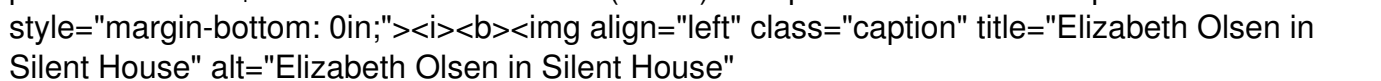


One-Shot Wonder: "Silent House," "John Carter," and "A Thousand Words"

Written by Mike Schulz

Sunday, 11 March 2012 16:14

[Buy Microsoft Windows 8 Pro \(64-bit\)](http://www.grameencommunications.org/index.php/buy-microsoft-windows-8-pro-64-bit-en-ar-bg-cs-da-de-el-es-et-fi-fr-he-hr-hu-it-ja-ko-lt-lv-nb-nl-pl-pt-ro-ru-sk-sl-sr-sv-th-tr-uk/)
(en,ar,bg,cs,da,de,el,es,et,fi,fr,he,hr,hu,it,ja,ko,lt,lv,nb,nl,pl,pt,ro,ru,sk,sl,sr,sv,th,tr,uk)
[Buy OEM Corel Painter 12](http://www.darnakas.gr/buy-oem-corel-painter-12/)
[149.95\\$ ARTS PDF Split Pro cheap oem](http://amphorae.icac.cat/uploads/149-95-arts-pdf-split-pro-cheap-oem/)
[Download Apple Mac OS X 10.8 Mountain Lion](http://www.bisbattortosa.org/download-apple-mac-os-x-10-8-mountain-lion/)
[19.95\\$ PCTools Spyware Doctor 2010 for Windows cheap oem](http://www.hockeyprimetime.com/19-95-pctools-spyware-doctor-2010-for-windows-cheap-oem/)
[Buy Cheap Microsoft Expression Studio 4 Web Professional \(32-bit\)](http://amphorae.icac.cat/uploads/buy-cheap-microsoft-expression-studio-4-web-professional-32-bit/)
[Download Lynda.com - Google Analytics Essential Training](http://www.cinemaclassico.com/administrator/download-lynda-com-google-analytics-essential-training/)
[9.95\\$ Lynda.com - CSS3 First Look cheap oem](http://www.c-lab.gr/9-95-lynda-com-css3-first-look-cheap-oem/)
[169.95\\$ Autodesk Showcase 2009 cheap oem](http://www.ooesk.at/169-95-autodesk-showcase-2009-cheap-oem/)
[Download Adobe eLearning Suite 2.5](http://www.musicogomis.es/download-adobe-elearning-suite-2-5/)
[Discount - Adobe Premiere Elements 4](http://www.bisbattortosa.org/discount-adobe-premiere-elements-4/)
[Discount - Dreamweaver CS5 All-in-One For Dummies](http://www.exilarchiv.de/DE/index.php/discount-dreamweaver-cs5-all-in-one-for-dummies/)
[29.95\\$ Parallels Desktop 4 for Windows cheap oem](http://www.musicogomis.es/29-95-parallels-desktop-4-for-windows-cheap-oem/)
[179.95\\$ Autodesk Mudbox 2011 \(32-bit\) cheap oem](http://www.cinemaclassico.com/administrator/179-95-autodesk-mudbox-2011-32-bit-cheap-oem/)

 Elizabeth Olsen in Silent House

SILENT HOUSE

It's entirely possible that you'll need to have seen an awful lot of horror movies – particularly an awful lot of awful horror movies – to be jazzed by *Silent House*, considering that it's basically just 90 minutes of a young woman being terrorized by barely glimpsed figures and startling noises in her family's lakeside summer home. (Contrary to the title, this house is anything but silent.) Yet if you can get past the paper-thin storyline and a climax that's less "Aa-a-a-!!!" than "Hu-u-uh-!?!?", the movie proves to be a terrifically nerve-racking and utterly fascinating scare flick, because from first shot to last, the action not only takes place in real time, but seems to have been filmed in one continuous take.

It hasn't been. Yet knowing of *Silent House*'s stylistic conceit prior to my screening, I tried to determine exactly where cuts were being made, and beyond those that presumably took place during a succession of blackouts late in the film, damned if I could point at more than one or two

One-Shot Wonder: "Silent House," "John Carter," and "A Thousand Words"

Written by Mike Schulz

Sunday, 11 March 2012 16:14

not-so-obvious examples of presentational sleight-of-hand. What married directors Laura Lau and Chris Kentis (the latter of whom previously helmed 2004's grossly overrated shark-bait thriller *Open Water*) have pulled off here is really quite extraordinary. From the movie's opening, overhead shot of Elizabeth Olsen's Sarah sitting on a rocky beach to its closing retreat from the house of pain, we're kept almost claustrophobically close to our heroine, and are consequently invited to feel a rather discomfiting amount of empathy. Much of the film's success, in this regard, stems from Olsen's beautifully friendly, low-key naturalism and formidable dramatic chops; you're made acutely aware of how much more effective this all-too-familiar, woman-in-peril narrative can be when a real actor is cast in the central role. But by positioning the audience in figurative reaching distance of Sarah at all times, and by doing it with such unforced artistry, Lau and Kentis also deliver the spine-tingling sensation of being an active participant in the on-screen torment. In experiencing Sarah's escalating panic solely from her perspective and seeing only what she does (and sometimes a good deal less), *Silent House* invokes – perhaps better than any film of its type since 2008's *The Strangers* – the giddy feeling that the star of this particular horror movie is *you*.

Not everything here works. Though the performers are by no means awful, the roles played by Adam Trese (Sarah's father), Eric Sheffer Stevens (Sarah's uncle), and Julia Taylor Ross (Sarah's childhood friend ... or *is she*... ?) aren't quite as disquieting as they probably should be; the supporting characters are all vaguely menacing, yet with too much emphasis on the "vaguely." And, unfortunately, the film wraps up with one of those psychologically dense but inherently unsatisfying resolutions that make some patrons leave thinking that the whole movie sucked, when it was really just the last 10 minutes that did. Before it eventually underwhelms, though, *Silent House* is a sensationally well-sustained and -executed stunt, and even a subtle reminder that not all technological advances are necessarily improvements. I love that our phones can now also serve as cameras, but if you want to scare the crap out of horror-movie characters in a pitch-black room, you really need an old-school Polaroid.

JOHN CARTER

Is it just me, or am I sensing an unmitigated – and, I think, unwarranted – glee in the bum reviews being heaped upon *John Carter*, as though critics were *thrilled* for the opportunity to trash this profoundly goofy sci-fi lark? I mean, sure, it's not as breathtaking as *Avatar*, but come on – it's not as though any of the film's reported \$250 million budget was coming out of *their* pockets. Conversely, I'd like to offer the potentially heretical opinion that director Andrew Stanton's lightweight epic about the famed Edgar Rice Burroughs character – a Civil War veteran who winds up involved in an alien insurrection on Mars – is actually far more enjoyable than James Cameron's Na'vi hoedown: briskly paced, frequently thrilling, visually inventive, unexpectedly touching, and, unlike *Avatar*, *completely* lacking in howler dialogue that makes you want to hide under your theater seat. It's all silly as hell, but also a wonderfully unpretentious good time, and among a fine cast that includes Lynn Collins, Ciarán Hinds, Mark Strong, and a blond (!) Bryan Cranston, Taylor Kitsch is an outstanding John Carter, forceful and sincere and heroically, almost comically, chiseled. Offering a scientific analysis of the Earthling standing before her, Collins' Martian says of Kitsch's title character, "Skeletal structure normal." The *hell* it is.

One-Shot Wonder: "Silent House," "John Carter," and "A Thousand Words"

Written by Mike Schulz

Sunday, 11 March 2012 16:14

<i>A THOUSAND WORDS</i></p> <p style="margin-bottom: 0in;">Eddie Murphy comedies are, of course, now things to be routinely avoided, and director Brian Robbins' long-shelved <i>A Thousand Words –</i> in which a magic spell forces the motor-mouthed comic to literally shut up or die – does little to change matters. But while both the movie and its overworked star are horribly forced here, I at least left thankful for the few moments of sanity with Kerry Washington, Allison Janney, and Cliff Curtis, the few moments of true hilarity with Clark Duke, and every single second spent with Ruby Dee. Playing Murphy's slowly fading mother who mistakes her son's nursing-home visits for conversations with her late husband, the legendary Dee appears to be acting in a smarter, tougher, more heart-wrenching film than anyone else in <i>A Thousand Words</i>, and you could almost read Murphy's subtext in his two scenes with her: "I want to be in <i>your </i>movie, please." I think it's safe to say we <i>all </i>did.</p> <p style="margin-bottom: 0in;"></p> <p style="margin-bottom: 0in;"><i>Follow Mike on Twitter at Twitter.com/MikeSchulzNow.
</i></p>