

# AROUNDTOWN

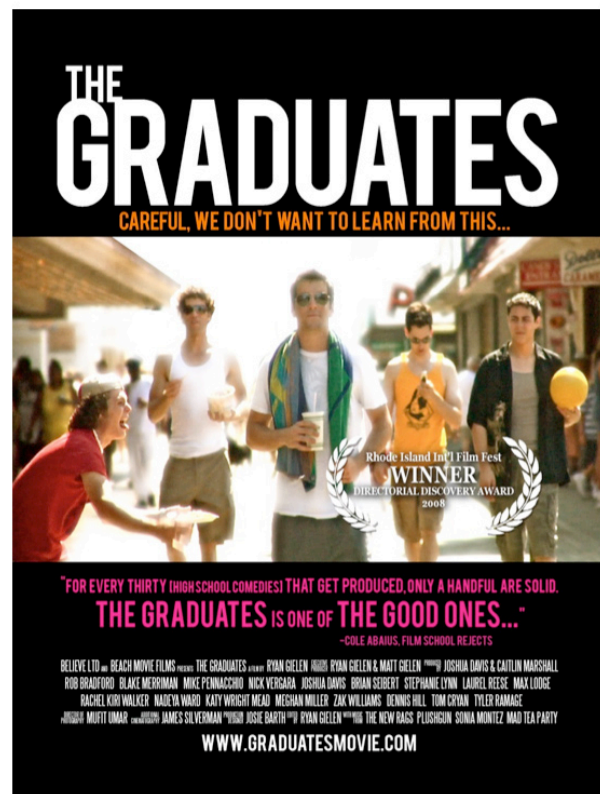
## The Graduates relax on Senior Week

**W Naomi Prale**  
Around Town Editor

The film explores the experiences of 18-year-old Ben (Rob Bradford), his friends Andy (Blake Merriman), Mattie (Nick Vergara) and Nickie (Michael Pinnacchio). The boy's few plans for the week, to hang out, party and meet hot girls.

The movie sets out outside a liquor store in Columbia, where Ben, his brother Josh (Josh Davis) are waiting for Josh's friend Brian (Brian Seilbert) who comes into the car handing Ben a bag of liquor. The party then proceeds to go and pick up the rest of Ben's friends, and encounter the long drive to Ocean City. With six guys squished in one small car, the topic of conversation highlights the group's limited understanding of sex, the main topic of dialogue in the movie.

Upon arrival in Ocean City, the boys go to



a party and get drunk. After entering the party, Josh tells the boys "the secret" about female body language. Later, at the party, Ben is talking with his best friend Megs (Laurel Reese) but becomes distracted by Annie (Stephanie Lynn), the hottest girl in school. Ben and Annie start to kiss, but a fight that breaks out with Nickie causes Annie to leave the party, and Ben feeling heartbroken.

The movie continues to follow the life of Ben and his friends, only focusing on the idea of sex, partying, drinking and girls the whole time. But the characters seem to hold a bond of true friendship that prevails throughout all of the funny scenes. At the end, the main character Ben seems to have learned "who is true friends are" but the rest of the characters continue to glide through life, drinking and partying.

The witty dialogue flows easily off the page, and the actors do a strong job of making everything sound natural. Each character comes from a different background, with different relationships that define their characteristics. It is the small characteristics about each character that create differences in each one of them.

The indie-rock soundtrack only emphasizes the coming-of-age mood in this film. Some new-age bands such as The New Rags, Plushgun, The Mad Tea Party, Our Daughter's Wedding and The Smittens are featured.

The movie features a tagline that says, "Careful, we don't want to learn from this." However, it is ironic to see how some of the characters learn some of the most important lessons of their lives. This humorous film is downright funny, but still stresses the importance of life lessons and friendship. Graduation time truly is a life-changing experience.



## Skate 2 rides up along with competition

**W Rexly Penafloida**  
Managing Editor

For many years, the *Tony Hawk* video game series has had a monopoly on skateboard video games. Now, a new game has come to rival the *Tony Hawk* series. *Skate 2* comes with a big world to explore and a variety of events that will keep the player in constant excitement. *Skate 2* is bound to attract both skateboard addicts and newcomers alike.

The storyline of the game is the same as any other skateboard video game. The main character is released from jail and comes back to town and tries to build up his/her career to the prestige that it used to be before being sent to jail. The storyline is very long but there are also chances to participate in extra competitions or challenges that could keep the player interested in the game.

If there is one word to describe the setting of the game, it would be massive. Each area of the world is unique in its own way. The high school has a lot of stairwells that can be grinded and the park has a lot of ramps that can be used to

perform tricks. Objects, such as garbage cans, benches and lunch tables can be moved around to suit any skater's needs. Movable objects are a great addition to the game and leaves the player with many options to improvise on how they would like to execute their trick sequences.

Before the *Skate* series was introduced, players had to execute trick on other skateboarding video games by pressing two or more buttons. *Skate 2* does a great job on making the controls much easier to players and it makes memorizing tricks a thing of the past. The one problem with the new controls is sensitivity. For example, in order to execute a heelflip, the player has to pull back the analog



stick, and then push it forward at an angle, but sometimes the analog stick will go straight instead of an angle. The sensitivity leads to a lot of attempts on a very simple trick and can leave players frustrated.

To this reviewer, the biggest part of the game is the wipeouts. Any player knows that it takes numerous trials to get the perfect trick. That is where the **Thrasher Hall of Fame** comes in. It works by awarding money to the players based on how crazy their skater's wipeout is. Basically, the more bones that the skater breaks, the more money is awarded. This is the more impressive part of the game because

it turns frustration from failing a trick to a very hilarious sequence of falling down stairs or

hitting a dumpster.

There are numerous events in the game that are bound to keep players entertained. There are **film sessions** where the player has to perform a trick at a certain area while a camera takes pictures of the trick. There are also competitions where the player competes against three other players and the winner is rewarded with a certain amount of money. The events are very generic, but there is so much variety within the different events that the player might not be able to put the controller down.

Without a doubt, *Skate 2* has raised the standard in skateboarding video games. There is a lot of potential within this game and players can spend numerous hours executing tricks and exploring the city. With all of its potential and grandeur, *Skate 2* looks to be one of the big hits of 2009.



## Evolution text probes readers consciousness for answers

**W Suhail Ansari**  
World Editor

Many theists have chosen to defend the concept of a higher being creating the universe with all creatures, especially humans, designed through divine origin. However, the step-by-step case for evolution, or the origin or change of species over time due to shifts in the frequency of heritable characteristics, is made by University of Chicago evolutionary genetics professor Jerry Coyne in his recently published book *Why Evolution Is True*.

This large undertaking seeks to persuade an audience, already aware about the controversy, about the facts; the facts up to date include all proof, from molecular genetics to the fossil record, supporting evolution and none refuting it, so far. The latter clause of the previous sentence is why many educated religious persons have largely ignored the plethora of evidence in favor of evolution.

Although many are comfortable with concept of natural selection, the idea that not enough resources are available to accommodate all

individuals so the most fit or adapted individuals will survive to pass their characteristics on to the next generation and effectively evolve a population, it is when this concept is applied to the context of human origin when feverous debate is picked up.

Coyne wishes to offer a succinct and precise argument for rallying the cause of evolution acceptance. Using appeals to logic, Coyne constructs a picture of nature which is defined only by the observed diversity of life. Building concepts such as vestigial structures along with homologous features, an ordered flow of evidence is presented. The data shown offers much for every reader, as the arguments are simply constructed and yet offer an interesting refresher to those already familiar with the topic area.

Metaphysical explanations are obviously ignored by Coyne, and this goes on to degrade his argument, but a brief mention is included in the preface stripping to role of atheism as a synonym of belief on evolution. He chooses language that is easy to follow regardless of one's extent of biological education.

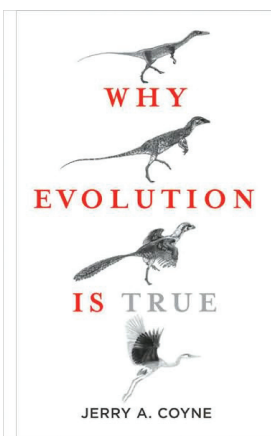
The chapters are structured with bold subtopics throughout the chapter, so if the debate becomes too intense for one, it is easy to return after a short break. Before each chapter begins, a relevant quote is presented which probes at the reader's consciousness about the truth towards evolution; then, the facts are presented to provide evidence for the quote.

Even though this reviewer's biology teacher managed to instruct the general concepts of the evolutionary history, much of the text was simple in presentation. But the fascinating new advances in the field are of vestigial structures amazed this reviewer into an even more ardent believer in the change of species over time. Most high school biology graduates have learned the history of the whale, where a terrestrial four-legged mammal helped originate the whales we know today. The

present day whale includes feet-bone structures that seem to have come from the said common ancestor.

Although it has been coded in the whale's genome to not express the organizational genes that make those developed feet, sometimes an error may occur in said organizational genes, and a leg-like structure will develop. This irrefutable evidence in favor of evolution presented by Coyne is one of the intellectually engaging arguments presented in his book.

The book may seem at first to dismiss all religion as false and to present evolution as the main history of man, the book goes on to show that such a sequence of change in species over time is just scientific fact.



# WestWord

## Malkovich defines itself as a cult classic

First in a series

**Naomi Prale**  
Around Town Editor

With a truly original screenplay and an intricate web of themes, *Being John Malkovich* sets itself apart from other movies as a “cult classic.” Originally released in 1999, the breakthrough film for former music video director Spike Jonze (Best Director Academy Award Nominee) was either praised highly for its originality or critically despised.

Charlie Hoffman’s script focuses on the experiences of a few adults who find themselves able to travel in a portal into the head and mind of the famous actor, John Horacio Malkovich (John Malkovich). Craig Schwartz (John Cusack) is an aspiring unsuccessful puppeteer who is married to pet-obsessed Lotte (a virtually unrecognizable Cameron Diaz) in a forlorn relationship. With his fast and nimble fingers, unemployed Schwartz finds a job working for a firm in an office building that humorously is located on the seven and a half floor, with a low ceiling and a rich history.

Schwartz finds himself attracted to his co-worker Maxine (Catherine Keener; Best Supporting Actress Academy Award Nominee) who repeatedly turns him down when he asks her out. At dinner, Schwartz tries to work Maxine, who asks what he did before coming to the firm. When he replies, “I am a puppeteer,” Maxine immediately shouts, “Check, please” to the waiter.

When Schwartz finds a door to a portal in

his office, he unexpectedly travels into the mind of John Malkovich for 15 minutes, after which he is deposited into a ditch on the New Jersey turnpike. Excited with this new discovery, Schwartz collaborates with Maxine to sell entry into Malkovich’s mind at \$200 a head.

Schwartz’s wife, Lotte, travels into Malkovich’s brain, in which Maxine calls up Malkovich and they go out on a date. Lotte realizes that she loves Maxine, and Maxine loves her back, but only as Malkovich. They continue to see each other in this fashion. Schwartz is outraged, and he ties up his wife so that she will not be able to see Maxine any longer. It is at this point in the story that Schwartz enters Malkovich only to find that he is able to manipulate Malkovich’s emotions and actions. Schwartz is able to control Malkovich, and he

lives in the mind of Malkovich with Maxine as his wife for the next six months, during which Schwartz revives his career as a puppeteer. However, Lotte devises a plan to get Schwartz to leave Malkovich, and once the portal to Malkovich’s brain becomes occupied by someone else, Lotte eventually lives her life with Maxine, while Schwartz has to live watching them be happy together.

The film’s spectacular acting performances clearly define the characters’ foibles. Cusack’s portrayal of Schwartz is a nerdy, dark and evil, which gives off the idea that Schwartz has somewhat of a sick and twisted mind. Diaz uses

peppy and innocent charm to portray Lotte, a sweet, good person who is very vulnerable. Keener uses a reserved attitude to

play Maxine, showing that she is smart and manipulative. However, as he has done in countless other films such as *In the Line of Fire* and onstage at Chicago’s Steppenwolf Theater, Malkovich steals the film. Unafraid to lampoon his own narcissism, the title character’s alter-ego comes off as rather unpleasant and surly, which only makes the performance more hilarious.

Lance Acord’s cinematography is interesting throughout (the characters being vomited out the portal on the Jersey Turnpike is especially spectacular), as various characters see the world from the perspective of Malkovich’s eyes, but it is truly brilliant at the point at which an angry Malkovich confronts Schwartz in his office and travels through the portal to—you guess it—his own brain, where Malkovich sees the world through his own eyes. In this world, every single person has Malkovich’s face and their conversations consist of repetitions of the actor’s name. The camera angles capture Malkovich’s horrified revulsion at a world in which everyone is he.

At 112 minutes, the rather slow-moving film is an investment but one well worth the time and rental fee. *Being John Malkovich* is one of the quirkiest and most unique cinematic experiences of the last decade.



*Being John Malkovich*



Directed by Spike Jones

## Fiction Family’s debut album charms listeners

**Naomi Prale**  
Around Town Editor

A collaboration by Switchfoot’s Jon Foreman and Nickel Creek’s Sean Wakins, the self-titled debut album from Fiction Family combines pop-rock sensibilities with alternative ballads to produce a solid, easy-listening album with few flaws.

Heavily influenced by the Beatles, whose signature tones and styles are all over this album, the duo nevertheless manages to sound unique.

This is not to say that they stray far from the sound of their respective bands. “When She’s Near,” “Look

for Me Baby” and “Not Sure” contain country-style guitar melodies a la Switchfoot’s “Dare You to Move” and Nickel Creek’s “Smoothie Song.”

The first track, “When She’s Near,” is catchy and mellow, employing the sounds of a low drum sounding in the background. However, like most alternative bands, the focus is on the acoustic guitar. This song is the first single off the album, and has a catchy and interesting tune. Foreman’s rough voice shines, joined later in the chorus when Wakins chimes to create soaring harmonies.

The next track, “Out of Order,” incorporates complicated rhythm patterns that initially sound a little disorganized. However, just as the cut seems about to spin

out of control, the instruments come together to harmonize into a powerful melody. Both members of the band sing falsetto while masterfully playing quick stanzas on the guitar.

“Not Sure” and “Betrayal” follow, reinforcing the romantic ethos of the CD. Stories of lost love capture the powerful magic of the alternative pop essence that pervades the album.

“Elements Combined” is witty and fun, emphasizing piano in the chorus that acts as a counterpoint to the background vocals to produce an interesting mix.

The best cut on the disc, “Please Don’t Call it Love,” distinctively employs violin at the beginning of the song to create a solemn mood that parallels the tone of the lyrics and

melancholy vocals.

The bouncy “Look for Me Baby” ends the record on an upbeat note that while out of sync with the slow tunes on the rest of the album, is nonetheless uplifting. It sounds as if it were pulled from the 1950s or the British Invasion, a quality that makes listeners want to dance.

*Fiction Family* is a gem of collaboration from two members of popular bands, who create modern sounds with a charmingly retro feel.



*Fiction Family*



Fiction Family

## Antica Pizzeria dishes up anti-delicious pizzas and entrees

**Christine Mahoney**  
Copy Editor

Antica Pizzeria, a new Italian restaurant located in the heart of Chicago’s Andersonville neighborhood, fails to meet expectations elicited by its pricey menu.

If only Antica’s outer façade were a harbinger of a positive experience to come. From the outside, diners acquire the feeling of a lowlight, cozy date spot. However, the ambiance is lost the moment one walks through the door. Bare walls and a few candles do not atmosphere make. Furthermore, patrons are expected to squeeze through a cluster of guests waiting to be seated. After waiting for 10 minutes for a

host, this reviewer decided to seek one.

Once seated in a cold corner, customers are handed a flimsy paper menu that does not consist of much variety. Diners have the choice of seven different pasta dishes (*Le paste* dishes range \$11.95-15.95). Small portions and undercooked spaghetti made the entrees less than a bargain.

If one is not in the mood for pasta, one can choose from a large variety of thin crust pizzas (*Le Pizze* dishes range \$10.95-13.50) baked in a brick oven, which one would assume would cook

pizza to a perfect crisp. However, instead of the perfect crispy crust, patrons may be surprised to chomp into a sloppy scalded pizza instead.

The soups and salads do not impress, either. When this reviewer sampled the bland Lentil soup (*Le zupe* dishes range \$6.95-12.50), she was shocked to find a sliver of metal in the broth.

At the end, guests can reward themselves to a tastiest part of the meal. For dessert this reviewer tried the *tiramisu* with rich almond ice

cream, which proved to be the highlight of the entire meal.

Although it was a busier Friday night than usual, the servers seemed to be pleasant, calm and well informed. Unfortunately, courtesy cannot overcome the restaurant’s atmospheric and culinary shortcomings.

Overall, Antica’s poor cuisine should not sway anyone to visit; however, should one choose to take a chance, the restaurant is located at 5663 N Clark Ave. Antica’s phone number is (773) 944-1492.



*Antica Pizzeria*



5663 N Clark Ave, Chicago

# AROUNDTOWN

## Taken only excites viewers with worthy action scenes

**W** Hira Malik  
Staff Writer

*Taken*, directed by Pierre Morel, is an action-packed film full of humor, adventure, deceit and violence. However, its lack of depth and testosterone-heavy plot leaves the viewer feeling unfulfilled.

The story begins with Bryan Mills (Liam Neeson) taking an initiative to change his relationship with his daughter Kim (Maggie Grace). He feels that he and his daughter are distant because of his former job as a CIA agent.

At the time, he did not know that Kim and her friend Amanda (Katie Cassidy) were planning to follow the band U2 in Europe.

As soon as Kim and Amanda arrive in Europe, they meet Peter (Nicolas Giraud), who would become an intricate character in the story.

That afternoon, while Kim is talking to her father on the phone, Amanda is abducted by three men. She tells her father what has just happened and Bryan tells her to hide. She holds the phone near the man who abducted her friend so that Bryan can translate what he says. The man finds Kim and takes her as well.

Determined to find his daughter, Bryan flies to Paris and begins his investigation. He finds that the language that he hears from the phone was Albanian. He discovers that Kim and Amanda have been kidnapped by an Albanian

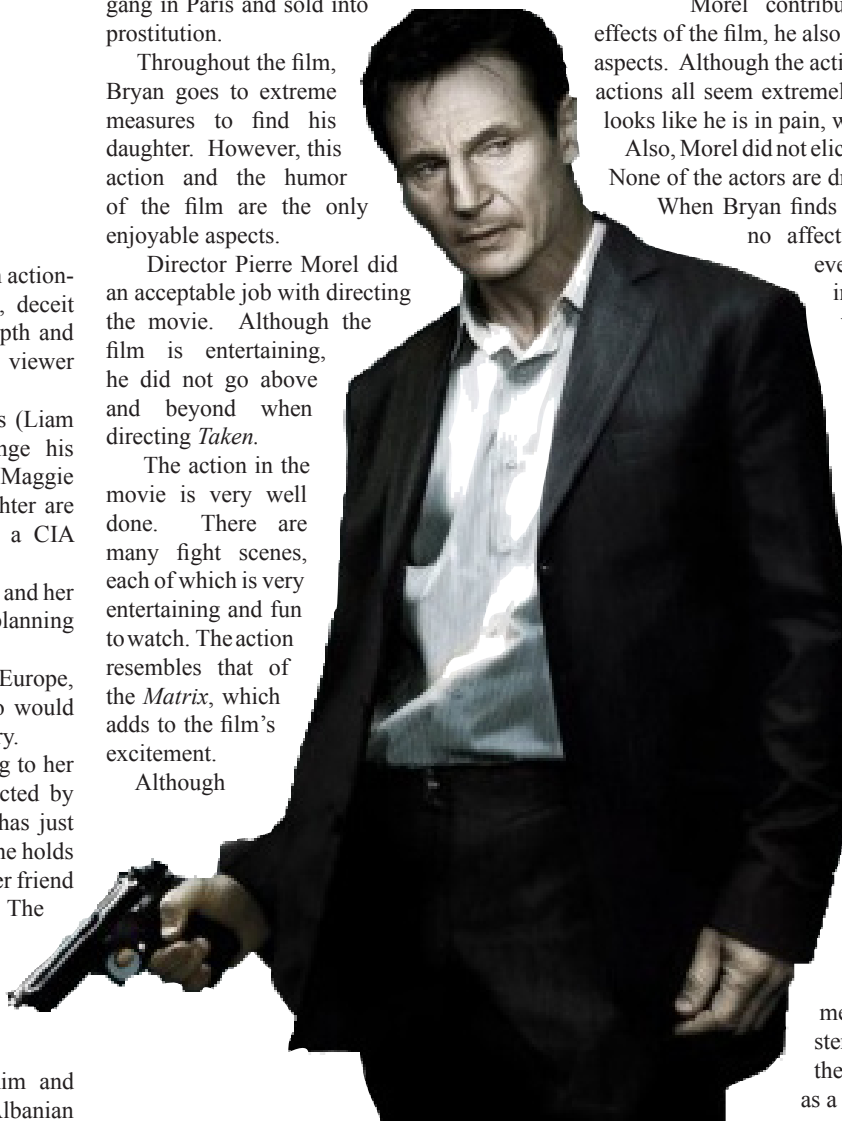
gang in Paris and sold into prostitution.

Throughout the film, Bryan goes to extreme measures to find his daughter. However, this action and the humor of the film are the only enjoyable aspects.

Director Pierre Morel did an acceptable job with directing the movie. Although the film is entertaining, he did not go above and beyond when directing *Taken*.

The action in the movie is very well done. There are many fight scenes, each of which is very entertaining and fun to watch. The action resembles that of the *Matrix*, which adds to the film's excitement.

Although



Morel contributed to the positive effects of the film, he also added to the negative aspects. Although the action is entertaining, the actions all seem extremely easy. Bryan never looks like he is in pain, which is not realistic.

Also, Morel did not elicit great performances. None of the actors are dramatic when needed.

When Bryan finds Amanda dead, it has no affect on Bryan or Kim even though she is an important character who is close to Kim.

Besides the simplicity of Morel's direction, screenwriters Luc Besson and Robert Mark Kamen's script can only be considered decent. Not a single line was remembered after watching the movie, which proves the film's dry quality.

A huge downfall in the screenwriters' work is the Albanians. Although that may not be the intent, it seems as if the screenwriters were merely contributing to stereotyping. Why did they choose Albanians as a target?

However, Besson and Kamen add a lot of humor in the film. This gives the film a more relaxed mood. Even so, whenever Bryan makes a joke, one could anticipate something bad happens to the person Bryan is speaking to almost right away. The humor foreshadows the disastrous events of the film.

A positive aspect, however, is that Besson and Kamen kept the Albanian language in the movie, and do not have the actors speak English. If they were to speak English, then the film would lose effect. However, Besson and Kamen's work throughout the film is mediocre.

The cinematography of the film is better than its merely decent direction and screenwriting. When the actors are not moving, the use of the camera by Nathaniel Mechaly is phenomenal. Mechaly used the camera from different angles throughout the film, making it understandable from all viewpoints.

Although the use of angles is exceptional, the camera seems shaky when the actors moved. During the fast scenes, such as when Bryan was running upstairs or jumping into a boat, the camera is also shaky.

Some of the action scenes are difficult to grasp because of the disconcerting camera work.

Although the direction, screenwriting and cinematography are modest and not at all thought-provoking, *Taken's* action will put viewers on the edge of their seats.



# just watch me

# find the right track

### Join Us on Campus

Saturday, February 14  
Saturday, April 18  
9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.  
Chicago Campus - 430 S. Michigan Ave.

For more information: 1-877-APPLY RU  
[www.roosevelt.edu/visitdays](http://www.roosevelt.edu/visitdays)  
[applyRU@roosevelt.edu](mailto:applyRU@roosevelt.edu)

Spend a day on our downtown Chicago campus and learn about the Roosevelt community including information about admission, student housing, and financial aid!

**ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY**

CHICAGO • MICHIGAN • CLEVELAND  
[www.roosevelt.edu](http://www.roosevelt.edu)