fascist imagery for these characters. Instead it's fascist imagery around Batman that you showed, but it's depicted as being cool.

[01:37:28] Meanwhile, like what we see when we see Dark Side in his people, it almost looks like more of a council. Like, yes, he's in charge, but it looks almost like more of a council. And I don't think that that's particularly visually effective. It

[01:37:43] **Nicole:** honestly, The way dark side and his shtick came across in the film was almost more of a xenophobic alien invaders who need to be like, defended by the uber, uber mensch kind of vibe than

[01:37:57] **sean:** Yes.

[01:37:59] **Nicole:** You know, which is [01:38:00] why people accuse Zack Snyder of being right wing, et cetera. He's very like, no, I'm not, I'm not, people will say I'm putting these messages in my movies. I'm not. I believe him that he's not trying to,

[01:38:15] **sean:** yeah.

[01:38:15] **Nicole:** I think he's an incurious person who knows what he responds to and doesn't question it.

[01:38:23] And that's part of what's kind of scary about a movie. I, and I don't wanna overstate it. I'm not really like in Ara, I, I'm not as mad at just Zach Snyder's Justice League as, as my colleague Sean here is, if for no other reason than I'm just not as close to the material. I think it's bad. I definitely never wanna watch it again.

[01:38:45] But I'm not trying to overstate the fascism thing and be like, this is a fascist movie that is a danger to the world. But I do think there's so some stuff creeping in there that he would do well to at least acknowledge, to at least be like, oh, I, I can [01:39:00] kind of, that's not what I was intending, but I see what you're here.

[01:39:03] But I saying, yeah, yeah. Like I've never seen 300, that's his movie that people really think is super fahy. And from what I've seen aesthetically, at least it is, but it's like, just own it. I'm not saying you can't ever shoot someone from a low angle, but I also think. One of the things that I haven't even said yet that's so offensive to me about Zach Snyder's Justice League is this movie takes itself so seriously and it's such a silly movie.

[01:39:38] It's such a silly movie for children. I think this might be one of the only times where maybe he had to fight the M P A A because he wanted an R

rating. Because I don't even, aside from Batman saying, fuck. And I thought you could say fuck once in a non-sexual context and get a PG 13. It was not a sexual context.

[01:39:58] There's no sex in [01:40:00] this movie.

[01:40:01] **sean:** I think there is at least one shit and maybe another fuck somewhere in the movie. I remember hearing something earlier in the movie and I was like, oh, that's why it's got the R rate. Plus a lot of people die. Yeah,

[01:40:11] **Nicole:** but like about like Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, like when all those Yeah, I agree.

[01:40:16] Those para demons are getting like impaled. I was like, oh, motherfuckers are getting impaled now. Maybe this is the art. And then I was like, but I've definitely seen PG 13 movies that were a lot fucking goer than this is. Yeah, it was real. Try hard shit. It was like, oh, we got it. Like it wasn't Yeah, effective.

[01:40:33] It wasn't fun. I do wanna show, can I show these fine people at home, how bad the bat suit looks in this movie?

[01:40:42] **sean:** Yeah. Yeah.

[01:40:42] **Nicole:** Bring it up. I've got a few shots of this, but yeah, if you wanna, if you wanna share this, hold on. This isn't even that bad 'cause at least this looks like kind of metallic, which it wasn't.

[01:40:54] Yeah, there's that, but I think I've got a better one. Um, [01:41:00] that's it in color? Yeah. But it looks about the same in black and white. It's just this like orange and green wouldn't be there. Yeah. It's just like very gray and textured. It's built in such a way that Ben Affleck looks about twice as wide.

[01:41:17] **sean:** Yeah, it's weird.

[01:41:19] **Nicole:** It makes him sense. Look very wide and like muscles, like the muscles are, are, are a big thing here. Like Zach Schneider's, like, I, I want everybody to know that these are big, strong men with a lot of muscles. So like, cyborg's terrible design is weirdly bumpy to suggest his, like, robotics are muscular.

[01:41:41] 'cause that's how robots work. Batman, you can really see like his biceps and, and his abs are very defined and stuff. But then anything below the waist front or back is gonna be in shadow constantly. Like, I couldn't figure out in, in the Batman movies we love like [01:42:00] the Tim Burton ones and the Joel Schumacher ones like you, you see what's going on with Batman's crotch

[01:42:06] **sean:** costume wise.

[01:42:07] Oh yeah. Especially the Joel Schumacher

[01:42:09] **Nicole:** ones. But Tim Burton's not backing away from it either. They're all like these Dick. No, he's like,

[01:42:14] **sean:** they're, if you're gonna go for r gimme some bad dick. That's all I'm saying. This

[01:42:18] **Nicole:** is like no butts, no dick. Like there there's no,

[01:42:24] **sean:** it's, it's fetish. There's not even really much in the way of boobs.

[01:42:28] Like at least gimme something. No, it's, it's, it's

[01:42:30] **Nicole:** not. And actually one of the things I've heard people praise this movie for, from a feminist standpoint, and I do not agree with this praise at all, is like, oh, is Joss Whedon's Justice League objectified Wonder Woman? Zach Snyder's Justice League makes her powerful and does not objectify her.

[01:42:52] Zach Snyder's Justice League. Doesn't objectify Wonder Woman because Zach Snyder's Justice League is [01:43:00] afraid of sex.

[01:43:01] **sean:** Yeah. He's not doing that because he's not doing it at all. And Joss Whedon, like, I mean, the biggest example of it for me was, and I remember there's that like faceplant in her boobs thing, that that's the, like, it was a thing, but I can't remember the shot.

[01:43:17] But like, like for me it was like when she talks to Cyborg on the street, Jos Whedon used a lot. This like one shot where her ass is like right in frame. And I mostly remember it 'cause it's the same shot for when Black Widow is talking to Loki. And, and the Avengers, when I remember seeing that in movie theater, I'm like, this is an interesting choice of shot

[01:43:37] **Nicole:** this shot where she's like walking in.

[01:43:39] And it's, it's not

[01:43:41] **sean:** just that. Like that's the one I remember in the, in the, in the theatrical version. What I remember, and it might be not as long as I remember it being, but I remember like his angle, his wider angle had had her in it. And it was like an over her hip shot, basically. I like, and her ass was like [01:44:00] right there.

[01:44:00] **Nicole:** Honestly, I find that less objectionable than what Zach Snyder did Hot take coming in. No, I don't, I I'm not saying that like, no credit to Joss Whedon here.

[01:44:11] **sean:** No, no. I'm not saying his is more like empowering or anything. I think she is equally like superfluous

[01:44:20] **Nicole:** also, like I'm, I'm sorry. Gal Gadot is a terrible actress.

[01:44:25] Yeah, she's a terrible actress. And that is a big part of why Wonder Woman is not more compelling in these films. It's bad writing, it's bad direction. There's questionable choices of cinematography. But also like at the end of the day there, there's a big void in that role, just like there is for. Batman also, bat Fleck is not good in these films.

[01:44:48] Like, he's not acting gal gado, iss not acting. And Superman, Superman's not acting like those three. The three like more [01:45:00] prominent members of the Justice League are by far like just the energy sucking non performances. Like, you know, Jason Momoa is delightful, Ray Fisher is fine. Ezra Miller, much as it pains to say, for me to say it does probably turn in the best performance of the six in terms of

[01:45:22] **sean:** doing some acting.

[01:45:22] And they were my favorite in the theatrical version. I have a very strong, like, there's a couple of comic book characters that I have m much stronger like feelings about than others. I read a lot of it have read a lot of it over the last 30 plus years.

[01:45:39] Superman for dc at least Superman, Barry Allen's, the Flash, and Martian Man, hunter who also shows up in this version because who doesn't twice kind of shockingly in really like pointless ways of him being there

because honestly like he should be there in the final battle [01:46:00] because he is just as capable as more than half of that group.

[01:46:05] But that's a whole separate thing. But I have like, particularly strong feelings about those characters because they're some of the first characters I read stories about. I had a particular book that I got, it was a collection like when I was like 10 years old and I read it and I reread it a bunch of times and it had stories like early origin stories four.

[01:46:26] There was a Batman one that was fine, but I kept rereading the Superman one. I kept rereading , the Flash one, and I kept rereading the Martian Man, hunter one. And they were like reprints from other books and it, I just reread them a bunch as a kid and I love those particular characters and there's a lot of things I don't like about how Barry Allen gets handled in a couple things as the Flash.

[01:46:49] He was very different in this and the theatrical version, but I didn't aid it like, I don't like some of the story choices. Not everybody has to be Batman. [01:47:00] They changed in the books that his mother was killed when he was a kid. It makes more sense and context with how they handled in the books eventually because time travel and when you is embedded into that character and villains who time travel.

[01:47:15] So there's a whole thing there that's not worth getting into right now, so I enjoyed them playing the character in the, in the theatrical version. And this worked okay too. Um, You know it was definitely an improvement over the others. I enjoy watching Jason Momoa basically just be like, I'm having fun,

[01:47:33] **Nicole:** Same

[01:47:33] **sean:** like, he's literally, I think his just whole life is just like, can I have fun doing this? All right, I'm gonna do

[01:47:38] **Nicole:** it. I was always thrilled when he was on screen just because I'm like, yeah, it's just Jason Momoa. Great. I wish I was watching Aquaman. Aquaman was fun.

[01:47:46] **sean:** Aquaman was

[01:47:47] **Nicole:** fun. This movie. Is taking itself so seriously as if this, this plot that Sean explained that they didn't even do a version of that goes into any of the interesting stuff with [01:48:00] it.

[01:48:00] It's just a like, we gotta get the who's it's before they get the who's it's 'cause. Otherwise there goes the world like in every single one of these fucking movies and it's, it's, it's treating it with like, it take, I had the thought like, wow, Schindler's List doesn't take itself as seriously as Zach Snyder's Justice League.

[01:48:18] I

[01:48:18] **sean:** forgot to explain the mother boxes. I'm sure other people don't care that much, but the mother boxes in this are basically like the lament configuration from Hellraiser in the books. It's not that there's three of them that you need to bring together to make a portal, like an individual one that's only about the size of a cell phone can open that it's a living computer that people have access to and like it has thoughts and opinions sort of that you never know what it's saying.

[01:48:47] It just makes beeping sounds and people who use 'em understand them. Kind of like R two D two. Yeah. That didn't come across. Yeah. And that's not what these are

[01:48:55] **Nicole:** in this, in this, they say it, they say they're living machines, but it's like, what does that mean? [01:49:00] We don't know. Even though you took four fucking hours to show us the flash running in slow motion for like 45 minutes of the runtime.

[01:49:08] Like fine effect. But actually, let me say something about that real quick, which is that Zach Snyder doesn't understand the language of cinema and how it works. So like within two minutes of this movie, we're getting slow motion. Superman's dead and it's sad and you need to see Lois Lane crying in slow motion.

[01:49:37] 'cause otherwise how would you understand what she's feeling? And so then when you get to certain points in the movie where it would make sense to have slow motion, like the one semi competent fight scene with Wonder Woman in like the bank or whatever the fuck it was. Yeah. Like when they cut to slow motion, I was like, oh, this would've been [01:50:00] effective if half the movie hadn't already been in slow motion.

[01:50:03] Or later where we're introduced to the flash and it, and it's explained that the flash can go really fast and we cut to slow motion so that we can kind of see what the flash is seeing that makes sense too. But it's a lot less effective when just random ass shit of someone walking down the street has been in slow motion.

[01:50:20] 'cause Zach Snyder's got some association in his brain between sadness, slow motion, that that's the thing I've seen. The November rain video, he really,

[01:50:32] **sean:** he, he, he likes gimmicks, but he does not understand how to use them for effective storytelling because like one of the reasons why Watchman was like going to be the last thing of his I watched until I gave Man of Steel a chance was because he fundamentally missed the point of the story with his style.

[01:50:53] Because he buried important parts of the mo. They're there buried important parts of the story and character development and [01:51:00] emphasized things that, like he jumps over the setup. He kind of quickly goes past important story points while over emphasizing other things. Example two examples being have you seen the Watchman movie?

[01:51:16] Yeah,

[01:51:16] **Nicole:** I saw it in theaters when it came out. Not since so,

[01:51:19] **sean:** so, They have sex in the, in the thing. And it's in slow motion in the, in the, in the owl ship. Right. Vaguely remember House. And the Hallelujah is playing. Oh God. And it's in slow motion. It's, that

[01:51:30] **Nicole:** also plays in fucking Justice

[01:51:32] **sean:** League. And he loves that fucking song for stuff.

[01:51:34] I mean,

[01:51:34] **Nicole:** I love that fucking song. And that's why they need to stop. There needs to, to be a moratorium on people using fucking hallelujah and shit. Don't get specifically, yeah. Don't get me started on the Nick Cave song that they use in Zack Snyder's Justice

[01:51:46] **sean:** League. Well, you can, you can, you can get started on it after I finish this point.

[01:51:50] Which is that there's that scene and it is an important character moment for, I mean, it's an important moment of connection for those characters. An important character moment[01:52:00] for the owl night Owl

guy. But they skip, but, but they, they gloss over very quickly. Why? And the setup for it and how it's sort of important for him.

[01:52:12] And I'm not saying it's important for him in a good way. I think it's important for in a how he's psychologically damaged way. It's, they just saved some people so now he can fuck. And we know now he can fuck because there's an earlier scene where they try to, where they try to have sex when they're, when they're about to be watching tv and he can't do it.

[01:52:31] It's in the books. It's in the movie. And I know people missed it. 'cause I talked to my wife about it later and she's like, oh, I missed that part. And I'm like, yeah, he focused on that moment where they're having sex in the, in the airship. But like the moment that sets it up, the thing that is important about that character set up is just real quick.

[01:52:54] And then for her for the Lori character the most important part [01:53:00] of the movie is when she realizes who her father is. It's the most important part of the story because it's what changes the mind of the Dr. Manhattan character. It's her revelation. It's her realization that her, her biological father is the man who raped her mother.

[01:53:17] Who attempted to rape her mother, the man, the man that she hates. And it tells her a lot about her mother. It tells her a lot about why, how, how her mother responds to some people. And it's this complicated moment for her, and it's an important moment for it. It's where the story turns, and it happens so fast in that movie, and it's, he fundamentally does not understand, as you say, the language of film.

[01:53:46] He does not understand the story he's telling because he's more preoccupied with his style and that movie is full of, and Justice League is full of little details of things that he is interested in, [01:54:00] which is great. I think it's very fascinating that he's doing that. Like, you know, there's a lot of details in the watch movie.

[01:54:06] There's a lot. And I'm like, I appreciate that, but you missed the, the, you missed the arc. You, you know, you, you missed the forest for the trees. It's the same in this movie. It's packed with little references. There's the one science guy who's working with Joe Morton Ryan,

[01:54:24] **Nicole:** God bless, Joe Morton, by the way.

[01:54:26] Only thing kept me watching that movie as I'm like, he's a highlight of that. Joe Morton's back, I can breathe a little bit.

[01:54:31] **sean:** He's a superhero character who will who, and he, yeah, he's planted in there and it's very conscious, like there's a lot of like characters in there. He's actually a version a different version of this character over my right shoulder from the Justice League of America, failed pilot from 1997.

[01:54:47] The Adam, he's a two thousands version of that character. You know, there's other stuff he plants in there, and I could appreciate that more if he spent more time on telling the story and telling the story in a [01:55:00] competent way. And then feed me these, feed me these things. That are like little hints of the larger world.

[01:55:10] I love that. I am a sucker for, I will always appreciate, even though it's definitely not working as well as it was before, I will always appreciate how the M C U generally works because it feeds a particular thing that I like, which is intertextuality. Like I really like when things are referencing other things and they fit together, you know that is a fun thing for me that I latch onto.

[01:55:36] I love it. I'm very into like looking up. I don't know all of them, but I'm very into looking up like what fits in the um, uh, the kid in st elsewhere. Everybody's in the autistic kid's snow globe or you know, all these TV shows that are connected by Detective Munch Richard Belzer's character.

[01:55:56] That's super fun for me. I love that. And so M C U feeds me that, and he could [01:56:00] feed me that and I would very much appreciate it, but he's fucking up the story.

[01:56:03] **Nicole:** He doesn't know how to tell stories. He knows how to make, like here are things I could see Zach Snyder doing a good job at certain music videos.

[01:56:12] Yeah. Perfume commercials. Yeah. Probably car commercials. Yeah. Probably commercials in general. Video game commercials. Yeah. Because he can do he something where it's just like a vibe, an aesthetic for a few minutes. Like you can do a music video for three and a half minutes in all slow motion and it could be great.

[01:56:35] You can't do that for four fucking hours. It's a different, it's a different medium. He makes all his films as if he's making commercials. Yeah. Rather than telling a story over the course of a couple hours. I do wanna ask

about your thoughts on Superman specifically as depicted. In Zach Snyder's Justice League versus in the source [01:57:00] material for these stories as well as just in the comics in general.

[01:57:04] Um, Because similar to how we were talking before, the, the feeling I get, and I don't wanna overstate it, but to a degree, I think Zach Snyder is presenting these superheroes as these kind of fascistic, uber menes here, you know, to be like the best of earth and save Earth, et cetera. 'cause they're better.

[01:57:26] Which is, feels different from my understanding of how the comics engaged with these

[01:57:35] **sean:** issues. So it depends. I think like, and we talked about this a little bit, like Superman's 85 years old this year and 85 years of, if we're just talking to comic books, at least one story a month, oftentimes dozens of stories a month.

[01:57:56] And then he very quickly, very, very [01:58:00] quickly, like within like two years or something like that, not even two years, becomes a multimedia icon. Like movies comic books to comic strips and uh, radio shows. And the thing is and this is something that I'm reminded about in that paper that I was mentioning that I, that I wrote 17 years ago for the Lit lit conference is the mythology of Superman.

[01:58:24] The core mythology of Superman is created in that multimedia landscape. A lot of different aspects of that are very well known about the character come from different media sources. You know, when he first shows up very originally, he, like, his origins aren't really well. Defined. He's, he just kind of shows up and then he starts pretending to be Clark Kent and he gets a job as a reporter and, and, and he's being Superman and he has adventures.

[01:58:53] And it's not really until they moved into a regular newspaper comic strip, which was [01:59:00] Siegel and Schuster's End Gold, because that was the primary medium of the for comics at the time. Superman actually helped legitimize the comic book as a medium of its own as opposed, not that that was the only one, but like really made it more popular.

[01:59:16] The daily comic strip was really the end goal. But the origins of Superman coming from Krypton stories about Krypton and Jorell and his family really di really came in that newspaper strip kryptonite was created for the radio show. There, there's some other aspects that come that, that were kind of

introduced um, at different points and become part of the general legend of the character.

[01:59:39] So, you know, anything really is an amalgamation, but I think the dominant narrative of the character, the thing that comes up a lot is very different from what some people interpret. And there is a popular interpretation amongst some writers, amongst some creators that sees him as a fascistic, uber mech, or at least [02:00:00] having the great potential for it.

[02:00:01] And I think it really misses the core of the character. And I think it really misses where the character kind of came together early on, like Sigel Schuster, this Superman is not their first Superman. They had a Superman uh, and a story that they did called reign of the Superman, who was a fascist, who used mind control to, you know, take over.

[02:00:27] **Nicole:** And what year was that roughly?

[02:00:28] **sean:** I can't remember. I think it was about two years before, I think it was like 36. So it was the

[02:00:32] **Nicole:** thirties though. It was, it was definitely the thirties. It was during, it was while Hitler was in power in Germany, which I think is whatever the intent was. Interesting context for any stories about power and oppression

[02:00:46] **sean:** happening.

[02:00:47] And I think, I think like there is that context of the thirties and fascism, you know, I mean, throughout Europe these were the, these guys were working in Cleveland or from Cleveland um, [02:01:00] and created this. But I think that, I don't wanna overstate that they created these characters or they had these ideas in response to any of that directly.

[02:01:10] **Nicole:** No, I'm not, yeah.

[02:01:10] **sean:** But I think when something is in, in the know, when something is happening out in the world, it will influence you intentionally or not like it's going to happen, you know? And that's going to inform it. I think like the core, and I think the core of Superman to look at and the thing that kind of comes through in a lot of interpretations of the character is that is that Clark Kent is the person there who Clark Kent is, that is the fundamental core human being.

[02:01:41] Like not human being. Like that is, who he is. Superman is what he can do. There's a very solid story from the late eighties when they rebooted. They rebooted everything at DC in the late, well most of things.

[02:01:54] If DC in the late eighties Batman's never really gotten a full reboot because he always kind of [02:02:00] just function. But. There's a story in the eighties where Lex Luther's trying to figure out like, okay, we gotta find this Superman. He lives somewhere. He's doing some, he's doing something. We gotta find him.

[02:02:14] I'm pissed at this guy. He made me look bad. And he's got these scientists analyzing all this data about Superman, and they come to the conclusion with their computers and all their analysis that Clark Kent is Superman. And he immediately rejects the premise because of this idea. And this is an idea that I think permeates with a lot of writers.

[02:02:33] Like, why would someone with that much power just pretend to be some reporter? Why would he pretend to be just some guy? 'cause he'd met, he knew who Clark Kent was. He'd met him as a reporter, and he is like, he's just this meek, like, whatever. Why would he pretend to be this guy? Fuck that. You're all fired.

[02:02:49] Get out of here. I think he probably had most of him killed because that's what Lex Luthor did. Lex Luthor in the eighties was also very loosely kind of there, there is some discussion that he was probably [02:03:00] very loosely based on a certain recent Pres Orange president of ours. And I think that is reflective of certain writers.

[02:03:07] I think Frank Miller viewed him as a potential fascist that is in the Dark Knight Returns series, which the Batman costume in this film, I think is very, very closely modeled on Batman Returns has had an outsized influence in Batman adaptations. It is in Dark Knight Rises. It is in The Dark Knight.

[02:03:27] I think it in ways that fundamentally misunderstand that it is also somewhat critical of Batman and also sees Batman as somewhat fascist. I think Miller sees these characters as kind of different flavors of fascism, but also he likes, he doesn't dislike some of it. The

[02:03:45] I think Snyder also sees them as that. I think there's a whole like video game and comic series called Injustice that is about like Superman loses Lois Lane. And then he decides that he has to [02:04:00] protect everyone, and

so he becomes a fascist dictator of the world, which is kind of hinted at what they're kind of doing with that dream sequence in this movie.

[02:04:08] That is also something that pops up in an alternate universe. An alternate universe episode of the Adventure of the Superman Adventures cartoon from the nineties, which is a great cartoon is very, very, and it has a great depiction of the, of Jack Kirby's Fourth World. Michael Ironside does an amazing dark side voice.

[02:04:27] And then one of our comments actually like, sort of brings up what my next point was gonna be, is that there's a better version of this which is the Alex Ross and Mark Wade miniseries Kingdom come which I was talking to you a little bit about before, and that it's the opposite. So the writer, Mark Wade also is a, he has done some really good Superman stories.

[02:04:49] I think he gets what works about the character and he gets that core really well. He wrote a great sort of retelling of the origin called Superman Birthright which really kind of [02:05:00] touches on him as a character and, and, and how having certain abilities and, and seeing the world differently might affect him.

[02:05:09] Like he's a vegetarian because the way he sees he can actually kind of see an aura around every living thing. And so it's he's, he chooses to be a vegetarian, which is not a common thing in most depictions of the character. But uh, but in Kingdom come the backstory for this, this takes place decade you know, several decades in the, you know future where most of the known superheroes have disappeared or retired and their children or younger ones exist and they've kind of gone wild and they don't really they're very violent and they cause a lot of damage, and they don't really give a shit.

[02:05:44] And it's a commentary on nineties comics. But Superman had gone into hiding or he'd just gone into seclusion, not hiding because, not because Lois was killed, Lois was killed by the Joker in it. But he captures the Joker and brings him to trial [02:06:00] because that's the right thing to do. He could kill him.

[02:06:02] He could do that. That's, that's the thing about Superman that I think is fundamental physically. He can impose his will on others if he chose to. He could always do that physically, but who he is as a person is, he would never do that. And that is in, that is part of the story of Kingdom come because in Kingdom come, he goes into seclusion because, not because the Joker killed Lois, but because during, during the Joker's trial, somebody else kills the Joker.

[02:06:40] Another new superhero shows up, kills the Joker, and everybody celebrates that character for it. And so he sees that the world has moved past him and he's not relevant anymore. And the world wants these superheroes who will kill people. Again, very major commentary on the nineties comic books and [02:07:00] what was going on there.

[02:07:00] This comes in like 1999 or some 98 is when it was released. And so he goes into seclusion and then a major incident happens and Wonder Woman convinces him to come back to the world and he starts down a path with Wonder Woman with a bunch of other superheroes that gets, that, gets into it, gets a little oppressive and it, or very oppressive at times, and gets Fay.

[02:07:28] And he has, he kind of does, I mean, he creates a gulag for the, the superheroes, super villains who are causing all this damage. Any, and he prisons in there and he tries to reeducate them basically. There, it's a little fucked up. But the saving grace of it and of the character Iser, he realizes that this is the wrong thing to do.

[02:07:55] And that just coming back to the world as Superman was [02:08:00] the wrong thing to do, and that's not what the world needed. The world needed who he was before the world needed that example. And ultimately at the end, I'm skipping over a lot here. Ultimately at the end, a lot of people are not sure if he if Superman is alive or dead.

[02:08:16] But Clark Kent has sort of reentered the world. He's, he's out there in the world, you know, just as Clark Kent. And he has moved on with Wonder Woman. They're gonna have a kid. And I think that also emphasizes that the, the error of assuming, and it's in this movie, it's I Justice League, they assume that the tie to humanity is Lois Lane.

[02:08:42] That he needs that love interest to tie him there. That's why she has to be there when they wake him up. And it ignores the fact that no, he wants to, he, he fundamentally is part of humanity. You know, the yeah.

[02:08:57] **Nicole:** One of the better parts, or I don't even wanna say [02:09:00] better, one of the less boring parts of Zach Snyder's Justice League is when they bring Superman.

[02:09:05] When they bring zombie Superman back from the dead. And he's, he's bad. And we see um, we see his like, supervision and everyone looks like a skeleton. And we see that for half a second. And I was like, oh, that looks cool.

Maybe we'll get to see Superman skeleton vision again. We don't, don't, don't get excited.

[02:09:23] But then he's killing people. And that's, you know, less boring for a second. And then Lois Lane shows up and it's like the dumbest shit ever. 'cause he's like, ma and then, but then he stops killing people with his laser eyes and they go to wherever the fuck they're from. Um, That love. It's a very, like, I, I feel like these movies, again, like I strongly disagree with the argument that Zach Snyder's Justice League is somehow defensible from a feminist standpoint, because no, look at the reverence he uses to depict Wonder Woman.

[02:09:58] I'm like, [02:10:00] if you, I guess if all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail or whatever, if all you've got is a misunderstanding of what the male gaze means, it's like all you're looking at is, am I seeing a lady's butt? No feminism. And that's not, yeah. That's not how I see things. I think it's really troublesome that, I mean, Amy Adams, Lois Lane, through all the Snyder movies I've seen, which is two she has no role to play her.

[02:10:28] She only really exists in relation to Superman. Not even Clark Kent. 'cause he's not really factoring into this. It's just Superman. There's

[02:10:35] **sean:** what little I've seen. I mean, I didn't see Superman versus Batman, but Clark Kent is really, he's not really Clark Kent and Man of Steel. There is no Clark Kent in this movie.

[02:10:47] **Nicole:** Yeah. It's, it's like Snyder's not interested in Clark Kent. He's interested in Superman, the big strong guy. And this like weird, very childish like, and the lady who's what tethers him to humanity and [02:11:00] love 'cause women embody love and nurturing and all Amy Adams gets to do through this whole fucking movie is be sad.

[02:11:09] And can I show a visual aid of the moment after Lois Lane shows up when Zombies Superman shooting everyone with laser eyes.

[02:11:17] Sure. And they fly up and they go wherever the fuck it is they go, yeah. To Martha's house or whatever, and then they land and

[02:11:30] we get this weird, this weird moment, which also exists in the theatrical version but is less weird. Um, If you can, if you can share my screen, I'll just show this visual aid. What you're seeing for viewers at home is a shirtless superman standing in a field. He came back wearing pants but no shirt, which I don't understand.

[02:11:53] And Lois, his abs ripped through the shirt. His abs ripped through the shirt and Amy Adams is standing next to him and her hands are on [02:12:00] his abs for a very long time, is what we're gonna see. Just there. Just there. She's just feeling his abs finally, sadly, took her hands away.- The reason I showed this is because, it makes more sense in the Theatrical Justice League because Joss Whedon's not afraid of sex in the same way. And it played a little horny in the theatrical version. Yeah. Which makes sense in this.

[02:12:38] It's very weird. It's like you're just resting your hands on his sculpted abs for like 45 seconds and it almost, when she pulls away, it's almost kind of funny in the theatrical version. Like she was just wrapped up in his physique, which would make sense, but here it's so desexualized that it's like she's worshipping a God or something like [02:13:00] that.

[02:13:00] It's very weird.

[02:13:02] **sean:** The Superman Lois and and Clark Kent dynamic whether we're talking about she knows he's Superman or not is really important to the character. And whenever it's left out or very minor like it is in the Zach Snyder movies, it really does a disservice to the character.

[02:13:22] Because like Lois is one of the most important things to get right when you're doing a Superman movie. And I think it's a, or a Superman story at all. And actually, one of the things I love and I started watching it 'cause I saw one of our uh, folks here leading comments Che mentioning it.

[02:13:38] There's a, there's an anime Superman cartoon that just started about them being young called My Adventures with Superman. And they immediately nail Lois Lane. , they just totally like get the character just right, which is, which is that she's she is a very, very driven person who [02:14:00] caress deeply about the truth.

[02:14:02] Who caress deeply about doing the right thing. She cares about justice, like and she is somebody who, so like Superman's purpose is partly to be inspirational, like, to be aspirational. Like Christopher Reeve put it really well when he, when he was asked about the character, why people think he's relevant is he was referring to one of the first, one of the lines that he says as Superman in the first movie is that when she asks who, when Lois asks who he is, she's an awe, and she asks who he is, who he is, and he just says he's a friend.

[02:14:36] And you know he expounded upon this a little bit in an interview later on where he's like, like, that is like the perfect encapsulation of the

characters. He's a friend. He's there to help, and that that is what he's there for. And he's there to be sort of ins, inspire others to do the right thing, not make them do the right thing, but show them that you can do the right thing and that you should do the right thing.

[02:14:57] And the thing that should be [02:15:00] inherent in the relationship between Clark Kent and Superman and Lois Lane is that Lois Lane is the person who inspires Superman, is that she's the person who not, he's in love with her and he makes her and, and she makes him human, but that she's some, he's, she's somebody that, if any ev everything else in the world is, you know, people not caring all of this stuff.

[02:15:24] She's somebody who fundamentally has that core, like, drive and caring and wants to do right in the world. And there's some very, very good depictions of her as a character. That cartoon that's very recent that just came out, I think there's like six episodes out right now, is doing an amazing job of showing her as this, even as like very young, as somebody who's like, we gotta get out there and, you know, find the story and find the truth and do this.

[02:15:51] And she's kind of dragging him along as Clark. And you know, the, the Superman and Lois TV show. Even the, even though Dean Cain has [02:16:00] become a real piece of shit or maybe he'll, or I guess he probably always was like the Lois and Clark show from the nineties also had that she's a strong character who really like, you know, she gets in trouble.

[02:16:11] Like that's a gag that comes up a lot. Oh, she gets in trouble and he's got a save her all the time. But like really in a lot of ways she's like what she does and who she is often leads Superman to what is wrong and leads Clark to what is wrong. And I think important about the dynamic of Superman and Clark is I think as I was saying earlier, like Superman is what he can do and Clark Kenis who he is, and Clark Kent is also how he influences the world and it's how he wants to influence the world.

[02:16:40] It's important that he chooses to be a reporter and that he's active as a reporter in the stories that he investigates. He can use his powers to help him do it and all of that. But like the way that he wants to change the world is through words, is through sharing the truth is that pursuit of truth.

[02:16:59] [02:17:00] And, and he is driven forward by working with Lois. That is an important part of the relationship. You know, and there's different versions of this and different interpretations of this, but the best ones I think, and the ones that I think endure and get repeated over and over again is that version.

[02:17:20] And I think just to kind of, and I should probably stop talking so much about Superman, but I am going to go to the death and return of Superman story for a second because that is the arc that we have between Superman versus Batman and this movie is that the way that it's handled in this versus the about year and a half, almost two year long story that is the death and return of Superman from the early nineties I think is a real strong indicator of.

[02:17:52] How Zach Snyder doesn't get it, and also is really [02:18:00] laying overlaying some, some fascist ideology, whether it's intentional or not on the character, is that the character dies, Superman dies. You know, it's it's, it's during a period of time where Lois knows that Clark and Superman are, are the same person.

[02:18:18] He'd revealed himself to her not too long before that. Which is nice because like, honestly like the whole like lo like him trying to avoid her knowing was always a little gaslighting. But they solved that in the nineties basically more or less. And the thing is, is that he's dead. But what he did was he inspired others to take his place.

[02:18:41] Like there are some that are direct inspirations. There's the steel character that did get a movie that I never saw starring Shaquille O'Neal. That has nothing to do with Superman as I understand it. But he was just a guy that Superman saved at one point, who he's basically Ironman basically and a lot of story ways.

[02:18:58] But he [02:19:00] builds himself a suit and he goes out he doesn't claim to be Superman, but he is very clearly inspired by him. And he is wearing the SS Shield and a big red cape and stuff in his in his suit. And then there's another one who is claiming to be a rebuilt, cyborg version of him.

[02:19:17] There is one who is a clone of him, who's like a teenager. And then there is another one who is also claiming to be him who is a bit more violent and extreme than the Superman we know. And over about a year of stories with these different characters, they all develop and Ultimately, Superman does come back because the one who's a little bit more violent, it turns out, is actually a a computer sort of living computer that was actually tasked with protecting him and was reviving him and then kind of taking his place in the world because that's what was needed while these other characters were doing it.

[02:19:53] But he fundamentally inspired others to do it, and he's not brought back to solve a problem. There's a big, [02:20:00] somewhat similar like invasion happening. A city gets destroyed and it turns out the Cyborg one is

actually helping with this invasion. And all of these Superman and other characters show up to try to stop this invasion.

[02:20:17] And then along comes the, the real Superman and everybody's a little weird, like not sure if it him or not but he returns and it's not because he's the only one who could do it, which is what happens in this movie. Right. And I think that's

[02:20:31] **Nicole:** actually a good segue to bringing it back to Schindler's List and talking a little bit about the controversies.

[02:20:38] Yeah. With both films, to the point you made earlier about Spielberg not really making this Schindler's list for Jews, but rather to try to inspire non-Jews to be like, wow, if it was the Holocaust, I'd wanna be an Oscar Schindler. And I think that's part of why they keep Oscar Schindler as opaque as they do, is to make it easier for people [02:21:00] to kind of project onto him and imagine him as being similar to them in various ways.

[02:21:06] And I, but I think that's not what Zach Snyder's doing in Justice League. No, I don't think he's trying to, ins have. These figures be inspirational to people. I don't think people really factor into it at all. I just think he wants to worship the gods, you know, and he thinks they're, and that's better. And he wishes they were real or some shit.

[02:21:28] 'cause he's five.

[02:21:29] **sean:** And he's saying that we need them to save us. We need somebody to come along and save

[02:21:33] **Nicole:** us, right? Instead of being like, motherfuckers, why don't you take their example and, and save yourselves and save, save one another. Like, why don't you step up and be the superhero that you need in the world?

[02:21:44] **sean:** Right? Which, which has come up in some superhero movies. And, and in that, just to one last sentence about that death of Superman story in the conclusion of it, the one that had revived him, who was a little violent, actually sacrifices himself to prevent Superman from [02:22:00] dying again. Like, like he inspired that sacrifice, that final sacrifice so that he could in, in someone else.

[02:22:07] And you know, I think that there is something in you know, I was thinking about the same thing with Schindler and, and the intent with it. And I

think, you know, Schindler is presented in some ways as being sort of an audience avatar. I think in some ways Gerta commandant is also presented to be a kind of audience avatar.

[02:22:29] Like we have that moment where we are very much in his perspective as he is snipe, you know, sniping, sniping, whatever the phrase is there the people in the camp, like it's through that lens. He, he wants to put you in those point of views, I think. I think he. Sorry, go ahead. I think he wants to put you in those point of views and make you, make you ask the question.

[02:22:55] I don't know that he did it that well, but I think this is what's going on, is he wants you [02:23:00] to ask the question of which one are you, which one would you be?

[02:23:03] **Nicole:** Yeah. I, I, I think, I think he is, and I think he also makes a point, and I don't have a problem with this, of trying to make it pretty unappealing to, to decide like, yeah, I'm gonna be good.

[02:23:17] 'cause like, from the beginning he's like, he's a sadist. He seems to hate himself. Yeah. He's a sadist. He's not very bright. He's just a despicable murderer from the jump. I, I think it would be difficult, even if you have Nazi sympathies to, you know, immediately want to be like him, who's more of a boar as opposed to like suave, slick Han Solo esque.

[02:23:46] Oh, I'm in it for myself. Oh, whoops, I've developed a conscience. 'cause now I've saw a girl in a red coat kind of figure that's, that's the way Schindler is depicted, is really a very classic Hollywood archetype. Yeah.

[02:24:00] Of kind of the outside the cowboy almost who's like in it, who's in it for himself, but then wants to save, then develops an emotional connection to the town and wants to save it.

[02:24:10] I think that's a problem as like the dominant Holocaust narrative. It also leaves no space for me watching it. I'm like, where does this leave me? Like I can't. I mean, I, I was engaged in the film and, and all of that, and I was interested in the Schindler character. I didn't ultimately really, I, I think there would've been a different way to do that, that could have accomplished some of what he was trying to accomplish in terms of making space for people who could have been the oppressors.

[02:24:41] Yeah. In this circumstance, I think you could do that and still leave room for Jews as people, which is something that's largely absent here. Like I think Ben Kingsley's performance is good, but the writing's a real problem. He

isn't given much to do. He does less in this version than that person did [02:25:00] in real life.

[02:25:00] In real life. There were more Jewish people who were more involved in this operation and the kind of undifferentiated mass of Jewish victims in this. It was not a pleasant thing for me to watch, and not in a, like confronting harsh truths way, but more in a like, just kind of feeling like I'm getting slapped in the face repeated.

[02:25:21] Like it's insulting. Yeah. And I think, so towards the controversy, this film was overwhelmingly embraced, including by like Jewish people. Like there's, Sean mentioned the Seinfeld episode, which I, I re-watched recently, which I think is very funny actually, where Jerry's getting shit from like, All the older Jews in his life, 'cause he hasn't seen Schindler's List yet.

[02:25:45] And they're like, oh, it's amazing. You have to see it. It's wonderful. It's wonderful. And I could like hear real people from my life in my head in this. I'm like, this is really accurate. And then he ultimately does go, he goes on a date with his then girlfriend. His [02:26:00] parents are staying in the house at the time, so they haven't had any time alone.

[02:26:03] Mm-hmm. So when they go to Schindler's List for over three hours, they end up just making out in the theater the whole time. Not watching the film, Newman, his neighbor is in the theater and sees this and then starts like ratting him out to everyone being like, he like rats him out to his girlfriend's parents.

[02:26:19] Like, your daughter and Jerry were making out in Schindler's List. So the dad's like, you have to break up with Jerry and it's like the, the most, you know, sacrilegious thing to be making out in Schindler's List, which to be fair, pretty bad taste to be making out through Schindler's List. I'm not disagreeing with that.

[02:26:35] It's also a show that's supposed to be about horrible people and it's illuminates some dynamics that I thought were very very funny. There was this idea amongst a lot of Jewish people that it's almost like this rite of passage. You have to see Schindler's List and, and bear witness and, and be in awe.

[02:26:54] And there's something so sad and depressing to me that I'm like, this is the [02:27:00] movie. We're like, we are so used to fucking scraps. Mm-hmm. We are so used to like, oh wow, here's a movie that where a maybe the preeminent Hollywood director of the time who is Jewish is telling a story about

the Holocaust. And he's being like, don't you feel sorry for this undifferentiated massive victims?

[02:27:22] Don't you wanna be the big suave guy who was the Nazi savior? You wanna be the Nazi savior. Right. Like, this is what we all need to rally behind. It's Yeah. And I wasn't the only one who felt that way. A lot of people. At the time felt that way. We'll link in the show notes a really fascinating round table from 1994 in The Village Voice in which a lot of Jewish critics, artists, intellectuals just have a round table discussion about Schindler's List.

[02:27:50] Uh, Most of them are pretty critical, not all of them. That's Art. Spigelman has a lot of very colorful things to say. Art Spigelman really hates Schindler's List [02:28:00] um, which I will point out. He admits though that part of that is he personally has beef with Steven Spielberg because Steven Spielberg produced an American Tail, which Art Spigelman felt was a ripoff of Mouse, which I hadn't really thought about, but it is like just taking the central conceit of like Jews as mice.

[02:28:20] It's a little more coated in American tale, but they're totally Russian Jewish mice. Yeah. And Katz as the oppressors. There aren't actual Nazis in an American tale, but, you know, I, I don't blame him for being salty about that. But there's other reasons to be salty about Schindler's List as well. One of the most outspoken critics of it was Claude Landsman, who is the director of Showa, which is a nine hour long documentary about the Holocaust.

[02:28:48] It's just nine hours of Holocaust survivors testifying, basically. I haven't watched it. I will, I think I should. I think that sounds like a really [02:29:00] important actual document. It's still a film also, I'm not gonna say documentaries aren't films. But that's very different from the kind of narrative drama that Spielberg created with Schindler's List in Claude LANs Man's opinion.

[02:29:15] And I'm not saying I agree with Claude Lansman here, but he's basically like, I did a movie about the Holocaust. The way you have to anything else is sensationalistic and irresponsible and obscene. You can't recreate these horrors, you can't make drama out of it. I think there are a lot of ethical questions about recreating these horrors and making drama out of it.

[02:29:36] But I want to be clear that I'm not taking Lands Man's hard line of like, there's one way to make a whole movie about the Holocaust, and it's having survivors talk about all the people they saw get killed, and that's it. I will say

[02:29:51] a lot of people were bothered about the fact that out of the, you know, 6 million Jews who were killed in the Holocaust, [02:30:00] and I'm, I'm forgetting the actual number of, of other people who were also killed in the Holocaust, which isn't

[02:30:08] **sean:** really in the millions, but not as big.

[02:30:09] **Nicole:** Not, not, not as big, but you know, obviously queer people, disabled people.

[02:30:15] You get a little sense of that in the scene where in the ghetto, when the Nazis are moving in people who are in hospital beds, they, they give them pills so that they can kill themselves because it's, yeah. They know that if they, if they don't do that, the Nazis are just gonna straight up murder these people because they can't work.

[02:30:33] And the only way to survive getting murdered in the Holocaust was if you could temporarily be useful to the Nazis. Mm-hmm. If you could be put to work in one form or another. So like disabled people were killed off immediately in the Holocaust. Queer people um, socialists, communists. Mm-hmm. Et cetera.

[02:30:53] That's not really touched on in the film. The romany. Very, yeah. I was just gonna say, you know this is stuff that needs [02:31:00] to be talked about, in my opinion, alongside the Jewish people while we were maybe like the main focus and there were more of us killed than these other groups, although these groups also intersect.

[02:31:09] So like, yeah. Jewish disabled people, for example, Jewish queer people, the Jewish sex workers, other, other people yeah. Et cetera. That needs to be talked about more. That's not present in this film at all.

[02:31:24] **sean:** Just to pick up on the Lansman thing, while you please see if you can pick that up again, is I, I do like, I take issue, and I know you don't agree exactly with what he's saying, but I take issue with saying that that's the only way that it should be done.

[02:31:43] How

[02:31:43] **Nicole:** convenient that he did it the right way and everybody else is

[02:31:46] **sean:** wrong. Yeah. Like, honestly, when I read that, like there's a certain degree to which I don't wanna outright dismiss him because, because I think that all he's doing is saying, you shouldn't watch this movie. You should watch my movie. But there's a degree to which it feels like that I, [02:32:00] I understand where he is coming from.

[02:32:01] I think any of these things, as we were talking about earlier, I think any of these things, it comes down to there's al there's always gonna be an ethical issue around it. There's an ethical issue around doing any fictionalized version of things that really happened, for sure, of history. But then it becomes a question of, I still think it becomes a question of,

[02:32:28] you know, is. It is a problem if the narrative that we create, if the fictional narrative we create based on rea, based on real events, becomes the dominant narrative, I think that does become a problem. But I do think that, you know, the, the stories that we tell, they the narrative fiction stories we tell, as long as we're acknowledging 'em as narrative fiction do need to ultimately not be shackled by [02:33:00] what really happened.

[02:33:01] And I'm not saying that people are saying that this should, you know, absolutely be that or that to make this more close to reality would be damaging the story. But I do think that that's the danger that comes and that the narrative fiction and the context of how this is made is this was made to be a mass market like Scorsese at that time and was maybe was not as big of a, of a box office draw, but you put Spielberg in the position of making this.

[02:33:37] You're, you're, you're saying, I wanna make a blockbuster movie. He is, he is one of the fathers of the blockbuster you know, with jaws. Like that is the choice. So that is what this is gonna be. And that is, and, and so the goals of this, I think are gonna be, again, it's that mass market. It's what we were talking about.

[02:33:55] I think it's never gonna be that close. I think there's, I agree that there's ethical issues [02:34:00] around it and that there's questions, it should be questioned and it should be a point of conversation and not the sort of thing where it maybe has become or at least did, maybe did for a minute or when it came out, was just like, oh, we have to accept this as the thing and we can't question it, and we can't question.

[02:34:20] The choice is made behind it. I think we should, I think that's an important conversation to have and to point out, you know, that, that, that it's using stereotypes and is arguably anti-Semitic for it. I'll also say another thing

that connects these movies is I would argue that making Superman a Christ figure in the Zack Snyder movies is antisemitic as he is more of a Moses like figure.

[02:34:45] But that's, that's, that's maybe an overextension. I'd get behind that. But like I bristle against this. Like, the only way we can tell this is by having these witnesses tell their stories. Because to be honest, and I was referencing this a [02:35:00] little bit before, like their stories, especially decades later, are not necessarily what happened.

[02:35:11] It's what they remember happened. And I think all of us have had moments where we misremembered things and there's a myth that some significant events, we remember them better. We just have closer recall of them because they have more context. We, we, you know, people remember more, a few more details, or they think they remember more details.

[02:35:32] It's more readily accessible. What happened around major events. You know, when people talk about, do you remember where you were when J F K was shot? Or, you know, things around nine 11 and and so on. You know, these major events, because there's more context, because the recall comes up more often because we're reminded of them more often.

[02:35:49] Because because of that. And I'm not saying that, you know, I didn't see the film either I'm not saying that, you know, these people are misrepresenting, misrepresenting [02:36:00] anything. But I, I would say that memory is a notoriously slippery thing. And that. It would be false to a degree to say that is a wholly accurate retelling of what happened.

[02:36:17] I think it's important because it is coming from the witnesses of what happened, which is certainly more valuable than the interpretations of of what happened. But it's still as potentially prone to, not to the same degree, but potentially prone to not being what really happened when we get the, when we get witness testimonies.

[02:36:44] **Nicole:** Sure. And I think a lot of your points were echoed in I don't remember if this is one of the articles you read, it was very long. Um, But there was this article called Schindler's List is Not Show Up by Miriam. Yes. I To Hanssen. Yeah. Which were to, [02:37:00] to a lot of your points. You know, she kind of views this like, which one, pick what's the right way, you know, as a false, a false choice.

[02:37:10] And, and I think it is as well for all of my criticisms of Schindler's List, I also am not super interested in should he have made this movie Yes or no. Because to me, I'm like, the movie exists, it's here. Yeah. Like that, that's, it's not gonna go away. It's here. I wanna watch it, I want to engage with it, I want to criticize it.

[02:37:34] I want it to not be the last word or the only word, or necessarily the dominant word in how people learn about the Holocaust. Which it, it's kind of become, and not without spe and, and Spielberg got behind that. Like, I don't know that that was his intention initially, but he definitely. You know, got behind all this.

[02:37:55] And I, I think that's, that's a real problem because like I said, I think it is chockablock full of [02:38:00] anti-Semitic tropes. I think it's insulting to Jewish people and similarly, I think reading Lands Man's critique and thinking about that is important.

[02:38:09] I think his 2 cents is valuable. That doesn't mean I agree with it, or I'm like, I'm on Lands Man's side. I'm not. But I, I think it's worth listening to or reading him talk about why he chose to approach this subject the way he did, what he thinks the problems are with other things, et cetera.

[02:38:28] And similarly, I'm, I'm troubled by Spielberg's assertions that his film is like not a Hollywood film. 'cause it's totally a Hollywood film,

[02:38:37] **sean:** very Hollywood film.

[02:38:38] **Nicole:** And that to me suggests that he's not being fully honest with himself at some levels, which I think is not to the strength of the film. I also wanna say, I realize we have been talking about these films for about the duration of Schindler's List.

[02:38:53] **sean:** Yeah.

[02:38:54] **Nicole:** I do want to quickly say I listened to a podcast, I don't know if you listened to

[02:38:58] this, but

[02:38:59] **sean:** I didn't I read your [02:39:00] notes?

[02:39:00] **Nicole:** Yeah. Uh, There's a podcast called Adventures with Dead Jews. Hosted by Dara Horn, and there was an episode called Shooting Jews, which is about Spielberg making Jurassic Park and Schindler's List. And that kind of goes through, if you wanna listen to a fun, witty, smart 40 minutes that uh, kind of gives a voice to a lot of the Jewish criticism of Schindler's List that that would be a great thing to listen to.

[02:39:31] Alongside, I would say, reading the Village Voice Roundtable, which we'll link and the Schindler's List is not Shoa article, which kind of also synopsizes a lot of the criticism of Schindler's List without subscribing to all of it. This reminds me of something I wanted to say to one of Sean's points earlier in, in that piece by Miriam Hanssen.

[02:39:52] She talks about watching Schindler's List in Germany and how her experience watching it there [02:40:00] with a German audience and how they were taking it in. Uh, She was kind of like, you know, if I'd seen it in the United States, I might be standing with a lot of these other Jewish people who are just like, fuck this movie.

[02:40:11] But seeing the impact of, on this German audience of them really taking it in made her see things a little differently. And I'm leaving it there for now, in part because I think there are good things about Schindler's List, I think. Mm-hmm. It's important for people to understand certain base facts about the Holocaust, which increasingly they don't.

[02:40:36] I was glad that, you know, in the world of this, although they don't actually depict it, it's, it's pretty clear that like, yeah, they, they did burn people up in ovens and yeah, they did gas people to death. 'cause if you ever talk to a Holocaust Denier, they won't say, oh, the Holocaust didn't happen. Not at first, at least.

[02:40:57] No, they'll start picking around some of these [02:41:00] facts, which is part of why, and I know this isn't what, what you're saying, Sean, so I'm not saying you're saying this, but just to make this very clear, while I think it is true that memory is fallible, like any story of what happened is a story of what happened, it's not the complete objective truth.

[02:41:14] I, I agree with all of that. And I, I also think it's important to establish and teach certain facts. Yes. About how this happened because those facts are under constant attack. Absolutely. People chipping away at that, it wasn't that bad. And it's not just the Holocaust that happens with um, there are some Holocaust scholars who like to see the Holocaust is unique, and it's like,

well, sure, every genocide is unique in some ways, but it's, it's not unrelated from what's happening in Florida and Texas right now, and places where, you know, we're supposed to teach about how chattel slavery taught enslaved people useful skills and some shit like that.

[02:41:56] You know? I think it's really important to push back and [02:42:00] be like, no, no, that's not fucking true. Um, With, with any of these atrocities that certain forces are constantly trying to minimize and be like, it wasn't that bad. I actually, and maybe the people who were being oppressed in this situation, maybe it was kind of their fault in some ways, and you, it wasn't that bad.

[02:42:20] And so how does Schindler's List play into those kinds of dialogues? I think it's a bit of a mixed bag. I think it could have been a lot stronger, but I'm not gonna deny that it has some utility. Mm-hmm. And it's here, so it's not like I can snap my fingers and it's Martin Scorsese's version instead. Or Steven Spielberg made a different movie about the Holocaust 10 years later when some of his own feelings is settled a little bit more.

[02:42:43] It's what we have and it's, it's, it's complicated. Yeah.

[02:42:48] **sean:** I think just to pick up on one of the things you're saying about the person who was talking about. She had a different experience when watching it in Germany. Mary Hanssen. Yeah. Yeah. I think that one of the things that's [02:43:00] worth recognizing when talking about this is the very, very different relationship Americans have to World War II versus Europeans.

[02:43:15] So when I was in film school and glorious bastard came out near the end of the time I was in film school and I went with, like, I went to film school where everybody was not from the United States except for me and like two people. And I went with my friends from Portugal who didn't have strong opinions.

[02:43:33] And another friend, he's from, I wanna say Denmark I think, or Holland, one of those one of those countries. And after it, you know, we came out and he was kind of commenting on the American response. We saw, you know, we saw it here in New York City, the American response to the film, he's like, I don't understand why you guys are kind of making like films like this about that or the kind of response you have to it.[02:44:00]

[02:44:00] And, you know, I talked to him a little bit about, about how, you know, there's a degree to which here in America, like one of the reasons we

continue to make films like that about this is there's a degree to which it's the last time we can kind of feel like we were the good guy in that kind of context.

[02:44:20] **Nicole:** Took us long enough. But

[02:44:21] **sean:** yeah, exactly. But,

[02:44:24] **Nicole:** and not for good reasons, but

[02:44:26] **sean:** not for good reasons at all. But like there's that. But I think there's also, there is a distinct and, and, and it's a thing I bristle against as I learned more. over time, and I'm by no means an expert or even that well versed on things that happened during World War ii.

[02:44:43] As I learned more about it, though, I started to bristle more against the way that people speak about the French in relation to World War ii because there's a big difference. You know, Americans like to talk about it. Like were these grand Savors who came in and saved everybody's asses in World
[02:45:00] War ii.

[02:45:00] And and, you know, kind of speak about the French's weakened quitting and all that, which is nonsense because they were fighting, you know, there were these undergrounds. And the truth is, is that America, and I've had some discussions with friends where they kind of pushed back against this to a degree.

[02:45:18] The war didn't happen on American soil. Like,

[02:45:22] You know,

[02:45:23] **Nicole:** it'd be a

[02:45:23] very different story if it fucking

[02:45:24] **sean:** had, it would be, it would be a very different story because like, Hawaii was not a state when Pearl Harbor happened. Hawaii was not a state. It was, you know, it was a, it was a colony essentially.

[02:45:35] There was some fighting on the Aleutian Islands. Alaska was not a state yet. Uh, It was a protector, or whatever the hell it was called at the time. There were no tanks that rolled through Washington dc There were fights very

close. There were spies, there was all of that. Sure. But it's a big difference between that and people growing people either seeing or [02:46:00] growing up with or growing up around the devastation that happened.

[02:46:03] And you know, in, in many countries, you know in, in France, you know, they can look to places and say, well, that's where the tanks rolled in when they invaded. You know, this building is what they used as a headquarters in England, in London, like. For, for quite a while afterwards, like areas of the city were rubble from the bombings, and there were children who grew up around that for years.

[02:46:36] And like the, you know, the, the whole context of the war and, and, and in Germany and in other Eastern European countries, the camps were down the street. Like our context in America is very different. There's gonna be a different response. There's going to be a [02:47:00] response of where they are going to identify more, I think, as I was saying with, with Schindler and say like, yeah, that's the person I wish I either, I wish I was at the time, I wish somebody in my family was at the time.

[02:47:15] Or I hope I'll be, because this isn't some Irishman playing a German. So two foreigners removed from, you know, who I am. This is somebody playing a person of my nationality, a person who may be my uncle or my father or my cousin was a Nazi. And was there like, I think that's a big difference in response.

[02:47:44] America is very removed from it. And I know that there are many people in America who fought during it whose families or themselves were killed or in the camps as part of the Holocaust of all types. But [02:48:00] there's still, I, I mean for them, I think like the removal is very, very different.

[02:48:04] But there is a physical geographic removal From what happened what was done. I shouldn't say what happened. 'cause that removes a level of yeah, it was done at that time. The agency, it was done. Yeah. It was something that was done. It was choices that were made. And so our response is always gonna be a little bit different.

[02:48:22] I, for a lot of reasons, I think it's going to be fetishized in various ways in America. I will give this movie Schindler's List, perhaps a little bit of credit for being an American movie that did not really insert the Americans in some way into this story. Like, which I was kind of expecting, but no, like the soldier that shows up to tell them they're all free to go was Russian.

[02:48:51] Russian, you know? And they could very easily, I'm sure some, some executive somewhere was probably like, yeah, but when's you know, [02:49:00] Patton gonna show up. When's you know, the, the American soldier's gonna show up in this? Are we gonna show any of that on the front or anything? I'm sure that was a conversation that had to happen because of the way, I mean, everybody in some way centers themselves in a story or tries to but certainly we do that a lot.

[02:49:21] America and Americans center ourselves a lot in those conversations about what was done in, in World War ii. But we are not really the subject or who this was done so directly to. I think it's always gonna be tainted American films made about that era. I.

[02:49:50] **Nicole:** Yeah. I, I, I agree with that. I think, I think that's a good point. There's so many more things I could say about Schindler's List,

[02:49:59] **sean:** but [02:50:00] well give, give it, give us some highlights.

[02:50:02] Hmm. Give us some highlights. Some highlights.

[02:50:06] **Nicole:** Sure.

[02:50:07] **sean:** Because there's so many things. I mean, and I know we probably both need to stop soon,

[02:50:11] **Nicole:** so. Yeah. I mean, I've, I've, I've touched on a lot of it already, honestly. I mean, I think, I think at the end of the day, I absolutely agree with what you said about not having America really be a part of this story.

[02:50:23] It is definitely true that the United States likes to be the star and the hero of all sorts of stories that happen on the world stage. In this one, this one in particular. I just, I think while I don't subscribe to Claude Lanzmann's kind of extreme position on, there's one way to talk to the Holocaust as a movie, and it's what I did I do think turning it into a classic Hollywood drama and then being in denial about the fact that you're doing that is a problem.

[02:50:59] I think [02:51:00] making the Nazi the hero and making his motives more ambiguous than they were to the degree that I can tell in real life. Like he spoke more explicitly about a lot of what he was doing, where in this, he's kept very opaque and you see his behavior, but you don't really know where he's at emotionally until I think the, the girl, the famous girl in the Red Coat scene where they show this girl and her coat's actually red. So the audience knows

that she is standing out to Oscar Schindler and he is seeing her humanity and she is standing out to him much as she is standing out to us.

[02:51:37] 'cause the language of cinema, I actually don't like that moment. I think it's really kind of clunky and we didn't need the red to get that he's following her and to get that later, we see her again and she's dead. I also don't know that we needed that device to show that Schindler now is sad about the death of Jews and it's a little insulting that we're supposed to go along with him through that.

[02:51:59] Like, we [02:52:00] weren't supposed to be sad before until we saw a little blonde girl. Okay. The general dehumanization of, of Jews in a movie about how it's bad to dehumanize Jews is something it's, it's, it's something I I do agree with what friend of the show Michael Hanukah said about, about Schindler's List.

[02:52:25] **sean:** we wish he was friend of the show.

[02:52:26] **Nicole:** He's a friend of the show in my heart. He gave this great, there was some round table with the Hollywood reporter in like 2015 or something where he just started talking smack about Schindler's List. And the, the quote I'll read before he goes into, here's the only things that I think are responsible depictions of the Holocaust, but, you know, without necessarily endorsing or disagreeing with that, he said the idea of creating entertainment of this, the mere idea of trying to draw and create suspense out of the [02:53:00] question of whether out of the shower head gas is going to come or water to me is unspeakable.

[02:53:08] Kind of agree with him there. I think there are other ways to dramatize this rather than doing this kind of very classic. Hollywood suspense drama like Spielberg ended up doing, I think in fact of one of the first movies we ever talked about on this show, which was Hanukkah's Funny Games, which is a film that subverts genre and tries to implicate the audience.

[02:53:35] I would be a lot more interested in a take on this material that had a little bit more of that energy, that was a little bit more about breaking down tropes and having the audience ask questions of themselves rather than kind of flattering the audience by being like, but you could be an Oscar Schindler and then all these Jews would be putting stones on your [02:54:00] grave.

[02:54:00] You could be a Nazi and still be a good person because like, look how pathetic they are. You could help them. Big, strong man. And, and that

also, we didn't even get into the gender dynamics, but women aren't, oh yeah. Women aren't really present as characters in Schindler's List. They are present a lot as I don't even wanna say sexual beings in and of themselves, but as objects of men's sexuality and verily in various ways.

[02:54:25] **sean:** I think, go ahead. No,

[02:54:27] **Nicole:** you you go ahead. I, I'll just keep the, so you talk,

[02:54:31] **sean:** so I I'm gonna, I'm gonna disagree a little bit about the shower scene because of what I interpret the intent of the movie is, I agree with you that there is a better movie in what you were describing of like, let's do something where we confront the audience and things.

[02:54:52] But as we know from the response to funny games, that's not, that's not exactly gonna get you [02:55:00] an audience. And I would argue that there is a greater value and. Making something with some kind of mass audience appeal to tell this kind of story because of very much what you were talking about, about, about, about Holocaust deniers.

[02:55:22] It is important to have the, some, at least some of these stories, and this being an example of one of them, there should be more of these stories that are, as you described but to have more of these stories or to have these stories where they are doing that in order to bring it to that broader audience and make that broader audience they're not going to interact with that other film.

[02:55:50] It would be lovely if that was an option for us, like it would, but we, but, but because of the, because of where we are in the [02:56:00] last 30, 40 years in film and the way that, the way that things are today I think it does need to have that kind. Is it exploitative? Yes. Do I think doing a scene where it makes them worry very much about are these people gonna get gassed or not?

[02:56:19] After they've had what that very scenario described, the audience has had that scenario described to them moments earlier or, or like 10, 20 minutes earlier in the movie. And then doing that and then putting the, that audience in the position of, oh my God, is this gonna happen? I recognize these people. Do I think it's a great way to do it?

[02:56:40] No. Do I think if the purpose of the movie is to create a sort of sympathy and create this story in the minds of a mass audience and make them really see [02:57:00] this as a. Here are these people that have been seeing, doing these other things. And it's a very good point that they're not really in a lot

of ways given much a given any agency or really depicted as whole characters or kind of depicted as a mass.

[02:57:16] But still a greedy mass. What a greedy mass. Just a Yeah. But, but amass that like the audience has been instructed to sympathize with by the film. I do think that there is a value in that. And it was something at the time, like, like I said, like I was 10 years old when this movie came out. It was definitely something that some of the things in this movie I had heard described back then, and I'm fairly certain I can't, you know, remember exactly the timeline, but it's probably because of this movie that people were talking about it because of this movie and these things were [02:58:00] described to us because of this movie.

[02:58:01] And I think that there's a problem with this being the dominant narrative, but there's also sort of a larger problem of the stories that we consume or, or have the option to consume and have access to which is a, a, a very large conversation that I don't think I'm prepared for. But

[02:58:26] **Nicole:** I I, I, I agree with what you're saying.

[02:58:28] I just don't think it's like you can do Schindler's List or you can do this imaginary, you know, funny games as well. No, no. I think we should do both well, but I think you can do other things as well. Yeah, I think you could. I think, for example, you could make a film, and I'm not saying I have the answer of how to do this.

[02:58:45] Like I get that Schindler's list. A lot of the choices Spielberg is making is about, I want the audience to be uncomfortable, but not so uncomfortable that they're gonna numb out. Right. I, I [02:59:00] respect like on a filmmaking level, I respect the calculations that went into that, and I think he largely nailed it in terms of his imagined audience and keeping them along for the ride.

[02:59:10] Yeah, I give him credit for that. I think he could have done that without having a moment where it's like, oh no, will they get gassed or not? Yeah. I think you can depict that this was a thing that happened. I think you can depict loss. I think you can depict grief without doing this exploitative suspense moment.

[02:59:30] Um, Some other people I will point out have problems with the nudity in that scene. They feel that it made the scene kind of sexualized. I understand why people say that. That is not how I felt at all watching it. That's, um, I, That's,

[02:59:45] **sean:** sorry

[02:59:46] **Nicole:** I'm interrupting. I, I, I think, I think there's a larger conversation to have about the use of nudity in Schindler's List.

[02:59:54] Generally speaking, I'm in favor of more nudity in films. I think people are prudes [03:00:00] and nudity is not always sexual and yeah, so I didn't have a problem with that. I did have a problem with the sexual assault scene with Ray Founds and Is made earlier, where like she's wearing this sheer top and you can like, see her breasts really well through it.

[03:00:15] And it's that yeah, was, I was like, we don't need this like, you know, erotic, thriller style, sexual assault, suspense moment crosscutting with Schindler, like gallivanting with some lady that also felt exploitative, that felt like it was sexualizing, a moment of sexual violence to me in a way I didn't, like, I didn't have a problem with the nudity in the shower scene.

[03:00:37] I just had a problem. With the exploitation for suspense. It wasn't necessary. It also serves to um, do this other thing that troubles me about the movie of, it's kind of a feelgood movie about the Holocaust in a way. Yeah. Because you're following this one group of Jews who aren't really established as characters at all.

[03:00:59] [03:01:00] We care about them because Schindler cares about them. Yeah. And he gets most of them out. So we won. Yeah. I think you can make a more conventional, you know, Hollywood film about this subject matter without doing that. So that's kind of just what I wanted to say. I, I think you don't have to take the Claude Lanzman perspective.

[03:01:24] You don't have to make funny games, the Holocaust movie. You could do something that's more conventional and a non-Jewish mainstream US audience would be able to follow along with that, could have avoided some of these really distasteful aspects of Schindler's List. I don't think it's that those necessarily come with the package and there's no other way.

[03:01:47] That's,

[03:01:47] **sean:** that's all I I, I, I agree with that. I think it's, as you say, like one of the problems is that this has become, in some ways the, the core narrative about it. And [03:02:00] that's a problem. And that, like, honestly, and again, I have a tendency to avoid the serious movies about this topic because I, 'cause I do think it's still exploitative.

[03:02:14] And and I, and I do take some, some issue with that. I have a hard time thinking of what the other movies were that centered around this. Around that time, I believe isn't, life is

[03:02:30] **Nicole:** beautiful. Also. That was a little later. I think that was a little later, but that was in the nineties. That's,

[03:02:35] **sean:** I I mean, I mean it's also about the, it's also about the Holocaust, is it not?

[03:02:39] Oh, yeah.

[03:02:40] **Nicole:** Okay. Yeah. Yeah. A hundred percent. And it's I haven't seen it since it came out. I liked it at the time. I would guess I might really not now. Like most people who I share sensibilities with really fucking hate that movie. Mm-hmm. 'cause it's also a feel good movie about the Holocaust. Holocaust about Holocaust, the power of imagination.[03:03:00]

[03:03:00] I was, at the time that came out, I was such a big Roberto Benigni fan because of him being in Jim Mish movies down by law mm-hmm. Is like one of the transformative movies of my lifetime. That kind of like, set, got me into weird indie stuff. And I just loved him in that film. I had so much goodwill towards him through that.

[03:03:19] I was really primed to be like, my hot take is life is beautiful, is good. And that's how I felt at the time. I was also a teenager. I do not, I I would probably have more mixed feelings now. I don't have a great example of a good serious Holocaust drama. I don't think they tend to be made. I think that some of the negative legacy of Schindler's List is it taught filmmakers.

[03:03:46] Oh, Holocaust movies are Oscar bait.

[03:03:48] **sean:** Like, yeah. And 'cause the other one that's coming to my mind is The Pianist, which Oh yeah. Fuck that movie. Yeah. I mean, I haven't seen that one either. It defin it came out after I was [03:04:00] aware of rapist Polanski's history. There's the Boy

[03:04:03] **Nicole:** in the Striped Pajamas, which is supposed to be real fucking bad.

[03:04:07] **sean:** I do think that there's something interesting about, and again, I haven't seen it, but maybe something worth, I. Because I know the pianist was

celebrated when it came out, but Polanski did survive the Holocaust as a child. So there's something to be said for, maybe there's something about what he said there.

[03:04:28] Again, I'm probably never gonna watch that movie because I, I

[03:04:31] **Nicole:** don't remember it. I just have negative feelings and, and to be fair, maybe the pianist just fucking great and just happens to be directed by a child rapist. I just don't fucking remember. I saw it. I don't remember it. Which says something also,

[03:04:46] **sean:** yeah, I think the only movies of his that I, I have had a tendency to watch again, are ones that I watched and appreciated before I found out, which would be uh, Rosemary's Baby in Chinatown.

[03:04:58] I mean, those are really

[03:04:59] **Nicole:** good [03:05:00] movies. They, they just are.

[03:05:02] **sean:** He, and, and, and, you know, somebody can be an awful, awful, awful, awful human being and also make good movies. Yeah. And this is true. I like re ion also. I haven't seen that one. I, I, I think, I think I've kind of avoided, like seeing ones that I haven't already seen in general.

[03:05:17] **Nicole:** I think that's, I think that's a good move. I think it'll be easier for me to watch Polanski movies when he is dead. Honestly,

[03:05:24] **sean:** that can happen anytime now. That could happen

[03:05:26] **Nicole:** anytime. Just, you know, you just hope. Why aren't there more wells out there for people to just step into?

[03:05:33] **sean:** Anyway yeah, I think, I think, I think you're right.

[03:05:36] I think that it's become sort of this like Oscar Beatty thing and like as we know as filmmakers, as indie filmmakers, there are topics that become of the moment to do, to try to get attention on you, to try to get, to be the you know, get awards and get into things because you don't, because people won't reject because you're doing like the topic of the moment, [03:06:00] you know, in the last decade or so.

[03:06:02] It's a human trafficking sound of freedom. Yeah. That we were just talking about that one last weekend. But, you know, I, but, and I don't just say this around like Hollywood type films or films that have a budget, I'm including like people at sort of our independent film level, which is more, excuse me, which is more on the fringe.

[03:06:23] Where, you know, we, there's a lot that I remember seeing you know, getting started, especially with like crowdfunding where they were these exploitative stories that people were doing, whether it was a documentary, whether it was a, whether it was a narrative film where they're doing it to try to establish them themselves.

[03:06:44] And there's people who've done things where I, you know, where I don't think it's exploitative where they're talking about their own story. You know, that's, that's a thing that I've seen from several filmmakers and more power to them. And then sometimes they, you know, extend that into doing [03:07:00] more films that are related to that, because that's kind of the mark that they've made.

[03:07:05] And I don't see a problem with that. It's when people are like, this is really important. You know, child trafficking is a super important thing that we all gotta talk about, so let's

[03:07:15] **Nicole:** make up movie about up stories about how it happens that has nothing to do without shit actually happens in real life, but it's a great boogeyman for the right wing to wield.

[03:07:24] **sean:** Mm-hmm. And, and some of 'em aren't even necessarily rightwing folks, but they play into those right wing narratives Yeah. That are very convenient for them. And it's, you know, it's, it's a, it's a thing that I think is kind of gross. And I think,

[03:07:42] you know, I think it, it's not to say that we can't do stories about those things. My problem often becomes, and, and it's related to what we're talking about with Schindler when it's the sort of thing where it's like we can't have a conversation about it. Like, we can't be like, okay, but that's not a real thing that you just told the story about.

[03:07:59] Yeah. It's. [03:08:00] Terrible, blah, blah, blah. But if you say

[03:08:01] **Nicole:** that you don't care about the children,

[03:08:03] **sean:** and, and to be fair, I don't care about the children. I do

[03:08:06] **Nicole:** though I don't. So here we've got all of opinion represented in terms of the children and caring. Exactly. But yeah, it's, and I mean, and similarly, I think there's a thing that comes up with Schindler's List of like, I gave it two stars on letterbox and I felt a little weird doing that.

[03:08:25] **sean:** There's some movies where it's like, I very careful about how I rate

[03:08:29] **Nicole:** them. And I'll be honest, I did have the thought when I first was like looking at letter before I watched Schindler's List and I was looking at the rating spread. And, and, and, and Schindler's List has a very high rating. It's like average is above four stars, like much higher than most things.

[03:08:46] But I'm like, who's giving Schindler's List half a star? And even I as somebody who like, is very down on Schindler's List in a lot of ways, I was like, are they anti-Semites? And then I, they might be, well, but then I started scrolling and I was like, [03:09:00] actually all of the reviews I'm seeing that gave it a low star rating, I absolutely agree with what these people are saying.

[03:09:05] Sure. I would give it a little more credit than they did, but I, I agree with them. And they're, they're not being anti-Semitic at all. But I even had that thought and the fact that I had that thought suggests to me that there's probably a lot of people having a similar kind of reaction and there's this kind of idea that Schindler's List stands in for like remembering the Holocaust happened and it's like you have to embrace Schindler's List or you're not in favor of remembering that the Holocaust happened or something.

[03:09:36] And Yeah, that's a

[03:09:39] **sean:** thing too. Yeah. It's like if you're even a little bit and, and you are more so than I am I think if you're even a little bit critical, Israel, you're definitely an antisemite according to some people.

[03:09:52] Well, you just

[03:09:53] **Nicole:** opened up a big can of Worm about Schindler's List. Exactly. And I was just thinking about how we didn't, there would be a

[03:09:59] **sean:** [03:10:00] lot we didn't touch on how it's Zionists. I mean,

[03:10:02] **Nicole:** I said that you touched on it a little bit. Yeah, I, I talked about that. But also specifically I think there's a lot we could talk about in terms of portrayals of masculinity in Schindler's List and portrayals of masculinity in Zach Snyder's Justice League and how there's problems in both of them and in Schindler's List that is related directly to this specifically Zionist narrative where it's like, look in Schindler's List, we've got all these like mostly pretty wussy Jews.

[03:10:27] The Jewish men aren't standing up and saving their women and fucking their women the way the Nazis are, you know, but then you know how you fix that. You, you go to Israel and you join the I D F. Now those motherfuckers are tough. And then you get Munich. And so that whole package of what's going on with Jewish masculinity in those two Spielberg films and how that relates to the state of Israel as like these salvation for Jews globally, that really doesn't sit right with me at all.

[03:10:57] Yeah. And even Claude Landsman, who's a pretty big [03:11:00] Zionist, made the point that I actually I do agree with him here. If I can just read this one quote, here's my note. Um, So He was like, anyway, although many take me for a Zionist, I'm pretty sure he was.

[03:11:18] I would never dare give such a sledgehammer blow as those Steve, as those Spielberg gives at the end of Schindler's List with that great reconciliation, Schindler's Grave in Israel with its cross and small Jewish pebbles with the color, which insinuates a happy ending. Israel cannot buy off the Holocaust.

[03:11:35] 6 million did not die to justify Israel's existence. Yeah. And that is kind of what you get from Schindler's List. Like it's, it's okay now the Jews have Israel, you can be a good Nazi and they can be off over there somewhere. And it's, it's a very weird message for me to be getting from a Jewish director.

[03:11:56] Yeah, although, like I said, there were things in it, the Shabbat candles and all that, I [03:12:00] actually spoke to me on it in, in a deeper way. It's, it's, it's, it's like we don't need these Aryan men, strong men to save the world, which is kind of what we get in both Schindler's List and Zach Snyder's Justice League, even though both of them are coming from source material, that paints a far more complicated picture.

[03:12:22] **sean:** Yeah. Yeah. It's, they're, they're oversimplified. They're kind of, and again, I have a, I have a, a, a, a more positive view of Schindler's List than you do, but I will, but I, I recognize and agree with the points on it entirely.

There both kind of, in certain respects, the worst examples of adaptation. Not the worst examples ever, but the worst kind of examples of adaptation when it comes to film in that they they lose the heart of what's important about the source material.

[03:12:59] [03:13:00] Complexity in the case of Schindler's List. I, I, and some of the comments they were talking, or some of the, the notes we had, they were talking about that there is a lot more layered complexity in the book that it's based on the comics that Justice League is loosely based on. There's a lot more complexity to the characters and interactions and themes, or there's a lot more opportunity for complexity than is present in the film.

[03:13:26] Which is funny because, you know, comics are usually considered to lack complexity and to be something that is very shallow. And film is often considered the opposite as more of a high art. It's funny that ultimately they become, they both are adaptations that lack the, the, the heart and the complexity of uh, their source material in favor, in some cases, in favor of [03:14:00]

[03:14:02] purposefully or not advancing a narrative advancing a philosophy or philosophies that may be counter productive to what the original source material was offering or just ignorant of the possibilities there.

[03:14:22] **Nicole:** Do we have any final, I I know at least some people watching us here, if anybody is still with us at this late hour.

[03:14:29] I know at least some of you have seen at least some of these movies, so I just want to give a chance if anybody has some comments, questions, bat suit opinions. Um, I will point out really quickly, fucking hate one last Visual Aid Schindler's List poster. Oh, yeah. Right. If you can, you can share this. I'm ready.

[03:14:55] So this is the poster for Schindler's List. It says Schindler's List. There's a [03:15:00] nice white male hand reaching down and lifting a child up, and there's a list superimposed over it, apparently Schindler's which was not one list and it wasn't made by him, but that's, you know, perhaps a topic for another day.

[03:15:14] I just wanna point out, there's a red sleeve on the child whose hand is being like, lifted out of the Holocaust. That, you know, this is like the, I mean, Schindler's List is a white savior movie, right? Like, it, it, it just is whether you

like it or not, it it is, and this is like a super white saviory image that has long troubled me, especially because like the kids got a red sleeve.

[03:15:39] This is implying that it's the girl in the red coat who famously Schindler did not save. She died. But in the poster art for the film and like the image that stands in for the film, what we're left with is a hand presumably Schindler's lifting a presumably Jewish child, you know, saving them. That, that's the vibe of [03:16:00] this film.

[03:16:00] It's about Schindler saving nameless Jews. And even in the poster art, they've rewritten the history of the own fucking film. Of the actual film it represents. Yeah. Implying that Schindler saved this girl, he famously did not save, and in fact, her death provoked him to give a shit about others. Um, That, something about that it's says a lot about the film to me.

[03:16:25] I mean, it says a lot about my problems with the film to

[03:16:27] **sean:** me. Yeah.

[03:16:29] **Nicole:** It's a lot like Zach Snyder's Justice League a little bit, you know?

[03:16:32] **sean:** Yeah. It's a, yeah, it's a. It's a poor representation. And you know, I didn't really realize that that was, that this was the case. Like I didn't, I knew that there was the girl in the red dress. I did not know what the ultimate significance of her was going to be in the um, in the film.

[03:16:56] So when that happened, I was kind of like, oh, oh, [03:17:00] mm. In context of the film itself, I can see like what they were doing. I don't dislike it as much as you do. Um, The poster I get what the, I get what the marketing team was doing with that. I don't like it, but I get why they were doing it. It's very tacky.

[03:17:20] It's important. It's tacky. But I mean, that's marketing mostly is, isn't it? True.

[03:17:26] **Nicole:** We did get a comment that uh, a listener really appreciated Sean's short history lesson on how Superman's lore is an amalgamation from a bunch of different sources. Very

[03:17:36] **sean:** interesting. There's, I could go on may, maybe we should make without me having to edit it 'cause I don't want to maybe we should make that paper that I wrote a Patreon post.

[03:17:51] Yeah, that's great. Um, Let's, let's

[03:17:52] **Nicole:** do that. Let's, let's put Sean's paper that he presented in 2006 about it's about like uh, myths, right? And

[03:17:59] **sean:** [03:18:00] like, it's basically about 21st, as I recall. I did not re, I haven't reread it in a whole, and this was 17 years ago, so, It's basically, I presented at the Pacific Rim Literary Conference in 2006 at University of Alaska Anchorage.

[03:18:14] It was about mythology in the 21st century. It is probably very misguided in some ways, as I believe part of my thesis was essentially that the corporate guided mythology of like comic books like Superman is the dominant, and perhaps that's a good thing. That's why it's probably misguided mythology of the 21st century.

[03:18:43] And you know, there's a lot of, there has been a lot of discussion about, in sort of broader, in the, in the broader world about comics being mythology. That I think is a misrepresentation. I think [03:19:00] very specifically certain characters have come to be specifically Superman. I think Superman is a very influential character in a lot of ways.

[03:19:11] Um, And he created a genre or he, not exactly, but he changed a genre. And uh, yeah, I think the thesis of it is essentially like this is, this is something that is telling our stories in some ways in sort of this mythic fashion. Which I do believe, like, I do believe, like Superman is fundamentally an immigrant story.

[03:19:42] It is fundamentally he is Clark and Superman are I believe part of this paper had to do with that. Superman is his legacy. From his home planet and Clark Kent as his assimilation. And he's trying to balance assimilation [03:20:00] and honoring his, his culture and his history. And this is something that appears, this does not, I think, appear in the paper, but it appears in other in other similar stories.

[03:20:12] It's the core of the Godfather is Michael balancing his his family's history and his, and that with trying to, as like his fundamental conflict in that movie, it's, he's trying to assimilate this is conflict throughout the three films.

Not a handled as well in the third film, but it's this conflict throughout the three films is he is trying very hard to assimilate into the larger culture and the history of his family is is, is makes Problematic that which interesting little fact there is the writer of Superman.

[03:20:47] The movie is Mario Puzo. He wrote, he wrote the screenplay for it. So they saw The Godfather and they said that guy understands Superman. And I think he did. And the others wharf from, specifically from Star Trek, the Next Generation who's [03:21:00] conflict throughout most of that series developed into him trying to honor the legacy of being a alien, of being a clinging on while also trying to assimilate into this very human crew on the enterprise.

[03:21:17] And I, and, and that's, and that's a thing that I think is, I think it's a theme that runs through a lot of things is that tension between is that tension between assimilation and heritage. So

[03:21:32] **Nicole:** we'll put it up on Patreon and then we can. Debated in the comments. I guess I did start reading your paper, but I didn't finish 'cause it was a text doc and that made it hard to read.

[03:21:43] And I was like, I should paste this into something else. And then I didn't do that.

[03:21:47] **sean:** But yeah, it probably needs to be formatted and be That won't be so bad to do though. No, and the references are I, I, I put the references in there without actually writing up the references. So to be clear, like it does not have an [03:22:00] introduction and I'm not entirely sure it has a conclusion because I just wrote the body of the paper.

[03:22:06] 'cause I never had to actually have a finished paper. I just had to have something there. And then I was just doing a presentation at the, at the conference. So it is not exactly complete. There is not the list of references, even though there are references peppered throughout it. That is just how I worked back then.

[03:22:24] When I would write papers as I would write the body of it, then I would write the intro, then I would write a conclusion and then I would fi and then I would, and I was inserting references throughout. And then I would finish out the bibliography or whatever it's called um, the reference page later. And I just never had to finish it 'cause I was outta college by that time.

[03:22:44] So it's an incomplete work,

[03:22:48] **Nicole:** aren't we all? Hmm. And on that note, I feel like this podcast had almost as many endings as Zach Snyder's Justice [03:23:00] League. Almost. Almost. So maybe we can have the final ending now. Wake

[03:23:09] **sean:** up, Nicole. Wake up. It was

[03:23:13] **Nicole:** all a dream. Oh, it was all a dream. Batman didn't say fuck there. No shame list.

[03:23:18] There's no.

[03:23:23] Oh, well thank you all. For those of you who joined us today, appreciate you joining us on this hot, hot, hot July Saturday afternoon to listen to me and Sean talk for almost four hours about Schindler's List in Zach Snyder's Justice League Justice's Gray Edition. We will be editing this together into a podcast so you can, you know, listen to it again, tell us why we're right.

[03:23:48] Tell us why we're wrong. If you're listening to this and you're not a Patreon subscriber, [patreon.com/four mile Circus](https://patreon.com/fourmilecircus), you could have sat for four hours and listened to us talk about. Schindler's [03:24:00] List in Zach Snyder's Justice League Justice's Gray Edition live on Streamy yard and made your witty comments and asked your questions.

[03:24:09] So put that in your pipe and smoke it. Anything else, Sean?

[03:24:16] **sean:** Let's uh, no, let's uh, let's

[03:24:18] **Nicole:** just get the fuck outta here. Hold on. Let's get the fuck outta here. Bye everyone. We're gonna go.

[03:24:36] This Sally Celluloid mirror is a four mile circus production hosted by Nicole Solomon and Sean Manion. Our theme music is Twisted by Kevin McLeod. You can hear more from kevinMcLeod@incomptech.film music.io. Please take a few minutes to rate and review the Celluloid Mirror on your podcast platform of choice.[03:25:00]

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[03:25:52] **Clip:** I ended up in that hall and there was, there was another girl. She [03:26:00] looked like me, exactly like me. What happens when the story dies? The evil is set free. Can you come in my dreams?

[03:26:20] I have to

[03:26:20] return some videotapes.