

I took the Monorail to the Shadow of the Moon

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It turns out that the replacement movie wasn't any of the ones I listed. Instead, I decided to see *In the Shadow of the Moon*, a mid-week performance in Seattle. Since it was also a fantastically warm sunny day, traffic into Seattle was a nightmare. As the bus crawled along the highway, I had to do some mental calculations. I'm definitely going to miss my connecting bus downtown (the number 4 at 6:05pm); what's the best recovery plan? It turns out that my decision, in retrospect, was the correct one, but it was merely a lucky guess. I arrived downtown at 6:17pm, intending to transfer to the 3 or 4 bus to Seattle Center, home of the SIFF Cinema theater. I was just too late for the 6:15pm bus, and right at the start of the transition from peak service to off-peak service. The next bus was at 6:35pm, which would put me at Seattle Center at around 6:45. Add in time for walking from the bus stop to the theater and waiting in line to pick up my tickets, and that puts me dangerously close to missing the 7pm show. I briefly considered getting off at REI and taking the 8, but I didn't know how often it ran, and if I missed, I would be out in the middle of nowhere. (Turns out the 8 runs every half hour, and the next bus was the 6:35, which would have gotten me to Seattle Center at 6:45, no better than the safer plan of taking the 3 or 4.) Aha, the Monorail runs every ten minutes. It's 6:17. Even in the worst case, I'm still way ahead. (They don't publish a timetable. You just buy your ticket and take your chances.) Turns out it was the worst case. I arrived at the ticket booth just as the doors closed. But the next one arrived at 6:27, as promised, and just a few minutes later, I was at the Space Needle. A brisk walk to the SIFF Cinema theater and I had plenty of time to pick up my ticket and get in line. I've lived in the Seattle area for over fifteen years, and this was my first Monorail ride. Recapping one week of SIFF:

12:08 East of Bucharest: The real movie was the call-in program that addresses the question of whether there was or wasn't a revolution in the town. The first half of the movie was vignettes of a small town in Romania. They were sometimes interesting, sometimes tedious (do we really have to follow a car for two minutes as it drives through the streets of town?), and they felt like filler and "backstory" for the main story. If you showed up 45 minutes late and just caught the call-in program, you'd still get 90% of the enjoyment of the movie. One brief plot line from the first half of the movie comes back in the second; aside from that, you really didn't miss much. I give it a 2 out of 5 based on the strength of the second half.

Fair Play: SIFF labelled this a black comedy, and there were indeed a few black-comedic moments at the beginning, but it really would be

better-described as a tense thriller. The build-up was well-done, and the twist at the end makes you mentally rewind the movie and replay it in your head so you can view the motivations of one of the characters in a different light. I give it a 4 out of 5, gaining points from the wonderful squash game, but losing points because the canyoneering trip was a bit too convenient from a storytelling point of view.

In the Shadow of the

Moon: This was absolutely wonderful, a documentary consisting of stunning never-before-seen NASA footage from the Apollo missions and interviews with most of the surviving astronauts who have been to the moon. (Of the astronauts, all of whom are extremely well-spoken and quite funny, Michael Collins steals the show.) If this movie goes into general release, I strongly encourage every space buff to run, don't walk, to see it. The footage of the Saturn V launch brought tears to me eyes. I give it a 5 out of 5. There's a spectacular shot taken from the inside of a spent stage: You watch the next stage ignite and the spacecraft fade off into the distance, then as the spent stage loses attitude, the earth comes into view before the film finally runs out. During the Q&A after the movie, one person asked the director, "How did the film of that sequence survive re-entry?" The answer: The film was ejected from the spent stage and fell to earth. High-altitude planes were in pursuit with giant nets trailing out behind them. That was one insane game of "catch". The special surprise guest at the screening was Bill Anders, the crewmember from Apollo 8 who took the famous Earthrise photo. He quipped that Frank Borman actually took the first Earthrise photo, but Borman had the disadvantage of using the camera loaded with black-and-white film; Anders had color film in his camera. Bonus story #1 from Gene Cernan: "My father was alive when the Wright brothers made their first flight; he could hardly believe that I walked on the moon. My son was five years old; he thought it was no big deal."

Bonus story #2 from Charles Duke: "After I returned, the flight doctor told me that at launch my heart rate was 144." A beat. "John's was 70." Cut to interview with John Young: "I'm old. My heart can't go any faster."

Legend

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~	Would pay money to see again by myself.
·	Would see again if it were free or if seeing it with others.
^	Would recommend to others.
^	Okay, but wouldn't recommend to someone not already interested.
·	Would advise against.
^	Waste of my time.

Note: The rating scheme has been revised since this article was originally posted.

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