

The WWF wrestles its way
into Famous Players theatres

Famous

april 2000 volume 1 number 4

canada's entertainment lifestyle magazine

Mary Harron
defends her
American Psycho

Bruce Greenwood
One of the busiest
Canadian actors in L.A.

Road to El Dorado
One heck of a trip for
co-director Don Paul

Sean Penn's spinach salad

Russell Crowe, Sarah Jessica Parker
and **Ewan McGregor** mourn the
parts they didn't get



Steven Soderbergh
on directing Julia Roberts'
Erin Brockovich

Return To Me

A donor heart,
David Duchovny and **Minnie Driver...**
Director Bonnie Hunt explains

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Julie Keshmiry
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Every photojournalist I know; Michael and Lesley in Sydney.



Feature story meeting, 10:30 am; swing dancing with Jeremy, 9:00 pm.



Notes for photo essay on endangered owls; Granny's best recipes.



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contents

Famous | volume 1 | number 4 |

FEATURES

16 DREAM WORK

Calgary-bred animator/director Don Paul talks about life at DreamWorks and its latest feature, *The Road to El Dorado*
By Marni Weisz

18 PLANET GREENWOOD

43-year-old Bruce Greenwood is just hitting his stride: He's in two new movies — *Rules of Engagement* and *Here on Earth* — and you'll soon see him as JFK in *13 Days*
By Neil Morton

21 SOUTHERN DIRECTION

Meet Baton Rouge-bred filmmaker Steven Soderbergh, the man behind *sex, lies, and videotape*, *Out of Sight* and Julia Roberts' new drama, *Erin Brockovich*
By Neil Morton

24 MARY MARY QUITE CONTRARY

Why would anyone do a movie based on the controversial book *American Psycho*? Let director Mary Harron explain
By Mark Magee

COVER STORY

26 QUEEN OF HEARTS

After fab supporting roles in *The Green Mile* and *Jerry Maguire*, Bonnie Hunt directs and co-stars in *Return to Me*, starring David Duchovny and Minnie Driver. Marni Weisz talks to Hunt about a movie test audiences were buzzing about

DEPARTMENTS

6 EDITORIAL

8 THE BIG PICTURE

A peek at current flicks, including *Romeo Must Die*, *Black and White*, *28 Days* and *U-571*

12 THE PLAYERS

Vital bio info on Matthew McConaughey, Julia Roberts and Rose McGowan

14 NEW AT FAMOUS PLAYERS

Watch WWF wrestling at the theatre

23 FAMOUS TRIVIA

25 FAMOUS FOCUS: JAMES FRANCO

The co-star of TV's *Freaks and Geeks* has a new romantic teen flick called *Whatever It Takes*

28 COMING SOON

31 ON THE SLATE

42 ON VIDEO

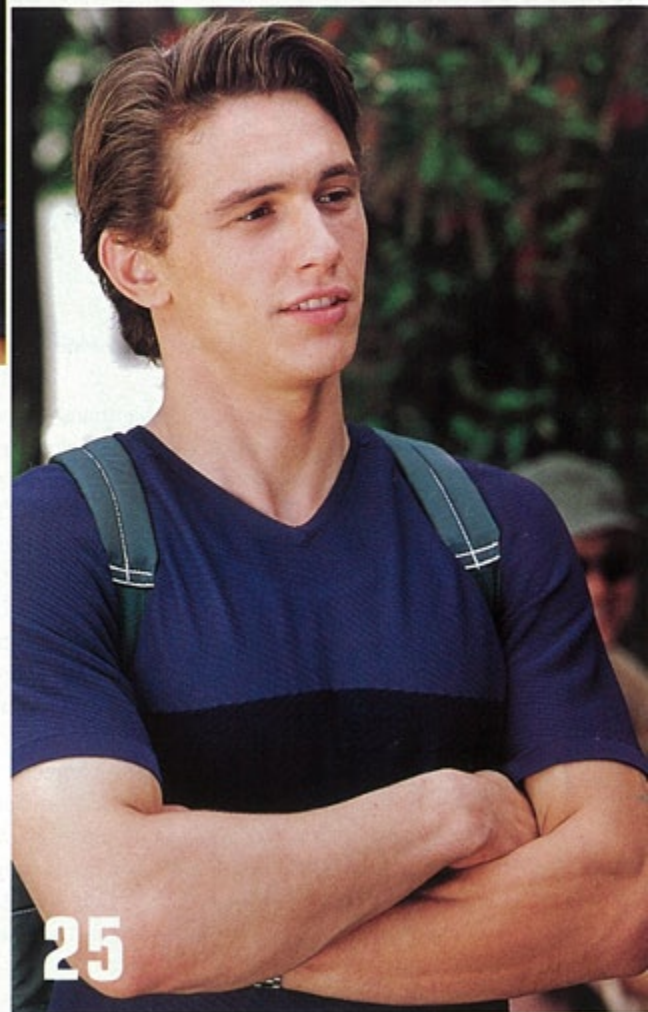
Phyllis Diller picks her five favourite videos

PLUS a list of new releases

45 HOROSCOPE

46 FAMOUS LAST WORDS

Ten stars, including Kevin Kline and Annette Bening, mourn the parts they didn't get



COLUMNS

30 CUISEEN

The spinach salad Sean Penn craved at Halifax's The Press Gang

32 LINER NOTES

Afrobeat comes to North America on one man's shoulders

36 THINGS

What you should know about DVD

38 PULP AND PAPER

Three books definitely worth cracking the spine

HUNT FOR COVER

the choice for this month's cover story was a cinch: *With Return to Me*, actress Bonnie Hunt joins the actor/director ranks of Kevin Costner, Robert Redford, Mel Gibson and Clint Eastwood. For this romantic comedy, starring David Duchovny and Minnie Driver, Bonnie actually pulled *triple* duty as actress, co-writer, and, for the first time in her career, director. The Second City alumnus, who has been a popular choice on late-night TV talk shows for years, has had some unforgettable roles — from the toothpick dropping waitress in *Rain Man*, to Tom Hanks' loving wife in *The Green Mile*. On the day I spoke with her, she had spent much of the morning pruning her garden. She had the same willingness to get her hands dirty on *Return to Me*, and the result is a magical tale of love and tragedy that has Bonnie's comedic stamp all over it. See "Queen of Hearts," page 26.

Speaking of talented women, the gorgeous and glamorous Julia Roberts just became the first woman in Hollywood to hit the \$20 million mark with her portrayal of legal secretary Erin Brockovich in the movie of the same name. Acclaimed director Steven Soderbergh (*sex, lies and videotape*, *Out of Sight* and *The Limey*) was behind the camera for that film and, in "Southern Direction" (page 21), he speaks with Neil Morton about Julia's performance, the real-life story that inspired this tale of courage, and someone very special who inspired him as a filmmaker.

In "Planet Greenwood" (page 18), actor Bruce Greenwood, probably best known for a couple of juicy roles in Atom Egoyan films — *Exotica* and *The Sweet Hereafter* — talks about how he got from Canada to Lotus Land. The 43-year-old is just now breaking it big in Hollywood: He has roles in two movies out this month — the military drama *Rules of Engagement* and a drama of a much different kind called *Here On Earth* — and plays John F. Kennedy in the upcoming *13 Days* (co-starring Costner), which is slated for a fall release.

Another transplanted Canadian finding fame in film is New York-based director Mary Harron, daughter of broadcaster/comedian Don Harron (aka Charlie Farquharson). But the type of comedy rampant in her new film, *American Psycho* (based on Bret Easton Ellis' infamous book), is a *very* dark brand of black comedy that couldn't be farther from the light-hearted type her father offers. In "Mary Mary Quite Contrary" (page 24), Mark Magee talks to Harron about why she was attracted to this unpleasant subject matter.

On a lighter note, DreamWorks has a new animated feature, *The Road to El Dorado*. It's loosely based on Spanish legend, but was also inspired by the Bing Crosby/Bob Hope road pictures of the 1940s. In "Dream Work" (page 16), former Calgarian Don Paul — one of three directors on this massive undertaking — talks about the movie and the stars with which he worked, including Kevin Kline and Elton John.

And finally, we put the spotlight on 21-year-old up-and-comer James Franco in "No Freak" (page 25). You may recognize Franco's sweet but aloof visage from the critically-acclaimed TV show *Freaks and Geeks*, but in *Whatever it Takes* he has his first starring role on film as Chris, the cool guy on campus. Our Q & A session will tell you how he went from McDonald's drive-through attendant to the big screen in just two years.

— Marni Weisz

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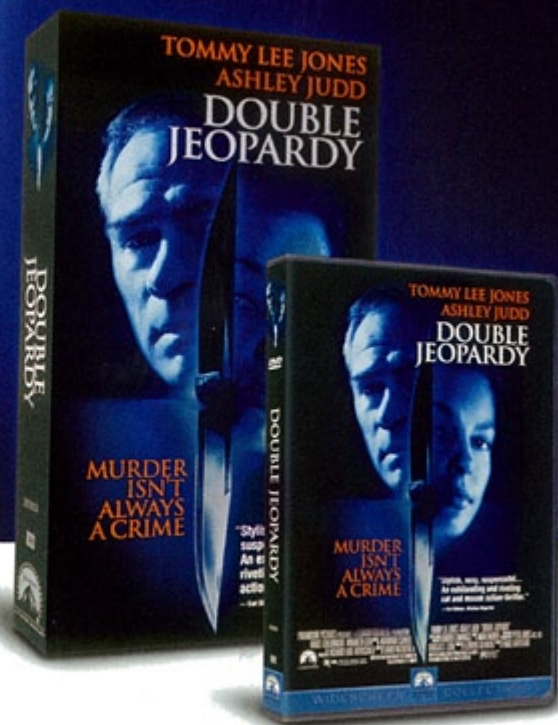
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from left:
Leslie Bibb,
Paul Walker
and Joshua
Jackson in
The Skulls

SPRING INTO SPRING WITH COMEDIES, DRAMAS AND THRILLERS

Erin Brockovich (March 17)

Who's In It? Julia Roberts, Albert Finney
Who Directed? Steven Soderbergh (*Out of Sight*)
What's It About? Based on a true story, Roberts (who made \$20 mil for this film), plays Erin Brockovich, a divorced mother of three who works as a legal secretary at a small suburban L.A. law firm where she discovers, and investigates, an obscure case involving contaminated water in a nearby desert town. See Soderbergh interview, page 21.

Final Destination (March 17)

Who's In It? Devon Sawa, Kristen Cloke
Who Directed? James Wong (debut)
What's It About? Alex (Sawa), a 17-year-old high-schooler, has a vision that the Paris-bound plane he and his six buddies are about to take off in will explode in mid-air, so he convinces them to disembark. The plane does blow up on takeoff, and it looks like they can thank their lucky stars. But Alex's buddies start to drop like flies anyway, and he could be next if he doesn't figure out what's going on.

Whatever it Takes (March 24)

Who's In It? James Franco, Jodi Lyn O'Keefe, Marla Sokoloff, Shane West
Who Directed? David Raynr (*Trippin'*)

What's It About? Ryan (West), a bright but socially inept teen, joins forces with Chris (Franco), a popular jock, to try and figure out how to hook up with their dream girls, O'Keefe (*She's All That*) and Sokoloff (*The Practice*). See "Famous Focus" on James Franco, page 25.

Romeo Must Die (March 24)

Who's In It? Jet Li, Aaliyah Haughton, Delroy Lindo, DMX
Who Directed? Andrzej Bartkowiak (debut)
What's It About? This action/romance is loosely based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. It centers on African-American and Asian gangs in Oakland, and how two people from opposite sides, Li (*Lethal Weapon 4*) and Haughton (in her debut), fall in love and try to bring an end to the neighbourhood turf wars.

Here on Earth (March 31)

Who's In It? Annette O'Toole, Bruce Greenwood, Leelee Sobieski, Chris Klein
Who Directed? Mark Piznarski (debut)
What's It About? A teenaged girl (Sobieski) who lives in a small Massachusetts town is dying, and her new boyfriend (Klein), her life-long chum (Josh Hartnett) and her parents (Greenwood, O'Toole) have to face up to the fact that she won't be with them much longer. See Bruce Greenwood interview, page 18.

The Road to El Dorado (March 31)

Who's In It? Kenneth Branagh, Kevin Kline
Who Directed? Eric "Bibo" Bergeron, Don Paul, Will Finn
What's It About? This animated feature follows the light-hearted adventures of two 15th

century Spanish con men, Tulio (Kline) and Miguel (Branagh), who get their paws on a map to the New World's El Dorado, the lost City of Gold. See Don Paul interview, page 16.

The Skulls (March 31)

Who's In It? Joshua Jackson, Paul Walker
Who Directed? Rob Cohen (*HBO's The Rat Pack*)
What's It About? Canada's Joshua Jackson (*Dawson's Creek*) plays Luke McNamara, an Ivy Leaguer invited to join an elite society known as The Skulls, which could help him get into a prominent law school. But when his journalist roommate commits suicide amidst strange circumstances, McNamara and The Skulls start going skull to skull. FYI: Rumour has it that Yale University has a secret "Skull and Bones Society".

High Fidelity (March 31)

Who's In It? John Cusack, Joan Cusack, Lisa Bonet
Who Directed? Stephen Frears (*The Grifters*)
What's It About? Thirtysomething Rob Gordon (Cusack) is a self-centered record store manager going through an early mid-life crisis. Guided by conversations with his staff about their lives and how the music they listen to shapes them, he tries to figure out his place in the adult world. Bruce Springsteen appears in a cameo.

Black and White (April 5)

Who's In It? Robert Downey, Jr., Brooke Shields, Oli "Power" Grant
Who Directed? James Toback (*Two Guys and a Girl*)
What's It About? The movie centres on the fascination white, privileged teens have with hip-hop culture, and much of the action was ad-libbed. Power plays Rich Bower, a criminal turned hip-hop impresario, while Shields is a documentary filmmaker whose subjects are the urban white kids who emulate Bower.



Brooke Shields in
Black and White



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Rules of Engagement (April 7)

Who's In It? Tommy Lee Jones, Samuel L. Jackson, Bruce Greenwood

Who Directed? William Friedkin (*The Exorcist*)

What's It About? A decorated war hero, Col. Terry Childers (Jackson), is put on trial for ordering his boys to fire on innocent civilians at a U.S. embassy in the Middle East. The man defending him is ex-Marine Col. Hayes Hodges (Jones), who owes his life to Childers after being rescued by him in Vietnam. But now even he has doubts about his former hero. The screenplay is by Vietnam vet James Webb, who once cleared a Marine convicted of war crimes in Vietnam.

Return to Me (April 7)

Who's In It? David Duchovny, Minnie Driver

Who Directed? Bonnie Hunt (debut)

What's It About? In this romantic drama, Bob Rueland (Duchovny), a lonely widower, and Grace Briggs (Driver) start to get close, but things get touchy when Bob finds out that his wife's heart now belongs to Grace, a donor recipient. See Bonnie Hunt interview, page 26.

28 Days (April 14)

Who's In It? Sandra Bullock, Steve Buscemi

Who Directed? Betty Thomas (*Private Parts*)

What's It About? Gwen Cummings (Bullock), a top-notch newspaper columnist — and life-of-the-party — gets busted for drinking and driving, and is assigned to a rehab center for 28 days. With the help of a counsellor (Buscemi) and fellow rehab-ers, Cummings realizes that maybe it's time to, well, learn to walk the straight line.

Ready to Rumble (April 14)

Who's In It? David Arquette, Scott Caan, Oliver Platt, Rose McGowan

Who Directed? Brian Robbins (*Varsity Blues*)

What's It About? Two hardcore wrestling fans (Arquette, Caan) travel to WCW headquarters in Atlanta, where they do everything in their power to convince the powers-that-be to salvage the career of their favourite wrestler (Platt), who has just lost his belt and been hammer-locked from the league.

The cast of *The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas*



Dennis Quaid in *Frequency*

American Psycho (April 14)

Who's In It? Christian Bale, Reese Witherspoon

Who Directed? Mary Harron (*I Shot Andy Warhol*)

What's It About? Bale plays young urban yuppie slash serial killer Patrick Bateman, a character created by Bret Easton Ellis in his highly controversial 1991 book of the same name. The movie was filmed in Toronto, much to the chagrin of the Mahaffy and French families — Paul Bernardo was a huge fan of the book. See Mary Harron interview, page 24.

Where the Money Is (April 14)

Who's In It? Paul Newman, Linda Fiorentino

Who Directed? Marek Kaniévski (*Less Than Zero*)

What's It About? An offbeat caper about a beautiful nurse, Carol (Fiorentino), from a small town who finds out that one of her nursing patients (Newman) is a renown bank robber who faked a stroke to get out of the joint. Instead of turning him in, she decides to help him map out one last heist.

Keeping the Faith (April 14)

Who's In It? Edward Norton, Jenna Elfman, Ben Stiller

Who Directed? Edward Norton (debut)

What's It About? A love triangle ensues when lifelong best buds Rabbi Jacob Schram (Stiller) and Father Brian Finn (Norton) both become all googly-eyed for their childhood friend, Anna Reilly (Elfman), a beautiful corporate executive who has re-entered their lives. Will they square-off in a Fight Club?

U-571 (April 21)

Who's In It? Matthew McConaughey, Jon Bon Jovi, Harvey Keitel

Who Directed? Jonathan Mostow (*Breakdown*)

What's It About? A small team of submarine captains (led by McConaughey) are sent aboard a disabled Nazi U-boat in the Atlantic to nab an encryption device that could be the turning point for the Allies. But here come the

Germans... and not even Jon Bon Jovi's vocals can drive them away.

Centre Stage (April 21)

Who's In It? Peter Gallagher, Susan May Pratt

Who Directed? Nicholas Hytner (*The Crucible*)

What's It About? A group of teens are trying to gain entry into a prestigious professional dance company run by Gallagher, and the competition is fierce, meaning points will be docked for Footloose moves or Dirty Dancing.

Gossip (April 28)

Who's In It? Joshua Jackson, Katie Hudson

Who Directed? Davis Guggenheim (debut)

What's It About? Joshua Jackson (*Dawson's Creek*) co-stars in this drama about a group of college students who start a rumour as a school project. But things get out of control after a young man is falsely accused of rape and the "victim" kills herself. Speaking of gossip, Director Guggenheim is married to sultry Elisabeth Shue. Pass it on.

Home is Where the Heart is (April 28)

Who's In It? Natalie Portman, Ashley Judd

Who Directed? Matt Williams (debut)

What's It About? A very pregnant and broke teen runaway (Portman) wants to get from Tennessee to California, but ends up living in a Wal-Mart in small-town Oklahoma — where her beau abandoned her halfway through their pilgrimage. During filming, Wal-Mart had to take down pictures of Queen Amidala, whom Portman played in *The Phantom Menace*.

Frequency (April 28)

Who's In It? Dennis Quaid, Jim Caviezel

Who Directed? Gregory Hoblit (*Primal Fear*)

What's It About? What's the Frequency Kenneth? Far-out. When a homicide detective (Caviezel) gets a ham radio message from a firefighter (Quaid) during a freak sunspot, he realizes it's his dear (and dead) old man, who bit the dust in a 1969 fire. The two work to change the course of history, which sees dear old mom in danger of joining dad in heaven.

The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas

(April 28)

Who's In It? Mark Addy, Kristen Johnston, Stephen Baldwin

Who Directed? Brian Levant (*Beethoven*)

What's It About? This prequel to 1994's live action original takes us back to the origins of the Flintstone clan, where Freddy, the boy from the wrong side of the tracks, is courting young heiress Wilma.

All release dates subject to change.

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left: McConaughey posing for his mugshot after his arrest last October; inset: As Lt. Andrew Tyler in the drama *U-571*

MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY

Now appearing in... *U-571*, in which he plays Lt. Andrew Tyler, a World War II sub captain who leads his crew onto a German U-boat to scoff a top-secret encryption device. Co-stars include Bill Paxton, Harvey Keitel and Jon Bon Jovi.

Bio bits: Born November 4, 1969, in Uvlade, Texas, he was raised in Longview — deep in Texas Lake Country — where he attended Longview High School (and played football). His dad, Jim, who passed away in 1992, was in the oil business, but also had a brief stint in the NFL with the Green Bay Packers; his mom, Kay, was a substitute teacher. ♦ McConaughey was a psych/phi-

losophy major at the University of Texas at Austin and hoped to go on to law — until he decided to study film there. ♦ In 1992, while still in school, he was discovered by director Richard Linklater and offered a part as an aging slacker in *Dazed and Confused*.

Breakthrough role: Played lawyer Jake Brigance in 1996's *A Time to Kill* with Kevin Spacey, Samuel L. Jackson and Ashley Judd. An unknown at the time, he soon found himself on the cover of *Vanity Fair* and, overnight, could no longer walk the streets in peace.

In the news for: Being arrested last October in Austin, Texas, after cops were called to his house late at night and found him playing the bongo drums in the nude (a buddy was there cheering him on). When they entered, they found marijuana stems and seeds, and a pipe. McConaughey appeared confrontational, so was cuffed and locked up for nine hours in Travis County Jail before scraping together \$1,000 for bond. He was later charged with resisting arrest, but initial drug possession charges were dropped.

Sample roles: Played Ed Pekurny in *Ed TV* (1999); Willis in *The Newton Boys* (1998); Roger in *Amistad* (1997); Palmer in *Contact* (1997); Jake in *A Time to Kill* (1996); Abe Lincoln (no, not that Abe Lincoln) in *Boys on the Side* (1995); Vilmer in *The Return of The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 4* (1994); and Wooderson in *Dazed and Confused* (1993)

Love life: Has dated Patricia Arquette and Ashley Judd (they hooked up during *A Time to Kill*), and also been linked with Sandra Bullock (*28 Days*)

What he likes: Stogies, women, Texans, chewing tobacco, golf, landscaping, bongo drums

On his time in Travis County Jail: "I don't want to rent a place there, but it was a nice stay for a night." — *E! Online*, October 1999

ROSE MCGOWAN

Now appearing in... *Ready to Rumble*, as Sasha, one of the Nitro Girls. The comedy stars David Arquette and Scott Caan as a couple of wrestling fans desperate to save their hero (played by Oliver Platt) from obscurity after he loses a big match.

Bio bits: Born September 5, 1975, in Florence, Italy, where she was raised on a commune for the Children of God cult — the same cult to which the Phoenix family (including River and Joaquin) belonged. When she was 10 years old, McGowan moved to the States with Mom, a writer, and Dad, an artist. ♦ Rose's Goth/mod style during her junior high years alarmed her mother so much that she checked young Rose into a drug rehab program even though she wasn't — she insists to this day — doing drugs. ♦ She ran away from home when she was 14 and lived on the streets for a while, before being discovered by director Greg Araki and cast in her breakthrough role as Amy Blue in Araki's *Doom Generation* (1995). (She did have a small part in *Encino Man* three years before.) Now lives just outside L.A.

In the news for: Her relationship with Goth rocker Marilyn Manson. ♦ Arriving at the 1998 MTV Awards in a backless outfit that was comprised of a G-string under a sheer, black, beaded slip.

Sample roles: Played Courtney in *Jawbreaker* (1999); Debbie in *Devil in the Flesh* (1998); Lisa in *Phantoms* (1998); Tatum Riley in *Scream* (1996); Denise in *Bio-Dome* (1996); Amy in *Doom Generation* (1995); and Nora in *Encino Man* (1992)

Love life: Currently engaged to Manson. She announced their plans to wed while doing a promotional spot for *Jawbreaker* on the *Howard Stern Show* in February 1999. She





above: McGowan shows off "The Dress" at the 1998 MTV Awards; inset: as Sasha in Ready To Rumble

Michaelson Collection

JULIA ROBERTS

Now appearing in... *Erin Brockovich*, in which she plays a struggling single mother who gets a job as a legal secretary, digs up dirt on a public utilities company that has caused many folk in a small town to get sick from contaminated water, and then nails the company in court — to the tune of \$333 mil. Based on a true story, the movie made Roberts the first actress to take home \$20 million (her highest before that was \$17 million for 1999's *Runaway Bride*).

Bio bits: Born October 28, 1967, in the small town of Smyrna, Georgia. Her parents, Betty and Walter, divorced when she was four, and her father died of cancer five years later. ♦ After high school in Smyrna, she moved to New York to live with her older sister, Lisa, and audition for roles. At one point, she was turned down for a part in the soap *All My Children*. In 1988, she had a guest spot on *Miami Vice*, the same year she made her feature film debut in *Mystic Pizza*.

Two years later came *Pretty Woman*, and her life has been pretty ever since. ♦ Her older brother Eric is also an actor, but reports are that things aren't exactly hunky dory between them. ♦ She has a home in Manhattan, and is a regular at Greenwich Village restaurants and SoHo shops.

Sample roles: Played Anna in *Notting Hill* (1999); Maggie in *Runaway Bride* (1999); Jules in *My Best Friend's Wedding* (1997); Grace in *Something to Talk About* (1995); Darby in *The Pelican Brief* (1993); Tinkerbell in *Hook* (1991); Vivian in *Pretty Woman* (1990); Rachel in *Flatliners* (1990); Shelby in *Steel Magnolias* (1989); Daryle in *Satisfaction* (1988); and Daisy in *Mystic Pizza* (1988)

Love life: There was Liam Neeson (they met while filming *Satisfaction*); Daniel Day-Lewis; an engagement to Kiefer Sutherland (they met on *Flatliners*); a brief fling with Jason Patric; a brief engagement to Dylan McDermott (they met on *Steel Magnolias*); her failed marriage in the mid-nineties to singer Lyle Lovett (they met on *The Player*); a short stint with Matthew Perry (they met on *Friends*); and now there's Benjamin Bratt, who starred on *Law & Order* — they're rumoured to be contemplating marriage.

Turned down: Gwyneth Paltrow's role in *Shakespeare in Love*, Meg Ryan's role in *Sleepless in Seattle*

Recent awards: Won this year's People's

Choice "Favourite Motion Picture Actress Award"; nominated for "Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture" at this year's Golden Globes for *Notting Hill*; named one of the "25 Most Intriguing People of 1999" by *People*; was No. 48 on *Entertainment Weekly's* "The 100 Greatest Entertainers: 1950-2000"

What she likes: Knitting, baking, throwing dinner parties, good-looking men, shopping, charity work

On an amusing encounter with a fan: "I was at the movies with my mom and I had gone to the bathroom, and someone in a rather loud voice said, 'Girl in stall number seven, were you in *Mystic Pizza*?' [Laughs.] I stopped peeing and I said, 'Yeah,' and that was kind of that."
— *About.com*, May 1999



below: Roberts at this year's People's Choice Awards; left: as Erin Brockovich

told Stern that Manson proposed while she was in the bathtub surrounded by candles. The two are reportedly working on a movie together called *Holy Wood*. ♦ Also dated actor Ryan Phillippe briefly in 1998.

What she likes: Art (she paints); singing (she provides vocals for the track "Posthuman" on Manson's 1998 CD, *Mechanical Animals*); Lionel Richie (don't ask); movies (she says she and Manson are movie addicts who get excited when flicks like *My Bodyguard* and *Just One of the Guys* come on TV)

On the dress she wore to the 1998 MTV Awards: "I wore it to cause an uproar. But I will confess that I did change into another dress after walking up the red carpet...those little strands in the back would have given me griddle butt if I'd set down." — *Maxim*, March 1999



Brenda Chase/Online USA

BIGGER IS BETTER

WWF fans leave the couch to join fellow fans at the theatre

bar). So, instead of watching the match on the little boob-tube in your living room, you can join hundreds of like-minded wrestling fans for a communal, writhing wrestling fest and watch the pumped pageantry play out on the big screen.

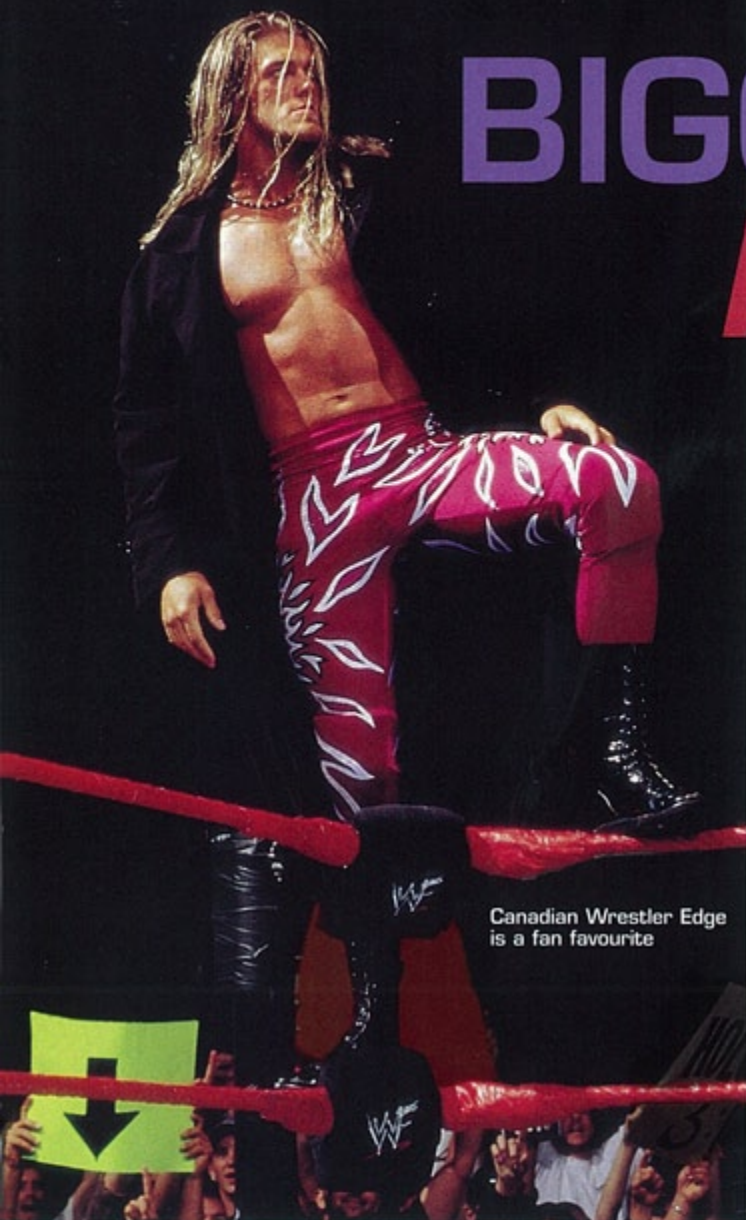
"You've gotta be with a crowd," says 24-year-old Chris Datillo, speaking through a red and black striped mask just like the one worn by his wrestling hero, Kane. "If you scream by yourself, no one's going to scream back with you. You need some encouragement." His friend Anthony Internicola, also 24, tries to explain why wrestling has such a hold on him. "You've got soap operas like *Days of Our Lives* — those are for women. Well, this is like a male soap opera."

It seems like a natural — this combination of big screens and big athletes — but according to Carl De Marco, president of World Wrestling Federation Entertainment Canada Inc., it's a first. Until now, the theatres weren't equipped to show Pay-per-view events. "So I went and cut a deal with Famous Players and with Bell ExpressVu," De Marco says after stepping into the hallway so that he can be heard above the blare of the on-screen drama. "Bell ExpressVu supplied the satellite dishes, and this is what we've done. The whole world is watching what we're doing here in Canada."

So far, 17 Famous Players theatres have been equipped to carry the satellite feed. But De Marco says that the response (sell-outs across the country) means they will likely add more theatres to the program. For this first round of WWF events, tickets cost 15 bucks, half of what it would cost if you ordered it at home. (Of course, at home, as many people as you can cram into your living room can enjoy the match for that price — but not on a big screen and not with hundreds of other fans.) However, De Marco

says the \$15 is just a "test price" that will likely increase "down the road."

De Marco has sat ringside for a live match and, although perhaps a bit biased, says this experience is pretty darn close to the real thing. "And the seats are way more comfortable than they are in an arena," he adds, with a laugh. —Marni Weisz



Canadian Wrestler Edge is a fan favourite

This is not your average night at the movies. A capacity crowd, most of them young and male, are packed into the Colossus Toronto. They jeer when the arrogant Kurt Angle announces he will be the hero of the night, gasp when The Kat drops her robe to reveal a bikini made entirely of bubble wrap, and cheer when pretty-boy Jeff Hardy hurls his hulking opponent, D-Von Dudley, through a table.

Not a single usher or perturbed patron dares to tell them to keep it down. That's because this is no movie — it's the first-ever Famous Players/WWF live Pay-per-view event. Rowdy behaviour (although the polite Canadian brand) is welcome.

Over the next five years, every WWF Pay-per-view match that you can order at home will also be beamed into select Famous Players theatres across Canada (see side-



Anthony Internicola points to his masked buddy, Chris Datillo, at the Colossus event

Keith Houghton

THEATRES

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Ontario: Colossus Toronto, Coliseum Mississauga, Coliseum Scarborough, Paramount Toronto, SilverCity Empress Walk (North York), SilverCity Ancaster, SilverCity Windsor, Coliseum Ottawa

Manitoba: SilverCity Polo Park (Winnipeg)

Alberta: Coliseum Calgary, SilverCity West Edmonton Mall

British Columbia: Colossus Langley, SilverCity Riverport (Richmond), SilverCity Metropolis (Burnaby)

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 2: WWF WrestleMania

April 30: WWF Backlash

May 21: WWF Judgement Day

June 25: WWF King of the Ring

July 23: WWF Fully Loaded

August 27: WWF SummerSlam

September 24: WWF Unforgiven

October 22: WWF No Mercy

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Miguel and Tulio search for El Dorado, the City of Gold

Dream Work

Canadian Don Paul talks about directing DreamWorks' latest creation, *The Road to El Dorado*

Calgary native Don Paul has just arrived at work — a 12 acre compound with Italian architecture, fountains, tile, lots of greenery and sun. Those are the kinds of perks you get when you work at DreamWorks headquarters, which are based in Glendale, California.

Paul hasn't lived in Canada since 1979, when Disney snatched him up after seeing the films he made at the Alberta College of Art. Things went well there (he worked on *Little Mermaid*, *Aladdin* and *Pocahontas*), but in 1994, he decided it would be even more fun to join DreamWorks, the then-new studio founded by Steven Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg and David Geffen. "It was a really tough decision," the 43-year-old says. "It came down to staying at Disney and working on films like *Hercules*, or coming here and working on films like *Prince of Egypt*. And I just thought, This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to build a studio from the ground up and at the same time work on really challenging features."

He served as visual effects supervisor on *Prince of Egypt* (1998), and now he's one of three directors (the others are Bibo Bergeron and Will Finn) on their latest creation, *The Road to El Dorado*, a buddy/adventure flick about Tulio (voice of Kevin Kline) and Miguel (voice of Kenneth Branagh), a couple of Spanish conmen who get a hold of a map leading to the New World's mythic City of Gold. When they arrive in El Dorado they're hailed as gods — a mistake they use to their advantage until,

eventually, they discover what's really important. "They go there looking for gold and then discover that the true wealth in El Dorado is the people," says Paul. Although the movie is very loosely based on Spanish legend and touches on historical figures like Cortez, Paul says it was really inspired by the Bob Hope/Bing Crosby road pictures of the 1940s. "That's why we called it *Road to El Dorado*."

Lush, glittering jungles and sun-baked Spanish villas and town squares dominate the look of the film. But for Paul, the best thing about *El Dorado* isn't a visual image or a special effect — it's the dynamic between the two main characters. "Kenneth Branagh is pretty amazing and Kevin Kline adlibs beautifully. The energy and dialogue between them is very unique."

In the end, Paul says they were aiming for a fun, light comedy. Yet, light as they are, animated features often end up

Director Don Paul



being lightning rods for accusations of racism. For example, some were unhappy that the conniving hyenas in *The Lion King* were all voiced by actors of colour, while others felt that *Aladdin* was full of stereotyped portrayals of Arabs. But despite the cultural backdrop of *El Dorado*, Paul isn't concerned and doesn't think there will be any complaints. "We try not to censor or edit ourselves during the creative process," he says. "It is something we keep in mind, but if it dominates the project then it will most likely effect the purity of your art."

As for why an animated film would need three directors, Paul explains that the projects are just that big and complicated. "Every frame is designed and viewed, and we look at every scene through every step of the process. I don't know if, physically, one person could do it." He describes his role as a combination between a live-action director and a stage director. You deal with voice talent and writers, but you also have to bring those voices to life with the animators and work with the art director on colour choices and cinematography.

But all the hard work on *El Dorado* was worth it, as Paul got to work one-on-one with big-name celebrities like Kline and Branagh — and with Elton John, who provides the film's music along with lyricist Tim Rice and composer Hans Zimmer. In fact, a brush with Elton may have been the highpoint of Paul's *El Dorado* experience. "He came in for some meetings and we were going over the score. I was sitting next to him at the conference table and he was running through the songs going, 'I like this one and this one,' and then he started singing along right there. And it was like, 'Oh God, this is great. I'm sitting next to Elton John and he's singing! I love this. What a life.' I was jazzed by that for weeks." —Marni Weisz

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PLANET GREENWOOD

First there was *The Sweet Hereafter*, then *Double Jeopardy*. Now it's *Rules of Engagement* and *Here on Earth* — and soon there'll be *13 Days*, his real breakout role. Yes, Canada's Bruce Greenwood is becoming a player

By Neil Morton

It's eight in the morning in West L.A., and all is not quiet in Bruce Greenwood's home. Over the phone, it sounds like he has a construction crew in there drilling away at something. But as the wide-awake Greenwood explains over the noise, it's just his cappuccino maker. A week ago, he was making worldly decisions as John F. Kennedy in *13 Days*, an upcoming film about the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. But his biggest concern right now is how to make an extraordinary cap for Susan Devlin, his wife of 15 years. "I've created these expectations, and now they must be fulfilled," he says, as he shuts down the contraption, and heads to the bedroom to deliver the prize cup.

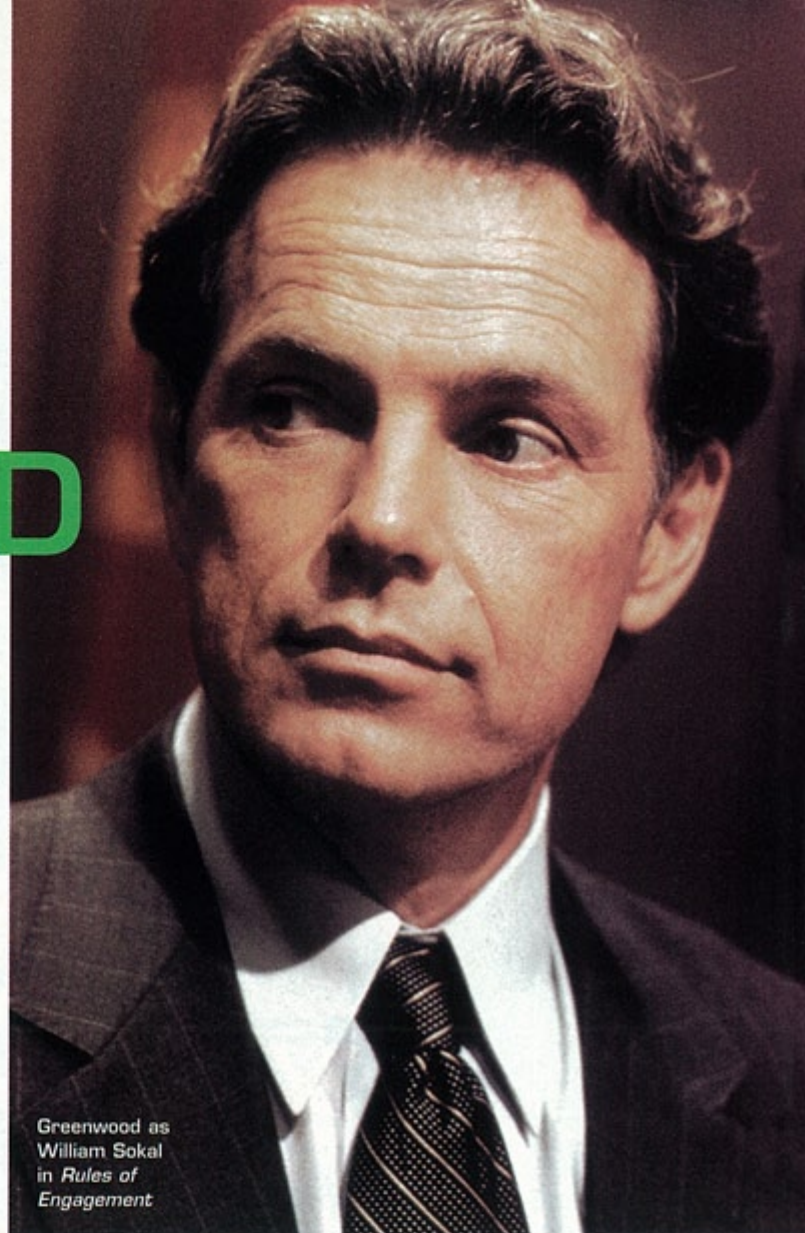
He should be content to have some chill-out time (he's got plenty of painting to do around the house) after having just wrapped *13 Days* —

"It was one of the great experiences of my professional life," he says of playing JFK — but he's not relaxed. "Nothing. Goose egg. Zero," he says, when asked about upcoming projects. "I hate that. If I had a job starting two months from now, I'd relax."

He needn't worry. At 43, Greenwood is no piece of deadwood. This month alone, the Canadian actor has two movies coming out. In *Here on Earth* he plays the protective father of a daughter with a terminal illness (Leelee Sobieski, *Eyes Wide Shut*). The film also stars hot up-and-comers Chris Klein (*American Pie*) and Josh Hartnett (*The Faculty*). And in *Rules of Engagement*, which stars Tommy Lee Jones and Samuel L. Jackson, he's a powerful, and slightly corrupt, government official.

Indeed, this is not the same guy that came to L.A. in 1984 with a "thoroughly embroidered" resume that

As Sheriff Earl Cavanaugh in *Here on Earth*



Greenwood as William Sokal in *Rules of Engagement*

included Sylvester Stallone's *Rambo: First Blood* — "nobody knew I was only an extra in it." Now, that resume would also include two Atom Egoyan films, 1994's *Exotica* and 1997's Oscar-nominated *The Sweet Hereafter* (he received Best Actor Genie nominations for both); last year's box-office smash *Double Jeopardy* (with Jones and Ashley Judd); and his starring role as JFK in *13 Days*, which co-stars Kevin Costner (who plays Secretary of State Kenneth O'Donnell).

While *13 Days* marks a new high point in Greenwood's career, it was his portrayal of Billy Ansell in *The Sweet Hereafter*, a movie about a bus crash that takes away a town's children, that first turned Hollywood heads. "That was a real watershed for me," he explains. "I started to be considered hireable — they saw an authenticity in me that had somehow escaped them before." Which isn't to say it's a cakewalk now. "Studio pictures are a different animal — trying to get in those is like winning a lottery," says the man who auditioned countless times for both *Double Jeopardy* and *13 Days*.

Life began for Bruce Greenwood in Noranda, Quebec, on August 12, 1956, but he didn't stay there long. His family (he has two younger sisters) spent most of the time trailing after their geologist father, Hugh — to Princeton, New Jersey, where Dad was doing his graduate studies;



to Washington, D.C.; to Maryland; to Vancouver (where the 15-year-old high-schooler first met Devlin); and even to Switzerland, where Bruce had aspirations of becoming a pro skier before a bum knee told him No Way. "That was before arthroscopic surgery existed. Otherwise, I'd probably be teaching at Whistler now or something," he jokes.

He tried his hand at philosophy and economics at the University of British Columbia (where his dad was a geology professor), but then came a drama class. "I took it for fun, for an easy credit. I got into a play and my other studies completely disintegrated, so I quit school and started working professionally."

He also joined Heirbourne, a Top 40 coverband that toured B.C. towns in an Econoline bus. "I was the lead singer — unfortunately for the audience." To this day, he has continued to plug away at music, having collaborated with Canadian folk singer Norman Foote on many children's songs. In fact, Greenwood, who has a rudimentary music studio in his house, had a song called "Two Foot of Butt Crack" in 1994's *Dumb and Dumber*. But, as he acknowledges, "I'm an actor who sings, I'm not a singer."

In *Here on Earth*, Greenwood plays a small-town sheriff in a fictitious Massachusetts town who will do anything to keep his daughter, Samantha (Sobieski), out of trouble. She is falling in love with Kelley (Klein), a wealthy kid from a neighbouring prep school, but also finds out she's dying of cancer. "It's basically *Terms of Endearment* for teenagers," Greenwood says of the film, which was shot last summer in Welsh, Minnesota. "It was beautiful there," he says of the town. "It's like the area around St. Jacob's [a picturesque community near Toronto]. Little gorgeous rolling hills, church on every hilltop." The only cloud was those polyester slacks he had to wear as sheriff. "They were so uncomfortable, so tight. And this was summer-time."

In his other new film, *Rules of Engagement*, directed by William Friedkin (*The Exorcist*, *The Guardian*), Greenwood has a peripheral but key role as William Sokal, a National Security advisor dealing with the fallout after a marine, Col. Terry Childers (Jackson), orders his troops to fire on a hostile gathering outside an embassy in the Middle East. Childers is eventually hung out to dry by his own country (including Sokal) and it's up to Col. Hayes Hodges (Jones), whom Childers saved in Vietnam, to defend him at trial. "He took tremendous professional and political risks to do what is appropriate for the country," Greenwood says of his character, adding, "but I don't think what anybody does in this movie can be necessarily supported morally."

The strangest day on set must have been when he was called back in after shooting had wrapped — producers decided some loose ends needed tying — to do a scene with Ben Kingsley (*Schindler's List*, *Gandhi*), who plays Ambassador Mourain. "I was still shooting *13 Days*, and when I walked on set, I did the whole JFK thing for half a minute before I realized, Wrong Body. Then, during the second take when Kingsley delivered

his dialogue, instead of doing my lines, I just stood there staring at him. So the director goes, 'God, what are you doing?' And without thinking, I just went, 'It's Ben Kingsley, man. It's Ben Kingsley.'"

If Greenwood was in awe of Kingsley, then *13 Days* (slated for a fall release), about the inner circle at the White House during the 1962 standoff between the U.S. and

Soviet Union over Cuba, must have been really intimidating, what with working so closely with Costner — who was also a producer on the movie. "There wasn't a shred of big-star b.s. with him," Greenwood says. "He was very approachable, and took real pains to explode that invisible but tangible window between big star and regular working actors."

Greenwood, who for his first audition learned Kennedy's Northeastern accent by pulling sound files off the web, says it was great when his parents came down from their home on British Columbia's Gulf Island to visit the set. "They saw the White House — it was in a warehouse in Glendale, California. They saw me dressed as the president. Plus, the caterer happened to have lobster and Châteaubriand that day, and this sound guy goes, 'It's a good day for the parents, they get lobster and Châteaubriand and their son is the president.'"

So now that Bruce Greenwood is on the cusp of greatness in Tinseltown, does this mean his cappuccino maker is constantly churning for the celebs who drop by? "Yeah, it's a real revolving door of megawatt stars," he says, then pauses and yells, "Bruce, we said like 9:30-ish, so why don't you f--- off!" It's Willis out there. Gawd, he just really gets under my skin. He's always dropping over."

Point taken. **E**

GREENWOOD'S NO. 1 FAN

One of the more exhaustive fan sites on the web is "The Bruce Greenwood Homepage" (www.greenwood.simplenet.com). Here, webmaster Pamela McKay, a youth services librarian based in Hercules, California, talks about her fascination with Greenwood — who has checked out the site and thinks it's neat.

ON WHY BRUCE GREENWOOD I knew he was a fine actor, but *Exotica* altered my opinion completely. That was when he became extraordinary. Plus, he's obviously very good looking, so that's a factor. I started doing research on him when I was a librarian at the NY Public Library for the Performing Arts.

ON THE WEBSITE It began after he was on *Nowhere Man* [a 1995-96 critically acclaimed, but short-lived, TV show], which had a huge online following. There were about 50 *NM* sites back then, but none on Bruce himself. We now get about 250 hits a day, as well as many emails — they range from fans, to people who want to contact him with scripts, to old friends who are trying to get in touch. I can't help them all, but I guess they think I can.

ON WHAT HER CO-WORKERS THINK My New York colleagues were much more excited and encouraging about the site. My current ones are interested, although I'm careful not to seem too obsessed. But they're more aware of Bruce than they used to be.

ON HOW SHE GETS HER INFO Several people keep me constantly informed. One person even joined a Kevin Costner mailing list to stay on top of *13 Days* news. There's also a Canadian librarian who comes up with tons of info.

ON HIS UPCOMING FILMS *13 Days* could be his biggest break. I have no doubt he'll be superb — his accents are amazingly accurate and he's also great with body language and intonation, so I know he'll capture Kennedy perfectly. *Rules of Engagement* is a meaty part for him, but in a personal way I'm more interested in *Here on Earth* — as the father of a dying child, I know he'll be wonderfully touching and suspect there'll be more of Bruce himself in the part.

PARTING LINE It is sort of strange how people end up doing these things, isn't it? But Bruce is definitely worth it.



Bruce Greenwood and Leelee Sobieski in a dramatic scene in *Here on Earth*

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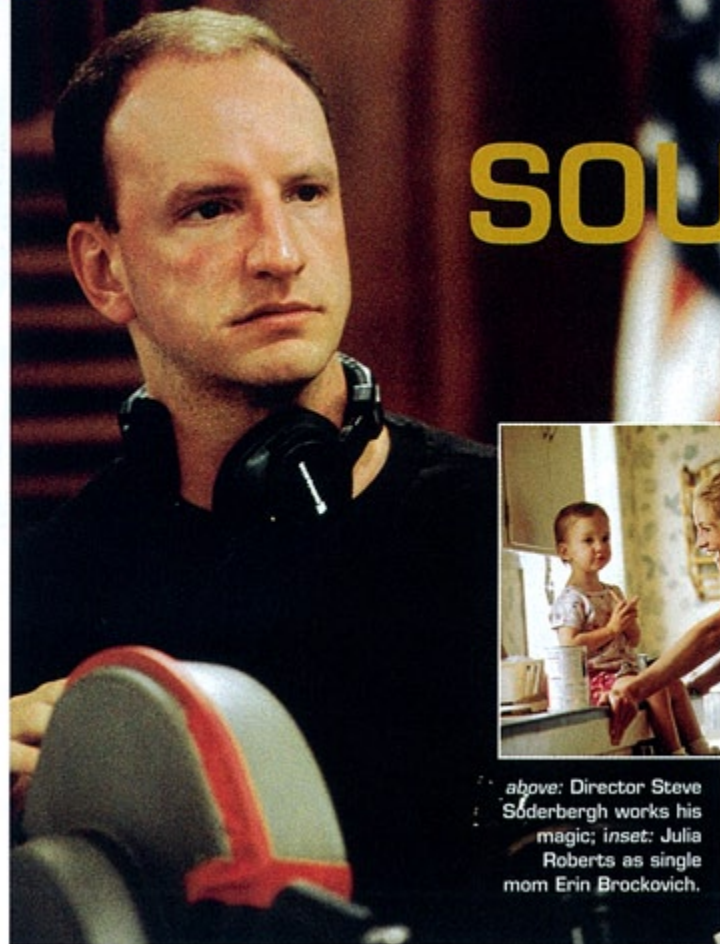
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SOUTHERN DIRECTION



above: Director Steve Soderbergh works his magic; inset: Julia Roberts as single mom Erin Brockovich.

He's the man behind the compelling *sex, lies, and videotape*, the outta sight *Out of Sight* and now Julia Roberts' new drama, *Erin Brockovich*. Meet Baton Rouge-bred director Steven Soderbergh

By Neil Morton

Ask filmmaker Steven Soderbergh to name someone who inspired him and you won't get a big-name answer like Steven Spielberg, Robert Altman or Martin Scorsese. Instead, the director of Julia Roberts' new drama, *Erin Brockovich*, will take you back to his pre-L.A. days in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the place where he began making films in his early teens. "His name was Michael McCallum," Soderbergh recalls. "He taught film at LSU [Soderbergh's father was a dean there]. When I was in high school, I sort of glommed on to him and his students. He was a documentarian, and was basically my mentor for five or six years. When I got out of high school, I worked for him. He taught me a lot — about standards of quality, and having your work maintain a certain aspect of integrity."

Those standards have been evident in Soderbergh's work since his first film — a low-budget movie (\$1 million) called *sex, lies, and videotape* that the then 25-year-old director made in 1988 in Baton Rouge. Starring James Spader and Andie McDowell, the movie

(which Soderbergh also wrote) raked in \$25 million at the box office, won the 1989 Palme d'Or at Cannes, and was credited with putting Robert Redford's Sundance Festival on the map after its January 1989 showing there. A *New York Times* review gushed, "He directs the camera as if it were the most natural storytelling device in the world."

The same year that Soderbergh filmed *sex, lies, and videotape*, an unknown actress named Julia Roberts had one of her first big-screen roles in the utterly forgettable chick band flick, *Satisfaction*. In terms of name recognition,

Soderbergh has since been far eclipsed by the woman who plays Erin Brockovich in his latest film, but he's never stopped making quality movies — movies like the black-and-white mystery-suspense *Kafka* (1991), with Jeremy Irons; the depression era *King of the Hill* (1993), based on the memoir of A.E. Hotchner; 1995's dark tale *The Underneath*, with Peter Gallagher; and *Gray's Anatomy* (1997), about dramatist Spalding Gray's weird eye disease.

Soderbergh's first big studio film was the hilarious caper *Out of Sight* (1998), which brought him back into the public eye (remember the George Clooney/Jennifer Lopez trunk scene?) and won the National Society of Film Critics' awards for Best Director, Best Picture and Best Screenplay. Last year, his crime drama *The Limey* (co-starring Terence Stamp and Peter Fonda) hit theatres, and while it was no box office smash, critics praised Soderbergh for his ingenuity in weaving time and action.

Now everyone is talking about his latest big studio picture, *Erin Brockovich*. Okay, maybe most of the buzz has been generated by the fact that Roberts made \$20 mil for her role — the first time a woman has cracked that barrier — but Soderbergh fans are also anxious to see what sort of performance he was able to coax out of the glam star. The 37-year-old director thinks they'll be impressed: "She was at the absolute top of her game. I just think she was ready to have this experience," he says over the phone from New York.

"She was a total pro on set," he adds. "Extremely easy to work with, positive, on time, prepared. She knew everyone's name, and didn't distance herself from anything in the production even if it didn't involve her. She was just a dream." For Roberts, who has worked with the likes of Spielberg, Altman, Woody Allen and Neil Jordan, her Soderbergh experience may have been the pinnacle. "Steven gives me a great sense of security and confidence — I love that he runs the camera and is so aware of the precision of our composition and the way things look inside the lens," the Georgia-bred star has said of her fellow Southerner. "He is a constant source of amazement to me. I think I have learned more about filmmaking and have seen it at its very best watching him work here." ▶▶

That filmmaking involved capturing the amazing true story of Erin Brockovich, a woman with no formal education who took a huge public utilities company to court and won. Co-starring Albert Finney, Aaron Eckhart, Peter Coyote and Cherry Jones, it follows the sexy, brash, divorced mother of three as she gets a low-level job at the law firm Masry & Vitoe, and then, instead of just filing, digs up evidence against PG&E, which contaminated water in the small desert town of Hinkley, California — causing devastating illnesses. Not only does Erin help convince more than 600 townsfolk to become plaintiffs (PG&E employed much of the town), but with the help of lawyer Ed Masry (Finney) she ends up winning a \$333 million direct action lawsuit against them, the largest amount ever paid out in such a case. Soderbergh paid homage to the gutsy woman by giving her a small part in the movie. "She plays this waitress [her nametag says Julia] in the diner where Julia is. And the real Ed is in the same scene right behind Julia's shoulder — he's in the next booth."

Soderbergh says Roberts "absolutely captured Erin's energy and spirit," and that his gorgeous starlet wasn't too beautiful for the part. "Erin herself is striking," he says. "If you showed up to a premiere with her on your arm, people would definitely ask you who she was."

To make the \$52 million movie as authentic as possible, Soderbergh met with Erin (as well as other key players) at length; read up on the case; dressed Julia in the mini-mini-skirts, high heels and plunging tops that Erin wears in real life; used a documentary style for an "unadorned" feel; and shot many scenes in the actual town of Hinkley in California's Mojave Desert. In fact, for a key town hall meeting scene in which the townspeople are urged to join the fight, about 40 out of 150 of the extras

were plaintiffs from the real-life case. "It was a very charged atmosphere," Soderbergh recalls. "A lot of them dropped right back into the sensation they felt the day the meeting actually took place."

With *Erin Brockovich* complete, Soderbergh has moved on to two new projects. This month, he is scheduled to start shooting *Traffik*, about a U.S. drug czar who discovers his teenage daughter is an addict. Then in January 2001, he'll start on a loose remake of the 1960 Rat Pack classic *Oceans 11*, about 11 guys who get together to rob casinos. The new version will be set in present day, and, at press, was slated to star hunky Brad Pitt and possibly Julia Roberts again, which would delight Soderbergh: "She's a movie star who also happens to be a great actress, and that's not always the case," he says. "Believe me, she's as good as anybody I've ever seen."

Working with actors like Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt and George Clooney and producing quality films like *Out of Sight* and *Erin Brockovich*... One has to believe that his mentor, the late Michael McCallum, would most certainly be proud of his former apprentice. "He taught me that there was a certain way to do things, and that you have to make things that you believe in and that you can defend," Soderbergh says. With or without those stars, Steven Soderbergh wouldn't have to defend his work to McCallum or anyone. **F**



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famous trivia

1

Which star of *28 Days* was voted "Most Likely to Brighten Up Your Day" by her high school class?

2

Bad girl Carmen Electra appears in the upcoming Keenan Ivory Wayans flick, *Scary Movie*. But which pop superstar "discovered" Electra while she was fronting a rap group in L.A., and then signed her to his label, Paisley Park?

3

Actress Lise Bonet makes a comeback in the new comedy *High Fidelity*. But she became famous for the character she played on *The Cosby Show* and on the spin-off, *A Different World*. What was the character's name?

4

The brother/sister acting duo John and Joan Cusack also appear in *High Fidelity* — the eighth film they have done together. In which one did they co-star with Molly Ringwald?

5

Which of the following actresses has Matthew McConaughey, star of *U-571*, not dated? Sandra Bullock, Drew Barrymore or Ashley Judd?

6

Supermodel Claudia Schiffer plays Greta in the critically acclaimed drama *Black and White*. But in what 1994 comedy did she make her big-screen debut as an aerobics instructor?

7

David Duchovny, star of the romantic comedy *Return to Me*, is best known for playing Agent Fox Mulder on TV's *The X-Files*. On what other creepy TV drama did he appear in three episodes as DEA Agent Dennis/Denise Bryson?

8

The singer/songwriter responsible for much of the music in the new animated feature *The Road to El Dorado* was born Reginald Kenneth Dwight. What name do we know him by?

1] Sandra Bullock 2] The Artist Formerly Known As Prince 3] Denise Huxtable 4] *Sixteen Candles* 5] Drew Barrymore 6] *Richie Rich* 7] *Twin Peaks* 8] Elton John

Mary Harron: The Canadian director is getting attention for her latest movie



MARY MARY QUITE CONTRARY

Is director Mary Harron nuts for bringing the controversial novel *American Psycho* to the screen? According to her, there are darn good reasons for doing this film

By Mark Magee

To the average film director, being told that a fresh-off-the-*Titanic* Leonardo DiCaprio is considering taking the lead role in your next flick is, to say the very least, a not too shabby argument for the existence of God. But for Canadian-born writer/director Mary Harron, the news that Leo was being offered \$20 million to play Wall Street nutcase Patrick Bateman in her adaptation of Bret Easton Ellis' 1991 novel *American Psycho* was nothing short of sacrilege. Claiming DiCaprio simply wasn't right for the part, Harron refused to even meet with him — a decision that led to her getting the boot from the project altogether.

But when DiCaprio eventually passed, Harron — along with her original choice for the lead, British actor Christian Bale — were invited back to bring the most controversial novel in years to the screen. Harron, daughter of light-hearted Canadian comedian/broadcaster Don Harron (aka Charlie Farquharson), made her mark as a punk-rock journalist and documentarian in the U.K., and then in the film world with her directorial debut *I Shot Andy Warhol* (1996) — an edgy and critically-acclaimed foray into the world of hangers-on that surrounded the pop artist.

Now comes *American Psycho*, which is set during the economic boom of the late eighties. Co-starring Bale, Willem Dafoe, Reese Witherspoon and Chloe Sevigny, it tells the story of a yuppie go-getter driven by his need to appear at New York's "right" restaurants, consume high-priced name-brand products, and slaughter homeless bums and hookers. The satirical point — as anyone who lived through the eighties well knows — is that Bateman's world of greed, consumer goods and amorality is nothing more than a slightly twisted reflection of everyday life in Reagan's money-hungry, every-man-for-himself America.

"Rather than a realistic character, Bateman is kind of a compendium of the most extreme tendencies of the late eighties wrapped up in one psychotic package," Harron says from her New York home. "He takes the culture's obsessions to the nth degree. Whereas Bateman's friends despise the poor, he kills them."

But make no mistake about it — satirical device or not, Bateman is a "psychotic package." The violent acts he carries out throughout the book are decidedly sick, a conclusion Harron herself agrees with...to a point. "We thought the violence was a really brilliant satire on alpha male behaviour, but it was too over the top for me — it would have just been too gruesome in a movie. The violence in the book is very cartoony and there probably would have been a way to do it like that, but it really wouldn't have been my style. I wanted to keep it more in the tradition of scary movies, where you're working more on dread than on horror. More like Hitchcock, more building up of fear."

Yet, even after Harron moved much of the violence off-screen into the realm of the implied, the U.S. ratings board threatened to slap it with the dreaded NC-17 rating — a pitfall avoided after a scene involving a loveless tryst between Bale and two prostitutes was re-cut for American audiences. The ironic part? The scene was considered too graphic in its depiction of sex. The inherent contradiction in slapping a movie about a violently psychotic killer on the wrist for showing too much flesh was apparently lost on its would-be censors.

Toronto actress Krista Sutton, who played one of those two prostitutes, was startled to see a headline in one of Canada's major newspapers that blared "Father Rushes to Actress' Aid in Sundance Sex Controversy," after the film's January debut at the Sundance film festival in Utah. And was it true? "No, he was coming to *ski*," says Sutton, who thinks the whole thing has been blown out of proportion. "I think maybe people are reacting to the scene because it's calling up stuff in themselves."

Harron's decision to shy away from slasher-style violence not only makes for a creepier movie, but also allows the film to avoid being labeled just a brainless exercise in exploitative gore. Indeed, while *American Psycho* critiques a specific bygone era, Harron believes the film's satirical observations are just as, if not more so, important today. "I think now it has come back to [the eighties]," she says. "Because the stock market's so booming at the moment, it's actually much more like the late eighties than when I started working on the script four years ago. Now, even though it's internet millionaires rather than stock brokers, there's this great emphasis on making money and aspiration."

It's observations like these — along with her Canadian birth — that makes Harron the perfect choice to helm what will likely be the most anti-American film of the year. "I definitely have an outsider's view of America," notes Harron, "which is actually why I think the film will probably do better and be much better understood in Canada and Europe. It's a very critical view of America."



Sutton (left) with Bale and Cara Seymour in the "controversial" scene

Mark Magee is a freelance writer.

NO FREAK

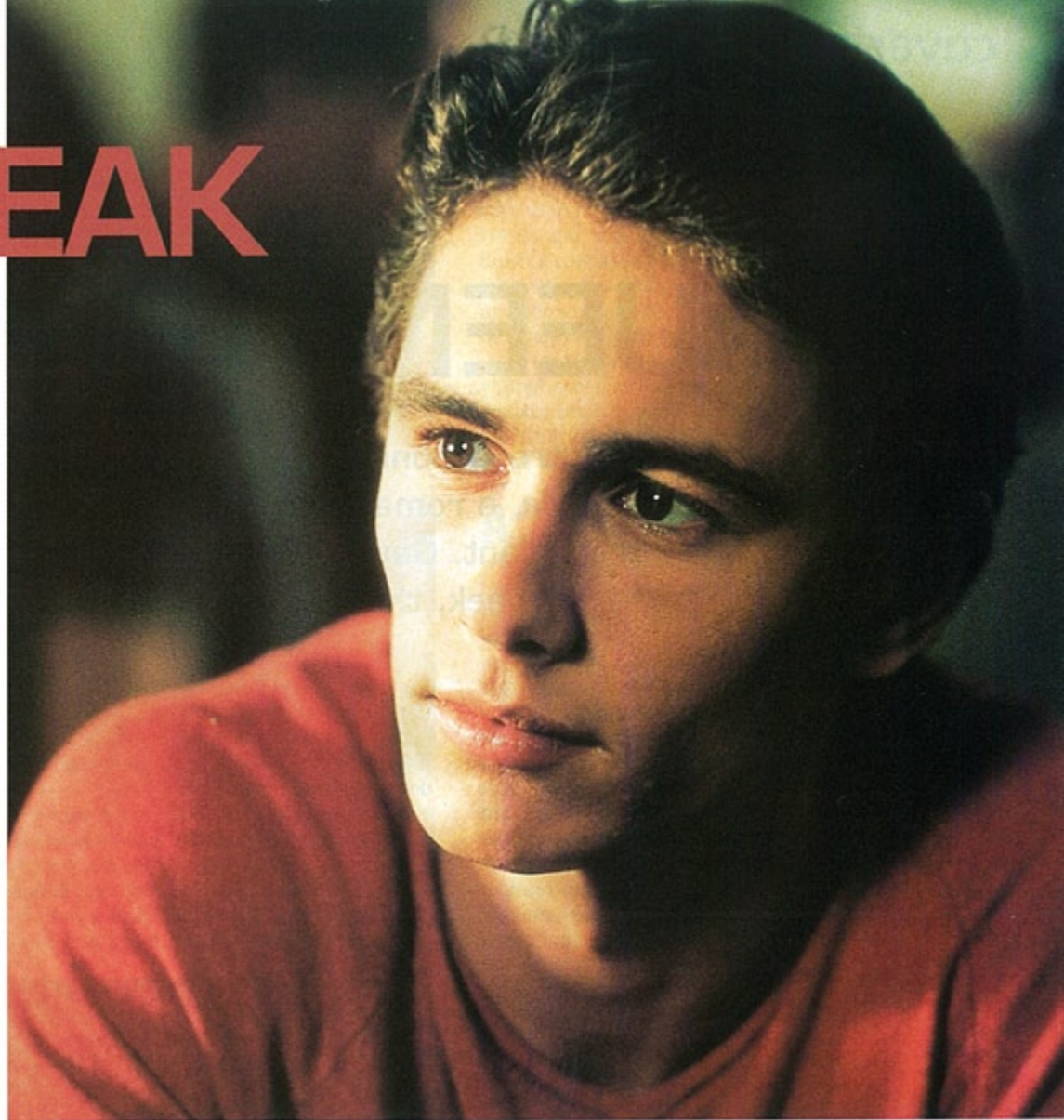
James Franco,
star of TV's
Freaks and Geeks,
shows he has
Whatever It Takes
to star on the big
screen

James Franco, the star of the critically acclaimed TV series *Freaks and Geeks*, makes his feature film debut with a starring role in this month's romantic teen comedy *Whatever It Takes*. The 21-year-old native of Palo Alto, California, plays Chris, a popular jock who comes to the aid of a social outcast. Just two years ago, he quit UCLA to enroll in acting school, and had to work at a McDonald's in the Valley just to pay the bills. Here, Franco talks to *Famous* about that job, his celebrity sweetheart and the new movie.

Tell us about *Whatever It Takes*. It's a very reworked version of *Cyrano de Bergerac* [the 19th century Edmond Rostand play that also inspired Steve Martin's *Roxanne*]. There's no long nose — the Cyrano character's deficiency is that he's socially inept, so he employs me to help him seduce the girl of his dreams because I'm the hot guy on campus. But my character is also in love with his friend, so it's sort of like a switcheroo. The *Cyrano* play is more about pride and having flair in the face of everything, and our movie is more about just coming to grips with yourself.

What's the strangest thing that happened on set? Well, there were many strange things [starts to giggle] but I guess the strangest was that I fell in love with my co-star Marla [*The Practice's* Marla Sokoloff, who plays his on-screen love interest]. I guess the whole movie I'm just trying to seduce her, and it just sort of flowed over. It was very hard to put a read on her, but finally one day we just realized we had these feelings for each other. Now it's been seven months.

She's great on *The Practice*. Isn't she? I wish I could see it more, but she doesn't let me watch it. But we make up for it by watching each episode of my show [*Freaks and*



Geeks) three or four times. [Laughs.]

What were you doing at McDonald's? The very high end of it — the drive-through. It was quite an experience. I have a journal full of stories. I worked the late shift — from about nine to two in the morning — when you get an array of drunks and partyers. And I practice accents, so I'd be doing an Italian accent and the girls would say, "You know, I'm learning Italian — how about you give me some lessons?" [Laughs.] One time I was doing a British accent on this guy that came through. I told him I was an actor from London. And he said, "Oh really, I'm a casting director with *NYPD Blue*." So I had the dilemma right there: Do I tell him? It was going so well, I thought I was going to get a part, and as soon as I cut the accent he freaks out and says, "Oh, I gotta go."

What was your first break? Well, I got out of McDonald's by booking a commercial for Pizza Hut. It paid more in one day than two months at McDonald's. From that point, I did

little spots on TV shows, then a pilot that was like *That 70s Show* called *1973*. It tanked, but the casting director — Allison Jones — also cast *Freaks and Geeks*, and remembered me.

When did you first start acting? I always wanted to act but I was very shy. Then, my senior year at high school, my girlfriend was in this one-act play this guy wrote especially for him and her where they're in love and they're making out on stage. I asked her not to do it and she did it anyway, so to get back at her I joined the drama department and said, "I'm going to do plays too." Maybe if it wasn't for her, I wouldn't be in this.

What kind of roles do you like? Individuals who, for whatever reason, are fighting against the mass. People who have this innate fire — maybe they don't even know why they're doing it, but are just fighting for this artistic goal.

When are you the happiest? When I'm so busy that I can't even sleep. —Marni Weisz

QUEEN OF HEARTS

Actress Bonnie Hunt directs her first movie, *Return to Me*, a romantic comedy that has to do with a heart transplant. Gauging from those who got a sneak peek, this one will warm your heart

By Marni Weisz

So here's the premise: A husband and wife are madly in love. One fateful night, they have a car accident. Wife dies. Flash forward one year. The widower decides to go on a blind date after much urging from a friend. That date, at a Chicago restaurant, is a bust, but he does meet a spirited waitress who makes a magical impression on him. They fall in love. But she

has a secret. One year ago she had a heart transplant, and now discovers — through a fateful turn of events — that the heart that pounds in her chest for this new man was donated by his dead wife.

Sound too schlocky? Too over-the-top? Like movie of the week material? Well, you should know that this movie — *Return to Me*, starring David Duchovny as widower Bob and Minnie Driver as his new heartthrob Grace — has garnered the highest scores from test audiences

in the history of MGM. Perhaps that's because the woman who co-wrote and directed *Return to Me* is acclaimed actress/comedian Bonnie Hunt, whose sharp and realistic sense of humour is always there to reign in this undeniably romantic story.

"Listen, I was shocked by the rating — absolutely shocked," Hunt says from her L.A. home, where she lives with her husband, investment banker John Murphy, whom she herself met on a blind date. "I wrote the movie basically for my family so they'd be proud and happy and get a good laugh out of it. Then to see a whole audience embrace it has been a great joy." Before the first test-screening, an MGM executive told Hunt if they scored in the 60s it would be a good sign. They got a 92. And that first score was no fluke. "It didn't matter where we tested — New Jersey in the middle of winter, the Valley in L.A., it always scored in the 90s," Hunt says.

Although *Return to Me* is a romantic comedy, it contains some honestly teary moments. Duchovny's wrenching turn as a shocked and grieving widower allows him to explore depths that his most famous character, *The X-Files*' Fox Mulder, has never even approached. As for Minnie Driver (*Good Will Hunting*), her biggest feat is managing to convince the audience that she's never had a boyfriend, a result of her fear of being treated like "damaged goods" because of her heart condition. There are also delightful appearances by Joely Richardson (*101 Dalmations*) as Bob's wife, Elizabeth, and Carroll O'Connor (*All in the Family*) as Grace's grandfather, who runs the Irish/Italian restaurant that provides the setting for much of the movie.

But not one of those actors had to go through the rigors of the audition process. "I



Duchovny and Driver share a tender moment

Bonnie Hunt gets serious behind the camera



hate auditioning so no one auditioned," Hunt says. She had seen Driver in *Circle of Friends* (1995) and was impressed. "So I took her to lunch a couple of times. We hit it off: She liked the material, I thought she had the right look and she's a good actress. I also thought she'd be really cute with David."

As for Duchovny, she had a small, sparsely-written scene with him on *Beethoven*, where director Brian Levant encouraged them to ad-lib. It turned out really well and Hunt remembered that when it came time for casting.

Aside from co-writing and directing the film, Hunt also plays Grace's protective and wise-cracking best friend, Megan. It's a humorous role, as most of Hunt's are, which isn't surprising considering she started performing with the well-known Second City improv troupe in her hometown of Chicago in 1986. That's where she first met *Return to Me*'s co-writer, Don Lake, who also has a small, but funny, role in the movie as a guy with a bad hair transplant.

In 1988, Hunt made the jump from Second City to the big screen as the toothpick dropping waitress, Sally Dibbs, in one of *Rain Man*'s most memorable scenes. She went on to play a string of sassy, apple-pie characters like the wifely Alice Newton in *Beethoven* (1992) and *Beethoven's 2nd* (1993); Robin Williams' childhood friend, Sarah Whittle, in *Jumanji* (1995); and Renée Zellweger's sister, Laurel Boyd, in *Jerry Maguire* (1996). (It was *Jerry Maguire* director Cameron Crowe who encouraged her to direct. "I guess it was just me saying 'What about try this, what about try that,'" Hunt says. "Me driving him crazy.")

Then, just last year, she appeared in the most dramatic role of her career as Tom Hanks' wife, Jan Edgecomb, in *The Green Mile*. The performance earned her a nomination for Favorite Supporting Actress in a Drama from the Blockbuster Awards and she admits a small part of her was hoping to hear her name when the Oscar nominations were announced in February. "Absolutely," she says, "but I haven't told anybody that except you and my husband [laughs]. I knew that I wouldn't get one, but it was fun to pretend that maybe it could happen."

Return to Me was her first kick at directing, never mind directing herself. "I never really thought of it as directing myself," she says. "I would just jump in and do the scene and then jump back behind the camera, take a look at it on the monitor and then say, 'Okay, let's move on.' It was easier than having to tell someone else what to do."



▶▶ From the film's opening shot, it's clear that this is going to be a movie about fate. The camera hovers high above Chicago, then slowly descends through a labyrinth of skyscrapers until it finds one particular construction site and one particular architect — Bob Rueland. Then, after his wife's death, Bob has several chance encounters with Grace, leading to the conclusion that they were meant to be together. So does Hunt really believe in fate, or did she just use it as a device to tell a magical story?

"I believe it. I believe that a lot of times we don't know what's happening when the chess pieces are being moved," she says. "We don't know fate until after it's happened. I feel it's always when you decide that you're going to be okay no matter what happens that good things come to you. And I think that's when David [as Bob] finally picks himself up and brushes himself off and thinks, 'I'll go on this date even though I don't want to' that fate intervenes and he meets Grace."

And maybe that fateful story isn't so far-fetched after all. These things do happen, and Hunt would be the first to attest to that. Before she was an actress, comedian, writer or director, Bonnie Hunt was a nurse for five years. Only she almost wasn't. When she was an 18-year-old nursing student in Chicago, her father died suddenly of a heart attack. She was devastated. Thinking she was only in nursing school to make him happy, she wanted to quit. But her mom convinced her to stick it out for one more week. "I went back to school that Monday and I was assigned a patient, Mr. O'Brien, and I remember thinking, 'Oh, here I go, my dad's gone and now I've got this patient who has cancer,'" Hunt says. "I would meet him every morning and get him ready for breakfast, and he would talk about how lucky he was to have cancer because he could say goodbye to his family. And he talked very often of a man who was one of his best friends from work, who was a family man, and who had died very suddenly and didn't have a chance to say goodbye. And by the third day we realized that he was talking about my father."

After that, Bonnie couldn't leave Mr. O'Brien. She was his nurse until he died three months later. She went on to finish school and become a full-fledged nurse. "It was one of the best things that ever happened to me because I was meant to be a nurse," she says. "It was a very important part of my life." Over the next few years, it was her patients — people who were often her age and didn't have much time left — who inspired her to put aside her fears and take a shot at becoming an actress. And, despite not having practised for years, she says she still feels like a nurse. "It's just a different form of nursing — to write and make people laugh and feel good in their heart." **F**

WHAT THE STARS SAY ABOUT *RETURN TO ME*

David Duchovny (Bob Rueland)

"The script of *Return to Me* was so simple and direct, and it wasn't tainted with the kind of cynicism which seems to affect everything else these days. It earns its sentimentality through truth and honesty — with integrity. I just read it and immediately wanted to do it, knowing that Bonnie would be the best director for her own screenplay."

Minnie Driver (Grace Biggs)

"There's a magical element to the entire movie which you must give yourself over to. What happens between Bob and Grace is a little farther over from coincidence, but in the spirit of the film it's not unbelievable. You like these characters so much, you want them to be together...and the film allows the audience to fulfill their wishes."

Travolta, De Niro and Cruise to star in films out late spring and early summer

Titan A. E. (animated)

Stars: voices of Matt Damon, Drew Barrymore, Bill Pullman

Directors: Don Bluth, Gary Goldman

Story: After Earth is ravished by an alien attack, a teenager (Damon) uses a map given to him by his father to find a mysterious "Earthship" called The Titan, a vessel which may save mankind from an eternity of living as nomads and refugees.

The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle

Stars: Robert De Niro, Jason Alexander, Rene Russo

Director: Des McAnuff

Story: In this cartoon/live-action feature based on the animated TV series, villains Boris (Alexander) and Natasha (Russo) escape from jail, find a way to transform themselves from pen and ink to flesh and blood, and hatch a plan to take over the world with the help of The Fearless Leader (De Niro). Rocky and Bullwinkle (still just cartoon characters) have to save the day.



The Patriot

Stars: Mel Gibson, Heath Ledger

Director: Roland Emmerich

Story: After having fought in the French/Indian conflict, Benjamin Martin (Gibson) renounces war and decides not to join the troops during the American Revolution. That is, until the Brits come knocking at his front door.

Dinosaur (animated)

Stars: D.B. Sweeney, Julianna Margulies, Joan Plowright

Directors: Eric Leighton, Ralph Zondag

Story: The buzz is that the animation in this feature will be unlike anything you've seen before — the dinosaurs, for example, are rumored to be even more realistic than those in *Jurassic Park*. All this comes at a price: The budget may exceed *Titanic*'s \$200 million price tag. The story, by the way, revolves around an orphaned dinosaur raised by lemurs (Sweeney), who leads his friends to safety as a giant asteroid heads for Earth.

Battlefield Earth

Stars: John Travolta, Forest Whitaker, Barry Pepper

Director: Roger Christian

Story: Based on the book by L. Ron Hubbard, *Battlefield Earth* takes place in the year 3000, when our planet is little more than an empty wasteland. The few remaining humans are scattered in remote villages, while vicious "Psychlo" aliens pillage the planet for its mineral resources. Travolta plays the villainous Terl, a Psychlo security guard, while Pepper is Jonnie Goodboy Tyler, our hero who dares to leave his village in search of a better life.

Mission Impossible 2

Stars: Tom Cruise, Ving Rhames

Director: John Woo

Story: A deadly virus has been stolen, so Ethan Hunt (Cruise) must lead a mission to track it down. Sounds simple enough, but one by one, his team members are getting killed off. Hunt has to find the perpetrators — a journey that takes him from the bustling streets of Madrid to the busy harbour of Sydney — before he becomes their next victim.

JOHN TRAVOLTA
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A SALAD TO DIE FOR

Sean Penn dines at Halifax restaurant while in town shooting a murder mystery



Sean Penn in *The Game*

Spinach salad — two words that probably don't make you salivate. Sure, the side dish has become a welcome reprieve from the traditional salad, but it's one that rarely inspires devotion.

Sean Penn would disagree — at least when it comes to the spinach salad at The Press Gang restaurant in Halifax, which isn't your typical spinach salad.

"I think people's interest is twiggled when they hear it's a warm spinach salad," says Jennifer Halpin, Press Gang's general manager. "It's an elegant spinach salad and everything in it is good." (That "everything" includes portabella mushrooms, arugula, radicchio, minced garlic, bacon, parmaggiano cheese and, of course, spinach.)

Penn (*The Game*, *Dead Man Walking*, *Sweet and Lowdown*) was in the Halifax area shooting *The Weight of Water*, a movie about a newspaper photographer researching a sensational 19th-century axe murder, when he discovered The Press Gang.

But he's not the only celebrity to frequent the upscale eatery. Halpin says the movie business has mushroomed in Halifax over the past couple of years. In recent months, The Press Gang has served the likes of Glenn Close, Saul Rubinek, Genevieve Bujold and Beau Bridges.

While shooting *Weight of Water*, Penn ate at the restaurant at least half a dozen times — sometimes with co-star Elizabeth Hurley (*Austin Powers*), and sometimes with wife Robin Wright-Penn (*The Princess Bride*) and their two young children. Each time, he started with the spinach salad and often convinced his fellow diners to do the same. Once, he even had the salad delivered to his hotel suite.

Martin Keyzlar, the restaurant's executive chef, says it's a tricky dish to prepare, but the key is to do everything at the proper time and in the proper amounts.

"Basically what you do is put the olive oil on the burner, and the bacon and mushrooms on at the same time, and then you brown the garlic with the mushrooms and the bacon until everything is crispy," he says. "You pick it up off the burner and splash on the balsamic vinegar. In the meantime, you should have already prepared spinach, radicchio, arugula, a pinch of salt, a pinch of pepper and a little bit of grated parmaggiano parmesan cheese."

He says people often make the mistake of adding too much balsamic vinegar. "You just splash it," he says. Too much vinegar changes the taste and cools the salad, which is meant to be served warm.

Keyzlar, who studied at the Culinary Institute in the Czech Republic, says the salad must be served as soon as the warm mixture is tossed with the greens. It can't be reheated, so leftovers should be thrown away.

Weight of Water, directed by Kathryn Bigelow (*Strange Days*), was actually shooting in East Dover, just outside of Halifax, but Halpin says most of the restaurants in that region are "Mom and Pop" places that serve pretty standard fare. So when the celebs found The Press Gang, they made it a regular hangout.

"There was always a question when they

came in as to how secluded they wanted to be," Halpin says. "Elizabeth Hurley didn't really want to be right out in the open. They were looking for a little bit of privacy, but they were very easy going. The restaurant has three smaller dining rooms and they went into the smallest one."

Halpin adds that Penn would also come in alone just to sit at the bar and toss back a few drinks. Maybe he just needed a quiet place to ponder his next spinach salad. — *Marni Weisz*

For reservations, call 902.423.8816.



Executive Chef Martin Keyzlar with his inspiring spinach salad

WHAT YOU NEED TO SERVE FOUR

leaf spinach	2 cups
radicchio	6 to 8 leaves
arugula	4 to 6 leaves
bacon	2 ounces, chopped bite size
button mushrooms	1/2 cup, sliced
portabello mushrooms	1/2 cup, sliced
garlic	1 tablespoon, minced
olive oil	1/4 cup
parmaggiano	1/4 cup, grated
balsamic vinegar	1 to 2 tablespoons
salt and pepper	to taste

Method: Place spinach, radicchio and arugula in a bowl. Over medium heat, sauté bacon, mushrooms and garlic in olive oil. When garlic starts to brown, add balsamic vinegar and mix gently. Pour warm mixture over greens and toss. Sprinkle in parmaggiano, add salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

CROWE IN A PLUM ROLE, SPIELBERG TRIES SCI-FI AND KEANU SELLS FURNITURE

CROWE FLIES TO FOSTER



Foster

Aussie Oscar nominee **Russell Crowe** (*The Insider*; *L.A. Confidential*) will star in a Depression-era flick called *Flora Plum* to be directed by **Jodie Foster** (*Little Man Tate*). Crowe, who is good pals with Foster, will play a circus freak who has a major crush on a penniless waif (**Claire Danes**) and helps her become famous. The film, which Foster picked over *Hannibal*, will be shot in early fall to accommodate Crowe's schedule. He is already booked to star with **Meg Ryan** in a movie based on "Adventures in the Ransom Trade," a *Vanity Fair* article.

NORTON A THIEF?

It looks like **Edward Norton** (*Fight Club*, *Primal Fear*) will star opposite **Robert De Niro** in *The Score*, about a master thief (De Niro) who decides to retire on his plentiful savings, but is coerced by an up-and-coming burglar (Norton) into doing one last heist. **Frank Oz** (*In and Out*) will direct, and **Marlon Brando** may co-star as De Niro's fence. Norton will get \$6.5 million for the role, which was originally supposed to be played by **Ben Affleck**. De Niro will reportedly rake in a whopping \$15 mil. Shooting is scheduled to start this month in Montreal.

SPIELBERG'S FUTURE

Now that **Steven Spielberg** has turned down an offer to do *Harry Potter*, it looks like he will be turning his attention to a futuristic sci-fi action thriller called *Minority Report*. And for the first time, he could be joining forces with **Tom Cruise**, who would play a cop in the "Pre-Crimes" division. The plot is based on a story by Philip K. Dick (*Blade Runner*) and sees Cruise's brother convicted of being about to commit a murder (ah, the wonders of technology). This project, or any other project for that matter, is contingent on Spielberg's health — remember, he had a kidney removed a couple of months ago.

BENTLEY DRIVES ON

Hot young actor **Wes Bentley** is being considered for a lead role in the next **Michael Bay** (*The Rock*) project — an untitled and expensive (Disney is shelling out about \$135 mil) *Titanic*-like love story set in the Pearl Harbor period. The Arkansas native Bentley, who shone in *American Beauty*, would play one of two Tennessee-bred fighter pilot pals who fall for the same nurse (it could be **Charlize Theron**) around the time of the December 7, 1941 Japanese attack on the U.S. naval base. Shooting is scheduled to start this month for a Memorial Day 2001 release.

KEANU'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURES

Before **Keanu Reeves** (*Speed*) does two *Matrix* sequels this fall, he will reportedly play an ex-porn star turned New Jersey furniture salesman in the bizarre comedy *The Ottoman Empire*, in which he gets blackmailed into having an affair with the First Lady. Reeves has also signed on to play an abusive husband in **Sam Raimi's** (*A Simple Plan*) small-budget psychological thriller *The Gift*, which co-stars **Cate Blanchett**, **Greg Kinnear** and, possibly, **Hilary Swank**, who was nominated for an Oscar for her role in *Boys Don't Cry*.



Cruise



Reeves

PRaise JONZE

Spike Jonze (*Being John Malkovich*) is trying to bring a strange F. Scott Fitzgerald short story to the big screen. The 30-year-old Jonze (his real name is Adam Spiegel), could direct *Benjamin Button*, based on Fitzgerald's "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," about an old man who ages backward. Jonze, who has directed killer videos for the **Beastie Boys** ("Sabotage") and **Fat Boy Slim** ("Praise You"), also made his acting debut last year in *Three Kings*.

BRIEFLY

♦ **Matt LeBlanc** (*Friends*) has signed on to the *Charlie's Angels* flick — he will play the love interest of a curvaceous crime-fighter played by **Lucy Liu** (*Ally McBeal*). ♦ **Eddie Murphy** (*The Nutty Professor*; *Doctor Dolittle*) may do another remake, this time with *The Incredible Shrinking Man*. He's also doing a sequel to *Doctor Dolittle*, which could pay him \$20 mil. ♦ **John Travolta** is considering *Travel Agent*, a time-travel thriller about a man who travels back in time to stop an assassination. ♦ **Joel Schumacher**, who brought us the 1987 vampire flick *The Lost Boys* (starring Jason Patric), may direct a female version of the film, *The Lost Girls*. Could this be another franchise?

OUT OF AFRICA

Femi Kuti is doing what his legendary father couldn't do: Bring the seductive Afrobeat to North American shores

By Matthew McKinnon

Fela Anikulapo Kuti, the father of Afrobeat (the fusion of traditional African percussion with uptempo jazz and funk hooks), is to Nigeria what Bob Marley is to Jamaica. A classically-trained saxophonist, pianist and vocalist, Fela was lionized by the underclasses for his lyrical attacks on Nigeria's military government.

Fela died of AIDS-related complications in 1997, but his spirit lives on in the form of his son, Nigeria-based Femi Kuti. With the recent release of his album *Shoki Shoki* in the U.S. and Canada, the 36-year-old Femi, a singer and saxophonist who, like his father, has mastered circular breathing (inhaling and exhaling at once), is on the verge of doing what his father couldn't: Hitting it big in North America. (He's currently on a tour that has three stops in Canada — Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.)

"Femi is up for a unique role as the man who may bridge African and American pop and raise awareness in a community that's sadly ill-informed about Africa," says Vivien Goldman, who recently wrote a Femi profile for *Spin*. "America has been way behind Europe [Femi's lusty lead single, 'Beng Beng Beng,' topped the European dance charts last year] as far as appreciation of world music goes."

Femi's first two albums never made it big here — 1987's *No Cause for Alarm* didn't even make it across the ocean, and 1995's *Wonder Wonder* had a worldwide release with Motown but got lost in the shuffle when the label's African division folded. But *Shoki Shoki* comes at a time when domestic audiences are primed for world music — thank you Ry Cooder — and is tinged with just enough North American funk and house rhythms to make it count on this side of the Atlantic.

Indeed, *Shoki Shoki* could become this year's Buena Vista Social Club. Universal Music has thrown its weight behind the album;

hip American artists like D'Angelo and Lauryn Hill all spent time in the studio with Femi last year for their own projects; and the Grammy-winning band The Roots remixed his consciousness-raising "Blackman Know Yourself" on the American version of *Shoki Shoki*.

This isn't the first time African music has invaded North America. Youssou N'Dour, Baaba Maal and Ladysmith Black Mambazo are relatively well-known here, although primarily for their work with the "Great White Hunters of the pop pantheon," as *Salon* writer Cynthia Joyce has called Cooder, David Byrne, Keith Richards and Peter Gabriel. N'Dour and Maal provided the strongest moments on *Passion*, Gabriel's 1989 soundtrack to *The Last Temptation of Christ*; and the South African group Mambazo were featured on Paul Simon's Grammy-winning 1986 album *Graceland*.

The tradition is continuing big-time with Femi, who's in the right place at the right time. And while his collaborations with Hill, et al. have raised his profile, it remains to be seen whether he will break large here because of what he has achieved — an album that fuses his father's music with that of James Brown — or for his work as a sideman on other artist's projects.

"Collaborations with big American names are traditionally regarded as an entrée to mass taste," Goldman says, "but nothing can ultimately castrate the seductive propulsion of Afrobeat." Femi, for his part, remains unconcerned. As he told Goldman, his goals are simple. "I want people on the dance floor to listen and say, 'Who's playing that saxophone?'"

Matthew McKinnon is the assistant editor of Shift magazine.

Femi Kuti performs at The Spectrum in Montreal on March 26, The Phoenix in Toronto on March 29, and Richards on Richards in Vancouver on April 3.



out this month

Artist: Violent Femmes
Title: Freak Magnet
Label: Beyond/EMI

Artist: Supergrass
Title: Supergrass
Label: Parlophone/EMI

Artist: Jann Arden
Title: Blood Red Cherry
Label: Universal

Artist: The Headstones
Title: Nickels For Your Nightmares
Label: Universal

Artist: No Doubt
Title: Return Of Saturn
Label: Interscope/Universal

Artist: Chumbawamba
Title: Wysiwyg
Label: Universal

Artist: Elliott Smith
Title: Figure 8
Label: DreamWorks/Universal

Artist: Tracy Bonham
Title: Down Here
Label: Island/Universal

Artist: Joni Mitchell
Title: Both Sides Now
Label: Warner Brothers

Artist: Pantera
Title: Reinventing The Steel
Label: Elektra/Warner

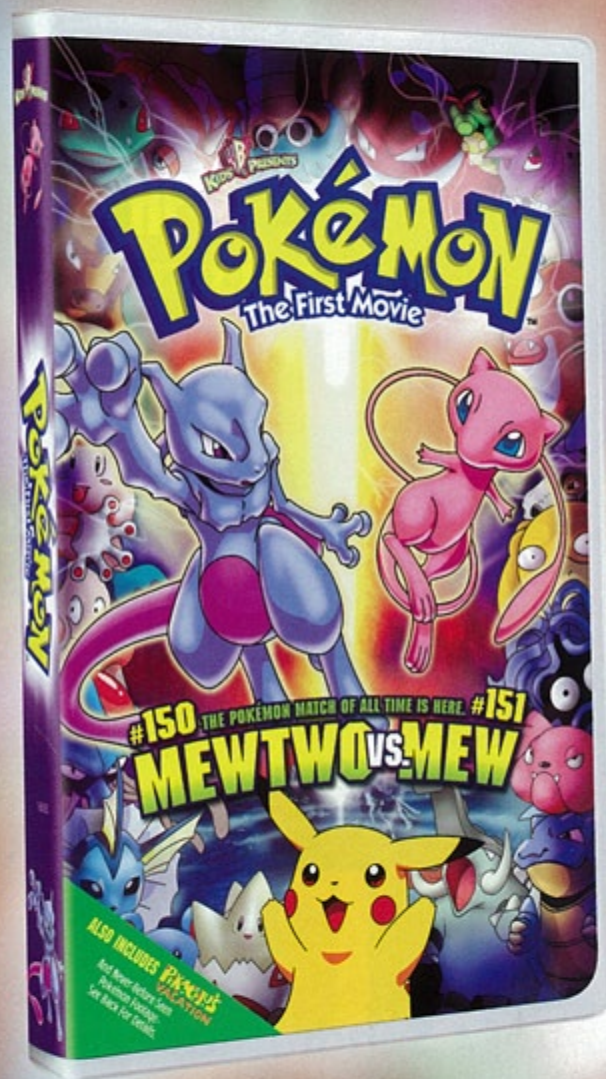
Artist: Lou Reed
Title: Ecstasy
Label: Warner Brothers

Artist: Cypress Hill
Title: Skull and Bones
Label: Columbia

Artist: Pink Floyd
Title: Is There Anybody Out There/The Wall Live 1980-81
Label: Columbia

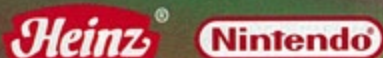
Artist: Ice Cube
Title: War and Peace: Volume 2
Label: Priority

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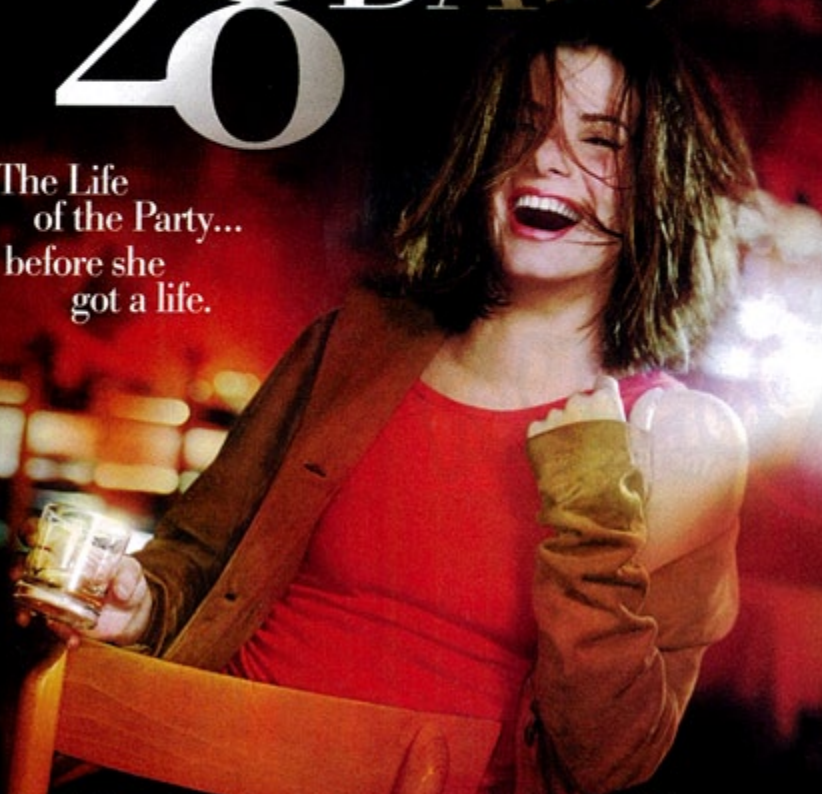


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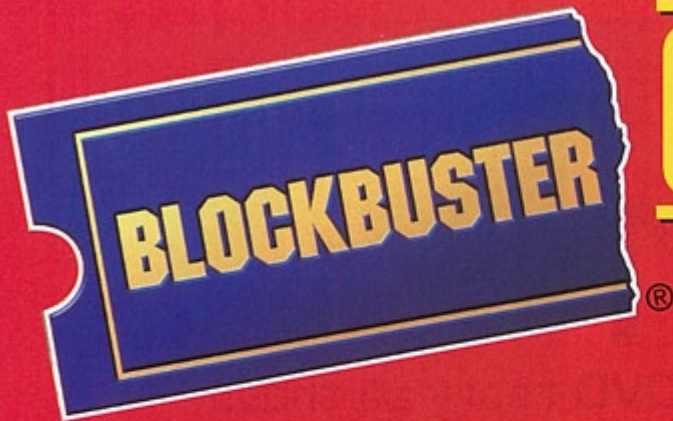
Answer: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Province: _____ Postal Code: _____ Telephone: _____

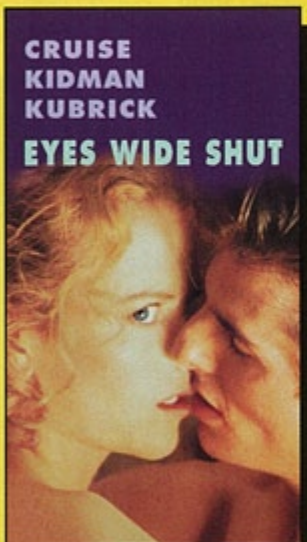
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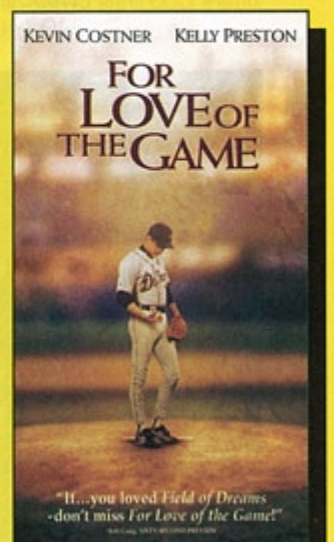
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MARCH 22



APRIL 4

DVD 101

It's all the rage right now, but is DVD really all that? Here's a primer on what you should know **BY DAVID RUSK**

Everywhere you turn these days, you hear DVD this, DVD that. Many converts now swear by these digital versatile discs (aka "digital video discs"), refusing to watch or listen to anything else. The DVD, which was the talk of the recent Consumer Electronics Show — the largest exhibition of its kind on the planet — is so hot that the likes of Blockbuster, Rogers Video, Future Shop, HMV and Wal-Mart are having to clear more and more space on their shelves for them, and electronics manufacturers are scrambling to keep up with the demand for DVD players.

All told, DVD hardware sales totaled about \$75 million in Canada last year, and that number is expected to rise dramatically this year. But many of us are still confused about whether we should pay more money, and forsake our VCRs and substantial VHS collections, for them. Here is the vital info that may help you decide.

Can I detect a difference between a DVD and VHS tape? Yes, the naked eye can easily detect an improvement in picture and sound over the standard VHS format. DVD offers 500 lines of horizontal resolution compared to VHS's 240 lines, not to mention

theatre-quality sound. Plus, a light beam reads the digital info stored on the disc, which means there's never any deterioration of the image with continued usage like there is with VHS tapes.

What makes them "versatile"? A wide variety of special features that can include interviews with directors and actors; a choice of languages via audio or subtitles; cast and crew info; and endings and scenes that didn't make the final cut. Plus, DVD players can handle both widescreen (theatrical) and pan-and-scan (TV-formatted) films; allow you direct access to specific scenes through menus; and can play audio CDs. Biggest bonus: You don't have to rewind.

Where did DVD come from? DVD players, the hardware needed to play DVD discs or audio compact discs, first appeared in Japan in late 1996, and debuted in Canada in early 1997. But before that could happen, all of the electronics manufacturers had to come to an agreement on one hardware/software format (they wanted to avoid the Beta-VHS war that happened during the early days of videotape), and the Hollywood studios had to be given enough proof that their releases

couldn't be pirated. (The studios are still very much concerned about the possibility of movies being pirated over the web. Earlier this year, the seven largest U.S. movie studios — Buena Vista Pictures, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Paramount Pictures, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Twentieth Century Fox Film, Universal Studios, and Warner Bros — and the DVD industry filed lawsuits in order to prevent several internet sites from distributing a program that would potentially allow users to copy DVD movies.)

How are DVD players selling? Like hotcakes. They have set an industry record as the fastest selling consumer electronics product in history — only the advent of the black and white TV comes close to matching this. DVD player sales rose 371 percent last year, and the Consumer Electronics Association predicts more than 6 million units (amounting to \$1.5 billion) will be sold this year in the U.S.; nearly 4 million were sold there last year, up dramatically from 350,000 in 1997. The Consumer Electronic Marketers of Canada estimates that almost half a million units will ship here this year, compared with 210,000 units in 1999, and 27,000 in 1997 — their first year here.

DVD

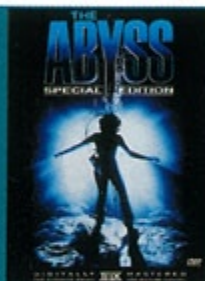
FAMOUS
RECOMMENDS



THE MATRIX

At the end of 1999, *The Matrix* was the No. 1 selling DVD in North America — probably because of all the add-ons, including a feature-length audio commentary by co-star Carrie-Anne Moss;

interactive menus; filmographies; and two special effects documentaries. Through the DVD-ROM drive of your computer, you can also access a game, screenplay, storyboards, screensaver, poster and links to chat rooms.



THE ABYSS: SPECIAL EDITION

This DVD was just released this month and includes 30 minutes of added footage; captions explaining the special effects; 3D animated interactive menu screens; a one-

hour documentary; and storyboards. Through your PC, the interactive DVD-ROM gives you access to the screenplay and other bonus footage; and two interactive games — *Titanic Explorer* and *Alien vs. Predator*.

101



How much do DVDs cost? They range in price from 10 to 50 bucks, depending on a number of variables — for example, specialty foreign titles can be pricey. But on average, they're about \$25 to \$30.

How much are DVD players? With several electronics manufacturers on at least their third series of players, the costs have started to come down considerably — which is one reason sales are picking up. They now range from \$200 (at discount retailers) to \$2,500 (at no-discount-here retailers). For those who can't afford to go too high, 500 loonies will get you a quality player.

How many DVD titles are there? There are more than 5,000 movie titles available, and that number will continue to increase steadily.

Where can I purchase DVD players and discs? At all electronics and major department stores. Discs can also be found in video and music stores, and on the internet at DVD sites like dvdempire.com and dvdresource.com, as well as places like Amazon.com.

What is going on with DVDs and computers? For almost three years now, DVD-ROM

drives have been available in home computers and provide options that aren't available through conventional DVD players. Titles like *The Matrix* and *Ronin* offer fans of the DVD format computer applications — challenging games, additional movie info, worthwhile internet links — through their DVD-ROM capabilities. While DVD-ROM drives will work with your current CD-ROM titles, DVD-ROM discs aren't compatible with CD-ROM drives.

What's the next DVD rage going to be? Probably DVD-Audio stereos, which are expected to be introduced in North America sometime this year, and will be able to play regular CDs. But whereas CDs work on only two channels, DVD-Audio discs have the capacity to handle five channels of sound, offering better quality audio with a wider range of sound. Eventually, when prices come down, we'll probably see recordable DVD players take off as well. Also, look for DVD players from companies such as Toshiba and Samsung to start to come equipped with internet access. In fact, Samsung has said that users will be able to access the net from their players as early as this year.

Have we seen the end of the traditional VHS format? Nope. "I don't think VHS has a thing to worry about for a long time to come," says Brian Lang, marketing manager for television and DVD with Panasonic Canada. Recordable DVD players, and DVD discs, have yet to hit the North American marketplace (they are available in Japan), and when they do (likely early in 2001, but possibly later this year), they will be too expensive for most consumers, Lang says — possibly as much as \$5,000. And blank discs will go for around \$30, much more than a VHS tape.

DVD on the web

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www.dvdfile.com
www.dvdinsider.com
www.dvdaddicts.com
www.digitalbits.com
www.dvdresource.com
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BEST LAID PLANS

The DVD for this thriller about Nick (Alessandro Nivola), his girlfriend Lissa (Reese Witherspoon) and his college friend, Bryce (Josh Brolin), who get caught up in a web of crime, features

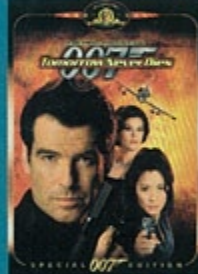
two things no fan of the movie will want to miss — an alternate ending and deleted scenes. It also contains the original theatrical trailers and TV spots, as well as director's commentary.



TAXI DRIVER: COLLECTOR'S EDITION

This Martin Scorsese classic (starring Robert De Niro and Jodie Foster), has been digitally remastered and released with a "Making Of" documentary; talent bios and filmographies;

theatrical trailers; a photo montage/portrait gallery; and even a storyboard sequence. This collector's edition is also available with English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Korean and Thai subtitles.



TOMORROW NEVER DIES: SPECIAL EDITION

Features a widescreen version of the flick; audio commentary from director Roger Spottiswoode; storyboard overlay that compares initial concepts with the final

film; a "Secrets of 007" featurette that follows the evolution of the series; information about digital effects; and a music-only track which includes an interview with the movie's composer.

POP CULTURE, BEHIND THE SCENES GOSSIP AND SLAVES ON SCREEN

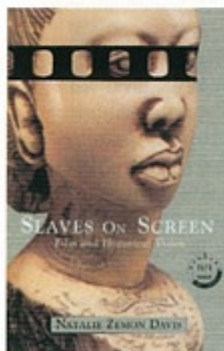
Slaves on Screen: Film and Historical Vision

by Natalie Zemon Davis

(\$18, Random House)

While working as a consultant on the Paris set of *The Return of Martin Guerre* (1982), historian Natalie Zemon Davis had an epiphany: When done right, a film set can provide a playground on which we can "try out the past." Now this Torontonian, who has taught at both

Princeton and Berkeley, has written a book about the pros and cons of capturing history on film. The central message? "It is possible to do really good film and good history — the imagination guided by the evidence, rather than the imagination working in a misleading way against the evidence," she says. She picked a theme — slavery — and five movies — *Spartacus* (1960), *Burn!*



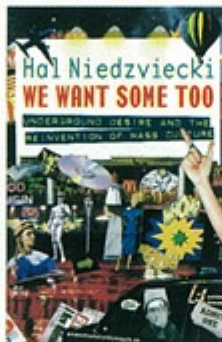
(1969), *The Last Supper* (1976), *Amistad* (1997) and *Beloved* (1998) — and set out to examine just how well they did in terms of both "getting it right" and entertainment value. The result is a studious and scholarly dissection of those five films combined with copious descriptions of scenes, plot and character. And how do those films look under the historian's microscope? "The two that are the most consistently valuable historically are *The Last Supper* and *Beloved*," she says. *Beloved*? Oprah Winfrey's *Beloved* that was roundly panned by critics and a box office dud? "It's a conscious fictionalizing of a story," Zemon Davis says, "but for its kind of story it's very well endowed with cultural accuracy."

We Want Some Too

by Hal Niedzviecki

(\$18, Penguin)

Hal Niedzviecki has everything going for him — he won the 1999 Alexander Ross Award for Canada's best new magazine journalist, and has a monthly column in the *National Post*. Plus, he seems like a happy enough guy — he's constantly giggling. So where does the 29-year-old get off writing *We Want Some Too*, a book about his disenfranchised generation and the general malaise that defines them? That's just it, he says. No matter how well this generation does, its success will always be tempered by self-inflicted comparisons to pop culture icons. Take his



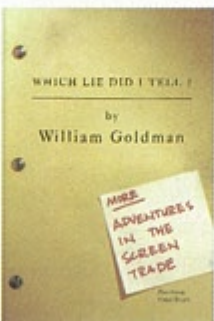
consciousness? Probably not." That book is comprised of dense, spiraling essays about things like marketing, depression, the counterculture and McJobs. But Niedzviecki would be the first to point out that most in his generation are leading pretty comfortable lives. So, just what is the "Some" in *We Want Some Too*? "Well that's the question," he says. "I don't think there's an answer to that. There isn't a thing that we can point to, and this is sort of the trap of pop culture."

Which Lie Did I Tell?

by William Goldman

(\$39, Random House)

He's written more than 24 screenplays — *Absolute Power* (1997), *The Ghost and the Darkness* (1996), *Maverick* (1994), *Misery* (1990), and *All the President's Men* (1976), among them. He had a big hit with his last book, *Adventures in the Screen Trade*, a tell-all about the business behind Hollywood movies. Now comes *Which Lie Did I Tell?*, with more behind-the-scenes gossip, stories and insight from the man who has worked with just about everyone who's anyone. The likes of Mel Gibson, Kathy Bates, Michael Douglas and Clint Eastwood had no idea that the amusing moments they shared with Goldman would become anecdotes in his book. But between the pages of *Which Lie Did I Tell?* you'll find a heap of dirt from each of the author's past 15 movies. For would-be screenwriters, the most interesting part comes when Goldman gets some of today's finest screenwriters to analyze a screenplay he wrote specifically for them to dissect.



book, for example: "You'll think to yourself, 'Well, I'm doing this, but what's really the point here? It's already been done.

Are two million people going to see it? No. Is it going to be a sitcom? No. Is it actually going to make a ripple in the mass media con-

sciousness? Probably not." That book is comprised of dense, spiraling essays about things like marketing, depression, the counterculture and McJobs. But Niedzviecki would be the first to point out that most in his generation are leading pretty comfortable lives. So, just what is the "Some" in *We Want Some Too*? "Well that's the question," he says. "I don't think there's an answer to that. There isn't a thing that we can point to, and this is sort of the trap of pop culture."

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—Marni Weisz

out this month

Burt Lancaster: An American Life
Author: Kate Buford

Now that Lancaster is gone, Buford becomes the first to write about him with the cooperation of his widow, close friends and colleagues. The story follows the screen idol as he leaves Depression-era Harlem, joins the circus, then lands in Hollywood.

Get Happy: The Life of Judy Garland
Author: Gerald Clarke

Clarke did more than 500 interviews in the 10 years it took him to write and research this book. The result is a thorough documentation of the starlet's life from her childhood stage performances through her struggle to find a niche at MGM.

Ravelstein

Author: Saul Bellow

From the Pulitzer and Nobel prize winning author comes this new novel about Abe Ravelstein, a brilliant professor at a prominent Midwestern university.

By My Side

Authors: Mary Jo Eustace and Johanna Weinstein

Eustace, star of TV's *What's for Dinner*, and Weinstein, a "food stylist", deliver an exciting collection of tantalizing side dishes in this attractive book of recipes.

The Ultimate Sleepover Party Book

Author: Debra Mostow Zakarin

Aimed at young girls, this book is packed with ideas to make their sleepover parties the talk of the neighbourhood. From cool invitations to funky party themes to groovy games, the advice is invaluable for anyone who likes to entertain in their PJs.

Simpsons Comics A-Go-Go

Author: Matt Groening

In this latest book based on the animated TV-show, Professor Frink manages to create an alternate universe in which Marge is Mayor and Homer is a hitman.

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Coliseum Ottawa

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Moncton 8

Paramount Montreal

Colisée Kirkland

SilverCity Polo Park

Coliseum Calgary

SilverCity West
Edmonton Mall

SilverCity Riverport

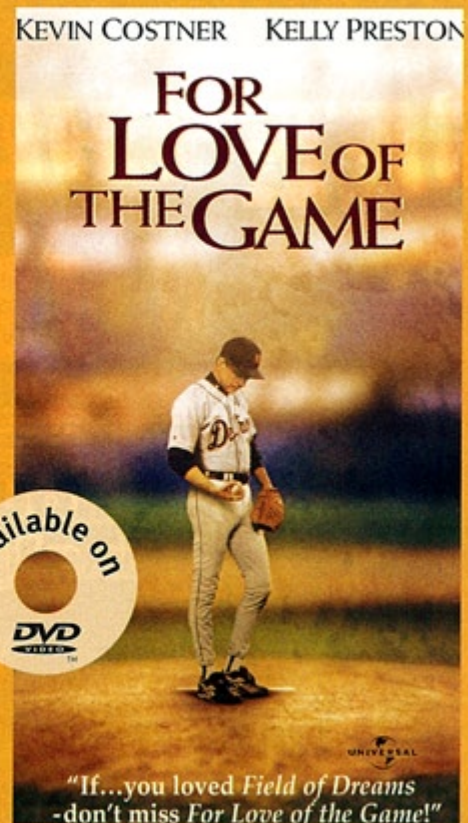
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PHYLLIS DILLER

makes her picks and talks about life at 82

Phyllis Diller, the ground-breaking comedienne and star of such films as *Splendor in the Grass*, *The Sunshine Boys* and *A Bug's Life*, is still delighting live audiences across the continent — and loving every minute of it. Before a recent show, the woman who puts the fright in fright-wig talked to *Famous* about her five favourite films, performing live, upcoming projects and who should play her in the story of her life.



Keith Houghton

ON HER FIVE FAVOURITE FILMS I'd have to say *Love Affair* — Bening and Beatty. It was about such civilized people handling tragedy in such a civilized manner. And, I like all three *A Star is Born*. Imagine seeing all three of them. [Laughs.] They each fit their era and it was wonderful the way they brought the one for Streisand up to date. It was so true about a studio trying to change a person and wrecking them. And it is also a true story of what happens when two show-people are married and the woman gets more famous than the man. That's a very bad thing. A man can't handle that — I'm speaking from experience. In the case of *A Star is Born*, he was over and she was hot, hot, hot, and every time the phone rings it's for her. The way they handled it in the Streisand version — when she came home, he was in bed with someone who came to interview her — was nice. *You Can't Take It With You* is my fifth choice: I like a story about crazy people who are living a red-hot life and enjoying it. And those wonderful stars — Lionel Barrymore, Mischa Auer... I forget who else, but they were all characters. Like, give me 10 character actors and I've got a movie. I can't stand violence and too much sexuality.

ON HER UPCOMING PROJECTS I've got a couple of movies coming out. One is called *The Debtors*. Randy Quaid is in it and I play his grandmother — his 90-year-old grandmother. [Rolls her eyes.] And as for the other movie — Christ, I don't even know the name of it. Isn't that awful? Anyway, I just turned down two movies because to me they were absolutely pornographic, dirty. One of them I had to leave — I hadn't read the script, but my manager had said "Yes" and then I got on set and thought, I can't do it.

ON WHO SHOULD PLAY HER IN THE STORY OF HER LIFE You know, they're going to do it and I can't even tell them who should play me. I'm not that current with young people. The person that's handling it wants the girl that plays in *Dharma and Greg* — yeah, Jenna Elfman. I think it should be a comic. The delivery of the lines is so important.

ON PERFORMING LIVE I work so fast. This trip, I go from New York to Dakota, to here to there to here.... It just gets to be a blur. It doesn't make an impression. But it's fun. It's wonderful to hear real-live laughs. It's one of the major thrills of your life.

ON LIVING IN LOS ANGELES I'll always live there. I have a lovely house and I'll be there forever. I couldn't move. It would take a forklift. —Marni Weisz

more info on Diller's picks

(all available on video)

LOVE AFFAIR (1994)

Stars: Warren Beatty, Annette Bening, Katherine Hepburn

Director: Glenn Gordon Caron

Story: Beatty plays Mike Gambrell, a former football player turned sportscaster who meets Terry McKay (Bening) on a plane that's forced to make an emergency landing. Although they're both engaged to other people, they become romantically involved. To test whether the attraction is real, they plan to meet three months later. Will they both show up?

A STAR IS BORN (1937)

Stars: Frederic March, Janet Gaynor

Director: William Wellman

Story: March plays Norman Maine, an alcoholic, self-destructive actor whose marriage to up-and-coming actress Esther Blodgett (Gaynor) pushes him into an even deeper depression.

A STAR IS BORN (1954)

Stars: Judy Garland, James Mason

Director: George Cukor

Story: In this musical remake of the 1937 classic, Garland plays Esther Blodgett and gives a performance that received rave reviews. Many consider this version to be the best of the three.

A STAR IS BORN (1976)

Stars: Barbra Streisand, Kris Kristofferson

Director: Frank Pierson

Story: The musical is updated by making Streisand's character a contemporary singer and Kristofferson an over-the-hill rocker.

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU (1938)

Stars: Lionel Barrymore, Mischa Auer,

Jean Arthur, Jimmy Stewart

Director: Frank Capra

Story: Alice Sycamore (Arthur) falls in love with her boss, Tony Kirby (Stewart). But the relationship is put in jeopardy when Alice has to introduce Tony to her blissfully happy, but rather eccentric, family.

NEW RELEASES

Insider, *Sixth Sense* and *Phantom Menace* among month's best video fare

The Sixth Sense (March 28)

Stars: Bruce Willis, Haley Joel Osment

Director: M. Night Shyamalan

Story: Osment plays a little boy who sees ghosts. Too young to understand his terrifying visions (they aren't Casper), he decides to confide in Dr. Malcolm Crowe (Willis). The result: A happy boy, a surprise ending, an Oscar nomination for Osment and a best pic nomination for the movie.



Griffith

Crazy in Alabama (March 28)

Stars: Melanie Griffith, David Morse

Director: Antonio

Banderas

Story: In summer 1965, an Alabama housewife (played by Griffith) escapes the clutches of her abusive husband and sets out for Hollywood to pursue her dreams of TV stardom. This film marks the directorial debut of Griffith's hunky actor-husband.

Free Enterprise (March 28)

Stars: William Shatner, Eric McCormack

Director: Robert Meyer Burnett

Story: Two *Star Trek* fanatics have their whole belief system thrown into disarray when they meet William Shatner and find out he's a schmuck who's trying to promote a musical about Julius Caesar in which he will play all the parts.

Star Wars: Episode 1 The Phantom Menace (April 4)

Stars: Liam Neeson, Ewan McGregor, Natalie Portman, Jake Lloyd

Director: George Lucas

Story: *Phantom Menace* takes place one generation before Luke Skywalker met Princess Leia. Their father, Darth Vader, is still just a sweet little boy (Lloyd) whose future is undetermined. McGregor plays a young Obi-Wan Kenobi and Neeson his Jedi mentor, Qui-Gon Jinn. All of them must protect young Queen Amidala (Portman) who is, herself, trying to protect her homeworld of Naboo.

For Love of the Game (April 4)

Stars: Kevin Costner, Kelly Preston

Director: Sam Raimi

Story: Pitcher Billy Chapel (Costner) has been the heart of the Detroit Tigers for two decades, but then his girlfriend tells him she's leaving and he finds out he's going to be traded. Instead of pouting, he goes out and throws a perfect game with a gimpy arm — all the while reminiscing about his stellar career and rocky relationship.

The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc (April 4)

Stars: Milla Jovovich, John Malkovich

Director: Luc Besson

Story: In 19th century France, a young peasant girl thinks she hears the voice of God telling her to come to the aid of her king and defeat the English forces invading her country. Is she just hearing things?

Superstar (April 11)

Stars: Molly Shannon, Harland Williams

Director: Bruce McCulloch

Story: In this *SNL* spinoff, social outcast Mary Katherine Gallagher pursues her dream of a) becoming a superstar; and b) French-kissing the hero of the football team. Director McCulloch is best-known as one of the wacky Kids in the Hall.

The Insider (April 11)

Stars: Al Pacino, Russell Crowe

Director: Michael Mann

Story: This Oscar-nominated drama is based on the true tale of *60 Minutes* producer Lowell Bergman (Pacino) and scientist Jeffrey Wigand (Crowe, who received an Oscar nom-



Pacino and Crowe



Perry and Campbell

ination for best actor). When the pair team up to reveal cigarette secrets, they find the higher-ups at CBS aren't willing to take on the tobacco industry.

Three to Tango (April 11)

Stars: Neve Campbell, Matthew Perry, Dylan McDermott

Director: Damon Santostefano

Story: Oscar Novak (Perry) is a young architect trying to impress his tycoon boss, Charles Newman (McDermott). So when Newman mistakes the heterosexual Novak for homosexual and asks him to keep an eye on his mistress, Amy Post (Campbell), he's forced to play along. Things get even more complicated when Novak realizes he's falling in love with Amy.

End of Days (April 18)

Stars: Arnold Schwarzenegger, Gabriel Byrne, Robin Tunney

Director: Peter Hyams

Story: When the devil (Byrne) decides to come to earth in corporeal form and impregnate a woman (Tunney) with his demon seed, the woman turns to an ex-cop (Ahnuld) for protection — no, not *that* kind of protection.

Fight Club (April 25)

Stars: Brad Pitt, Edward Norton

Director: David Fincher

Story: Norton plays a disillusioned car-maker whose life changes when he meets a stranger (Pitt) on a plane. He's then introduced to a secret world where men find release from the tedium of their pointless lives by beating each other senseless. Based on the novel by Chuck Palahniuk.

Three Kings (April 11)

Stars: George Clooney, Mark Wahlberg, Ice Cube, Spike Jonze

Director: David O. Russell

Story: After the Gulf War, four American soldiers in Iraq set out to find a cache of gold reportedly hidden by Saddam Hussein somewhere near their desert base. Along the way they meet a dangerous challenge that will change their lives forever.

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STAR GAZING

By Dan Liebman

ARIES

March 21-April 20

Public places are where you'll have fun early in the month (but don't make it the George Michael kind). The second and third weeks highlight your conservative side in fiscal matters, although spontaneity is key in matters of the heart. And take note: An offbeat work-related alliance could prove a winner. Relatives, especially your in-laws, may astound you with their generosity.

TAURUS

April 21-May 22

The trick is to recognize, then tap into, financial opportunities sprinkled throughout the month. You are, after all, the money sign. Long-distance relationships continue to flourish. Look for a hidden message in that letter or email that arrives from a mysterious man or woman around the 21st.

GEMINI

May 23-June 21

A Sagittarian or Leo could play a pivotal role in your romantic life early this month, be it as partner, matchmaker, or confidant. It's a ripe time to enjoy galas and weekend jaunts. Wherever you are between the 12th and the 23rd, count on making a memorable splash.

CANCER

June 22-July 22

You're finally over your last love, and now it's time for a new commitment. Your prestige ranking shoots up around the 14th. Renovating this month? Watch out for a streak that sees you choosing bizarre colours and making zany acquisitions.

LEO

July 23-August 22

Dramatic Leo enjoys success in the literary world — your prose sparkles. But there's a big warning: Go for understatement, not melodrama. You also have a knack for bringing out the best in others, especially kids. If starting a new relationship, establish an intellectual rapport first...then you can think about hopping into bed.

VIRGO

August 23-September 22

Shared arrangements — financial or travel — are good ideas as long as you focus on the details. A possessive friend may be getting a little obsessed so be careful because those intrusive calls or emails are no April Fool's prank. Career activity starts to sizzle by month's end.

LIBRA

September 23-October 22

A modest windfall could land in your lap during the first five days of the month. Your brainy side surfaces near the 10th — a great time to sign up for a quiz show. In relationships, however, intellectualizing can prove the kiss of death. Return to traditional gender roles — if only briefly.

SCORPIO

October 23-November 21

Relax. It's easy to be too demanding of those around you — everyone from your partner to your colleagues at work. Better to focus on sharpening your own talents, such as puzzle-solving. Late April is an outstanding time to begin a fitness regime, so start pumping iron and skipping rope.

SAGITTARIUS

November 22-December 22

Pollyannas and ruthless people populate your life this month. You think you're watching some weirdo double bill, but that colourful cast of characters is real. It's a good month to identify your strengths and ignore others' weaknesses, the latter being the much greater challenge.

CAPRICORN

December 23-January 20

Your career may seem to be in jeopardy, but good things really are happening behind the scenes. Relationships need a more honest review. A self-appointed role as sleuth pays off when you solve a family mystery. Remember that pal who went out on a limb for you? Come late month, it's payback time.



Illustration by David Arathoon

AQUARIUS

January 21-February 19

They call you an original and a humanitarian. Combine these qualities and you could be making an important social contribution this month. Emotionally, you warm up around the 20th, when you join with a Libra or other air sign. A young person responds to your friendly demeanor by adopting you as a mentor.

PISCES

February 20-March 20

Secret manoeuvres add mystery to the first 10 days of April, including some interesting real estate transactions. Then, after the 16th, imagination takes over. There's a profit-making angle here, too, so get out and do something — boot up your computer, sign up for tuba lessons, or dust off those red shoes and go dancing.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS BY DATE

1st: Debbie Reynolds	2nd: Alec Guinness
3rd: Marlon Brando	4th: Christine Lahti
5th: Bette Davis	6th: Billy Dee Williams
7th: Jackie Chan	8th: Patricia Arquette
9th: Dennis Quaid	10th: Max von Sydow
11th: Joel Grey	12th: Andy Garcia
13th: Rick Schroder	14th: John Gielgud
15th: Emma Thompson	16th: Ellen Barkin
17th: William Holden	18th: Rick Moranis
19th: Ashley Judd	20th: Jessica Lange
21st: Andie MacDowell	22nd: Jack Nicholson
23rd: Sandra Dee	24th: Barbra Streisand
25th: Al Pacino	26th: Carol Burnett
27th: Sheena Easton	28th: Ann-Margret
29th: Daniel Day Lewis	30th: Cloris Leachman

10 STARS

MOURN THE PARTS THEY WANTED BUT DIDN'T GET

By Susan Granger

SARAH JESSICA PARKER "I really wanted Andie MacDowell's part in *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994). I thought it was a really great script, and I was disappointed when I didn't get it. Not only did I not get it, I wasn't even next in line. I think I was third or fourth. When I saw the film, though, I thought Andie was dear. She's so beautiful to look at. I would have hired her, too."

KEVIN KLINE "When I saw John Malkovich in *Dangerous Liaisons* (1988), I have to admit I felt some envy about that part. I went right home from seeing it and called John and told him so."

KURT RUSSELL "Losing *Bull Durham* (1988) was tough. [Writer/director] Ronnie Shelton and I both lived that life [of a minor-league baseball player], so I was surprised he did it with somebody else. I went to Europe on vacation, having said the script was great, and I came back to discover Kevin [Costner] was doing it. So I pulled a practical joke on Ron. I was working on another picture about 60 miles from where he was doing *Bull Durham*. I got on the phone and pretended to be [production chief] Mike Medavoy. I told him that the movie was sh-- , and Costner was not working. 'Here's what we're going to do,' I told him. 'Kurt Russell's 60 miles north of you finishing his movie tonight. He will be on the set Monday morning.' There was a long pause until Ronnie realized who he was really talking to, and then he said, 'You son of a bitch!'"

ALI MACGRAW "I really wanted to play Daisy Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby* (1974) and at the time, my husband, Robert Evans, was head of production at Paramount Pictures. But our marriage began to disintegrate and I lost the role to Mia Farrow. I did get to marry Steve McQueen, which more than made up for it."

ANNETTE BENING "I lost the part of Cat Woman in *Batman Returns* (1992) because I became pregnant. Of course, I'd rather have a child than a role any day of the week, but Michelle Pfeiffer replaced me and had the biggest commercial success of her career."

EWAN MCGREGOR "When I was cast as the young Obi-Wan Kenobi, I realized the part I really wanted to play was Princess Leia. Stick some big pastries on my head. Now that would be interesting!"

FRAN DRESCHER "My manager told me to take voice lessons to get rid of my nasal whine, so I went to a specialist who said I had to speak very slowly and carefully. I went up for the TV mini-series *The Winds of War* (1983), and the casting director told my agent, 'She did great, but she spoke very slowly and it's only an eight-hour mini-series.' I never got any work with my new voice, so I went back to my old one."

TOM SELLECK "Steven Spielberg told me I was his first choice for *Indiana Jones*, but I was unable to get out of my *Magnum P.I.* television commitment, so the part went to Harrison Ford."

RUSSELL CROWE "I would have loved to have played one of the drag queens in *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (1994), but when the director, Stephan Elliott, met me, I was bald — my head was shaved — and I was covered in tattoos for *Romper Stomper* (1992). He said he'd never be able to imagine me in women's clothing. I also wanted to play Shakespeare when I was younger, but with the big onset of Shakespeare in the cinema in the last few years, I've lost interest."

GLENN CLOSE "I wanted desperately to play the grisly Madame Merle opposite John Malkovich in Jane Campion's *Portrait of a Lady* (1996). I met with Jane and I knew what she was thinking. I said, 'You think that because I did Mertueil [in *Dangerous Liaisons*] with Malkovich that this would be the same.' She admitted, 'Yes, that is what I am thinking.' But the characters are so different! It was a wonderful part, but Barbara Hershey got it, not me."

left: A chipper Russell Crowe arrives at the Beverly Hills premiere of *The Insider*



Lucy Nicholson/AFP



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