



THE PURITAN POST

| by Hank W. Mardukas |

This Week on TV

Into the Dark: Pilgrim (Hulu)

Well, ol' Hank forgot all about this year's Thanksgiving Issue. There was some confusion because, as you know, in Canada we celebrate Thanksgiving in October so I forgot all about American Thanksgiving this year. That said, I still was able to check out *Into the Dark's* Thanksgiving themed installment, *Pilgrim*, about a suburban woman who invites Pilgrim re-enactors to a party for Thanksgiving. Things take a dark turn, however, when the re-enactors refuse to break character. The protagonist, the stepdaughter, is the only one who sees something is wrong. While I didn't care for this movie as much as some of the others in the *Into the Dark* series, it was still watchable but not as good as last year's Thanksgiving episode. Also it was definitely one of the weakest episodes visually.

Also This Week on TV

The Irishman (Netflix)

I had extremely high hopes going into Martin Scorsese's latest movie, *The Irishman*, which reunites Joe Pesci and Robert Deniro and goes back to Scorsese's gangster film roots. That said, it is very hard for me to say, as one of the biggest Scorsese fans out there, that I was shockingly disappointed by the flick. For a movie which some are hailing as a masterpiece, I found it to be perhaps Scorsese's least interesting, most plodding movie that he has ever directed. The de-aging process used on Robert Deniro and Joe Pesci was incredibly distracting and constantly took me out of the movie while also making it difficult to tell what era we were in scene to scene. Overall, it pains me to say, but *The Irishman* is one of the most overrated and disappointing movies in some time.

Director Spotlight: Shane Black



Birth: 12/16/1961 Pittsburgh, PA
Notable Works: *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*, *Iron Man 3*, *The Nice Guys*, *Edge*, *The Predator*
Fun Facts: Six of the movies he's written are set at Christmastime.
 - before directing, wrote the films *Lethal Weapon* & *The Last Boy Scout*.

THE PURITAN POST'S IV WEEKS of CHRISTMAS Week I: Underrated Christmas Classic 36.15 CODE PÈRE NOËL (1989) & Did HOME ALONE Plagiarize?

After a rather uneventful November here at THE PURITAN POST, it is the first week of our IV Weeks of Christmas Issues! In this Issue, I want to kick off the Christmas season by talking about a highly underrated Christmas gem, *36.15 Code Père Noël*, also known as *Dial Code Santa Claus* and *Game Over* amongst other names. The movie was directed by René Manzor who also made one of my other favorite French films, *Dédales*. I will also examine at the allegations made by Manzor that John Hughes and the makers of *Home Alone* stole his idea and pawned it off as their own.

The film follows a precocious, tech-savvy young boy named Thomas who lives in a mansion with his widowed, successful mother, Julie; ailing grandfather, Papy, and beloved dog, J.R. Thomas is obsessed with action movies and desperately wants to catch Santa in the act this Christmas using skills he picks up from his favorite movies. Thomas accidentally communicates with a derelict and homeless child predator on the internet who tries to get him to divulge his address. The man gets a job as Santa at Thomas' mom's department store, and is fired by Julie after slapping a child. He then seeks out Thomas by hijacking a toy delivery and after taking out the delivery guy, breaks into Thomas' home. Things take a dramatically dark turn when one moment Thomas thinks he sees the real Santa coming down the chimney, he soon finds out this man is pure evil. The movie is so incredibly skilled at balancing different tones and telling a story that is both heartfelt and nostalgic whilst also being absolutely terrifying and, quite frankly, very disturbing at times. The film never saw a wide release in France and it wasn't until 2018 that it was ever shown in America. It is a shame because if it were more widely seen, I imagine it to be considered a classic piece of Christmas cinema.

Now we must address writer and director René Manzor's allegation that John Hughes and the film *Home Alone* plagiarized his idea. *Home Alone* came out in 1990, a year after *36.15 Code Père Noël*, and went on to become the highest grossing Comedy ever at the time. While he never formally filed a lawsuit, Manzor did threaten the makers of *Home Alone* with legal action stating they, "remade my movie". In fairness to Hughes and those behind *Home Alone*, there are some distinct differences, namely the concept of the Kevin character being left by his family and titularly "home alone" as opposed to Thomas, who has Papy and J.R. That said, it's hard to deny the distinct similarities between the two films. The inherent premise of a kid on Christmas having to use creative traps to stop a home invasion is exactly the same. Not to mention, there is perhaps an obvious hint in the plot of *Home Alone* left as a clue from John Hughes. After all, when Kevin's family leaves him alone, they're going to spend Christmas in France, the very country that gave us both *36.15 Code Père Noël* and René Manzor. Coincidence? We may never know.

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