

canada's #1 movie magazine in canada's #1 theatres

Famous

april 2004 | volume 5 | number 4

**TARANTINO
& HANNAH**
TALK
KILL BILL:
VOL. 2

**MATTHEW
PERRY** on
THE
WHOLE
TEN
YARDS

THE
ALAMO'S
**DENNIS
QUAID**

**LACEY
CHABERT**
A MEAN
GIRL?

CHATTING
with
**JOHN
CLEESE**

THE LATEST
**Video
& DVD**
PAGE 42

Nia Vardalos

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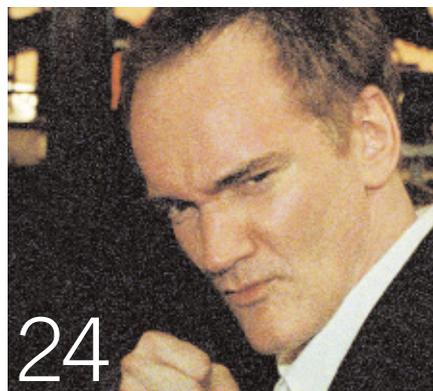


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| By Ingrid Randoja

COVER PHOTO BY PATRICK FRASER/ICON INT'L



SUMMER 2004
COLLECTION

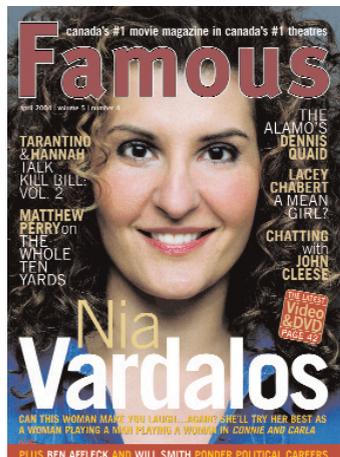


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WEDDING'S GIFT



By now, you all know that **Nia Vardalos's** last film, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, became the highest-grossing independent movie of all-time. Sure, that sounds impressive. But come on, we're talking independent films, right?

I mean, what is an independent film anyway? Sometimes it seems that any film with a budget under \$50-million gets tagged with the label, or that if a famous actor takes a 10-percent pay cut to be in a film, it's considered independent.

The official definition of an independent is any film not made by one of the big eight studios — Paramount, Disney, Warner Bros., MGM, DreamWorks, Columbia, Universal or Fox. But things get more wishy-washy when you consider how many production companies, studios and distributors are often involved in a pic by the time it hits the megaplex.

Of course, that wide definition only makes Vardalos's feat all the more impressive. Would you have guessed that *Silence of the Lambs* is considered an independent film? It is, having been produced by now-defunct Orion Pictures. Then there's *Pulp Fiction*, *The Usual Suspects*, *Se7en*, *Platoon*, even the *Kill Bill* movies — all considered independent because they weren't made by one of the big eight studios.

So how does Vardalos follow up the highest-grossing indie film of all time? By joining the ranks of the studio system, of course. It was Universal that coughed up the dough for her latest, *Connie and Carla*. In "Great Expectations," page 32, the Winnipeg-born actor/writer tells you about the downside of making more than \$350-million (U.S.) with *Greek Wedding*, and what that movie has in common with *Connie and Carla*.

As you may have noticed a couple paragraphs back, **Quentin Tarantino's** gory *Kill Bill* movies are considered independent. That's because they were produced by Miramax, which, even though owned by Disney, isn't considered to be one of the big boys. That's fine with Tarantino, he probably wouldn't have been able to make the blood-gusher the way he wanted (never mind chop it in half and release it as two volumes) if he'd been with anyone else. In "Father of the Bride," page 24, the director reveals some of *Vol. 2's* secrets.

Every once in a while, through some cosmic synergy, we just happen to have two articles with very similar themes in the same issue. This time those two articles chronicle the trials of two actors who've fought substance-abuse problems — **Dennis Quaid**, who plays General Sam Houston in this month's *The Alamo* ("The Battle Back," page 20), and **Matthew Perry**, who reprises his role of Oz in the sequel *The Whole Ten Yards* ("Back in the Game," page 28). Interestingly, although the two men have had similar problems, their stories are quite different. Perhaps that's because Quaid is about a decade ahead of Perry in the whole recovery game.

And on page 30 you'll find "Cruel Intentions," our interview with *Party of Five* alum **Lacey Chabert**. The child actor is all grown up now — 21 to be exact — but that didn't stop her from playing a snotty high school student in *Mean Girls*.

—Marni Weisz

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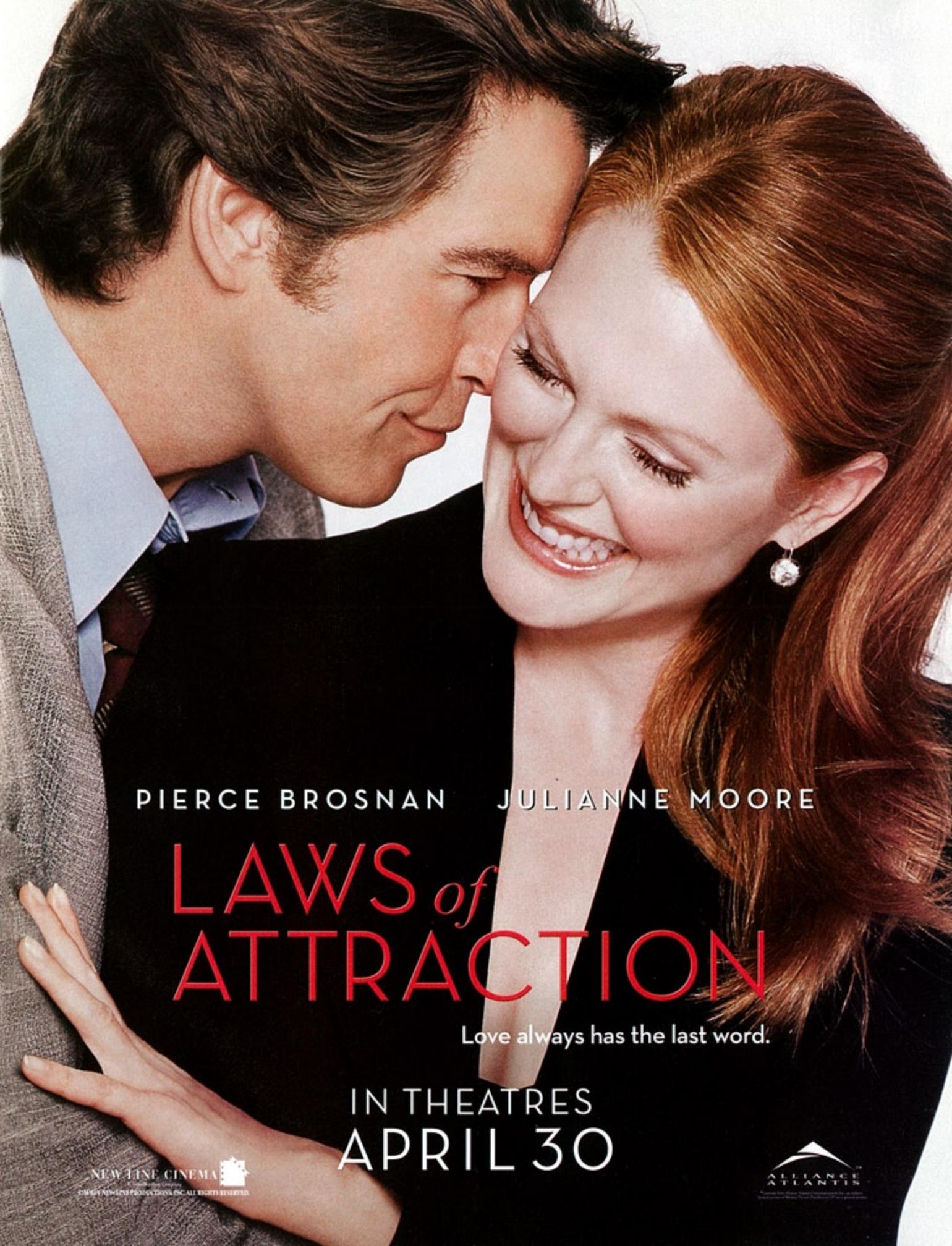
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PIERCE BROSNAN JULIANNE MOORE

LAWS of
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Love always has the last word.

IN THEATRES
APRIL 30

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CAUGHT ON FILM

THE STARS WORK, PLAY AND PROMOTE THEIR MOVIES



◀◀◀ When in Paris.... Jennifer Aniston never did remove that overcoat at the Paris premiere of *Along Came Polly*. Not while she was outside in full view of the cameras, anyway.

√ That stunning back belongs to 45-year-old British actor Emma Thompson. The star of period pieces like *The Remains of the Day* and *Howards End* has shown up to a number of recent events looking stunningly sexy, but we think this backless number she wore to the British Academy of Film and Television Awards, or BAFTAs, took the cake. Here Thompson shares a blonde embrace with her *Love Actually* co-star Laura Linney.

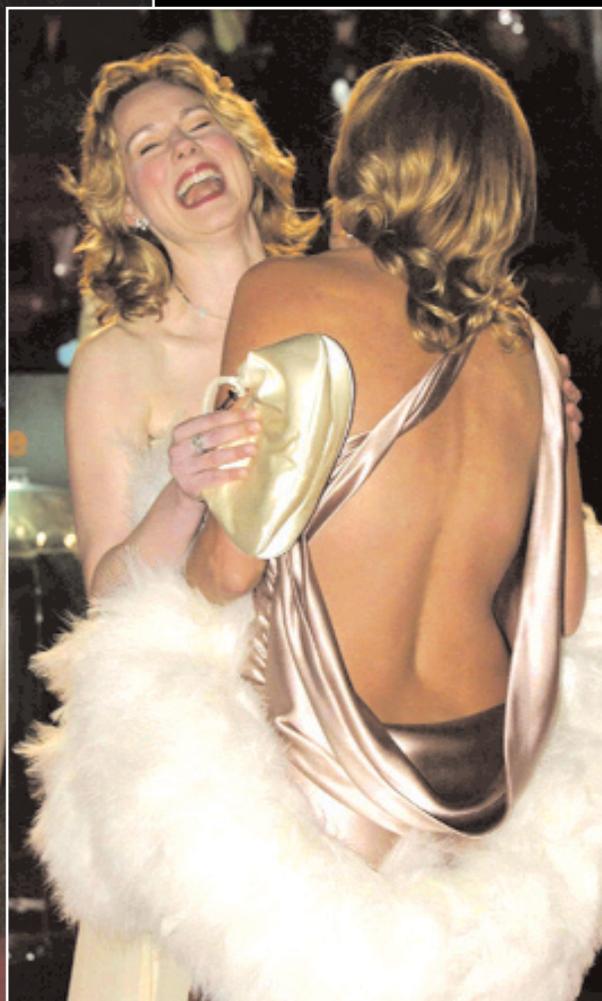


PHOTO BY TONY BARSON/WIREIMAGE

PHOTO BY YUJI IWOKI/EPA PHOTOS

PHOTO BY LUCY NICHOLSON/REUTERS



^ It was "Get Your Head Pressed into Anna Nicole Smith's Breasts for Free Day" as the L.A. Lakers took on the Sacramento Kings at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. Just kidding. We're sure Danny DeVito can afford to be nuzzled by the reality TV star any time he likes.

>>> Every year a different celebrity is asked to be the king of the Bacchus Parade at New Orleans' Mardi Gras celebrations. This year it was *Lord of the Rings* hero Elijah Wood who donned the gilded uniform of the god of wine and mirth. From the looks of things, he took his role to heart.

v Now, everyone smile. No, we didn't say purse your lips together in an approximation of a smile that really means "Okay, are you done? Just push the button." Ahhh, that Colin Firth really is a good sport for taking a snapshot with some fans on the London set of *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason*. If all goes well, the film should hit theatres this Christmas.



PHOTO BY DAN HERRICK/KEystone

PHOTO BY MARTIN GRIMES/KEystone





Food for thought

There was a time when Kristin Booth would walk down the street and not see any people. The only thing the actor could focus on was her reflection in store windows, and whether or not she looked fat. And although she was thin — very thin — she was consumed with anxiety over her weight.

That was about a year ago, and Booth — who recently starred in the Canadian heist flick *Foolproof* and will be seen in the upcoming TV movies *Sleep Murder* and *Burn: The Robert Wraight Story* — has regained control over her life and the anorexia and bulimia that once controlled it.

That's why she's become a spokesperson for "Beyond Compare: Women Photographers on Beauty," a touring photo exhibit presented by Dove, which challenges society's notion of female beauty. All proceeds from the tour go to the National Eating Disorder Information Centre (NEDIC).

"We want the photos to make waves, get people talking about female beauty and challenge our perceptions of what is considered beautiful," says Booth.

The perky, diminutive actor has popped into the *Famous*



Top left: Kristin Booth. All other photos are from "Beyond Compare: Women Photographers on Beauty"



office to chat about the pics and her own experience with anorexia and bulimia. She believes it's first-person accounts that get through to women caught in the downward spiral of eating disorders.

"It's so hard to see it in yourself, but when you listen to someone else talk about it you go, 'Oh my God, I'm not alone,'" she says. "Here's this person reiterating the fact that over a 24-hour day you spend seven hours sleeping, and probably 12 thinking about food, your body, or what size you are. And then you realize that your life is just passing you by. You realize that you don't remember things and events because you weren't there, you were in here," she says, pointing to her head.

The 25-year-old Booth, who was raised in Stratford, Ontario, and now lives in Toronto, says she battled her eating demons for almost 10 years. And, like most women, she did it secretly.

"Initially, it was very hidden. People, including my family, would say to me, 'You're too thin,' or, 'Why aren't you eating that?' And I had all these weird ideas in my head about food. I thought if I ate dinner in the morning, and breakfast at night, then that would help me lose more weight. And when I say dinner, that's a joke," she says with a hollow laugh. "I'm talking about a leaf of lettuce or half a something. I came up with all these strange things."

She sank into a clinical depression, started to hate acting, even being seen in public, until finally she broke down and opened up to her mother. Together they found a therapist, and today Booth manages her compulsions.

It'll never be easy for her, considering she's an up-and-coming actor and the movie biz, especially Hollywood, puts unbelievable pressure on women to stay thin.

"I would be lying if I said I was totally pressure free, that I don't listen to the media and what this or that casting director said about me. I think the challenge in my life is to hear those things but develop this filter and think, 'Yeah, but does it really matter?' And the answer is, no, it doesn't." —INGRID RANDOJA

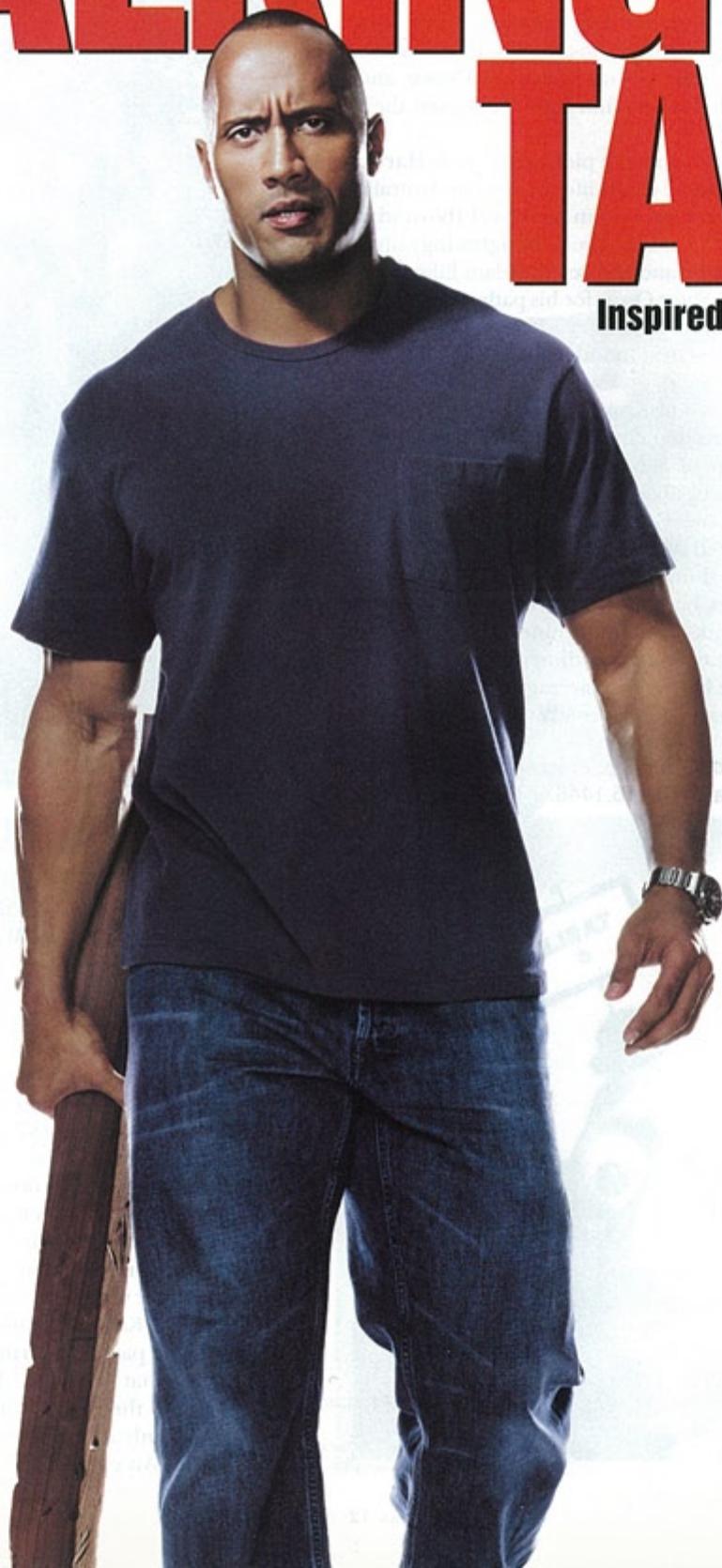
"Beyond Compare: Women Photographers on Beauty" finishes its Canadian tour in the following cities:

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- VANCOUVER, APRIL 17-26, **The Pacific Centre**
- MONTREAL, MAY 10-16, **Place Desjardins**
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For more info on the exhibit check out www.dovebeyondcompare.ca.

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APRIL

Krumpet comes to Canada

The Aussies haven't stopped their takeover of the film industry at simply sending flesh-and-blood actors like Nicole Kidman, Hugh Jackman, Russell Crowe and Naomi Watts to score all the best film roles. Now even their bits of clay are invading.

That bag-eyed little fellow in the picture below is Harvie Krumpet, a pitiable plasticine-based life form from Australia who'd had just about the worst luck in the world (born with Tourette's, parents froze to death, struck by lightning) until about a month ago when he and his creator Adam Elliot took home the Best Animated Short Oscar for his pathetic life story.

You can see that 22-minute film, *Harvie Krumpet*, along with more than 200 other shorts next month at the **CANADIAN FILM CENTRE'S WORLDWIDE SHORT FILM FESTIVAL** in Toronto [May 11 - 16]. At least two of Krumpet's Oscar competitors will be among the shorts screened — *Destino*, the Disney-produced interpretation of Salvador Dali's works, and the Slovenian short (*A Torsion*, about the members of a Sarajevo choir and an injured cow. Canadian director Christopher Hinton's Oscar-nominated *Nibbles* might also be there.

One of the amazing things about *Harvie Krumpet* is that creator Adam Elliot was born with a hereditary tremor or "shake." You might think that would hinder an animator, but Elliot simply got around the impediment by building his claymation models a bit bigger than average. Harvie himself is about the same size as his Oscar. —MW

For ticket information go to www.worldwideshortfilmfest.com, or call 416.445.1446.



What's the frequency Batman?

Those poor souls who believe TV personalities are speaking directly to them through their sets will seem a teensy bit less crazy this fall when Warner Bros. and Mattel unveil their latest joint effort — a line of Batman toys which “communicate” with the new *The Batman* animated TV series.

The “first-ever truly interactive toy line,” according to the press release, will use video-encoded invisible light technology (VEIL) to transmit digital data directly from the show to a new line of VEIL-enabled toys. There's a Batman action figure (\$52), a Batmobile (\$70) and a communicator device (\$45), each of which will be able to do things after reading the data that they couldn't do before, like speaking new dialogue, emitting new sound effects or moving in a new way.

Of course, in order for the toys to gain new powers they have to be sitting in front of the TV, and turned on, while the show airs. A clever way to ensure tots tune in to the new series which will air on Kids' WB!, and later the Cartoon Network.

Let's hope the payoff is worth the effort for the kiddies. We all remember that scene in *A Christmas Story* where little Ralphie sits by the radio with his Little Orphan Annie Decoder Ring only to get the message “Remember to drink your Ovaltine.” An early lesson in marketing indeed. —MW



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HELLBOY

WHO'S IN IT? Ron Perlman, Selma Blair

WHO DIRECTED? Guillermo del Toro (*Blade II*)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT? Who'd have thought Hellboy, a demon spawned by the Nazis and then raised by U.S. government agents, would go on to become a paranormal investigator who takes on nasty freaks, including the freaky Nazi who brought him to life?

HITS THEATRES APRIL 2

APRIL 2

THE PRINCE & ME

WHO'S IN IT? Julia Stiles, Luke Mably
WHO DIRECTED? Martha Coolidge (*Angie*)
WHAT'S IT ABOUT? An American college gal (Stiles) falls for a fellow student who just happens to be the Prince of Denmark (Mably). The school scenes were filmed at Toronto's York University, which was subbing for a Midwestern U.S. college.

WALKING TALL

WHO'S IN IT? The Rock, Johnny Knoxville
WHO DIRECTED? Kevin Bray (*All About the Benjamins*)
WHAT'S IT ABOUT? The Rock follows in the footsteps of esteemed thespians Joe Don Baker and Bo Stevens (who starred in the first two *Walking Tall* pics) to play a two-by-four-toting sheriff set on wiping out the criminal scum who've ruined his hometown.

HOME ON THE RANGE

VOICES: Roseanne, Judi Dench
WHO DIRECTED? Will Finn, John Sanford
WHAT'S IT ABOUT? Disney's latest animated flick finds a group of farmyard animals, led by bossy cow Maggie (Roseanne), banding together to capture a cattle rustler and save their digs. Others lending their pipes to the project include Sarah Jessica Parker and Steve Buscemi.

APRIL 7

JOHNSON FAMILY VACATION

WHO'S IN IT? Cedric the Entertainer, Bow Wow
WHO DIRECTED? Christopher Erskine (debut)
WHAT'S IT ABOUT? The Johnson clan jump in their car and head from California to Missouri for a family reunion. Recommended for those who have fond memories of being poked to death by a sibling, choking on the smell of mom's perfume and having to listen to crackly AM radio on family road trips.

APRIL 9

THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

WHO'S IN IT? Emile Hirsch, Elisha Cuthbert
WHO DIRECTED? Luke Greenfield (*The Animal*)
WHAT'S IT ABOUT? A well-mannered high school senior falls in love with the girl next door, who turns out to be a former porn star. Bet he has to go over there and tell her to turn down the "bowk chika bown bown" tunes.

THE ALAMO

WHO'S IN IT? Dennis Quaid, Jason Patric
WHO DIRECTED? John Lee Hancock (*The Rookie*)
WHAT'S IT ABOUT? It's 1836 and Texan revolutionaries Sam Houston (Quaid), Davy Crockett (Billy Bob Thornton) and

Jim Bowie (Patric) defend a small mission against the Mexican army. Look for Lone Star state flag-waving, but also expect a more politically correct depiction of the Mexican rulers than you'll remember from the John Wayne version. **See Dennis Quaid interview, page 20.**

THE WHOLE TEN YARDS

WHO'S IN IT? Bruce Willis, Matthew Perry
WHO DIRECTED? Howard Deutch (*The Replacements*)
WHAT'S IT ABOUT? This sequel to the critically maligned, but relatively popular, *The Whole Nine Yards* finds goofy dentist Oz (Perry) calling on hitman pal "The Tulip" (Willis) to help save his wife, who's been kidnapped by the Hungarian mob. **See interviews with Matthew Perry and Amanda Peet, page 28.**

ELLA ENCHANTED

WHO'S IN IT? Anne Hathaway, Cary Elwes
WHO DIRECTED? Tommy O'Haver (*Get Over It*)
WHAT'S IT ABOUT? This adaptation of Gail Carson Levine's book stars Hathaway (*The Princess Diaries*) as Ella, a young woman who, since birth, has been saddled with a spell of obedience that makes her follow other people's commands. But the girl's had enough and sets out across her magical kingdom to find the fairy who cursed her in the first place.

APRIL 16

KILL BILL: VOL. 2

WHO'S IN IT? Uma Thurman, Daryl Hannah
WHO DIRECTED? Quentin Tarantino
(*Kill Bill: Vol. 1*)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT? The Bride (Thurman) heads to Texas to finish off Bill (Carradine) and the rest of the crew that popped her at her wedding. Keep your eyes peeled for Samuel L. Jackson who has a cameo as the dead organ player in the church. **See interviews with Quentin Tarantino and Daryl Hannah, page 24.**

CONNIE AND CARLA

WHO'S IN IT? Nia Vardalos, Toni Collette
WHO DIRECTED? Michael Lembeck
(*The Santa Clause 2*)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT? Call it *Some Like it Hot* meets *Tootsie*. Vardalos, who wrote and starred in *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, also penned this comedy that casts her and Collette as second-rate dinner theatre performers who disguise themselves as drag queens to elude the mafia after they witness a hit. **See interview with Nia Vardalos, page 32.**

I'M NOT SCARED

WHO'S IN IT? Giuseppe Cristiano, Mattia Di Piero
WHO DIRECTED? Gabriele Salvatores
(*Mediterraneo*)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT? A young boy from a southern Italian village discovers another young boy living inside a hole. The two become friends, but the adults of the village have their reasons for keeping hole boy under wraps.

APRIL 23

MAN ON FIRE

WHO'S IN IT? Denzel Washington, Dakota Fanning
WHO DIRECTED? Tony Scott (*Spy Game*)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT? Washington plays a former marine turned top-notch bodyguard whose charge — a 10-year-old girl (Fanning) — is kidnapped in the streets of Mexico City. (Oops, guess he's not so very top-notch after all). Of course, he gets really mad and sets out to find her. This is actually a remake of a 1987 movie of the same name that had Scott Glenn playing the lead role.



THE PUNISHER

WHO'S IN IT? Thomas Jane, John Travolta
WHO DIRECTED? Jonathan Hensleigh (debut)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT? When FBI agent Frank Castle's (Jane) family is killed, he transforms himself into The Punisher, a crime-fighting vigilante who takes no prisoners. Travolta plays a crime boss who becomes The Punisher's number one target.

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13 GOING ON 30

WHO'S IN IT? Jennifer Garner, Mark Ruffalo

WHO DIRECTED? Gary Winick (*Tadpole*)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT? This movie is all about capitalizing on Garner's very sexy girl-next-door appeal. Thirteen-year-old Jenna wishes she was grown-up, and a big puff of magic dust does the trick — she awakens one morning as a successful, 30-year-old magazine editor.

HITS THEATRES APRIL 23

▶▶ APRIL 30

ENVY

WHO'S IN IT? Ben Stiller, Jack Black

WHO DIRECTED? Barry Levinson (*Bandits*)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT? Stiller plays Tim, whose feelings of jealousy toward his best friend Nick (Black) boil over when Nick gets rich inventing a spray that evaporates doggie doo-doo. (Who cares about those wacky old laws of physics anyhow!)

MEAN GIRLS

WHO'S IN IT? Lindsay Lohan, Lacey Chabert

WHO DIRECTED? Mark S. Waters

(*Freaky Friday*)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT? *SNL* head writer Tina Fey's script (based on a *New York Times* feature) focuses on the wrath of teenage girls. When the once-popular Cady (Lohan) crosses the line and offends her school's cliquy in-set, she becomes the target of teenybopper terrorism. **See interview with Lacey Chabert, page 30.**

PAPER CLIPS

WHO DIRECTED? Elliot Berlin, Joe Fab

WHAT'S IT ABOUT? This documentary recounts the story of students from a rural high school in Tennessee who set out to collect six million paper clips, representing the six million Jews who died during the Holocaust.

GODSEND

WHO'S IN IT? Greg Kinnear, Robert De Niro

WHO DIRECTED? Nick Hamm (*The Hole*)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT? When the son of a young couple (Kinnear, Rebecca Romijn-Stamos) is killed in an accident a doctor (De Niro) clones them an exact replica, except that son number two is kinda creepy and gives them the heebie-jeebies.



LAWS OF ATTRACTION

WHO'S IN IT? Julianne Moore, Pierce Brosnan

WHO DIRECTED? Peter Howitt

(*Johnny English*)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT? Two renowned divorce lawyers (Moore and Brosnan) go on a bender and wind up tying the knot. The question is, will these marriage vultures start picking apart their own union?

HITS THEATRES APRIL 30

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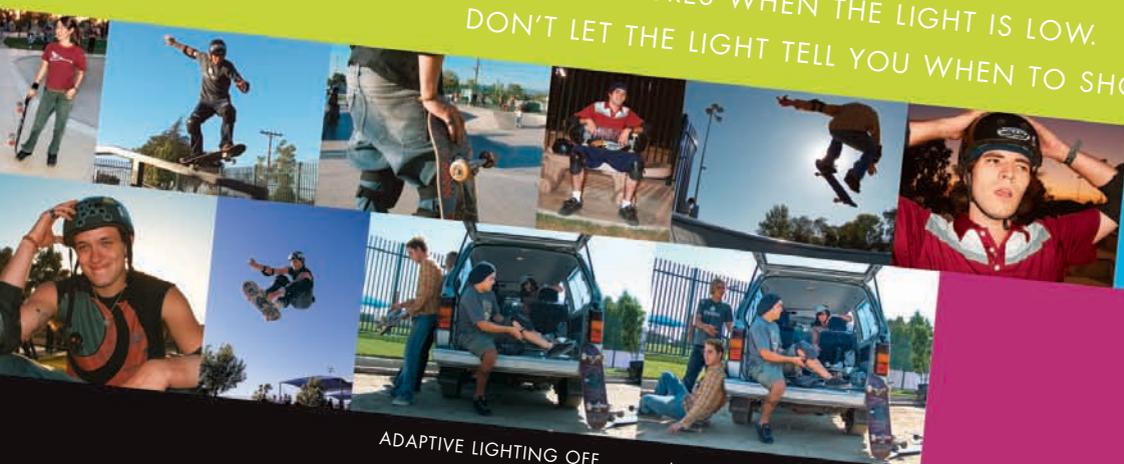


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PHOTO BY MICHAEL CAULFIELD/WIREIMAGE

Laura HARRING

NOW APPEARING IN...the adaptation of the Marvel comic book *The Punisher*, as glamorous Livia, the wife of crooked Tampa businessman Howard Saint (John Travolta). Saint's responsible for the murder of FBI agent Frank Castle's (Thomas Jane) family, putting him at the top of Castle's list of people to punish.

BIO BITS: Some day, a big exposé will be written, revealing that everything we know about Laura Harring was dreamed up by a publicist. But until that day, we'll just have to believe it.

According to the story, Harring was born in the small Mexican town of Los Mochis on March 3rd 1964, where her grandfather was the country's equestrian and fencing champion. She lived there until she was 10 and her family was forced to flee because a corrupt governor wanted their ranch. They relocated to San Antonio, Texas, where at age 12 she was riding in a car with her mother, stepfather and sisters when she felt like she'd been hit in the head with a rock. Turns out their car was caught in the middle of a gunfight and a stray bullet hit her head, missing her brain by a millimetre.

Harring claims that brush with death intensified her desire to live a full and eclectic life, which she proved at age 16 when she convinced her parents to let her go off to a boarding school in Switzerland. After a couple years of learning French and mixing with the European elite, Harring wanted to experience the other end of the spectrum, so, at 17, went to India where she worked for an aid program, digging ditches and planting vegetables.

Upon her return to San Antonio, Harring's parents told her that the Mexican peso had devalued to the point that their savings were worthless and she would have to fend for herself. So she did something she never wanted to do, and entered the beauty pageant circuit. She quickly rose through the pageant ranks until, in 1985, she was crowned Miss America, the first Latina to win the honour.

During her reign, Harring met Belgian Count Carl Edward von Bismarck, fell in love, married him and became a countess. Although the marriage only lasted two years she still holds the title.

Back in the States, Harring was discovered by a casting director who thought she'd be wonderful as the wife of Mexican president Santa Anna in the TV movie *The Alamo: Thirteen Days to Glory*. She had no desire to take the role until she saw the man who would play Santa Anna, the late Raul Julia.

A spotty acting career — which included a stint on *General Hospital*, appearances on both *Baywatch* and *Baywatch Nights* and the starring role in *Lambada: The Forbidden Dance* — followed, but her Hollywood stock made a steep climb when she snagged one of the lead roles in director David Lynch's impenetrable, but award-winning, 2001 puzzler *Mulholland Dr.*

LOVE LIFE: Was married to Count Carl Edward von Bismarck, the son of Germany's Prince Ferdinand, for two years in the late '80s.

SELECT FILMOGRAPHY: Cathryn in *Willard* (2003), Gina in *John Q* (2002), Rita/Camilla in *Mulholland Dr.* (2001), Mrs. Dunleavy in *Little Nicky* (2000), M.C. Kindra in *Exit to Eden* (1994), Marcia in *Dead Women in Lingerie* (1991), Jerri in *Silent Night*, *Deadly Night 3: Better Watch Out!* (1993)

INTERESTING TIDBITS: Swears by meditation and went public with David Lynch last year to say it's the way to world peace. • Wore a pair of \$1-million, diamond-encrusted shoes to the 2002 Oscar ceremony. • Right after finishing *The Punisher* she went into the Mexican jungle to find a Mayan herbalist. • She had a car accident on the way to her audition for *Mulholland Dr.*, not knowing the character she was vying for loses her memory after a car accident. • She writes regular diary entries at her official website, www.LauraHarring.net.

ON HER PERSONAL HISTORY: "I've had so much drama in my life that some of it doesn't even seem real to me anymore." [*Calgary Sun*, March 2003] —MW



"INSANELY CREEPY."

- Jeffrey K. Howard, ABC-TV



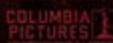
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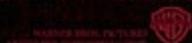
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THE BATTLE BACK

*Dennis Quaid stars as Texan hero Sam Houston in this month's historic epic *The Alamo*. But his real-life victory — resurrecting his career after drugs and a troubled marriage — is just as compelling*

| BY EARL DITTMAN

Although he tried to place the blame on others, in retrospect, Dennis Quaid confesses he always knew he was solely responsible for wrecking his film career with drugs and alcohol.

It was a hedonistic, headline-grabbing existence that finally came to a crashing halt in 1991, after he finished his role in *Postcards from the Edge*, actor/writer Carrie Fisher's tale of (what else?) Tinseltown addictions.

"I was living a secret life with my cocaine addiction, and I was in complete denial," says the six-foot-three, 50-year-old star of this month's history-based battle film *The Alamo*. I had made some pretty good movies during the '80s — *The Right Stuff*, *The Big Easy* and *Great Balls of Fire* — and I thought I was invincible. But I quickly began to realize that Hollywood will only take so much from screw-ups, and they weren't going to take any more of my crap. I was a liability. And, more than anything, I realized I was destroying my personal life. I was about to lose my wife [actor Meg Ryan] and son [Jack], two of the most important people in my life."

Instead of wallowing in self-pity, the proud Texan checked into rehab. And after successfully completing the program, he decided to take a little time off. "It was only a couple of years, but Hollywood has a short memory," Quaid says as he takes a bottle of water from the mini-bar of his Central Park hotel suite. "Although they knew I had gotten help for my problems, they seemed to

have forgotten I once could sell a lot of movie tickets. So once I decided it was time to come back, it was a struggle to find really good scripts.”

In the beginning, he took the best of what he was being offered, like the 1993 films *Wilder Napalm*, in which he played a circus clown who could start fires with his thoughts, and *Undercover Blues*, a comedy about a husband and wife spy team who try to give up the biz to raise their baby. “But there were so many films I wanted that were never even offered to me,” he says. “It was really depressing.”

Even tougher was living in wife Meg Ryan’s shadow as she was quickly becoming one of the highest-paid actresses of the mid-’90s thanks to *When Harry Met Sally*, *Sleepless in Seattle* and *You’ve Got Mail*.

“I can joke about it now, but I honestly expected people to start calling me Mr. Ryan,” Quaid says. “I was struggling to find good roles, and it was all the more frustrating because I was married to someone who was getting handed everything on a silver platter. She could do any movie or role she wanted and I was just sitting by the phone at home, hoping for any kind of role.”

Slowly but surely, Quaid started to get the calls he had hoped for, and won supporting roles in films like *Switchback* (1997), Oliver Stone’s *Any Given Sunday* (1999) and the critically lauded *Frequency* (2000). Best of all, during his struggles he had managed to stay sober.

“I had a little boy who depended on me, and I wasn’t about to let my son down,” he says. “So when I started to feel like things were getting too much for me, all I did was think about how much I loved my son, Jack, and he loved me. And, as a consequence, I started to feel like my life was finally coming back together.”

But Quaid’s life was shattered again in 2000 by the news that Ryan was having an on-set affair with her hunky *Proof of Life* co-star Russell Crowe. When Quaid found out — through the tabloids, no less — he was crushed. But not for long. “I think anyone would be shocked to see something like your wife and her new boyfriend on the front page of the morning paper,” says Quaid. “But I think we both knew our marriage was over before that happened. I don’t want to point fingers or assess blame, that’s why I’ll just say that it made me

finally understand that our marriage was over for good.”

About the same time the ink was drying on his divorce papers, however, Quaid received a call from director John Lee Hancock, asking if he wanted to star as real-life Texas baseball player Jimmy Morris in *The Rookie*. He did, of course. It meant a second shot at leading-man status.

The film grossed more than \$80-million (U.S.) in the States alone, making it the first bona fide hit Quaid had enjoyed since his rehab 10 years before. “I’m really grateful for *The Rookie*,” he says. “It had the biggest opening ever for a baseball movie. So a lot of people in the industry began to take notice of me — again.”

With his next film, director Todd Haynes’ drama *Far From Heaven*, Quaid completed his 180-degree turn from

“A lot of people in the media made a big deal about me, Billy Bob and Jason wanting to play Davy Crockett, and I’m here to tell you that was all bull,” insists Quaid

Hollywood pariah to media darling with his daring performance as Frank, a conflicted alcoholic husband having to come to terms with his homosexuality in 1950s America.

Quaid, who has the reputation of being quite a ladies’ man, insists he had no second thoughts about playing a gay man. “I understood the feelings he was forced to deal with, but in a different context. While I was in the middle of my addiction to cocaine, like Frank, I was trying not to be the way I was and it hurt deeply whenever I’d backslide. Unlike my drug addiction, though, Frank’s homosexuality is not a disease, although that was a common belief in the 1950s when the story is set.

“I mean, my heart goes out to the people I know who still feel they have to conceal their true sexuality. I’ve seen how their secret lives bring them such pain and shame. It’s tragic because it’s still all love. You can’t help being attracted to whom you’re attracted.”

Although there had been considerable Oscar buzz surrounding his performance, and co-star Julianne Moore received a Best Actress Oscar nomination for her work, Quaid was passed over. “It was a competitive year for actors, so I wasn’t surprised that I didn’t make the cut,” he says (Chris Cooper took home that year’s Best Supporting Actor Oscar for *Adaptation*). “I was just happy I had grown as an actor and did a role that no one expected me to do. I don’t even think my closest friends thought I’d ever kiss another guy” ▶▶



The Alamo's Quaid (centre) leads his men into battle

►► on film. Todd's great film just moved me up the career ladder another rung."

And now comes *The Alamo*.

Late in 2002, while Quaid was in Montreal finishing up the upcoming disaster pic *The Day After Tomorrow*, director Ron Howard was in Texas, approving the final touches on the sets for the Disney-financed story of San Antonio's most-famous landmark. But just weeks before cameras were set to roll, Howard was still battling with Disney brass over the film's reported \$125-million budget. They wanted it cut to \$80-million, Howard refused, and both he and his star, Russell Crowe, quit the project.

Disney quickly recruited *The Rookie* director Hancock to bring *The Alamo* to fruition.

Based on the historical events that won Texas its independence from Mexico in 1836, *The Alamo* chronicles the final days of a small group of Texas revolutionaries headed by Jim Bowie (Jason Patric) and Davy Crockett (Billy Bob Thornton). Holed up in a tiny church-turned-fortress they were forced to stand against thousands of Mexican troops led by General Santa Anna (Emilio Echevarria).

Hancock called on Quaid, his old pal from *The Rookie*, to play General Sam

Houston, the film's surviving hero who would capture Santa Anna after the battle of San Jacinto, force the general to give Texas its freedom and become the Republic's first president.

"I had to do the role or all my relatives from Texas would have disowned me," Quaid says with a smile. "More than anything, I'm proud to be playing such a noble, heroic man. Look, I'm a hard-core Texan, and we learn about the Alamo when we start kindergarten. And, let me tell you, all my Texas pride came out while I was doing *The Alamo*."

Despite reports that the film's principals fought with Hancock over the chance to play Old West icon Davy Crockett, Quaid says nothing could be further from the truth. "A lot of people in the media made a big deal about me, Billy Bob and Jason wanting to play Davy Crockett, and I'm here to tell you, that was all bull," Quaid says. "My home town was named after General Sam Houston, so I was more than proud to play him.... And while I'll always admire John Wayne's version of *The Alamo*, John Lee's is much more historically accurate. It's action-packed, a little bloody and very emotional. But, ultimately, it shows the stuff of which heroes are made. And, right now, I think we all need as many heroes as we can find. Everybody loves a hero."

Everybody also loves to root for the underdog, which is probably why most people are hoping Dennis Quaid's return to his former form is a permanent one. Quaid, however, is just content to have been given a second chance to do what he loves the most — act.

"It feels really nice to be back in this place, making movies that I'm proud of," he says. "And the fact that it's the second time around makes it all the more sweet. When success came to me earlier in my career, I wasn't able to handle it. That was obvious. I had my head so far up my butt I didn't appreciate the wonderful career I had. That is certainly not the case this time around. I'm grateful for everything that is coming my way and I am doing my best to show everyone, from directors to my co-stars, that I appreciate having another chance. I love making movies and being an actor, and I promise everyone I'll never take that for granted again." **F**

Earl Dittman is an entertainment writer based in Houston, Texas.



Dennis Quaid as Sam Houston

famous TRIVIA

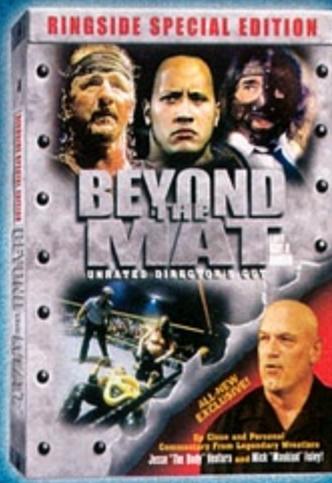
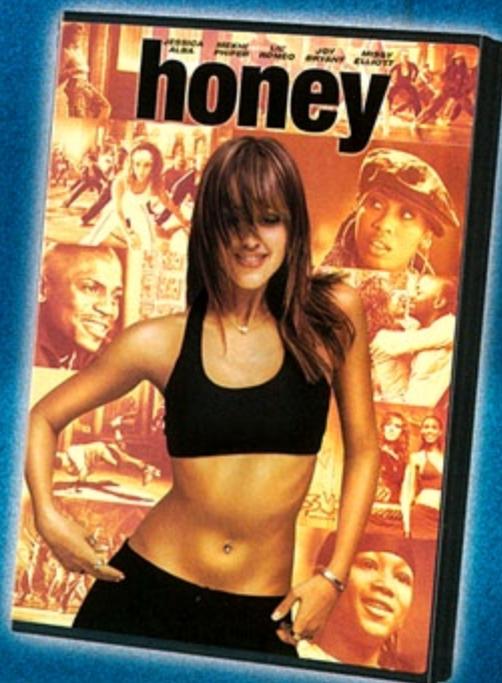
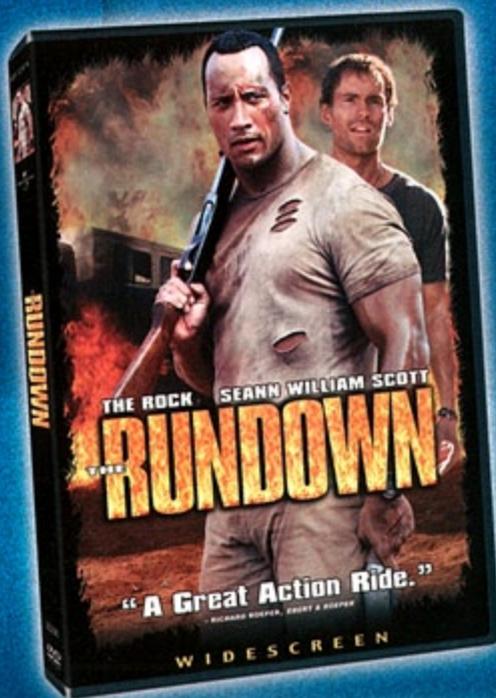
- 1 Roseanne provides the voice of a cow in the animated feature *Home on the Range*. In which 1990 sequel did she lend her pipes to baby Julie, the little sister of Bruce Willis-voiced Mikey?
- 2 For which CFL team's practice squad did *Walking Tall* star Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson play before he made it as a wrestler?
- 3 Which of the following stars of *Mean Girls* has not been a *Saturday Night Live* cast member — Amy Poehler, Ana Gasteyer, Tim Meadows, Olympia Lukis or Tina Fey?
- 4 Ten-year-old actor Tallulah Belle Willis appears in *The Whole Ten Yards*. Who's her famous mother?
- 5 For which movie did *Man on Fire*'s Denzel Washington win his first of two Oscars?
- 6 In how many Bond films has *Laws of Attraction* lead man Pierce Brosnan starred?
- 7 Name the two TV shows *Godsend* star Greg Kinnear hosted in the '90s.

answers

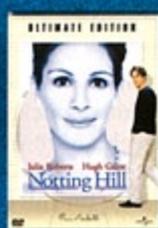
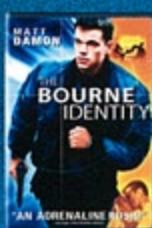
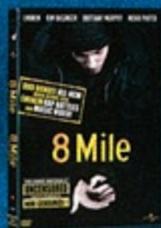
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2. Calgary Stampeders
3. Olympia Lukis
4. Demi Moore
5. Glory
6. four
7. Talk Soup and Later

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FATHER OF THE BRIDE

*Quentin Tarantino spent a decade nurturing his two-part revenge flick **Kill Bill**. Now, after a long shoot, editing challenges and concerns about gratuitous violence, it's time to give his baby away* | **BY BARRETT HOOPER**

As famous for being infamous as he is for being a filmmaker — tabloid breakups, producer punch-outs, Ecstasy raves at the Great Wall of China, *Pulp Fiction* — Quentin Tarantino is cinema's first rock star director. Subtlety ain't his style. Today is no exception.

Running late, Tarantino whips into the parking lot of the Beverly Hills Four Seasons in a pimped-out yellow pickup truck with Pussy Wagon splashed in pink across the tailgate. A prop from *Kill Bill* — it's the battle wagon driven by Uma Thurman's vengeance-seeking Bride in the blood-soaked double bill — the vehicle is now Tarantino's regular ride as he tools around Tinseltown from power lunches to after-parties.

Upstairs, he bursts chin-first into the room for our interview, decked out in a black leather jacket with orange flames licking at the sleeves, and a T-shirt for *Battle Royale*, the ultra-violent Japanese cult classic that's one of his favourite movies. Even before he sits down he's answering questions that haven't yet been asked.

"*Kill Bill* is like taking 30 years of my favourite movies and genres and sticking them into a duck press," says the 40-year-old geek savant in a reedy, hyperkinetic yammer, his hands translating into sign language for the geek impaired.

Never having made an action movie, Tarantino schooled himself for more than a year before attempting *Kill Bill*, gorging himself on a stew of Japanese

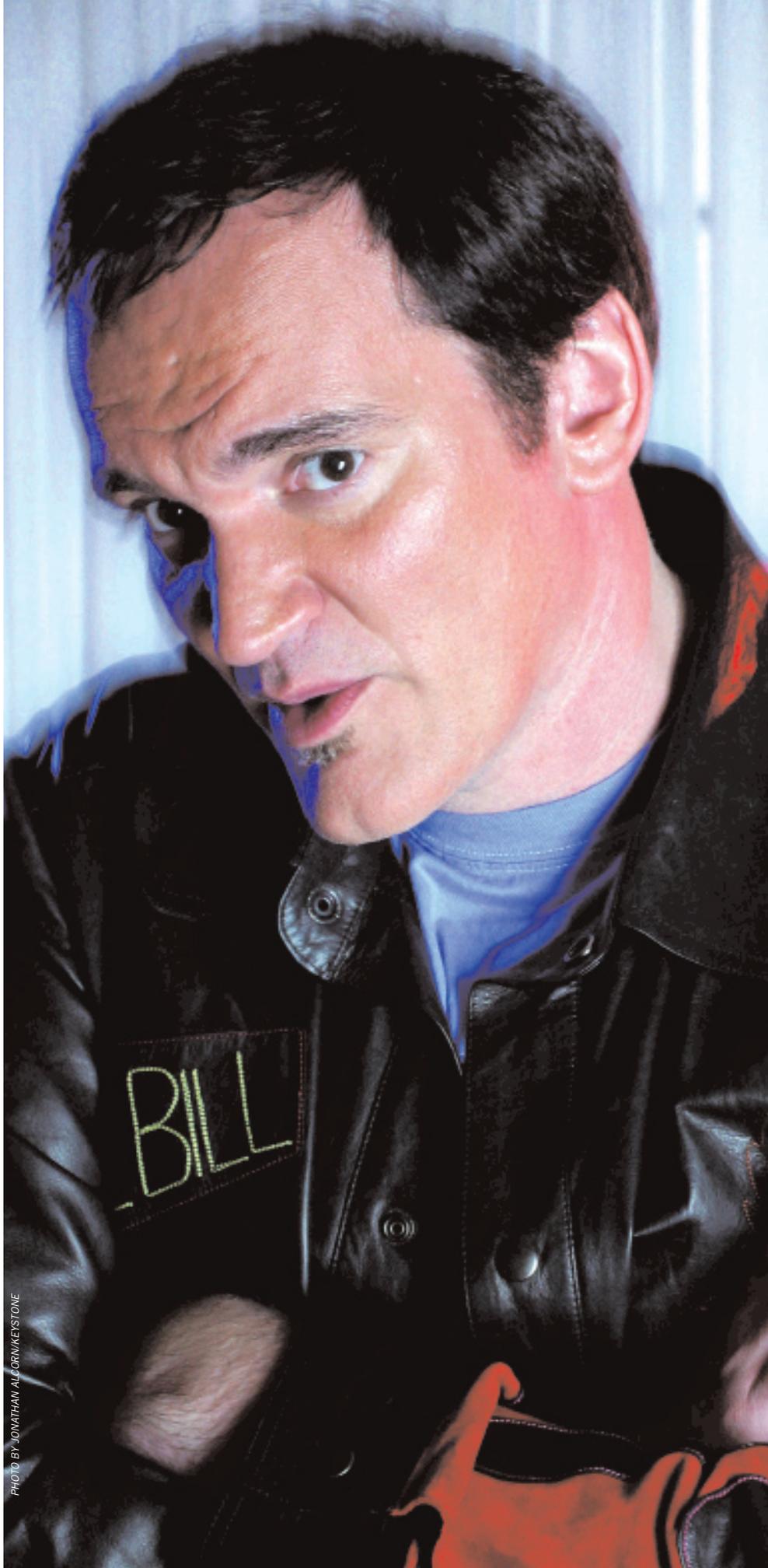


PHOTO BY JONATHAN ALDRIN/KEystone

samurai epics, Hong Kong kung fu flicks, spaghetti westerns and anime. "I wanted to immerse myself so much in that style of filmmaking so that the things that they did would be second nature to me," he says of the five-film-a-day binges that kept him from seeing a year's worth of Hollywood movies.

"The best way to describe it is that *Volume 1* is, for lack of a better term, my Eastern with a Western influence, a spaghetti western influence," Tarantino says of the first half of his epic, which was released last October. "*Volume 2* is my spaghetti western with an Eastern influence."

Walking the earth through all this chopsocky mayhem is Thurman's Bride. On the violent end of a shotgun wedding and left for dead, she sets out on a rampaging road of revenge that brings her fist-to-face with her former comrades-at-arms — the Deadly Viper Assassination Squad, played by Lucy Liu, Vivica A. Fox, Daryl Hannah, Michael Madsen and David Carradine.

Cooked up by Tarantino and Thurman while they were making *Pulp Fiction*, *Kill Bill* is no ordinary revenge thriller. Based on a huge 222-page script and filmed on location in China, Japan, Mexico, Texas and L.A., its shooting schedule doubled to 156 days and its budget ballooned from \$42-million (U.S.) to \$56-million.

But instead of taking a butcher knife to the final film, which risked ruining a potential masterpiece and upsetting Tarantino, whose \$150-million, multi-Oscar nominated *Pulp Fiction* turned Miramax studio into a mini-major, head honcho Harvey Weinstein decided to let Tarantino cut the movie into two parts.

"I'm telling a very simple story, but it had a very big canvas, and it needed all of those little moments in the canvas to make it work," explains Tarantino. "If too much of the emotional aspect in the movie would have been lost by splitting it in half, then I wouldn't have done that."

So, nine years after he gave us *Pulp Fiction*'s cool-like-Fonzie hitmen (spawning a decade of arthouse-action movie knock-offs), and six years after the Blaxploitation remix *Jackie Brown*, *Kill Bill: Vol. 1* marked the return of the most innovative, ingenious and envied director in Hollywood. The final tally

on *Kill Bill: Vol. 1*? Two hundred gallons of raspberry red samurai blood, a mountain of severed limbs, 108 dead bodies — six of them Japanese anime — \$170-million (U.S.) at the box office worldwide and a critical consensus that can be summed up in two words: bloody brilliant.

Indeed, *Kill Bill: Vol. 1* has been called "the most violent American movie ever made" in part due to the climactic showdown between Thurman and a horde of sword-wielding yakuza henchmen that lasts 20 minutes and leaves the handful of survivors swimming in a pool of viscera and severed limbs. "Sure *Kill Bill's* violent but this is a Tarantino



Daryl Hannah as Elle Driver

Whistling a New Tune

In *Kill Bill: Vol. 1*, Daryl Hannah — best known for sweet roles in flicks like *Splash* and *Roxanne* — embodied pure menace as Elle Driver (also known as California Mountain Snake), the hitwoman with the wicked whistle. Now she's back in

Kill Bill: Vol. 2, and she's out to finish what she started — killing Uma Thurman's Bride.

Do you think that women might be turned off by *Kill Bill's* violence?

"Personally, I don't think so. Quentin's films are always so entertaining and so fresh and not like anything else that you've seen. And women are just as interested in seeing that as men.... I'm a person who doesn't like violent movies, I usually cover my eyes if someone even slaps another person. And with this film I didn't have to do that ever. This is so stylized to the point that it's not really graphically real. It doesn't make you sick in that way."

What's it like to finally play such a bad-ass after all these years?

"Horrible. It's fun. Every time I've ever gotten to play a villain, like in *Blade Runner* or the Wesley Strick film [*The Tie that Binds*], there's always something kind of innocent or kind of vulnerable about the character, and there's none of that in Elle Driver. There's nothing to even empathize with. She's über-bitch. She's just nasty."

Can you tell us about Elle's big fight with the Bride?

"It's the big 'war of the gargantuans' fight, the two giant blondes at the end, like *Godzilla vs. Rodan*. I use a machine gun, I use a samurai sword, and I can pull off a barroom brawl, too. I know it looks like I was cut out of the movie because I'm not in the first one that much but I'm the bad-ass of the second film."

Quentin Tarantino writes specifically for his actors after seeing some of their work. What did he see in you that made him want to cast you as Elle?

"He saw everything, unfortunately, that I've ever been in, and some things that I've never seen. Before a take he likes to tease you about your most embarrassing role and quote lines that I don't even remember. So there was actually a cheesy cable movie that I did because they gave me an AVID [editing machine] and a good paycheck and I was editing my documentary [*Strip Notes*]. I never saw the cable movie [but] he saw it and it gave him an idea for my character because I played a Secret Service agent in that. He decided that Elle Driver would be this Interpol agent who was tracking down Bill and he turned her." —BH



Uma Thurman's Bride wears black

▷▷ movie,” he says. “You don’t go to a Metallica concert and ask them to turn the volume down.”

And while *Volume 1* was like an adrenaline-filled syringe to the heart, *Volume 2* promises to be a more zen-like samurai sword to the throat, he says. “In part two, we slow it down a bit, you get to know the characters more — at least the ones that survived part one — especially Bill. Two’s more like my other movies, more of the dialogue people expect, and more messed up chronologically.”

While *Kill Bill: Vol. 1* saw the Bride take out Fox’s housewife Vernita Green (a.k.a. Copperhead) in a kitchen knife fight and Liu’s half-Japanese, half Chinese yakuza kingpin O-Ren Ishii (a.k.a. Cottonmouth) in a snowy samurai showdown, *Volume 2* puts the Bride on a collision course with Hannah’s eyepatched Elle Driver (a.k.a. California Mountain Snake) and *Reservoir Dogs*’ Madsen as Budd (a.k.a. Sidewinder).

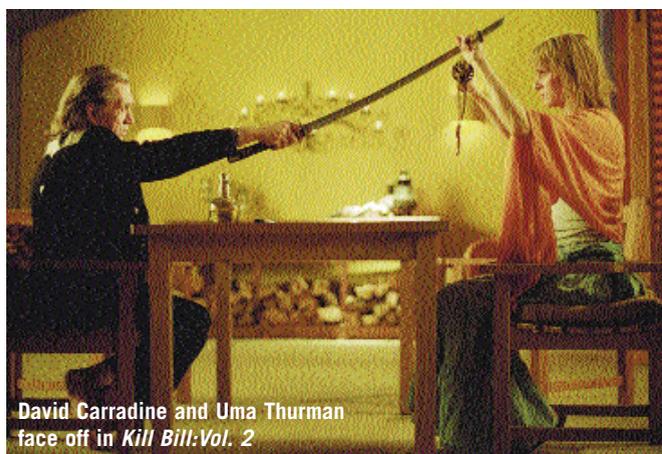
But it’s the final confrontation with Bill, played by Carradine (TV’s Kwai Chang Caine himself), that drives both volumes. The slow-talking, slow-moving star of ’70s TV series *Kung Fu*, took over the role of Bill when Warren Beatty bowed out. (The actor who, along with *Bonnie and Clyde* co-star Faye Dunaway, was torn apart by a few hundred rounds of machine gun fire in one of the bloodiest film climaxes in American cinema, reportedly couldn’t grasp *Kill Bill*’s violent sensibilities.)

“You’ve got the true representative of American ’70s martial arts with David Carradine,” says Tarantino. “He is the one who single-handedly, with his personality and his portrayal of Kwai Chang Caine, more than Bruce Lee, broke kung fu into the American mainstream. Its first introduction, in a way, and it wasn’t because of his fighting skills. It was the strength of his performance. That is a performance-oriented thing.” Tarantino has reportedly even coaxed Carradine into picking up Caine’s flute for a scene in *Kill Bill: Vol. 2*.

“It’s a real international movie and every person on the list that [the Bride] goes to is like a different iconic character, or represents a different genre, and each country represents a different flavour and a different genre,” says Tarantino. “So, when she goes to Mexico at the end — that’s where Bill is, to give you a hint — it’s like she’s going into Sam Peckinpah’s world.”

As for the ending of *Kill Bill: Vol. 2*, Tarantino says it should be obvious from the title. “The only reason to do a revenge movie is to have the hero kill the guy at the end. Otherwise, it’s like watching a Zalman King movie and never seeing any sex.” **F**

Barrett Hooper is a Toronto-based freelance writer.



David Carradine and Uma Thurman face off in *Kill Bill: Vol. 2*

coming soon

THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW >> May

Stars: Dennis Quaid, Jake Gyllenhaal

Director: Roland Emmerich (*The Patriot*)

Story: We wonder if the producers consciously chose this title to evoke memories of *The Day After*, that memorable 1983 TV-movie about the fallout from a nuclear attack. Regardless, it’s another post-apocalyptic cautionary tale, this time with the apocalypse being caused by a natural event — a huuuuge storm (including earthquakes, twisters and tidal waves) resulting from the greenhouse effect. The more personal storyline follows a scientist dad (Quaid) trying to get to New York to find his son (Gyllenhaal) after the hail starts to fly.

TROY >> May

Stars: Brad Pitt, Orlando Bloom

Director: Wolfgang Petersen (*The Perfect Storm*)

Story: Everyone knows that Brad Pitt was cast as arrogant warrior Achilles in this retelling of the ancient Greek tale of infidelity and war. But who, you ask, could they possibly have hired to play Helen of Troy, whom literature has widely acknowledged as the most beautiful woman of all time — Kate Hudson, Heather Graham, Charlize Theron? Nope, they banked it all on little-known German model Diane Kruger who looks like your pretty basic blonde. Maybe that’s the point. For those who haven’t read *The Iliad* or Greek mythology...Helen leaves her husband King Menelaus (Brendan Gleeson) for the lovely young prince of Troy (Bloom), igniting a 10-year war led by our buff friend Achilles (Pitt).

SKY CAPTAIN AND THE WORLD OF TOMORROW >> June

Stars: Gwyneth Paltrow, Jude Law

Director: Kerry Conran (debut)

Story: When was the last time anyone gave an unknown director \$70-million (U.S.) to make their first film? Conran, who also wrote the script, is a young CalArts grad who got this gig based on a CGI software program he developed which allowed him to shoot the actors entirely against blue screens, and add all the scenery later. If the trailer’s any indication, the film certainly does have a unique look — both retro and high-tech at the same time. Paltrow plays a 1930s newspaper reporter investigating the disappearance of a bunch of famous scientists. Law is a pilot who swoops in to fight the bad guys.

HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN >> June

Stars: Daniel Radcliffe, Gary Oldman

Director: Alfonso Cuarón (*Y tu mamá también*)

Story: We’ll soon know how director Alfonso Cuarón’s influence will change the *Harry Potter* films. The first two were directed by Chris Columbus, whose previous credits include mainstream mush like *Bicentennial Man* and *Mrs. Doubtfire*. Cuarón, on the other hand, is best-known for the sexually explicit 2001 Mexican coming-of-age film *Y tu mamá también*. Will we see some wizard booty? Not likely. In the third movie based on J.K. Rowling’s books, Harry contends with Sirius Black (Oldman), a rebel wizard who has escaped from Azkaban prison apparently to off our magical little hero.

PlayStation 2

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BACK in THE GAME

He's completed rehab and is wrapping up *Friends*, so now Matthew Perry can concentrate on his big-screen career. He'll start by returning to familiar turf with *The Whole Ten Yards* | BY EARL DITTMAN



From left, Amanda Peet, Matthew Perry and Bruce Willis in *The Whole Ten Yards*

Four years after he first teamed with Bruce Willis, Natasha Henstridge, Amanda Peet and Kevin Pollack to outwit the mob in the Montreal-filmed — and set — hitmen comedy *The Whole Nine Yards*, Ottawa-raised Matthew Perry has reunited with his former cast mates for the sequel, *The Whole Ten Yards*.

In the first movie, hitman Jimmy “The Tulip” Teduski (Willis) moves to the Montreal suburbs to elude Chicago mobsters. When his dentist-neighbour Nicholas “Oz” Oseransky (Perry) finds out, he’s not happy and tries to rat out The Tulip. Of course, by the end of the movie the two have worked out their differences. In the sequel, The Tulip’s ex-wife (Henstridge), now married to Oz, is kidnapped, and Oz needs The Tulip’s help to get her back.

Shooting the film was a bit of a grind for Perry, as there was some overlap between its schedule and that of his sitcom *Friends*, but he was determined to fit it in.

“*The Whole Nine Yards* is one of my

favourite movies of my film career, so there was no way I was going to sit out the second instalment, even if it meant I got only two hours of sleep each night,” he says.

Perry recently spoke with *Famous* about his battle with drugs, the end of *Friends* and the new film.

Why is *The Whole Nine Yards* one of your favourites?

“Let’s be honest, I haven’t exactly made a slew of Academy Award-winning movies [his filmography includes *Fools Rush In*, *Three to Tango* and *Serving Sara*]. *The Whole Nine Yards* really clicked for me both as an actor and as a moviegoer. Watching it, it’s a really funny, well-written and superbly acted movie.”

The first film was set in Montreal and was filmed there. Was *The Whole Ten Yards* also shot in Quebec?

“I would have loved it if we had been able to because Montreal is such a great city. But Jimmy — Bruce’s character —



Matthew Perry (left), chicken and Bruce Willis

heads south of the U.S. border to avoid his old buddies, and Quebec just doesn’t look a whole lot like Mexico [laughs]. More than anything, though, we had to shoot it in Los Angeles because I was doing *Friends* at the same time. Actually, there were times I was doing them both on the same day.”

It sounds like the workload was pretty brutal.

“It was a tough schedule. But with *Friends*, because we had been doing it for such a long time, we’re always allowed some time off in the process of doing the show. Plus, I only did *The Whole Ten Yards* during the first part of the last season of *Friends*, not the whole thing.”

Your last film, *Serving Sara*, almost didn’t get finished because you had to leave to battle your drug addiction. Is your life back on track now?

“Very much so. It’s been very well-documented that I was going through a tough time during the shooting of that movie. At a time like that, when it’s kind of a life and death crisis, I just had to prioritize. You just have to say, ‘Look, I have to take care of this problem. Forget the movie. Forget the TV show. It’s not going to be any kind of future unless I get better.’”

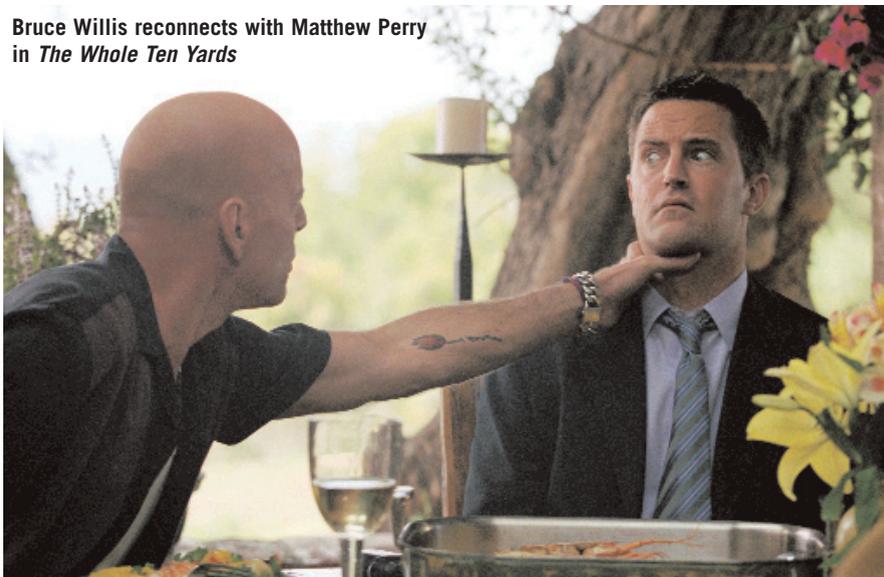
Will this addiction be a life-long fight?

“Yeah, it’s a life-long thing. It’s a disease that you have, and it’s a maintenance program. It’s a daily, spiritual kind of condition that you have to keep up. The key is not to forget how bad it was, because I’m walking around these days pretty joyful and happy and having a really good time in my life. So it would be easy to forget how bad things got. And that’s the danger. You can’t forget.”

Have any producers asked you to take a drug test?

“No, I’ve been very fortunate.”

Bruce Willis reconnects with Matthew Perry in *The Whole Ten Yards*



Were you worried about the media reporting on the rehab?

“Well, of course you think about people talking. But, as I said, if you’re going to do this in a correct way, you forget about it. And it was easy to forget about it, because there were much more important things going on.”

Jennifer Aniston has said that she often felt trapped by the success of *Friends*, but she’s a little worried about what’s going to happen to her career now that *Friends* is over. Do you feel the same way?

“I don’t feel trapped. In an odd way, I wouldn’t be getting the leads in these movies, or these doors wouldn’t have opened up, if it wasn’t for the show. And I waited my whole life to be on a show like *Friends*. The problem, I suppose, is if you enjoy doing comedies, like I do — just enjoy trying to make people laugh, then there is going to be a lot of similarity. Chandler is a funny guy, and Oz from *Nine* and *Ten Yards* is a funny guy too. We look a lot alike [laughs]. Other than that, you just try to find differences. In fact, my next film, *One of Us*, is going to be a full drama. There’s really no jokes in it at all.”



Peet and Perry

Do you find that critics take particular glee when a *Friends* cast member is in a film that tanks?

“Oh, yeah.... I think it’s the nature of the beast of being on a show that has this kind of phenomenal success — to build us up and then break us down. We have suffered through all of that stuff, and we’ve enjoyed the high points.

But one of the things that got talked about was the fact that our movies weren’t as successful as *Friends*. If a movie were to be watched by as many people on a weekly basis as *Friends*, it would make something like what *Harry Potter* makes. We had something like 30-million people watching us every week. To expect that kind of success is outlandish.”

Should we expect to see *Friends: The Movie* at theatres anytime soon?

“Look, *Friends: The Movie* will never happen. I promise you from the bottom of my soul. Of course, in Hollywood you should never say ‘never.’”

Jennifer has said there might be a *Very Merry Friends Christmas* one day.

“I don’t think so. Maybe if all of our careers hit the skids in 20 years we’ll do a *Friends* Christmas special. It’ll probably air right before *The Whole 25 Yards* weekly sitcom [laughs].” **F**

Sweet re-Peet

Actors who make sequels are often asked why they’d want to return to a role they’ve already done. For Amanda Peet, who plays dental hygienist/assassin Jill St. Claire in the *Yards* movies, her reason is pretty straightforward.

“You know, I’ve always loved and believed in that saying, ‘You should dance with the one that brought you to the party,’ and that was *The Whole Nine Yards* for me. It started my film career. So when they called me for the sequel I was like, ‘Wow, I wonder how many people get to go back and revisit the moment they got their big break?’ I felt really sentimental about it. So I cried a lot when we first got together for a reading of the sequel. I was so embarrassed.”

Peet admits there was a little bit of tension while they were making the first film, but says *The Whole Ten Yards* set was completely stress-free. “I don’t think we were sure how the first one was going to be received or if it was going to be a hit, so we were all a little on edge,” Peet recalls. “Once it came out, though, audiences loved it. Critics weren’t that into it, but do

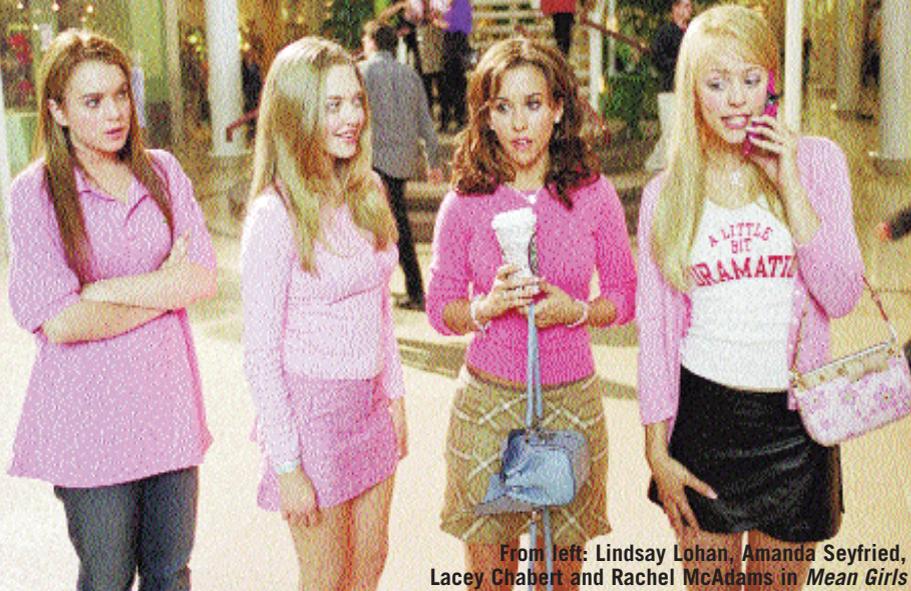


Bruce Willis with Amanda Peet

they ever like anything? And this time around the actors and the writers had enough time to work out all the kinks in the script to where it was flawless. So we just went in every day and had a great time making it.”

One thing that reduced Peet’s stress level this time, was that she didn’t have to repeat her infamous nude scene from the first movie. “Nude scenes are not fun at all,” she says. “At least, I don’t find anything fun about them. Matt and Bruce kept begging me to reconsider doing another one. So I said, ‘I will only do another nude scene if the two of you bare it for the camera too.’”

“But then I remembered Bruce did male nudity in *Color of Night*, and I could just imagine him talking Matt into doing it. So I said, ‘I change my mind. I’m just not getting naked. Subject closed.’” —ED



From left: Lindsay Lohan, Amanda Seyfried, Lacey Chabert and Rachel McAdams in *Mean Girls*

CRUEL intentions

Lacey Chabert plays a vicious teen in *Mean Girls* | BY MARNI WEISZ

Lacey Chabert is sitting in her bedroom with her beloved Chihuahua, Teacup, by her side. The pair is rarely separated for any length of time — when Chabert leaves her California home to do a movie, Teacup almost always tags along. In fact, the last time they were apart was this past October, when Chabert was filming her new movie *Mean Girls* in a climate far too inhospitable for a little Mexican hairless — Toronto.

“It was freezing...and she was sick. She had an ear infection so she had to stay here. Compared to California, which is 70 degrees almost year-round, it was freezing,” insists 21-year-old Chabert, who’s best-known as Claudia Salinger from TV’s *Party of Five* and the voice of Eliza Thornberry on the popular animated series *The Wild Thornberrys* and its movie spin-offs.

Mean Girls is the first feature film written by New York showbiz industry darling Tina Fey, who is *Saturday Night Live*’s current head writer and the co-anchor of “Weekend Update.” For that reason, hopes run high that it will be more interesting than your usual high school-set comedy featuring a smattering of young starlets (in this case Chabert, Lindsay Lohan and London, Ontario-born Rachel McAdams).

“It’s more in the vein of a *Heathers*, or a more subversive type of *Clueless*,” says

Chabert. “It’s much funnier, a tiny bit darker, and I guess subversive is really the right word.”

The film was inspired by the *New York Times Magazine* article “Girls Just Want to be Mean,” which chronicled the complicated strategies high school girls employ to belittle other girls and solidify their place atop the hierarchy — spreading rumours, three-way calling (tricking an outcast girl into saying something nasty about a popular girl while that girl listens in), turning against life-long friends in the effort to be accepted by the in-crowd.

As the film begins, Cady (*Freaky Friday*’s Lohan) has just arrived at a new school in Illinois after having lived in Africa with her zoologist parents for a few years. At first, she fits right in with the popular clique, but when a potential romance brews between Cady and one of the popular girl’s ex-boyfriends her relationship with the in-crowd sours.

Chabert plays in-crowd member Gretchen Weiners. “Her dad is the inventor of Toaster Strudels and she likes to make everyone aware of that,” Chabert says with a laugh. “She’s really superficial and obsessed with all the wrong things.”

The irony is that Chabert is among the tiny minority of North American females who were not subjected to the psychological ills of spending their teen

years cooped up with dozens of other awkward, insecure females. She was schooled by tutors, first on the set of *All My Children*, where she served a few months as Bianca Montgomery (number three) at age 10, and then on the *Party of Five* set from ages 11 through 17.

Chabert insists, however, that she still felt the burn of teen-girl cattiness, if only in social situations, rather than between the walls of an academic institution. “People would always have this preconceived notion of me before I would meet them. ‘Oh, who do you think you are? You’re on a show, you’re an actress,’” Chabert recalls. “And then when they’d meet me they’d realize I’m pretty down to earth.”

Even in her early 20s, it can still be hard for Chabert to find people with whom she can connect in Hollywood. But these days that has more to do with the fact that the Mississippi-born actor is a devout Christian than because of jealousy. “It is difficult to find people I can relate to on a spiritual level,” admits Chabert, who still lives with her folks, “but that’s just in life anywhere, I think. It’s with any job that you have, any area in which you work.”

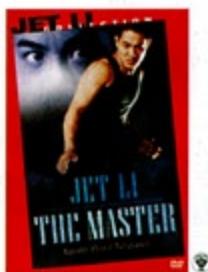
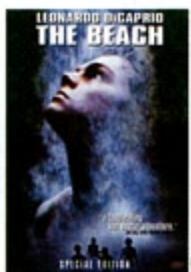
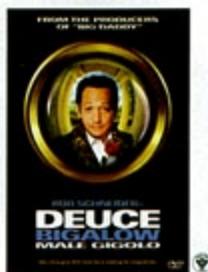
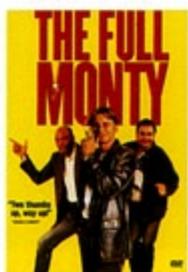
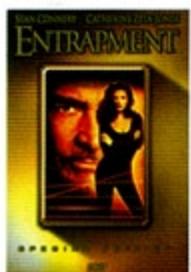
The fact that she has such strong faith (although she hates the word “religious”) may surprise those who’ve seen the paparazzi photos of her in an array of midriff-baring baby Ts and tops that take advantage of her, ummm, womanly assets. But Chabert maintains that having faith doesn’t have to mean wearing long skirts and button-downs.

“It’s the cliché, you know, people roll their eyes, ‘Oh, you’re a Christian so you must be a stick in the mud,’” she laments. “If you just stop and look at what my faith is about, it’s how I feel that I’m supposed to be living my life. I mean, it’s difficult being in this business because I’m always called to make choices, and sometimes I don’t make the right choice. I’m not perfect.”

Those choices will only get more challenging as Chabert hopes to move into edgier film territory. “I love the roles that Natalie Portman does, I love the roles that Scarlett Johansson does, I love the roles that Julia Stiles and Kirsten Dunst do. Those are the types of roles I really fight for,” she says. “If I could choose how I want people to perceive me it would just be as a solid, good actress who can be versatile. And I’m just kind of making baby steps towards that.” **F**



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Great expectations

The fact that there were absolutely *no* expectations for Nia Vardalos's first film, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, played a huge part in its success. Things will be a lot different this time as the Winnipeg native tries to prove she's no one-hit wonder with *Connie and Carla* | BY INGRID RANDOJA

There are actors who may be more beautiful, more talented and funnier than Nia Vardalos, but the one thing she's got that they haven't is the common touch. And that's a priceless commodity in Hollywood.

Vardalos, as everyone who hasn't been living in a hole knows, is the Winnipeg-born writer/comedian whose autobiographical one-woman play, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, was plucked off the stage by Tom Hanks's production company and turned into a little

indie film in which she starred. Well, that little indie film, which cost a paltry \$5-million to make, touched a receptive nerve with, let's see, *everyone*, and went on to gross more than \$350-million worldwide.

And whether or not you liked *Greek Wedding*, you have to admire Vardalos. Not only did she make sure the movie stayed true to her vision, but her "aw shucks" appeal lured a lot of people who don't often go to the cinema, including older folks who haven't

stepped inside a theatre since Julie Andrews twirled across a mountaintop.

So, like the rookie who hits a grand slam his first time at the plate, Vardalos is under a lot of pressure to score another home run her next time up, which takes place this month when her cross-dressing comedy *Connie and Carla* hits theatres.

"People are going to notice *Connie and Carla* has the same themes as *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*," says Vardalos. "It's not offensive, you can bring your



PHOTO BY CLAUDIO YASKYWI/IMAGE

grandma to see it, it's about worshipping your body — 'cause it's the only one you've got, and loving your family — 'cause they're the only ones who really care about you."

The sincerity in Vardalos's voice comes across even on a phone line from L.A., where she lives with her husband, actor Ian Gomez. If you are at all cynical, you may think Vardalos is kidding when she talks about family values and says things like, "I'm such a middle child that I cringe at the thought that I could ever offend somebody!"

And while you get the sense that she is awestruck by her own success, don't be fooled — she's also determined to be a success, and works incredibly hard to make things happen for herself.

Check out the way she got her break with Toronto's Second City comedy troupe. Vardalos was working as a ticket taker at Second City in the hopes of breaking into the troupe, and would watch every performance after she finished up in the booth. When one of the female performers called in sick 15 minutes before show time, Vardalos ran into the director's office and said she could do the part, that she knew it by heart. The director scoffed but, desperate, put her on. The next day she was made a member of the troupe.

With *Connie and Carla*, Vardalos sat down to write a movie that would showcase her musical talents (she's always loved to sing) and make people laugh.

The film, directed by Michael Lembeck (*The Santa Clause 2*), stars Vardalos and Toni Collette as two women who perform musical numbers at the Chicago airport for unsuspecting (and unimpressed) travelers. When they witness a mob hit in the airport car park, they fear for their lives, and go on the run. They end up in L.A., where they stumble into a drag club and come up with the brilliant idea to disguise themselves as drag queens and perform their act. Lo and behold, the once-ridiculed pair are a hit. But their plan starts to fray once Connie (Vardalos) meets Jeff (David Duchovny), an adorable straight guy who's come to L.A. to search for his drag queen brother.

"All I really, really wanted to do was sing in a movie," says Vardalos. "I like musicals, I like to sing, and I think other people do as well. I think because I'm an average person my taste is like everyone else's taste. That's what I



Toni Collette (left) and Nia Vardalos belt 'em out in *Connie and Carla*

"Sometimes when we would do a take I'd go, 'Hold on, hold on. I put my hand on my waist and guys don't do that,'" says Vardalos

found out with *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. I thought I wrote a movie about my family, but it turns out I wrote a movie about everyone's family.

"When we test-marketed *Connie and Carla*, both men and women raised their hands and said they would recommend the movie to a friend. Once again, it's this happy coincidence that I have the same taste as the audience."

Unlike the character she played in *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, Vardalos had to stretch as an actor, playing a woman, playing a man, playing a woman.

"Because it's a romantic comedy, I had to find a way to play a believable man, dressed as a woman, and still have sexual chemistry with David Duchovny, who is playing a straight man," explains Vardalos.

"So, I thought of a plan. When I'm a girl, I'll be a girly girl, and when I'm on stage I'll go full drag, and when I'm in a scene with David I'll walk the line between those two. But sometimes when we would do a take I'd go, 'Hold on, hold on. I put my hand on my waist and guys don't do that. Can we do it again?' And I'd go back and put my hand on my hip. And our director was also very conscious of little things. He'd say, 'Close your mouth, guys don't do that. Don't pout your lips, guys don't do that.' It took a lot of guidance, and a lot of retakes," she says, laughing.

However, her husband, Gomez — whose work includes stints on TV's *Felicity*, *The Norm Show* and *Curb Your Enthusiasm* — wasn't too fond of his better half's new look.

"He came to the set when we were doing camera and makeup tests and ▶▶



cover | story |

▶▶ saw me in drag. He had to walk away, he didn't like it," she says with a laugh. "He likes me scrubbed clean, no makeup, fresh out of the shower."

Gomez has a small part in this film, just like he did in *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. "I have to beg him to be in my movies and read my scripts," says Vardalos. "He reads them like this, 'Crap, crap, my line, crap, crap, my line.' [Laughs.]"

Art has a way of imitating life, and just as Vardalos has a very down-to-earth real-life partner in Gomez, she hand-picks extremely understated actors — John Corbett in *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* and *Connie and Carla's* Duchovny — to be her cinematic lovers.

"I chose both of them for the same reason: they're accessible in their sexuality without being too threatening. Men like them, and women love them. Of course, the second I'm cast against these guys the reality sets in that I have to kiss them! I'm so embarrassed," she says with a giggle.

"But David is so fun and so silly, you'd never expect it. On the first day of shooting, Toni [Collette] and I toilet-papered his trailer, and the war was on! He took a picture of himself hanging a moon and put it in my purse."

Making movies hasn't been all fun and games for this nice Greek gal from the 'Peg. She's faced two separate lawsuits arising from the success of *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. Her former manager and the film's original producers both sued Vardalos for money they felt was

owed them. Both cases were settled out of court, but it must have felt like a slap in the face.

"Yes, it did," she says in a serious tone. "It was surprising, and it was a dose of reality. In the end, I just surrounded myself with my supportive friends and family and got through it. Everything is gone."

So there are no more legal worries?

"I'd hate to say that I don't have to worry about it anymore because as a person in the public eye you always have to worry about it. It's unfortunate, but we live in a litigious society. It's too bad. But, actually, it reaffirmed my belief that 99.9 percent of the people on this earth are good, compassionate and wonderful, and I just refuse to worry about that point-one percent."

Vardalos can now count herself among Hollywood's true players — she's got a blockbuster hit and the subsequent lawsuits to prove it. But Hollywood still doesn't quite feel like home. After all, she once said L.A. made her feel "incredibly invisible because I wasn't 22 and skinny."

You have to wonder if it's hard for her write and act in such an unforgiving environment.

"It's very difficult to create in a superficial vacuum," she says. "I think, for me, it's having the same friends from what I call 'before,' who are honest with me and who'll say, 'Hmm, that's not funny, and you look fat in those pants.' And that, I think, is the key to surviving in Hollyweird." **F**

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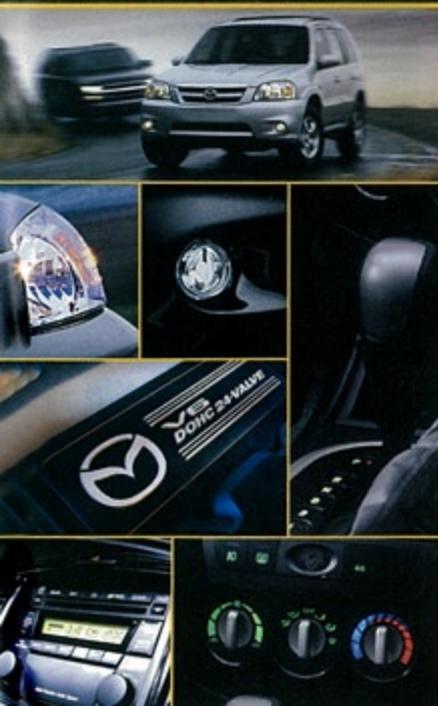
Vardalos and David Duchovny fall for each other in *Connie and Carla*

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Brights of Spring

After a brutal winter, thaw out with a hot dose of colour | **BY ZENYA SIRANT**

Taking cues from tropical sunsets and vibrant flora, this spring's makeup looks are all about bold, saturated colour. While some of the shades may seem like a throw-back to the extreme '80s, the 2004 spring palette is entirely fresh and manageable. Colours are now more complex, ranging from the sheerest glosses to dense, opaque shadows. Update your spring makeup look by coating your lashes in a tidal wave of bright blue mascara — with matching eyeliner, of course. Or, simply add fruity melon and orange shades to your lip colour repertoire.



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Away from OPI, \$12.50, at fine salons and spas.

Add these Spring Must-Haves to your makeup Bag



Blue Spring Colour Palette from Stila Cosmetics, \$42, at select Holt Renfrew stores.



Superbalm Tinted Lip Treatment in Mango Tint from Clinique, \$13.50, at Clinique counters nationwide.

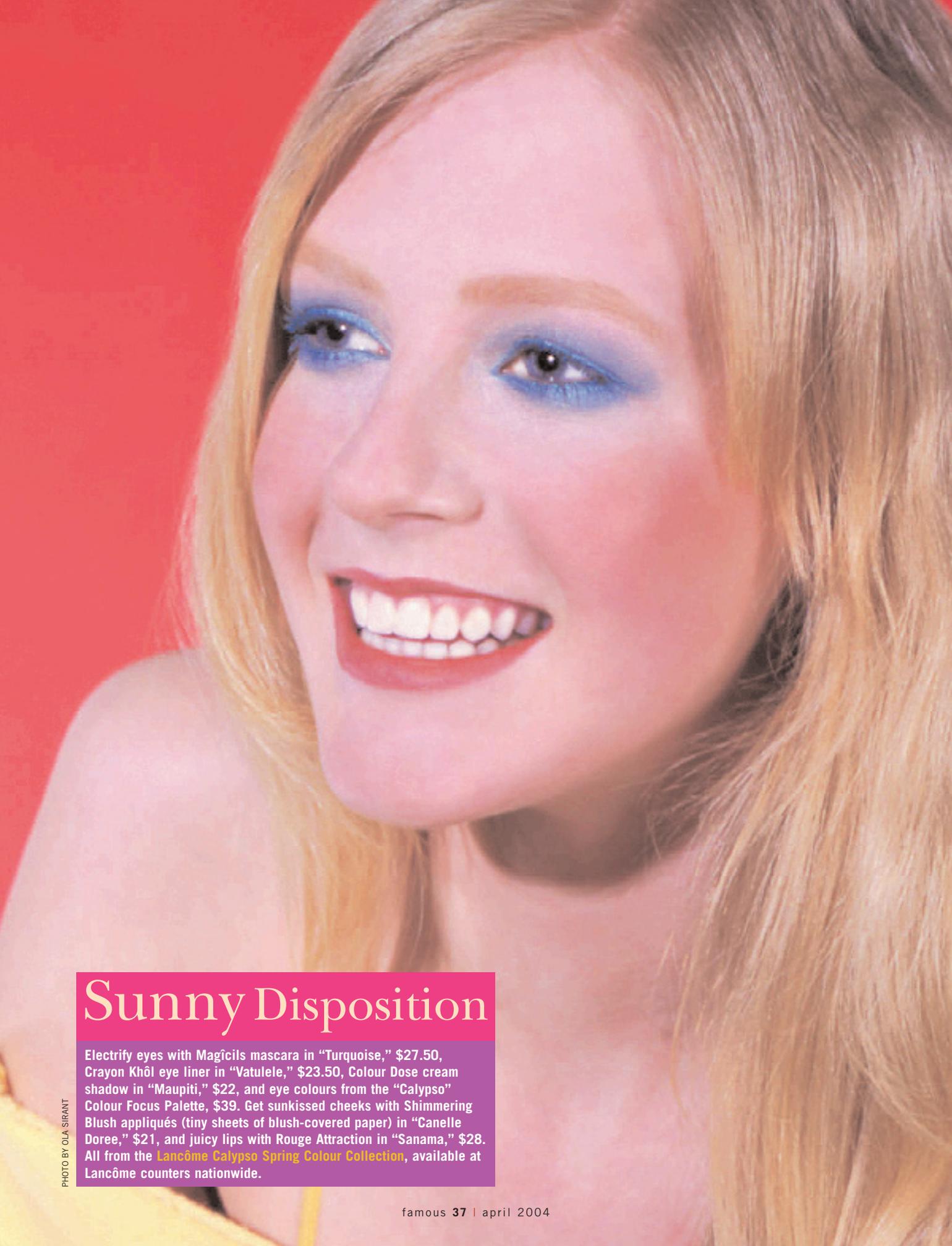


Boys' Club

Leave it to fashion pioneer Jean Paul Gaultier to launch the **Tout Beau Tout Propre** makeup collection for men. Before you jump to drag-queen conclusions, this line centres around modest, beautifully formulated skin concealers and bronzers (also a hit with the ladies), with a kohl liner as the most dramatic piece — essential when going for rock star looks à la Dave Navarro. Prices range from \$22 to \$59, available at department stores nationwide.

An item or two from **MAC's** fruity Hipnotique line, \$11.50 to \$16, at MAC counters nationwide.





Sunny Disposition

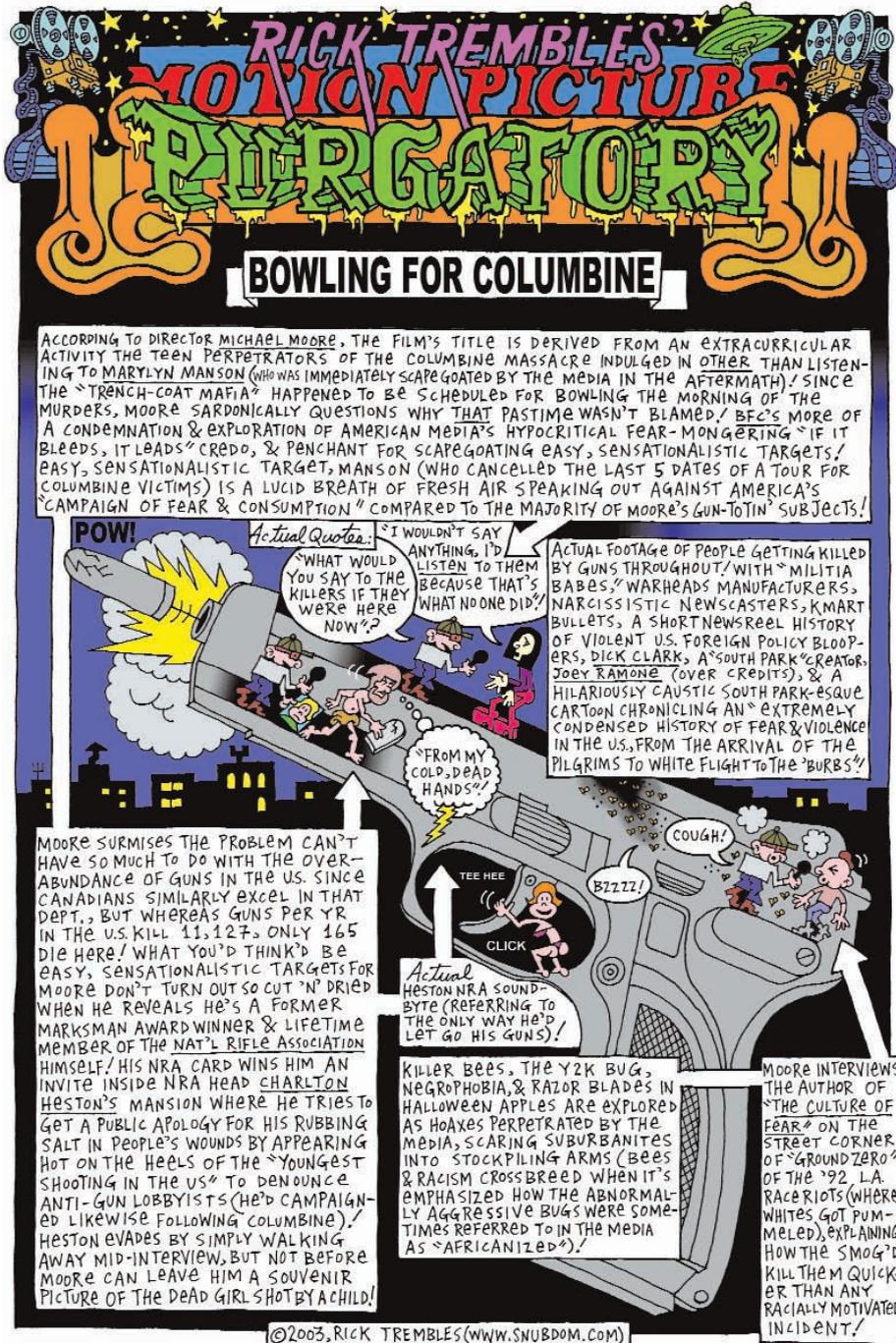
Electrify eyes with Magîcils mascara in “Turquoise,” \$27.50, Crayon Khôl eye liner in “Vatulele,” \$23.50, Colour Dose cream shadow in “Maupiti,” \$22, and eye colours from the “Calypso” Colour Focus Palette, \$39. Get sunkissed cheeks with Shimmering Blush appliqués (tiny sheets of blush-covered paper) in “Canelle Doree,” \$21, and juicy lips with Rouge Attraction in “Sanama,” \$28. All from the **Lancôme Calypso Spring Colour Collection**, available at Lancôme counters nationwide.

PHOTO BY OLA SIRANT

PURGATORY EXPERIENCE

If you like your film reviews, and your comics, on the subversive side, you'll probably enjoy the work of Montreal native **Rick Trembles** (real surname Tremblay) who spins out weekly graphic movie reviews for his website **snuddom.com**. While often a tad raw, Trembles' work — dubbed "**Motion Picture Purgatory**" — is darn funny, and manages to capture the essence of a two-hour film, whether a mainstream release like *Big Fish*, an indie documentary like *Bowling for Columbine* or a cult classic like *Bambi vs. Godzilla*, in just a few frames, or sometimes even a single frame crammed full of plot bits and slicing commentary.

Trembles, now 42, has been creating comics for various Montreal zines since the late 1970s, and even had a page in famed cartoonist Robert Crumb's *Weirdo* back in the '80s. Here's how he answered the five Ws. | **BY MARNI WEISZ**



WHO are you?

"Primarily, a Montreal-based cartoonist-slash-musician (with my "post-punk" band The American Devices since 1980), who also dabbles in the indie film scene, having provided 2-D animation and/or my limited acting abilities for various eccentric local productions (I always seem to get typecast as a brain-dead zombie or degenerate)."

WHAT is "Motion Picture Purgatory"?

"I sick words and doodles against each other. I often have either so much applause or vitriol for whatever film I'm reviewing that the text can overtake the artwork, so I end up having to draw smaller and smaller to accommodate the words 'til any accompanying depictions of people get reduced to such a whisper they may as well be hieroglyphics I can type in with the keyboard."

WHERE does your work appear other than snuddom.com?

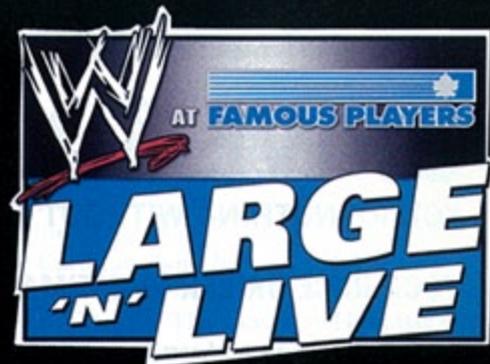
"Since 1998, my film reviews have been in *The Montreal Mirror*. I've also become known in comix circles worldwide for some of my self-published comix. I've had stuff distributed through reprints in various international anthologies. This summer, cult-film specialists Fab Press will release a book of my best 'Motion Picture Purgatories.'"

WHEN did you start doing this?

"My father used to draw Canadian World War Two comic books for a living in the '40s and he had early anthologies lying around that reprinted prehistoric newspaper comics while they were still experimental. Some of that deceptively crude-looking stuff was encouraging because it looked as if anyone could do it and eventually I saw how a lot of '60s underground cartoonists seemed influenced by them too, so they inspired me the same way."

WHY do you do this?

"As a kid, I was obsessed with monster movies and when punk made its first impressions on me I started playing what I hoped was the equivalent of monster music, and thought the same aesthetic could be applied to comix and film. At the risk of spreading myself thin I wanted to live, breathe and cross-pollinate that notion. Film, comics and rock 'n' roll all share avant-garde counterparts predating punk so it's an endless mine of inspiration. I wanted it all and, as a result, I'm a walking, talking catastrophe. So besides being a childhood dream, drawing comix is therapeutic."



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DRIVE TO SUCCEED

YOU'RE NOTHING WITHOUT MOOLA IN *TOCA RACE DRIVER 2* | BY SCOTT GARDNER

TOCA RACE DRIVER 2: ULTIMATE RACING SIMULATOR

[XBOX, PC]

With a huge variety of cars and courses, plus the brand new "Terminal Damage Engine," *TOCA Race Driver 2: Ultimate Racing Simulator* is looking to break into the big leagues of videogame racing.

In single-player mode, you assume the role of an inexperienced, yet talented, driver who aspires to become a Formula One champion. But to do this you'll need money — a lot of money. So you build up your savings by working your way through 30 different championships, cups and events.

You'll have to master 15 different styles, including Super Truck, Stockcar Oval, Rallycross, Ice-Racing, Street Racing and more. Although *Race Driver 2* doesn't quite match the dizzying variety of cars in the revered *Gran Turismo* series, it does offer 35 obscenely expensive and gloriously over-powered dream cars, including the Aston Martin Vanquish and Jaguar XKR.

Full online play for all platforms and System Link mode for Xbox let you duke it out with others on the digital asphalt (or dirt or ice). Online play also features leader boards and specialty ladders, and after a few wins you'll be able to host your own races and decide who races with you.

Rendered with 60-frame-per-second graphics, realistic motion blur and true depth of field, the sophisticated Terminal Damage Engine means car windows smash, doors can be ripped open, wheels get torn from their axles and a head-on collision can leave your car a complete wreck of twisted metal. Drive carefully!



NBA BALLERS [PS2, XBOX]

Confirming that no one plays ball just for the love of the game anymore, *NBA Ballers* is a one-on-one showdown where making the baskets brings you the Benjamins and the bling-bling as well as, oh yes, points.

Set in the fantasy lifestyle of sports superstars, and officially licensed by the NBA and NBA Legends, *Ballers* boasts 60 current and 24 all-time player legends taking the game out of the arena and into a N.Y. mansion, a deluxe yacht or a Miami nightclub.

Gamers can create custom NBA characters by choosing their look and skills, or pit Shaq against Larry Bird. Player models are based on the height, weight and athletic ability of real NBA players and feature 36-point facial animations.

Ballers offers online play for PS2 and Xbox, including ladder and tournament modes, plenty of virtual cash, chromed-out cars, ice, ladies, tats and jets. And if you're good enough, you'll walk away with the keys to a top baller's penthouse or yacht.



HITMAN: CONTRACTS

[PC, XBOX, PS2]

The third instalment in the critically acclaimed, multimillion-selling *Hitman* series promises to be the darkest, most disturbing episode yet.

As usual, you'll explore the murky psychology of killing for a living in the role of Agent 47, one of the most ruthlessly efficient assassins in gaming history.

This particular adventure gets going in the city of lights, Paris, where 47 is wounded and trapped in (what else?) a dangerous situation — even for him. But on the bright side, a new graphics engine showcases his "work" in brutal detail.

Hitman: Contracts also features even more ways to make the perfect kill than its predecessors, and an increased arsenal of firearms and close-combat weapons. Plus, an improved control system and more gradual learning curve ensures that the game is accessible to aspiring hitmen of any ability.



HE-MAN: DEFENDER OF GRAYSKULL

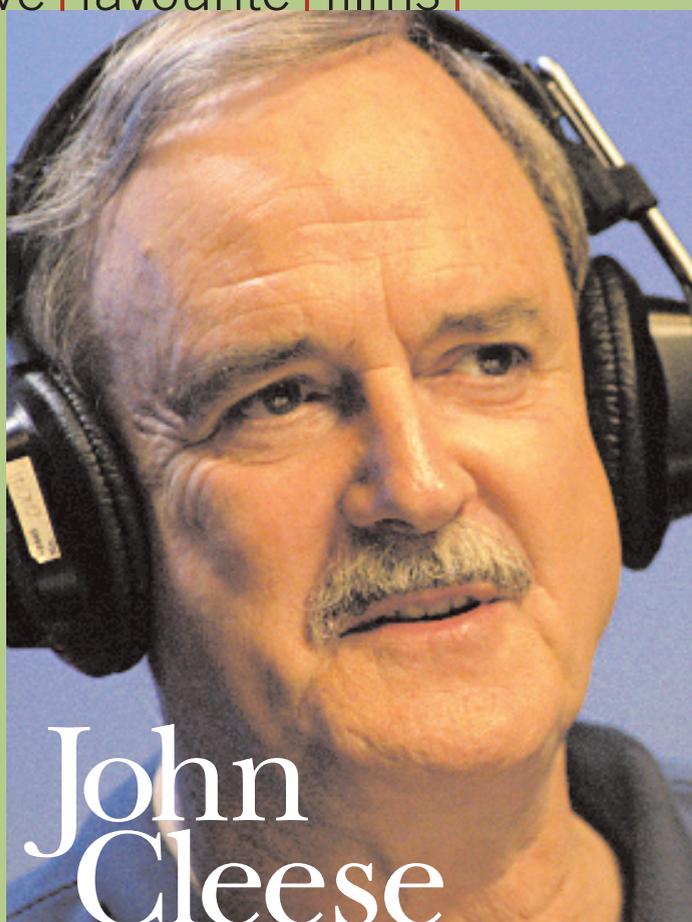
[XBOX, PS2, GC]

Based on the "new" animated series, don't be confused if you also see this one titled *He-Man: Masters of the Universe* — it's the same thing. Regardless, the game is a third-person action adventure that puts players in the role of He-Man, the Most Powerful Man in the Universe.

To save the land of Eternia, He-Man (the Most Powerful Man in the Universe) must fight Skeletor and Beast Man through 34 levels and three magical environments. Fortunately, he has the help of his trusty Battle Cat. And let's face it, with that salad-bowl haircut, he'd better be powerful.

By the way, on developer TDK's *Masters of the Universe Interactive* website, 47 percent of survey respondents — almost 10,000 voters — said they were interested in the game because they watched the 1980s version of *He-Man* on TV. Is it just me or is nostalgia not what it used to be?





John Cleese MAKES HIS PICKS

It isn't enough that John Cleese and his fellow Monty Python members changed the face of comedy. No, Mr. John Marwood Cleese's list of accomplishments includes earning a law degree from Cambridge, co-authoring two books on therapy, producing quite possibly the world's funniest corporate training videos and writing and starring in the classic comedy *A Fish Called Wanda*.

You'll also recognize his clipped, oh-so British voice in the upcoming *Shrek 2* (he plays Fiona's father), and you'll see him in a cameo in this summer's quirky kids version of the Jules Verne classic *Around the World in 80 Days*. Oh, and James Bond videogame enthusiasts can see a pixelated version of him as gadget master Q in the just-released video game *James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing*.

Famous chatted with Cleese on the phone from L.A. where he was busy promoting the new Bond game.

WHAT ARE YOUR FIVE FAVOURITE FILMS?

"Number one is certainly **Dr. Strangelove** [1964], which I think is the greatest comedy of my generation. You'll see that I veer towards the comedies. • Number two is **The Ladykillers** [1955], the original English one with Alec Guinness. The Ealing comedies of the '40s and '50s are just marvelous, although none of them were successes over here in North America. • Number three is **The Lavender Hill Mob** [1951]. I'm partial to that one because of my association with its director, the darling Charlie Crichton.

And although it's not a *great* movie, it's a very good movie. I remember seeing it three times as a kid, and then to have Charlie direct *A Fish Called Wanda* was such a great thrill. • Number four would be **Some Like it Hot** [1959]. I think it's just terrific. The performances from Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis are both big and small at the same time. • Number five would be **All of Me** [1984] with Steve Martin and Lily Tomlin. That was a staggeringly good performance by Steve, who was not nominated for an Oscar! Anybody who plays someone handicapped has eight times the chance of getting nominated for an Oscar as opposed to someone in a comedy. It's one of those things, when it comes time to nominate, people somehow feel they ought to show what a deeply caring person they are as well as rewarding a particularly difficult acting feat."

YOU PLAY Q IN THE BOND FILMS AND VIDEOGAMES. ARE YOU TECH SAVVY?

"Oh God, no. Pierce [Brosnan] says he's hopeless, and I'm *completely* hopeless. I used to be able to program VCRs up until seven or eight years ago, and then the engineers took over and now 95 percent of the features are only of interest to various engineers working at rival companies."

LAST REPORTS HAD YOU WORKING ON A MOVIE ADAPTATION OF ROALD DAHL'S BOOK *THE TWITS*.

"I've actually walked away from that. I used to read *The Twits* to my youngest daughter, Camilla, when she was little. It was our favourite book. But [Disney] wanted me to make certain changes to the script that I didn't think were right, and so we had a perfectly friendly and courteous artistic disagreement."

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON NOW?

"My partner [Kirk di Micco] and I are writing an animated movie for DreamWorks about cavemen. It's being animated by the wonderful Aardman people, who did *Chicken Run* and the *Wallace & Gromit* films. I'm absolutely delighted to be working on it because it gives me the chance to do a lot of reading about what was going on 40,000 years ago when Neanderthals were around."

IS IT A CHALLENGE TO MAKE NEANDERTHALS FUNNY?

"One of the things we are trying to figure out at this early stage is the tone of the movie, and what are these people's attitude towards death. I have a feeling back in the cave-man's day people were getting killed fairly often [laughs]. I think it was probably more of an everyday occurrence. We have to figure that out and see if that works on screen."

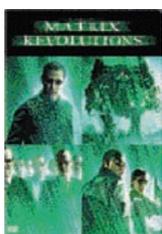
IS THERE ANYTHING YOU HAVEN'T DONE IN YOUR CAREER THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO DO?

"Yes. I'm vaguely beginning to wonder about doing a one-man show. When I saw Eddie Izzard's show recently, I thought what a wonderful thing it is to just stand up in front of an audience and paint a picture of the world that's just your own. But God knows when that will happen, that's a long way from now. The other thing is that I would dearly love to write a couple of plays for the stage. That would be marvelous." —**Ingrid Randoja**

new releases

GO HOME WITH **MASTER AND COMMANDER**, DISCOVER **LOVE DON'T COST A THING** OR GET INTO **THE HAUNTED MANSION**

APRIL 6

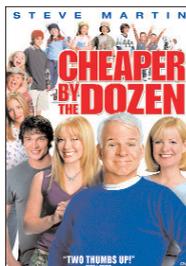


MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

Stars: Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne

Directors: The Wachowski Brothers (*The Matrix*)

Story: In the *Matrix* trilogy's final chapter, Neo's destiny and the fate of all humanity will be decided by his cataclysmic battle with Agent Smith and the Machine Army. The war will end tonight...plus there's one heck of a rainstorm. **DVD Extras:** Four featurettes, *Matrix* timeline, stills gallery



CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

Stars: Steve Martin, Bonnie Hunt

Director: Shawn Levy (*Just Married*)

Story: After having 12 children together, college sweethearts

Tom and Kate Baker — Baker's dozen, get it? — move their family to the big city after Tom gets his dream job there. With his wife away, can Tom hold it together with his kids pulling him one way and his job pulling him the other?

DVD Extras: Audio commentary by the "Baker Kids," two featurettes, six deleted scenes, theatrical trailers

APRIL 13



KILL BILL: VOL. 1

Stars: Uma Thurman, Lucy Liu

Director: Quentin Tarantino (*Pulp Fiction*)

Story: This blood-soaked tale of a female assassin (Thurman) seeking revenge on her attackers employs

split screens, an anime sequence and Tarantino's trademark ultra-hip musical selections. *Kill Bill* may be just a highly stylized revenge flick — but what style!

DVD Extras: "Behind the Scenes with QT" documentary, trailers



TIMELINE

Stars: Paul Walker, Frances O'Connor

Director: Richard Donner (*Lethal Weapon 4*)

Story: In this swords and scientists adventure, archaeology students travel back to the year 1357 to rescue their missing professor. They'd better all get As.

APRIL 20



CHASING LIBERTY

Stars: Mandy Moore, Mark Harmon

Director: Andy Cadiff (debut)

Story: As the only child of the U.S. president, 18 year-old Anna Foster (Moore)

is always in the public eye. But during a diplomatic trip to Europe, Anna ditches her Secret Service agents and takes off on a madcap European adventure with a mysterious stranger.

THE HAUNTED MANSION

Stars: Eddie Murphy, Terence Stamp

Director: Rob Minkoff (*The Lion King*)

Story: Inspired by a Disney theme park ride, the once-funny Murphy goes to his family friendly material (again) for 88 minutes of semi-creepy, special effects-driven slapstick. Don't say we didn't warn you. **DVD Extras:** Bloopers, deleted scene, Raven's "Superstition" music video, a Haunted Mansion virtual tour, behind-the-scenes featurettes



MASTER AND COMMANDER

Stars: Russell Crowe, Paul Bettany

Director: Peter Weir (*The Truman Show*)

Story: Captain "Lucky" Jack Aubrey (Crowe) leads a high seas

adventure so rich with period detail and convincing dialogue, the audience can practically smell the salt air and feel the heave of the ocean beneath their seats.

DVD Extras: The two-disc set includes a 70-minute doc, four featurettes, six deleted scenes, four multi-angle studies, a split-screen vignette, four art galleries and theatrical trailers

APRIL 27



BIG FISH

Stars: Ewan McGregor, Albert Finney

Director: Tim Burton (*Sleepy Hollow*)

Story: Nearing his end, an old-timer (Finney) reconnects

with his son (Billy Crudup) by telling the story of his rich life. His tall tales involve a witch, a giant, a haunted forest and, yes, a big fish. McGregor plays Finney's younger version. **DVD Extras:** Seven featurettes, Burton's commentary, interactive trivia game

THE COOLER

Stars: William H. Macy, Alec Baldwin

Director: Wayne Kramer (debut)



Story: In this dramedy, Bernie Lootz (Macy) is so unlucky he works for a Vegas casino as

a "cooler" — his mere presence at a hot table will kill a winning streak. But when Bernie falls in love, his luck changes for the better and all hell breaks loose.

DVD Extras: "Anatomy of a Scene" TV special, deleted scenes, storyboards

LOVE ACTUALLY

Stars: Hugh Grant, Emma Thompson

Director: Richard Curtis (debut)

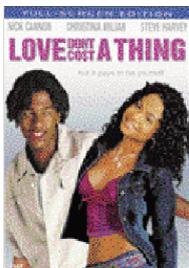
Story: In this charming comedy, a charming all-star cast, including Colin Firth, Laura Linney, Alan Rickman, Keira Knightley and Billy Bob Thornton, charm their way through charmingly inter-related romantic tangles. Looks like love



actually is all around. **DVD**

Extras: Charming audio commentary by Grant, deleted scenes

APRIL 27



LOVE DON'T COST A THING

Stars: Nick Cannon, Steve Harvey

Director: Troy Beyer (*Let's Talk About Sex*)

Story: A nerdy teen (Cannon) hires the most popular girl in

school (Christina Milian) to "fake a front" as his girlfriend, then finds out popularity ain't all that. A 21st-century update of the not-exactly-classic 1987 teen comedy *Can't Buy Me Love*.

DVD Extras: Deleted scenes, alternate ending, two music videos, trailers

STUCK ON YOU

Stars: Matt Damon, Greg Kinnear

Director: The Farrelly Brothers (*Shallow Hal*)

Story: Wild complications ensue when conjoined twin brothers (Damon, Kinnear) — or at least one of them — pursues a Hollywood career. Whatever happens, nothing will ever come between these two. The latest comedy from the makers of *There's Something About Mary* is silly, outrageous and surprisingly sweet. **DVD Extras:** Commentary by the Farrellys, four featurettes, eight deleted scenes, blooper reel, trailer gallery.

GO TO WWW.BLOCKBUSTER.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION

NEW to DVD

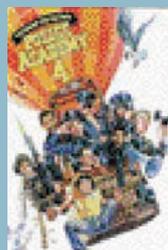
POLICE ACADEMY: 20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

"Call them slobs. Call them jerks. Call them gross. Just don't call them when you're in trouble."



And so began one of comedy's most enduring franchises, finally arriving on DVD in all its lowbrow glory.

If you grew up in the '80s you will rejoice over the 20th Anniversary Edition of *Police Academy*, and possibly despair because you're getting so darn old. Has it really been 20 years since the doors of the



police academy swung open for Tackleberry, Jaws, Hightower and the rest those lovable losers?

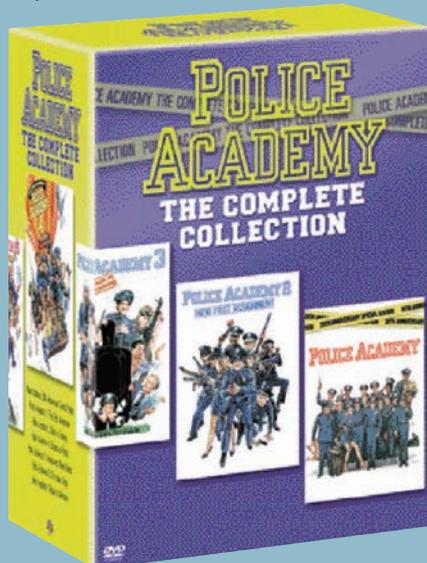
Criminally underrated by film historians and responsible adults alike, this indestructible series

boasted such once and

future stars as Steve Guttenberg, Sharon Stone, Kim Cattrall, Bob Goldthwait, Christopher Lee and Janet Jones-Gretzky.

The original *Police Academy* will also include a reunion audio commentary with stars, director and producer, plus the new documentary "Behind Academy Doors: Secret Files Revealed."

The rest of the series — *Police Academy 2* through *7* — will also arrive on DVD this month. Each is newly remastered and includes a new "making of" featurette and theatrical trailer. For completists, the whole kaboodle is available in a seven-disc giftset for \$74.98.



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april

HOROSCOPE | BY DAN LIEBMAN

Aries

March 21 >>> April 20

Personality clashes toward mid-April are followed by a rather extended period of co-operation. A friend or relative is finally ready to accept your decisions. Think carefully before agreeing to any offer that involves money and risk.

Taurus

April 21 >>> May 22

Personal relationships are on a smoother course after a rather awkward period. Professionally, too, the atmosphere turns more positive, as you take on greater responsibility. It's a good month to seek advice on a legal matter, but don't hesitate to ask difficult questions.

Gemini

May 23 >>> June 21

Make an effort to pull yourself out of a rut. Don't find excuses to decline invitations. Just dress yourself up, mingle and meet some fascinating people. Something that involves your artistic side — drawing, for example — can be turned into a profit-making venture.

Cancer

June 22 >>> July 22

A good friend returns, and your extended family seems to grow and grow. It's time to decide how serious you want a long-distance relationship to become. Exercise — not a war of words — is the best way to release stress. Expect an interesting offer around the 27th.

Leo

July 23 >>> August 22

This is a good month to work on family albums or other nostalgia projects. Mid-April sees you networking or joining a social group. Use new tactics to settle a family dispute. Save your important requests for late in the month, when your karma is especially good.

Virgo

August 23 >>> September 22

It's time to contact family members — even the crabby ones you've been avoiding. It's also a good month to go after debts and unfulfilled obligations, though you may have to change your approach. Shared ventures thrive once you work out the pesky details.

Libra

September 23 >>> October 22

You're highly motivated to go after a personal goal, whether it's learning a new language or launching an exercise program. April is also a good month to volunteer time to a favourite cause. The last 10 days see you engaged in competitions, most of them friendly.

Scorpio

October 23 >>> November 21

A short trip or impromptu break can provide the solitude that you cherish. Expect some changes in your work surroundings. Motivation is unusually strong, but remember that it comes from within. Late April may find you hosting theme-related events.

Sagittarius

November 22 >>> December 22

April is better for completing projects than for starting them. It's also a good month to work on a journal. Keep an impatient streak in check and allow relationships to develop naturally. Around the 19th, you may earn a small financial award or receive a commendation.

Capricorn

December 23 >>> January 20

It's the time to build on recent successes. A significant achievement is within your grasp, but you can't afford to lose momentum. You may encounter manipulative and nosy people, but they're best ignored. Late-April family events are surprisingly cordial.

Aquarius

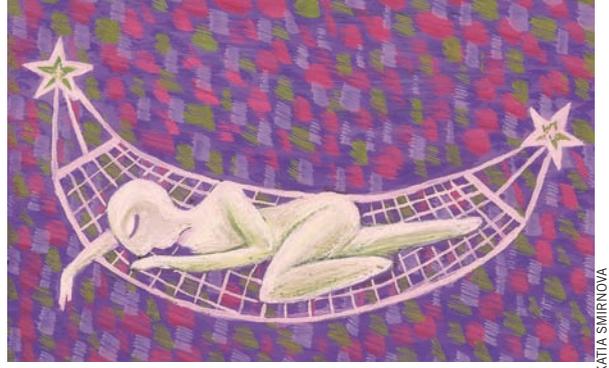
January 21 >>> February 19

You're becoming less materialistic, thanks to the influence of an older friend. Make sure that you remain practical, too, especially when it comes to educational or professional advancement. It would be a pity to blow the opportunities that pop up late in the month.

Pisces

February 20 >>> March 20

It's time to come out of hibernation, since some wonderful events are about to take place outside your cave. People in high places start to notice your talents and skills. Circulate your résumé, spruce up your wardrobe and get ready to make that overdue comeback.



KATIA SMIRNOVA

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

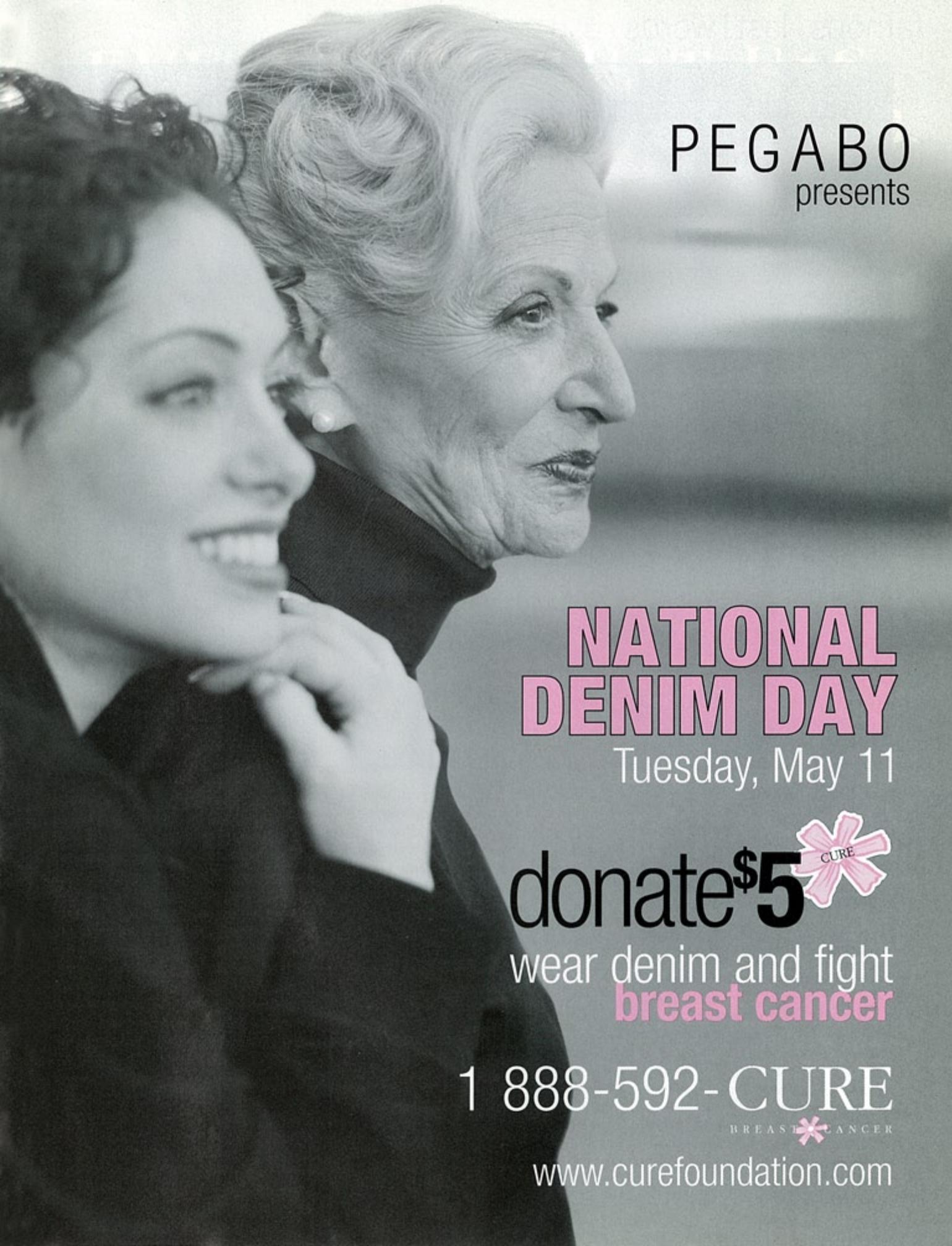


- 1st **Debbie Reynolds**
- 2nd **Dana Carvey**
- 3rd **Alec Baldwin**
- 4th **Christine Lahti**
- 5th **Frank Gorshin**
- 6th **Marilu Henner**
- 7th **Russell Crowe**
- 8th **Patricia Arquette**
- 9th **Cynthia Nixon**
- 10th **Steven Seagal**
- 11th **Joel Grey**
- 12th **Claire Danes**
- 13th **Rick Schroder**

- 14th **Adrien Brody**
- 15th **Emma Thompson**
- 16th **Martin Lawrence**
- 17th **Jennifer Garner**
- 18th **Conan O'Brien**
- 19th **Kate Hudson**
- 20th **Jessica Lange**
- 21st **Tony Danza**
- 22nd **Jack Nicholson**
- 23rd **Valerie Bertinelli**
- 24th **Barbra Streisand**
- 25th **Renée Zellweger**
- 26th **Carol Burnett**
- 27th **Sheena Easton**



- 28th **Jay Lenô**
- 29th **Daniel Day-Lewis**
- 30th **Kirsten Dunst**



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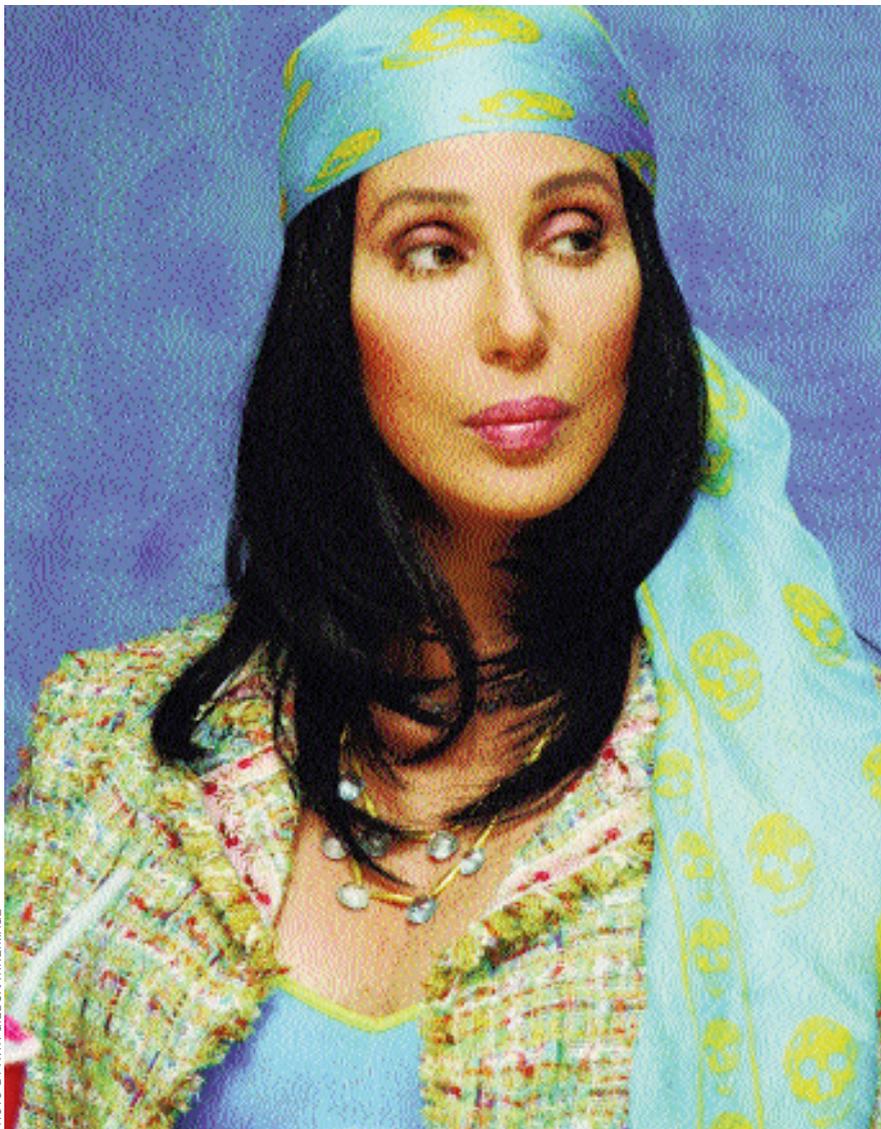


PHOTO BY AVIK GILBOA/WIREIMAGE

10

stars

REVEAL THEIR POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS

CHER "If I could start life over, I think I'd go into politics the way Sonny [Bono] did. You know, he was a forward-thinking and dyed-in-the-wool Democrat who had to change to get where he wanted to go, to get to Congress."

| BY SUSAN GRANGER

BEN AFFLECK "My fantasy is that some day I'm independently wealthy enough that I'm not beholden to anybody, so I can run for Congress on the grounds that everyday people — be they singers or movie stars or poets or bankers or lawyers or teachers — should be in government. But I know that I probably have too many skeletons [in my closet] to survive the election process."

TOM SELLECK "I know several Republicans who have approached me, but I have more acting that I want to do before I consider another career. And I plan on being an actor for quite a while."

CHRIS ROCK "Jesse Jackson has been urging me to get active in politics. I told him, 'I'm in show business.' I wanna hang out with Janet Jackson, not Jesse Jackson."

TOM HANKS "My image is really good. I've made nice acceptance speeches on TV a couple of times. I handle myself pretty well in the glare of the entertainment media. Not a bad platform, I suppose, to run for some office."

WILL SMITH "I say this to my friends a lot, jokin', but I'm really serious. I feel like I could be president of the United States. I believe if I set my mind to it, within the next 15 years, I would be president. And my primary issue would be education. I'd like to be known as the 'Education President.'"

DUSTIN HOFFMAN "Not me. Never. We've never gotten away from the comic book mentality. Superman was all good. You could get him with kryptonite, but he didn't have a flaw in him. The president has this image, and it's not true of any

president. Besides, I have this inability to lie. It's too late to change that now."

WARREN BEATTY "I've considered the idea but I doubt that I'd ever run. I do, however, want to have the opportunity to speak out for the value of social programs, a safety net, regulation and active government."

WHOOPI GOLDBERG "Yeah, I've been asked. But I don't have the patience. I don't have the diplomacy that you need to be a politician. I don't like stupid people, and I don't like idiotic comments, and I say so."

JANEANE GAROFALO "I'm excited by politics, but I wouldn't want to be president. I don't even think President Bush wants to be president. Whenever you see him on television, the expression on his face says, 'This sucks. Why did I let my dysfunctional family get me into this?'"

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