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Meet Mark Cotner, a librarian who loves movies as much as he loves a good book

By Michael Smith Tulsa World 7 hrs ago



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Mark Cotner, who is a reference librarian at the Herman & Kate Kaiser Library and a movie fan, shows off a few of his favorite movies. JOHN CLANTON/Tulsa World



Promotions

For this recurring series of stories, we asked Cotner about all of his movie favorites.

What is your favorite movie of all time and why?

This is kind of like asking a parent which child is their favorite! A favorite is "The Godfather." It is a superbly crafted film. I have seen it hundreds of times and still look forward to viewing it. It's like looking into a window of American crime but also America itself. To me, it's almost the perfect movie.

What is the funniest movie you've ever seen and why?

A favorite funny movie is Robert Altman's "M*A*S*H". This movie is satirical and a black comedy at the same time. Although it takes place during the Korean War, the subtext is of a different war — the Vietnam War — that was raging when this movie came out in 1970. But the whole situation and the

futility of the doctors in a MASH unit is what gives this movie such a playground for comedy, with Altman sewing all the disparate strands of chaos together to make a funny movie that says a lot about war and those that served in any capacity.

What is the movie that scared you and why?

“The Night of the Hunter” starring Robert Mitchum probably scared me more than any other movie. From the way that Charles Laughton shot the film (his only film that he directed) to the chilling impromptu sermons Mitchum gives about the story of love and hate, this film is truly one of the most compelling studies of evil in all of cinema. So scary but so good.

What is the movie that makes you cry and why?

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“Old Yeller” makes me cry every time. The first time I saw that movie, I was 7, and nobody told me how the picture ends. But when Travis takes his gun out to put Old Yeller down because he has become rabid, it made me cry and still makes me cry.

What is your favorite movie experience, maybe one you saw as a kid, or with friends in summer, or a midnight movie, and what made it so special?

In the summer of 1975, I was 11 and my friend and I were talked into going to see this “fish” movie by my friend’s older sister. I remember that my friend and I spent 85 percent of the time jerking our legs up to keep them out of the way of “Jaws.” Besides keeping our feet off the floor, this movie does a really ominous thing when Quint gives his version of the sinking of the U.S.S. Indianapolis from a survivor’s viewpoint. I am still haunted by that soliloquy that was based on fact.

At the theater, where do you prefer to sit, and what are your refreshments of choice?

I prefer to sit all the way in the back, about two rows down from the top in the middle of the row. I usually have a large popcorn and an unsweet tea followed by a box of Junior Mints.

What old movie would you love to see on the big screen, either again or for the first time?

I want to see “Lawrence of Arabia” again on the big screen. I have seen it twice, and the cinematography is just absolutely stunning. The sweeping panoramic shots of the desert gives the film such scale. The acting is just superb. There is a reason that it won seven Academy Awards.

What upcoming movie are you looking forward to seeing?

Martin Scorsese’s new film, “The Irishman,” based on the Charles Brandt book (about) a labor union official with mob connections and the slaying of Jimmy Hoffa. It stars Robert De Niro, Al Pacino, Harvey Keitel and Joe Pesci. I can’t wait for this one!

Do you have a favorite movie star whose movies have many times made you go to the theater because you like that person’s films so much?

Gene Hackman. I have seen all his films, and he always does an amazing job. An “actor’s actor.” It doesn’t seem to matter whether he has a starring or supporting role, he always does a memorable job.

Is there a director whose films you like so much that you will see any movie that they make?

Martin Scorsese. I have seen and will see any film that he makes. I think that he is just a masterful storyteller.



'Constitutional carry' gun bill passes easily through House committee



Michael writes movie reviews and features, interviews Oklahoma performers and covers entertainment events for the Scene and Weekend sections of the Tulsa World. Phone: 918-581-8479

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