

This Is A Students' Newspaper

UNION

22 October 2007

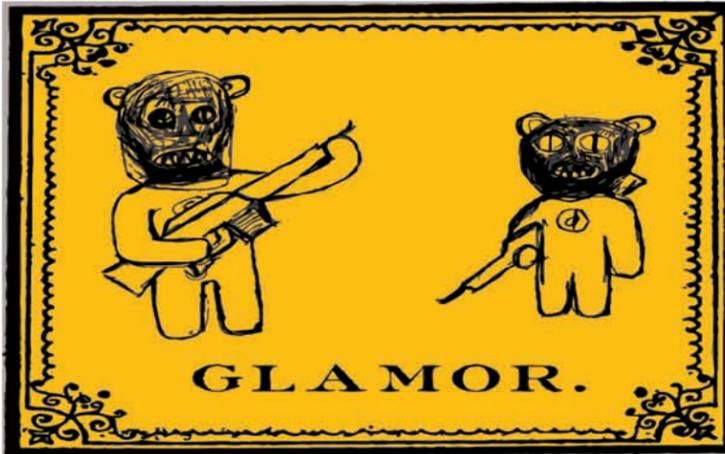
Volume 61 Issue 8



WEEKLY

UNDER A SKY THE COLOR OF ROTTEN FRUIT
WE BEGAN TO BOMBARD STUNNING IN ITS HELPLESSNESS
HELPLESS LITTLE BLUEBIRDS *BUT SHE SURPRISED THEM ALL*
WITH GAMMA RAY PILLGUNS **WHAT A LOVELY NEWBORN MA'AM**
SOMETIMES I ASK MYSELF SOMETHING NASTY MOVING IN THE DARK

FLIES ON A CORPSE
 THE STARS AT DAWN
LIKE PULLING TEETH
 STAINED GLASS WINDOW
DO NOT CRY OUT
 CONTRACT CRIMINAL



YOU'LL CATCH A COLD
MINNOWS IN A BARREL
 CHEWING MOUTH OPEN
STYLISH TO A FAULT
alert the media
SHARP TEETHES
 THOSE STRANGE OUTFITS

LIKE RADIO HEAD GUNS



NEWS 5 ENTERTAINMENT 11 SHOT OF BABY STRAPPED IN BACK SEAT 8

EVERYTHING

RADIO

HEAD

IN ITS RIGHT PLACE

A RADIOHEAD RETROSPECTIVE

When I was in 7th grade, my next-door neighbor gave me a burned copy of *Kid A*, at the time, the newest release from British art rock band Radiohead. At that point, I honestly don't think I was ready to understand exactly what I was listening to. What I heard was a dark, brooding soundscape of music rooted deeper in electronics than anything I had ever experienced up to that point. What I heard completely changed the way I listen to music. It wasn't until a few years later, though, that I was able to comprehend exactly why *Kid A* was such a masterpiece; at first, all I knew was that I had a placating, otherworldly collage of electronic pulses and reverb-soaked vocals.

Years later, as my horizons broadened, and my appreciation and familiarity with Radiohead's catalog grew, I began to realize exactly why *Kid A* was the work of art that it is, and ultimately, why it did what it did for me.

successful album of their career to date, Radiohead instead chose to retreat to Copenhagen to begin working on *Kid A*, their fourth studio album. Completely dissatisfied with modern rock and what it had become—specifically, the role his band's earlier songs had played in it—Thom Yorke decided that he wanted to create an album radically different from anything the band had done in the past. Though this turned out to be something some of the other band members had trouble with, Radiohead eventually created an electronically lush album that heavily featured keyboards, samples, and drum loops, rather than the electric guitars and traditional rock elements that dominated their previous records.



The result was easily the most challenging album to reach such a level of critical and financial success. *Kid A* is an album that not only defies easy, uncomplicated listening, but also defies a rock blueprint with which Radiohead had established itself as a creative force to be reckoned with on an international level. For lack of a better term, imagining the balls it took to execute a move like this is simply staggering.

Until I was able to completely comprehend exactly what *Kid A* represented, it was just a very soothing album that I could put on before I went to bed. Eventually (probably at some point during high school), I was able to realize that Radiohead had done something far too few bands have the guts to do today—they made the music they wanted to make. Many might find *Kid A* difficult, and to an extent, I would agree; it's certainly not an album that's for everyone. Structure isn't always apparent, and guitars are in short supply. Live drums are, for the most part, replaced by beats and blips; keyboards and electric pianos are increasingly prevalent; and Thom Yorke's voice, filtered and computer-augmented, assumes the role of an instrument. As an album, *Kid A* represents a bold shift in style and substance for Radiohead. For the band, it meant the satisfaction of doing their own thing, regardless of what might have been more traditionally accepted, and for Thom Yorke, it meant finally figuring out a way to please himself, as well as everyone else. And for me, it marked a complete revolution of the way I listen to and understand music.

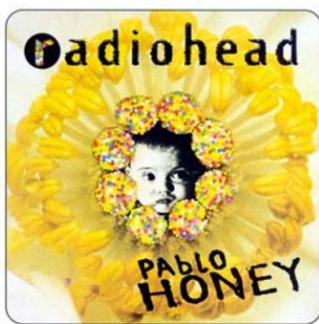
In 1995, Radiohead put out *The Bends*, which eschewed the straightforward, Britpop feel of their debut *Pablo Honey*, favored more textured, art rock flavorings, and effectively broke them into the mainstream. Two years later, the release of *OK Computer* compounded this effect exponentially, swiftly catapulting Radiohead to international superstardom, at times to the chagrin of the band members, specifically lead singer Thom Yorke (as evidenced in the documentary *Meeting People Is Easy*). *OK Computer* is an album laden with Yorke's paranoia that the 21st Century, with all its technology and innovations, will swallow up the real world and all the people inside it—how ironic, then, that upon its release, Thom and company are immediately engulfed in the stranglehold of the modern international press. Fueled by a classic rock influence (but definitely not without experimentation), *OK Computer* is widely recognized as being one of the best records made in the last twenty years.

One would imagine, then, that having created a highly successful formula with *OK Computer* (one that it was quite certainly leading up to on *The Bends*), Radiohead would simply stick to what was continuing to win them massive amounts of critical acclaim. This, however, is where one would be completely wrong. Rather than creating an easy, predictable follow-up to what is easily the most

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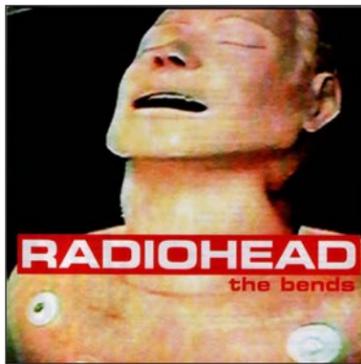
Until I was able to completely comprehend exactly what *Kid A* represented, it was just a very soothing album that I could put on before I went to bed. Eventually (probably at some point during high school), I was able to realize that Radiohead had done something far too few bands have the guts to do today—they made the music they wanted to make. Many might find *Kid A* difficult, and to an extent, I would agree; it's certainly not an album that's for everyone. Structure isn't always apparent, and guitars are in short supply. Live drums are, for the most part, replaced by beats and blips; keyboards and electric pianos are increasingly prevalent; and Thom Yorke's voice, filtered and computer-augmented, assumes the role of an instrument. As an album, *Kid A* represents a bold shift in style and substance for Radiohead. For the band, it meant the satisfaction of doing their own thing, regardless of what might have been more traditionally accepted, and for Thom Yorke, it meant finally figuring out a way to please himself, as well as everyone else. And for me, it marked a complete revolution of the way I listen to and understand music.

I'll come right out and say it: *Pablo Honey* is my least favorite Radiohead release. But being in last place ain't too shabby when you're going head to head against other Radiohead albums. Don't get me wrong; it's a great album—better even than most bands will ever make. But it just doesn't measure up to the band's later albums. The real gem on the album is the song "Creep," which is still one of the most popular songs the group has written. But the record is not a fair representation of the band's potential as they proved on their later albums. The lyrics are often repetitive or cliché. The instrumentation is occasionally rather generic. *Pablo Honey* definitely has its moments, though. Moments when you can hear hints of what the band was to become. On its own, the album plays like a pretty average early 90's rock CD, with the only hints that the band was not going to be a one hit wonder being found in songs like "Blow Out," as well as particular moments of pure genius in songs like "Vegetable". The album is not bad by any stretch of the imagination...it's just not particularly incredible.



-By Allan Steiner

For '90s alt-rock purists, *The Bends* is Radiohead's only great album. For everyone else, *The Bends* is Radiohead's first great album. It is important for Radiohead because it is the first time they treated the album like a legitimate art form. Its use of cohesion and lyrical themes lays the groundwork for Radiohead's future masterpieces, *OK Computer* and *Kid A*, and marks the beginning of their relationship with producer Nigel Godrich. *The Bends* is important to music, because it is influential. Bands like Muse, Coldplay and Travis make a living off thickly textured pop songs and falsetto vocals a la *The Bends*. Not to mention, the music sounds great.



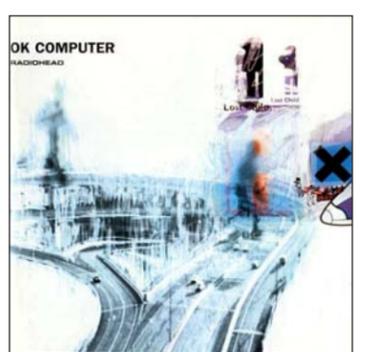
-By Sean Bernhoff

The first four tracks are Pixies-influenced pop songs. "Planet Telex" opens, giving us our first hint of space-rock from the band. The title track is a fun rocker, where Thom sings about "the tanks and the whole Marines" coming to take him away. Track four, the brilliantly written "Fake Plastic Trees," contains some of Yorke's most heartfelt vocals. Yorke claims to have broken down in tears after recording the vocal track in one go.

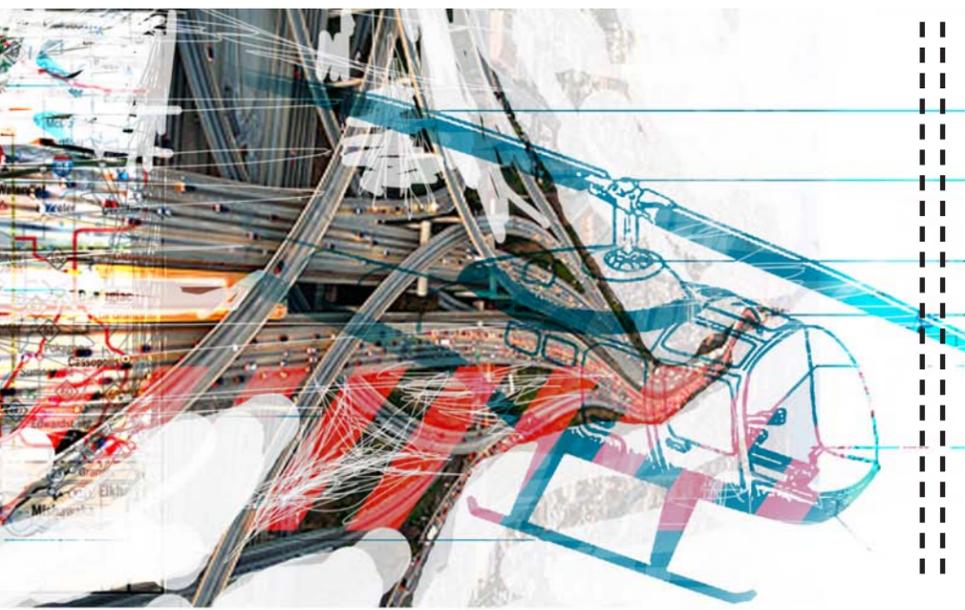
The album picks up steam with "Just" and "My Iron Lung." Yorke describes "Just" as the result of a competition between himself and Jonny Greenwood to see who could get more guitar licks into one song, making it an intense rocker and a fan favorite in live sets. "My Iron Lung" follows in the footsteps of "Just" and at times surpasses it in greatness.

"Street Spirit" is the first of many amazing closers to Radiohead albums. This song, written by Ed O'Brien, is at once haunting and uplifting. It first demolishes the listener with verses about "cracked eggs/ dead birds," then leaves the listener warm inside as Yorke urges you to "immerse your soul in love."

Thorough critique aside, *OK Computer* is a mind-fuck. Not only does it absolutely ooze with Orwellian dystopia dread and bring the firepower on each and every song, but it entirely ruins the notion of what is expected of an album. The lyrics and art point to a Vonnegut-esque separation of the individual and their planet with emphasis on bittersweet longing and mechanized society. "In the next world war, in a jackknifed juggernaut, I am born again." The music is ethereal without dragging (the most common sin among space rock acts), and melodic without feeling limited. Echoing guitars bounce a solo around sleigh bell slaps and bleeding snare hits. I feel I should also mention (detachment be damned) that this album both sparked my love of music and scared the childhood out of me. The direction of the album quickly shifts into madness, confinement, and self-loathing. "One day/I'm gonna grow wings/a chemical reaction/hysterical and useless." And of course, the final resolution comes in the form of suicide contemplation and the strange liberty that might bring. "I'll take the quiet life/a handshake of carbon monoxide." Now I'd hate to give too much away, especially since I've imagined most of this supposed story, but the last two songs really close it on a curveball. I'm very happy to add my words to the near-unanimous chorus of critics and listeners who've absolutely felled the album with praise, and I hope/expect you'll feel the need to give this album another few spins just to reacquaint yourself with all of its understated glory and elegant despondency.



-By Matt Dupree



REVIEWS

IN RAINBOWS

Radiohead's newest album, *In Rainbows*, is the definition of the phrase "a strong effort" as it's used to critique music. While not showing many deficiencies, it isn't a breakthrough either.

One of the weakest points is the quality of the recording. For some reason, *In Rainbows* was released only with high compression low quality MP3s. While some conspiracy theorists say this is a sign that Radiohead is planning on releasing a high quality version later on, that you will HAVE to pay for, I personally think that might just be a misguided artistic choice. The other major problem is that the album blends together to make one amorphous blob, a pretty sounding amorphous blob, but a blob nonetheless. Everything from "Nude" to "House of Cards" sounds like an epic solo of sleepy music. Its good sleepy music, but it lacks variation, it lacks punch.

One thing it doesn't lack is invention. Like *Kid A* and *Amnesiac*, *In Rainbows* feels like a Radiohead album while at the same time having very little tying it to past albums. Every time you think you have a song pegged as the next "Creep," or "Optimistic," it changes up and becomes thing incomparable to other Radiohead.

Sonically, the album features an array of traditional instruments and electronic samples, often blended in a manner more deft than most DJs can dream of. Songs twist from being driven by drum machine, to being driven by vocals, to being driven by piano. It's a little hard to take in at once, but that's what makes Radiohead so enjoyable. Like a good play, each individual instrument shines, without stealing the scene. Yorke's somber, sexy vocals feel like just another instrument at the band's disposal, flawlessly interweaving between singing solo, melody or rhythm.

While I couldn't say this is the best thing Radiohead has done, it's "a strong effort."

-By Dylan Little

In Rainbows makes for a beautiful addition to Radiohead's already outstanding discography. Being described around the office as Radiohead's best baby making music to date, the album feels otherworldly, with a slow pace that sometimes forces the listener into a new mindset. For me, this new mindset consists of increased focus, efficiency, and thoughtfulness. I have gotten more work done in the time I have been listening to this record than I thought was possible. But the album is much more than just a catalyst for productivity. It's also a milestone in music history. Radiohead was able to turn an album release into an event. Kanye and 50 Cent had their little publicity trick, but what Radiohead has done is revolutionary. Sure, it was partly publicity stunt, but at the same time, it was more of a social experiment: One of the biggest bands in the world announces an album 10 days before releasing it on the internet to everyone (including the press) for whatever the consumer feels comfortable paying. It made people stop and think about what music is worth to them, and that is exactly what the group had intended on doing. And moreso than just a social experiment, this is a fantastic album. I find that I am unable to choose a single favorite song on this album. Everytime I think I have found a favorite, I realize I love another song more. But right now, my three top songs are "Nude," "Weird Fishes," and "Videotape." Each and every song sounds completely different, making the album's replay value incredibly high.

-By Allan Steiner

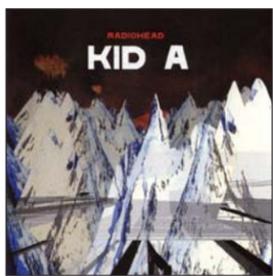


M15 WP^{SMOKE} hand grenade.



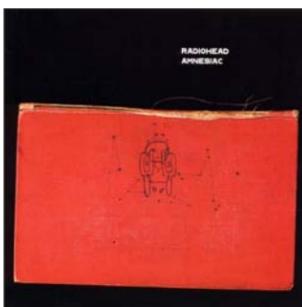
OUTPUT PLANE DATA OUT

Some bands just know how to make really, really good music. With *Kid A*, their fourth album, the Oxford-based Radiohead proved to the world that they can pretty much do whatever the fuck they want...and it'll be great. After the release of the largely accessible and critically lauded *OK Computer*, Thom Yorke and Co. holed up for a few years, completely rethinking their plan of attack. Opting to abandon their then-familiar guitar-based approach, Radiohead created a very dark and densely layered record rooted in the unfamiliar territory of electronica, laced with influences ranging from krautrock to Charles Mingus.



-By Sean Boulger

The strength of *Amnesiac* is its cohesive mood. It is claustrophobic and haunting record, but it is also a warm and comforting record. The opening track, "Packt Like Sardines in a Crushd Tin Box," is at once hypnotizing and enlivening. Colin Greenwood's bass weaves in and out of synthesized beats while Thom Yorke croons, "I'm a reasonable man, get off my case." It's a perfect tonic for road rage or the frustration of wading through heavy traffic. After "Packt," the tempo shifts down into "Pyramid Song," a track that is sprinkled with existentialist beauty and lush detail, ending with Yorke's reassurance that there is "nothing to fear, nothing to doubt."



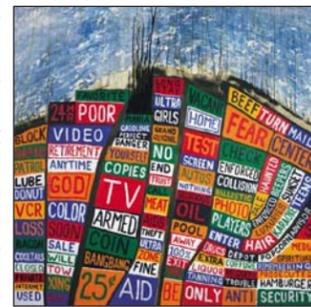
-By Sean Bernhoft

"I Might Be Wrong," is a clear standout track. The song strings you along with a repetitive drop D guitar riff, and culminates into a false ending. The beat comes back in, Yorke croons, and the guitar riff returns for a short but gratifying ending. "Knives Out" follows, sporting what appears to be a guitar line nicked from *OK Computer*'s "Paranoid Android."

Eventually, the disc closes out with marvelously dreary bit of electrojazz. Yorke's disappointed vocals mingle with a morose brass ensemble, and the track plods along until York exclaims over a syncopated beat and crashing cymbals that "of course [he]'d like to sit around and chat/only/there's someone listening in." "Life in a Glasshouse," sounds like an anthem to an Orwellian dystopia. It's a beautiful piece of art.

Where this album suffers is with its inclusion of multiple throwaway tracks. "Pulk/Pull Revolving Doors" is a failed sonic experiment; its drums sputter about aimlessly, while Robot-Yorke babbles on about doors. "Morning Bell/Amnesiac" and "Like Spinning Plates" seem relatively uninspired and, while it sounds kind of neat, "Hunting Bears" has little substance. *Amnesiac* is a good record, but it's nobody's favorite.

Hail to the Thief should be called *A Beginner's Guide to Radiohead*. It contains all the classic Radiohead elements without being so Radiohead it's intimidating (see *Amnesiac*).



Starting out with one of the most rocking Radiohead tracks, "2+2=5," and ending with the disquieting "A Wolf at the Door," it has shades of every Radiohead album. It rocks like *The Bends*, without the tinge of the early nineties. It broods with atmospheric tracks, such as "The Gloaming," without abandoning the casual listener without any semblance of traditional pop music. It even has a trance song a la *Kid A*'s "Idiotique" in the track "Myxomatosis."

While generally favorable, being a causal guide to Radiohead has its down side. Many fans and critics describe it as being unoriginal, which is forgivable for a band like Radiohead, that thrives on reinvention. The album, barring a few exceptions, also doesn't play to one of Radiohead's other great strengths, Thom Yorke's voice. While "There, There" and "We Suck Young Blood" are outstanding, the rest of Yorke's vocals are less pronounced, seeming almost artificially subdued.

However, the rest of the band is perfect. The album features the best guitar work that Radiohead has done since "Paranoid Android." Whether is frenetic solos like in "2+2=5" or haunting sober melody like in "A Wolf at the Door," all the guitar on this album is remarkable. The rhythm section is also in top form, especially in "A Drunken Punchup at a Wedding" featuring 100% more funky bass than previous albums.

If you are a Radiohead fan, hopefully you didn't write this album off (I mean, if you are looking to snub a Radiohead album, pick *Pablo Honey*). If you aren't, this is a great place to start. Passing *Hail to the Thief* up would be like getting flan in the face.

-By Dylan Little

We Loan the Night (From *The Departed*)

A Review of *We Own the Night*



Though I didn't necessarily realize it at first, *We Own the Night* might very well owe its existence to *The Departed*. I wouldn't go so far as to call it an outright knockoff...but Scorsese's latest crowd-pleaser was undeniably an influence in one way or another. That being said, however, *We Own the Night* is definitely a film that can stand on its own, with or without its Bostonian counterpart.

Telling the story of two brothers that start out on opposite ends of the law, *We Own the Night* stars Joaquin Phoenix and Mark Wahlberg as Bobby Green and Joseph Grusinsky, respectively. Bobby is the manager of a Russian-owned nightclub where "Heart of Glass" plays on repeat. He's got a smoking hot, Puerto Rican girlfriend (Eva Mendes, who manages not to be completely shitty), a bunch of cool buddies, and he loves him some cocaine. Joseph, on the other hand, is an up-and-coming New York policeman. He's got a family that loves him, and his dad is Burt Grusinsky, the living legend chief of police, played by Robert Duvall, in full tough/old fashioned, but at the same time loving father mode. What more needs to be said? You've got your movie right there, and I think that might actually be where this film's flaws lie. The conflict here is far too obvious. Two brothers with conflicting priorities: jobs, personal lives, and allegiances to opposing sides in the conflict of the streets? The movie practically writes itself! Of course, that doesn't make *We Own the Night* a complete failure...in fact, I wouldn't call it a failure at all. Director James Gray definitely isn't setting any new industry standards here, but what he's created is a fun, effective, and very entertaining film.

Sure, *We Own the Night* isn't going to make you think about it after you've left the theatre, but for two hours, Phoenix lights up the screen with his usual electricity, and Mark Wahlberg gets in people's faces. Good times, as far as I'm concerned, though it's worth nothing that Wahlberg might very well be the John Heder of tough-guy typecasting. He seems to have acted himself into a little bit of a corner, but interestingly enough, he's doing it by earning himself Oscar nominations. We know Wahlberg can be a super tough guy who doesn't take no bullshit from nobody. We've seen that a few times now, and for any other actor, enough would be enough. But he pulls it off so effectively, and in such an endearing way that you just can't help but love the guy. He's not quite as ridiculously badass as he is in *The Departed*, but his tough-as-nails New York cop persona is convincing as anything else he's done, and his sibling rivalry is alive and real with Phoenix, who—as usual—seamlessly slips into his role. His swagger and bravado are beautifully executed, and his inner conflict as he thumbs his nose at the legacy his family has built is important to the effectiveness of the film as a whole.

Gray handles onscreen tension like a pro, skillfully creating scenes where the suspense is positively crackling; The climactic car chase sequence—done this time around with nothing but a heart-beat-like pulsing on the soundtrack, as opposed to the usual *Transformers*-esque hard rock—will leave fingernail marks on the arm rest next to you (or on the forearm of your significant other).

-By Sean Boulger

Reel News

Dan in Real Life

Buena Vista Pictures

PG-13

This flick is about a single dad (as played by Steve Carrell) who writes an advice column (but can't get his own life together!) and then falls for his brother's girlfriend. And so long as they can dial down the douchebag factor by way of brutally killing Dane Cook within the first ten minutes of the movie, it should be a lark.

Saw IV

Lions Gate Films

R

I'm not even going to watch the trailer, because I can probably guess what it's about. And so can you. It's just another braindead splatterfest where people get raped and brutalized to edgy camera work for a ninety minutes. For some reason these movies keep on selling. So I don't blame the money-grubbing studios, I blame you, the public, that insists on funding these cinematic atrocites. Damn your eyes.

Rails & Ties

Warner Independent Pictures

PG-13

I'm only going to bring this movie up because it's directed by one of Clint Eastwood's (legitimate) daughters. I don't know. It's about suicide or a train or something. I really wasn't paying attention to the trailer. It's got Kevin Bacon in it, though. And that guy is always a barrel of laughs. This is a pretty bleak week. Isn't *The Darjeeling Limited* or *Jesse James* out in more than three fucking theaters worldwide yet?