

VALENTINE'S NIGHTmare

I learned from KNIGHT RIDER many, many things, but the one that stayed with me the most was from episode 22. In case you can't recall it, that's the one where Michael Knight (David Hasslehoff) and his indestructible car KITT (William Daniels) are threatened by an indestructible semi-trailer named Goliath.

Goliath was the evil spawn of Michael's stepmother and her menacing son Garth (also played, a la Peter Sellers, by David Hasslehoff). Like all stepbrothers, Garth's great aim in life was to destroy his unwanted demi-sibling, and Goliath the indestructible semi-trailer was to be his weapon. This provided a great and heavy quandary for Michael and KITT and I remember their dialogue to this day.

MICHAEL

(looking meaningfully at KITT)
You know what we're talking about, right?

KITT

(looking meaningfully at Michael)
Absolutely, Michael. We're about to discover
the answer to the world's oldest
conundrum: what happens when an
unstoppable
force collides with an unmovable object?

So it was on Valentine's Day, when an unstoppable force (me) collided with an unmovable object (The Girlfriend) over the year the movie about Stu Sutcliffe, the "fifth Beatle," was released.

Now, I knew when it was released. I knew darn well. I knew where I was when I saw it and I knew who was in it. It was released in 1993 and it starred up-and-coming young pretty boy Stephen Dorff and ex-Twin Peaks bombshell Sheryl Lee. And it was called BACKBEAT.

But The Girlfriend knew too. Oh boy, did she know. It was released in 1981. She didn't know who was in it but she had watched it with her father and she remembered everything about watching it. And it was called BACKBEAT.

Two Beatles fans. Two movie *fanatics*. Two pop-culture junkies. Two people who *didn't like to be wrong*.

Just like with KITT and Goliath, an unstoppable force was about to collide with an unmovable object. And the world's oldest conundrum would be solved.

The restaurant, by the way, had three chefs hats, and everything up until this point had been supremely romantic. And don't forget: it was Valentine's Day.

"No," I said, "the one I'm talking about isn't *about* the Beatles. It's about the *fifth* Beatle."

"Yeah, that's the one I'm talking about."

"No, I'm talking about BACKBEAT."

"Yeah, that's the one I'm talking about."

"But the one I'm talking about is about his relationship with Astrid, the photographer."

"Yeah, that's the one I'm talking about."

"No, this one is all set in Hamburg when they were young."

"Yeah, that's the one I'm talking about."

The unstoppable force was hurtling towards that unmovable object and I couldn't see any way to divert its course... because we were both sure, both *absolutely positive*, that we were right.

"No, he dies at the end of this one. Of a *brain aneurism*."

"Yeah, that's the one I'm talking about. He dies."

"But in his studio! He didn't want to be a musician! He wanted to be a painter! And he died of a bloody brain aneurism in his studio and Astrid the photographer from *Hamburg* found him."

"Yeah, we're talking about the same movie."

"Which was released in 1993!"

"Except it wasn't because I watched it with my Dad in 1981."

"No!" I was really starting to sweat now. As far as I was concerned there was no going back from this. This could be the deal-breaker, the relationship-buster. It might all end here, at the most expensive restaurant I'd ever been too, on Valentine's Day, and it wouldn't end in tears but in righteous indignation.

Could she be right? Well, yes, if in some freaky way she saw a movie that was released to cinemas in 1993 on the television in 1981.

Could she be *wrong*? Well, she was, to me that was brain-numbingly clear. But she wasn't going to admit it, because it wasn't a case of admittance: in her mind, she *knew she was right*, and this was a woman who would not back down if she knew she was right.

And then it dawned on me: one of us had to. One of us had to *pretend to admit* that we "might" be wrong, otherwise this most expensive of dinners would be ruined, as not even the food in this place could survive the bitter taste of a couple feuding on Valentine's day.

Incredibly, I can't remember the conclusion to Episode 22 of KNIGHT RIDER, though I know they made another 62 episodes (plus a telemovie in 1991) so assumedly KITT survived. But I do, now, know the answer to the world's oldest conundrum: the unstoppable force has to stop, or else the immovable object has gotta move, otherwise dinner's gonna suck.

By the way, you know who was right, right? Stephen Dorff would've been about *nine* in 1981.

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