

Friday, 03 May 2013

Be(a)st Friends

Written by [Gregg Shapiro](#)

font

Tim Burton has a long history of interpreting and transforming horror and science fiction through his own distorted, and usually, entertaining lens. Films such as *Beetlejuice*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *Ed Wood*, *Sleepy Hollow*, and *Sweeney Todd* all bear the unmistakable mark of Burton. But his 2012 film *Dark Shadows* was such an ill-conceived and poorly executed fiasco that he needed to go back to the drawing board, or story board, for that matter.

With the full-length animated feature *Frankenweenie* (Disney), Burton is on the road to redemption. Expanding on his 1984 live-action short feature of the same name, Burton's new *Frankenweenie* tells the story of Victor Frankenstein (voiced by Charlie Tahan), a boy whose interests include filmmaking, science, and his dog and best friend Sparky. At home, his parents (voiced by Catherine O'Hara and Martin Short) are supportive of his endeavors, although his father insists that he play baseball.

Unfortunately, it is at one of Victor's Little League games that Sparky meets his untimely death.

Ultimately, it is the words and encouragement of new science teacher Mr. Rzykruski (voiced Landau) that lift the depressed Victor's spirits. With the upcoming science fair in mind, and the Holland's predisposition for lightning storms and strikes, Victor makes plans to reanimate the Sparky. Constructing a lab in the attic for his purposes, Victor retrieves the dead and buried p him up and inserts neck bolts. Before you can say flash, the experiment is a success.

But there are forces working against Victor. His grumpy next door neighbor, the mayor of Ne makes Victor's life miserable. Competitive and meddling classmates Toshiaki (James Hiroyuki (Atticus Shaffer), Bob (Robert Capron), and Nassor (also voiced by Short), also succeed in u Thankfully he has kindred spirit Elsa (Winona Ryder) for support. Everything culminates in a finish, complete with torches, which would make James Whale blush.

The early 1960s setting, as well as the multiple references to a variety of Creature Feature hor as *Godzilla*, *Bride of Frankenstein*, and *Dracula* as portrayed by Christopher Lee, fits in with



white visuals. However, the 3D may be superfluous, and some of the “period” humor could be questionable. Longtime Burton collaborator Danny Elfman’s score is also suitably dramatic and *Frankenweenie* is a delight of frights all year round. Bonus material on the four-disc combo pack (Blu-ray, DVD and digital copy) includes an all-new *Frankenweenie* short, a music video and more.

Narrated by Ringo Starr, based on the (Harry) Nilsson short story and song (and featuring Nilsson), *The Point*, is a mildly psychedelic pop-art animated bedtime story that won’t put you to sleep, but will give you and kids of all ages something to think about when it comes to accepting and loving someone different than you.

A boy who would rather watch his TV “program” than have a bedtime story read to him by his mother, Oblio, would rather have the story read to him regardless. As he turns on the TV, the story unfolds on the screen.

The story, set in a tiny village where everything – houses, bridges, carts, towers, crops, even people – has a point (and always had), has some points to make. The main activity in town was, of course, “pointing.” The artist community made new points to view because “the point was the point of it all.”

One day, a very unusual thing happened. Oblio (voiced by Mike Lookinland of *The Brady Bunch*)’s only son, a boy with no point at all was born. His perfectly round head made him “an involuntary instant classic.” Despite being a healthy and happy baby in spite of never growing a point, Oblio wore a pointed cap made by his mother and his “greatest dog in the world” Arrow were inseparable.

Everything was well until after school, while choosing sides for a game of Triangle Toss, Oblio was “not liked, but not well-liked” son of the village’s very powerful and not nice Count. After Oblio was “not liked” by the Count’s son, the evil Count devises a plan to rid the village of Oblio. The Count tells the kind, gentle and very ordinary ruler, that the law of the land has been violated. Everything and everyone must be punished and appropriate measures must be taken. Following the convening of a public tribunal, Oblio is banished to the Pointless Forest.

While there, Oblio and Arrow encounter a variety of characters, ranging from the wise Rock, the confusing three-headed Pointed Man, and learn a series of important lessons. The point of *The Point* is to show that to prejudice, that what’s in your head is more important than what’s on top of it. As the Rock says, it is not “necessary to possess a point to have a point.”

Oblio and Arrow return, receiving a hero’s welcome. The Count, who misread the will of the people, finally has to realize that “if everything has a point, Oblio has a point, too” and that “everyone has a point, whether they show it or not.”

The themes in The Point, which first aired on TV in 1971, ring as true today as they did more than 40 years ago. Bonus features on the definitive collector’s edition of The Point consist of four linked features including Who Is Harry Nilsson? and Legacy of the Point.

Published in [Out on Screen](#)

Share this

Gregg Shapiro

Pop-culture journalist Gregg Shapiro's interviews and reviews run in a variety of regional publications and websites. His poetry and fiction have appeared in numerous outlets including *Quarterly*, *Beltway*, *modern words*, *Bloom*, the anthologies *Sex & Chocolate: Tasty Morsels*



Body (Paycock Press) and Poetic Voices Without Borders (Gival Press

Website: www.myspace.com/greggshapiro |

Related articles

- [Sir Ari Gold: Naked Before You](#)
- [Theatre Project: Magician's New](#)
- [Oblivion is Sci-fi with a Twist](#)
- [Cuban-American Poet Tackles L](#)
- [Lots of Horsepower in Spotlight](#)