

# “Monty Python and the Holy Grail” turns 50!

WILL LIVINGSTON  
SPORTS EDITOR

Fifty years ago, one of the greatest movies of all time was released and the landscape of comedy movies was changed forever.

The British comedy troupe Monty Python had been active for about 5 years and growing steadily in popularity all over the world when they released “Monty Python and the Holy Grail” on April 3rd, 1975. Although made on a shoestring budget, this movie soon became the Holy Grail of comedy movies of the era. The film itself is a spoof on the legend of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. King Arthur and his knights are given a divine quest by God to find the Holy Grail and along the way, they must overcome a man-eating rabbit, knights who say ni, rude Frenchmen and the violence inherent in the feudal system.

The best parts of the film came about as a result of the extremely limited budget that Monty Python had for the movie. For instance, they could not afford horses for the characters, so, the Pythons decided to do a running gag that the characters would gallop on foot, while their squires clopped coconuts together to act like horses. And this is the opening scene of the movie, setting the tone immediately and hilariously.

Throughout the movie you can see how the Pythons got around the low budget. They only had money to rent the use of one castle, so every time the characters go to a new castle, it’s literally just a different angle of the same castle, or it’s a small model of a castle. For instance, Camelot is “just a model (shhh).”

My personal favorite bit in this movie is when the characters split up on their own quests. The best of these quests is the Tale of Sir Lancelot. In this one, Sir Lancelot tries to rescue a damsel in distress, who turns out to be a prince who doesn’t want to marry a girl for her huge tracts of land and just wants to sing instead.

What makes this movie so good is how the cast do not take themselves or the film seriously in the slightest, which makes it ten times better. From monks slapping themselves in the face to keep time in their chants to Tim the Enchanter, the endless silliness makes the film flow very well and keeps the laughs coming.

This film is one of the most quotable of all time for me and easily one of the top three comedy films of all time. And it’s not number two or three, either.

If you haven’t already, give yourself the gift of watching “Monty Python and the Holy Grail,” and you certainly will never forget it once you do.

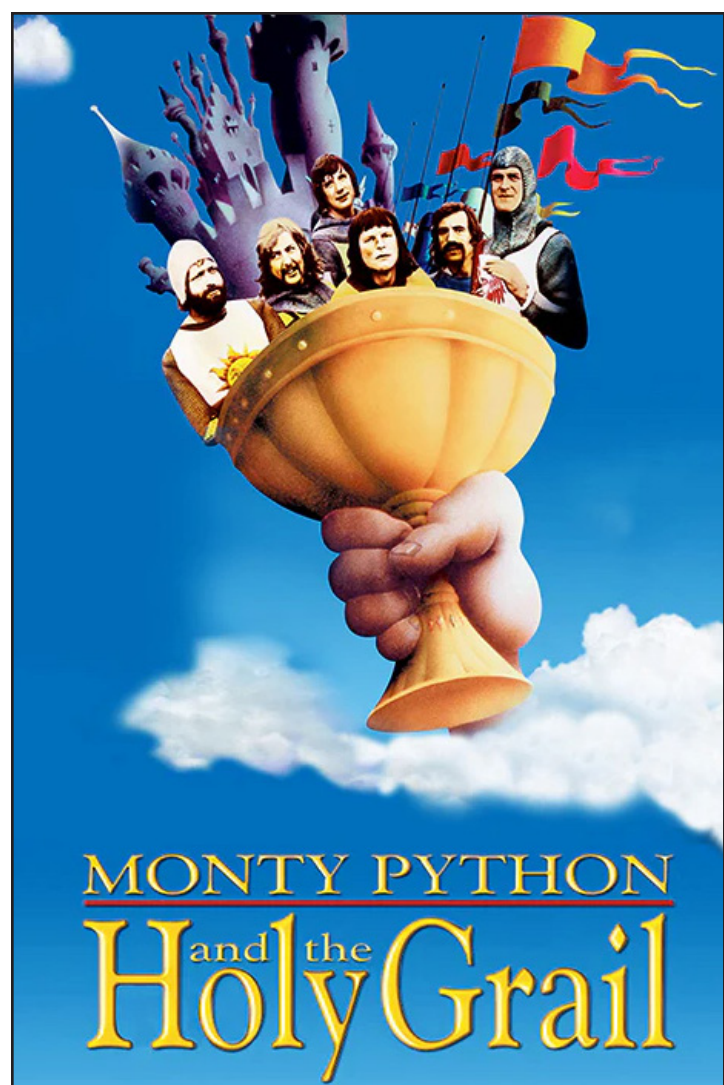


IMAGE COURTESY OF MOVIEPOSTERS.COM

# “The Crux” by Djo is a project that will only get better with time

LAILA CASIANO  
OPINION EDITOR

As a long-time fan of Jerry Keery’s music, I was eagerly awaiting his third studio album, “The Crux.” His sophomore release, “Decide,” was one of my most-played albums of 2023, so when he announced this new project in January, I was ecstatic. However, I feel “The Crux” is an album that will require multiple listens before I fully embrace it.

What made “Decide” an instant favorite for me was its psychedelic, danceable and off-kilter synth-pop sound. Unfortunately, “The Crux” shifts toward a more classic

indie rock style, which isn’t typically my go-to. Still, Djo’s willingness to experiment with sound makes me want to love it from the first listen.

Instant favorites from the albums include “Delete Ya,” and “Potion.”

“Delete Ya” is one of the few tracks reminiscent of “Decide.” With production that channels Prince, it also echoes the themes from “On and On,” (from the previous album) where Djo reflects about his struggles with social media and the digital age.

Lines like, “Oh God, I wish I could delete ya cause nothing can compete with ya / I replenish and repeat ya / a heart excretes only one of

us, only one” really resonated with me, especially as I’ve been working to limit my screen time and social media use. Growing up in the digital age, it feels almost like a rite of passage to learn to be on social media because of FOMO or because of escapism — and Keery captures that tension nicely.

My second favorite track is “Potion,” which immediately gave me Fleetwood Mac vibes — in the best way. The song explores a craving for a genuine, fulfilling love and companionship. With a melodic sound that feels like purple glitter falling to the floor, it hits even harder with the vulnerability

and longing it conveys. The album amazingly showcases Keery’s range as an artist. Since gaining attention from his viral TikTok hit “End of Beginning” his writing and producing instincts have only sharpened.

While “The Crux” hasn’t yet clicked with me the way “Decide” did, I see it as a project I’ll grow to love. It’s an invitation to embrace a new sound, voice and presence from an artist I’ve followed closely — and that kind of evolution deserves its time.

Official Score: 7/10



COURTESY OF GENIUS

Official album cover for “The Crux” by Djo.



COURTESY OF GENIUS

Alternate album cover for “The Crux” by Djo.

# “A Minecraft Movie” is undeniably stupid, but I love it anyway

JERRY DON BURTON  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Going into this movie, I was expecting a by-the-book, uninspired, long-form advertisement for marketable plushies. Pretty much the 2019 remake of “Jumanji” but with Jason Momoa in place of The Rock. I was prepared to turn my brain off and giggle as Jack Black explained the idea of Minecraft to the audience for an hour and a half.

What I got was a supremely enjoyable, yet stupid film that kept a smile on my face for the entire runtime.

I quite enjoyed how the film leaned into the absurdity of the premise and did not take itself seriously, even by accident. It seemed like the film knew that it was not supposed to be good and it was quite okay with that.

The humor was solid, most of the jokes were random but I felt a majority of them landed.

Anytime the actors interacted with the world in a way that was accurate to the game were far and away the best parts of the film for me.

Jack Black and Jennifer Coolidge were both terrific. I’m not even wholly convinced Black was acting.

As absurd as the tone is, though, some moments get too brainless, even for my tastes. For one, the movie made exceptions or just flat-out ignored some existing Minecraft mechanics in the name of plot convenience. Also, the necessary but incredibly long exposition dump by Black in the beginning of the film became a slog and felt like it may never end.

For what the film was trying to accomplish as a fun and lighthearted comedy for children, it delivered in spades.

Minecraft elitists will be upset with this movie. They’ll gripe at all the inaccuracies and

wail at the bastardization of their comfort game, but if you go into the movie with the right mindset (that is, to turn your mind off), it’s a very enjoyable experience. At the end of the day, I had to accept this movie was not made for people like me; people who grew up with Minecraft and are now adults.

This movie is for kids who are growing up with the game now.

Ultimately, the film sucked. But it was so enjoyable that I think it might just be brilliant.

I am not even sure what a “bad” movie is anymore. If I enjoyed it, how bad could it really be?

It was pretty bad though.



PHOTO COURTESY OF IMDB

A creeper sneaking up on Jason Momoa as Garrett in “A Minecraft Movie.”

## Creative Media Production student premieres film project

**HOSSEIN RASTAGAR**

SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

The following is a transcript from an interview with Colby Thompson, a senior creative media production major from Conway, Arkansas to discuss his film, "Aluminum Man," and the work that went into bringing it to life.

**Give us a quick summary of the film.**

"The film is the story of a sleep deprived college student who becomes convinced that aluminum foil is the best way he can save Arkansas State from impending doom."

**Where did that idea come from?**

"The idea came from a podcast my friend Austin Sweat and I recorded for my Audio Production 1 class. I was supposed to do an audio interview and instead of interviewing a real person, I thought it would be fun to interview a made-up character and Aluminum Man was born out of that. There was a plan to make a film for that class, but that didn't happen, so the idea sat on the shelf for about a year. When it came time to make a film for my Media Production Practicum class it was the best idea that came to mind."

**How was the process of making a student film?**

"A key thing for me in making the film was trying to find people who I believed were more talented than me in key areas. For example, Jacob Osborn is a much better cinematographer than me and so I asked him to film the movie. Hannah Rainwater is a much better writer than I am and so I asked her to be the writer for the film. The film took around 6 months to make. It was originally supposed to be done within the half-semester course of Media Production Practicum but I wanted to

make something I was really proud of and so I started working on it before the class started and worked on it much longer after the class ended."

**What were some challenges you faced during production?**

"This was my first true short film to direct and so I vastly underestimated the time it would take to film the scenes. We ended up having to double the amount of days of filming that I had originally planned on. I was so grateful to be working with such a generous cast who didn't make me feel bad about this oversight."

**What has the response been like so far from those who have seen the film?**

"The response has been pretty positive from most people who've seen it. A lot of people have found it to be pretty funny. Before its release, I sent the film to some more experienced filmmakers than myself. They pointed out some issues with the film which I tried to address in the current version of it."

**How do you think this experience has helped you develop your skills and prepare for creative work after college?**

"This film has already been accepted into the Oasis Film Festival and I'm hoping it will be accepted in others. This film is my ticket to these festivals where I hope to be able to network with people and hopefully find work."



Photo by Ibuki Hinohara | Photo Editor

(Left) Jacob Osborn, Hannah Rainwater, Austin Sweat, Colby Thompson, Luke Caldwell and Mason Sherman conducting a question and answer panel after the premiere of "Aluminum Man" at Baptist Collegiate Ministry on April 3rd.



POSTER DESIGN BY YOCHAN R.

Official poster for "Aluminum Man."

## Mental Health Matters: tips for a less stressful time at A-State

**BENJAMIN MCDOWELL**

STAFF WRITER

Mental health plays a vital role in everyday life, affecting emotions, relationships, productivity and overall well-being.

Experts say maintaining mental health can help people cope with stress, make decisions and enjoy life, while neglecting it can lead to issues such as anxiety, depression and physical health problems.

Patricia Glascock, associate director of the Wilson Counseling Center, said mental health affects the body in many ways.

"Mental health is important because it impacts our physical well-being, our quality of life, our relationships, our ability to focus and concentrate, and follow through," Glascock said. "It impacts our sense of connection with life, having a sense of meaning and purpose, feeling energized throughout the day and making important connections, not only with

other people but with nature."

Glascock said failing to address mental health can result in physical symptoms.

"If we don't take care of our mental well-being, it may present itself in terms of physical illnesses," she said. "Sometimes individuals experience body aches, headaches or low energy. They may go to the doctor, undergo multiple tests, and find no conclusive reason. That doesn't mean they aren't struggling. It may indicate that their physical symptoms result from unprocessed emotions, high anxiety, depression or other mental health disorders."

Tristan Harlen, a senior creative media production major from Cabot, Arkansas and station manager at ASU-TV, said taking time to relax and have fun is key to maintaining mental health.

"Mental health is important because it makes people want to do and give more," Harlen said. "It's different for everyone. As college students, we have people to talk to,

whether that's at a counseling center, a trusted teacher, friends or a significant other."

Harlen said simple activities can help improve mental well-being.

"Spending time with the people you care about most, getting a good laugh every once in a while, and doing things you enjoy—whether that's watching a favorite show, taking a nap or drinking your favorite beverage—can make a difference," he said. "At the end of the day, only you know what's going on with you."

Devin Nelson, a student life counselor at the Wilson Counseling Center and a licensed professional counselor, said mental health impacts all aspects of daily life.

"Mental health affects how people perform, make connections and operate in their day-to-day lives," Nelson said. "It influences how comfortable they feel in new environments, how they handle challenges and how they work toward future goals."

Nelson said stress is not always negative. She said learning how to harness stress and use it to one's advantage is important.

"That's why we talk about stress management instead of stress elimination. There's a window of stress where we're most productive," Nelson said.

She said there are healthy ways to handle stress, including taking breaks, setting realistic goals and avoiding procrastination.

"Breathing techniques, going for a walk and making an action plan with attainable goals can all help," Nelson said. "Motivation follows action. Managing our time and prioritizing our needs—including taking care of ourselves—is key."

A-State students interested in the Wilson Counseling Center and the services they provide can contact their office at 870-972-2318, drop by the office in person or email them at [counseling@astate.edu](mailto:counseling@astate.edu) to schedule an initial intake.



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Sign outside the Wilson Counseling Center at 107 N. Caraway Road.