



THE PURITAN POST

| by Hank W. Mardukas |

This Week on TV

Marriage Story (Netflix)

Netflix has released a number of Oscar-bait original movies over the last couple of years, but Noah Baumbach's semi-autobiographical new film *Marriage Story* is perhaps the studio's greatest thus far. The film follows a couple as they are preparing to get divorced and trying to provide the best life for their young son. The two leads, Adam Driver and Scarlett Johansson, are both phenomenal in their complex and sensitive portrayals as the two parents nearing a tragic precipice in their relationship. I expect both to get both Oscar and Hank award nominations coming up soon, and they are bolstered by an equally excellent supporting cast. The film is sharply written, meticulously shot and directed, and easily one of the best of the year.

This Week on Home Video

Ready or Not (2019)

And in an entirely different sort of marriage story, I finally got around to watching *Ready or Not*, one of the best Horror films released in 2019. The movie follows Grace, a young woman who just married into the family of a billionaire gaming tycoon. As part of a secret family ritual, Grace must take part in what she believes to be a harmless game of hide and seek, but she couldn't be more wrong. What follows is one of the most iconic Horror flicks that I have seen in a long time, with a fantastic script and a superb cast. *Ready or Not*, is pleasantly short, well executed and sure to remain a classic Horror flick for years to come. I fear it didn't get quite as much attention as it should have due to its marketing campaign being amidst the Fox-Disney transition.

Director Spotlight: Nancy Meyers



Birth: 12/8/1949 Philadelphia, PA

Notable Works: *The Parent Trap*, *What Women Want*, *The Holiday*, *It's Complicated*, *The Intern*, *Something's Gotta Give*

Fun Facts: The highest grossing female director of all time.
- Hallie and Annie in *The Parent Trap* are named after her daughters.

THE PURITAN POST'S IV WEEKS of CHRISTMAS Week III: Review: *SELF-STORAGE* (2019) or: The Strangest Christmas Movie EVER

Even though Christmas is long gone, THE PURITAN POST's IV Weeks of Christmas continues. My apologies to my loyal readers as I have been back home in Newfoundland celebrating Chanukah, Christmas and Boxing Day with my dear family in a home with no internet access. But I digress. Back in Issue No. 40 of THE PURITAN POST, I wrote a brief review of a small, micro-budget movie that I worked on called *SELF-STORAGE*, written and directed by my boss, Pat Collier. On the project I had a number of roles, primarily as the Director of Photography (D.P.) and the Editor.

When I first reviewed *SELF-STORAGE* I said it "had all the makings of a future cult classic", and I stand by that statement. *SELF-STORAGE* is also, without a doubt, the strangest Christmas movie ever made. The movie follows a young man named Conrad, who one Christmas, is unexpectedly broken up with by his girlfriend Olivia. A year later, Conrad is still having trouble getting over Olivia, and hanging onto a box of her belongings. His best friend Freddy advises him to get rid of the box. However, unable to part ways with it, Conrad takes the box of Olivia's mementos to his self-storage unit, where he finds himself trapped on the top floor with a knife-wielding killer. Over the course of the movie, Conrad must defend himself using gifts Olivia gave him.

The movie works primarily because of the universal identifier of keeping things in storage and the nostalgically familiar element of hanging onto mementos. The cast, for the most part, is pretty solid, with the standout being Connor McCafferty, who plays Freddie. Alexandria Rousset is also quite good as Olivia. Without tooting my own horn too much, the movie is also well shot and well edited, if I don't say so myself. Probably the biggest flaw with the flick, however, is Collier's script, which has a number of plot holes and often feels rather pedantic. Sometimes it feels like Collier is too in love with his own voice, and could stand to trim bits of dialogue down every now and then. That said, *SELF-STORAGE* is still a pretty clever concept, so I give Mr. Collier credit for contriving this bizarre little Christmas story to begin with.

When I look back at the production of *SELF-STORAGE*, it was not an easy road to making this roughly 7,000 dollar independent feature. Collier was sometimes disorganized, flighty and exhibited many of the flaws of a first time director of a feature length movie. With that said, I admire his tenacity and work on the flick. It takes gumption to dedicate three years of your life to a no-budget movie. I haven't decided if I would ever work for Mr. Collier again in the roles of D.P. and Editor. On one hand, I am greatly proud of my work on this picture, but at the same time, I had my share of problems with the organizational structure of the project. I think I speak for everyone involved that if we ever work with Pat Collier on another movie again, we all deserve far better pay.

SELF-STORAGE is now available on DVD & BluRay and hopefully soon on VOD.

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