National Treasure: Book of Secrets, however far-fetched, hit a chord with audiences. Like its predecessor, this is an action-filled and predictable pursuit.

Baddie-with-a-cause, Mitch Wilkinson's accuses Henry Gates of complicity in Lincoln's assassination. Thus, he goads Ben Gates (Nicolas Cage) into a quest to clear the family's name. In tow is now ex-girlfriend, the charming Abigail Chase, (Diane Kruger), trusty comic relief sidekick, Riley Poole (Justin Bartha), and decrepit father, Patrick, played by the contemptible Jon Voight. The only passion Patrick inspires is that he will lose his footing in one of the franchise's plentiful bottomless pits.

Helen Mirren plays Ben's mother, a role inexplicably beneath her talent ($$$). Conveniently, she is the key to this mystery. Ben Gates' endless store of historical trivia allows him to solve the most obscure riddles in seconds. As a result, it feels as though the writers want to get by with canned solutions. The story has no real twists or surprises, unless you consider how divorced parents managed NOT TO SPEAK for 32-years. When the family collaborates to clear its name, will Patrick and Emily reconcile? Did we just stumble through a secret tunnel and land in The Parent Trap? National Treasure surpassed its sequel in action and plot twists. What redeems this franchise is Nicholas Cage making another far-fetched role credible (e.g., "Air Con"). Even so, Cage's earnestness does not answer integral questions such as how the "Book of Secrets" travels the chain of succession especially after a presidential assassination. Maybe they're saving that for National Treasure III (subtitle to be determined).

Author P.D. James said people who like mysteries like order. They believe the secrets of the universe are knowable and its riddles solvable, -- whether through a Savior, super-intelligent extraterrestrials, or a tome of nation's secrets.

This movie is like Disneyland's Jungle Cruise. The alligators will attack, the guide fires his pistol, the hippos emerge and wiggle their ears. Yet you still ride. So, if you want a fun diversion open the Book of Secrets.

Andy's Random 2-Cents: It dragged, but had diversionary value. Mitch W Ilkinson's (Ed Harris) motivation was murky. W ere he a descendant of John W ilkes Booth's redeeming his family name, it would have suspended some disbelief.

Harvey Keitel and his Winston Wolf mustache reappeared in an insult cameo. W hy? Same reason as Dame Mirren ($$$).

The problem was insufficient candy to shut our brains up. NT-BO'S unanswered plot points left the same kind of aftertaste artificial sweetener leaves in coffee.
## Media Arts 130 — Act Two
**by A. Ramachandran**

Congratulations for completing Broadcasting 25. Now you masochists who signed up for Media Arts 130, advanced screenwriting, must see these movies.

You'll also find my recommendations (in parenthesis) for marathon viewings of sequels, similar themes, and what I think would just make interesting viewing.

Some odd pairings perhaps, kind of like fish and red wine, but the last thing you want to do next semester is not raise your hand when asked, "How many of you have seen ... ?" Preempt the admonishment and watch as many of these movies as possible. - O -

### Forget It Jack, It's Not Chinatown— A. Ramachandran

The Two Jakes rejoins J. J. Gittes in 1948 Los Angeles, 11 years after Chinatown. He’s older, fatter, balder and not as fleet. W inded perhaps by all those stairs he climbed in Batman or running between his mark, the director’s chair perhaps by all those stairs he climbed in Batman or running between his mark, the director’s chair perhaps by all those stairs he climbed in Batman or running between his mark, the director’s chair - O -

All this makes watching The Two Jakes once bad enough and re-watching it out of the question. So much so, it made Shatner’s Star Trek V seem both comparatively and empirically deft. Nonetheless, because it matches in general tone and theme, it still merits inclusion in the Star Trek canon.

### sequences, similar themes

It’s as ridiculous as if Randle and Anjelica Huston. The San Fernando Valley is still under contention. Their progenitors speak to moments in the character names on the China-...