
I Want to Believe

Posted by Lyra - 13-05-2008 09:53

This is really just for me to obsess over the new X-Files film now there are little titbits of information and a few stills around.

I so hope that there's still enough interest to make this a success.

I really think it's going to be excellent. They're going to have a sort of post-90s cynicism hanging over everything. People are so used to conspiracy stuff now that I think we just take it for granted, but the focus has shifted, the things we worry about now are things like climate change, like the way that wars and disasters seem to be perpetuated by capitalism - the horrors of this century are even worse than those of the last and I reckon they'll overshadow this film, even though it sounds like the story is more localised this time. Mulder and Scully will be older, more depressed than ever, careworn. I wonder what William will look like now.

They always used to do serial killer/forensic science stories really really well, and I think they had a lot of impact on shows such as Dexter and Bones. And in some of their finest episodes (eg Home, or in a different way, Paper Hearts) I think they did have that that-much-darker edge; but they did also tend towards over-seriousness a bit, and I think they'll have learned in turn from newer sensibilities and there'll be a bit more blood, gore, grim humour.

Also Xzibit is in it, which, you know, is going to be aces.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Spearmint Rhino - 13-05-2008 10:18

I've been meaning to buy up all the old X-Files episodes on second-hand DVD and start from the beginning, because I loved it back in the day, before it disappeared up its own arse with the whole labyrinthine conspiracy plot. I might try a bit harder to follow it up the aforementioned arse this time.

I interviewed Gillian Anderson once, you know. She had a screaming baby in the room, and a Meat Loaf CD on the stereo.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Crusoe - 13-05-2008 11:40

Some of those one- or two-part episodes, away from the increasingly tedious story arc, were absolutely fantastic. It had that grim, downbeat hopelessness that inspired stuff like Millennium (Lance Henriksen, not Robbie Williams) but with real moments of humour (I'm imagining Gillian Anderson eating that bug at the end of the freakshow/circus episode) and a lightness that the imitators never really matched.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Lyra - 13-05-2008 12:32

You've MET Gillian? What was she like? A friend of mine had dinner with her once in Vancouver and said she spent the whole evening snogging her husband (this was the first one).

And you can't go wrong with any of the first 5 series, really. 6 and 7 have great moments too but are a bit more patchy.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Mitch - 13-05-2008 12:35

There was loads of humour in the X-Files at the start.

The funniest episode was the one where Mulder swapped bodies with this horrible lech CIA agent, played by Michael McKean from Spinal Tap.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by King Mob - 13-05-2008 12:58

I always used to fall asleep through The X Files. Without fail. Ten minutes in, I'd be there on the sofa, head back, rivulet of dribble trickling down the side of my cheek.

I mean, despite myself - I did like the few minutes I caught before succumbing to the urge to nod off.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Lyra - 13-05-2008 13:50

That was in series 6 Mitch! Dreamland.

Yeah they did humour really well. Jose Chung's 'From Outer Space'; Clyde Bruckman's Final Repose; Bad Blood; Home; War of the Coprophages, the aforementioned Humbug, and now I realise what a colossal nerd I sound like so I'd better stop.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Spearmint Rhino - 13-05-2008 13:52

Lyra wrote:

You've MET Gillian? What was she like? A friend of mine had dinner with her once in Vancouver and said she spent the whole evening snogging her husband (this was the first one).

Honestly, she was a bit boring and humourless.

Maybe I just wasn't asking the right questions, but it was one of those interviews where it never quite clicks.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Hofzinsler - 13-05-2008 13:55

A friend of mine had dinner with her once in Vancouver and said she spent the whole evening snogging her husband

I read this a few times before I realised you meant Gillian Anderson was snogging her own husband rather than your friend's.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Lyra - 16-07-2008 18:20

I've just been watching the trailer a few times in an attempt to keep the hype going. Let's face it it's what I've got to look forward to.

Anyway. It's going to be SO aces. It has almost everything. Mulder scrabbling in the snow. Mulder going 'I NEED you on this, Scully' in that super-romantic way just like he did in teh first film. The black oil! Visions from God and ranting priests. Extreme chiaroscuro. Scary medical equipment. People submerged in vats of icky goo. And some fantastic looking kissing. And Xzibit looks great.

I just cannot wait.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by robw - 16-07-2008 22:31

I never did see the first film. My brother was more into the X-Files than I was. I did however, purchase seasons 1-4 on DVD last year and I should really get round to buying the rest, but buying the Sopranos on DVD took over.

Duchovny is fucking great.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by ian.64 - 17-07-2008 07:15

The first film was watchable but nothing special. I've forgotten most of it.

The title to the second one is a bit crap.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Rory Bunk - 17-07-2008 07:30

ian.64 wrote:

The title to the second one is a bit crap.

Aye, it makes me heckle "I don't want to watch."

I used to love the show, but I hate stuff being brought back all the time for that old rope effect.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Lyra - 17-07-2008 08:44

The title to the second one is a bit crap.

But it's the poster in Mulder's office! And it's basically his own personal philosophy that's kept him going all these years.

I would normally agree about the old rope, etc, but this case is an exception.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by ian.64 - 17-07-2008 10:08

But it's the poster in Mulder's office! And it's basically his own personal philosophy that's kept him going all these years.

Funny you should say 'poster' because I was going to mention that it reminded me of those signs that football fans, mainly the gormlessly sentimental ones, hold up at matches to draw attention to themselves rather than make any particular point.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Lyra - 17-07-2008 10:13

Pfeh. It's a very important point about faith.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by ian.64 - 17-07-2008 12:12

Pfeh is a very important point about faith?

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by dogbeak - 17-07-2008 12:19

ian.64 wrote:

Funny you should say 'poster' because I was going to mention that it reminded me of those signs that football fans

"I WANT TO BELIEVE" sums up beautifully my feelings towards Kevin Keegan, Mike Ashley and the 2008-09 football season.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by evilC - 17-07-2008 12:40

King Mob wrote:

I always used to fall asleep through The X Files. Without fail. Ten minutes in, I'd be there on the sofa, head back, rivulet of dribble trickling down the side of my cheek.

I mean, despite myself - I did like the few minutes I caught before succumbing to the urge to nod off.

You watch Doctor Who, don't you, KM?

Maybe it's something about quality itself that makes you drowsy?

On a more serious note, I loved X Files for a very long time, but towards the end it just got too annoying to watch. Just as you know when pop stars have lost perspective because they wear shades all the time, with X Files it was that the main characters would only ever speak in a barely-audible murmur in those later seasons. I used to have to turn the TV's volume up to max just to hear Scully, sometimes. Then the scene would cut and BLAMMM!!! And all that teary-eyed bollocks that dominated the late episodes - balls to that! If I want a melodramatic revelation or a so-called 'moving' death of a main character every fucking episode, I'll watch Doctor Who or Eastenders, thanks.

The continuity between episodes was very selective, too. If you remember, Mulder was supposed to have been 'possessed' by a demon in a relatively early episode (he looks into the eyes of a boy who is being exorcised by some priests, just as the demon leaves his body) whilst Scully was rendered unkillable in a later adventure. (The one where the bloke who can't die is trying to photograph death itself. In the end, when death comes for Scully, he 'takes' her death.) Now, just imagine if the writers had chosen to use those two factors as plot mechanisms. One demonic FBI agent and one immortal one! Now, that would have been amusing.

as for a sequel film, ...I'll probably wait for the DVD, I think.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Lyra - 17-07-2008 12:44

Chris Carter has a lot to answer for, it's true. I agree with you about plot discrepancies. I think it's brilliance is in being, at least at its best, astonishingly good despite the best efforts of some of the writers/producers to fuck it up.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Houdi Elbow - 17-07-2008 22:00

Billy Connolly!?!

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Matej - 30-07-2008 17:42

It's pretty good, but not great.

For a summer blockbuster, it is incredibly low key and restrained. I don't think there is a gunshot or an explosion.

It also has pretty much nothing to do with any plotline from the series.

It's basically the equivalent of a two-part episode from the later seasons, but shot in high quality (and beautifully, as well).

It felt like a 'franchise tester' movie. If it does well enough, I'd expect to see a bigger, noisier X-files film next.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 01-08-2008 09:42

The premise has always irritated the fuck out of me: dogmatic sceptics rejecting clear evidence of the supernatural because of their attachment to narrow-minded rationalism, while the credulous saucer-gawpers are right all along. They can fuck right off with that.

So, er, I never watched it. Don't like much sci-fi anyway, Dr Who being the huge exception.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Lyra - 01-08-2008 09:53

It was a bit subtler that that; Scully started off being put there to test everything with 'science', yes, but she always valued evidence most of all; she didn't reject it, she interpreted it and enough stuff happened to her that of course she was convinced by it. They play on that all the way through of course, it was fundamental to the show and to the dynamic between the characters, but it also always was the two of them against almost everyone else. More about government conspiracies to conceal unsavoury truths than anything else really.

For example an important part of it was that stuff that initially seemed like one thing to Mulder (eg alien abductions) and another to Scully (ptsd or some other thing like that) turned out to be a third thing all along (the government experimenting on people without their consent).

Anyway it's great and you missed out.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 01-08-2008 10:53

It was a bit subtler that that; Scully started off being put there to test everything with 'science', yes, but she always valued

evidence most of all..

It's the fact that that sentence contains "but" rather than "and" that sums up the problem.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Lyra - 01-08-2008 11:24

Hang on, I'm confused.

What I mean is, you said "rejecting clear evidence of the supernatural because of their attachment to narrow-minded rationalism" and I'm saying no, she didn't reject the evidence out of hand because it didn't fit with her world view, she evaluated it as a scientist.

Her *bosses* wanted her to use science to discredit Mulder, but she never did. This is where my "but" came from; the mission she was sent to do was the dishonest thing, but she had the integrity to follow the evidence.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Spearmint Rhino - 01-08-2008 11:29

Lyra's got it right.

I'm re-watching The X Files from scratch at the moment, by the way. Bloody good stuff, and ahead of its time in terms of the quality of dialogue, the effort put into each individual episode etc.

Even if some of it is a bit quaint in the internet age, eg the retro-looking computer in Ghosts In The Machine.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 01-08-2008 11:35

I guess it's something that all sci-fi that's set in a contemporary landscape has to grapple with: why is it that scientific orthodoxy, and much popular opinion too, rejects space aliens and superpowers and that? New Who, for example, because of its odd fixation on Earth Now, has to deal with it, and does so rather badly to be honest, invoking mass collective denial and stuff.

But the X-Files has always seemed to me to embrace the business about the rationalist orthodoxy being blinkered and the "believers" being the only ones who care about the truth. The fact that your woman, by being the only one who's truly rational, is led to reject the narrow dogmatism of her "bosses" in favour of all the weirdness--that amplifies the problem rather than mitigating it.

In the best SF, the ideas are the stars, and that idea is a bad one.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 01-08-2008 11:37

Yeah, but SR, our previous conversations on things like the moon landing photographs suggests your and my orientations differ a lot here.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Spearmint Rhino - 01-08-2008 11:40

Wyatt Earp wrote:

Yeah, but SR, our previous conversations on things like the moon landing photographs suggests your and my orientations differ a lot here.

Well, you can think that if you want.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 01-08-2008 11:45

If I want to believe, you might say.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 01-08-2008 11:47

All I'm saying here is that I think I've a bee in my bonnet about that kind of thing, and therefore that it's more likely to get in the way of my enjoyment than of yours.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Spearmint Rhino - 01-08-2008 11:48

Well, the X Files is fictional entertainment. I don't need or expect it to represent the world as it is.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 01-08-2008 11:51

No, but it reflects a worldview, as does all SF.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Lyra - 01-08-2008 12:15

is led to reject the narrow dogmatism of her "bosses" in favour of all the weirdness

Well not really, they all know for a fact that the government is experimenting on people, etc. They assume that she will be narrowly dogmatic etc; they don't bargain for her being openminded at all. They put her there because they think she'll be as wrong as Mulder is. They're **both** wrong, most of the time.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Lyra - 01-08-2008 12:19

What I mean is, the worldview isn't one that says 'If you see a UFO it might well be a spaceship, you can't prove it isn't', it's one that says **they** are pursuing an agenda that they will go to great lengths to protect. And **they** start off thinking, "There's a guy in the FBI who's a bit of a loon but he's lending credibility to all the Fortean Times types out there. Let's stick a doctor on the case to rubbish everything he says, make him look like a loon again."

They are wise enough to know that rather than trying to cover stuff up, which will never happen, making it look like attempts to hoax people into thinking something else altogether is going on, is going to deflect attention perfectly. And so

on and so forth.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 01-08-2008 13:07

That's even worse than my inaccurate precis, though.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Spearmint Rhino - 01-08-2008 13:15

Why?

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Lyra - 01-08-2008 13:44

It's still fiction after all.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 01-08-2008 14:08

Yeah, but fiction can embody a view of the world of which one disapproves, surely.

This is a paranoid fantasy. I don't know if Nolan actually subscribes to this brand of paranoia, and I don't think it matters.

Let me ratchet up the stakes to make the point starkly (without suggesting for a moment any equivalence of harm). Suppose there were a TV program whose premise was that there was a vast conspiracy, only this time not led by the US government but by the Elders of Zion. Exactly how much of a defence would "It's fiction" be? Somewhat of a defence, but not, I reckon, nearly enough of one.

On the other hand, a TV series in which the Earth happened to be flat would be harmlessly kooky and nothing more.

It all depends, I think, on how malign is the delusion that's being affirmed. I'd place the Ufology lark, and related pieces of bollocks, as more malign than flat-earthism but much less so than anti-semitism.

Roughly on a par with Creationism, perhaps, as utter cack that's hostile and damaging to science. A series based on that premise would have to be fucking entertaining to win me over, be it never so fictional.

(Hmm. Discuss with reference to Narnia. I think that scrapes through, for me, because it's done via an allegory you can choose to ignore.)

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Lyra - 01-08-2008 14:29

So... it's offensive, because if it were anti-Semitic, which it's not, it would be offensive?

I find it hard to believe, that the US government isn't guilty of covering things up. Only they're more prosaic things like, they have an interest in keeping certain wars going on so arms companies can sell weapons and make money; or they don't really want people to lower their consumption of sugar because the sugar barons pay their campaign costs, or whatever. Well, I guess they don't cover this stuff up very well, but it's not like they admit to it either?

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 01-08-2008 14:31

Lyra wrote:

So... it's offensive, because if it were anti-Semitic, which it's not, it would be offensive?

No, that was just a critique of the "It's only fiction" defence.

I'm not saying governments don't lie, either.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 01-08-2008 14:32

(Or, indeed, that it's "offensive". I'm not "offended".)

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Taylor - 01-08-2008 14:40

UFO stuff on a par with Creationism, in terms of harm? Not sure about that. I don't see how it's such a serious threat to science, in any way that really matters. It's just a hobby for silly buggers, and while it's obviously a bad thing overall, and not great that (some) people outside the hardcore take it (sort of) seriously, I'm not sure it's remotely as frightening as something like Creationism, which is a direct, deliberate assault on rationalism, appealing to a huge base, backed by some powerful interests. At least a guy in a T-shirt with a "grey" on it is going to be thought of, primarily, as a twat.

Still - Lyra, you should be cautious with that "they do cover things up" stuff. It's a fallback argument for conspiracists generally. They'll tell you that because the US Government doesn't always tell the truth, clearly their own pet ideas about Area 51 / the World Trade Centre / governments practicing population control via poison gas in jet fuel (one of my favourites, for its heroic resistance to logic and science) must therefore be true.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Lyra - 01-08-2008 15:07

i read a stupid thriller recently which was all about vaccine testing and drug companies covering up the deadly results and causing epidemics of diseases in order to make millions. I am predisposed to believe that this level of thing happens more than we know. I don't think it quite goes as far as Roswell was real, but I wouldn't be able to put much past them, out of cynicism rather than anything else. They are fully prepared to fuck with our environment to the point of catastrophe or manufacture a concept of "terror" and they get away with it because no one cares/self-interest prevails. In this kind of climate (hah) it's hard to believe that there is anything they won't do.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Mitch - 01-08-2008 15:15

It's interesting to equate Creationism with "UFO stuff", as there does seem to be an element of almost-religious fervour to it.

I've read of Psychologists interviewing hundreds of people who claimed to have been alien abductees, and it was evident that they really, really believed it themselves. i.e regardless of the fact that they knew it sounded mental, and that they couldn't back any of it up, they certainly weren't trying to deceive other people.

Personally, I think that's the interesting part about these UFO cases; how these otherwise-rational people manage to convince themselves so completely of something so crazy.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Spearmint Rhino - 01-08-2008 15:19

Wyatt, out of interest, what's your opinion of Close Encounters Of The Third Kind?

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 01-08-2008 15:28

Yeah, I feel similarly--at least about that element of the backplot that deals with the scepticism issue.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Taylor - 02-08-2008 01:12

It's kind of unavoidable though, up to a point. If your plot involves alien invasion - specifically one bloke saying "I know it sounds crazy, but..." - you kind of have to show rational people saying "well, yes, it does sound crazy," because they haven't seen any evidence yet. Anything else would be unrealistic. And ultimately, they have to be wrong, or there's no film.

It's just become such a common cliché - the loner shouting "you have to believe me!" and everyone in the audience feeling for him because they've been shown the aliens, and grouching at the closed-minded so-called scientists who have seen no aliens or evidence of aliens yet, and so (quite rightly) remain sceptical. I'm not sure anyone would really want the scientific establishment to leap in the air and run around shouting "oh my God! Alien invasion!" every time some bloke just showed up and told them they'd seen a UFO. But there are always those for whom movies and TV makes more sense than real life, who will genuinely "want to believe", and honestly think the world should go on red alert every time some dude from Montana sees a meteorite.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Lyra - 12-08-2008 13:07

Right well I think I might actually take myself to see this tonight. I might become a bit giddy with anticipation.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Ginger Yellow - 13-08-2008 16:48

This is what I call a conspiracy theory.

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Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Lyra - 16-08-2008 17:29

That's quite sweet really. When I worked in a local authority housing department I met a few people just like that.

I didn't go last week. I am determined to go this week. That's if it isn't off everywhere already. I think it may have tanked.

=====

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 17-08-2008 10:56

Ginger Yellow wrote:

This is what I call a conspiracy theory.

I think the worst characteristic of "our side"--of us hardcore rationalist types--is this kind of mocking of the daft, which a lot of self-appointed crusaders for Science go in for. Give the woman a break, she's a loony. It's not as if she was Gillian McKeith or someone.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Lyra - 19-08-2008 16:28

Poor old Dr Gillian.

Right. I am going to have another attempt at seeing this tonight. Wish me luck.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Ginger Yellow - 19-08-2008 16:42

I don't know - I mean clearly she could be, but she could also just be really ignorant and prone to conspiracy theories. A lot of people are, especially on the internet. Steve Novella, a neurologist, discussed the video on the most recent Skeptic's Guide , and he said that he she wasn't displaying any of the hallmark speech indicators that distinguish paranoid schizophrenics from sane conspiracy types (although obviously you can't do a proper diagnosis on that basis). Besides, you've got to marvel at someone with the wherewithal to post a video like that on the internet, but not to look up rainbows on Wikipedia.

Re:I Want to Believe

Posted by Lyra - 19-08-2008 20:44

Yay. It was ACES. Lovely and low-key, like one of the more thoughtful episodes. Lots of angst and snow and pain and death. And no aliens. Just the sort of mystery they used to do so well, where there's more than one interpretation of what's going on, and that's where the dramatic tension comes from.

And it's just *so romantic*. sigh.
