



# NEWSLETTER C-6

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## Do you mind telling me why you're leaving early?

Following on from the first part of our Walkout films article, here are some more cases where, for different reasons all, an early exit was called for ...

**Adrian Pickering:** You asked about walkouts. I can't remember whether it was **Battleship Potemkin** (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925) or another early Russian film that the Phoenix showed in the late 80s or early 90s. I



asked John if he could check the date and circumstances - he has kept notes on pretty well all our films over the years. From his diaries of those two decades, he doubts it was **Potemkin**, but rather another Eisenstein classic **Strike** (astonishingly also from 1925) which he tells me we screened in 1992. I am happy to accept his correcting note, even if I was clearly far less accepting of the film itself. I think it was when we had just acquired the BP 35 mm projectors, but before they were re-lamped, but it could even have been back in 16 mm days when the wonderful Jim McWilliams was at the projection controls?

It was at Boldrewood (ah, those good old days of comfortable seats, good food, easy parking, etc.). The film was long and not an easy watch at the best of times. However, what was worse was that the image was so dim - I think 300W lamps on that throw was like watching a film with a hand torch projecting! We eventually went to 1.6kW! I was a busy, young academic at the time and I just couldn't afford to waste any more effort or time on it. I've still never seen it, despite its reputation. I have a feeling that the dim image problem stopped me from going to the Phoenix for some years :-)

**Wendy White:** I have only walked out of one film because I was unwell, I suspect from something I had eaten. Sadly, I can't remember the film, although it was a Phoenix one. I often come to our screenings in a rush with a meal grabbed on the way. Once I am watching a film, I stay to the end as even if it is dreadful, I try to find some redeeming feature in it, a good camera angle, a bit of good acting, and so on. I may well have nodded off during a handful of films along the way, but that is another issue ...



**Graham Cole:** I find it almost impossible to walk out of any performance, be it a theatre production, a concert, a sporting event, cinema screening, etc. I once heard a story, possibly apocryphal, of a football supporter who was watching his team in the F.A. Cup final at Wembley (in the good old days!). A few minutes from the end, his side was losing 1-0, and evidently not playing too well, so the said fan decided to leave the ground and head home, disappointed and frustrated at the likely result. His team scored twice in the last five minutes to win the Cup ...

So, perhaps the eternal optimist in me says that no matter how bad something might be, there will be something good to redeem it before the end. Whilst that isn't always the case, I have generally stuck with it through some terrible cinematic dross, but in such cases have delighted in giving the film somewhat fewer than Janice Nicholl's "foive" (for those who remember ITV's Thank Your Lucky Stars). Nevertheless, one film walkout I do recall was when, as a lad of sixteen, I saw **Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf** at the Odeon in Clacton. Now, given that the film was rated X (= latterday 18) I may well have told my parents I was going to see a different film so perhaps my disenchantment at the movie was my punishment for that little peccadillo! Incidentally, the X certificate was



largely for the frequent aggressive language which included "son of a bitch", "goddamn" and "for Christ's sake", and sexual references, as it is phrased nowadays (no nudity or actual sex, mind) – remember this was in the days before the f- and c-words entered legitimate cinematic language and before film storylines allowed (required???) full frontal everything. It was in black and white, still not unusual then, but lasted 131 minutes, with every minute focusing on a very alcohol-sodden and unpleasantly bruising nightcap discussion. I stuck it out as long as I could, but the time came when I could take no more and I trudged off to the bus station to go home. A further ignominy was heaped on me when I was stopped by the police as I walked from the bus stop to my house and asked lots of questions about where I'd been, where I was going, etc. I lived in a quiet seaside town where nothing much ever happened so this alarmed me no end, but I was allowed to continue on my way home, again perhaps feeling suitably castigated for going to watch an X film!

**John Marshall:** You will know that I am seldom in the Cinema when a Phoenix film is playing. After handing out the Weekly Film Notes and voting slips to people as they go in, I have various tasks to do, mostly administrating for the evening. So I usually only come into the Cinema when there are about twenty minutes left of the movie. My tasks can include explaining to latecomers that as the film has started, they cannot go in, and it also involves talking with "walkouts", simply asking them for their voting slip and comment (if any), but also why they are leaving (if they wish to tell me!). As I have written before, those reasons are not only very varied, but also very interesting. I'd like to think that all our films at the Phoenix will hold everyone's attention throughout, but in fairness, that clearly is a pipedream. Each to her or his own, since one person's meat is another person's poison. And, of course, there is always that jar of marmite ...



As for my own cinema experiences, I can't remember ever walking out of a film. We war babies, born under rationing, are too mean to waste a single frame! I tend to read a lot about all kinds of movies in all kinds of publication, and I look at a few websites such as the astonishingly encyclopaedic imdb. I don't always agree with some of the critics, although there are some I consider pretty reliable, but on the whole I hope I am sharp enough to tease out the films that will interest me. I particularly avoid blockbusters with exploding helicopters and/or heroes with special Superman type abilities! The bottom

line for me is that if a film is that bad I don't spend money on going in to the cinema. That could never be the case with a Phoenix screening, of course.

And we must point out that we do have some very loyal Members who don't miss a minute of the films they watch, this from **Catherine Curtice:** Thanks for the invitation to comment on films I have left early, but I simply can't think of a film I have walked out of. I must be a glutton for punishment!



Linda Roser      John Lariviere      Mekiel Benjamin

# IMAGINARY MOVIE



## Which of these is not a genuine movie title?

We have mentioned the NextFilm website before in these pages, as a very useful resource to view nearly all the movies that are on (terrestrial) television for the day ahead. However, I have noticed that the links they offer for some films are wildly inaccurate or plainly wrong! For example, on one day recently, BBC4 had **I Am Not Your Negro** listed and there it was also on NextFilm's page. However, both the image alongside and the imdb link took the reader to a page about **Legend of the**

**Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole**, a Warner Bros animation adventure and definitely not Raoul Peck's 2016 documentary about race in modern America! In this case, I wasn't fooled, having seen the James Baldwin-narrated film before (it is excellent, by the way), but it got me wondering if there really are any fictitious films doing the virtual rounds out there?

**Imaginary Movie** is actually genuine, but, believe me, in each of these fifteen groups of movie titles below, one really is a rogue, a spoof, a fraud, a fiction, a Trumpian fake even, with no possible weblink. But which one? Read on, and enjoy the puzzle, but remember, no googling!

1. War; The Short War That Never Ended; The Private War of Major Benson; Suppose They Gave a War and Nobody Came; War Horse.

2. Eggs For Breakfast; Diamonds For Breakfast; Lions For Breakfast; Kisses For Breakfast; Lobster For Breakfast.
3. Down With Love; Loveless; Dr. Strangelove Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb; Must Love Dogs; The Love Ship.
4. Rumble Fish; A Fish Called Wanda; Plenty More Fish; Fish Fish & More Fish; Smiling Fish and Goat on Fire.
5. The Ruby In The Smoke; Smoke Yourself to Death; Smoke; Smoke Signals; No More Smoke Signals.
6. Silent Night; Silent As a House Mouse; Silent Witness; Silent Running; Silent Light.
7. A Heavenly Vintage; Bottle Shock; Sideways; Days of Wine and Roses; Rouge, Blanc, Rosé.
8. How to Tie a Bow Tie; The Ox-Bow Incident; Baby, Take a Bow; Meow Bow Wow; The Magic Bow.
9. Green Tulips; The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel; The Blue Dahlia; Magnolia; Daffodils.
10. Ain't Them Bodies Saints; The Saint; The Saints & the Sailors; La Sainte Famille; Sinners and Saints.
11. Rain Man; Purple Rain; The Man With Rain In His Shoes; Like Rain For Rhubarb; Strawberries Need Rain.
12. Flash Gordon; Flash and Splash Hit the 'Hood; Royal Flash; Ricki and The Flash; A Flash of Light.
13. White Heat; Body Heat; Dead Heat; Love Heat; Blind Heat.
14. Black Swan; Deepest Black; The Black Dahlia; The Black Camel; Black Beauty.
15. 1408; 1917; 1941; 1984; 2050.

Have fun! Answers next month.

### ★★★The Phoenix Special Members' Christmas (virtual) Meeting★★★

In our last monthly MailChimp email, we told you about a special virtual meeting we are holding for Phoenix Members on Wednesday December 16<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. It will be the nearest we can get to our traditional Christmas celebration and a chance to share our thoughts through these strange times, and as an added attraction, there will be a shorter-than-usual festive quiz (sorry, no prizes this year!). The meeting will be held using the popular Zoom facility and will be open to all Phoenix Members. However, in order to participate, we are asking you to **send us an email to let us know you wish to "attend"** so that we can send out the access details to those of you who express a wish to join us. From the email responses we receive, we will then send an email to those Members on Monday December 14<sup>th</sup> with full access details which you can then use on the 16<sup>th</sup> to enter the virtual meeting. These will consist of a Zoom weblink/URL, a meeting ID, and a meeting passcode. You will need both audio and video capability on your PC, laptop or tablet device and you will be asked to allow both. If you are unfamiliar with Zoom meetings here is a good link to see step-by-step how joining such an event is done <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9isp3qPeQ0E>.

We hope you will wish to join us, so if you do, please **send us an email to our usual address [enquiries@thephoenix.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@thephoenix.org.uk)** as soon as possible and with **Celebration** in the subject line. Then put the date in your diary and you will be added to the list of participants. If you have any queries about this, please do not hesitate to contact us, again at that same address.

#### Dear Friends at The Phoenix

### **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL** *WRITE FOR RIGHTS 2020*

As promised in last month's Phoenix newsletter, below are details of how to send a message of hope to two individuals whose campaigning for human rights has unjustly led to lengthy imprisonment. Their details can be found over the page. This year, Amnesty's *WRITE FOR RIGHTS* campaign features ten cases in all, and if you would like to write more messages or send an appeal by e-mail or social media you can find information at [www.amnesty.org.uk/write-for-rights](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/write-for-rights).

Thank you! Amnesty International Southampton Group [www.amnesty.org.uk/groups/southampton-city](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/groups/southampton-city)



**BURUNDI: GERMAIN'S PLACE IS NOT IN PRISON. HE MUST BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY AND UNCONDITIONALLY**

The legitimacy of his work in social justice and protecting human rights must be recognized

#FreeGermainRukuki



**GERMAIN RUKUKI, BURUNDI**

Germain Rukuki is serving a 32-year prison sentence for his peaceful activism in Burundi. Early on 13 July 2017, he and his wife Emelyne Mupfasoni were woken by heavy footfall and banging on their door. Security officers interrogated the couple, who are both NGO workers. They arrested Germain and transferred him to Ngozi Prison where he has been held ever since. He was found guilty of sham charges including 'rebellion' and 'threatening state security'. His previous

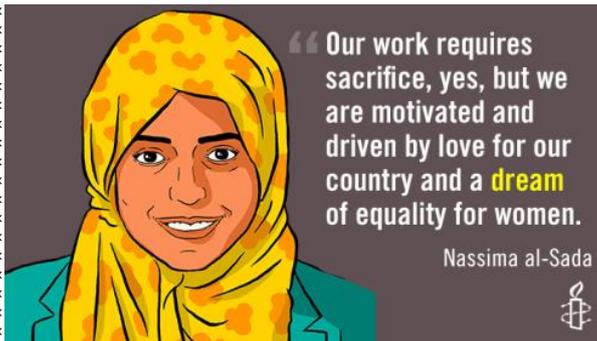
association with the NGO Action by Christians for Abolition of Torture (ACAT-Burundi) was used against him. Just weeks after his arrest, Emelyne gave birth to their third son, whom Germain has never met.

**SEND A CARD** in support and solidarity to Germain and/or his wife Emelyne Mupfasoni. End with the Kirundi words Komera Turikmwel (Stay strong, we are together).

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:** You may use a religious/Christmas card; you may include your name and address if you wish.

**Send to:**

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EAST AFRICA, THE HORN AND GREAT LAKES,  
c/o BURUNDI TEAM,  
RIVERSIDE STUDIOS, RIVERSIDE LANE, OFF RIVERSIDE DRIVE,  
PO BOX 1527-00606,  
NAIROBI,  
KENYA



**NASSIMA AL-SADA, SAUDI ARABIA**

Nassima al-Sada, a prominent Saudi Arabian activist and human rights educator, has been detained in Al-Mabahith prison in Dammam for over two years. She has spent many years campaigning for women's freedom, including campaigning for women's right to drive and ending the male guardianship system. She is at risk of being sentenced to a lengthy prison term. She was arrested on 31 July 2018, and was held in solitary confinement for a year. She has also endured threats

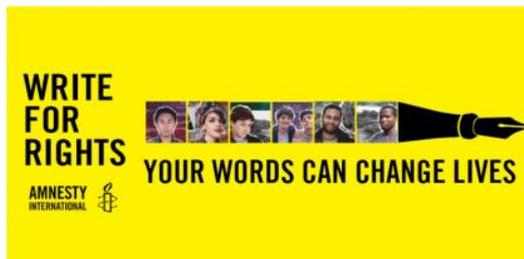
and ill-treatment. So far, all her court sessions have been closed, with diplomats and journalists banned from attending. A mother of three, she is allowed one weekly phone call with her family, but no visits, not even from her lawyer. Her detention is part of a recent wave of arrests that target Saudi women's human rights activists.

**SEND A CARD** to Nassima's son, Moussa, expressing your support for him and his mother. Designs with animals, nature, or a garden would be particularly appropriate, as these are all things loved by Nassima.

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:** DO NOT use a religious or Christmas card. You may include your name and address if you wish.

**Send to:**

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL,  
For MOUSSA,  
POSTBUS 1968,  
1000 BZ AMSTERDAM,  
NETHERLANDS



MailChimp

Are you on our MailChimp mailing list? If you are, you will have been receiving monthly mailouts (from which you can unsubscribe at any time) detailing our latest news. If you haven't received these mailings (check your spam/junk folder as well as your inbox), please do let us know, along with any other comments, to our usual email address [enquiries@thephoenix.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@thephoenix.org.uk)

[www.thephoenix.org.uk](http://www.thephoenix.org.uk)

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