



THE YEAR THAT TREMBLED (2002) PRESS QUOTES

"The overall feeling of the period is just right, and the performances are highly affecting, with old hands like Henry Gibson, Fred Willard, and Martin Mull interacting with younger players as deftly as the fictional story does with the archival footage. This is more believable than most depictions of the period because the politics are informed by historical reflection."

-Jonathan Rosenbaum, Chicago Reader

"Memorable...beautifully reflects a depth of experience of the late 60's and early 70's...a touching glimpse into the lives of young people enmeshed in the political and emotional climate of the times."

-April Greene, Boston Herald

"Craven is an intuitive director—take his inspired interweaving of stock footage, as when he juxtaposes cops carting away demonstrators with grunts carrying away their wounded brethren. That such scenes are in the news again only calls to mind the provocative parallels."

-Mike Millard, Boston Phoenix

"Lush cinematography and stellar performances perfectly capture the zeitgeist of this troubled time. The experienced cast makes the most of the film's subtleties and dramatic high points. Brandis and Hinkle are especially fine in portraying their dangerous attraction."

-Julie Washington, Cleveland Plain Dealer

*"An ambitious coming-of-age story set amid the turmoil that beset rural Ohio communities in the wake of the May 4, 1970 Kent State shootings...**The Year That Trembled** evokes the fear, anger, and conflict that swept over the country at that time."*

-Kevin Thomas, Los Angeles Times

*"Films that effectively capture the mood of the 60's are few and far between. Writer-director Jay Craven's **The Year That Trembled** succeeds... Craven deftly sets the stage with a montage of news clips before proceeding to a fictionalized street theater version of a great Vietnam Era protest. Film includes good work from Henry Gibson, Fred Willard, Martin Mull (all playing it straight), and the latest actress from the Chaplin clan, Kiera."*

-Andy Klein, Variety

"Vermont-based Jay Craven ranks with Victor Nunez and Richard Linklater as one of America's leading independent regional filmmakers. His latest, most ambitious work, set in 1970, centers on a group of small-town Ohio friends whose personal lives are disrupted by the bloody Kent State protests (vividly recreated in the opening scenes), the escalating war, and the draft. Based on the novel by Scott Lax, the film centers not on political dogma but on the impact of the era's political upheaval on ordinary lives, captured by Craven's sure sense of time and place and the fine ensemble cast. Especially good is Fred Willard in a non-manic role as a high-school principal whose loyalties are tested when his daughter (Meredith Monroe of "Dawson's Creek") is hunted by the FBI."

-Marty Rubin, Curator, Gene Siskel Film Center, Art Institute of Chicago



*“The rural Ohio homefront of the Vietnam War is the setting of **The Year That Trembled**, an elegiac, well-acted ensemble drama based on the poetic 1998 novel by Scott Lax. The independent feature charts a group of young friends over several tumultuous months from 1970 to 1971, as the threat of the Vietnam War draft lottery casts a long, cold shadow over young people already confused by the onset of adulthood.”*

*“Writer-director Jay Craven has done a good job of putting flesh and bone on Lax’s impressionistic narrative, and he adroitly juggles the multiple characters like Robert Altman with an extra dose of gentle humanism. Craven and crew evoke the early-’70s time period splendidly, without capitulation to hippie camp, finger-pointing or Top 40 soundtrack hits. **The Year That Trembled** comes across as less a sweeping historical pageant than a heartfelt album of relationships, sweetness, innocence, irony and regret, all crystallized in a fragile time when the much-vaunted counterculture revolution flickered briefly for a final time, then winked out with a puzzled whimper. Take advantage of its visibility to enjoy a well-honed, non-formulaic postcard dispatched from the sunset of the Age of Aquarius.”*

–Charles Cassady Jr., Cleveland Times

“Touching and intelligent. It deserves to be seen.” **–Jason Koornick, Ain’t It Cool News**

“Rings true.” **–Ron Weiskind, Pittsburgh Post Gazette**

“The Vietnam war is the real protagonist, the looming thing that informs the crucial decisions. As the spectre of the draft creeps closer, doing what’s “right” seems more ambiguous than ever... Craven directs in a clear manner.”

–Pittsburgh City Paper

“Jay Craven’s best film yet. This is the kind of indie worth waiting for. With more and more filmmakers succumbing to the monkeymass and avoiding political thought with any substance, it’s kind of great to see Craven in the trenches, figuring out how to tell the kinds of stories he wants to tell.”

“A very good film may be made someday about the Kent State Massacre, but for Lax and Craven, Kent State is just the spark that lights the story’s fuse. Craven stresses ensemble playing over any kind of star vehicle, and through the course of the film, he deftly juggles multiple characters and storylines as 1970 runs its course through the death of Jimi Hendrix and the communal fallout from Woodstock.”

*“Even on the kind of budget that wouldn’t cover cappuccino costs on a Joel Silver action epic, Jay Craven gets the most out of his actors and resources, confidently weaving storylines in and out, tying them in surprising yet apt ways, and again emerging with a singular portrait of a community in crisis. **The Year That Trembled** would make a great double bill with George Lucas’ **American Graffiti**, in that it deals so poignantly with the spectre of young adults being cut loose to find their way in the world.”*

“The performances are strong and passionate, all the way down the line. The film boasts a strong young cast like the glazed-over Jim “Hairball” Morton (Charlie Finn), whom I enjoyed immensely



*in **Super Troopers**. In one of the film's ironic bits of casting, Danica McKellar from "The Wonder Years" reappears, this time as a frightened housewife who refuses to go public with what she saw at Kent State. After what feels like months of formula movie garbage, **The Year That Trembled** feels like the first important movie of the year. Aside from John Sayles, no one has tried to do what Jay Craven has accomplished."*

-Bryan VanCampen, Ithaca Times

"Not a single false note." – Gerald Rafshoon, film producer and White House Director of Communications for President Jimmy Carter.

*"A surefire recipe for cultural whiplash: director Jay Craven takes us back to a time when people of college age had things on their minds slightly more pressing than wet T-shirt contests or neurotic roommates — and faced choices on matters considerably more far-reaching than their cellular service plan. It's hard to believe the America of **The Year That Trembled** is the same one we live in today."*

"The film features an impressive ensemble cast, some of whose members are recognizable and some not. You never know who's going to pop up in a Craven picture. Meredith Monroe costars as a young protester on the run from the FBI. Her father's a school official played by Fred Willard. The actor's old pal and "Fernwood 2-Night" partner Martin Mull is a disillusioned Bureau vet close on the girl's heels. Some of the movie's most compelling and emotionally complex scenes are those shared by these two men. The pair proves just as capable of making us think and feel as they are of making us laugh."

"The same can be said for the film. The turbulence of the times is effectively evoked JFK-fashion through a combination of character study and archival footage, both of which provide a troubling reminder that this country was at war with itself not so long ago. Jay R. Ferguson turns in a chilling, edgy performance as a G-man in a baaad sheep's clothing. The addition of his composite character is a nifty Oliver Stone-style touch."

"The Year That Trembled is new territory for the Vermont director, and he shows every sign of feeling right at home in it. This is the first film Craven has made whose credits don't list him as producer. That's deceiving, though. From his earliest work to his newest, Craven is a filmmaker who always produces.

-Rick Kisonak, Film Threat

*"**The Year That Trembled** deals with matters that Hollywood won't touch, and gets people thinking about a dramatic piece of our history that has been largely forgotten. What happened at Kent State was a microcosm of what happened to the nation. TYTT's young characters have their lives changed, and we get to know them up close — their loves, their fears, their dreams. This is an unusual film."*

-Howard Zinn, author, The People's History of The United States



*“Writer-director Jay Craven was smart enough to see the possibilities and sensitive enough to appreciate the romance of the time...Craven gets a number of grace notes right (the VW bus, a dog named Nixon; he even pulls off a good Bread and Puppet Theater joke)...Unlike Hollywood's vapid and misguided attempts to be "far out" (like 1970's **The Strawberry Statement**) Craven sees many of his characters as sometimes wrongheaded and confused but also idealistic, and maybe even a tad heroic.”*

–Eleanor Gillespie, Atlanta Journal-Constitution

**** “Intimate, subtly riveting, and richly reminiscent. **The Year That Trembled** captures much of the drama and essence of the Vietnam War protest era.”*

–Marty Meltz, Portland Press Herald

*“**The Year That Trembled** will reconnect a new generation with the way an American era once was lived, and the way great films once were made: with undeviating conviction, passion, and faith in dreams. It is not often that a cinematic project in America gives off the unmistakable aura of being exactly the right movie for exactly the right moment in the country's history. **The Year That Trembled** is such a project. The creators have pierced through the hardened crust of blockbuster-induced voyeurism, cheap irony and numbness on the one hand, and outdated sentimental piety on the other, to engage the movie-going public at a level of uncompromising truth and passion on the great themes of war and youth and courage and comradeship.”*

–Ron Powers, Pulitzer-prize winning critic and co-author, Flags of Our Fathers

“Personal and powerful...it never gives up hope.” **–Times Argus (Vermont)**

“Remarkably authentic...writer-director Jay Craven and his large ensemble cast succeed at capturing the nuances of those times.” **–Box Office Magazine**

*“Jay Craven's **The Year That Trembled** gets it just right -- the era, the homefront, the conflict, the characters. I was more moved than by a dozen Hollywood efforts that skate over Vietnam as if it were a plot point rather than a country and a war we have still not recovered from. At a moment when history is rewinding itself for more military adventures in countries and cultures we do not understand, **The Year That Trembled** is a film I hope Americans will see.”*

*-- Peter Davis, Academy Award winning director, **Hearts and Minds***

“Marin Hinkle gives a standout performance!... This is an important film and will hit home for many people. Go see this movie at all costs!”

–The Lakelander, Lakeland College (OH)

*“**The Year That Trembled** is not just another Vietnam War tale. Director Jay Craven has masterfully maneuvered down an untravelled trail tread by regular Joes and Janes swept up in a coming of age war-chronicle and student teacher tempest.”*

–Robin Caudell, Plattsburgh Press Republican (NY)



"I was very touched. The film captures the essence of what people were going through at the time—not just the movement, but the regular guys. I highly recommend it to anyone."

–Sherry Beall, KPFF FM, Los Angeles

"...shines an honest light on a time and place that still resonates in the American soul."

–Jeff Craig, Sixty Second Preview

"Captivating and timely. Brilliantly captured the events surrounding the Kent State demonstrations in 1970 and the end of innocence that the campus shootings wrought."

–Roger Jackson, ifilm.com

"...Brandis and Hinkle inhabit their roles with real weight; there's a nice reunion of Martin Mull and Fred Willard as beleaguered Ohio parents, and a spacy turn from Henry Gibson...Craven pays meticulous attention to the details of the Kent State shootings and aftermath, and deftly integrates period news footage (how shocked young viewers of the Iraq war will be to see how close the cameras were in Vietnam)."

–Jon Strickland, LA Weekly

"Sweet...touching...historically significant...throw this on your list of films to watch."

–Entertainment Today