



Well, here we are, the next day, and I'm still thinking about how unfortunate it is that they made a sequel to a movie that stood pretty well on its own. I stand by the thought that if Todd Phillips didn't think the Joker needed a sequel, he should have stuck to that. I'm sure the money was good, but I have to think maybe it wasn't just about the money. If The Penguin series is a combination of Penguin and The Sopranos, then the first Joker was Joker meets The King of Comedy.

When you get one past the goalie, like Phillips did with The Joker, even if you know you should quit while you're ahead, you might try again. Since the first one wasn't your strongest genre but did well, maybe you could do it a deuxième fois.



Write a musical, cast a singer/actor to star alongside the lead, and make sure they're seen as talented. You think, "WBD is letting me continue to play in the Gotham sandbox; who am I to turn that down? Even if they handed the reins to Matt

Reeves... why not fuck around and find out?"

Well, you did; you fucked around with the singing and the dancing and found out it doesn't work. You tried to introduce a version of Harley that is independent of Joker, when Harley is connected to Joker. The same way Arthur is a product of his bad life, Harley, as a character, is a product of her interactions with Joker. Funny enough, if you had explored Harley's motivations, you might have avoided making her a more one-dimensional character who exists solely for "Joker" in this film. You could have made her truly independent; instead, her motivations are all about the



power associated with “Joker.” Harley the anarchist might have been the idea, but that fell short. Since Phillips keeps saying that Arthur Fleck isn't actually Joker, I could almost see what he was trying to do for Harley in a world where the Joker doesn't technically exist yet, but it didn't land.

However, he did stick the landing with the point that Arthur is not Joker, but at the expense of developing the few characters around him. At some point, they'll possibly make a Harley

movie, maybe a Two-Face and a Joker 3. Todd won't make them, but he built the universe. A grittier one that set the bar, and Reeves took the challenge in *The Batman*. Phillips did what Sony wanted to do with *Venom*: establish the villain without the hero. Maybe this “New York” Gotham (as opposed to the New Jersey Gotham of Reeves' world) will find a home under Gunn & Safran's DC Studios. An Elseworld visited at some point just because; maybe it ends here, a weak sequel full of bad renditions of popular songs.



If they do go the way of expanding on this universe... at least we had the first film. At least we got Phoenix playing Fleck so well that he got a statue for it, which, for us comic fans, was nice to see.

