

## Blog Export: Beaneball, <http://beaneball.org/>

Wednesday, February 2, 2005

### Rolling Stone: 2/10/05

Feeling a bit like I haven't written anything in a while, I'm going to take a page from Entertainment Weekly Review and let you know whether or not you ought to buy the latest issue of Rolling Stone.

Though I wonder, first, whether anybody still buys the venerable music magazine. Is it still relevant? Does anybody care? Of my six readers, are any of you subscribers? Regular newsstand buyers? Occasional buyers? Or am I being too generous about the size of my readership?

With an Erik Hedegaard cover story on Johnny Depp, there's an immediate pull, though the story turns out to be a bit boring. There's just not much that hasn't already been said about Depp, and it's hard to plumb new depths because he hasn't been particularly closed-off about his past before. It's not like getting the first truly candid interview with (insert star here), and, Hedegaard not being a critic but a professional profiler, we don't really get interesting insights or observations about Depp's role in modern America. On the other hand, I shouldn't fault Hedegaard for not being Tom Carson or somebody, because that's unfair. As we say in baseball analysis, look for what the player (here, story) does, not what it doesn't do. And in this case, the piece is well-written and engaging in a way that escapes the majority of RS's writers.

Gavin Edwards on Dominic Monaghan (of Lord of the Rings and, now, Lost fame) is sort of the opposite. The piece is straightforward and can basically only be applauded for staying out of the way of the subject, but that subject is interesting and fresh, at least in the sense that I hadn't read anything before on Monaghan.

The National Affairs desk produced a piece on the likelihood of a return to the draft. This being RS and not Fox News, you can guess that it's not an article full of happy reassurances that it'll never happen. The only really interesting bit of information is the note that a memo was uncovered in which two minor members of the Bush administration discuss how a draft might proceed. It's noted that the memo was made public with a Freedom of Information Act appeal, but it's unclear who asked for it. The story's author, Tom Dickinson? Some other (unnamed) writer? Regardless, it doesn't seem like it took a Hersh-ian level of sleuthery to pick up this tidbit, and it's not all that revealing anyway. Sure, it puts lie to the administration's claims that a draft hasn't even been discussed, but who cares, really? They've lied before, and they'll do it again. We know they're evil, and there doesn't really appear to be much to be done about it at this stage in the game. On a more substantive level, I'm glad these people are having these discussions. As the piece points out, if the administration keeps going as it's going and invades Iran or something, we're going to need some new soldiers. It's pure numbers. Thus, the fact that some new ideas are being bounced around for how to draft is good news, because I'd rather see them lying about it than have to have a draft with only a month to prepare.

Peter Wilkinson contributed a piece on a police informant who's now in a no-man's land. The police won't use him or help him and various low-lives throughout the Western United States want him dead. It's a bit astounding, actually, because the man allowed himself to be photographed for the story and, apparently, his real name was used (there was no note about names being changed to protect the not-so-innocent). The piece itself is sort of blah, par for the RS course. If you're jonesing for a bit of police-informant-and-drug-crazed biker action, go watch Beyond the Law, with Michael Madsen (following up Reservoir Dogs and who, by the way, is in nine movies (!) slated to hit in 2005), the ever-intense Charlie Sheen, and Linda Fiorentino.

Sebastião Salgado's series of beautiful black-and-white photos of the natural world of South America continues this issue with a piece on whales. The pictures are, of course, beautiful, but I'll cop to not bothering to read the accompanying piece written by Salgado.

The music reviews are nothing to write home about, and in this case, that means both that none of the albums sound terribly exciting and that none of the reviews provide any particular pleasure in themselves. On the other hand, it's pretty much only a Rob Sheffield review that I can really look forward to reading in any given issue, and his handful in this issue are as straight-forward as he can make them. His forté really seems to be the hilarious review of the forgettable teen pop album. Maybe I'm damning with faint praise here, but what else should I do? I'm a blogger.

I saw the trailer for Bride and Prejudice this weekend, before Finding Neverland (a small ugh, by the way), and I was absolutely stunned by Aishwarya Rai. I'd read about her before, in a sort of teaser article meant to inspire all of us to get excited about her big American splash, but I didn't really buy the hype. Lots of people who are considered beautiful by

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the world-at-large aren't really my type, but for Rai, let's say that I'm on the bandwagon. Anyway, Peter Travers gave the film (wait, there's a movie involved here?) three stars (out of four), which sounds unlikely. Travers is notorious (to me) for giving star ratings that are wildly out of line with his actual reviews (of course, that his reviews are wildly out of line with reality is a separate issue which will, undoubtedly, be broached at a later date). In this case, he refers to Martin Henderson looking lost and the script falling apart when the action leaves India. Can a movie that falls apart in what I'm assuming is at least the last third really deserve 75% of the possible stars? Especially when he allows himself the luxury of half stars? I mean, if he was that in love with Rai (he is), he could give it two and a half and still be satisfied that she might acknowledge his presence at a screening or something, but he had to go overboard and hope she doesn't read.

Posted by jason in Magazines, Reading at 16:08

What position does Salgado play? What's his OPS?  
Anonymous on Feb 3 2005, 11:06

Well, had to let you know that you have at least\_1\_ reader. The answer to your question is no. Haven't read, looked at, bought, subscribed to, thought about buying, or even thought about looking at Rolling Stone for over 20 years. Nothing against the mag, just doesn't interest me. Hope this helps.  
Anonymous on Feb 3 2005, 03:49