

The Weekly Log, 4/10/09

by Joe Mulder

Okay. I'm looking at Yahoo!, and they have this "Top Ten Inaccurate Movies About the Future" bit. Fine; standard stuff. "The island of Manhattan has not become a maximum security prison," "we don't yet have flying cars or cyborgs who are indistinguishable from human beings;" they even throw in the obligatory "1984 was way off about everything... or *was it?*" bit at the end. All well and good.

But it was their *Back to the Future Part II* entry that really stuck in my craw. Here's what it said:

Here's what is not going to happen in 2015, when this movie is set: Jaws XII isn't going to come out unless the studios deem it necessary to make eight more movies in the next six years; we won't be able to control the weather (if anything it will be more unmanageable), and sadly those way cool hoverboards won't around either. On the other hand, "Back to the Future Part II" has gotten props for predicting the Florida Marlins winning the pennant in '97.

No it hasn't! It by God has *not!* I'm mean, for Pete's sake... can you run your copy by maybe *one* straight guy before you put it online? So many reasons this is bad...

First of all, the Florida Marlins won the *World Series* in 1997, not just the pennant ("winning the pennant" has always referred to winning the league championship, which you win to *advance* to the World Series). So, writing that the Florida Marlins won the pennant in 1997 would be rather like writing that in 2008, Barack Obama made history by becoming the first African-American to be nominated for president by the Democratic party.

Second, the Marlins also won the World Series (and, yes, your precious "pennant") in 2003; did *Back to the Future Part II* "predict" that as well? Who knows, but they could have at least thought to mention it. Although I'm sure whoever wrote the piece has absolutely no idea that the Marlins won the World Series in 2003, or in fact what the World Series is.

Third, the fact that this rumor or urban legend persists at all defies all conceivably logic. Now, in the movie, if you'll recall, Marty McFly finds himself in 2015, looking at a giant computerized outdoor billboard (which, by the way, we have all over Los Angeles now). It says "Cubs Win World Series... Sweep!" Then it says that they beat Miami. At the time, Miami did not have a major league baseball team, so that as the joke. And that's it. That's how *Back to the Future II* "predicted" the Florida Marlins winning the "pennant" in 1997: by showing the Cubs winning the World Series over Miami in 2015.

Some, of course, have noted the coincidence of the Cubs and

Florida Marlins (who do play in Miami) meeting in the 2003 National League Championship Series (the winner of which captured – you guessed it – the pennant). Sure; that's somewhat interesting. I'll give you that. The movie had the Cubs and "Miami" meeting in the postseason before Miami even had a team, and a mere 14 years later the Cubs and the team headquartered in Miami met in the playoffs. Fine.

The big problem with the joke, of course, is that in 1989, when the movie was released, there were 14 teams in the American League and 12 teams in the National League, and expansion was being proposed. Obviously, the National League would expand by two teams, and Miami was a front-runner to get a team. If a Miami team ever existed it was highly likely that it would be in the National League, and therefore couldn't possibly play the National League Cubs in the World Series. So that's the problem with the joke, to start with.

In any case, it's almost impossible to imagine how this nonsense that the movie "predicted" anything has gotten passed around; anybody who knows baseball would know immediately that it wasn't true, and I can't imagine why anybody who doesn't know baseball would be interested enough to repeat it. What I do know is that I've never heard it summed up worse than Yahoo! did it. "Winning the pennant in '97..." *that's not even the year they played the Cubs!* My goodness...

The TV pick this week isn't so much a TV pick as a DVD pick; "Andy Richter Controls the Universe," Andy Richter's (first) ill-fated attempt at TV stardom, was released on DVD at the end of March. I had remembered it as a very clever show, albeit one that employed the "mindscreen" gimmick that was all the rage at the turn of the century but had begun to feel a tad stale by 2002. You saw it on "Ally McBeal," you still see it on "Scrubs;" somebody says something, they show you what "wacky" thoughts occur in response in the character's mind and then we smash-cut back to reality, where the juxtaposition of the character's real reaction with his or her fantasy one supposedly makes for big laughs.

It rarely does, even on "Andy Richter Controls the Universe," but if you can get past the inoffensively blah mindscreen jokes you're in for a treat. The writing is extremely witty; it's one of the smarter shows this side of "Arrested Development" or "30 Rock," whose ranks it may even have deserved to join. The supporting cast is excellent, and excellently fleshed out. All of the performers to a top-notch job, from the sublime Paget Brewster (you saw her on "Friends" as a girl who nearly drove Joey and Chandler apart, you loved her on "Huff" as the long-suffering upper-class wife) to the dreamy James Patrick Stuart (who used to work with my friend Alicia) to the sexy Irene Molloy (the most realistic-looking office hot chick TV history) to the mousy Jonathan Slavin (whom I still feel is owed an apology

POOP READING

by PoopReading.com co-creator Jameson Simmons).

"Andy Richter Controls the Universe" should have been one of those shows that all your smart friends watch, that "Entertainment Weekly" pimps relentlessly, that can't scare up sufficient ratings despite a few big Emmy awards, and that is sorely missed by a small but loyal band of dedicated fans after its three-or-four season run. Instead it lasted 19 episodes, and then pretty much everybody forgot about it.

So the wife, the kids and I are visiting the in-laws for Easter weekend. It's always a fun time, because Grandad keeps the fridge stocked with beer and isn't shy about starting before 5:00 p.m., and Nana is one hell of a cook (also they're fine people, which, given what I just told you, is almost beside the point). Throw in not working on Good Friday and a father-in-law who's just as interested in *The Masters* as I am, and a good time will certainly be had by all.

Plus, my wife and I will, over the course of the weekend, get to a) eat in a restaurant, and b) see a movie in the theater (I've already looked up the showtimes for *I Love You, Man* in Temecula). We won't be doing those two things on the same day, but we will be doing them in the same weekend.

Now, when you have one kid, dinner in a restaurant and a movie in the theater qualifies as a pretty big to-do. When you have *two* kids, dinner in a restaurant and a movie in the theater is like Mardi Gras, crossed with Times Square right after we beat the Japs, times fifty.

So yeah; I'm excited. If given the chance, I would totally kiss Paul Rudd like that sailor kissed that nurse.
