



by Daniel W. Duffy

The lights go down. The crusty old maroon curtains laced with spitballs and Snow Caps part, and the feature presentation starts. There's nothing like the film-going experience until—the people behind you start talking.

Nothing a karate chop to the throat wouldn't cure.

Because really, if you ask them politely to be quiet or let loose a nice "SHHHHHH-HH!!!" you're made out to be the anal-retentive bad guy.

What ever happened to manners or common courtesy? Why do people have to intrude on my right to enjoy a film in silence? And I'm not talking crappy horror films and the like where the story is so stupid you need to play "Mystery Science Theater 3000" in order to enjoy the movie. But when I can't even go to an event with "intellectuals" such as the UNLV International Film Series without some yahoo behind me narrating the whole movie to his old lady or some crusty blue-haired bitties next to me yapping and singing throughout the film, something is very wrong and I want to hurt someone. Hurt someone bad.

# Movies are made for watching

After I break a few cinder blocks with my head, my benevolent side takes over and says let's go to the root of the problem and ask the question, "Why do people talk during movies?"

I don't want to say people talk because they have a low mentality, that would be too easy. So, it's always good to go with your first instinct (even on standardized testing—don't believe the hype); and my first inclination is to say that people talk because they are impatient and need to know what's going on right then and there.

I'm gonna let you all in on a big secret. Movies are meant to be confusing and keep you guessing, thus to peak your interest. As movies unfold, questions are generally answered. The good films will have some sort of resolution whether it be ambiguous or definitive. Why people don't just save their questions and let the film answer them is beyond me. At the very least, they should wait until the movie is over to ask questions.

And don't worry about sounding like a dork by asking questions *post-facto* anyway. If you're still confused after leaving the theater, the filmmakers probably didn't do a good job. If the people you go to the movies with look at you like you're a leper if you ask them a question or if they give you some pretentious answers, tell them to piss off and find some real friends.

If movies still confuse you, do like they do at the drive-in and neck throughout the film with your escort for the evening. You won't care what happens during the movie anyway. For those of you from the post-"Happy Days" generation, "to neck" means to make out. It is synonymous with going to the lake to watch the submarine races.

There are several breeds (and inner breeds) of an-

noying people who talk during films. First there are the aforementioned dumb-asses who are impatient or can't figure what the heck is going on because they're just plain hillbilly dumb. There is a similar breed of those who ask questions because they miss some important information during the movie because they were talking in the first place which only leads to more talking.

Then there are those knuckleheads who try to impress the hell out of their date by trying to say something witty. Those guys kill me; I mean, "dude you're not funny, so why don't you just pipe down."

The same goes for people who try to guess whodunnit in psychological thrillers: "That tramp Catherine Tramell, she did it." With them it's like, "I don't give a shit if Ruprect the Monkey Boy did it, if you say one more word, I'm going to stick this mutant Hot Tamale in your eyeball."

Some people—for the most part pairs of women—seem to go to a movie for no other reason than to have a conversation. Ladies, if an evening at the movies is that important to you, I have an easy solution. Save yourselves \$13.50 and have your pow-wow in the theater lobby. You can still partake in the over-priced refreshments and enjoy the scent of popcorn and imitation butter in the air.

With the breakdown of manners in movie theaters, there are no easy solutions. I highly doubt ushers will come back into fashion anytime soon to shine flashlights into the eyes of loudmouths and blind them like a deer in a peddled headlight, so I pose several solutions to those of us who like to enjoy a movie in peace.

You might take on the role of an usher yourself and bring a penlight to the



A film short by Peter Joya

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film. If anyone acts up around you, shine it in their pupils like you were giving them an eye exam. If that doesn't work, throw the penlight at them.

Something I find that works even better is to turn around and relentlessly stare at the person talking. It has a similar effect to turning around and looking at people in an elevator.

And if all of the above fail, you always have the old standby: that karate chop to the neck. If they're bigger than you, make sure to blind them with a ninja screen of popcorn or spit a lethal dose of Dr. Pepper in their eyes before going for the throat.

If you are one of those people who feel the need to talk during a film or interact with and/or yell at the screen, please go to *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, they encourage that sort of thing there. And for those

of you who have kids—legitimate or not—don't bring them to the movies. They get rambunctious and cry because they don't give a rat's ass what's happening on the screen. They're much better left at home so they can terrorize one baby-sitter instead of bothering an entire movie house.

Being quiet in a movie theater is a discipline—it's not easy in these uncouth times. But that's why I'm here. To help you, the public out. So next time you see a melee going on at your local movie house, look in the middle of the fisticuffs and you'll see me there attempting keep theaters quiet so all can enjoy the film. And if you feel the need to talk during a movie, it's your First Amendment right, but you'd better watch your throat!

Keep an eye-out for future articles on movie theater etiquette by Daniel W. Duffy.