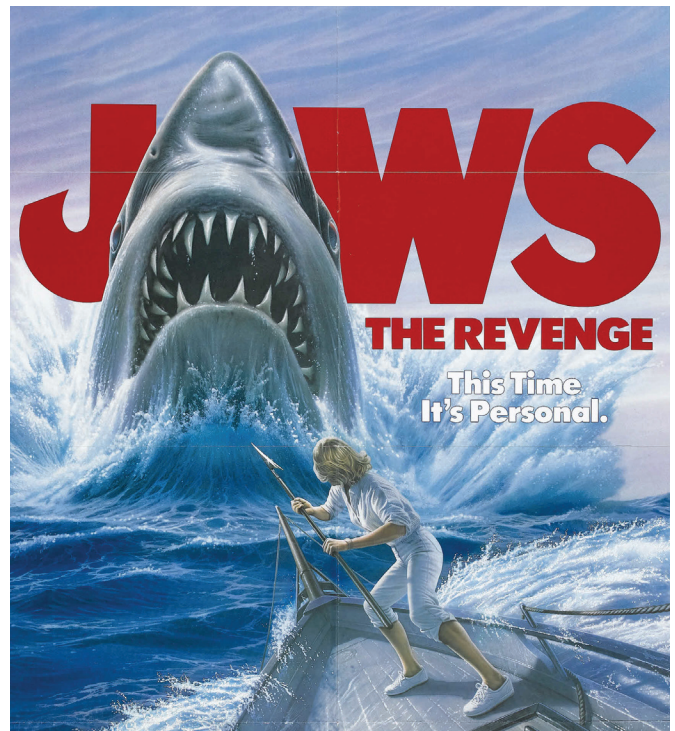# Sequels II: Son of the Return of the Revenge of Sequels!

Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the movie theatre!

Words by Leo Graziani

"God willing, we'll all meet again in *Spaceballs 2: The Search for More Money*."

—Yogurt, *Spaceballs*

Summer is almost here, and with it comes blockbuster movie season. Here are 10 films I'm looking forward to: *Iron Man 3*, *Star Trek: Into Darkness*, *Man of Steel*, *Red 2*, *The Wolverine*, *300: Rise of an Empire*, *Kick-Ass 2*, *Machete Kills*, *Sin City: A Dame to Kill For* and *Thor: The Dark Worlds*. Huh. Something's off there, isn't it? They're almost all sequels, with one prequel and a remake. What's going on?

Film sequels are nothing new—they've been around for almost as long as the medium has existed. Look at any point in movie history (say, the James Bond franchise) and you'll find sequels. Yet it seems to me that there's been a bit of an uptick lately in the number of sequels and remakes coming from Hollywood.

Where Are the Original Ideas?
There are two competing sides to this, as I see it. One is to create interesting works of art and tell compelling and challenging stories. The other is to play it safe and create what sells. We've seen this countless times: a studio finds a hit and pumps out films until that idea well is dry.

I've been incorporating more indie films and '70s classics into my viewing lately, and the more I watch, the more I realize that these films demand more from an audience. Despite being a passive medium, these movies make me feel as though I'm more active and involved in what's happening, because I have to think harder to see where the story is going.

Character Development
Classic storytelling tells us that a protagonist has a flaw to overcome in order to solve the problem presented in the plot. The character grows and changes, often emerging as a completely different person at the end. Think of all the really good films you've seen—they probably fit that description, don't they?

Many sequels are uninspired, retreading familiar ground and offering nothing new. They come off as episodic, but film isn't supposed to be like television, where characters return to a state of normalcy after figuring out the plot problem. Yet characters are being written this way so that the sequel is a sure thing. I know it's a business, so it has to make money—but whatever happened to just telling a good story?

And yet, I will go see every one of those 10 movies listed above.

Give the Audience What it Wants?
Humans love repetition. We think nothing of memorizing a favourite song, and repetition is key to learning—so why do we hold movies to a different standard? Sometimes we want to see familiar characters that we love triumphing over further adversity, and maybe that's not entirely a bad thing. Think of your favourite movies: how many times have you seen them? There's a comfort in that. I quoted my favourite film of all time at the beginning of this article.

Still, for every *Empire Strikes Back*, there are tons of *Police Academy 6*s.

I went to see *A Good Day to Die Hard* with my dad. We went in knowing the movie would be awful, and we were not surprised by seeing a good film instead. We weren't there for character development (it was laughable)—we just wanted to watch stuff blow up for an hour and a half. So I have to begrudgingly admit that even terrible sequels have their place.

Maybe the trick is simply balance. Go see the fun stuff, but challenge yourself with more complex and thought-provoking films.

Now if you'll excuse me, I've got *Rocky XLVII* ready to go in the Blu-ray player.