

**Excerpts from  
Postings Concerning:**

**"OUR GIBSON STRATEGY" ©**

including a "Checklist" of

**48 critical motifs**

to look for in the Mel Gibson film,

*The Passion of the Christ*

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**Winter 2004**



**OUR "GIBSON" STRATEGY #1 - ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE**  
(January 2, 2004)

Dear Colleagues and Friends [on my personal mailing list],

5 [1] Let us visualize Gibson's "Passion" as "a play WITHIN a play." To Jews, the film is now but part of a larger drama. Was it hard for Gibson to forgo playing Jesus and "merely" direct the film? On some level, he's now playing Jesus on the world stage, "victimized" by today's Jews (as Jesus, allegedly, was victimized by Jews of his own day).

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[2] By the same token, Jews are likewise now on stage, with our performance also subject to reviewers. Sadly, some Jews have already been publicly reviewed as "hysterical," "paranoid," or "malicious" (the last echoing the New Testament).

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[3] If "all the world's a stage," and we're now on it, our laity should understand how this transpired: The original drama pitted Gibson against the Catholic Church's Vatican II reforms. This is why it was specifically the Catholic Secretariat for Interreligious Affairs that convened a seven-member Scholar Group in April 2003, with the Anti-Defamation League an invited partner -- so we could compare Gibson's script with already published Catholic Guidelines for Passion productions. Reading our Report, Gibson immediately threatened suit. When the Bishops Committee (to whom the Secretariat reports) abruptly withdrew from the fray, the drama promptly metamorphosed into Gibson vs. the ADL. Never understudies to play "Gibson's opponents," Jews were abruptly catapulted to center stage, nonetheless.

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[4] Initially, Gibson trumpeted "historical accuracy" as his hallmark, but the onslaught of the Scholars' critique of his errors was grievous (citing here merely four examples):

- # Everything spoken in Latin in the film should have been in Greek, instead.
- # Jews built Jesus' gigantic cross right inside the Temple Court? (Come on!)
- # Pilate was ineffectual, dutifully deferential, and wholly subordinate to the Jewish High Priest Caiaphas?
- # Jews went door-to-door bribing residents to turn out to condemn Jesus?

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[5] Are we "okay" with allowing decades of Christian scholarly advance to wither on the vine? Will there even be a basis for any Jews to celebrate Vatican II's 40th anniversary (2005)?

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I'll follow up this posting with others outlining specific strategic but simple steps that I feel should be set into motion in advance of February 25.

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**OUR GIBSON STRATEGY #2 - TWO COLLEAGUES' REACTIONS**  
(January 4, 2004)

50 There is a value in exploring just how frustrated we feel, before moving on.  
Two of us have given me permission to excerpt their viewpoints, sent me privately.  
One, a couple weeks ago, framed the dilemma as follows:

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55 **"So after the movie is released, it could be a dud, as say the recent movie,**  
**'The Gospel of John,' or it could be a large success like other recent Gibson**  
**movies. Now as a rabbi in a southern community, I really do not wish to go on**  
**record as being against this movie, unless it is absolutely outrageous. If it**  
**is a dud, then my silence helps it go away faster. If it is a success, then**  
**my criticism of it could in this community engender increased anti-Semitism.**  
60 **Criticizing something that Christians feel to be holy, worthwhile, and not**  
**anti-Semitic is not the way to win friends and influence people [here]. "**

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65 Meanwhile, in reacting to my installment #1, another has also written.

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70 **"There's the crux. 'Why are the Jews whining all the time?' Thus, you are**  
**directly 'on message' about people perceiving us as paranoid, and also about**  
**the need for us to think strategically for a change."**

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## Our Gibson Strategy #3 - "Christal" Ball

(January 8, 2004)

80 [1] Since JEWISH VIEWERS, by and large, do not know the Gospels, they are  
likely to process the movie as entirely GIBSON's creation. In reality, Gibson has  
only embellished the underlying anti-Jewish core of what is in the Gospels already.  
Jewish viewers, however, will likely **not be in a position to make any distinction at  
all between Gibson and what he drew from the Gospels.** (To help us understand  
the fine distinction here: Gibson has produced a "torture" film predicated on  
85 Gospel materials.)

90 [2] Many CHRISTIANS, meanwhile, knowing the New Testament materials, will  
likely see the movie as only a CONFIRMATION of their own Scripture, no matter how  
imaginatively and graphically Gibson has embellished it (by adding details of torture).  
The potential exists, therefore, **for Jews seeing the movie still to "schrei Gewalt"**  
**(and not sleep for several nights thereafter) yet for a Christian to say to**  
**Jews: "For the life of me I can't see what's the big deal."** (This, not by the  
way, is what's been so unfruitfully played out in the press for months now -- so, I  
believe, people will continue to talk past one another for months still to come.)

95 [3] Because Gibson has likely now shifted the burden of the (March 2003) torture  
scenes away from the Jewish Temple officers and now more onto Roman soldiers,  
Christian viewers are likely to say to us: "You know, I've seen the film, and **by far**  
**most of the torture of Jesus was inflicted by the Romans (not by the Jews),**  
100 so the film's not nearly as bad as you feared."

105 [4] But Jewish viewers, traumatized by seeing the graphic torture (relentlessly  
and almost endlessly prolonged) are going to fear that Christians will draw another  
inference: that, yes, the Romans now did indeed inflict by far most of the torture,  
**but if it hadn't been for the BLOODTHIRSTY and VENGEFUL Jewish mobs**  
**Jesus would never have been plunged into the Romans' hands to start with --**  
**so derivatively it's the Jews who are responsible for the tortures Roman**  
**soldiers inflicted.** Meanwhile, those viewers already antisemitic before entering the  
110 theater will have a field day -- interpreting the film as buttressing their  
predisposition. (This is the danger especially in Europe and the Middle East.)

115 [5] Gibson will emerge from this, saying: "The stuff the Jews don't like was  
already in Christian Scripture. Don't blame me, I didn't put it there. And as for the  
April 2003 script those 'Scholars' read, their whole Report was bogus because they  
based themselves on a stolen script that was not the one on which the film was shot,  
anyway."

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**Our Mel Gibson Strategy #4 - "Pressed by the Press"**

(January 12, 2004)

125 Six of us have written me of their concern with the press -- WHAT TO SAY TO THE PRESS ABOUT GIBSON'S FILM. Certainly, on Feb. 26 (after the release), our local religion editor may well be on the phone. Local interfaith relations are sensitive; and what we say about Gibson's film, of course, reflects on and impacts our constituencies -- it's not simply a matter of expressing our personal opinion.

130 Excerpting one thought from each of six E-mails: "What's best for us to say, or not say, to the press?" "I've explored this subject. It's too complex. How do I get on top of it?" "I've read the gospels. What now?" **"Under duress from the press, I could easily say things I haven't sufficiently thought through, and may thereafter regret."** "Every time a new twist on the story comes out, I'm expected to drop everything to set our newspaper straight." The most recent query: how to respond to the Klinghoffer piece (that [mis]used the Talmud to defend the Gospels).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> My own Letter to the Editor:

DavidKlinghoffer's 1/7/04 article ("... Gibson's controversial film coincides closely with ancient Jewish writings") is fundamentally flawed. He tries to show that ancient Talmudic and later Rabbinic texts confirm Gospel testimony. But he overlooks the elementary explanation: the Jewish writers based their limited knowledge about Jesus entirely on traditions arising from the Gospels themselves (hence the misleading "agreement" of the Jewish writers with Christian testimony). Also contorted is the author's linking of stoning with crucifixion. Jesus was not stoned before being crucified, nor was Stephen crucified after being stoned (Acts 7), nor could anyone stoned "to death" still be alive if later put on a cross. So of what conceivable relevance are Mr. Klinghoffer's citations of Rabbinic passages? Moreover, if Jews themselves supposedly practiced crucifixion (after stoning), why would they have brought Jesus to Pontius Pilate in the first place? Mr. Klinghoffer has contributed misinformation and confusion, not the "cooling agent" he admirably intended. He has introduced the Talmud in the wrong place, in the wrong way, in the wrong connection, and at the wrong time.

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140 Here may be a practical idea -- at least for those of us who pen monthly  
Newsletter columns. Why not (as a practice run) devote our next column to thoughts  
about the film's release? Later, **distill that article down further to the "press  
release" we may give.** That way, we've produced a polished statement in advance.  
And if we're NOT called, let's SUBMIT our statements on our own.

145 What "Guidelines" should we follow? I envision two categories: some could be  
universally applicable (to any of us); others idiosyncratic to the respondent alone (i.e.,  
matching our personal bent, comfort, or style).

**UNIVERSAL Guidelines: Our "press" Statements might be:**

- [A] already in **WRITING** (so as to reduce chances of our being misquoted)
- 150 [B] submitted only via **E-MAIL** (to minimize misquotes, and retain a record  
of what we said)
- [C] **BRIEF** (to reduce the likelihood of unwanted / unwarranted excerpting)
- [D] **SUCCINCT** (so readers will stick with us to the Statement's end)
- [E] **CLEAR** (so readers -- Jews AND Gentiles [Christian and non-Christian]  
155 -- can easily grasp the basic issues)
- [F] **UNCLUTTERED** (no more than several significant points)

**IDIOSYNCRATIC Guidelines: Of course, tailor your own. The following would  
be mine (on the Mel Gibson matter, at least):**

- 160 [G] **BALANCED** (e.g., defending Gibson's right as an artist)

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[H] **PREEMPTIVE** (e.g., anticipating claims by those championing his film: "Well, it's faithful to the Gospels so what more can anyone want?" No, it isn't. It selects some of the worst passages from different Gospels and meshes them together; it contains violence and tortures in no way hinted at in the Gospels; etc.)

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[I] **HOMILETICAL** (applying Gospel texts suggesting Jesus' own Jewish teachings reflect disapproval of the effects of Gibson's production)

[J] **SOBERING** (e.g., haven't we by now learned from recent events the explosive dangers that can accrue from uncritically accepting sacred religious texts?)

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[K] **TACTICAL** (attacking Gibson's greatest vulnerability: his declaration that his Passion is the most historically reliable version ever produced:)

# He consulted as a historical source the markings on the **Shroud of Turin** (a late medieval forgery), as well as a **widely-ridiculed article from the Journal of the American Medical Association** -- likewise relying on the Shroud (by authors who didn't know any better).

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# He openly acknowledged his dependence on **the (antisemitic) "visions" of a 19th Century nun (Sister Anne Catherine Emmerich)**.

# The most antisemitic episode in his film is the Jews' calling for release of **Barabbas (costumed as virtually an animal)**. **Yet this pericope (paragraph) is a post-66 CE device** to protect Christians from Roman persecution and from popular association with rebellious Jews. **If Gibson's portrayed only what actually happened, he should have omitted this episode altogether.**

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How can we confidently prepare a statement before the film's release? The CORE can be readied, necessary ancillary comments appended last minute. We know **certain themes are inevitably going to be central:** e.g.,

# the **disproportionate power Gibson accords Caiaphas (vis-à-vis Pilate);**

# Gibson's stress on **torture**, almost a **medieval fascination with pain;**

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# **Jesus' pummeling to a pulp by Roman soldiers (for which Jews are nonetheless responsible** since THEY could have freed him instead of freeing Barabbas).

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## Our Gibson Strategy #5 - "Finding a Benchmark to Sit On"

(January 13, 2004)

200            If Gibson's made substantial improvements, won't these call for some  
comment by us? The conundrum we face here is that Gibson dismissed as bogus,  
"stolen," and "obsolete," the April 2003 script assessed by the Ad Hoc Scholars  
Group. So doesn't this mean we have no "benchmark" enabling us to compare the  
205            final production (due out soon) with the script we read ten months ago? I believe  
that benchmark was reliable then, and remains such today:

#            On April 14, Gene Fisher of the Catholic Secretariat (and the convener of the  
seven scholars) E-mailed each of us: **"I JUST RECEIVED THE GOOD NEWS THAT WE  
210            WILL RECEIVE THE SCRIPT FOR OUR ANALYSIS WITHIN THE NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS." We  
may not circulate it, "THOUGH OF COURSE OUR COMMENTS CAN BE PUBLIC."**

#            All seven scholars then signed an **OATH OF CONFIDENTIALITY** -- to assure ICON  
Productions we'd not show the script to anyone else.

#            Our phone conversations with Gibson and ICON were ongoing AS we read the  
script we'd received. Gene Fisher and Eugene Korn (ADL) conversed with Gibson  
215            on our behalf. Each conversation took for granted that the very script we were  
analyzing was the basis of the confidential Report we soon sent **GIBSON AND  
ICON (WHO REPEATEDLY SAID THEY AWAITED RECEIVING OUR SUGGESTIONS).**

#            Father Fulco (California) had translated the text into Latin and Aramaic. He told  
us by phone, in April: **"SHOOTING ENDED JUST THIS PAST WEEK. THE FILM FOLLOWS  
220            THE SCRIPT QUITE FAITHFULLY" (he meant, of course, the script we possessed).**  
Moreover, Fulco **knew this script BY HEART, "BACKWARDS"** as well as forwards (if  
our script wasn't the real McCoy, why did he learn it so intimately?).

#            Our script was obviously **a reworking of MANY EARLIER DRAFTS:**

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- Corrections were designated as "white page" revisions, "pink," "blue" and "green page" revisions. This was **NOT SOME RUDIMENTARY DRAFT discarded early on.**
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- Also, **DIFFERENT PAGINATION SYSTEMS** were evident -- contrasting page-numbers of earlier versions still visible on each text page, likewise suggesting that we were reading a very late-stage document.
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- Most significantly, the script was accompanied by **Gibson's own STAGE-MANAGING CUES** for how actors should behave (particularly **DURING BRUTALITIES INFLICTED ON JESUS**; also when focusing on how **THE JEWISH HIGH PRIEST, CAIAPHAS**, should comport himself -- with anger, glee, a sparkle or gleam in his eyes, champing at the bit with excitement, etc.).
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- As for the "brutality," our script was like the very **"WAR MOVIE"** Gibson said it would be (in his *The New Yorker* interview). **These stage-cues as to his mind set** were **VERY TELLING** -- likely his genuinely "artistic" intent unchanged from the first script till the one we had in April.

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I believe our script was only pronounced "stolen" AFTER Gibson recoiled from our critical Report based on it. (The plausible alternative was that the script was "leaked" by someone in Gibson's own camp worried about the film's antisemitism.) Certainly, the film-version later seen by Abe Foxman and Eugene Korn paralleled the script we'd already read. And the vast majority of those attending that preview (in

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Houston?) were Christians -- so Gibson wasn't showing one version to critics and another to supporters.

If, when back in Italy this past Fall, Gibson indeed made improvements, it's hard to ascertain their extent or even importance.

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# Anticipating their EXTENT is hard because the only benchmark we have is the April script (which each scholar returned upon demand).

260 # And it's hard anticipating the IMPORTANCE of any improvements because viewers simply won't recognize them. Since they won't know what the antecedent text contained, the film will likely make much the same impression on them as the April text made on us.

265 At the same time, there IS a virtue to our knowing whether Mel Gibson used our Report after all, making changes without citing the cause. The place to start must be with **the antisemitic "visions" of Sister Anne Catherine Emmerich**. I traced seven-to-eight of the nastiest motifs of April's script STRAIGHT TO THIS NUN (so much for Mel Gibson's protestations of historical accuracy). My bet is that the final film retains two of the six, omits one (too foul to keep), and of the remaining three  
270 I surmise two or all three were retained.

To be continued.

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## Our Gibson Strategy #6 -- Three Goals

(January 15, 2004)

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As preliminaries to our constructing checklists of what to look for in Gibson's film, I recommend we be guided by several goals:

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[1] Since some items in these checklists will be ugly, **WHAT IS THE MOST RESPONSIBLE WAY TO HELP OUR LAITY AND OURSELVES COPE** with these? I suggest: let us reassure our constituents, and ourselves, that, while all viewers in the theater may think they are watching one and the same film, **in reality TWO FILMS, NOT ONE, are being seen: one by Jews, the other likely by non-Jews:**

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[a] **JEWISH VIEWERS** will be preoccupied with how the Jews of Jesus' day are grotesquely and falsely portrayed, and will be worried how non-Jews will react, process, and possibly transform these horrific visions into antisemitic attitudes and even behaviors in the modern day -- in America and, even more so, in Europe and the Middle East.

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[b] **CHRISTIAN VIEWERS**, however, will instead be preoccupied with the extraordinary love Jesus showed through the excruciating pain he willingly and graciously underwent for the redemption of this otherwise helpless and hopeless world.

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It would be salutary if our Jewish constituents would become convinced that **MOST CHRISTIANS VIEWING THE FILM WILL SIMPLY NOT "SEE" THE SAME TRAVESTIES JEWS WILL SEE.** Formulating checklists will be counterproductive and unhealthy unless this overarching consideration is assimilated beforehand. This movie need not be a cause of hysteria. It will be far better if we can calmly, but effectively, transform this into a teaching and learning opportunity.

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[2] Sound-byte generalities may be the only effective means of communicating these days. "Checklists," however, are likely so to focus our attention on



345 [c] His **"over-the-top" FASCINATION WITH VIOLENCE** has created a portrait  
far exceeding what's necessary, or true, concerning the death of Jesus  
-- and only reinforces the "un-Christian" values and "un-Christian" vile  
violence pervading the modern-day SECULAR culture that so many  
Christians feel assaulted by today (TV, video games, amusements, etc.).  
What Gibson has produced, accordingly, is in its EFFECTS of rage and  
name-calling **diametrically inconsistent with what Jews understand to**  
350 **have been the wholesome message of love** and the wholesome nature  
of society envisioned by the one Christians call "the Prince of Peace".

[3] Besides generalizations, however, "checklists" of details do have their place.  
Yet we should envision specific reasons for constructing them, if they are not  
to "sit there gathering dust". I see some of the potential goals as these:

- 355 [a] To help us know and spot what we could or should be looking for in the film;  
[b] to enable us to gauge to what degree Gibson has (secretly?) taken to heart the  
Scholars' April 2003 critique, and  
[c] to gauge how much his final version of the film coheres with or, instead,  
360 cavalierly disregards, **THE OFFICIAL CATHOLIC GUIDELINES AND STRICTURES FOR**  
**PASSION PRODUCTIONS**, promulgated decades ago;  
[d] to help us formulate a reaction to the **UPCOMING (AND ALL-IMPORTANT) REVIEW OF**  
**THE FILM BY THE U.S. CATHOLIC BISHOPS**, not to mention by the legions of other  
movie critics. Also,  
365 [e] checklists will enable us better to explain to our Christian colleagues and friends  
who want some **SPECIFIC EXAMPLES BEYOND** broad "sound-byte" generalizations --  
specific examples of what had been so alarming back in April 2003 as to spark  
this enormous media controversy in the first place -- that there really WAS a  
"Wolf" to cry out about.

370 Checklists, in stages, to be forthcoming ....

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# CHECKLISTS

( January 15-20, 2004 )

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## The NUN

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I begin our "Checklists" with visions by SISTER ANNE CATHERINE EMMERICH (1774-1824; **THE DOLOROUS PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST [Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1983]**). Because Gibson acknowledges being inspired by her, the more he's drawn upon her the less compelling his claim to historical accuracy. (Visions of a 19th Century antisemitic nun are not dependable for knowledge of the 1st Century.)

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Parts of the April 2003 script evidently came from sources outside the gospels or from Gibson's imagination. Consider the shock of reading this nun's book and spotting paragraphs Gibson evidently drew upon!

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Seven to eight Emmerich excerpts, particularly memorable to me, are noted below. Compare Gibson Passion motifs, listed below, with the Emmerich excerpts -- **the correlations are unmistakable**. Which Emmerich excerpts are STILL in the final film? That's for viewers now to determine. Some excerpts may now be missing. But other Emmerich material (not below) may now be ADDED. This is because Gibson's P-R machine has been so extraordinarily successful that he may have become emboldened by his success rather than sobered by his critics.

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For convenience's sake, I've condensed the Emmerich excerpts by leaving out words. (If you wish the full text, please see the end of this section.)

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**Possible Movie Motif #1 --**

**FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS MUST FULLY EXPOSE THEMSELVES to 100% of THE ACTUAL AGONY JESUS UNDERWENT.**

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Compare Emmerich Ch. XII -- "It is impossible to describe all the Holy of Holies [= Jesus] suffered from THESE HEARTLESS [JEWISH] BEINGS. The sight affected me so excessively I felt I could not survive it. We ought, indeed, to be ashamed of THAT WEAKNESS WHICH RENDERS US UNABLE TO LISTEN COMPOSEDLY TO THOSE SUFFERINGS WHICH OUR LORD ENDURED SO CALMLY AND PATIENTLY for our salvation."

Now Present?     Now Absent?

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**EXPLANATION:** *The above = Gibson's philosophy, exactly. His audience is welcome to walk out if they cannot stand the tortures, but they should be "ashamed of that weakness which renders [them] unable to listen composedly to those sufferings which our Lord endured so calmly and patiently for [their] salvation." In other words, gore is edifying.*

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Possible Movie Motif #2 --

**JEWISH OFFICIALS BRIBED OTHER JEWS TO SHOW UP TO DENOUNCE JESUS PUBLICLY (= even THEN Jews were "lovers of money"?)**

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Compare Emmerich Ch. IV -- "The Sadducees, whom Jesus so often reproved, hastened to all the inns to offer **BRIBES** [to the enemies of our Lord] to secure their [public] appearance."

Cf. Emmerich Ch. VI -- "I saw **MONEY GIVEN TO THOSE WHO BEHAVED THE WORST TO JESUS** by armed men belonging to the tribunal [= Sanhedrin?], and I saw them push out all who looked compassionately at him. The former [only] were allowed to enter the Court of Caiphas [sic]."

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Now Present?     Now Absent?

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Possible Movie Motif #3 --

**PILATE, THE MORALIST, EXPOSES THE JEWISH CAPTORS' VICIOUSNESS (note how Pilate occupies the higher moral level)**

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Compare Emmerich Ch. XVII -- "When Pilate perceived how shamefully the cruel Jews treated their prisoner, he addressed them: '**IS IT NOT POSSIBLE TO REFRAIN FROM TEARING TO PIECES AND BEGINNING TO EXECUTE YOUR CRIMINALS EVEN BEFORE THEY ARE JUDGED?**' "

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Now Present?     Now Absent?  
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Possible Movie Motif #4 --

445           **PILATE, THE MORALIST, EXPOSES THE WICKED HIGH PRIEST CAIAPHAS' HYPOCRISY (note how Pilate occupies the higher moral level)**

Compare Emmerich, ibid. -- [Caiaphas to Pilate:] " 'Witnesses declared [Jesus] violated the Sabbath, curing the sick.' Pilate said in a jeering tone: '**HAD YOU BEEN [ILL] YOU WOULD NOT HAVE COMPLAINED OF BEING CURED** on the Sabbath.' " (Emphasis added.)

[ ] Now Present? [ ] Now Absent?

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Possible Movie Motif #5 --

455           **PILATE, THE MORALIST, EXPOSES THE WICKED CAIAPHAS AS BLOODTHIRSTY (note how Pilate occupies the higher moral level)**

Compare Emmerich, ibid. -- [Caiaphas to Pilate:] " '[Jesus] says that no person can attain eternal life unless they eat [Jesus'] flesh and drink his blood.' Pilate with scorn exclaimed, '**YOU [YOURSELF] MUST WISH TO FOLLOW HIS DOCTRINES AND TO ATTAIN ETERNAL LIFE, FOR YOU ARE THIRSTING FOR BOTH HIS BODY AND BLOOD.**' " "

[ ] Now Present? [ ] Now Absent?

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Possible Movie Motif #6 --

465           **A BLINDFOLDED JESUS IS DRAGGED DOWN CONCRETE STAIRS, CRACKING HIS HEAD**

Compare Emmerich Ch. XX -- "Having procured a large sack they tossed it over the head of Jesus, then dragged him causing his sacred head to strike against columns and sides of the wall."

[ ] Now Present? [ ] Now Absent?

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Possible Movie Motif #7 --

475           **TEARING OFF LARGE CHUNKS OF JESUS' FLESH**

Compare Emmerich Ch. XXII -- "The two [Roman] ruffians continued to strike our Lord with unremitting violence. His body was covered with black, blue, and

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red marks; the blood trickling down on the ground, and yet the furious cries which issued from among the assembled JEWS showed that their cruelty was far from being satiated. The blows tore his flesh to pieces, penetrated to the bone, tore off large pieces of flesh at every blow. The body of our Lord was torn to shreds." (Emphasis added)

Now Present?  Now Absent?

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**Possible Movie Motif #8 -- BLOOD CURSE now RESTORED?**

*It's unfortunately conceivable that Gibson will restore the blood curse (Mt. 27:25; this after he had said months ago he'd take it out [because otherwise the Jews would come to kill him]). If so, then the following excerpt suddenly reemerges as a problem:*

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**Emmerich XXVIII:** "Whenever I imagine that frightful cry of the Jews, 'His blood be upon us, and upon our children,' this curse penetrate[s] even the very marrow of their bones -- even to the unborn infants."

Now Present?  Now Absent?

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Those wishing to check out the uncondensed quotations, please go to:  
<http://www.emmerich1.com/dolorouspassionofourlordjesuschrist.htm>

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## The CROSS

*The following motifs are significant because many express antisemitism to one degree or another, and also lack Gospel rootage, or expose the falsity of Gibson's claim to be producing a work that is absolutely historically accurate. Continuing now with ##9-19.*

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*Are there any hints in the movie that JEWS HAVE ALREADY CONDEMNED JESUS EVEN BEFORE he is captured or tried -- and, moreover, that JEWS (rather than Rome) WERE PRACTITIONERS OF CRUCIFIXION IN THEIR OWN RIGHT? E.g.,*

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**Possible Movie Motif #9** -- Is there any hint that (Jewish) Temple guards, well before Jesus' arrest, were looking for -- and finding -- wood for his Cross (the implication being that the

Jewish officials had already choreographed Jesus' death sentence long before any trial commenced)?

515 [ ] Now Present? [ ] Now Absent?

Possible Movie Motif #10 -- Is a captured Jesus ever marched past JEWISH CARPENTERS BUSY FASHIONING THAT SAME WOOD into the vertical pole for the Cross (likewise suggesting that Jews were seeing to it that Jesus would never receive a fair trial)?

520 [ ] Now Present? [ ] Now Absent?

Possible Movie Motif #11 -- Failing discovery of either of the above, is there nonetheless any suggestion in the film that JEWS, rather than Rome, were those who constructed the Cross?

525 [ ] Now Present? [ ] Now Absent?

Possible Movie Motif #12 -- Is there any suggestion that such construction was accomplished WITHIN THE ACTUAL CONFINES OF THE TEMPLE COURT ITSELF?

530 [ ] Now Present? [ ] Now Absent?

Possible Movie Motif #13 -- Is the distance between the pre-drilled holes on the crossbeam wider than the spread of Jesus' outstretched arms -- such that one arm (his right one?) has to be PARTIALLY YANKED OUT OF ITS SOCKET to make Jesus "fit" the prearranged holes?

535 [ ] Now Present? [ ] Now Absent?

Possible Movie Motif #14 -- Is the Cross, with Jesus ALREADY AFFIXED, ever allowed to plunge to the ground WITH JESUS FACE-FIRST plummeting into the mud?

540 [ ] Now Present? [ ] Now Absent?

Possible Movie Motif #15 -- If this does occur, WHY? Is it, e.g., to make it easier for the executioners to hammer and bend the exiting nails into right angles (so Jesus won't deliberately or inadvertently be able to pull himself loose from the Cross)?

545 [ ] Now Present? [ ] Now Absent?

Possible Movie Motif #16 -- Does Jesus' Cross appear to be normal size (about 6' tall) or is it more along the lines of 15' x 8'?

[ ] Now Present? [ ] Now Absent?

**Possible Movie Motif #17** -- If there are any other crosses in the film, are they the SAME SIZE as that of Jesus, or much smaller?

550  **Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

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**Possible Movie Motif #18 (my curiosity only)** -- In terms of the positioning of the "thieves" flanking Jesus on the Cross, does the non-penitent thief appear on JESUS' LEFT (not OUR left), and does the non-penitent thief face AWAY from Jesus (rather than TOWARD him)?

555  **Now Present?**  **Now Absent?** {appearing on Jesus' left}  
 **Now Present?**  **Now Absent?** {facing away from Jesus}

*EXPLANATION: These are conventions of traditional Catholic art.*

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**Possible Movie Motif #19** -- Does a black raven ever appear around the head of the non-penitent thief (symbolizing the evil of those who do not recognize Jesus' innocence)?

560  **Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

## The JEWISH RABBLE

565 It would be virtually a declaration of war by Gibson against Vatican II if some of the items listed below (especially ## 25 & 26) are indeed in the film, and a huge setback to Catholic-Jewish relations if the US Conference of Catholic Bishops fails to assert itself in response. Moreover, the legacy of Pope John Paul II would be adversely affected.

570 -----  
Are the Jewish Rabble portrayed as

**Possible Movie Motif #20** -- BLOODTHIRSTY?

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

575 -----  
**Possible Movie Motif #21** -- VENGEFUL?

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

-----  
MONEY-LOVING?

580 **Possible Movie Motif #22** -- Does a (Jewish) Temple soldier ever knock on the door and give someone inside a bag or a handful of coins with which to BRIBE other Jews to show up and condemn Jesus (suggesting that Jews were "lovers of money," and dishonest)?

Now Present?  Now Absent?

585

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**Possible Movie Motif #23** -- Does a Jewish woman ever answer a door and talk to a Jewish Temple soldier, with her husband then spotting and grabbing bribery money from the visitor's hand (suggesting, again, that Jews were "lovers of money," and dishonest)?

Now Present?  Now Absent?

590

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**Possible Movie Motif #24** -- Is BARABBAS still portrayed as so ugly or animalistically grotesque as to make the Jewish mob appear unimaginably villainous -- for opting to free HIM instead of mild-mannered Jesus?

Now Present?  Now Absent?

595

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**Possible Movie Motif #25** -- Has Gibson restored the infamous passage from John 19:11 (wherein Jesus says to Pilate: "therefore he [the high priest, CAIAPHAS] who has delivered me to you has the greater sin")?

Now Present?  Now Absent?

600

*EXPLANATION: This statement, if restored, could be construed as tantamount [1] to Jesus' directly blaming his own death on the Jewish leader rather than on the Roman ruler; and [2] in context, demonstrating that, even while it is true that it is God Who controls evil, Caiaphas (the leader of the JEWS) would continue to bear personal responsibility. This is a statement with wide ramifications concerning what human responsibility exists for Jesus' death (here it is vested specifically in the JEWISH leader), irrespective of God's overarching plan.*

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**Possible Movie Motif #26** -- Has Gibson restored the Jewish mob's shrieking Matthew 27:25 ("his blood be on us and on our children")?

Now Present?  Now Absent?

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*EXPLANATION: Please note how this would constitute a direct **contradiction of Vatican II's sentiment** that "the death of Jesus should no longer be blamed upon all Jews then living nor upon Jews of today" -- and, if the Catholic Bishops refused to condemn the movie (with THAT passage now again included in the script), we would be faced with a sorry state of affairs, with far-ranging ramifications.*

615

**Possible Movie Motif #27** -- Does the Jewish mob shout insults or spit or otherwise abuse Jesus' mother, Mary (N.B.: do not confuse Mary with Veronica and her face cloth that captures Jesus' image) -- as, e.g., when Mary rushes up to Jesus as he's on his way to die?

620

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

**Possible Movie Motif #28** -- Even while it is the Roman soldiers who are torturing Jesus, is the Jewish mob in the background still egging the Romans on -- fueled by cruelty and mouthwatering anticipation of Jesus' imminent torment and death?

625

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

**Possible Movie Motif #29** -- Are Jewish men distinguished from Romans by being scruffy, while Romans (even soldiers) are clean-shaven?

630

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

**Possible Movie Motif #30** -- Is it fair to say that the film is so violent in expressing Jesus' torture that the THEATER audience will be likely to feel outrage at those who perpetrated such a horrendous crime?

635

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

**Possible Movie Motif #31** -- Is it fair to say that, even though the main torturers of Jesus have now been made the Romans (rather than the Jews), the THEATER audience will yet hold the Jews accountable (e.g., because THE JEWS could have freed, and spared, Jesus rather than Barabbas; or because the Jewish crowd continued unrelievedly to urge the Roman torturers to get on with it)?

640

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

## CAIAPHAS

In Motifs ## 32-44, the Jewish High Priest CAIAPHAS often serves as a symbol of the Jews, or at least of Jewish officialdom. (In addition, he has already figured in some earlier motifs.)

645

*The key concern here is SYMBOLISM, also historical accuracy (since, as the Jewish historian Josephus well attests, the High Priest [in this case, Caiaphas] served only at the behest of the Roman Governor [in this case, Pilate], and could be readily dismissed from his position at Pilate's whim). Does Gibson, who boasts of historical accuracy,*

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*SYMBOLICALLY and falsely REVERSE the genuine power arrangement between the two figures?*

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**Possible Movie Motif #32** -- Is Caiaphas always dressed sumptuously, ornately, with emphasis on the RICHNESS of his clothing throughout?

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

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**Possible Movie Motif #33** -- Do the Jewish priests exchange bemused, conspiratorial looks with each other, suggesting not only that they are in cahoots but also out to get Jesus by PREARRANGED plan?

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

665

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**Possible Movie Motif #34** -- Does Mary Magdalene, upon seeing Jesus arrested, question how Caiaphas (in JUDEA) could legally arrest Jesus (a GALILEAN), and then receive an answer such as: "Caiaphas can have anyone he wants arrested"?

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

670

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**Possible Movie Motif #35** -- Does Caiaphas often seem portrayed as filled with secret pleasure (upon seeing what is befalling Jesus)?

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

675

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**Possible Movie Motif #36** -- As Jesus is being scourged by Roman flagellants, are Caiaphas' EYES (what we might term) breathlessly excited?

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

680

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**Possible Movie Motif #37** -- When Caiaphas threatens Pontius Pilate that, if the latter releases Jesus, he is "no friend of Caesar," does Pilate look seriously intimidated (fearing, e.g., that if Pilate doesn't do what Caiaphas wants [namely, have Jesus crucified], Caiaphas might provoke a revolt)?

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

685

*EXPLANATION: For Caiaphas to provoke a revolt would be suicidal. Rome would remove him from his fabulous post. Look what happened when the priesthood could not PREVENT the Jewish Revolt of 66-70? That failure effectively ended their power, which Rome now*

*passed on, instead, to the Pharisees / Rabbis. For Caiaphas himself to PROVOKE (forget about "prevent") a revolt would have brought swift retaliation against him by Rome.*

690

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**Possible Movie Motif #38** -- When Pilate signals Caiaphas to get the crowds quiet, does Caiaphas simply ignore him (showing Pilate how powerless Pilate is compared to Caiaphas)?

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

695

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**Possible Movie Motif #39** -- In turn, does Caiaphas' effectiveness in instantaneously quieting the crowd (but, this time, on HIS own schedule) have the effect of publicly HUMILIATING Pilate?

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

700

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**Possible Movie Motif #40** -- Do the Jewish priests actually show up, triumphantly, at the Crucifixion scene, dressed ornately (of course)?

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

705

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**Possible Movie Motif #41** -- When the chief priests and members of the Sanhedrin show up at the Crucifixion, would it be fair to say that they triumphantly stare (as with glee) at what they see transpiring?

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

710

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**Possible Movie Motif #42** -- Does Caiaphas himself approach the Cross and, with arrogance, HIMSELF (rather than "passersby") reproach Jesus: "If you are the Christ, save yourself"?

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

715

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**Possible Movie Motif #43** -- Does Caiaphas actually SPIT at the penitent thief flanking Jesus (probably on JESUS' right) for having just pronounced Jesus innocent?

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

720

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**Possible Movie Motif #44** -- If, upon Jesus' expiration, the Temple itself (not simply its curtain) cracks in two (whether by lightning, or an earthquake), are Caiaphas' opulent robes now shown as torn and filthy (with the theological message of this not lost on the audience)?

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

# SATAN

**Possible Movie Motif #45** -- Does SATAN or LUCIFER appear anywhere in the film?

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

725

*EXPLANATION: In European Passion Plays, Jesus originally had two sets of enemies on stage: Satan and his demons, and the Jews. Eventually, these two were coalesced into one: Jewish officials wearing horned hats (the horns signifying their being in league with the Devil).*

730

**Possible Movie Motif #46** -- Before Jesus' arrest, is Jesus shown crushing a snake's head with his sandal (= trampling upon Satan)?

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

735

*EXPLANATION: If Satan wants Jesus to be crucified, and the Jews are those who make that happen, then once again the Jews and Satan are coalesced -- but both will be "crushed" (= trampled upon their head).*

740

**Possible Movie Motif #47** -- Do any Satanic AGENTS -- e.g., mysterious flying barely-visible spirits -- appear during scenes where Jesus is being tortured by ROMANS?

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

745

**Possible Movie Motif #48** -- Is there any suggestion that such devils are NEEDED to motivate those who are ROMAN to continue their torture of Jesus whereas NONE is needed to motivate the Jewish torturers or screaming mob? If so, then Jews would come across as entirely self-motivated and without Satanic help because, indeed, they are Satanic themselves and need no encouragement!

**Now Present?**  **Now Absent?**

750

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