



Matrix invented bullet time and now you see it everywhere. Even cows use it to shoot spurts of milk at an annoying human (from Kung-Pow: Enter the Fist)

Blasts from the past: Catching up on the best of the 90's

By Gokhra

WHEN asked to give a brief of the 90's movie scene it seemed a bit overwhelming. Post 2000 movie world is full of remakes and sequels and there is hardly anything original going on. The 90's on the other hand offered up a whole lot of originals. What it did not have was the animation as it was still an art form in the early stages of development. The 90's decade provided a lot of interesting and often thought provoking flicks the best among which is undoubtedly The Shawshank Redemption by Stephen King. Here Tim Robbins plays Andy Dufresne who was wrongly sent to prison on charges of killing his wife and her lover. He spends twenty years forging relationships and teaching people about hope and finally escaping. It's an awesome thriller considering how his plan of escape is a mind boggling puzzle. And the whole thing is written by the king of thrills Stephen King.

Such life movies make for occasional tear jerkers as well as providing unique storylines of unique people. Good Will Hunting starring Matt Damon as a mathematical prodigy and Robin Williams who realigns the young mans confused, rebellious spirit. It's not only a beautiful story but also its also base don real life. The there's The Green Mile by Stephen King again. It's told in flashback about 1935 when a prison guard, Edgecomb, reflects on how he developed a poignant, unusual relationship with this one inmate, sentenced to Death Row, who may be innocent. The inmate, John Coffey, is an African-American man--

convicted of the rape and murder of a pair of 9-year-old sisters--who awaits his death in this harsh prison. Coffey has strange powers, both mysterious and miraculous. It sets the theme for a poignant story.

While on the subject of life stories how can we leave out Braveheart and Mel Gibsons Scottish saga of epic proportions and men in skirts.

Another great film that wasn't heard of much was South Central that told the story of a man who is released from prison only to find his son is involved with his former gang. The father tries to stop him from getting involved with drugs. Also check out Goodfellas. It's a drama of a half-Irish, half-Sicilian Brooklyn boy initiated into a neighbourhood mob in his youth, and the struggles he encounters with the gang through the next 25 years.

and how can we forget the cool dude John Travolta in his comeback movie Pulp Fiction? It offers a slick inside look at a memorable community of criminals proving to be a movie that is a genius in all facets. Its story starts off so simple, and then becomes twisted into random events that make for a surprising and entertaining plot.

Now if you want the chills then there is Arlington Road starring Jeff Bridges which contains riveting and ultimately disturbing plot twists that show how the bad guys win for a change. A when we talk of chills no one can do it better than the Anthony Hopkins in his chilling portrayal of a psychotic cannibal in the cult classic The Silence of the Lambs.



Jodie Foster takes the help of this madman to capture another serial killer who strips off people skins to make coats. The blood and gore isn't what chills but it is Hopkins' calm voice and psychotic gleam in the eyes.

Yet another psycho thriller of the time was Seven where Brad Pitt runs around trying to solve the puzzling clues of a serial killer whose



M.O. is the seven deadly sins. Of course, if you want your mind to be warped into another unidentifiable shape than nothing beats Fight Club with Edward Norton and Brad Pitt. Some say this is one of the best movies ever with a finish so spectacular that words do not do it justice.

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American Beauty - Pointlessly acclaimed movie about a dysfunctional family

Magnolia - Tom Cruise in a plot twister

American History X - Gritty, raw story of urban white supremacy and its consequences.

Laughter is the best money maker

Of course this was also the era of the grossed out comedies where slapstick liberties have been taken to extremes. There's Something About Mary grossed out some viewers with its bodily gags that seems a little tame in comparison with what is on offer today. Then we had the king of all spoofs Scary Movie of which there are four now and they are progressively less about scary movies. While theses provide out and out ridiculous humour the best and also quite tastefully done was Forest Gump that is yet another cult classic.

Another interesting comedy is Outside Providence by the Farrelly Brothers. Then there's the Full Monty set in a British steel town where a group of out-of-work steel workers are organized into a Chippendale-style dance troupe. Yep, male strippers and don't let that put you off because it is a rip roaring comedy about a bunch of unique

characters.

The 90's were possibly the reign of the cute and adorable Meg Ryan with a large share of romantic comedies. There was You've Got Mail with Tom Hanks and Sleepless in Seattle with Hanks yet again. They made a pretty good on-screen couple back then. Another of Megs hit flick was City of Angels with Nicolas Cage where an angel decides to take the fall to earth because he has fallen in love with a woman he was assigned to watch over.

Other comic offerings include the man who can twist his face into any shape, almost. Jim Carrey had two of the biggest hits with The Mask and Dumb and Dumber. The latter is about a couple of friends who miss all of life's opportunities because they are too dumb to understand when opportunity blows down the door.

Ever get the feeling of deja vu. Well Groundhog starring the dry humour talents of Bill Murray had his character live the same day over and over again. Frustrating at times but also offers a lot of insights into and pointers into life itself. It's also a sweet love story in the end.

Of course, few movies beat Forest Gump for the right doses of humour, heart wrenching drama and the indomitable human spirit.

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90's A READER'S REVERIE

By Sabrina F Ahmad

1992

A birthday party. The walls of the large drawing room is festooned with tacky crepe-paper chains and balloons. At one corner, the long dining table, now empty of its feast of home-made (this was the pre Shumi's and King's Confectionery days, after all) goodies like sandwiches, samosas, kebabs, and rolls, and the must-have "doll" cake (a real doll with a dress made of cake) from Cooper's. The children are seated in a circle on the floor; girls dressed in frilly frocks and boys in their GI Joe and Thundercats t-shirts and skinny jeans.

There are no party favours, no blaring television sets, not even a video game console in site to keep the kids occupied. All they need is an obliging adult working the cassette player, while they pass a pillow around. The game ends, and the winner is announced with fanfare and applause.

Finally, it's that exciting time of the party, when the birthday girl gets to open her presents. A taut silence descends over the group as they gather together for this almost sacred ritual. The silence is interrupted by the sounds of ripping wrapping paper, shrieks of glee, and oohs and aahs of appreciation as piles of Enid Blyton books come tumbling out. Detective stories like Famous Five, Secret Seven, and the Five Find-Outers, as well as school-based series like Malory Towers and



St. Clares...there's a little of everything. Then, to make an already wonderful day sweeter, the girl's parents hand her the huge children's encyclopaedia that she has been dreaming about for weeks.

"This is the best birthday I've ever had!" she happily declares

1994

A family party. The adults are downstairs, contemplating the intrigues and the adventures in the brand-new television soaps like The Bold and the Beautiful, and Santa Barbara, trying to compare these with old favourites like Dallas, and Dynasty.

Upstairs, the children, an assortment of cousins, are seated in front of the television set, lost in the adventures of the Teenaged Mutant Ninja Turtles. As the end credits are shown, conversation resumes, and quickly turns into a heated debate over the merits of Nancy Drew vs. The Hardy Boys, or classics like Little Women, as opposed to popular teen fiction like the Sweet Valley series. Finally, after a lot of arguing, they somehow managed to agree on one thing...parents were cruel, silly, and unfair for banning comics.

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90's King of Fighters, Super Mario Bros. and the Memories

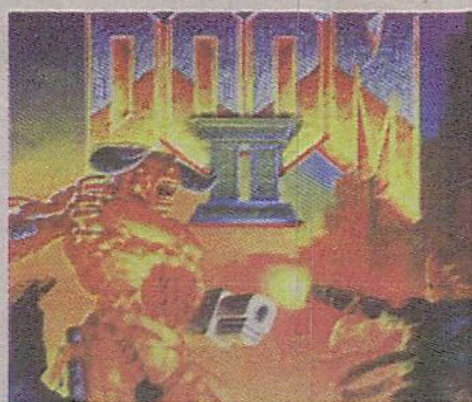
By Zeeshan B. Rahman

IDDQD I'm sure this five-letter code must ring a bell in the minds of many readers. For those who are wondering what on God's earth this is, it's the god-mode cheat code for Doom II one of the most popular computer games of the nineties. Yes, readers, as this is our nineties special issue, you're about to look back at the gaming scenario in the nineties.

The nineties was probably the most important decade for gaming in general, and perhaps the most important for gaming in Bangladesh. This was the decade when gaming became accepted as a form of entertainment in Bangladesh. As people slowly realized the need for a computer at home, PC games became the new sensation for the teens in the town. Moreover, the decrease in the number of playing led to the increase and popularization of the gaming arcade and the home console back then which meant an Atari, a Sega or maybe a Nintendo. Growing up through the nineties and then this decade (what do you call it anyway?) I've had the wonderful opportunity to witness the gaming industry and the culture rapidly improve, improve and then improve a bit more. But somehow it makes me wonder whether it is really important for a game to have high-resolution graphics and what not for a game to be fun. But I guess this is something our younger readers will

understand when they get to the later half of the next decade!

The earliest gaming devices in Bangladesh were the hand-held games which our relatives from abroad sent to us. Back in the early nineties, having one of these things defined being cool for the young teenager. Although hand-held



games came in different sizes and shapes, the most popular was clearly the apparently silly but insanely addictive Brick Game. I still remember saving my lunch money to buy batteries for it every week. I just had to break my friend's top score record! But childish whims soon fade away. It wasn't long before the Brick Game was left in

some ignored corner of my closet; the reason being the new gaming arcade that had been established in our neighborhood. Now arcades in Dhaka city were small dingy places with three or four machines at the best, not at all like the ones you would see on TV. These arcades, however, had an attraction quite unique to themselves.



Firstly, gaming there was extremely cheap it was one or two bucks per coin, and any good gamer could play to their heart's delight with about 20 takas. Secondly, arcades probably had the most competitive gaming environment ever! You might argue that online gaming is much more competitive, but standing face to face with your

opponent and then trying your best to win the match for that oh-so-important two taka coin was something very different. And if you like games like Street Fighter and King of Fighters (I'm not sure if anybody does nowadays, though) you had to try out your skills against the best in the world (okay, the neighborhood). However, it



soon became apparent to my parents that going to these arcades wasn't really helping improve my manners or studies (although I believe that it helped improve my vocabulary of 'special' words a lot!) among other problems. And so I was prohibited from going to the arcades. My parents probably didn't think of the consequences of

their order, because as soon as I stopped going to the arcades, I demanded a gaming console of my own! My very own Atari took a lot of pursuing and hunger strikes on my part, but finally, it was all worth it.

The Atari was, in fact, the most affordable and most common console of the nineties. The others like the Sega Mega II or the Sega Genesis or the Nintendo consoles were comparatively more expensive but popular nonetheless. All of the consoles had pretty much the same games, the most popular ones being Super Mario Bros., Contra, Mortal Combat, Power Rangers and the Sega all-time favorite Sonic the Hedgehog. Now, none of these games had the graphics, the music or the stories of the games today, but what made them addictive was their simplicity, gameplay and the pointless fun involved with it all. But the fact that these consoles couldn't be upgraded and newer versions weren't being released eventually led to their obsolescence. This, on the other hand, led to the emergence of probably the greatest ever gaming device the PC.

Personal computers started becoming a necessity for everyone since the late nineties. By then, the Segas and the Ataris had become nothing but obsolete. And it was also quite sometime before the Playstation hit the market.

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90's games never looked as good as these pictures in the two opposing corners but we put them in anyway (not least because the girl is hot)