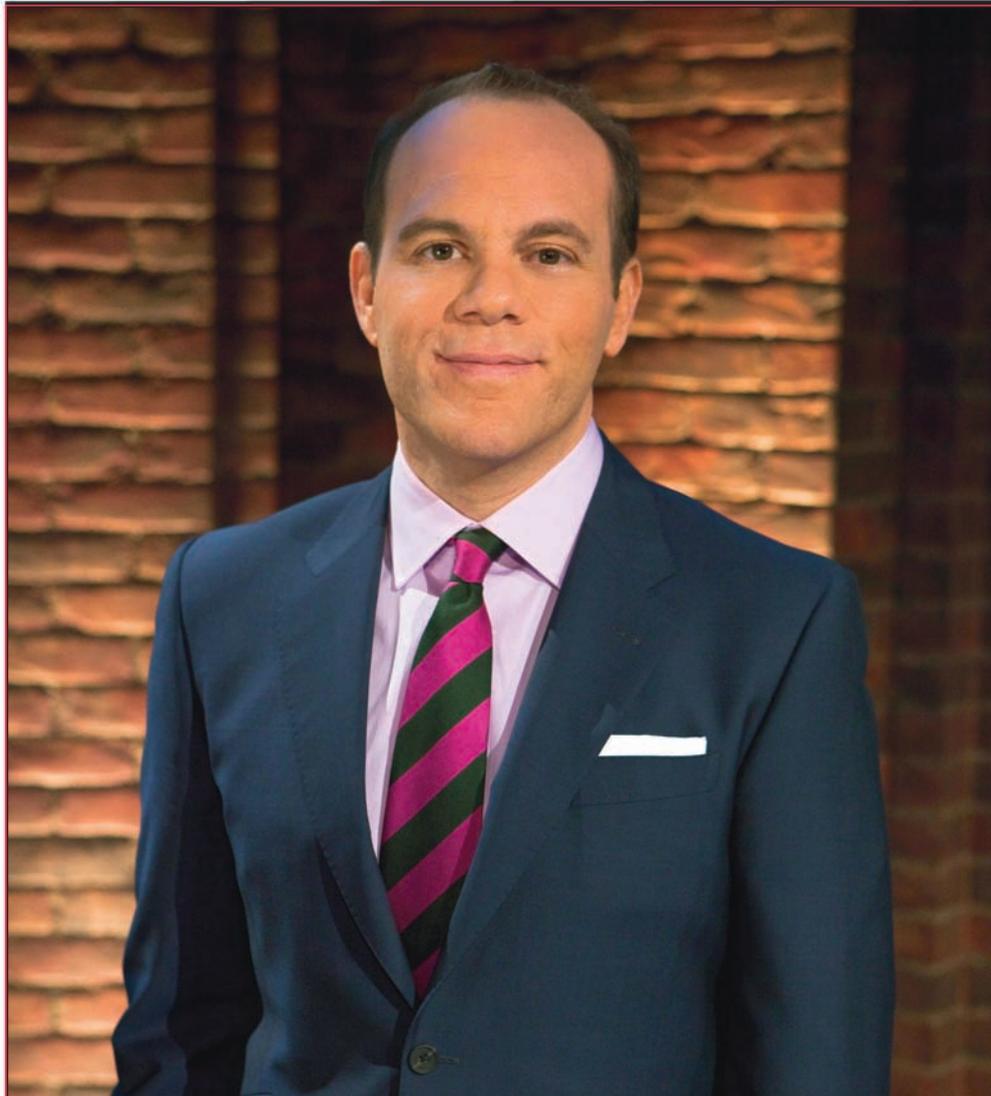


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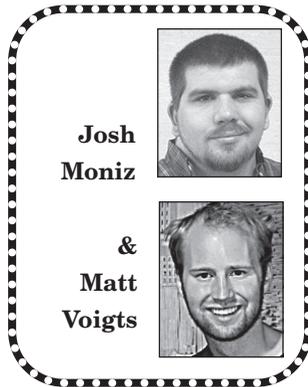
Double Take: *Green Lantern*

Matt: Limitless possibilities, unfortunate results
Josh: "Lantern's" quality is very dim

Matt: A flashback early in *Green Lantern* depicts a mythical time when fighter pilots were celebrities and a prototype test flight drew a crowd. The movie itself, however, is staunchly of a jaded time beyond wonder, when spectacles of imagination are treated as afterthoughts by executives hungry for action figure sales and fast-food tie-ins. It's passably entertaining, but with *Super 8* and *X-Men* still in theaters it deserves to be ignored.

If you assume "creativity" entered into the process, you could guess that DC was aiming for a breezier, less Batman-like, more Marvel-like tone with *Green Lantern*. Working against the fun is how much Ryan Reynolds' Hal Jordan is a massive jerk. He's irresponsible, showing no consideration for his friends, family, or the women he sleeps with. He is a walking icon of privileged Ayn Rand-esque WASP masculinity.

And yet, a magic ring grants Hal the power to turn his thoughts into reality because he is "without fear." If I were a benevolent magic ring dispensing nigh-unlimited superpowers, I'd



want to give them to a level-headed individual with strong impulse control, but whatever. It's also false that Hal is "without fear:" he spends most of his time worrying about an untimely death — something the movie treats not as a logical response to squid monsters from outer space, but as a shameful secret on par with having plagiarized your doctoral dissertation or something.

This possibly made for awkward Father's Day viewing last Sunday, given that Peter Sarsgaard's balding villain probably looks something like your father and Reynolds probably looks and acts more like the guy who just beat him out for a promotion. This is this film's moral universe: Ryan Reynolds has a chiseled chest and flies fighter planes all day, so he deserves superpowers. Sarsgaard is kind of ugly and likes to play chess, and for daring to leave his apartment he must die.



If the stupidity of this image doesn't warn you off, then I guess you can go see *Green Lantern*.

Josh: I agree that this movie is a disaster. It's sloppy, simplistic and dull. But, its downfall has more to do with movie-goers growing up than the film committing an unforgivable sin.

DC is definitely trying to steal Marvel's clumsier playbook. DC was trying to do something quick and easy. Big stars, big explosions, big fun. When you look at the plot, it's "Spiderman" almost exactly, except less creative. What they didn't consider is that Marvel was actually falling behind for not pushing the story side of their films enough. Thanks to films like *X-Men: First Class* or *The Dark Knight*, people are expecting more out of their superhero films. They want complex, adult story lines with special effects on the side, not the other way around. Or, at the least, they want a vibrant, fresh character. *Green Lantern* fails on both of their marks.

The plot is the biggest letdown. It could have been interesting, with the main character and the sub-villain being paralleled in their story arcs. The hero could show how courage is accepting fear and learning how to control it. The villain could have been the consequence of letting fear consumes you. Instead, *Green Lantern* teases you with whispers of character development before dropping that and having them fight even if it doesn't make sense.

I also didn't like the CGI. There are tons of strange creatures and places to depict in this film, not to mention the Green Lantern's CGI costume, so you would think they would have put some effort into the animation. All of it, except for the big villain, is extremely sloppy. And what's worse is that it is used so much that real-world, human scenes become jarring when the film switches to them. See

reality in the film ends up making the CGI even worse than it would have been. In my opinion, they should have animated the few humans parts, too, so that the entire thing was like a cartoon. It would have been more satisfying and better to look at.

Matt: I would totally watch a *Green Lantern* cartoon. Despite all the movie's flaws, it has perked my interest in the character — his powers are fascinating, and the intergalactic Lanterns seem to offer a lot of storytelling possibilities. I will also say — the fight at the end with the "big bad," Parallax, the pseudo-Lovecraftian fear-eating squid thing, is cooler than your average finale. Plus, Parallax is voiced by Clancy Brown (*Carnivale's* creepy Brother Justin), who I'm always happy to see working. Sarsgaard is delightfully hammy in his role. And I'm willing to forgive director Martin Campbell an awful lot because he made two of the best post-Connery James Bond movies: *Goldeneye* and *Casino Royale*. This movie, however, didn't seem so much directed as assembled by a marketing team.

Josh: I actually have the opposite feeling about the Green Lantern's powers. Because he can create anything at will, it's an uphill battle to feel concern for his fights.

Anyways, we've survived the onslaught of summer superhero. Hopefully we can look forward to less generic blockbusters going forward, for better and for worse.

Matt: If your kids are clamoring to see it, why not? But be the adult here: take them for a triple feature with *Super 8* and *X-Men*.

Josh: It won't hurt you if you see this film, but you should probably skip it.

Matt: 3/10, **Josh:** 4/10

Synopsis:

Hal Jordan is a fighter pilot seemingly without fear, just like his father, who died on a test flight. That's why a ring imbued with the green power of will chooses him to be a Green Lantern — a member of a powerful intergalactic corps sworn to protect the universe from the yellow power of fear. As Hal learns to use his powers — which let him turn his thoughts into reality — he must confront monsters and other challenges on Earth and across the universe.

Director: Martin Campbell

Writers: Greg Berlanti, Michael Green, Marc Guggenheim, Michael Goldenberg

Starring: Ryan Reynolds, Blake Lively, Peter Sarsgaard, Mark Strong

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