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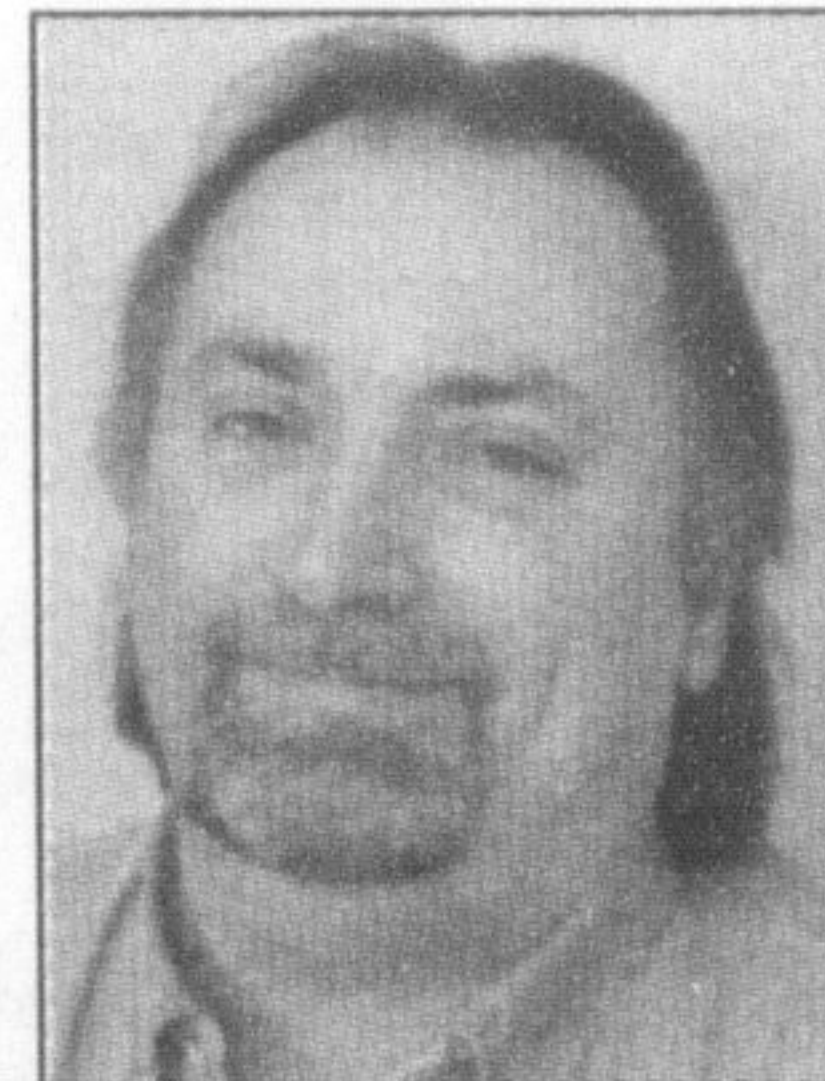
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Mixed reviews for 'Children of Men'



Jennifer Smith

Freelance writers Murray Townsend and Jennifer Smith, who have very different tastes in films, give their reviews of a movie currently playing. This time it was Jennifer's turn to 'Pick a Flick' and she chose Children of Men.



Murray Townsend

Staring Clive Owen, Chiwetel Ejiofor and Julianne Moore, Children of Men is set in 2027, when no baby has been born for the past 18 years and humankind faces the likelihood of its own extinction. A disillusioned government agent (Owen) agrees to help protect and transport a miraculously pregnant woman to sanctuary so that her child's birth may help scientists to save the future of mankind.

What Jennifer thinks

The best science fiction functions as

allegory, forcing us to look at contemporary issues from a different perspective. 'Children of Men' ranks among the best.

The film explores a wide range of issues: the environment, racism, xenophobia and what it takes to tip a free society over into a fascist state.

While most of the world has descended into violence and chaos, Britain maintains order by focusing the people's anger on an arbitrary target: immigrants. Recent refugees and long-time citizens alike are rounded up and herded into ghettos and internment camps while they await deportation. The parallels to both Warsaw and Guantanamo Bay are disturbing.

In the midst of this despair, the baby serves as a small reminder of our common humanity. At one point a terrorist radical stops shooting, looks at the baby and says, "I'd forgotten how beautiful they are." The sight of it knocks the wind out of him.

'Children of Men' is so astonishingly detailed that it warrants multiple viewings. I look forward to buying the DVD. I give it four-and-a-half stars out of five.

What Murray thinks

There are three things wrong with futuristic science-fiction movies.

One is that the vision of the future is always dark and gloomy. Another is that they usually raise more questions than they answer. And thirdly, they try to pretend there's some deep meaning and message hidden in the story.

That fits Children of Men perfectly, which unlike many science-fiction movies doesn't even have the decency to be entertaining. Everybody on the planet, or almost everybody, is infertile? Yawn. Already saw a version of that in the Handmaid's Tale. Anyway, how did it happen? Why is everybody killing each other? Why are people trying to get into a country that wants to kill all immigrants? Why are some trying to get out? Why this? Why that?

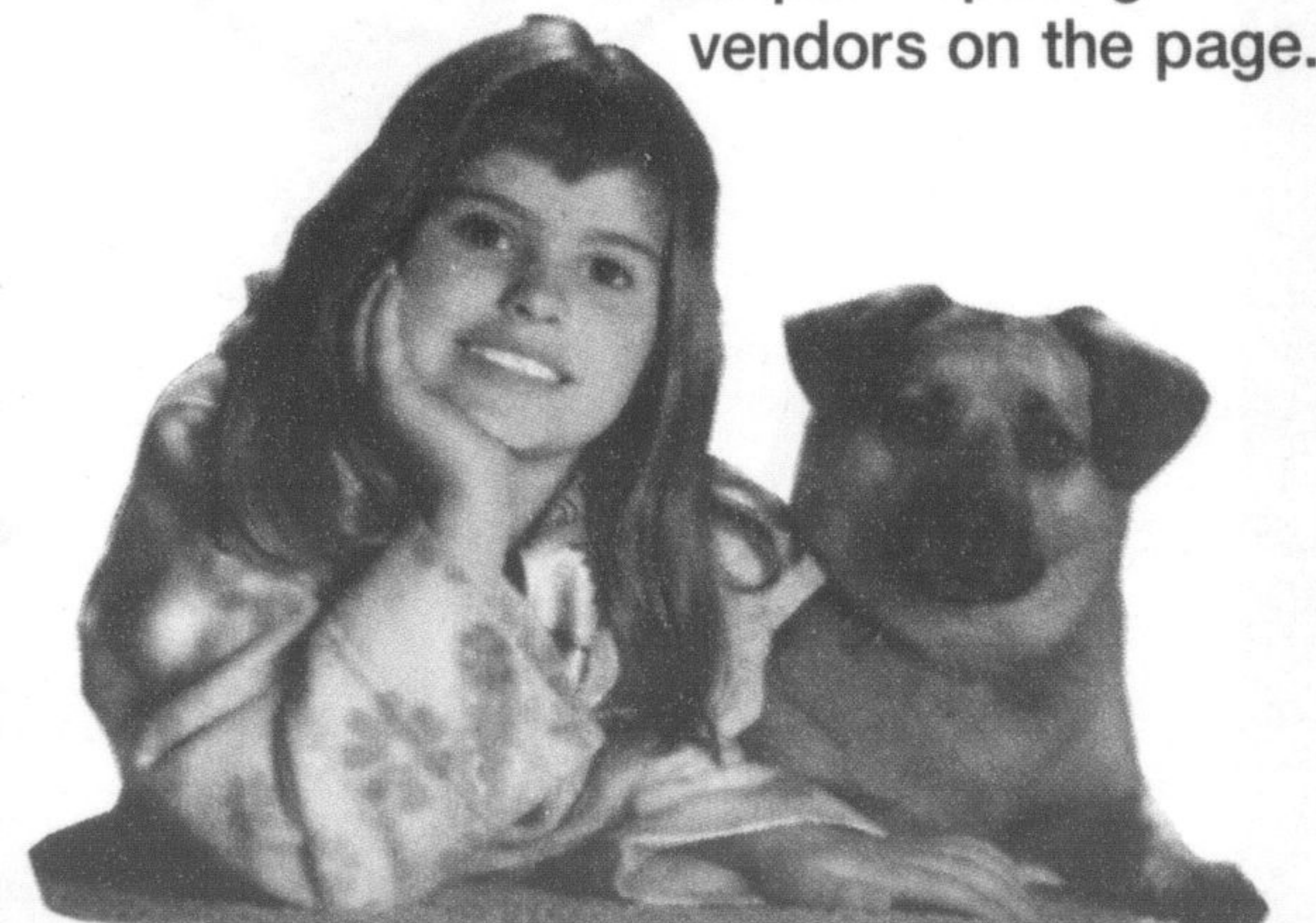
The biggest question after a while is: "Who cares?" Movies aren't supposed to be seven hours long, either. At least that's what this one seemed like. It was a snooze fest with a few scattered action sequences. One was particularly helpful, I must admit, because it came at a time when I was nodding off.

I give it one star, two if you're having trouble sleeping.

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