

50 Most Underrated Films of All Time

List Compiled By: the Movieguy

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Hello and welcome to my list of the 50 Most Underrated Movies of All Time. Earlier in the year I released my “25 Most Overrated Movies of All Time” list, and received many compliments on it. Though some saw “Overrated Movies” as a negative category and wondered why I was such a pessimist. As a matter of fact, while I was doing the overrated list I was also working on a list for the most underrated films of all time. This one would take much longer however because I decided to include 50 films to send the message that underrated movies are much more important to me than the overrated ones. I had always wanted to do this list and after lots of work it is finally finished.

Before we begin, perhaps I should describe what I mean by Underrated.

The films I have put into this list fall under one or more of the following rather broad categories:

- 1) A movie that has been unfairly criticized despite being a good or even excellent film.
- 2) A movie that has been ignored and/or underappreciated by critics, fans, studios etc.
- 3) A very good movie that is simply unknown, or does not have much recognition by critics and/or fans.
- 4) A movie that was once popular and should stand the test of time, but is slowly but surely being forgotten by critics and/or fans.
- 5) A brilliant, Oscar-worthy film that was inexplicably left out at the Academy Awards.

A quick note: You might notice that I have quite a few from 2006, and many from the 2000s. I was as surprised as anyone to discover this. I simply made a list of about 100 films and began to rank them, dragging some up, some down, eliminating some and adding others until I was satisfied. I didn't enter the dates until the very end, and was pretty surprised to notice that the list didn't have as much chronological diversity as I expected. I think so many films came from the 2000s because so many more movies are released (and made) now than ever before. And, sadly, more great movies are ignored now than ever before. In the 40s, 50s, 60s and 70s there were a lot of movies, but most got their due in one way or another as the industry was much different then. The 80s were a dreadful movie decade that I think we all wish to forget, and the 90s were still coming out of that funk. Though it may seem as though I am biased toward recent films, please know that I searched far and wide for movies from time periods, and after months of research and applying my criteria to each film, this was the list I came up with.

Hopefully you will enjoy this, and it will cause you to add a few new movies to your “must-see” lists. Please email any questions or comments that you might have.

Happy viewing,
the Movieguy

50) The Grand (2007)

the Movieguy's Analysis: A good comedy is hard to find, and they really don't come along all that frequently. It received no real theatrical release, and was put out on DVD without any advertising, but this movie was flat out hilarious. The screenplay was under 30 pages, and writer/director Zak Penn expected all the actors to improvise in practically every scene. Let's just say they excelled. Featuring a great cast of David Cross, Woody Harrelson, Mike Epps, Denis Farina, Richard Kind and Judy Greer, this comedy about gambling and card playing is fairly unique and definitely needs to be seen.

49) The Libertine (2004)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Some of the films we'll see on this list are movies that were completely robbed of deserved Oscar recognition- this is the first such film on the list. Riding on the brilliant, Oscar-worthy performance of Johnny Depp as infamous 17th Century poet John Wilmot (The Earl of Rochester), this movie had a raw energy that most period pieces just don't achieve. Laurence Dunmore's direction was also Oscar-worthy, and it was as gritty and realistic as they come. Its vision, style, intensity and complex character development made it an outstanding film which was inexplicably ignored by critics and fans alike.

48) The Boys From Brazil (1978)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Since we all watch "To Kill a Mockingbird" in English class, the first real Gregory Peck movie I saw was "The Omen," which was ruined by his putrid overacting. Next I saw "Cape Fear" which was vastly inferior to the Robert De Niro remake. I then watched a few of his other films to discover that I liked him as an actor, but didn't much like his movies. Then I saw this film. Not only did we have a brilliant, chilling performance from Peck, but we were also treated to an Oscar-nominated performance from that Laurence Olivier guy, plus outstanding direction from Franklin J. Schaffner. It's a mystery/thriller hybrid which combines elements of science fiction with a disturbing take on ex-Nazis. This film was nominated for three Oscars and grossed \$19 million in the box office (decent for the time), but was quickly forgotten. It's never on any top movies of all time lists, and it damn well should be. This is an excellent all around movie that did not compromise itself and certainly delivered as much unsettling psychological material as you can ask for. Stop ignoring this movie!

47) The Mothman Prophecies (2002)

the Movieguy's Analysis: I had never heard of this film when I picked it off the shelf of the video store. It actually made \$35 million in the box office off of a \$32 million budget, and starred Richard Gere, Laura Linney and Will Patton. Yet it was kind of maligned by critics and received mysteriously lukewarm reviews from the public. Based on a true story, this film recounts events which led to the discovery of a mysterious entity called "The Mothman," which had been blamed by some for many mysterious events around the world. Is "The Mothman" a legitimate paranormal entity? I doubt it, but it's a great idea and worked flawlessly in the movie. Directed by Mark Pellington, whose surprisingly good 1999 film "Arlington Road" was a runner up for this list, it carried a suspenseful, scary atmosphere with chilling imagery and excellent camerawork in all the right places. Gere, Linney and Patton were outstanding, with Gere's performance delivering the perfect blend of paranoia and character development. The screenplay was well-constructed and contained plenty of good ideas. If you're looking for a well made suspense/mystery film about supernatural events, watch this one.

46) LÉby Goes Down (2002)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Featuring an outstanding cast of Kieran Culkin, Claire Danes, Jeff Goldblum, Jared Harris, Amanda Peet, Ryan Phillippe, Bill Pullman, Susan Sarandon and Rory Culkin, and written and directed by Burr Steers (aka Flock of Seagulls in "Pulp Fiction"), this dysfunctional black comedy worked in more ways than one. Bitingly written and cleverly directed, this movie's wit and charm were infectious. It's on the list because while critics and fans gave it positive reviews, it's just not talked about enough. 2002 isn't THAT long ago, yet this movie, like so many others on this list, just got pushed under the rug. It'll show up on a few cult movie lists, but it should be the film that you recommend to your friends who ask if you know of a smart, witty comedy they can watch.

45) The Game (1997)

the Movieguy's Analysis: With a multitude of good reasons, "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" was #1 on my "25 Most Overrated Movies of All-Time." Before that movie though, David Fincher was a totally different filmmaker. After he disowned "Alien 3" he created "Se7en," a true masterpiece. Then he helmed "Fight Club," which achieved immortality much in the same way "Se7en" had. Oh, wait- there was a movie in between... and it was a great movie indeed. Fincher's ability to create mystery and suspense is otherworldly, and this movie's odd plot was a perfect showcase for that talent. Running on Fincher's energy, plus a truly great performance from Michael Douglas and strong showing from Sean Penn, this movie took control from beginning to end. From a \$50 million budget it grossed \$48 million which isn't bad, but certainly not indicative of how good of a movie it is. In reality this movie is a victim of its release date; sandwiched between two timeless classics it just got lost in the shuffle. Rent this movie right away!

44) The Fountain (2006)

the Movieguy's Analysis: This is a tale of two films- the final version and the film Hollywood robbed Darren Aronofsky from making. Largely a victim of Hollywood politics, this film was intended to be a big budget blockbuster starring Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett. Creative differences between Pitt and Aronofsky, caused Pitt to drop out and make "Troy," then Hollywood pulled its \$75 million budget and shut it all down. That was 2002. Aronofsky had a choice- give up or make a condensed version of the movie. He chose the latter, settling for his own fiancée, Rachel Weisz and classic overactor Hugh Jackman. To be fair, Weisz is a first rate actress and her performance in this movie was better than Blanchett's probably would have been. As for Jackman, he gave one of his better performances and carried the film nicely. Aronofsky's direction was beautiful and artistically brilliant, jamming an enormous amount of symbolism and complex philosophical, psychological and metaphysical themes into a running time reduced to just over 90 minutes. Its phenomenal musical score deserved an Oscar, but it was sadly ignored. Some critics and fans maligned the movie for being nonsensical and problematic, but I disagree. The film works on a variety of levels, none of which are grounded in reality. It told a good story with grace and beauty, but you could just tell that a timeless, Oscar-worthy epic was yearning to get out. Though I long for that movie, this was a brilliant film as well. Was it a perfect film? No, but it was really quite excellent in its own right.

43) Tristram Shandy: A Cock and Bull Story (2005)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Take a step into the world of the truly bizarre with this offbeat British comedy. It is humor of the smartest and most subtle variety, and represents one of the few times extreme creativity and a far out plot don't backfire in a comedy. Not only was it helmed by a great performance by Steve Coogan with Rob Brydon as a reliable co-star, but skilled director Michael Winterbottom directed it. I'd try to describe the plot, but it wouldn't make any sense unless you see it for yourself. Good comedy doesn't come around very often, and this is one of those movies you've probably never heard of, but just have to see.

42) Road Trip (2000)

the Movieguy's Analysis: You know, there WAS a world BEFORE Vince Vaughn, Will Ferrell, the Brothers Wilson, Paul Rudd, Steve Carell and Seth Rogen were in every comedy you saw. What was that world like? Hit or miss most of the time, but this was a timeless comedy that was overshadowed by "Old School." Directed by Todd Phillips, the same guy who brought you "Old School," "Starsky & Hutch" and "The Hangover," this raunchy comedy was very funny indeed.

Sure it had typical characters and some purposely over-the-top sequences that could have been eliminated, but its humor was real and Phillips gave it such a genuine feel that it was almost possible to believe this plot could happen in real life. Starring Breckin Meyer, Seann William Scott, Amy Smart, Paulo Costanzo, DJ Qualls and Tom Green, its cast was almost as good as the plot. A college kid and his long distance girlfriend send each other videotapes (like a video diary) to keep their relationship alive. However, the boyfriend gets drunk one night, cheats on his girlfriend, videotapes it, and accidentally mails his girlfriend the sex tape. Now he and his misfit friends have to travel halfway across the country to intercept the tape. With quirky, funny and sincere performances complimenting a surprisingly well-written screenplay, this is the forgotten Todd Phillips comedy that people need to rediscover.

41) Shallow Grave (1994)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Guess what? Danny Boyle's only movies aren't "Trainspotting" and "Slumdog Millionaire." After doing television work in the late 80s and early 90s, Boyle made his first feature film. "Trainspotting" came two years later. Starring an acting trio of Ewan McGregor, Christopher Eccleston and Kerry Fox, their performances were as strong as their on-screen chemistry. The story was simple: Three flatmates bring in a new roommate only to find him mysteriously dead in his room with a suitcase full of money. The story is engrossing, and Boyle developed the characters with great precision. This film really did have everything- solid acting and direction, it was disturbing and it made you think. This is what a cult classic really looks like, and more people need to see it.

40) War of the Worlds (2005)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Yes, yes I know Tom Cruise bashing was in full force when this film came out. Honestly I don't care what he said on a certain live TV broadcast, and I care even less that he embarrassed himself in front of millions. It happens, deal with it. I hate that every so often we need a celebrity to bash, and because it happened to be Cruise at the time this movie came out, people bashed it, and quite unfairly I might add. Sure it wasn't the best movie ever made, but it took a classic that desperately needed remaking and brought it into the modern world. This is a story that is almost totally reliant on special effects, and the 1953 film was a neat movie that had good special effects for the time. It even won an Oscar for special effects, but they just don't hold up today. The remake was nominated for three technical Oscars and had outstanding visual effects which really brought the story to life. If anything, the movie's faults (a propensity toward Hollywood clichés) should be attributed to director Steven Spielberg, whose inclinations are usually centered around whatever is mainstream, easy to understand and likable to the masses. The plot itself had some issues, but we can blame Spielberg's influence for those as well. Cruise gave a strong performance as did Dakota Fanning and Justin Chatwin. I even enjoyed Tim Robbins' cameo, which was dangerously close to being over-the-top. This might be the only "Underrated" movie that made over \$234 million (including a \$77 million opening weekend), but people just kept bashing it because of Tom Cruise, and it was pushed under the rug after its theatrical run. 'Underappreciated' might be the more appropriate word.

39) The Visitor (2007)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Here's another brilliant movie totally ignored by every critic and movie distributor there is. Thomas McCarthy has quietly made a name for himself as a respectable independent filmmaker, and this movie should have catapulted him to several Oscar nominations. Without question he deserved nominations for Best Director and Best Original Screenplay, while the movie richly deserved a Best Picture nod. Richard Jenkins was nominated for his outstanding leading performance, but Hiam Abbass was ignored for her brilliant supporting role. But enough about critical accolades; this was a beautiful movie, full of emotional richness and compelling character development. It's a shame so few people got to see it. The height of its theatrical run went to just under 300 theaters worldwide (the average Hollywood movie gets between 2500 and 3200), though it did manage to gross over \$9 million in this restricted environment. It's disgusting how much garbage Hollywood puts out there, and a truly amazing film like this gets thrown away like stale bread. Watch this movie- you won't be disappointed.

38) I Heart Huckabees (2004)

the Movieguy's Analysis: If you have a flair for the bizarre, this is your movie. Co-written and directed by oddball filmmaker David O. Russell, the tagline for this movie read "An existential comedy." Does that make sense? I didn't think so. The plot is just too hard to explain in such a small space, but needless to say, Russell brought comedy in many clever, smart and strange directions. It featured a huge cast of Dustin Hoffman, Lily Tomlin, Jude Law, Mark Wahlberg, Jason Schwartzman and Naomi Watts, all of whom were perfect for their strange and unique characters. The movie wasn't Oscar-worthy or perfect by any means, but Russell took chances, and the cast was smart enough to see the intelligence and thought put into the story. If you've seen any of Russell's other films, namely "Flirting with Disaster," you know they aren't really meant to work on a literal level. It's a comedy on its own wavelength and definitely is not for everyone, but I don't think enough people gave it a chance, which is why it's on the list.

37) The Devil and Daniel Johnston (2005)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Documentaries are pretty obscure these days. Most of them aren't released in theaters at all, and a select few receive limited showings. They're obviously not crowd pleasers, but a good documentary can illuminate a great deal about the human condition. This was one of the best I've seen in that department, and sadly very few have even heard of it. The film chronicles the life of Daniel Johnston, a genius musician/artist whose manic depressive/schizophrenic tendencies derailed his career. What's particularly amazing about Johnston was that he meticulously documented practically every moment of his life with a combination of video tapes, audio tapes, artwork and music. The movie's writer and director Jeff Feuerzeig brought this footage to life with the same passion Johnston used to create it, combined with the vision of a top-notch documentary filmmaker. This was a truly brilliant documentary that inexplicably did not receive an Oscar nomination. Watch this movie!

36) Mulholland Dr. (2001)

the Movieguy's Analysis: David Lynch movies are by their very nature "under the radar," but this film was different. With more accessibility to its imagery and complex themes, the movie appeared less obscure than some of Lynch's other work, hinting at a return to his "Blue Velvet" days when his movies were more in the public eye. This was an Oscar worthy movie, and Lynch did receive a best director nomination, though I think it's fair to say she had no chance of winning. This was a film of the highest quality, and should have been nominated for Best Picture, Best Original Screenplay, Best Cinematography and Best Original Score. The story itself was excellent and extremely compelling, so much so that its 2 1/2 hour running time seemed to rush by in a wave of surreal imagery and complex emotions. Naomi Watts should have been nominated for best lead actress, and her co-star, Laura Harring, could have easily received a nomination of her own. Justin Theroux, and Ann Miller also turned in outstanding supporting performances in a film that was as well acted as it was directed. Like most of Lynch's other movies, this film's disgraceful excuse for a theatrical release hit its peak at 247 theaters. However, Lynch fans did slowly bring in over \$7 million. Ignored by the Oscars and the general public, David Lynch has become kind of an outlaw sitting outside the filmmaking world. It's a shame because his movies are so good, but it's especially unfortunate for this particular film, because it should have put him back into the public eye. Even though Lynch might not be your cup of tea, but this movie on your list; you won't be disappointed.

35) To Die For (1995)

the Movieguy's Analysis: most people know Gus Van Sant from "Good Will Hunting," or the recent "Milk." However, by the early 90s, he had built a solid reputation as a cult filmmaker with "Drugstore Cowboy" and "My Own Private Idaho." Released two years before "Good Will Hunting," this is one of the sadly forgotten Gus Van Sant films. Starring Nicole Kidman, Matt Dillon, Joaquin Phoenix and Casey Affleck, this movie was about a disturbed woman who so desperately wanted to be on television that she would seduce and trick three teenagers into killing her husband. It was a typical Van Sant film from beginning to end, incorporating dark comedy and a colorful cast of characters in an even darker universe. The film was well acted all around, and Van Sant's directorial mark was present in almost every scene. It's a uniquely bizarre film indeed that is definitely worth seeing.

34) Blindness (2008)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Based upon a brilliant novel by José Saramago that won the Nobel Prize for Literature, and directed by visionary filmmaker Fernando Meirelles, everyone expected a great deal from this movie. The film itself was brilliantly directed, but was ultimately unable to overcome Don McKellar's screenplay problems. Nevertheless, it's a movie that needs to be seen, but is quickly being forgotten. Though it is an English-language film, it was released primarily in Brazil (Meirelles' native country) and was never given a chance in America. It's a shame because its symbolism and imagery were extraordinary, and its social implications were vast. Not only that, it featured fantastic performances from Julianne Moore, Danny Glover, Mark Ruffalo and Gael García Bernal. Sure it wasn't the film that everyone thought it would be, but it was still a high quality movie that was as socially important as it was phenomenally directed. It's not an easy movie to watch, but it's worth it in the end.

33) One Hour Photo (2002)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Robin Williams is a double-edged sword. You get the excessive stupidity of movies like "Night at the Museum" and "Flubber," or you get unique acting talent portrayed in films like "Deconstructing Harry," "The Fisher King," "Awakenings," and this movie. Released without much fanfare in late 2002, the movie slowly grossed over \$31 million, though \$19.5 million of that came from overseas. The film tells the story of a lonely, middle-aged photo lab employee who becomes dangerously obsessed with a family whose pictures he frequently develops. With digital cameras readily available during this period, the film was oddly outdated even during its theatrical run. Somehow, it still manages to hold up today even though most people can't remember the days when they had film developed. Robin Williams was phenomenal in his starring role, inspiring as much fear as curiosity with his complicated and unsettlingly damaged character. Director Mark Romanek had made a career of directing music videos, but the quality and vision of his direction was pristine from beginning to end. In the one or two years after its release, the movie rented extremely well on DVD, but has been forgotten in recent years. This movie was a rare and special vision, and needs to be rediscovered.

32) Jarhead (2005)

the Movieguy's Analysis: After "American Beauty" pulled in five Oscars including Best Director and Best Picture, a lot of people expected a great deal from Sam Mendes. His follow-up, "Road to perdition," was a very good movie that was nominated for six Oscars, and won one for Best Cinematography. Though the film had an extraordinary amount of meaning and emotion, some people thought it was forced and Mendes was reaching for something. Three years later, he made this film, which was a total departure from everything related to his directorial style. Perhaps movies about the modern military are going to be unpopular, especially films that portray it in a negative way, but this was one of the more underrated films of 2005. Ignited by a phenomenal performance from Jake Gyllenhaal, Mendes took a true story about a Marine's experiences fighting in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and made a different type of "war movie." Though the film had typical war movie themes (lost love, lost friends, etc.), Mendes' direction was creative and carried a unique vision that most films in the genre cannot achieve. On a \$70 million budget, the film grossed \$62.4 million and was heavily previewed, however it was forgotten soon after it was released and never rented well on DVD. It is understandable that movies about war are difficult to watch, but there are a few that are too important to skip- this happens to be one of them.

31) Midnight Run (1988)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Robert De Niro has a lightning quick comedic ability that has been largely untapped throughout his lengthy acting career. This was one of the few movies where he took full advantage of practically his entire skill set as an actor. With Charles Grodin co-starring, the movie took a fairly common plot (a crooked accountant who jumps bail is perused across the country by a bounty hunter, the FBI and the mobsters he worked for) and weaved it into a clever, funny and ultimately memorable movie. Directed by Martin Brest before he committed career suicide (see "Gigli"), this movie had as many laughs as it did believable moments of action, making it a successful action/comedy, which is as rare as they come. I'm sure most of you have never even heard of this movie, which is why you need to check it out. So many movies try to do what this movie did and end up being horrible, which goes to show you how special this film actually is.

30) The Atomic Café (1982)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Sorry about the weird letter 'e'- the font I selected for the titles won't support accent marks and I wasn't about to change it for one letter of one title. Anyway, I had never heard of this film until one of my history professors in college showed clips of it in class. I tracked it down and watched the whole thing; I then proclaimed it to be the best documentary I ever saw. This film is a collection of propaganda videos from the 40s and 50s created to assure Americans that the atomic bomb was not dangerous. I'm not one for shock value, but after watching this movie it is clear that in certain situations, shock value can be a very effective tool. This movie's social commentary was as biting as it gets, and the interesting thing was, it didn't need narration or even a great deal of organization- the material spoke for itself. Disgracefully, this movie was not even nominated for an Oscar, even though it deserved to win hands down. It would be difficult to locate a documentary better than this, so watch this movie and see what I mean.

29) The Boy in the Striped Pajamas (2008)

the Movieguy's Analysis: To say a film is underrated could mean many things. So far in this list we've seen movies that have been ignored by the public, unfairly chastised by critics or simply never given a chance to be enjoyed by anyone. This movie is on this list for one reason and one reason only- its unspeakable, indefensible and disgraceful snubbing of nominations for the many major Oscars it clearly deserved. How many Oscars wasn't nominated for? Zero. Which Oscars did it deserve nominations for? Best Picture, Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Actor in a Leading Role, Best Original Score, Best Cinematography. Which Oscars did it deserve to win? Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Actor in a Leading Role. It would have been a very tight race for best picture as well. It is infuriating when a truly brilliant film is unilaterally ignored, but we have an unfortunate case of it here. As for the movie itself, it really doesn't get much better than this. We've seen so many movies about Nazis and World War II that at this point were just numb to them. Not only did it take those tired themes in a completely different direction, writer/director Mark Herman's remarkable directorial vision brought out a layer of emotions most films of this genre do not touch. The movie's greatest achievement came from the performance of Asa Butterfield, who deserved the Oscar more than anyone this year, and most in other years as well. Regarding his snubbing, let's put it this way- it would have been akin to not nominating Forest Whitaker or Philip Seymour Hoffman for the Oscars they eventually won. Get to your video store and pick up this unforgettable film; it is an achievement that you are unlikely to see again for quite some time.

28) Felicia's Journey (1999)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Atom Egoyan's movies are as complex as they are bizarre. He's kind of a hybrid David Lynch, with his imagery and dark stories, but with a more slowly polished beauty in the end product. The Egyptian filmmaker has a long and varied career which has seen its share of ups and downs, but this movie was an odd, yet successful departure from his typical style. The plot is too difficult to describe, but this movie is an undiscovered gem. Led by Egoyan's brooding and haunting direction, an extraordinary dark performance from Bob Hoskins and an excellent co-starring effort from Elaine Cassidy, there wasn't much to dislike about this film. It received no theatrical release or publicity of any kind, and critics definitely did not give this film its due, but if you have a flair for the bizarre put this movie at the top of your list.

27) The Truth About Charlie (2002)

the Movieguy's Analysis: When this movie came out it was viciously torn apart limb from limb. Why? Well, it wasn't the greatest movie, but it certainly was not a bad movie by any stretch. It was well acted and creatively directed by Jonathan Demme, but it just so happened that it was a remake of the classic 1963 film "Charade" starring Cary Grant, Audrey Hepburn, Walter Matthau and James Coburn. Whenever a classic movie is remade there is a strong possibility that critics will bash it for no reason, as if there is some law that states that classic movies cannot be remade. Mark Wahlberg, Thandie Newton starred in this film and gave solid performances. Is Mark Wahlberg Cary Grant? Of course not. Is Thandie Newton Audrey Hepburn? Of course not. But this was a fine movie in its own right, and certainly did not deserve to be ripped apart for no reason by people who think certain films are untouchable. Interestingly enough, the DVD was actually a double sided disc. On one side was "The Truth About Charlie," on the other, "Charade." Go figure.

26) Silk (2007)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Ever see a movie with Oscar caliber direction and cinematography and wonder how no one else has even heard of it? That's this movie in a nutshell. François Girard's direction was epically beautiful, as was the cinematography, which captured the film's emotional resonance with the skill and vision that only elite filmmakers show. The story itself is rather obscure. Set in the 19th Century, it tells the story of a married man who travels from France to Japan to bring back silkworms to make silk in his factories. During his time there he becomes infatuated with a concubine. When he returns to his wife, his love for the concubine persists, and things begin to get complicated for the both of them. It's a story of unrequited love told in the most beautiful context. Starring Michael Pitt and Keira Knightley, the film had a high-caliber level of acting, which conveniently matched its outstanding direction. It might sound like a typical love story, and the plot summary doesn't do it justice. This is a beautiful movie that probably no one has heard of, or even seen. I gave it four stars, and it deserved every one of them. If you don't like the sappiness that comes out of Hollywood today, and are longing for beauty and sincerity, this is a movie you need to see.

25) Badlands (1973)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Terrence Malick is a special filmmaker with a unique style. His movies contain an odd combination of quiet beauty and unsettling serenity, juxtaposed with troubled characters who are going through monumental psychological changes. This was Malick's first feature film, and somehow it has gotten lost in time. Malick's films are not easy to watch (see #17), but are remarkably rewarding to those who can appreciate his vision. This film featured the breakout performance of Martin Sheen, who at that time was considered the reincarnation of James Dean. It also featured a brilliant young Sissy Spacek, whose beauty and innocence captivated from beginning to end. The movie told a dramatized true story of a 1958 killing spree during which a teenage girl ran off with her older boyfriend and murdered people with him. Though it is far down on the list, the film is widely recognized as one of the best directorial debuts ever, and does show up on top 100 lists with decent frequency. It's on the list because Malick is a special, often misunderstood filmmaker whose vision is much more powerful than people give him credit for. You can't really publicize older movies, and unless you know film, Malick's movies will not come up very often as topics of discussion. At any rate, this movie, at least in my opinion, is slowly being forgotten by a wider and wider section of the public. I look at top 100 lists every year, and I see this movie slowly slipping further and further down the list. It used to be in the 40s and 50s, now it's in the 70s and 80s. Let's put this movie back where it belongs.

24) Gods and Monsters (1998)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Brendan Fraser's acting career has been one of the most varied I've ever seen. A man with great talent has spent a great deal of time wasting that talent on some truly awful movies. It's not as bad as Robin Williams, but he's probably the runner up. This movie, on the other hand, was truly outstanding. It chronicles the last days of reclusive 1930s director James Whale, whose films included "Frankenstein," "The Bride of Frankenstein," "Show Boat" and "The Invisible Man." Movies that run on flashbacks are usually forced and desperate, but this movie was haunting and powerful to the very end. Outstanding performances from Ian McKellen, Lynn Redgrave, and Fraser were the fuel for the film, but Bill Condon's direction and writing were phenomenal. The film received three Oscar nominations (McKellen, and Redgrave), and Condon won for Best Adapted Screenplay. It's a wonderfully conceived character study, driven by haunting performances and perfectly crafted direction. Unfortunately, Condon is now known more for "Dreamgirls," McKellen is remembered for his "Lord of the Rings" Oscar nomination (even though it was only three years later), and the movie itself has been all but forgotten. Do yourself a favor and resurrect this one.

23) Following (1998)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Less than a decade before Christopher Nolan was known as the man who revitalized the Batman character, he was a student filmmaker perusing his dream. This was his first feature film, and though it did not look like any of his other movies, it certainly showcased the talent that was to come. At a running time of just over an hour and shot in black-and-white, this is one of the better "student films" you'll see. The plot was as brilliant as they come, and I'd like to see Nolan someday remake this into a longer movie in which he can more fully develop the characters. Basically, it was about a young writer who was struggling for ideas. He began to follow strangers on the street and see what they did, hoping to be inspired. In his travels he encountered a seemingly well-to-do thief and the two began a partnership in crime. However the situation was complicated when a beautiful woman was introduced into the mix. Jeremy Theobald, Alex Haw and Lucy Russell, gave excellent performances, playing the film's three main characters. The film was unpredictable and inspired, and carried a dark style all its own. I'd say this is a must-see.

22) The Good Shepherd (2006)

the Movieguy's Analysis: I've talked plenty about movies which have been unilaterally ignored by the Oscars, and I've talked about movies which have been unfairly criticized by the public and/or critics. At number 22 on the list, this film has a whole lot of both. With an interesting plot, the movie chronicled the inception of the CIA through the life of a more or less fictional character. It featured as much talent and big names as you can possibly cram into a movie. The director? Robert De Niro. The writer? Oscar-winning screenwriter Eric Roth of "Forrest Gump," "The Insider" and "Munich." The cast? Matt Damon, Angelina Jolie, Alec Baldwin, Billy Crudup, De Niro, Michael Gambon, William Hurt, Timothy Hutton, Gabriel Macht, Joe Pesci and John Turturro. Not only did the film have all the pieces, it executed brilliantly. In 2006 I had been waiting for the best movie of the year into December. Then this movie came out, and everything changed. It truly was the very best film of the year, and it deserved nominations for numerous Oscars including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Original Screenplay, Best Lead Actor, Best Cinematography, Best Original Score, and even Best Costumes. So, what happened? Critics took the absurd position that the film was too slow, too long and didn't accomplish much. They wrote it off like it never even happened. In the end, it was nominated for one Oscar (Best Art Direction) which it didn't even win. In actuality this movie should have won a majority of the major Oscars. It was brilliant in every respect, and was practically a perfect motion picture. Roth and De Niro told a great story and captured the passage of time expertly, developing characters with grace and consistency. The acting was first rate across the board, and it really left nothing to be desired. When you talk about underrated movies, I don't think there can be a respectable list without this one.

21) Miami Vice (2006)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Highly publicized and with a budget of \$135 million, this movie should have been a huge summer blockbuster. Instead, it was a box office bust, pulling in just over \$63 million and a boatload of criticism from critics and fans. In fact, this was a very good movie that was killed by only two words: "Miami Vice." Michael Mann is a brilliant filmmaker, but he isn't without fault. "The Last of the Mohicans" was a poor movie, and "Ali" was misunderstood, yet a missed opportunity at the same time. In the execution of this movie, Mann did nothing wrong. His direction was gritty and real, and his story was a perfect crime saga. The film also featured solid performances from Colin Farrell and Jamie Foxx. So what was wrong with it? Even though Mann was an executive producer on TV's "Miami Vice" for many years, he made the fatal decision to name this movie after a television show it literally had nothing to do with. Though the two main characters in the movie had the same names as the characters from the show, the connection could go no further. In some cases, a person's expectations are everything, and when people saw the words "Miami Vice," they assumed it had something to do with the television show. When they saw that it didn't, they were disappointed, and that was the end of it. They refused to acknowledge Mann's brilliant directorial vision, and the gritty realism he brought to the movie. As for the story itself, I read that people could not follow the plot, which is baffling to me. Sure there were a number of characters and names mentioned back-and-forth, but it was no more complicated than "Heat," which everyone loves. Maybe they love "Heat" because its director didn't call it "Miami Vice." Watch this movie, but pretend it has a different title. It is an excellent crime movie and should be viewed as such.

20) A Scanner Darkly (2006)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Richard Linklater is one of the great American filmmakers of our time, and though he is best known for "Dazed and Confused" and "Before Sunrise/Sunset," this movie may in fact be his crowning achievement. Based upon the novel by Philip K. Dick, a writer whose works are extremely difficult to adapt, this film takes a futuristic world and presents it in an entirely different way. The film was shot with normal movie cameras, then, in post production, a process called rotoscoping was applied. It makes the actors and sets appear cartoonish and slightly jittery. Hardly any movies use it at all because of how time-consuming and expensive it is, but Linklater used it to perfection. When all was said and done, it truly was the perfect visual method for this complex and odd story. His direction was emotional and sincere, and his writing was witty and entirely memorable. It is difficult to judge acting in a rotoscoped movie, but in this film the performances were outstanding. Keanu Reeves, Robert Downey Jr., Rory Cochrane, Winona Ryder and Woody Harrelson were perfect for their characters, with Reeves and Downey Jr. standing out above the rest. To give you an idea how difficult the film's post production was, it took 23 days to shoot the scenes, but it took 50 animators 18 months to complete the rotoscoping process. This film deserved so many things that it didn't get- Oscar nominations, a more respectable advertising campaign and a nationwide theatrical release. Without fanfare or recognition of any kind, it stands as one of the best science fiction movies ever made, and one of the few successful adaptations of a Philip K. Dick novel. This is a must-see.

19) Lost Highway (1997)

the Movieguy's Analysis: As mentioned in the "Mulholland Dr." review, David Lynch's movies are always going to be on the outside looking in. This movie may be his most widely ignored and universally unknown work. This film shows a rarely seen raw and visceral side of Lynch. I've seen the film at least a dozen times, and it took me quite a while to understand the plot, but it seems to have a hypnotic hold over anyone who watches it. Bill Pullman and Patricia Arquette gave fine performances, but they were overshadowed by Robert Blake's chilling and intensely terrifying supporting role. It's almost impossible to talk about the film in any detail with someone who hasn't seen it because of how completely bizarre and strange it is, and I would venture a guess that no one alive could understand it after they see it first time. Still, it is an invigorating yet psychologically terrifying movie experience. Only David Lynch could come up with something like this and make it work so well. The movie received absolutely no theatrical showing and was only recently released on DVD in America. Just more evidence that the greatest movies often have to endure the most criticism and must suffer through being unilaterally ignored. I have a feeling if you watch this movie you will be as hypnotized by it as I am.

18) Match Point (2005)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Woody Allen's dramas have always been better than his comedies. Perhaps it's easy to say that because he's had so few dramas and all of them have been outstanding. This movie signaled a career rebirth for Allen, choosing to film in Europe over his customary New York, and his movies have never been better. This was his best movie in years, and was the best drama of his career after "Interiors." The plot was typical Allen all the way- a man falls for a conventional woman, then has an affair with an exotic woman with an explosive personality. It sounds like a Woody Allen comedy, except, well, it wasn't. I have not seen, an "edge of your seat" drama with this much intensity or emotional suspense for a very very long time. In fact, it is probably one of the best ever in that particular genre. Jonathan Rhys Meyers gave an outstanding leading performance, capturing the confusion and hysteria of his character perfectly. Matthew Goode and Emily Mortimer provided strong supporting performances, but Scarlett Johansson, overshadowed them all with quite possibly the best performance of her entire career. Dripping with sexuality and unpredictable emotional swings, she seemed quite at home in Allen's superbly created world. Dedicated Woody Allen fans provided the film with a \$23 million box office gross, which was impressive considering it barely exceeded 500 theaters nationwide. The film's complex characters and psychological content earned Allen a Best Original Screenplay Oscar nomination. But the film deserved to be nominated for Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Supporting Actress as well. Its scant theatrical release and disgraceful lack of Oscar recognition are inexcusable; this is one of the top 10 best movies of the decade.

17) The New World (2005)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Well, you either love it or you hate it- there is simply no other way to describe this movie. As I mentioned earlier, Terence Malick is a different kind of filmmaker. His movies are quiet, slow and beautifully moving. People who require fast paced action and constantly moving plots would probably not last 30 minutes through this 2 1/2 hour film. People who appreciate carefully developed character discovery, and breathtakingly beautiful cinematography will find this a veritable gold mine. Though much of the negativity surrounding this film did result from Malick's directorial style, the rest came from the public's incomprehensible dislike of Colin Farrell. Farrell is a truly gifted actor, and though not all of his movies have been gems, he has a raw talent that needs to be harnessed by strong direction. In this movie, Farrell was in a great atmosphere, and though his performance was not perfect, he was certainly an ideal carrier of Malick's vision. While the movie centers around explorer John Smith and his relationship with the Native Americans (namely Pocahontas) in the 17th century, many have complained that the film had no story at all, or was just too slow. Again, it's a matter of whether or not you like Malick's style. I gave the film 3.5 stars, because I was enthralled with the direction and truly captivated by the characters. Malick has a way of getting under your skin, and once you acclimate yourself to his pace, you find yourself in a completely different world. It's impossible to properly advertise his movies, and there is a definite love-hate relationship associated with them, but I urge you to watch this movie. Some may hate it, while others will be instantly drawn to it as I was.

16) Bug (2006)

the Movieguy's Analysis: There was a time when William Friedkin was considered to be a great visionary. Unfortunately, after "The French Connection" and "The Exorcist," his movies more or less bottomed out. He appeared to be a filmmaker without a voice and until this movie came out. It was an exercise in psychological brutality and extreme minimalism, and in the end, this proved an extraordinary achievement. The film takes place almost entirely in a seedy Oklahoma motel room where a lonely woman meets up with an unbalanced man. The two soon realize that their room and bodies are infested with tiny bugs, but all is not what it seems. Ashley Judd and Michael Shannon starred, and their performances were enthralling and intense. Both deserved Oscar nominations for the level of believability and realism they brought to the story. Friedkin's direction was brutal to watch, and the decisions he made showed his talent was very much alive and was just waiting for the right project to bring it out. The film was filled with as much psychological intensity and paranoia as you can probably fit into a movie, and it is not a movie that will leave your mind easily. The film received a decent theatrical exhibition of over 1600 screens, but a less than satisfactory advertising campaign doomed it. It was out of theaters after just four weeks and \$7 million. This ranks number 16 on the list because not only did fans and critics pass it over, but the Oscar nominations it deserved were nowhere to be found. In the 70s, this was the kind of movie that would be nominated for every major Oscar and discussed for decades. Today it's just ignored. It is psychological intensity, brilliant direction and strong acting at its finest- watch this movie!

15) The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (2003)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Remakes are an old Hollywood money making formula. Sometimes they work out, other times they don't, but Hollywood will always keep at it regardless of the quality of the final product. "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre" came out in 1974 and spawned a litter of terrible sequels and spinoffs. The original film wasn't that much better, but it is a cult classic to the fullest extent. German music video director Marcus Nispel took the helm on this project, and everyone thought it would be just another bloody teen horror movie. It's like they say in sports, "That's why they play the game." Jessica Biel, Jonathan Tucker and Eric Balfour seemed like the typical people that you would put in a movie like this, but their performances were not clichéd and surprisingly high quality considering the genre. The film's real coup was R. Lee Ermey's terrifying supporting performance. Nispel's direction was as intense, scary and realistic as any horror movie I've seen. I've seen this movie several times and it still scares me. As a critic, I'm always willing to admit when something turns out differently than my prediction. Other critics were not so kind to this movie and have unfairly lumped in with all of the other worthless teen slasher garbage flicks out there. What makes it even more special is that Nispel is a one-hit wonder- "Pathfinder" and the "Friday the 13th" remake were terrible. It just goes to show how difficult it is to make it good horror movie these days. If you want a scary movie, watch this.

14) Interiors (1978)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Woody Allen's obsession with Ingmar Bergman caused him to completely change his style and create one of the most quietly beautiful and bleakly moving dramas ever filmed. It's probably one of the best screenplays Allen has ever written and it's by far his best directorial effort. The film was nominated for five Oscars, though plenty of snubs were afoot. Maureen Stapleton should have won Best Supporting Actress over Maggie Smith for "California Suite," Woody should have won Best Director in a landslide over Michael Cimino for the incredibly overrated "The Deer Hunter," Woody should have won Best Original Screenplay over Waldo Salt and Robert C. Jones for "Coming Home," and the movie should have also won Best Art Direction over the overrated "Heaven Can Wait." Not given the proper recognition during its own time, this beautiful masterpiece is almost totally unknown now. It will appear on top 100 lists every so often, but only as a space filler near the end. Woody Allen has made plenty of movies, but this happens to be his best.

13) Primer (2004)

the Movieguy's Analysis: In the last few years this totally unknown film has picked up some status on DVD as a bizarre science fiction must-see, but most have still never even heard of it. Shane Carruth wrote, directed and starred in this truly odd piece of cinema, which tells the story of two friends/business partners and their use of a dangerous invention they created by mistake. With a running time under 80 minutes and a constant barrage of complicated plot changes, literally blinking might cost you your understanding of this movie. It wasn't made to be purposely complex, but its storyline was a metaphysical blend of science and philosophy, which is exactly as obscure as it sounds. Strangely enough, the film didn't showcase breathtaking performances or ingenious direction- it told a uniquely bizarre story that couldn't help but pull you in.

12) The Science of Sleep (2006)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Michel Gondry is one of a few directors who sincerely deserves to be called geniuses. After all, only a genius could tell this story and make it into a masterpiece. You might get away with calling it a romance film, but it's hard to pin a category to this movie. Basically, it centers around a man who lives more in his dreams than reality. He opens up his world to a young woman he falls in love with, but she doesn't exactly return the feelings. Despite the power of cinema, wild imagination is often hard to fit on the big screen. Tim Burton is finding out the hard way that you can't just film a bunch of weird looking sets and call it a movie. This film is in its own world, which is strange enough as it is, yet that world exists inside another world which is even more fantastical and bizarre. Gondry's direction was a magnificent achievement, maxing out even the most vivid imagination with some of the best special effects and creative imagery I've ever seen. Gael García Bernal and Charlotte Gainsbourg gave outstanding performances, and the writing was as rich as the visuals. It wouldn't be an underrated movies list without a film of this caliber receiving no advertising whatsoever, and shown on under 230 screens worldwide. Even worse, it was snubbed for every Oscar for which it deserved a nomination, including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Original Screenplay, Best Cinematography, Best Art Direction, Best Costumes and Best Original Score. Sometimes movies just get ignored, and I'll bet most people haven't even heard of this film. That's why I'm doing this list, but go to the video store and rent this fantastically unique piece of filmmaking.

11) Full Frontal (2002)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Steven Soderbergh is one of the best filmmakers alive. Like Michel Gondry from "The Science of Sleep," he deserves to be labeled as a genius. Not all of his films have been well received, and this one has taken more of a beating than all of his movies combined. Released a year after the wildly successful "Ocean's Eleven," it was a prime example of the sad fact that even an established filmmaker has his movies ignored when he attempts to do something outside of the mainstream. This was a very odd and extremely experimental movie that managed to achieve a range of emotions and experiences in its 101 minutes what most directors can't figure out how to fit into two separate stories. Given no theatrical release, no advertising and universally panned by critics and fans who refused to analyze its many layers, it was doomed before it was even completed. A strangely assembled cast of David Duchovny, Nicky Katt, Catherine Keener, David Hyde Pierce, Julia Roberts and Blair Underwood all gave memorable performances, though Katt's character had some of the film's funniest moments. Cleverly written by Coleman Hough and directed with layer after layer of strangeness from Soderbergh, this was one of those movies that takes a while to sink in after you've seen it. But once it does sink in, you immediately want to see it again. In fact, it needs to be watched several times to be fully appreciated. However, in order to do that you must first watch it once, so add it to your list right away.

10) 21 Grams (2003)

the Movieguy's Analysis: This one is in my top five favorite films of all time list, and it is one of the most all-encompassing journeys of character exploration ever put to film. Exquisitely directed by brilliant filmmaker Alejandro González Iñárritu, the film captured the lives of three people who are brought together by a tragic accident. Iñárritu presented the film out of sequence, allowing the audience to piece together the events of this beautiful puzzle for themselves. Every aspect of this movie was Oscar-worthy, including the stunningly powerful performance of Sean Penn, Naomi Watts and Benicio Del Toro. At least Del Toro and Watts were nominated, though Penn was somehow snubbed- but he wasn't the only one. This should have been a lock for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Original Screenplay, Best Original Score, Best Film Editing and Best Cinematography. The 2004 Oscars was the year when "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" was GIVEN every Oscar imaginable merely to celebrate the end of a financially successful film franchise. It wasn't a total loss for Penn- he won Best Lead Actor for "Mystic River." Though it's not the kind of movie that will clear \$100 million, it certainly deserved SOME advertising and a theatrical run of more than 411 theaters. I'll give the film its due, it has rented very well on DVD since its release, but its power and spectacle are nowhere near represented to their full worth in top 100 lists; it's a top 30 movie hands down.

9) Perfume: The Story of a Murderer (2006)

the Movieguy's Analysis: This is a film that should have never ended up on a list like this. Apparently someone thought it had potential because it carried a budget of nearly \$66 million, yet it received no publicity or theatrical release- IN AMERICA. Worldwide the film grossed just under \$130 million, so I guess it's fair to say American distributors aren't as smart as they think they are. As for the movie itself, well, if you see it, let's just say it will stay with you forever. Tom Tykwer took a brilliant but practically unfilmable concept and turned it into one of the best films of the decade. The film chronicles the experiences of Jean-Baptiste Grenouille, a man born with an ultra-sensitive sense of smell. He becomes a perfume maker, but his journey turns dark as he continues to search for what he considers to be the ultimate sent. Ben Whishaw was more or less unknown before this film, but his leading performance was as exacting and skillful as a seasoned performer. Tykwer's direction was dark and hauntingly beautiful, enhanced by rich cinematography and the epic nature of story. The screenplay was creative and carefully written, developing the main character with subtlety and psychological precision. Like so many films on this list, the movie deserved Oscar recognition that never came. Best Picture, Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Cinematography, Best Costumes, Best Cinematography, Best Art Direction and Best Original Score. I have no idea why this film wasn't recognized for the masterpiece it truly was, and I'm even more baffled that it doesn't show up on any top 100 lists. This is a movie that achieved everything it set out to achieve under the most difficult of circumstances, yet wasn't fully appreciated.

8) Session 9 (2001)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Despite a rancid leading performance from TV's David Caruso (filmed during his ill-advised foray into the movie world), this is one of the best horror/suspense movies I've ever seen. The plot is deceptively familiar for the genre- an asbestos cleaning crew is hired to clean out an abandoned mental hospital with a grizzly history, but slowly the hospital's past is overtaking them. A B-list cast of Stephen Gevedon, Paul Guilfoyle, Josh Lucas and Peter Mullan all performed very well in spite of their impaired lead actor. Thankfully the film was more of an ensemble piece so Caruso's acting deficiencies were not as noticeable as they could have been. Brad Anderson took the helm on the project, and his direction gave it the perfect blend of low budget effects, paranoia and visual creativity. Anderson made it easy to fall prey to the movie's eerie atmosphere, and its characters were just analytical enough about their surroundings to create the perfect blend of mystery and horror. I doubt many have heard of this movie, or Brad Anderson for that matter (even though he directed "The Machinist"), but you need to get acquainted right away.

7) Happy Accidents (2000)

the Movieguy's Analysis: I picked this film off the shelf of my video store one summer because I saw my future wife, Marisa Tomei, on the cover. I like Marisa Tomei. I guess I was expecting a cheesy romantic comedy, but was shocked to discover one of the best, most bizarre and original romance/comedy films ever made. I won't tell you the plot because I'd like it to be a surprise as it was for me. Tomei and co-star Vincent D'Onofrio had perfect chemistry, and their performances were fantastic. Brad Anderson's screenplay was filled with good ideas and plenty of creativity, but also fostered a strong romantic connection between Tomei and D'Onofrio's characters. This is a rare movie that needs to be seen by more people.

6) 10 Items or Less (2006)

the Movieguy's Analysis: It took writer/director Brad Silberling forever and a day to get this movie made, and after all that effort, the film basically went straight to DVD. Starring Morgan Freeman as an aging actor preparing for an upcoming role, he embarks on a journey with Scarlet, a grocery store clerk played by Paz Vega. It's a film that doesn't fit in any category or genre, yet with rich characters, intelligently crafted situations, clever humor and wonderful performances, it doesn't require a genre. It's the kind of movie that never gets made in today's studio market, and even Freeman's big name couldn't get it into theaters. It's a shame, but we need to appreciate this movie now that we have the opportunity. Though it never got any publicity even for its DVD release, it actually plays on movie channels with relative frequency. Watch this unknown movie- I promise you won't be disappointed.

5) Chashback (2006)

the Movieguy's Analysis: Sean Ellis a truly gifted filmmaker. He has great creativity and vision, and this film should be the start to a wonderful career. Adapted from his 2004 Oscar-winning short film of the same title, this brilliant piece tells the story of Ben, an art school student who develops insomnia after a painful breakup. To take his mind off of his troubles, he gets a job at an all night supermarket where his ability to stop time and explore his fantasies begins to get the better of him. Like some of the other films on this list, it defies genre. Ellis' inexperience as a filmmaker shows however as he often went too far with his protagonist's sexual curiosity, and placed a few unnecessary scenes in the film. Nevertheless, Ellis' vision resulted in a once in a lifetime movie that captured romance, clever comedy and artistic creativity from an entirely new perspective. Despite excellent acting from a more or less anonymous cast and Ellis' pristine direction, the film was not given any theatrical exhibition, thus being unfairly thrust into unknown status. This is a different kind of movie experience, and more people need to see it.

4) Solaris (2002)

the Movieguy's Analysis: This is another movie that was unfairly criticized. It was never given a chance to succeed because apparently "Solaris," the 1972 foreign film of which it is a remake was another untouchable movie that simply could not be remade. Frankly, I'd never even heard of "Solaris" until critics started bashing this movie. Steven Soderbergh directed the film with beauty and elegance, giving its science fiction plot another dimension. George Clooney's leading performance was solid, though perhaps a bit understated at times. Supporting performances from Natascha McElhone, Viola Davis and Jeremy Davies were very good in a movie that was well acted overall. It wasn't a perfect movie, as some of its complex plot lines were carried out in a rather roundabout fashion, but it certainly carried more pros than cons. I already mentioned that critics hated it, but fans never gave it much of a chance either. I think they expected a science fiction thriller and complained when they got an elegantly crafted romance/psychological think piece. With a \$47 million budget it was definitely a box office flop, grossing less than \$15 million. Ultimately this is a misunderstood, misleadingly advertised movie that craves a fresh start.

3) The Da Vinci Code (2006)

the Movieguy's Analysis: When I talked about "Jarhead" earlier I mentioned that movies presenting the US military negatively usually receive bad reviews. Well, what happens to a movie that speaks negatively of the catholic church? We've seen films blackballed for so much less, and even though the popularity of the book catapulted this blockbuster to a \$217.5 million box office gross, it was unfairly removed from Oscar consideration for its controversial storyline. It should have seen nominations for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Lead Actor and Best Supporting Actor to name a few. Ron Howard presented this compelling mystery with a wonderful combination of fast suspense, exacting analysis and beautifully elegant direction. Paul Bettany's breathtaking supporting performance deserved to win Best Supporting Actor more than any of the nominees including its winner, Alan Arkin, for "Little Miss Sunshine." Tom Hanks and Audrey Tautou were wonderful together, and the film proved a compelling mystery from beginning to end. It's not the most unfairly criticized movie of all time, but it's up there.

2) The Matrix Reloaded (2003) / The Matrix Revolutions (2003)

the Movieguy's Analysis: "The Matrix" left plenty of room for a sequel, but I'm not sure the Wachowski brothers had any idea their second and third Matrix films would be so aggressively hated by so many people. What's odd is that when they came out, the negativity was somewhat muffled. "Reloaded" made \$281 million in the box office, and "Revolutions" made \$139 million. I love that they were released in the same year, making them one of the few sequel sets to do that. The Wachowski brothers spent the last two films building an exceedingly complex philosophical mountain of symbolism, historical references and layered imagery to complete their trilogy, placing clues in every corner of every scene. The ability to understand these two films (and ultimately the trilogy) was heavily dependent upon a scene for scene recall of each movie and its many subtleties. It was understandably frustrating that people, who after watching "Revolutions," walked out of the theater with an ending that was dissatisfying and confusing. I do respect the Wachowskis' decision to make the series intelligent and complex, and after watching the trilogy back to back several times, I can verify that it really does work. The main problem I found with these last two movies was that they relied heavily on more elaborate battle sequences which were a bit excessive. Perhaps fans were unhappy with the way the trilogy turned out, some of its plot twists or its penchant for obscurity, but fans are forgetting one important thing: this trilogy is a once in a lifetime achievement. You won't see anything with this level of symbolism, intelligence, special effects or vision again. The ideas behind this franchise were a work of genius, and though the last two films did have a few faults, they were still representatives of a brilliant vision that built the greatest movie trilogy of all time. They do not deserve to end up on most overrated movies lists, or criticized the way they were. Watch all three films together, concentrate a bit and you'll appreciate them more.

1) The Village (2004)

the Movieguy's Analysis: At this point, it's fair to say that M. Night Shyamalan's career is over. His new movie, "The Last Airbender," makes "Lady in the Water" look like "The Godfather," and "The Happening" showed he couldn't even find a way to direct talented actors. Shyamalan has proved that he has nothing left to say. Fitting then that the number one most underrated movie of all time was Shyamalan's very best movie, even better than "The Sixth Sense." Yes, you read that correctly. It was the very last of his good ideas, and he saved the best for last. The movie told the story of a small, old-fashioned town besieged with the constant threat of vicious creatures living in the surrounding woods, who, every so often, come out and attack the townspeople. Blessed with a phenomenal cast of Bryce Dallas Howard, Joaquin Phoenix, Adrien Brody, William Hurt, Sigourney Weaver and Brendan Gleeson, this movie succeeded not only from the power of its acting, but from Shyamalan's top-notch direction and brilliant writing. Shyamalan's direction was eerie and captivating, creating a dark world with even darker secrets hiding within. His screenplay was layered and deceptively simple, providing one movie for those who don't know the ending, and completely separate film for those who have seen it already. Speaking of endings, Shyamalan's is known for surprise endings, and this movie had his best one ever.

Yes, the shocking ending from "The Sixth Sense" was epic, but the psychological power, social ramifications and complete unpredictability of the movie's ending are unmatched by any film I've ever seen. What was so strange about this movie was that it grossed a respectable \$114 million, yet basically all of those people ripped it apart from every conceivable angle. They said the acting was bad, they said the direction was bad and they hated the story. Maybe Shyamalan's movies are easy to make fun of, and maybe surprise endings can backfire on a certain kind of audience, but sometimes people just blatantly refuse to acknowledge a good movie. This film did everything right, took chances and succeeded on countless levels. It's a movie that will stand the test of time once shortsighted critics and mindless fans stop ruining it for everyone. It was also released during the time when it was popular practice in mainstream media to make fun of M. Night Shyamalan movies, which helped no one. In the end, that's what this list is all about- making special mention of the movies that have been pushed under the rug, ignored, unjustly criticized and forgotten.