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After being hopelessly suppressed and faced ultimate certain death on the chicken farm where they are held, Rocky the rooster and Ginger the chicken decide to rebel against evil Mr. and Ms. Tweedy, the farm's owners. Rocky and Ginger lead their fellow chickens in a great escape from the murderous farmers and their farm of doom. If you like and use our caps, please consider making a comment below – we'd like to see what you made with them! :) Download Gallery As Zip File Page: 22 of 53 « Previous 1... 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 ... 53 Next » Page: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 * All reviews contain spoilers * Disclaimers * Disclaimer: This blog is purely recreational and not for profit. Any material, including images and/or video footage, is property of their respective companies unless stated otherwise. The author claims no ownership of this material. The opinions expressed therein reflect those of the author and should not be considered factual documentation. All screenshots are from Animationscreencaps.com. Cast – Armand Assante – Tzekel-Kan Tobin Bell – Zaragoza (Sailor Who Owns the Card) Kenneth Branagh – Miguel Elijah Chang – Kid #1 Jim Cummings – Hernán Cortés Elton John – A Actor Kevin Kline – Tulo Duncan Majoribanks – Acolyte Edward James Olmos – Chief Tannabok Rosie Perez – Chel (The Only Woman in the Cast) Cyrus Shaki-Khan – Kid #2 (What a Wonderful Name Does This Man Have!) Frank Walker – Altivo Sources of Inspiration – Conquest: Montezuma, Cortés, and the Fall of Old Mexico, a nonfiction book by Hugh Thomas, 1993, Road to... , a series of seven American films branching out Bing Crosby and Bob Hope, 1940-1962, and Hernán Cortés' conquest of Mexico, 1519-1521 Release Dates – March 31st, 2000 in the U.S. (premiere and general release) Run-time - 89 minute Directors - Eric Bibb Bergeron and Don Paul (Will Finn and David Silverman were originally directors before leaving the project, and Jeffrey Katzenberg had an uncredited board role) Composers – Elton John, John Powell and Hans Zimmer Worldwide Gross – \$76 million Accolades – 1 victory and 12 nominations 2000 in History This was the final year of the twenty , despite the popular misconception that it ended with 1999 a Class computer eras associated with formatting and storing calendar data arises , collectively known as the Year 2000 Problem or the Y2K fault The Millennium Dome opens in London (now the O2 Arena); in November, criminals try to diamond the explosive Millennium Star but is foiled by police The last of this course Pyrenean Ibex has been found dead, having apparently been killed by a falling tree (the species is very much cloned back to life in 2003, but the clone dies after just a few minutes) America Online purchases Time Warner in the largest ever corporate merger British serial killer Harold Shipman was sentenced to life imprisonment and dies four years later Mzambique suffers from torrential flooding, the worst in fifty years (some people still alive in recovery shelters today) a Rare , the first since 1600 and the last to 2400 The PlayStation 2 is released in Japan, North America, Europe and Australia - it remains the best-selling gaming console to this day After a financial crisis, Ecuador takes on the US Dollar as its new currency A new class of composite materials is manufactured, which has been a combination of physical characteristics never before seen in a natural or man-made material The Filipino ILOVEYOU virus quickly spreads to tens of millions of Windows machines across World On July 14th, a powerful sunflower triggered a geomagnetic storm known in France as the Bastille Day event Popular website DeviantART was launched a Russian submarine, the Kursk, basins in the Barents Sea, the death of all 113 aboard Tsar Nicholas II and his family have been canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church The long-term children's program Dora the Explorer debuts on Nickelodeon The last Olympics of the twentieth century are held in Sydney , Australia October 30th becomes the last day there is no human presence in space; the International Space Station has been constantly staffed since Disney's Paradise Pier Hotel opens at the Disneyland Resort in California Fourteen years after the disaster, Chernobyl's third and final reactor is closed Births of Noah Cyrus, Tucker Albrizzi, Frankie Jonas, David Rawle, Willow Smith, Connie Talbot and Aul'ri Cravalho Hello all, and welcome to another It's been a few months since we explored DreamWorks' juicy hand-drawn offering from 1998, The Prince of Egypt, but now we're returning to the studio to take a look at his other two hand-drawn films, released before the big studios decided to drop the art form altogether. The first of these is El Dorado, which can trace its origins right back to the dawn of DreamWorks in 1994. (Be warned – there's going to be a lot of dear old Jeffrey Katzenberg in this one.) Just as DreamWorks SKG was founded in the fall of 1994, Jeffrey Katzenberg had a meeting with screenwriters Ted Elliott and Terry Rossio to discuss an idea he had for a new film. He presented them with a copy of the book Conquest: Montezuma, Cortes and the Fall of Old Mexico by Hugh Thomas, explaining that he wanted to create a story set during the Age of Discovery, so the two of them got jobs and presented Katzenberg with an early story treatment by the spring of the following year. Elliott and Rossio have been on the classic Path to... film series starting Bob Hope and Bing Crosby, creating some comedic antiheroes whose journey they would take the jungles of Central America, in search of a fabled lost city of gold. All very promising, but much like another, similarly animated film being made over at Disney around the same time, this one would endure a notoriously rocky production. The original directors of the project were animators Will Finn and David Silverman, who aimed for a tentative release date in late 1999. The story Elliott and Rossio gave them had Miguel as a more Sancho Panza-style character, with an ending in which the two heroes would save the Mayans from Cortés, but things quickly went to pot as the film's lighthearted tone began to collide with Katzenberg's award-hungry for big, dramatic musical extravaganzas. Will Finn (who apparently directed the bulk of the film) went on record explaining how much he hated working on this film, which is a real shame to hear. He deemed the script and desperately tried to fix it and take it to writer David Swift in hopes of punching it up – Swift told him, "You're never going to make a good movie with s**t like that for writing!". Finn also fought to keep certain sequels, like the ballgame, in the film, because they were one of the few references to real-Mesoamerican culture; the drivers couldn't give any good reasons for dropping that particular scene, so it remained in place. By 1998, Finn had enough, leaving with David Silverman, leaving the struggling film in the hands of new directing team Eric Bibb Bergeron and Don Paul. All these changes and delays led the film to become the sarcastic nickname, El Dorado: The Lost City on Hold – as the months to years stretched, the film officially fell into development hell. As it turned out, Katzenberg backed out as The Prince of Egypt neared completion (the two films were in production alongside each other), deciding that since that film was so serious, this new one should be lighter and more comical (which exactly the tone the writers became more comical). Miguel and Tulo were turned into small scams and the environment was made more idyllic and exaggerated; the romance was also apparently toned down and Chel's clothes were made less scandalous (makes you wonder how she was dressed before, isn't it?). Much of the conflict during production was attributed to an uncertainty about who the target demographic was for the film, something many critics remarked on its eventual release. Producer Bonne Radford explained that we originally thought it would be rated PG-13 and so we made it skewed towards that group... But then we thought we couldn't exclude the younger kids, so we had to show the romance. Again, this is the same problem of a team straining to tell a more mature story in animation, but then chicken out at the last minute, unable to get out from the straitjacket of expectations that all animation should be suitable for small children. It's such a burden and it's so many potentially hampered hampered films, this one included. In early 2000, the film finally smothered across the finish line after going through five different directors (including Katzenberg) and a production spanning more than five years. The experience left a bitter taste in the mouths of many of those involved, and unfortunately the film didn't fare too well at the box office, becoming DreamWorks' first flop and the first fail in the coffin for their hand-designed features. Critics weren't kind to it at the time, but like many other early-2000s animated films, this one has since built up a huge cult fan base it appreciates for its comedy, its lush animation and its charismatic cuts. I can't help but be surprised by the uncanny resemblance it all has to the production of The Emperor's New Groove, which is also in a pre-Columbian civilization. I know Katz has become known for ripping off Disney/Pixar stories, but did he really need to rip off the tortured production schedule this time, too? Either way, the Disney film still managed to find an audience despite all its problems, so let's take a look at El Dorado and see how it compares. Characters and Vocal Performances The film's leaders, Kevin Kline, Kenneth Branagh and Rosie Perez, signed on the film in the summer of 1998. Unusually, Branagh and Kline were able to record their lines together and create the kind of plausible chemistry needed for such an enthralling few artists; a good deal of their dialogue from the final film was improvised and the two actors clearly had a lot of fun with their parts. Katzenberg has always felt like the comic sidekick characters in animation prone to stealing the spotlight from the blandier, eachman leads they appear together, so this film's intention was to give those very characters a chance in the spotlight. Whatever problems it may have, one thing most people agree on is that Miguel and Tulo are among the film's best aspects; Bonne Radford said their buddy relationship is at the heart of the story. They need each other because they're both pretty relentless. They are opposites - Tulo is the scheme and Miguel is the dreamer. Their camaraderie contributes to the adventure; you almost don't need to know where they're going or what they're looking for because the fun is in the journey, in the role of Tulo, the producers were originally angling for Antonio Banderas, but he apparently refused for unknown reasons. Adam Sandler was also considered, but fortunately they settled on Kevin Kline, who brought just the right kind of restrained charm to the character. As one half of our dynamic duo, Tulo generally takes the lead in most situations and appears to be the more dominant of the two. He and Miguel are thought to have been friends for many years, and their friendship feels so natural because each has a personality that is that of the Balance. Tulo is drier and more cynical than Miguel, holding a more pessimistic attitude and tending to overthink things until he has a nervous nervous. However, he is also the more logical of the two and will consider the consequences (and dangers) of his actions before bearing them out, while Miguel is happy to only blindly rush into things. Both of them are natural artists, although I think it's Tulo who is the brains of the operation; he thinks on his feet and can enthrall his way out of anything, but the New World adventure is the bravest sure they've ever concocted and challenge their friendship like nothing before. Many Disney fans noted Tulo's similar to Flynn Rider, that other dazzling swashbuckler from Tangled (some even like to theorize that Flynn is a descendant of Tulo's), and it's not hard to see why. They share very similar story arcs, with both characters beginning as poor doves obsessed with finding material wealth that later learn that there is much more to life than money, thanks to their relationships with women. In this case, that relationship has a very different dynamic than Flynn's did, because Tulo found himself falling for the equally streetwise and cuddled Chel, a local from El Dorado. Both men start with sleazy, objective attitudes towards women in general (and Tulo has a particularly protective way with Chel that I really don't like), but the ladies each have different ways of dealing with it. Rapunzel could bear down Flynn's cynicism with her natural innocence and seriousness, but Chel instead frustrated Tulo's respect by proving herself more than a match for his wit. There's also some burning hot sexual chemistry between them, making them a surprisingly mature couple for animation if they can barely keep their hands off each other... Of course, the main relationship Tulo has is with his partner, Miguel. The two of them always have each other's backs, even though Tulo often finds himself deservingly frustrated by Miguel's recklessness. He spends much of the film simply trying to keep his wide-eyed pal's wander in check while also trying to get out of the whole mess with as much shooot as possible, but ultimately, he's more likely to give up than Miguel is. His growth is largely courtesy of Tzekel-Kan, whose notable disregard for the citizens' well-being begins to make Tulo uncomfortable; it's possible he comes to realize how similar his own attitude is, as he's originally out to exploit these people, even after they treat him with such hospitality. The joint influence of Chel, Miguel and Chief Tannabok softens Tulo's hardy exterior and he eventually gets to a point where he can put the safety of the people before his own materialism (though not without substantial internal conflict). Together, he and Miguel disposed of the city of Tzekel-Kan and its sadism and did something to help other people instead of themselves for perhaps the first time in their lives. Towards the end of the film, Tulo realized his values and realized what's truly important in his life. While his desire for gold does not able to put that aside when it's really important. Unfortunately, while he's nice, the fact that he's essentially an elevated side character means he's not going on any significant personal journey, one problem many critics felt the film had was that its central characters didn't really change or develop. This is usually the longest portion of my reviews, but I have to be honest: I really struggle to say a lot this time around. I love these characters, but it's more for their comedy than for their complexity. Denis Leary and Jim Carrey were both considered for the role of Miguel before Kenneth Branagh was selected, but as with Kline I'm very glad they chose him in the end because I can't imagine this character with any other voice right now. Branagh loads Miguel with personality and makes him very likeable, so much so that it's easy to forget he's a little criminal like Tulo. As you can see in the image above, Miguel is the excited one of the pair, boyish and manic - a keef if you like (watch TV Tropes for that one). While it's Tulo accomplishing the plots, they couldn't be executed without Miguel's natural exuberance; he's perfectly in sync with Tulo (most of the time, anyway) and can quickly join in on any act or scam his quick-thinking friend cooks. He's also more of a risk-taker, which is what gets them to El Dorado in the first place – it's Miguel who is betting on the card in the craps game, Miguel who gets Tulo to jump into the barrels that are loaded onto the ship, and Miguel who busts them out of the hold by enlisting the help of Altivo. Miguel is also the one who chooses to push forward in the jungle once they coast into the New World, using the map they won to find their way eventually to the mysterious city. Curiously and optimistically, Miguel is mesmerized by the city of El Dorado; it's just the kind of adventure he always dreamed of have and for a while nothing can stop him from fully enjoying it. However, he is far less cautious than Tulo, whose practicality is needed to maintain such a massive scam, so it's not long before Tulo's recklessness and the suspicious of Tzekel-Kan and puts the whole thing at risk. Yet his sunny outlook and friendly attitude quickly wins over the Chief and people, taking Miguel's hands on approval to a god and welcoming him with open arms. It's the perfect counterbalance to Tulo's more worthy take on the role, ensuring they get the people on their side - both guys have charm but of different kinds. By now Chief Tannabok had figured out the rust and knows well that foreigners are not gods at all, but he likes Miguel enough to invite him to stay anyway, knowing his influence is better for the people than Tzekel-Kan. Miguel really takes care of the people and repeatedly up to them, prevent Tzekel-Kan from murdering individuals on a whimsy and earning the Chief's respect (even while he was the High Priest's As I said with Tulo, there's not a whole lot to explore in terms of Miguel's character development because none of them really change, but a little drama gets raised once Tulo hits it with Chel. It's then that we see that Miguel is far more sensitive than Tulo, and after overheating his lovestruck buddy makes an awkward comment while in the arms of his new girlfriend, Miguel angrily decides to resolve their partnership and stay in El Dorado for good. (Could he possibly be jealous?) It's a strong moment, but because the film is so short, we soon rush to the next plot point and the drama of this conflict isn't allowed to simmer long. Miguel and Tulo are forced to delay their little fix for a while to take down Tzekel-Kan once and for all, but after that, the film lingers for a moment about the possibility of their separation. It's a testament to the level of chemistry the actors and writers have conjured up between these two that we can see how inconsistent they are about their divisions, even without words. Neither man is truly comfortable with erging the others behind, but they're both too stubborn to admit it. If they had just been given a little more development, this pair could have been one of the most sensational in animation - the groundswell was there, but they simply didn't have time and neither Miguel nor Tulo is ever given enough to do. Then, just as they are on the cusp of no return, word reaches the city approaching Cortés, led by a surviving Tzekel-Kan. There's a last-minute scramble to protect the city from the European conquistadors, with Tulo using his wits and Miguel using his connection to the Chief to disengage the hidden entrance to the city before it's too late. During all this, Miguel rejected his dream of staying behind, at Tulo and Chel on the boat as it forever swept out of the city - friends to the end, after all. Although there may not be much to discuss of development, I enjoy Branagh's performance as Miguel a lot. For once, I see Katzenberg's point, the comic side characters steal the show and it was about time they were given the spotlight. Miguel and Tulo never really needed to be there because that wasn't the point of them – they're simply here to engage in a wacky skit around the New World, exchanging one-liners and charming the pants of the audience, and they achieve it beautifully. The end of the film is very noticeably set up for a sequel, as the trio ride off into the sunset after numerous further adventures, but unfortunately the film's underperformance puts an end to such ideas (and you know I'm not normally one to trespass a lack of sequels). This open-endedness may explain the lack of depth in this first film, as the team was perhaps planning to play these characters in later expand – but it's just a theory. More likely is that the endless writing problems have left the team with little idea of where to take the characters, take, their colorful but insubstantial; the side characters may have taken the helm in this film, but they remain essentially side characters. For the lone female role in the film, Jasmine Guy and Téa Leoni were considered (Téa Leoni, really?), but the filmmakers eventually chose Rosie Perez, a smarter choice considering it made her one of the only two cast members to have real Mesoamerican roots (she's from Puerto Rican heritage, while Edward James Olmos has Mexican heritage Hmmm... I can't quite decide how I feel about Chel. On the one hand, she's another knockout character, full of personality and easily holds her own in this sausage festival, but on the other hand she's undeniably objectified, exotic and protected by both Tulo and the writers. Chel is introduced early as the first residents of El Dorado to meet the boys upon their arrival; Like them, she is shown a daring diet of dreams of an escape from humble position life has put her in, willing to do whatever it takes to achieve it. This shared motivation quickly ties the three of them together and Chel (who is the first to indeed indemnify the gods' rust) becomes Miguel and Tulo's chief adviser on everything El Dorado. It is made clear that the boys need Chel's help in surviving in this sacrifice-heavy culture; without her direction, they risk certain destruction at the hands of the nefarious Tzekel-Kan. As indispensable as she is, however, she can't help but be gether exploration of her character as Miguel and Tulo's candidates for Most Comely Protagonist, but Chel's background is Miguel's vague line: "You gave me the season, and I have the horse." Chel's dream of escaping from the seemingly luxurious life she's in is also a mystery: "Where is her family? Is she in trouble with the law? The Chief doesn't seem to have any problem with her, and Tzekel-Kan appears to be no more eager to sacrifice her than any other resident of the city. She's mysterious and alluring, yes, but she also feels endorsed. Still, she plays her role in the scam just as well as Miguel and Tulo do, becoming a fixture on their sides in every major event they attend. She appropriately dresses them to greet the public, helps them save the life of one of Tzekel-Kan's intended victims at the dawn sacrifice, prevents all their gold from being bruised in a whirlpool by having a quiet word with the chief and even helping the boys win the provocative ballgame by coming up with the armadillo plot. The price of her help is that Miguel and Tulo should agree to take her with them when they finally leave El Dorado, something Tulo is initially hesitant about... for some reason. However, as much as Tulo tries to resist Chel's charm, he soon finds himself irresistible after her and the two begin a covert alliance. Despite all his careful planning, Tulo's romantic entanglement with Chel risks do the whole charade in the same way that Miguel's frolicking with the people; Women, it seems, are Tulo's weak spot. I have to say, I find the inclusion of the standard love story in this film a little frustrating as it feels unnecessary to the plot, although to Chel's credit, it's she who initiates the relationship and she remains in charge throughout. She owns her sexuality and uses it to manipulate the men to do what she wants; it's definitely not new, but it's an unusual move for an animated film (can you imagine a Disney princess acting like that?). Like Chel if I'm honest before her personality is quite fascinating and she's a lot of fun. She's devilish, mischievous and integral to the plot, but that doesn't mean I don't still have problems with the way she's portrayed. It comes down to three issues: One, Chel is overcast, with several shots even blatantly framing her alongside the gold to make her look like part of Tulo's prize at the end of the film. Two, just a very sexualized, which wouldn't be a problem herself if it weren't for the fact that the plot presents her wicked will as an obstacle that almost destroys the friendship of our heroes. (Also, why should non-white women always be presented as ruble savages like this?) And three, she has no real agency; her one goal is quickly tied into that of the leading man and the two soon become inseparable... even indistinguishable. Towards the end of the film, Chel and Tulo are essentially the same character, with her just supporting him – why should the leading lady always have a love interest? Actually, I couldn't help wondering why Chel didn't fall for Miguel, if she had to fall for one of them. She and Tulo are too similar and I can see they bring out the worst in each other, maybe biced and split a lot down the line. Miguel, on the other hand, shares her wanderlust and taste for adventure while also has the perfect jerk attitude to counter her more cynical one. For the same reasons Miguel Tulo compliments so well, I think he'd also make a much better partner for Chel (and given that line about that girl in Barcelona, who knows what life in store might have for the trio after the credit role...) The High Priest of El Dorado, Tzekel-Kan, was almost played by the likes of Kelsey Grammer or James Garner, before the role went to Armand Assante. Assante seems to be an ideal choice, as he makes Tzekel-Kan into a classic hammy while also keeping him appropriately threatening and turning the character into a sadistic zeal with a desire for strength and designs on cleansing the city of everyone he considers unworthy (rather like an Aztec Frollo). In keeping with the film's Disneyesque atmosphere, Tzekel-Kan is a truly terrific bad guy. From the moment he first appeared to handché a greeting to Miguel and Tulo until the moment he was dragged down by Cortés' men, changing the scenery in almost every scene he has makes an indelible impression one of the film's great highlights. When Miguel and Tulo first arrive in El Dorado, they seem to have stumbled in the midst of some sort of political standoff between the Chief and the High Priest. It's something that even the naive Miguel picks up quickly; Tzekel-Kan is clearly power-hungry and is thought to be to the Chief's position, with some supporters even going so far as to suggest that none of them ever truly believed the men were gods, instead simply going with it to use their influence over the people against each other. In his very first scene, Tzekel-Kan sneers to the Chief to step aside, the words loaded with an emphasis beyond the literal request; Chief Tannabok's wry look at his people after this speaks volumes about his fears of a coup. Throughout the film, Tzekel-Kan constantly tries to over-upt Tannabok at every opportunity and does his best to win the favor of the gods in the hope that he will be able to call off their divine wrath against the benevolent Chief. He's egotistical and slightly crazy, but what really makes him stick in your mind is his extremely sadistic love of sacrifice. While it is drawn from real Mesoamerican cultures of the time, Tzekel-Kan takes it to another level, repeatedly trying to sacrifice random people to satisfy the gods, never seeming to see Miguel and Tulo's obvious horror at this practice. It's another hint of the team's efforts to make the film more mature; even the nasty Disney is rarely so bloody. It's unnatural, to say the least. Of course, being the type of person he is, Tzekel-Kan take kindly to a fool of being made. While he is even submissive in the face of Miguel and Tulo's divinity, their continual undermining of him and their failure to comply with his prophecies soon awakes his impatience. His confusions about them are finally surplised after the ballgame, when he sees Miguel bleeding from a head wound and realizing that the new arrivals are mere fatalities after all. That's all the evidence he has to take matters into his own hands; using a kind of vague Mayan magic, he tries to crush the boys with a huge stone dragon - er, I mean jaguar - only to wind distracted by a semi-stage battle, falling victim to his own love of violence. He fights back to the last moment, but Miguel and Tulo are finally able to outsmart him and send him tumbling into the very whirlpool he's trying to beat a sacrifice in earlier. Yet even then, he's not quite dead and survives long enough to stage one final attack on El Dorado. After being washed by the currents in a pool a short distance from the city, he happens to run in Cortés and his army their approach. Somehow Tzekel-Kan falls twice for the same trick, and once again abuses the stranger for a prophesied duty and leads him gleefully to make El Dorado of his people too (maybe he's skilled enough to know about Where did you get it? ... Tiffany's dahlia. Fortunately, a scout advances the citizenry and they are able to create an overt blockade, prevent Tzekel-Kan from leading the army in the city and lead to his own imprisonment. I have to admit, as much fun as it is to hate on Tzekel-Kan, you feel kind of sorry for him at this point, given the historical context; it's deeply uncomfortable to see him dragged down by the Europeans, which makes the film's examination of the issue just a touch further; Tzekel-Kan's acolytes are a small character who supports him in his various manic schemes, albeit with some reluctance. He is suspiciously simple of Kronk, a kind of punching bear, who holds no real malice toward anyone but is too naive and easily led to be a master's bid. He's given some scenes that make it clear he's not as bad and man, as when talking to Miguel about the orders Tzekel-Kan issuing in the Spaniard's name – he does just as he's told and has no evil designs of his own. The acolytes also serve as a kind of chief of police or chief guard in the city, as he leads a group of warriors to Chel when she tries to escape and work to clear the streets of people following the order of the gods. It's easy to see why Tannabok wants his guy; you just wish he listen more to the Head and less to the High Priest. The acolyte is essentially another pawn caught up in the political battle between the two, but unfortunately he doesn't get the chance to himself as Tzekel-Kan actually finish him whenever he's gotten all he can get out of him! The death of this sweet, bubbly character outright feels like a jarring dark move for such a lighthearted film, but at least it's not graphic. We also have the armadillo, a curious little creature who joins Miguel, Tulo and Altivo on their way to El Dorado, apparently a taste for the group after they unintentionally rescued him from a snake. He's apparently named Bibo after the director, and from the moment he joins the band, he becomes the standard Disney-style animal sidekick, a cute little cry for the youngest kids in the audience to enjoy. Like most such characters, he plays almost no role in the actual story, but there's one exception. When Miguel ends up tulo trying into the Mesoamerican ballgame, it quickly becomes obvious they're going to lose without cheating. Chel comes with a strange but perfect solution; by replacing Bibo for the ball, they can use his sentence to control how many goals they get. Somehow it works and they quickly gain the upper hand, eventually winning the game and further cementing their status as divine beings in the eyes of the population. (Although how an armadillo is able to perform the many anti-gravity stunts this one pull is anyone's guess). Finally, we have Zaragoza, a sailor who serves as the principle opponent in Miguel and Tulo's craps game near the start of the film. He is perhaps the most striking because he was voiced by Tobin Bell (aka Jigsaw) and his pre-Saw days. The Spaniard is sharper than he looks and almost outwits the ladies when he insists on replacing Tulo's loaded dice for his own usual ones, but as to his dismay, they have genuine luck on their side and still roll the winning number. But when Tulo drops said loaded dice and uncovered their scam, it looked for a moment like

Chicken run 2000 animation screencaps

After being hopelessly suppressed and faced ultimate certain death on the chicken farm where they are held, Rocky the rooster and Ginger the chicken decide to rebel against evil Mr. and Ms. Tweedy, the farm's owners. Rocky and Ginger lead their fellow chickens in a great escape from the murderous farmers and their farm of doom. If you like and use our caps, please consider making a comment below – we'd like to see what you made with them! :) Download Gallery As Zip File Page: 22 of 53 « Previous 1... 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 ... 53 Next » Page: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 * All reviews contain spoilers * Disclaimers * Disclaimer: This blog is purely recreational and not for profit. Any material, including images and/or video footage, is property of their respective companies unless stated otherwise. The author claims no ownership of this material. The opinions expressed therein reflect those of the author and should not be considered factual documentation. All screenshots are from Animationscreencaps.com. Cast – Armand Assante – Tzekel-Kan Tobin Bell – Zaragoza (Sailor Who Owns the Card) Kenneth Branagh – Miguel Elijah Chang – Kid #1 Jim Cummings – Hernán Cortés Elton John – A Actor Kevin Kline – Tulo Duncan Majoribanks – Acolyte Edward James Olmos – Chief Tannabok Rosie Perez – Chel (The Only Woman in the Cast) Cyrus Shaki-Khan – Kid #2 (What a Wonderful Name Does This Man Have!) Frank Walker – Altivo Sources of Inspiration – Conquest: Montezuma, Cortés, and the Fall of Old Mexico, a nonfiction book by Hugh Thomas, 1993, Road to... , a series of seven American films branching out Bing Crosby and Bob Hope, 1940-1962, and Hernán Cortés' conquest of Mexico, 1519-1521 Release Dates – March 31st, 2000 in the U.S. (premiere and general release) Run-time - 89 minute Directors - Eric Bibb Bergeron and Don Paul (Will Finn and David Silverman were originally directors before leaving the project, and Jeffrey Katzenberg had an uncredited board role) Composers – Elton John, John Powell and Hans Zimmer Worldwide Gross – \$76 million Accolades – 1 victory and 12 nominations 2000 in History This was the final year of the twenty , despite the popular misconception that it ended with 1999 a Class computer eras associated with formatting and storing calendar data arises , collectively known as the Year 2000 Problem or the Y2K fault The Millennium Dome opens in London (now the O2 Arena); in November, criminals try to diamond the explosive Millennium Star but is foiled by police The last of this course Pyrenean Ibex has been found dead, having apparently been killed by a falling tree (the species is very much cloned back to life in 2003, but the clone dies after just a few minutes) America Online purchases Time Warner in the largest ever corporate merger British serial killer Harold Shipman was sentenced to life imprisonment and dies four years later Mzambique suffers from torrential flooding, the worst in fifty years (some people still alive in recovery shelters today) a Rare , the first since 1600 and the last to 2400 The PlayStation 2 is released in Japan, North America, Europe and Australia - it remains the best-selling gaming console to this day After a financial crisis, Ecuador takes on the US Dollar as its new currency A new class of composite materials is manufactured, which has been a combination of physical characteristics never before seen in a natural or man-made material The Filipino ILOVEYOU virus quickly spreads to tens of millions of Windows machines across World On July 14th, a powerful sunflower triggered a geomagnetic storm known in France as the Bastille Day event Popular website DeviantART was launched a Russian submarine, the Kursk, basins in the Barents Sea, the death of all 113 aboard Tsar Nicholas II and his family have been canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church The long-term children's program Dora the Explorer debuts on Nickelodeon The last Olympics of the twentieth century are held in Sydney , Australia October 30th becomes the last day there is no human presence in space; the International Space Station has been constantly staffed since Disney's Paradise Pier Hotel opens at the Disneyland Resort in California Fourteen years after the disaster, Chernobyl's third and final reactor is closed Births of Noah Cyrus, Tucker Albrizzi, Frankie Jonas, David Rawle, Willow Smith, Connie Talbot and Aul'ri Cravalho Hello all, and welcome to another It's been a few months since we explored DreamWorks' juicy hand-drawn offering from 1998, The Prince of Egypt, but now we're returning to the studio to take a look at his other two hand-drawn films, released before the big studios decided to drop the art form altogether. The first of these is El Dorado, which can trace its origins right back to the dawn of DreamWorks in 1994. (Be warned – there's going to be a lot of dear old Jeffrey Katzenberg in this one.) Just as DreamWorks SKG was founded in the fall of 1994, Jeffrey Katzenberg had a meeting with screenwriters Ted Elliott and Terry Rossio to discuss an idea he had for a new film. He presented them with a copy of the book Conquest: Montezuma, Cortes and the Fall of Old Mexico by Hugh Thomas, explaining that he wanted to create a story set during the Age of Discovery, so the two of them got jobs and presented Katzenberg with an early story treatment by the spring of the following year. Elliott and Rossio have been on the classic Path to... film series starting Bob Hope and Bing Crosby, creating some comedic antiheroes whose journey they would take the jungles of Central America, in search of a fabled lost city of gold. All very promising, but much like another, similarly animated film being made over at Disney around the same time, this one would endure a notoriously rocky production. The original directors of the project were animators Will Finn and David Silverman, who aimed for a tentative release date in late 1999. The story Elliott and Rossio gave them had Miguel as a more Sancho Panza-style character, with an ending in which the two heroes would save the Mayans from Cortés, but things quickly went to pot as the film's lighthearted tone began to collide with Katzenberg's award-hungry for big, dramatic musical extravaganzas. Will Finn (who apparently directed the bulk of the film) went on record explaining how much he hated working on this film, which is a real shame to hear. He deemed the script and desperately tried to fix it and take it to writer David Swift in hopes of punching it up – Swift told him, "You're never going to make a good movie with s**t like that for writing!". Finn also fought to keep certain sequents, like the ballgame, in the film, because they were one of the few references to real-Mesoamerican culture; the drivers couldn't give any good reasons for dropping that particular scene, so it remained in place. By 1998, Finn had enough, leaving with David Silverman, leaving the struggling film in the hands of new directing team Eric Bibb Bergeron and Don Paul. All these changes and delays led the film to become the sarcastic nickname, El Dorado: The Lost City on Hold – as the months to years stretched, the film officially fell into development hell. As it turned out, Katzenberg backed out as The Prince of Egypt neared completion (the two films were in production alongside each other), deciding that since that film was so serious, this new one should be lighter and more comical (which exactly the tone the writers became more comical). Miguel and Tulo were turned into small scams and the environment was made more idyllic and exaggerated; the romance was also apparently toned down and Chel's clothes were made less scandalous (makes you wonder how she was dressed before, isn't it?). Much of the conflict during production was attributed to an uncertainty about who the target demographic was for the film, something many critics remarked on its eventual release. Producer Bonne Radford explained that we originally thought it would be rated PG-13 and so we made it skewed towards that group... But then we thought we couldn't exclude the younger kids, so we had to show the romance. Again, this is the same problem of a team straining to tell a more mature story in animation, but then chicken out at the last minute, unable to get out from the straitjacket of expectations that all animation should be suitable for small children. It's such a burden and it's so many potentially hampered hampered films, this one included. In early 2000, the film finally smothered across the finish line after going through five different directors (including Katzenberg) and a production spanning more than five years. The experience left a bitter taste in the mouths of many of those involved, and unfortunately the film didn't fare too well at the box office, becoming DreamWorks' first flop and the first fail in the coffin for their hand-designed features. Critics weren't kind to it at the time, but like many other early-2000s animated films, this one has since built up a huge cult fan base it appreciates for its comedy, its lush animation and its charismatic cuts. I can't help but be surprised by the uncanny resemblance it all has to the production of The Emperor's New Groove, which is also in a pre-Columbian civilization. I know Katz has become known for ripping off Disney/Pixar stories, but did he really need to rip off the tortured production schedule this time, too? Either way, the Disney film still managed to find an audience despite all its problems, so let's take a look at El Dorado and see how it compares. Characters and Vocal Performances The film's leaders, Kevin Kline, Kenneth Branagh and Rosie Perez, signed on the film in the summer of 1998. Unusually, Branagh and Kline were able to record their lines together and create the kind of plausible chemistry needed for such an enthralling few artists; a good deal of their dialogue from the final film was improvised and the two actors clearly had a lot of fun with their parts. Katzenberg has always felt like the comic sidekick characters in animation prone to stealing the spotlight from the blandier, eachman leads they appear together, so this film's intention was to give those very characters a chance in the spotlight. Whatever problems it may have, one thing most people agree on is that Miguel and Tulo are among the film's best aspects; Bonne Radford said their buddy relationship is at the heart of the story. They need each other because they're both pretty relentless. They are opposites - Tulo is the scheme and Miguel is the dreamer. Their camaraderie contributes to the adventure; you almost don't need to know where they're going or what they're looking for because the fun is in the journey, in the role of Tulo, the producers were originally angling for Antonio Banderas, but he apparently refused for unknown reasons. Adam Sandler was also considered, but fortunately they settled on Kevin Kline, who brought just the right kind of restrained charm to the character. As one half of our dynamic duo, Tulo generally takes the lead in most situations and appears to be the more dominant of the two. He and Miguel are thought to have been friends for many years, and their friendship feels so natural because each has a personality that is that of the Balance. Tulo is drier and more cynical than Miguel, holding a more pessimistic attitude and tending to overthink things until he has a nervous nervous. However, he is also the more logical of the two and will consider the consequences (and dangers) of his actions before bearing them out, while Miguel is happy to only blindly rush into things. Both of them are natural artists, although I think it's Tulo who is the brains of the operation; he thinks on his feet and can enthrall his way out of anything, but the New World adventure is the bravest sure they've ever concocted and challenge their friendship like nothing before. Many Disney fans noted Tulo's similar to Flynn Rider, that other dazzling swashbuckler from Tangled (some even like to theorize that Flynn is a descendant of Tulo's), and it's not hard to see why. They share very similar story arcs, with both characters beginning as poor doves obsessed with finding material wealth that later learn that there is much more to life than money, thanks to their relationships with women. In this case, that relationship has a very different dynamic than Flynn's did, because Tulo found himself falling for the equally streetwise and cuddled Chel, a local from El Dorado. Both men start with sleazy, objective attitudes towards women in general (and Tulo has a particularly protective way with Chel that I really don't like), but the ladies each have different ways of dealing with it. Rapunzel could bear down Flynn's cynicism with her natural innocence and seriousness, but Chel instead frustrated Tulo's respect by proving herself more than a match for his wit. There's also some burning hot sexual chemistry between them, making them a surprisingly mature couple for animation if they can barely keep their hands off each other... Of course, the main relationship Tulo has is with his partner, Miguel. The two of them always have each other's backs, even though Tulo often finds himself deservingly frustrated by Miguel's recklessness. He spends much of the film simply trying to keep his wide-eyed pal's wander in check while also trying to get out of the whole mess with as much shooot as possible, but ultimately, he's more likely to give up than Miguel is. His growth is largely courtesy of Tzekel-Kan, whose notable disregard for the citizens' well-being begins to make Tulo uncomfortable; it's possible he comes to realize how similar his own attitude is, as he's originally out to exploit these people, even after they treat him with such hospitality. The joint influence of Chel, Miguel and Chief Tannabok softens Tulo's hardy exterior and he eventually gets to a point where he can put the safety of the people before his own materialism (though not without substantial internal conflict). Together, he and Miguel disposed of the city of Tzekel-Kan and its sadism and did something to help other people instead of themselves for perhaps the first time in their lives. Towards the end of the film, Tulo realized his values and realized what's truly important in his life. While his desire for gold does not able to put that aside when it's really important. Unfortunately, while he's nice, the fact that he's essentially an elevated side character means he's not going on any significant personal journey, one problem many critics felt the film had was that its central characters didn't really change or develop. This is usually the longest portion of my reviews, but I have to be honest: I really struggle to say a lot this time around. I love these characters, but it's more for their comedy than for their complexity. Denis Leary and Jim Carrey were both considered for the role of Miguel before Kenneth Branagh was selected, but as with Kline I'm very glad they chose him in the end because I can't imagine this character with any other voice right now. Branagh loads Miguel with personality and makes him very likeable, so much so that it's easy to forget he's a little criminal like Tulo. As you can see in the image above, Miguel is the excited one of the pair, boyish and manic - a keef if you like (watch TV Tropes for that one). While it's Tulo accomplishing the plots, they couldn't be executed without Miguel's natural exuberance; he's perfectly in sync with Tulo (most of the time, anyway) and can quickly join in on any act or scam his quick-thinking friend cooks. He's also more of a risk-taker, which is what gets them to El Dorado in the first place – it's Miguel who is betting on the card in the craps game, Miguel who gets Tulo to jump into the barrels that are loaded onto the ship, and Miguel who busts them out of the hold by enlisting the help of Altivo. Miguel is also the one who chooses to push forward in the jungle once they coast into the New World, using the map they won to find their way eventually to the mysterious city. Curiously and optimistically, Miguel is mesmerized by the city of El Dorado; it's just the kind of adventure he always dreamed of have and for a while nothing can stop him from fully enjoying it. However, he is far less cautious than Tulo, whose practicality is needed to maintain such a massive scam, so it's not long before Tulo's recklessness and the suspicious of Tzekel-Kan and puts the whole thing at risk. Yet his sunny outlook and friendly attitude quickly wins over the Chief and people, taking Miguel's hands on approval to a god and welcoming him with open arms. It's the perfect counterbalance to Tulo's more worthy take on the role, ensuring they get the people on their side - both guys have charm but of different kinds. By now Chief Tannabok had figured out the rust and knows well that foreigners are not gods at all, but he likes Miguel enough to invite him to stay anyway, knowing his influence is better for the people than Tzekel-Kan. Miguel really takes care of the people and repeatedly up to them, prevent Tzekel-Kan from murdering individuals on a whimsy and earning the Chief's respect (even while he was the High Priest's As I said with Tulo, there's not a whole lot to explore in terms of Miguel's character development because none of them really change, but a little drama gets raised once Tulo hits it with Chel. It's then that we see that Miguel is far more sensitive than Tulo, and after overheating his lovestruck buddy makes an awkward comment while in the arms of his new girlfriend, Miguel angrily decides to resolve their partnership and stay in El Dorado for good. (Could he possibly be jealous?) It's a strong moment, but because the film is so short, we soon rush to the next plot point and the drama of this conflict isn't allowed to simmer long. Miguel and Tulo are forced to delay their little fix for a while to take down Tzekel-Kan once and for all, but after that, the film lingers for a moment about the possibility of their separation. It's a testament to the level of chemistry the actors and writers have conjured up between these two that we can see how inconsistent they are about their divisions, even without words. Neither man is truly comfortable with erging the others behind, but they're both too stubborn to admit it. If they had just been given a little more development, this pair could have been one of the most sensational in animation - the groundswell was there, but they simply didn't have time and neither Miguel nor Tulo is ever given enough to do. Then, just as they are on the cusp of no return, word reaches the city approaching Cortés, led by a surviving Tzekel-Kan. There's a last-minute scramble to protect the city from the European conquistadors, with Tulo using his wits and Miguel using his connection to the Chief to disengage the hidden entrance to the city before it's too late. During all this, Miguel rejected his dream of staying behind, at Tulo and Chel on the boat as it forever swept out of the city - friends to the end, after all. Although there may not be much to discuss of development, I enjoy Branagh's performance as Miguel a lot. For once, I see Katzenberg's point, the comic side characters steal the show and it was about time they were given the spotlight. Miguel and Tulo never really needed to be there because that wasn't the point of them – they're simply here to engage in a wacky skit around the New World, exchanging one-liners and charming the pants of the audience, and they achieve it beautifully. The end of the film is very noticeably set up for a sequel, as the trio ride off into the sunset after numerous further adventures, but unfortunately the film's underperformance puts an end to such ideas (and you know I'm not normally one to trespass a lack of sequels). This open-endedness may explain the lack of depth in this first film, as the team was perhaps planning to play these characters in later expand – but it's just a theory. More likely is that the endless writing problems have left the team with little idea of where to take the characters, take, their colorful but insubstantial; the side characters may have taken the helm in this film, but they remain essentially side characters. For the lone female role in the film, Jasmine Guy and Téa Leoni were considered (Téa Leoni, really?), but the filmmakers eventually chose Rosie Perez, a smarter choice considering it made her one of the only two cast members to have real Mesoamerican roots (she's from Puerto Rican heritage, while Edward James Olmos has Mexican heritage Hmmm... I can't quite decide how I feel about Chel. On the one hand, she's another knockout character, full of personality and easily holds her own in this sausage festival, but on the other hand she's undeniably objectified, exotic and protected by both Tulo and the writers. Chel is introduced early as the first residents of El Dorado to meet the boys upon their arrival; Like them, she is shown a daring diet of dreams of an escape from humble position life has put her in, willing to do whatever it takes to achieve it. This shared motivation quickly ties the three of them together and Chel (who is the first to indeed indemnify the gods' rust) becomes Miguel and Tulo's chief adviser on everything El Dorado. It is made clear that the boys need Chel's help in surviving in this sacrifice-heavy culture; without her direction, they risk certain destruction at the hands of the nefarious Tzekel-Kan. As indispensable as she is, however, she can't help but be gether exploration of her character as Miguel and Tulo's candidates for Most Comely Protagonist, but Chel's background is Miguel's vague line: "You gave me the season, and I have the horse." Chel's dream of escaping from the seemingly luxurious life she's in is also a mystery: "Where is her family? Is she in trouble with the law? The Chief doesn't seem to have any problem with her, and Tzekel-Kan appears to be no more eager to sacrifice her than any other resident of the city. She's mysterious and alluring, yes, but she also feels endorsed. Still, she plays her role in the scam just as well as Miguel and Tulo do, becoming a fixture on their sides in every major event they attend. She appropriately dresses them to greet the public, helps them save the life of one of Tzekel-K

Zaragoza was going to tar them - that's until they launch into their faux battle, which so captivates the crowd that they almost lose interest in pursuing them (almost). Animation We're back to delicious hand-signed animation with this film and watching it, I just wish DreamWorks hadn't left it once they did. The film was simultaneously in production alongside The Prince of Egypt, but El Dorado was the figurate reheaded stepchild of the two, much like The Lion King was to Pocahontas — far more resources and animators were devoted to Prince, although by January 1997 there were about a hundred animators assigned to El Dorado. The supervisors on this film included such talents as James Baxter and William Salazar for Tulio, David (now Darlie) Brewster, Bob Scott and Serguei Kouchnorov for Miguel, Kathy Zielinski for Tzekel-Kan, Rodolphe Guenodon and French Vischer for Chel and Kristoff Serrand for Altvo and Cortés. Elsewhere, Craig Ring has overseen Creation sequence of the prologue (incorporating many computer graphics), while Sylvain Debossy handled the jaguar statue and Nicolas. 2007. Bibo adopted the armadillo. Patrick Mate took care of the sailors and ballplayers, with Erik C. Schmidt overseeing diverse others (presumably chief Loonabok, who is not mentioned anywhere else). It was 2000, the animators were understandably anxious to get on board the CGI train that was gathering speed at the time. They spoke of a treadful convergence, their method of incorporating the best elements of traditional hand-signed artwork with the latest cutting-edge computing effects. Water, for example, was notoriously time-consuming to handle in traditional animation, so for this film, software was used to duplicate individual hand-breded splashes in a particle system, which they can reproduce endlessly to provide a suitable deluge. Given the core role of gold in the story, the animators also devised a whole new way to animate the fabric in CGI, giving it a reflective sheen that actually looked gold as opposed to just yellow, like the color of Miguel's blonde hair. While I appreciated the lengths they went to try to mix the two styles together, it was still pretty early in the CGI game and unfortunately the results here didn't age well. In The Prince of Egypt, computers are largely reserved for only a few special effects scenes and the work has mostly stood over time (detached Sphinx noses aside), but there's much greater use of CGI in El Dorado and it just feels obstructive. The gold in particular doesn't integrate well with the hand-drawn people who hold it, and much of the prologue looks like it's from another film (the pyramids stick out like sore thumbs). Yet such quibbles are made up for the expressive character work, typical of such greats as Baxter, Zielinski and the rest. Some of the animation presented here is on a par with Disney's, with the film becoming first meme feed in the Instagram era for its many funny background events, many of which involve Altvo's recreated reactions to the crazy events surrounding him or Miguel's exaggerated pantomime faces. One of my favorites is the moment above, where Miguel and Tulio have this amazing reaction to the face of Tzekel-Kan's jaguar monster (complete with girlish screams of terror). Plot A lot like the last film I looked at, a lot of the argument about the quality of this one comes down to its plot. Although highly fantastic and exaggerated, the film still makes use of a true historical setting and at least one real historical figure, so I think the best place to start is with a little explanation of that history - education is always beneficial. The last days of Tenochtitlan, Conquest of Mexico by Cortez, by William de Leftwich Dodge, 1899 Much Like Pocahontas, we deal with here with a specific year - 1519. There was quite a bit going on in the world at that Leonardo da Vinci died in France, Martin Luther held the Leipzig debate with Andreas Karlstadt and Johann Eck in Germany, and the Prince of Ning Ning took place in Ming Dynasty China. In England, Henry VIII had already been on the throne for ten years and was still married to his first wife Catherine of Aragon, but their union was destined for collapse a few years later. Across the channel was the King of Spain (which Miguel and Tulio referred to) at the time Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor - apparently his parents Philip the Handsome and Joanna the Mad (I swear I'm not making it up). While I appreciate the historical touch in this particular environment, the film falls victim to the inevitable trap of anachronisms at times. For example, the characters refer to the peseta as a unit of currency, but it was not introduced until nearly 350 years later in 1868. At that time, the Spanish used the wares, which were commonly denominated in pesos or Hispanic dollars. 1519 is also too early that there are any sugar plantations in Cuba on which Miguel and Tulio can be hooked; this first started to harvest around 1523, but they did not become truly profitable until the 1700s. Then there's the telescope that hits Altvo's apple on one of the ships — it's a 1608 invention, some ninety years out of place. Portrait of Cortés, by José Salomé Pina, 1879 Still, it's just trifling details. How does the plotline hold up over Cortés? Surprisingly good, as it turns out. 1519 is indeed the correct year for Cortés' arrival in Mexico, which he reached around February — he claimed the ground for the Spanish crown the following month, and by November he marched into the Aztec Court of Tenochtitlan to meet with a reluctant Moctezuma II. At the time, he was only thirty-four (although in those times it was virtually middle age) and already had one young daughter. While the film implies that Cortés was gunned down at the end, he remained in Mexico for a few more years, overthrowing the Aztec government, leading to the creation of the Kingdom of New Spain in 1521 and then the Vice-Rectorship of New Spain in 1535. Colonialism has arrived. Some other details are also borrowed from elsewhere: the oft-cited story about conquistadors that is wrong for gods by the locals actually involved Francisco Pizarro, who reportedly experienced it at the first encounter of the Incas far to the south a few years later. Columbus, that infamous conqueror of the 1490s, died for years, but the story element of Cortés asks Tzekel-Kan about the source of his golden earnings was taken from his earliest expedition, in which he made the same request from the locals he met in the Bahamas. A gold rati of the Gold Museum in Bogotá The search for El Dorado was also a true part of history, although many of the details were changed here. El Dorado was originally the Spanish name for a mythical tribal chief of the Muisca people, who lived in the Allipiano Cundiboyacense in Colombia. This chief was said to have found himself gold dust to cover up as part of an initiation ceremony, then submerged submerged in the waters of Lake Guatavita. Over time, this practice confessed to the El Dorado name in a full-blown legend, telling of a fantastic lost city of gold that many explorers of the sixteenth century believed to be hidden in a place called Mambá, on the shores of Lake Parime. One notable expedition to find it was led by Sir Walter Raleigh, that favourite of Queen Elizabeth I, in 1595. Although the expedition paved the way for future colonial expansion in Guyana and Venezuela, he couldn't find the lost city, but that didn't stop him from trying again in 1617. That time he violated a peace treaty with the Spanish when his men let loose one of their outposts, so upon his return to England the following year, he was executed by an angry King James I (who never held him anyway). A collage of artifacts from the Gold Museum Further expeditions to find El Dorado was mounted from the 1530s to as late as the 1840s, although by then the focus was on contradicting the myth rather than fulfilling it. Numerous conquistadors made their own efforts to find the fabled city throughout the sixteenth century, among them the younger brother of Incan conqueror Pizarro, and efforts were even made to drain Lake Guatavita in Colombia after explorers began to suspect it to contain the gold of the Mouseca. Fortunately, it became a protected site in 1965, but some of the gold artifacts extracted from the mucus can still be seen at the Gold Museum in Bogotá today. So, that's how real history compares. In addition to these details, the main plot line was also loosely adapted from Rudyard Kipling's 1888 story The Man Who Would be King, which was about two scrub British adventurers who became kings of a remote province of Afghanistan. Now, one thing that needs to be addressed are the claims of racism aimed at the film aimed at its release. It would always be a sensitive area, considering the story deals with a real historical conflict in which hundreds of thousands of people have lost their lives — you'd think Katzenberg would have learned from Pocahontas the dangers of trying to portray Native American characters as a white bloc, but apparently not (and there's more to come). Several viewers have been incensed at how the residents of El Dorado are presented as victims of their own culture, to be saved by the white men instead of grooming Tzekel-Kan himself. Cortés may not be presented in good light, but the atrocities of the Spanish are never properly examined or even hinted at. Yes, it's a family film and mass carnage would be inappropriate, but the implied happy ending with El Dorado safely hidden from the colonists feels misguided at best. If you watch us two Spanish lead galloping down the sunset, you can't help think about the crimes their fellow explorers were about to sit in the years ahead. The fact that Cortés had just marched down a different direction, unhindered and led an army, came up with illnesses are hardly cause for celebration, either, even if he has caught Tzekel-Kan. I doubt the filmmakers were malicious with any of this, but in their ignorance they fell into the trap of stereotyping — and the kind of white Savior narrative on which it was based was already questionable to begin with. (It's rather like the original idea of whisking Mulan away to a life of happiness in the west by a white prince... shudder). In addition to the potentially insensitive material, the film also suffers from pacing problems. It sometimes feels like they've tried to scratch too much in far too little time, with Miguel and Tulio constantly tossing from plot point to plot point and never giving the story time to breathe. One particularly glaring case of this is when Miguel and Tulio apparently reached the New World in almost no time (and in a rowboat, no less), when in fact the Atlantic crossing took everywhere from six weeks to several months in the ships of the day. Of course, this can probably be explained by the length of time they spend in the brig, which is unspecified; the scoring points on the wall suggest they were there a while by the time they come out, and given how soon Cortés come after doing so, it's likely they've nearly reached the continent by the time they jumped ship. Still, that could have been made clearer. One other glaring problem I've noticed - and this is one we've seen before - is the hand-waving of the language barrier between the Spanish leads and the locals of El Dorado. These days, of course, a typical Spaniard would have few problems chatting with a Mexican, but we've already seen in the last section why that's the case — back in 1519, the two people didn't share a common language. The locals are likely to speak some form of Classic Maya while Miguel and Tulio would use early modern Spanish, but do the authors care about such details? Nope! At least Pocahontas has the decency to address it with a lazy magic contribution, but Tarzan has shown us that it's not hard to cover this particular plot hole in a simple leather montage. Moreover, there are several important moments in the story — specifically involving Miguel and Tulio retaining their god charade — that rely on impossible contributions. Suspension of disbelief is one thing, but it only takes the cookie. For example, right after they arrive, the pair are able to use a handy volcanic eruption to prove their divinity by appearing to stop it (or even reversing it), but since they obviously aren't behind it, the film seems to be suggesting the volcano actually did it themselves. That simply isn't how geology works; I know I look too far into a quick gag, but the fact that the rest of the story hinges right now makes it a sickening point for me. Later, another such moment during the ballgame. Miguel and Tulio can't lose because they're supposed to be gods, but they're completely outclassed by the native and realize that they will have to cheat. Fair enough; they do it all the time. However, Chel's solution is to use their armadillo friend, Bibo, as a replacement ball, the idea is that he can control his movements, thereby allowing the boys to score some easy points. Apparently, this armadillo can literally fly because there's absolutely no way he'll be able to pull off the kind of manoeuvres he's doing here, especially while rolled up in a ball. How does he cling to the sheer walls of the court? It's another ridiculous gag that further convinces the locals of Miguel and Tulio's divinity, defending all logic and making the film feel much cheaper and idle than it used to be. Cinematography I may have had my issues with the story, but I have no problems whatsoever with the beautiful theatre. Raymond Zibach was the art director and I love what he did with Spain and the New World, filling them with lush backgrounds and lighting them to perfection. The scenes in Spain were deliberately kept muted to contrast with the later scenes of El Dorado, with more colour gradually being introduced to the palette until the guys reach the lost city, at which point it shines with all the colors of the rainbow, the most delicious sight they (and the audience) have seen to this point. The staging is also often used to good effect, such as during Cortés' questioning of Miguel and Tulio and Tzekel-Kan's first attempt at sacrifice. The designs of the art and architecture were partly influenced by a series of lectures on Mayan culture and civilization hosted by DreamWorks, but of course they also took some Disney-style research trips to Mexico to see their intended locations in person. Early in production, Katzenberg and his team set out to explore the ruins of several Mayan cities in the Yucatán like Tulum, Chichen Itza and Uxmal in hopes of make El Dorado look more authentic to the culture, which remains as true as they could to Mayan art, space and design. The buildings and temples are apparently a combination of the Mixtec city of Mitla in modern Oaxaca, and the Mayan city of the Palenque in Chiapas. Temple of Kukulkan at Chichen Itza A palace at Mitla with original paintwork The Temple of the Inscriptions at Palenque I particularly appreciated the references to the real culture(s) of the area, even if they were all modded together. Among these are the Aztec codices that Tzekel-Kan reads for his spell, the Danza de los Voladores that Miguel participates in at some point (rather like a maypole) and Chel's references to the Mayan underworld (or mental world) of Xibalba. Chief Tannabok is also shown with cigars and although they would not have been in modern Cuban form as shown here, Caribbean peoples of the time have indeed smoked primitive rolled-up cigars full of tobacco. The plentior gold of El Dorado is drawn primarily from the Muisca culture of Colombia in the time discussed less often than the Aztecs or Incas, for some reason. Of course, many films that at this time have a tendency to blend elements of these different cultures together into a kind of ethnic mush sometimes called Mayincatec, but the society of El Dorado feels predominantly Maya for the most part, even including the practice of ritual sacrifices (which was a staple of both Aztec and Maya culture, although the Aztecs are more famous for it). Soundtrack Dear old Katz pulled no punches when it came to this film, but perhaps the stiest attempt was to cash in on the patented Disney formula in its meeting of the exact same musical team from The Lion King – Elton John, Tim Rice and Hans Zimmer. I know I'm in the minority, but I think I actually prefer Elton John's songs in this film; I was never a big fan of Can You Feel the Love Tonight? Marylata Jacob started the music department of DreamWorks in 1995 and became the film's musical supervisor before the script was finished. She and Katzenberg decided that the approach to the soundtrack would be world music (which at least fits the themes and surroundings) and in late 1996 Rice and John were asked to write seven songs. Rice would begin the process by first writing the lyrics, with John composing the music to set them — John would then record a demo and hand it over to the animators, who used it to put together their storyboards. The pace and vocals remained intact throughout this process, but the team ultimately decided not to sing the characters as in a traditional musical. Bonne Radford explained, We tried to break free from that pattern that was kind of met in animation and really put a song where we thought it would be great... and get us through some story points. Rice and John composed their songs from opposite sides of the Atlantic, with one in Atlanta and the other in London, but each completed song would then be passed to composer Hans Zimmer to be recorded in the overall soundtrack. John Powell assisted Zimmer with the score and his contributions can be heard in scenes such as To Xibalba, Save El Dorado and The Ball Game. If we're completely honest, it's not some of the most striking songs in animation. I've always felt like this film suffers from the same problems as Brother Bear and Tarzan with their Phil Collins-dominated soundtracks; These kinds of generic, non-dietble pop songs are simply less impactful than the cinema-inspired numbers commonly featured in Disney films, although they have their moments. The prologue number, simply titled El Dorado, is a short but fairly catchy number with some appropriately Spanish instrumentation, setting up the myth of creation of El Dorado himself (as well as introducing Bibo the armadillo, or a descendant of his). The sequence itself is bright and colorful, even if lives animation doesn't quite in, but it's certainly one of the weaker pieces from a lyrical perspective. By contrast, The Route Us Is one of my favorites from this film. This one comes in as Miguel drags Tulio and Altvo down to explore in the jungles of the New World; over the course of the song, they hack and stumble their way into the interior until they wind up on El Dorado's doorstep, with madcap adventures throughout (the best of which when they rush to some thieves monkeys, butt-nudes, to retrieve their clothes). The song has a great rhythm and the backing singers really sell it. I always humm this one for days after watching. It's hard to be a God is the one exception to the non-dietary rule; it looks like the filmmakers couldn't resist getting Branagh and Kline to sing while they had them. As the only character number in the film, it's a lot of fun and surprisingly well sing... though I can see why Kline didn't get a song in Hunchback anymore. The pair perform this one on the eve of their first night as gods at Tannabok's big party, quickly getting into the spirit of things, even as they worry about the potential risks of their crazy scheme. Once again we got a bumpy carnivalesque beat and plenty of enthusiasm from Branagh and Kline - apparently, the soundtrack version made even Elton John performing it with Randy Newman. There's also a brief homage to Bob Hope and Bing Crosby of the Road films, if you pay attention: when Miguel and Tulio look in the big bowl of punches, their reflections briefly morph to resemble the actors (Miguel looks like Crosby, while Tulio looks like Hope). Later, we get to no doubt, who does a little to help dispel the Mighty Whitley issues as Miguel explores and enjoys the culture of the El Dorado people. It's a decent song in its own right, but it doesn't seem to do much with the situation lyrically - you can apply it to a number of other stories just as easily, making it harder to connect with in this context. Don Henley and Timothy B. Schmit of The Eagles are also credited as background singers on the soundtrack version of the song, for any fans out there. By the end, we had Friends Never Say Goodbye, a touching ballad that Elton John claimed was his favorite of the film's songs. It comes at the moment where Tulio is preparing to leave with Chel from the city but leaves his buddy Miguel behind; the two of them struggle to somehow find apologizing for the misunderstanding, but as the song itself says, they never say goodbye. Good thing, too, as it turns out, as they suddenly scramble themselves to hide the city's entrance from the approaching conquistadors and, in the process, remember their friendship. The song sometimes gets a little Phil Collins-ish with the rather on-the-nose lyrics, but it still carries the emotional resonance of the scene nicely, transporting the regrets both men feel as they prepare to part ways on bad terms. Apparently the Backstreet Boys (of all people) on the soundtrack version of the song, but had to uncredited uncredited to record label problems. The group is simply resigned by Elton John after the credits in the CD booklet. About the credits, we then got our final song from the film, Someday Out of the Blue. It's alright... don't kill me, but I've never been a big fan of Elton John songs. My favorite thing about this one is that it was accompanied by a music video that featured an animated version of John himself, interacting with the scenes and characters from the film. It's so funny, reminds me of the animated Carrie Underwood of the Ever Ever After music video in 2007 of Enchanted. As for voice acting, there's not a lot left to say that I haven't already covered in my discussion of the characters above. Armand Assante steals the show with his scenery-chewing take on Tzekel-Kan, and Kenneth Branagh, Kevin Kline and Rosie Perez are all doing a wonderful job of getting their morally ambiguous characters to bring life with as much vim and vier as possible. Edward James Olmos and Jim Cummings, with their drastically different characters, round out this small but solid throw off perfectly, there are no weak links here. Even Altvo is voiced by a real person - Frank Welker, another vocal chameleon. Final verdict - The Road to El Dorado was marketed with the standard Burger King campaign, which shared a dual trailer on The Prince of Egypt's home video release with DreamWorks' other release of 2000, the Aardman-produced Chicken Run. Unfortunately, the troubled film was a box office failure upon release, failing to make back its \$95 million budget and being widely criticized for its thin characters and predictable plot. However, Roger Ebert gave it a more favourable three out of four stars and appreciated his good energy and witness aside (I always seem to agree myself with him). His only award victory was a Critics' Choice Award for Best Composer for Hans Zimmer, although it also got a number of nominations for Annie and Saturn Awards. It would be only the first in a string of flops for DreamWorks in the early 2000s, with Shrek standing out as their only major success of the period; at the time, hand-signed animation was already at risk due to the emergence of computer animation studios such as Pixar, but flops like this were the final nail in the coffin. Originally, a series of sequels were planned that would feature Miguel, Tulio, Chel and Altvo on other adventures and are looking for gold elsewhere, but the mediocre box office is soon averaging an end to those ideas. It's also worth spending a moment on this piece of controversy. As I've discussed before in my review of The Emperor's New Groove, DreamWorks and Pixar have begun to develop some sort of rivalry by the time this film came out, following their infamous box office match with A Bug's Life and Antz in 1998. This happened again, albeit less noticeably, with two films in 2000, and a visual development artist on El Dorado named Marc Lument admitted. It was really a race, and Katzenberg wanted to in front of theirs. He also added, We didn't know exactly what they were doing [Disney], but we had the impression that it was going to be very similar. Whoever came out second would face the impression they copied the others. The directors of Emperor's New Groove responded by pointing out that their film had been in development for much longer, but it's debatable. As far as I can tell, both films were cancelled from about 1994 before going into full production around 1995-1996, and it's been a critical year for Katzenberg since that was when he left Disney with that great resentment under his arm. Hmmm... it's all a little fishy, but what further complicates matters is that both films have notoriously endured difficult productions in which scores of people have jumped ship. Did some of those people find their way into the opposing projects, perhaps? It certainly wouldn't be the first time. Sigh... Katz, baby, why you shif' so lobster-crazy? On top of that, Disney even released another film the following year featuring similar themes — white colonial explorers finding an undisputed civilization and saving it from other, greedy white people — called Atlantis: The Lost Empire. Coincidentally, it also turned out to be a massive flop at the box office; apparently audiences at the time just weren't in the mood for this kind of thing. Either that or whether they are mismarked on purpose, as some believe, to help kill hand-drawn animation... Anyway, whatever went wrong, the damage was done; the film was quietly released to the home video at the end of 2000, and DreamWorks barely spoke of it again. Only this year it finally got a Blu-ray release, after the distribution rights to the film changed hands several times and eventually returned to Universal Studios. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment made it the improved release it deserves, much to the satisfaction of fans (although I don't yet own a Blu-ray player myself). To sum up, all I can say is that despite its many flaws, I've always liked this film a lot. The story is certainly a problem as is so often the case in these overly rewritten and debatable racial stereotyping doesn't help matters either) but the film is still a visual surprise and features plenty of excellent comedy thanks to the talents of its all-star cast. I'm not sure when I first saw it, it's one of those films that I can remember as long as I can, although I suspect I didn't see it in theaters. If you haven't seen it yet, I'd advise you to ignore the surprisingly hard scores it holds on the various review sites across the web; much like The Emperor's New Groove, it's an entertaining romp and worth watching for its animation alone, so please give it a chance. Most of the 2000s releases were severely underestimated! User: Bobak Ha'Erī - English Wikipedia, CC BY 2.0. - credit for the Mitla image By Jan Harenburg - Own work, CC BY 4.0. - credit for Palenque image - credit for animated Elton John image - some criticism of portraying Native Americans in the film (a further criticism of the film's presentation of women and Mexican people — Wiki page on Christopher Columbus ➤_Cortés — Wiki page on Hernán Cortés — Wiki page on El Dorado myth — TV Tropes Trivia page - Wiki - IMDb profile Follow Feeling Animated on

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