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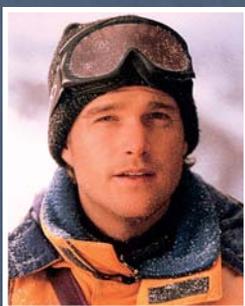
december 2000 volume 1 number 12

canada's entertainment lifestyle magazine

Nicolas Cage
ON BECOMING
THE FAMILY MAN

Sandra Bullock
MAKES HER BID FOR
MISS CONGENIALITY

Chris O'Donnell
TALKS VERTICAL LIMIT



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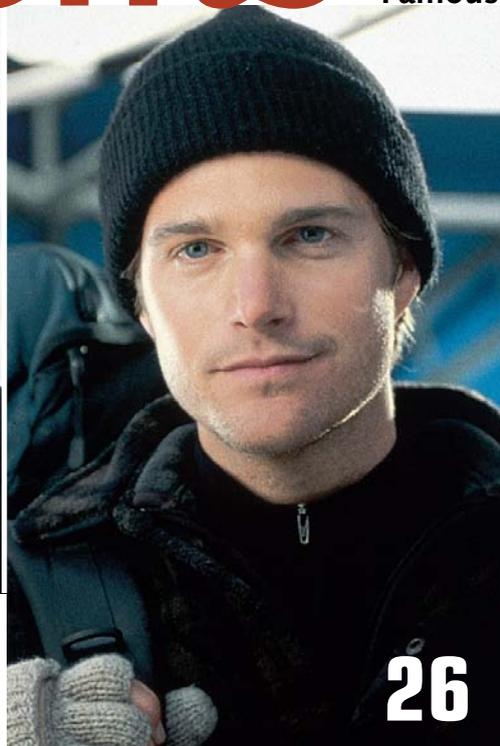
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By David Giammarco

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She's not crazy about all the makeup and sparkly clothes, but Sandra Bullock learned a lot about beauty pageants on the set of her new comedy, *Miss Congeniality*

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In *Vertical Limit* Chris O'Donnell plays a mountain climber on a mission to save his sister from certain death. The former Batman sidekick chats about the importance of his real-life family and making the high-altitude action pic

By Sean Daly

COVER STORY

30 WHAT HELEN WANTS

Where has Helen Hunt been for the past two-and-a-half years? The Oscar-winning star of *Cast Away* and *What Women Want* explains her recent absence from the movies and opens up about feeling unloved and uncool

By Earl Dittman

ON THE COVER Helen Hunt

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hunt is on

Five years ago I went to see a terrible crime-thriller called *Kiss of Death*, which starred a couple of TV personalities turned big-screen actors. David Caruso — in his first movie role after leaving *NYPD Blue* — was Jimmy, an ex-con trying to make good, and *Mad About You*'s **Helen Hunt** made a rather brief appearance as Jimmy's wife, Bev. Brief, because a mere 30 minutes into the film Bev gets whacked. It was at this point that one of my friends declared, "They had to kill her off because she can only act for half an hour at a time."



It's true, just a few years ago poor Helen was thought of as a middling TV sitcom actress who turned to film to keep busy between seasons. But in 1996, she created box office magic as a damp-shirted scientist in *Twister*; then followed up with an Oscar-winning turn as an overworked single mom in 1997's *As Good as It Gets*. Helen Hunt had transformed from a TV actress doing film in her spare time to a film star slumming it on her old TV show between movie projects. Over the past three months, four Helen Hunt movies have hit theatres, including two this month — *Cast Away* with Tom Hanks and *What Women Want* with Mel Gibson.

For "Many Happy Returns," page 30, Hunt spoke with Earl Dittman about taking time off, the new movies and how stardom can't change how "uncool" she sometimes feels.

Nicolas Cage is another actor fond of transformation. But rather than change mediums, Cage has changed genres...again and again and again. There's Cage the comedic actor (*Raising Arizona*, *Peggy Sue Got Married*), Cage the dramatic actor (*Birdy*, *Leaving Las Vegas*), Cage the action icon (*The Rock*, *Con Air*) and now, Cage the star of romantic comedies? If his new time-warp love story *The Family Man* does well, you can expect to see him in similar roles for the next couple of years — and even if it doesn't, he'll probably stick with the genre for a while. Cage tells David Giammarco why in "Lights, Camera, No More Action?," page 18.

You might think litesome brunette **Sandra Bullock** would feel right at home in a beauty pageant, but such is not the case. For *Miss Congeniality*, the 36-year-old actress felt about as uncomfortable as did her character — an undercover FBI agent posing as a contestant in the "Miss United States" pageant. As Bullock told Michele Manelis in an on-set interview, "It is a business that consists of bondage, horse training [and] abuse." But that doesn't mean she has no respect for the women who take part. Read "Beauty Queen," page 22, to learn why.

From teen model to McDonald's commercial actor to movie star, **Chris O'Donnell** seems to have breezed his way to Hollywood's apex. Climbing to the top of a frigid mountain in his new movie *Vertical Limit*, however, wasn't quite as easy. O'Donnell tells Sean Daly about the long, tough shoot in "Mountain Man," page 26.

Enjoy whichever holiday you observe at this time of year, and have a wonderful New Year from everyone here at *Famous*. And if you need help planning your vacation viewing schedule, check out "The Big Picture," on page 12. There are some good ones this month.

— Marni Weisz

Famous

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Famous™ magazine is published 12 times a year by *Famous* magazine Inc. Subscriptions are \$32.50 (\$30 + GST) a year in Canada, \$45 a year in the US and \$55 a year overseas. Single copies are \$3. Back issues are \$6.

All subscription inquiries and back issue requests should be directed to *Famous* magazine at 102 Atlantic Ave., Ste. 100, Toronto, Ontario, M6K 1X9; or 416.539.8800; or famous@interlog.com

Canada Post Publication Agreement: No. 1716344

500,000 copies of *Famous* magazine are distributed through Famous Players theatres, Alliance Atlantis theatres and other outlets. *Famous* magazine is not responsible for the return of unsolicited manuscripts, artwork or other materials. No material in this magazine may be reprinted without the express written consent of the publisher.



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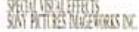
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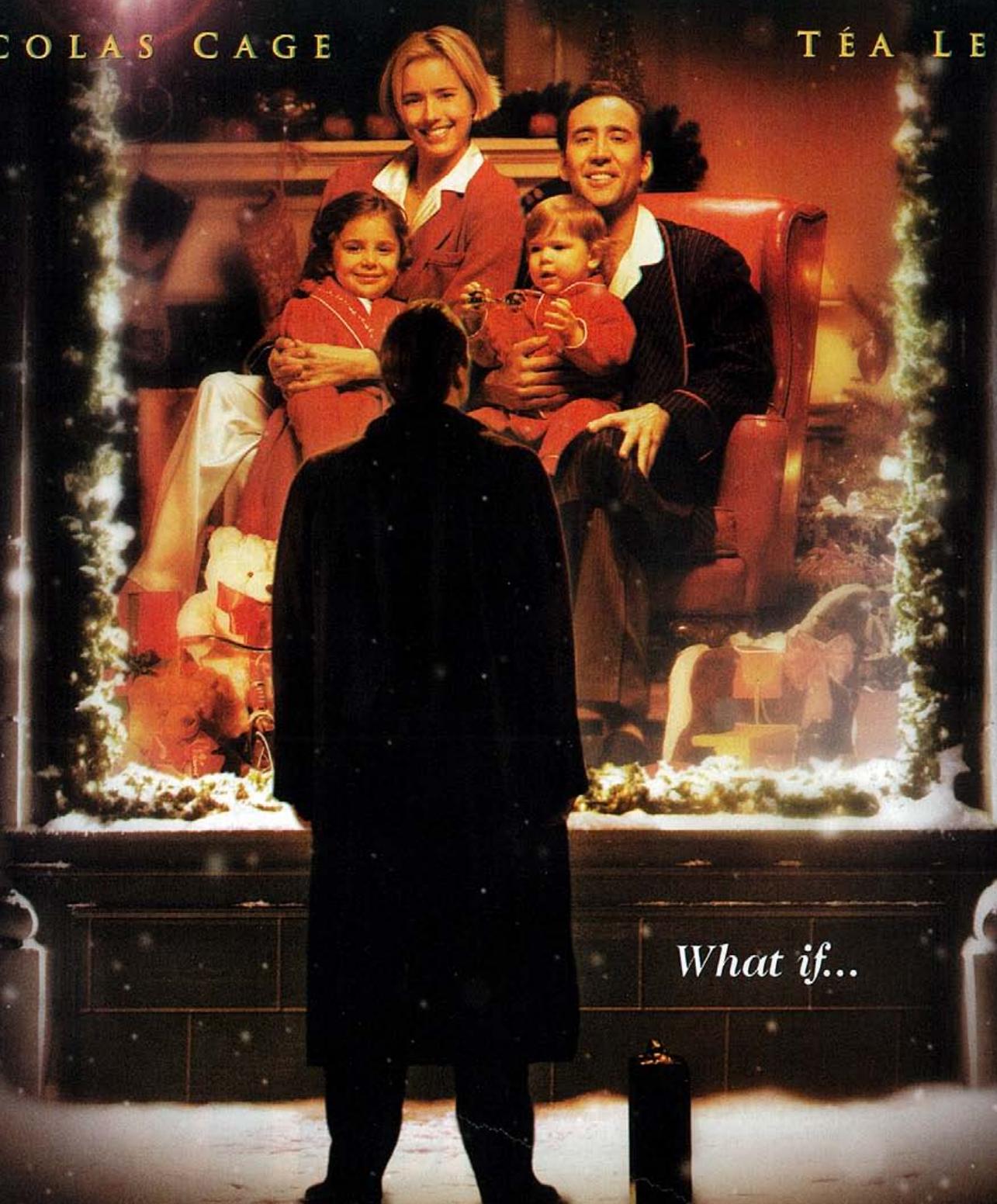
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NICOLAS CAGE

TÉA LEONI



What if...

THE FAMILY MAN

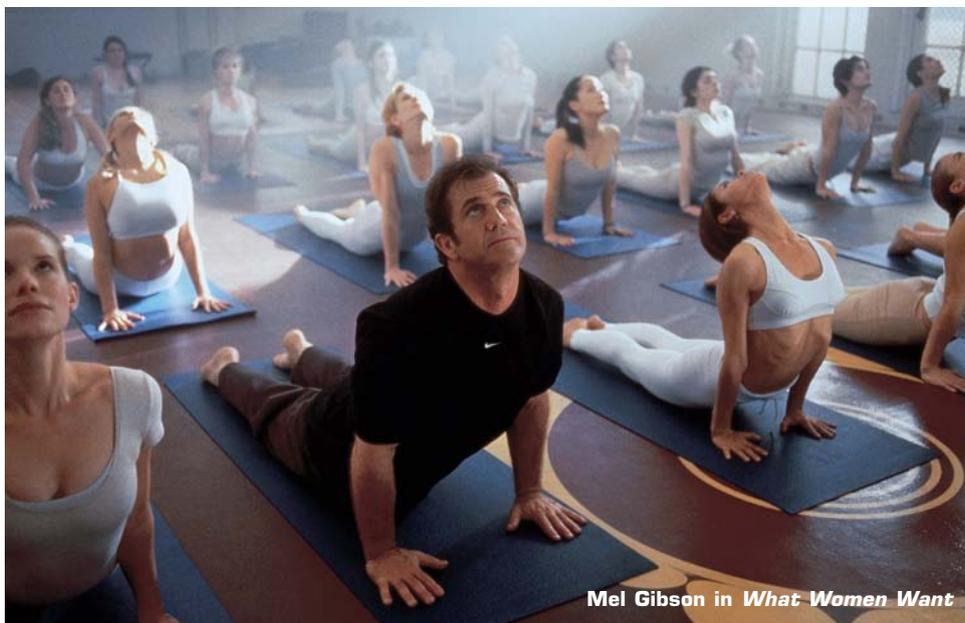
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Mel Gibson in *What Women Want*

Proof of Life (Dec. 8)

Who's In It? Russell Crowe, Meg Ryan
Who Directed? Taylor Hackford (*Devil's Advocate*)
What's It About? Russell Crowe stars in his first romantic drama, joined by his (widely rumoured) main squeeze, Meg Ryan. When an American engineer is nabbed by Colombian rebels and held for a \$6-million ransom, his wife (Ryan) calls in a "freelance hostage negotiator" (Crowe) to arrange his release. The pair soon start to fall in love as they work together to free her hubby. Like Crowe's 1999 film *The Insider*, *Proof* was also adapted from a lengthy article in *Vanity Fair*.

Vertical Limit (Dec. 8)

Who's In It? Chris O'Donnell, Bill Paxton
Who Directed? Martin Campbell (*Goldeneye*)
What's It About? Chris O'Donnell trades in his PVC bodysuit from *Batman & Robin* for some polar fleece and a pair of icepicks — playing a mountaineer who leads a daring rescue expedition up K2, the world's second-tallest mountain. Why? Because his sister and her team of climbers are trapped up there in a cave. **See Chris O'Donnell interview, page 26.**

Dungeons & Dragons (Dec. 8)

Who's In It? Thora Birch, Jeremy Irons
Who Directed? Courtney Solomon (debut)
What's It About? Anyone who spent their teen years playing *Dungeons & Dragons* will, no doubt, have all kinds of geeky flashbacks with this \$35-million adaptation of the 1980s fantasy role-playing game. Thora Birch is a newly

crowned empress at war with an evil wizard played by Jeremy Irons. To defeat him and save her kingdom, she sends a band of adventurers in search of a legendary magical item that can control dragons.

Dude, Where's My Car? (Dec. 15)

Who's In It? Ashton Kutcher, Seann William Scott
Who Directed? Danny Leiner (*Layin' Low*)
What's It About? Kutcher and Scott play a couple of potheads who wake one morning to find that their car is missing. Worse, they can't remember a thing about the previous night. As they attempt to reconstruct the lost evening's events, they learn they had — then lost — a suitcase full of money, and encountered six sexy alien women. Expect the same sense of humour as TV's *That '70s Show*, not only because Kutcher plays "dumbass" Kelso on the retro sitcom, but because the flick's screenplay was written by the show's story editor, Philip Stark.

What Women Want (Dec. 15)

Who's In It? Mel Gibson, Helen Hunt
Who Directed? Nancy Meyers (*Parent Trap*)
What's It About? In his first romantic comedy, Gibson plays a sexist ad exec gifted, after a nasty electrical shock, with the ability to read women's minds. So, he listens in on the thoughts of the women in his life and, slowly, starts to understand them. He even, brace yourself, shaves his legs. Hunt plays his boss, and one of his attempted conquests. **See Helen Hunt interview, page 30.**

The Family Man (Dec. 15)

Who's In It? Nicolas Cage, Téa Leoni, Don Cheadle
Who Directed? Brett Ratner (*Rush Hour*)
What's It About? Much like such other "alternate life" movies as *Me Myself I* and *Sliding Doors*, the romantic comedy *The Family Man* has Nicolas Cage as a loveless bachelor who wakes up one day to the life that would-have-been if he'd married his college girlfriend, played by Leoni. **See Nicolas Cage interview, page 18.**

The Emperor's New Groove (Dec. 15)

Who's In It? David Spade, John Goodman
Who Directed? Mark Dindal, Roger Allers
What's It About? Disney's new animated feature has David Spade voicing a headstrong Incan prince who gets turned into a llama by a wicked sorceress (Eartha Kitt). Partnering up with a local peasant (Goodman), the prince must race back to his capital city to reclaim his throne and try to reverse the spell.

Miss Congeniality (Dec. 22)

Who's In It? Sandra Bullock, Michael Caine
Who Directed? Donald Petrie (*My Favorite Martian*)
What's It About? Someone is threatening to bomb the Miss United States beauty pageant so an FBI agent (Bullock) is sent undercover, as Miss New Jersey, to investigate. That is, after an image consultant (Caine) transforms her from a tough G-woman into a sparkling beauty queen. Candice Bergen also stars and William Shatner steps in as the show's MC. **See Sandra Bullock interview, page 22.**



Russell Crowe in *Proof of Life*

Mel Gibson Helen Hunt

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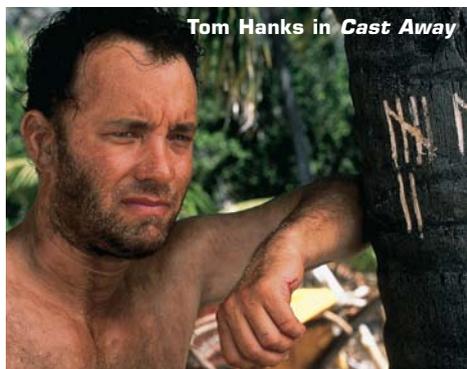
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► **Cast Away** (Dec. 22)

Who's In It? Tom Hanks, Helen Hunt
Who Directed? Robert Zemeckis (*Forrest Gump*)
What's It About? It's like the opposite of *Survivor*: Tom Hanks is the *only* person trapped on a desert island and *wants* to get off. When a Federal Express plane crashes into the ocean, middle manager Chuck Noland (Hanks) washes ashore on an uninhabited isle somewhere in the tropics and must find a way to adapt and survive. Will he ever see his fiancée (Hunt) again? Should he get into a voting alliance with Rich, Rudy and Sue? **See Helen Hunt interview, page 30.**



Tom Hanks in *Cast Away*

State & Main (Dec. 22)

Who's In It? Alec Baldwin, Julia Stiles
Who Directed? David Mamet (*Winslow Boy*)
What's It About? Writer-director David Mamet, known for talkative think-pieces such as *The Spanish Prisoner* and *Glengarry Glen Ross*, takes a swing at comedy with this story of a Hollywood film crew descending on a sleepy Vermont town. Alec Baldwin plays a heartthrob actor caught "in the act" with a local high school girl (Stiles). William H. Macy and Philip Seymour Hoffman also star.

13 Days (Dec. 22)

Who's In It? Kevin Costner, Bruce Greenwood
Who Directed? Roger Donaldson (*Dante's Peak*)
What's It About? Donaldson, who also directed Costner in the 1987 spy thriller *No Way Out*, calls the shots in this re-telling of the Cuban Missile Crisis — the 1962 contretemps between the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. that almost set off a full-scale nuclear war. Costner is the White House Chief of Staff and our own Bruce Greenwood (*Double Jeopardy*) covers up his Canadian accent to play JFK.

Dracula 2000 (Dec. 22)

Who's In It? Gerard Butler, Christopher Plummer
Who Directed? Patrick Lussier (debut)
What's It About? Producer Wes Craven rubber-



Matt Damon in *All the Pretty Horses*

stamps his name on this updated version of the Dracula story. A British vampire slayer is sent to the U.S. when Count Dracula (Butler) resurfaces in present-day New Orleans.

An Everlasting Piece (Dec. 25)

Who's In It? Barry McEvoy, Brian F. O'Byrne
Who Directed? Barry Levinson (*Wag the Dog*)
What's It About? In 1980s Belfast, a Protestant barber (O'Byrne) and his Catholic counterpart (McEvoy) team up in an effort to corner Northern Ireland's hairpiece market.

All the Pretty Horses (Dec. 25)

Who's In It? Matt Damon, Henry Thomas
Who Directed? Billy Bob Thornton (*Sling Blade*)
What's It About? It's been four years since Thornton wowed audiences with his directorial debut *Sling Blade*. Will his horse opera follow-up pack the same punch? Damon and Thomas play two Texas cowpokes looking for a new life in Mexico, accompanied by *Sling Blade* star Lucas Black.

Finding Forrester (Dec. 25)

Who's In It? Sean Connery, Rob Brown
Who Directed? Gus Van Sant (*Good Will Hunting*)
What's It About? Sean Connery stars in the title role — a reclusive author who befriends a talented young college student (newbie Rob Brown) who must choose between writing and a career as a pro basketball player.

Malena (Dec. 25)

Who's In It? Monica Bellucci, Giuseppe Sulfaro
Who Directed? Giuseppe Tornatore (*Cinema Paradiso*)
What's It About? In a small village in war-torn



Sean Connery (left) and Rob Brown in *Finding Forrester*

Sicily, a young boy learns about love, sex and life when he falls in love with a beautiful young widow.

Chocolat (Dec. 25)

Who's In It? Juliette Binoche, Johnny Depp
Who Directed? Lasse Hallström (*The Cider House Rules*)

What's It About? A single mom (Binoche) and her six-year-old son open a candy shop in a small French village, attracting an ensemble cast of customers and oddball locals.

O Brother, Where Art Thou? (Dec. 29)

Who's In It? George Clooney, John Turturro
Who Directed? Joel Coen (*Fargo*)
What's It About? The title is a reference to a 1942 Preston Sturges movie. And the story, thanks for asking, is loosely adapted from Homer's epic poem *The Iliad*. George Clooney (*The Perfect Storm*) stars as one of three escaped convicts on the run, and looking for some hidden loot, in 1930s Mississippi.

All release dates subject to change. Some films play only in limited markets.

New theatre for Newmarket

Newmarket, Ont., gets an early Christmas present on December 8 when the brand new SilverCity Newmarket throws open its doors. The 91,000-square-foot complex is located at 18151 Yonge St. and features 16 auditoriums, each equipped with wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling screens, stadium-style seating and multichannel digital sound. The venue also boasts a TechTown gaming centre, where you can indulge in high-end simulation and interactive games, and two party rooms. Concessions include Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream, Mike's Pizza, New York Fries, Suckers Candy and a Famous Café

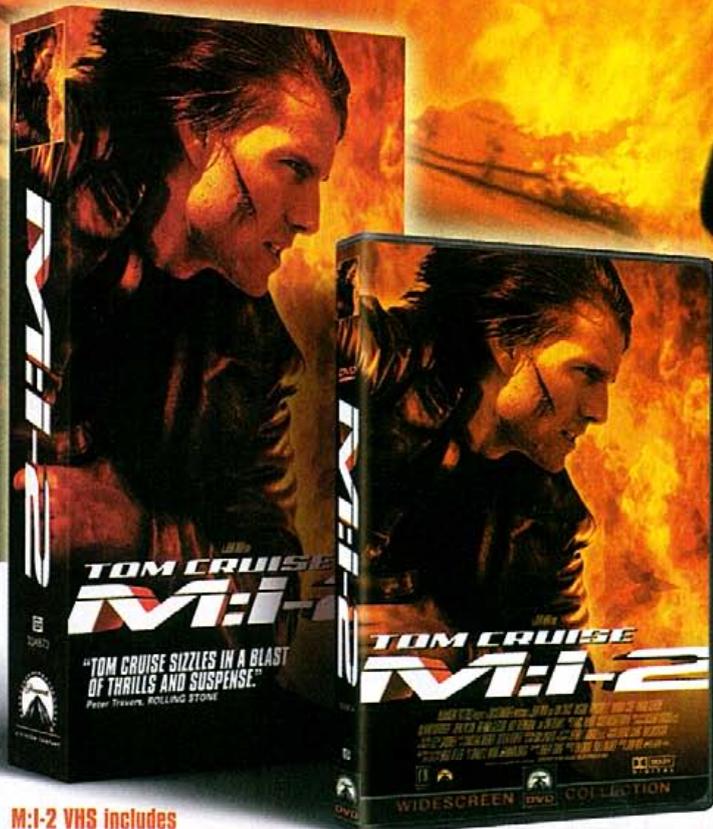
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THE EMPEROR'S NEW GROOVE



David Spade.
Inset: Spade's llama (left) with John Goodman's peasant in *The Emperor's New Groove*



DAVID SPADE

Now appearing in...*The Emperor's New Groove*, Disney's animated musical about an arrogant Incan prince (voiced by Spade) who gets turned into a llama by an evil sorceress. John Goodman plays the prince's sidekick.

Bio bits: Born July 22, 1964, in Birmingham, Michigan, and raised in Scottsdale, Arizona. Spade's dad abandoned the family when David, the youngest of three boys, was just four years old. His mom raised the kids while holding down two jobs and later got remarried to a doctor. The new family moved to a tough, and very poor, copper mining town in Arizona where the thin, and admittedly nerdy, Spade developed his defensive, sarcastic sense of humour. He dropped out of the business program at Arizona State, preferring to work at a skateboard shop and do occasional stand-up gigs. Spade was a huge fan of *Saturday Night Live* and admits to stealing jokes from the show for his early comedy acts. But it wasn't until after the death of his best friend (motorbike

accident) and stepfather (suicide) that Spade, seized by a sense of *carpe diem*, began to work seriously on his comedy. In 1985 he moved to L.A. where he played the college and nightclub circuit and landed some small TV and movie roles: playing a skateboarder in *Police Academy 4* and appearing on sitcoms like *The Facts of Life* and *ALF*. In 1989 Spade performed at the 13th annual *Young Comedians Show*, hosted by *Saturday Night Live* cast member and fellow misanthrope Dennis Miller. Miller was so impressed by Spade's act that he pulled strings to get him a job at *SNL*. Frustrated with his lack of air-time, Spade joined forces with his new best friend Chris Farley and the pair quickly developed their own sketches — drawing big laughs from the audience and movie deals from studios. Spade and Farley made two films, 1995's *Tommy Boy* and 1996's *Black Sheep*, before Farley died of a drug overdose in 1997. Spade was so shaken by his friend's death that he couldn't bring himself to attend the funeral, and instead wrote a tribute to him in *Rolling Stone*.

Since leaving *SNL* in 1996, Spade has continued to make movies and stars on the NBC sitcom *Just Shoot Me*. He also had a short-lived cartoon series, *Sammy*, based on his deadbeat dad.

Sample roles: Dylan in *Lost and Found* (1999), Scott in *Senseless* (1998), Steve Dodds in *Black Sheep* (1996), Richard Hayden in *Tommy Boy* (1995), Rand McPherson in *PCU* (1994)

Interesting tidbits: Drew fire from a gay rights group after telling *Playboy* that his *Just Shoot Me* character was too "fruity." ■ He still enjoys skateboarding but complains he doesn't have time for it anymore.

Love life: Was involved with Lara Flynn Boyle and Kristy Swanson. ■ Has a reputation for dating models and actresses.

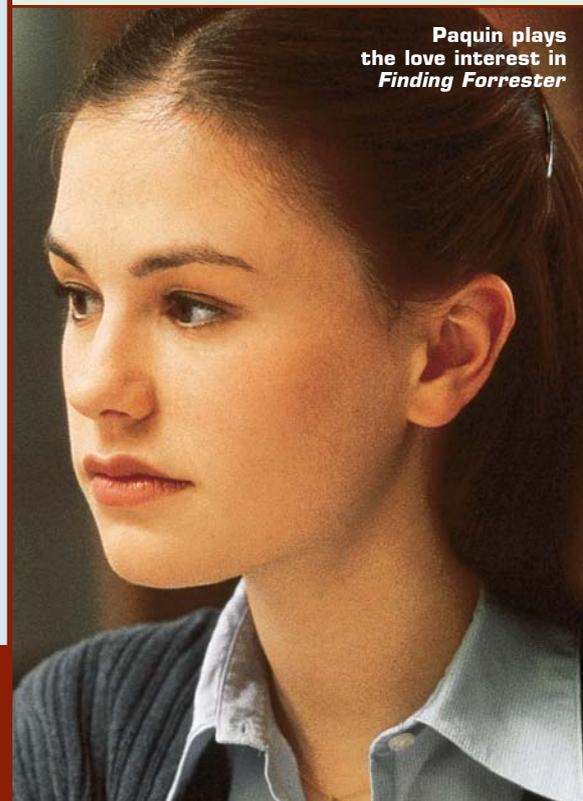
On reconciling with his dad: "You only get one dad, so I always tried to make him want to be a better one. I missed out. My brothers and I had no one to teach us to play football or baseball. It was kind of a drag. But now we talk all the time. He's a good guy." — *Playboy*, April 1999

ANNA PAQUIN

Now appearing in...*Finding Forrester*, the new Gus Van Sant-directed drama about a reclusive novelist (Sean Connery) who develops an unlikely friendship with a young black athlete (Rob Brown). Paquin plays Brown's love interest and fellow student at their nearly all-white prep school.

Bio bits: Born July 24, 1982, in Winnipeg, Manitoba. That's right, the cute Kiwi with the lovely New Zealand accent was actually born right here in our home and native land. Her parents, Brian Paquin and Marie Brophy, were both teachers, with dad (a Canadian) specializing in phys. ed. and mom (a New Zealander) in English. When Anna was four, the family (which includes sister Katya, now 20, and brother Andrew, now 25) moved to New Zealand where Anna stayed until her movie career forced her to relocate to California a couple of years ago.

But she hadn't set out to be an actress. Paquin got her first (and probably still best-known) role as Flora in 1993's *The Piano* quite by chance. After an open audition was advertised in the local newspaper, Anna's sister and her friends decided to give it a shot. Anna went along for the ride. She was the smallest and shyest of all the wannabe stars, but as soon as she launched into an improvised soliloquy for director Jane Campion, she pretty much had the part. The



Paquin plays the love interest in *Finding Forrester*

aring in... FORRESTER

PROOF OF LIFE

period piece co-starred Holly Hunter as Flora's mute mom and Harvey Keitel as the brutish man who slowly steals mom's heart. For her turn as the waifish, story-telling daughter, 11-year-old Paquin became the second-youngest actor to win an Academy Award. (The youngest was a nine-year-old Tatum O'Neal for *Paper Moon* in 1973.) While she was filming 1996's *Fly Away Home*, an Ontario-shot film about a girl who saves an orphaned group of geese, Anna's parents split up.

In the years following *The Piano*, Paquin chose her roles carefully and sparingly. But over the past three years she has sped things up — appearing in nine movies. The role that most surprised her fans was *Hurlyburly*'s drug-addicted, homeless teen, Donna, who agrees to be Sean Penn and Kevin Spacey's sex toy in return for a free place to stay. Subsequent roles in this year's *X-Men* and *Almost Famous* put her front and centre in the public eye. The 18-year-old now calls Brentwood, California, home when she's not studying at New York City's Columbia University.

Hobbies: photography, playing cello, rugby, running, singing, reading and knitting

Interesting tidbits: She won \$10,000 from David Letterman after he bet she couldn't sink a basketball during his show — and she did. She gave the money to charity. ■ She keeps her Oscar in her bedroom closet so that people won't feel the need to comment on it. ■ Her favourite TV show is *Dawson's Creek*.

Sample roles: Poxelia Aphrodesia in *Almost Famous* (2000), Marie/Rogue in *X-Men* (2000), Beauty in *Sleepless Beauty* (1999), Annabel Lee in *All the Rage* (1999), Mackenzie in *She's All That* (1999), Alison in *A Walk on the Moon* (1999), Donna in *Hurlyburly* (1998), Queen Isabella in *Amistad* (1997), Amy in *Fly Away Home* (1996), Young Jane Eyre in *Jane Eyre* (1996), Flora McGrath in *The Piano* (1993)

On winning her Oscar: "I had no idea what the Oscars were. And I wasn't expecting to have to do anything. I didn't want to go up and talk with all these people staring at me, waiting for me to say something. Those types of things aren't too fun when you're little." —*Detour*, April 1999

MEG RYAN

Now appearing in... *Proof of Life*, a romance/hostage drama. Ryan plays the wife of a business exec (David Morse) who is kidnapped and held for ransom by Colombian banditos. Unable to pay the \$6-million, she hires a hostage expert (Russell Crowe) to negotiate her husband's release. But then she and the hired gun start to fall for each other...

Bio bits: Born Margaret Mary Emily Anne Hyra, Meg Ryan was understandably quick to change her name when she started acting. When it came time to fill in her Screen Actors Guild membership, she borrowed her mom's maiden name and adapted her childhood nickname, Peggy, to come up with her new stage name.

She was born November 19, 1961, in Fairfield, Connecticut, and grew up in nearby Bethel. Her parents, both teachers, divorced when Meg was 15 and her mom, Susan Jordan, took off to New York to pursue acting. Her dad was left to raise four kids while continuing to coach sports and teach high school math. Jordan, now a casting director, remains estranged from her megastar daughter.

After high school, Meg entered the journalism program at New York University and paid her tuition by acting in TV commercials — finding ample work despite her complete lack of training. After two years, she got her first feature film role in director George Cukor's last film, *Rich and Famous* (1981), playing daughter to Candice Bergen. At 20, she dropped out of college to join the cast of *As the World Turns*. She left the soap opera after two seasons and relocated to L.A. where she finally took a few acting classes, under Peggy Feury no less — tutor to Nicolas Cage, Anjelica Houston and Sean Penn. It was on the set of *Innerspace* (1987) that she met her future husband Dennis Quaid. But Ryan refused to marry him until he went into rehab for his cocaine addiction. Quaid got clean and the pair were hitched in 1991. Unfortunately, their nine-year marriage hit the rocks this year following rumours that she was having an affair with Russell Crowe during the filming of *Proof of Life*. Ryan and



Ryan and Russell Crowe hook up in *Proof of Life*

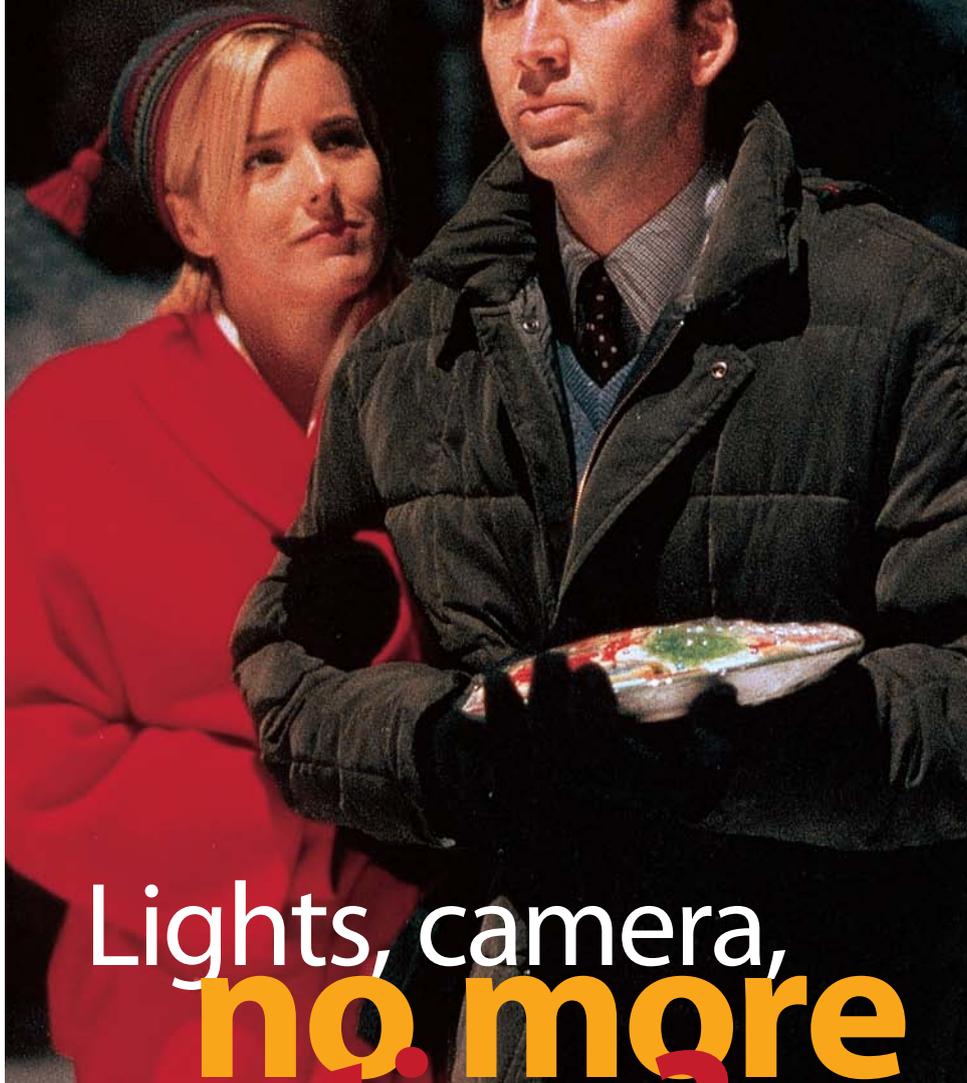
Quaid have filed for divorce but deny it has anything to do with a "third party." They have an eight-year-old son named Jack.

Sample roles: Eve in *Hanging Up* (1999), Kathleen in *You've Got Mail* (1998), Bonnie in *Hurlyburly* (1998), Maggie in *Addicted to Love* (1997), Capt. Karen Walden in *Courage Under Fire* (1996), Annie in *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993), Pamela Courson in *The Doors* (1991), DeDe, Angelica and Patricia in *Joe Versus the Volcano* (1990), Sally in *When Harry Met Sally* (1989)

Interesting tidbits: Runner-up Meg became homecoming queen in high school when the winner was expelled for doing drugs. ■ She studies yoga and Eastern spirituality.

On making romantic comedies: "I find the romantic comedy genre sort of difficult, it's not a drama, so you can't play the thing for real. It's not a slapstick comedy, so you're not going for huge, huge laughs. You're going for this fairy tale world in between, this little tightrope that you have to walk. Very often in romantic comedies, when people are upset, it's supposed to be funny." — *Hollywood.com*, December 1998

The Family Man's
Téa Leoni with Cage



Lights, camera, no more action?

NICOLAS CAGE EXPLAINS HIS GENRE-HOPPING MOVIE CAREER AND HIS NEW ROMANTIC COMEDY, *THE FAMILY MAN*

By David Giammarco

it seems that Nicolas Cage's penchant for brainless big-budget action films has finally subsided. After winning a Best Actor Oscar for his performance in *Leaving Las Vegas* (1995), Cage invoked the ire of not only his loyal film critic following, but also his friends, by seemingly selling out with a string of cookie-cutter blockbusters (*The Rock*, *Con Air*, *Face/Off*, *Gone in 60 Seconds*) in exchange for obese paycheques.

Cage even severed his longtime friendship with Sean Penn after Penn publicly ridiculed him for "squandering" his acting talent. Apparently, everyone else has been far more concerned with Nicolas Cage's career than Nicolas Cage *himself*.

"I don't think it's wrong to go to a movie and get your mind off of your problems," shrugs Cage, in defense of his perceived sell-out. "If you just wanna get stupid, that's not crap. Why not see if it's possible to give

all the explosions and whatever it is that stimulates people and gets their minds off their problems? I don't think that's anything to be ashamed of. We're in an *entertainment* industry. It's not just putting on the beret and smoking a Gitane and saying, 'I'm only going to do foreign films because I'm erudite and I'm so cool.' I don't buy that. I think it's a matter of doing every kind of movie you can possibly do."

And *that*, insists Cage, has always been part of his long-range acting plan.

"To be completely honest, I've just really tried to see how many different careers I can have in one career — that's always been my goal," Cage explains earnestly, as he sits on the edge of his chair in a Beverly Hills hotel suite. "See, it became clear to me that I didn't really have an 'image' after, like, 15 years. That I wasn't one of those guys you would pay seven bucks to see and say, 'Oh, I'm going to get that voice I like' or 'I'm going to get that style of movie I like.'

"I became very aware that my image was to not have an image, and to expect the unexpected," he continues. "So that's what I've kind of settled into now. And I keep trying to change. It doesn't happen from movie to movie as much as it happens, like, every three movies, that I go into a different mode...maybe it's because I really just want to master each type of film. I want to try my hand at it and perfect it and then move on. That's sort of the way I work."

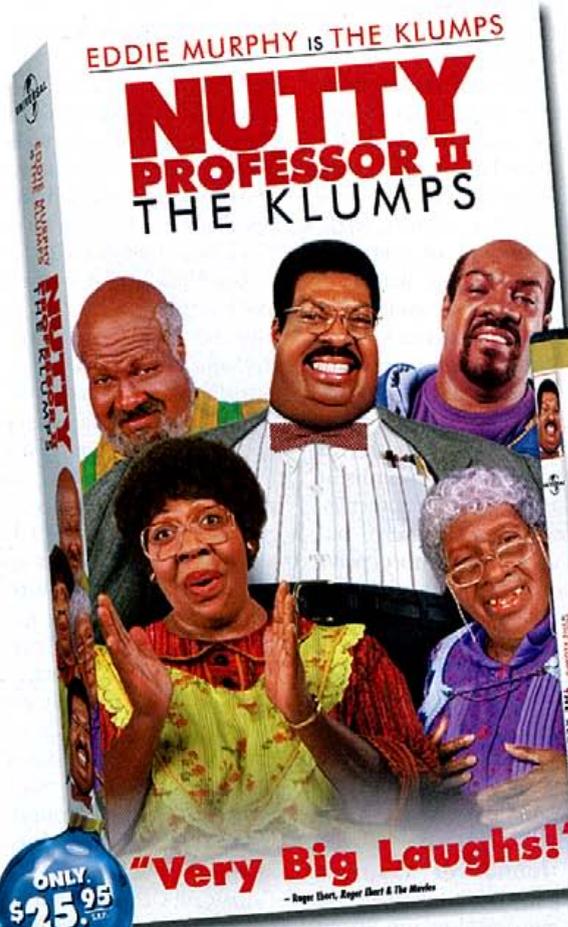
Those who have taken Cage to task should be happy that the 36-year-old is returning to quirkier fare with this month's romantic comedy *The Family Man*, which co-stars Téa Leoni, Don Cheadle, Jeremy Piven and Bo Derek. Cage plays a successful and extremely driven Wall Street investment banker who unwittingly stumbles onto a grocery store holdup one snowy Christmas night. On Christmas Day he wakes up in a suburban New Jersey bedroom to find himself married to his college sweetheart (Leoni), whom he left years earlier to pursue his career. Horrified that his former life no longer exists, he stumbles dumbfounded through this alternate *Truman Show*-esque universe, that also includes two kids and a blue-collar job in the local tire store.

Cage had originally committed to *The Family Man* two years ago, but then dropped out, saying that "I was in a very different headspace...I couldn't really see myself in a comedy." Instead, John Travolta became attached to the project. But then he too passed on it, as did Tom Cruise. ▶▶

THIS HOLIDAY'S

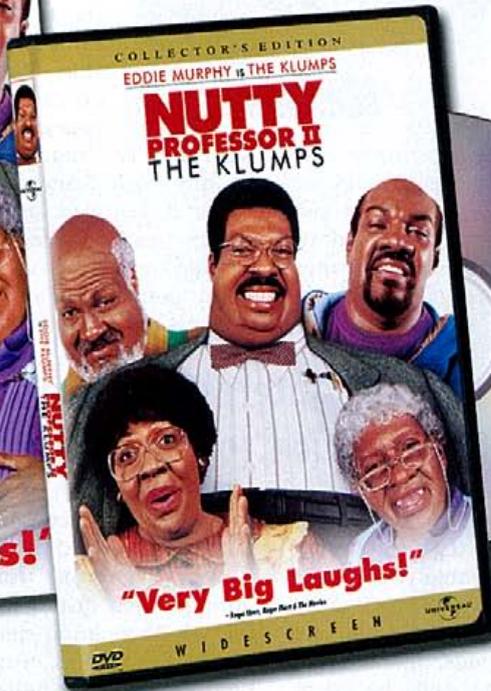
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Leoni and Cage

▶▶ Director Brett Ratner (*Rush Hour*) was close to signing either George Clooney or Hugh Grant, but decided to make one last pitch to Cage. With filming scheduled to commence in a matter of weeks, Ratner drove out at 1 a.m. to the set of *Gone in 60 Seconds* and, Cage recalls, said, “People love

went to San Francisco to live with his wealthy Uncle Francis’ family for months at a time. There were many times, he recalls, that he “really enjoyed going up there,” but he didn’t exactly fit in with his more privileged cousins — or with the wealthy students at Beverly Hills High. He took a

“I’ve just never been interested in playing pretty, glamorous people. Perfection, to me, is boring,” says Cage

you in romantic roles...you can always make a *Con Air*. Why are you shying away from a *Moonstruck*?” It worked. Within two weeks, a \$20-million deal was struck with Cage.

“I guess I realized that I needed to get back to some lighter moods,” offers Cage, who says he’s also done with his “dark period” of films like *Bringing Out the Dead*, *8mm* and *Snake Eyes*.

But no matter what genre Cage decides to indulge — sometimes for longer periods than others care to indulge with him — he always brings his unique comic sensibility to every role. “The humour has to be organic, it has to come out of the situation,” he says. “Like life, there are some horrible situations that are funny in spite of themselves. I think it’s more interesting to attack a dire mood with humour, because humour is a survival mechanism. When I’m dealing with a lot of pain in my life, I find that I’m more funny than I am when everything is at peace. I don’t know why.

“I think perhaps when I was a child that was my way of escape, or my way of dealing with the world when I was unhappy,” he adds. “If you look at most comedians, a lot of them say that they had unhappy childhoods.”

By all accounts, Cage’s childhood was no

general equivalency diploma exam and left school before graduation.

After frustrating rounds of auditions during which casting agents “would spend the whole audition time asking me about my Uncle Francis,” young Coppola grew tired of being “prejudged” and decided to come up with a new last name — which he took from the comic book character Luke Cage. Cage says he took a lot of heat from his Coppola relatives for his decision. “My great-great-grandfather came to America from Italy. We were paupers, struggling, and then my grandfather Carmine developed a talent, which was to play the flute,” says Cage. “Carmine married my grandmother, who was a songwriter’s daughter, and that began this sort of illustrious life in the arts. With that is a certain kind of competition and pride and a thick kind of passion that I guess by changing my name I ended.” But Cage has given his son (with former girlfriend Kristina Fulton) the name Weston Coppola Cage, “so when he gets older, he can choose whichever name he wants,” he says with a smile. “I wanted to give him everything, and let him decide for himself.”

In 1982, Cage’s name change almost

exception. Raised in Long Beach, California, with two older brothers, young Nicolas was six when he began to see his mother sink into a series of severe depressions and an instability that forced her to be institutionalized for many years. His parents eventually divorced when he was 12. His father, August, who was a professor of literature at Cal State Long Beach, is the brother of Francis Ford Coppola and actress Talia Shire. When August traveled on extended academic trips, young Nicolas Coppola often

immediately jump-started his career. On his first audition as Nicolas Cage, he was hired for what would be the romantic lead in *Valley Girl* about a preppy girl who falls in love with a punk rocker. It would be the beginning of Cage’s unrelenting desire to continually remake his image. He tried to change his look, his walk and his voice in every movie — the latter, he admits, was out of low self-esteem. “I never felt my voice had any character to it on its own merit,” he says. “So I was always trying to experiment.”

And that he did — from his raspy-voiced loser in *Peggy Sue Got Married* to his simpleton babynapper in 1987’s *Raising Arizona* to his solemn drunk in 1995’s *Leaving Las Vegas*. “I’ve just never been interested in playing pretty, glamorous people,” he says. “Perfection, to me, is boring. I identify with people who have scars — not only on the surface — and aren’t afraid to show them. I guess I always find it uplifting that someone rises above the scars and has dignity in a bad situation.”

So what’s next for Cage? Well, after six years of rewrites and rotating directors, the long-in-limbo Superman movie has finally been declared dead. It was hard for Cage to accept that he wouldn’t be leaping any tall buildings in a single bound, after he devoted so much time and energy to getting the project off the ground, not to mention turning down numerous films in order to keep his schedule clear for Clark Kent.

Instead, Cage will appear in the John Woo-directed film, *Windtalkers*. But don’t expect a typical Woo-style action extravaganza — Cage will play a marine guarding a Navajo soldier during World War Two. After that, he will play a screenwriter in the reality-based *Adaptation*, written and directed by the team behind *Being John Malkovich*.

But Cage feels that his action film sojourn, despite the naysayers, has ultimately proven the best thing for his career, in that it has afforded him the clout and bankability to produce the more esoteric, less-commercial fare to which he is naturally drawn. “I’m a bit of a hot property right now,” he says, “but I also know that it’s not going to last. It never does. So I’m going to capitalize on that popularity and use it to its full advantage. This way, it will give me the time and the opportunity in the future to get back to doing small, low-budget independent films...that’s where my heart ultimately lies.” **E**

David Giammarco is an entertainment journalist based out of Toronto and L.A.



MEG RYAN | RUSSELL CROWE

A TAYLOR HACKFORD FILM

PROOF OF LIFE

CASTLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH BEL-AIR ENTERTAINMENT AN ANVIL FILMS PRODUCTION A TAYLOR HACKFORD FILM MEG RYAN RUSSELL CROWE
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DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY SLAWOMIR IDZIAK EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS STEVEN REUTHER TONY GILROY PRODUCED BY TAYLOR HACKFORD AND CHARLES MULVEHILL WRITTEN BY TONY GILROY DIRECTED BY TAYLOR HACKFORD

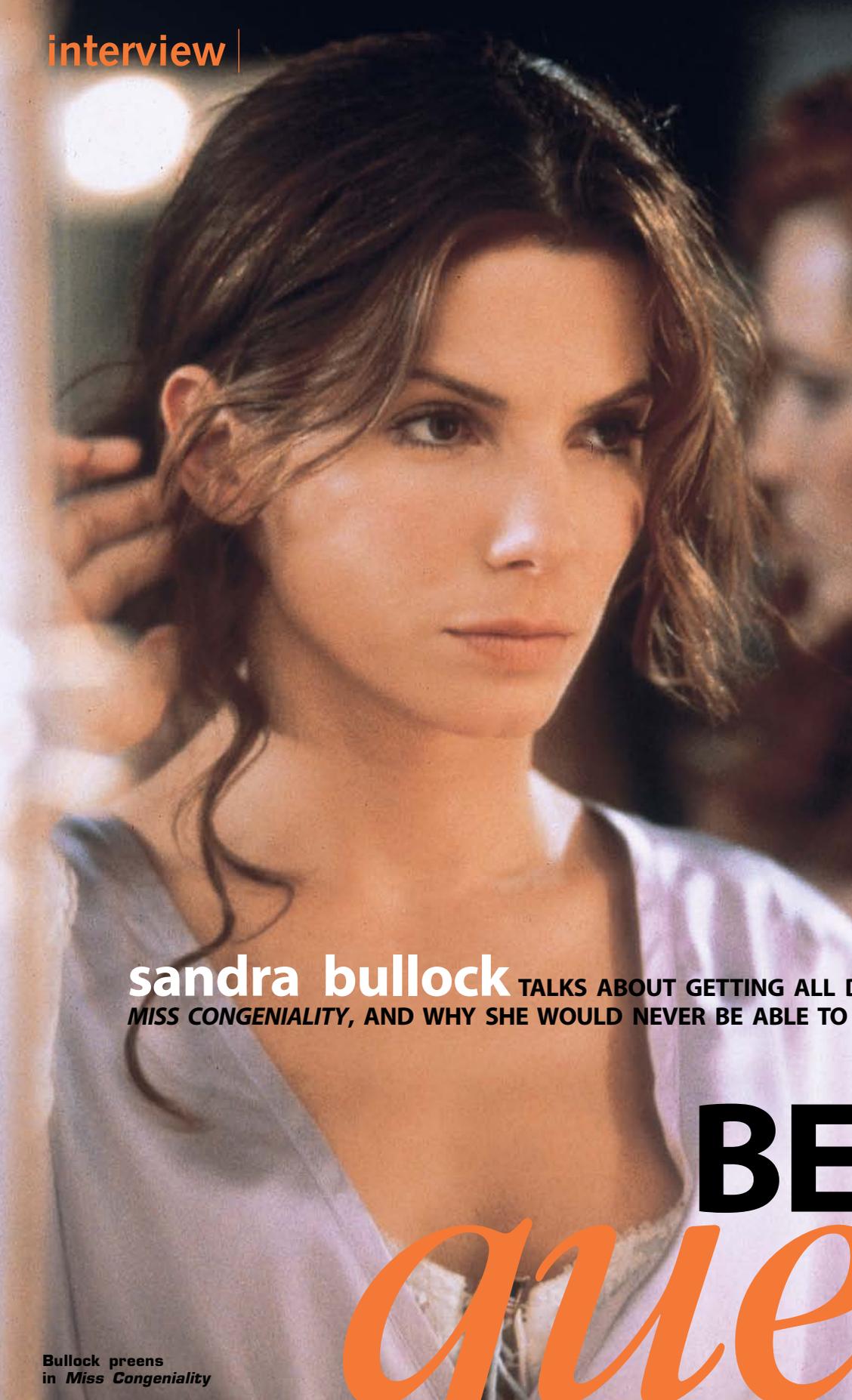


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sandra bullock TALKS ABOUT GETTING ALL DOLLED UP FOR HER NEW MOVIE, *MISS CONGENIALITY*, AND WHY SHE WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO CUT IT ON THE PAGEANT CIRCUIT

BY MICHELE MANELIS

BEAUTY *queen*

It's a typically hot afternoon in Austin, Texas, and hometown girl Sandra Bullock is shooting a beauty pageant scene for her new movie, *Miss Congeniality*. The wacky comedy of errors sees the star of *28 Days* and *Speed* playing Gracie Hart, a tough FBI agent who poses as a beauty pageant contestant to investigate a bomb threat. But Bullock is more than just the on-screen talent for this one — *Miss Congeniality* marks her fifth foray into producing (after *Gun Shy*, *Trespases*, *Hope Floats* and *Our Father*). Donald Petrie (*My Favorite Martian*) directs Bullock and her co-stars Michael Caine, who plays a pageant consultant, and Benjamin Bratt, who stands in as Gracie's friend and fellow FBI agent.

For this scene, Bullock is standing on a flower-festooned stage, flanked by three other "contestants," while several hundred enthusiastic extras act as their audience. Despite the "Miss New Jersey" sash draped across her torso, and heels which are clearly too high for her, Bullock manages to look glamorous in her Donna Karan gown. She teeters over to the edge of the stage. "I'll be right with you," she says warmly, and motions to a room at the back of the stage. She grabs a couple of Evian waters and finds the nearest sofa.

Within minutes, it becomes clear that her status in Hollywood as the "Queen of Nice" isn't just hype. Finding a celebrity of this stature without any phony affectations is a refreshing change. In fact, with her humour and down-to-earth charm, it's damn near impossible not to like her. ▶▶

Bullock preens in *Miss Congeniality*

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►► [q] TELL ME ABOUT YOUR CHARACTER, GRACIE.

[a] “She’s incredibly aggressive and great at her job. She’s very smart so she’s always thinking ahead, but she’ll leap too quickly instead of thinking about the whole contingency of people that she has to work with — which is what happens at the beginning of the film. She almost gets a man killed because her instincts are such that she jumps the gun. They wanted to can her, give her a desk job, but then somebody she works with is given this opportunity to check out the possible threat at the Miss United States pageant and they go through the roster of all the people and she’s the only one physically, and age-wise, who can possibly stand in as one of the contestants.”

[q] WAS IT A VICARIOUS THRILL TO BE A PART OF THIS BEAUTY PAGEANT?

[a] “Oh, it’s miserable! I don’t know how women do it. It is a business that consists of bondage, horse training, abuse and just a smart, quick mind. I’m shocked because I had a different sort of image of what beauty pageants were about. But it’s miserable.”

[q] WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TRICKS YOU LEARNED?

[a] “How to keep the bathing suit down. And I’ve learned a lot about enhancing the breasts. That’s my thing. Well, Michael Caine’s hand inside pulling them up is one of the things [laughs]. No seriously, there’s taping, there are these gels. You just wouldn’t believe it — there are so many tricks.”

[q] WHAT DOES PRODUCING GIVE YOU THAT ACTING DOESN’T? MORE CONTROL OVER YOUR CAREER?

[a] “No, not over my career. You can’t control your career. You can make choices but, you know, you don’t know how it’s going to end up. I love the camaraderie of hiring people. I think that my biggest thrill is when I recommend people and they go, ‘I don’t know,’ and you’re like, ‘Trust me, this person is amazing.’ I love the process of finding people who have a great vision.”

[q] YOU HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED AS A VERY HANDS-ON PRODUCER. DOES IT TAKE ENERGY AWAY FROM YOUR ACTING?

[a] “No, because you have so much prep time and it is a comedy. I wouldn’t do it if it were a drama or something where I feel like I’d have to do a month of preparation.”

[q] DID YOU PICK MICHAEL CAINE?

[a] “You don’t really pick Michael Caine, you just sort of have him on the wish list. Yeah, we had him on the wish list.... That



From left: Caine, Bullock and Bratt



was right before his second Academy Award, and then his price went up a little bit. As it should.”

[q] WHAT’S YOUR OPINION OF BEAUTY PAGEANTS?

[a] “It’s a business. Here you have these women that were blessed with good genetics — but they also have drives, issues, things that they want to do with their lives. They all have different goals and reasons for why they’re doing it but they’re all socially oriented and business oriented. Either they want to make a social difference in life or they want a certain business opportunity that would normally not be awarded to them.”

[q] BUT THEY’RE ONLY REWARDED FOR THEIR LOOKS.

[a] “No, it depends on which pageant you’re looking at. Some of them are scholarship programs. Some of them don’t even have the swimsuit competition.”

[q] SO YOU DON’T THINK IT’S DEGRADING?

[a] “You think being on the cover of a magazine is degrading? You think being an actress is degrading? It’s kind of the same thing. If you really think about it, they’re proud of who they are and what they have. They happen to be talented and smart and beautiful at the same time.”

[q] DO YOU FEEL MORE FEMININE WHEN YOU’RE IN THAT BEAUTIFUL GOWN WITH YOUR HAIR DONE UP?

[a] “No, I feel very stiff. I feel false, but also I’m not a stand-up-straight person. I slouch. I feel sexier when I don’t have any makeup on and I feel clean.”

[q] ARE YOU SHOOTING IN AUSTIN BECAUSE IT’S CLOSE TO HOME?

[a] “I didn’t want to go to Canada because a lot of productions are leaving the U.S.A. And I didn’t want to go to Las Vegas because you lose half your crew because people spend all their money. It happens every single time. They spend their per diem, their money, divorces happen, it’s horrible. If you think about it, what else is there to do in Las Vegas? And I like the quality of life here.”

[q] PEOPLE LIKE TO SEE YOU IN COMEDIES, DO YOU FEEL PRESSURED TO MAKE THESE TYPES OF MOVIES?

[a] “No, because if you look at my track record lately, it hasn’t been all that great and I’ve played happy in them. I mean, in *The Net* I wasn’t all too happy and on *Time to Kill* I wasn’t all too happy and, you know, *Speed* I was kind of angry, you know, smart mouth. I think the key is that you just have to try and make a good movie, have great characters and that’s a gamble every single time.”

[q] DO YOU TAKE IT PERSONALLY WHEN ONE OF YOUR FILMS DOESN’T DO WELL?

[a] “Why should I? There are another 350 people that were there that are responsible for making the film. I did my work and I know how hard I worked. I know it comes down on me because it’s funnier to write about that in the press. They’re not going to go, ‘Well, the gaffer didn’t seem to be lighting right. The DP [director of photography] sort of took an angle which gave it a darker edge rather than a more commercial edge.’ You know, that’s not as fun to write about as a Sandy Bullock film flopped. But as far as I’m concerned, we’re all in it together. I don’t take it personally.” **F**

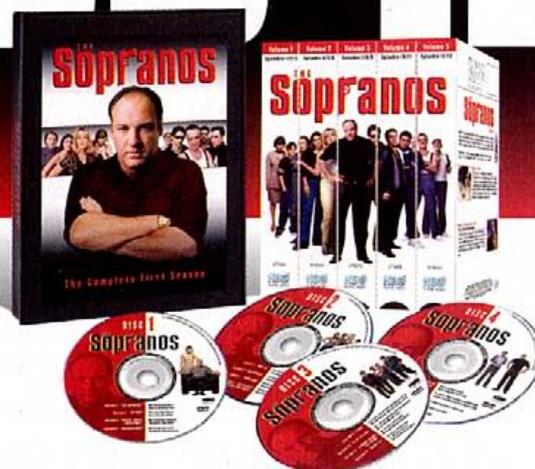
Michele Manelis is a freelance writer based in Los Angeles.

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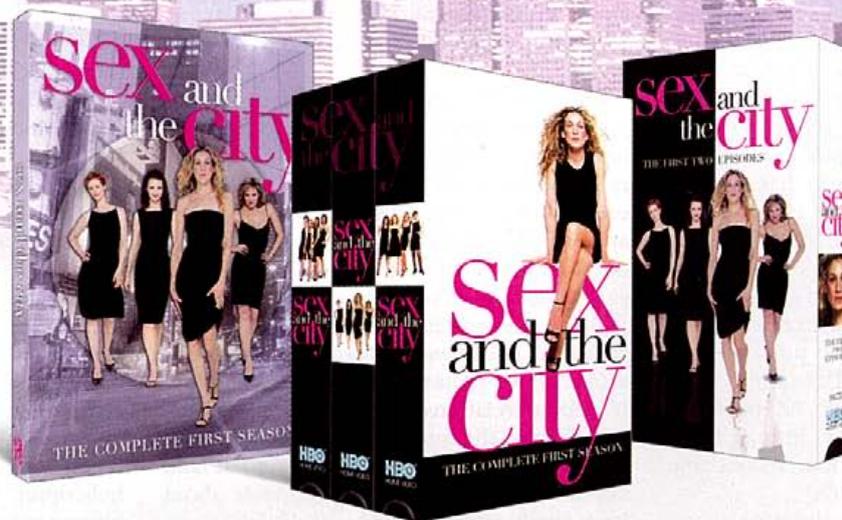
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mountain

man

He may look like a natural-born rock climber in the chilling new thriller *Vertical Limit*. But **Chris O'Donnell** admits scaling mountains isn't something he'd do for fun. Especially with a growing family waiting at home

BY SEAN DALY

Chris O'Donnell has a huge smile on his face. On this warm autumn night in southern California, the wholesome-looking young actor has come to Sony Pictures Studios for his first peek at the new action-thriller *Vertical Limit* — his first feature film in more than a year.

He is accompanied by Caroline Fentress, his former college sweetheart and wife of four and a half years. She, too, has a lot to smile about. Last fall, their first child — Lilly Ann — was born near the mountains of New Zealand where O'Donnell was filming the movie. Now safely back in Los Angeles, the former kindergarten teacher is expecting their second child by the time *Vertical Limit* hits theatres in early December.

"I would like to have a lot of kids," O'Donnell says. "I love my little girl so much. It's amazing how [children] become the absolute focus of your life."

The film O'Donnell was shooting when Lilly was born has everything to do with family. *Vertical Limit* is an emotionally charged story in which O'Donnell's character

must confront both his own limitations and the awesome power of nature in order to save his sister, Annie, played by *End of Days*' Robin Tunney. Bill Paxton (*Titanic*, *Twister*) and Izabella Scorupco (*Goldeneye*) also star.

O'Donnell (*Batman Forever*, *The Bachelor*) plays Peter Garrett, a young rock and mountain climber who launches an extraordinary rescue mission up the world's second highest peak, K2, when Annie becomes trapped at 26,000 feet. That's above the vertical limit of endurance (where the human body can't survive for long), so he has little time.

But, according to director Martin Campbell (*Goldeneye*), *Vertical Limit* is not a film about mountains or about climbing. It's about relationships. "Forget the mountain. Forget the snow," he insists, "this is a drama that could be played out on flat land and it would still be a fantastic movie about love, family and courage."

The movie actually begins years before Annie gets stranded at the top of K2. In the opening scenes, a younger Peter and Annie

are climbing with their father when one of their anchors breaks loose, leaving the remaining support unable to bear the weight of all three climbers. Peter is forced to make the split-second decision to cut their father's rope in order to save both of their lives. Years later, that experience (and the ensuing guilt) is the inspiration for his heroic attempt to save his sister.

The high-adrenaline tale was shot on location in the mountain regions of Mt. Cook and Queenstown, New Zealand, beginning in the summer of 1999. "It was the longest movie I have ever worked on," O'Donnell recalls, laughing. "It took something like eight months to shoot."

During that time, the Chicago native was given a crash course in man versus nature. "We brought survival gear every morning when we flew up [the mountain] in the helicopter," he recalls. "I was kind of secretly hoping we would get snowed in overnight or something, so that we would have a great story for the talk shows. But that never actually happened." ▶▶



O'Donnell plays rock climber Peter Garrett in *Vertical Limit*



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Hanging on for dear life in *Vertical Limit*



O'Donnell and teammate Izabella Scorupco

▶▶ The actor does, however, recall several incidents when the cast and crew were forced to evacuate to lower ground because weather conditions grew dangerous, and a few times when the weather was so bad they couldn't even head for safer ground.

"A storm would come through and we'd be stuck for three or four hours," he recounts. "Eventually the helicopters were able to come up and get us. But it was a little weird, because you are tired and you can't call your wife. And you are worried 'cause she is worried..."

Such experiences often caused O'Donnell and his co-stars to question what would make someone want to climb mountains in the first place. "It's the ultimate challenge, I guess," he concludes, shrugging his shoulders. "Everest is the highest mountain. But K2 is the hardest. It's the most challenging. I guess [climbing] is an addicting thing. You always want to do the most, the best."

Still, O'Donnell admits he has never really been a fan of the sport. "We have a family friend who had a real bad injury rock climbing when I was a kid," he explains. "So I was always kind of scared of it. Granted, you have safety lines and all, but there are still some guys who free climb 500-foot faces with nothing. You couldn't pay me all the money in the world."

Instead, O'Donnell, who was on his high school's rowing team and is a known golf enthusiast, kept in shape by hiking almost every day during the long shoot — but at lower, safer elevations.

"We would just kind of pick a peak near

the hotel," he explains. "It wouldn't be a huge peak, but it would be, like, a five-hour hike. There's still a sense of accomplishment when you get to the top and you look around and see what you have done. I suppose climbing Everest or K2 would be the ultimate."

Now 30, O'Donnell got his start in show business as a teen with modeling assignments and television commercials. One of his most memorable performances was as the counter boy who served Michael Jordan a Big Mac in a mid-Eighties McDonald's commercial.

He made his feature film debut in 1990 with a critically acclaimed performance as Jessica Lange's rebellious son in the Paul Brickman feature, *Men Don't Leave*, and, in 1993, was nominated for a Golden Globe Award and won the Chicago Film Critics Award for his role opposite Al Pacino in the multiple Oscar-winning *Scent of a Woman*. He has since added such credits as



O'Donnell [centre] plans the rescue

Circle of Friends (1995) and *The Chamber* (1996) to his résumé, and is now trying his hand at producing via his recently formed company, George Street Productions.

"A lot of these production deals are just vanity deals for actors," he admits. "But I really want to build a successful production company. In fact, we recently did a TV movie for CBS called *Miracle on the 17th Green* which starred Robert Urich and Meredith Baxter."

O'Donnell took one of his first steps toward success in the business of show business during the filming of 1995's *Batman Forever* (he played Robin), when he attended a series of night classes to complete the business management degree he'd started at Boston College years before. Acting had prohibited him from completing college under the traditional "four-year plan," but O'Donnell still refers to his years at BC as "the most memorable" of his life.

"I remember just wanting to go to college and party and have a blast," he recalls. As the youngest of seven kids, he had already heard all of the titillating stories about campus life. "I was like, 'Bring it on, Baby!'"

Even though his first try at college fizzled, he's glad he had the chance to blow off some steam. "I'm convinced that's the reason why, in Hollywood, I meet all of these young guys and they're all screwed up," he surmises. "Cause they don't go to college and get it out of their systems."

With his party days behind him, O'Donnell is excited to be a husband and new father and looks forward to watching his family grow. "When I used to think of my 'family' I would think of my mom, dad, brothers and sisters," he admits. "But now, I immediately think of my wife and daughter." 📍

Sean Daly is the editor and publisher of Showtime Magazine in Los Angeles.

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WITH TWO MOVIES RELEASED THIS FALL, AND ANOTHER TWO — *WHAT WOMEN WANT* AND *CAST AWAY* — HITTING THEATRES THIS MONTH, OSCAR-WINNER **HELEN HUNT** HAS CLEARLY RETURNED FROM HER TWO-AND-A-HALF YEAR HIATUS FROM THE BIG SCREEN

many happy returns

By Earl Dittman

Two years ago, after garnering a Best Actress Academy Award for her dazzling performance in James Brooks' *As Good as It Gets*, then waving a final goodbye to the long-running sitcom *Mad About You*, all of a sudden it appeared as if Helen Hunt had dropped off the face of the Earth. In the summer of 1999, she snuck in a low-profile marriage to actor and *Simpsons* voice man Hank Azaria, and then it seemed she shifted her light-speed television and film career into neutral. There were even rumours that the 37-year-old was retiring from show business. Her legion of fans were broken-hearted, fearing their heroine had packed it in for good.

"Those same people are probably going to be so sick of seeing me by the end of the year, they are going to wish I had retired," Hunt says with a laugh. The Oscar winner finds it funny that some people actually worried they'd never see her face on the

Hunt as Darcy Maguire
in *What Women Want*



silver screen again, especially since she's almost single-handedly dominating the fall film lineup. "I have so many movies coming out in a three-month span, it'll look like I'm the only actress working in Hollywood."

In October, she starred alongside Richard Gere in Robert Altman's comedy *Dr. T and the Women*, and co-starred with Kevin Spacey and Haley Joel Osment in the karmic drama *Pay it Forward*. This month, she plays Tom Hanks' love interest in *Cast Away*, about a FedEx employee (Hanks) stranded on a desert island, and Mel Gibson's boss, Darcy Maguire, in the romantic comedy *What Women Want*.

"I would have liked it better if all these movies had been spread out a little more, but it's all a part of the Hollywood studio scheduling game," she says, making herself comfortable in one of the plush, oversized chairs that adorn the upscale New York hotel suite set aside for our talk. "Plus, it does make it look like I was away for a long time, and I really wasn't."

But she did step out of the spotlight for a couple of years. Seven seasons of struggling to make *Mad About You* (1992-1999) into a ratings hit *and* trying to jump-start a movie career in her off-time, had finally begun to take a physical and emotional toll.

"I worked — non-stop — for a decade, and I just felt tired," she admits. "I was always on a set doing the show or I was on a plane flying to do a movie. When *Mad About You* was over, I thought, 'I want a serious movie career, and I don't want to be tired every time I do a film. And, if I'm ever going to take some time off, this is when I need to do it.' So I took about two-and-a-half years off and got myself rested. When I started doing *Pay it Forward*, it was very strange not to feel exhausted."

Hunt admits that scoring an Oscar (which she keeps "on some shelf, tucked very nervously on the corner of my bookcase") in 1998 for *As Good as It Gets* made the decision to take a personal hiatus a little easier.

"In this business, it's risky to take any time off," she says. "You can be hot one day and completely cold the next. But after winning the Oscar, I knew that my peers respected me and that my fans were behind me. That gave me the confidence to do what I needed to do as a person. It also gave me the chance to choose the projects that I really wanted to do."

And her cinematic choices have been wise ones. She decided to do *Dr. T and the Women* for the chance to work with a filmmaking legend ("It's a little bit like, 'Do you want to have *not* done a Robert Altman



Gibson (left) tries to seduce Hunt in *What Women Want*

"We all have times when we feel unloved and uncool," says Hunt. "I feel uncool all the time."

movie?' I wanted to do an Altman movie."); and *Pay it Forward* offered her a part that was just too good to pass up. "It was one of the best roles I have ever gotten," she says. "Working with Kevin and Haley made it an even more unbelievable experience."

As for *Cast Away*, her role kept getting larger and better. "It started out as something I did because I wanted to work with Tom and [director] Bob Zemeckis. I thought I was just going to be playing his girlfriend, and that was fine. Then I started to discover things about this woman that really interested me. So the part started getting bigger because we had fun working on it," Hunt says.

She was anxious to do *What Women Want*, well, because it had Mel Gibson attached. "Mel is such a great guy. If there is any reason to do a film, it's for the privilege of working alongside him," Hunt says, beaming. "Everyone said that before I worked with him, and it's true. He's the kindest, most gentle man that I've ever met. And he's incredibly giving. He's the kind of guy who gives everything he has to complete strangers. And he does it in this quiet little way where he does something, leaves and people go, 'How did this get here?' I think if you were to squint, you would see little angel wings on his back."

Known for his on-set practical jokes, Gibson, however, granted Hunt a reprieve.

"I just threw myself at his mercy," she remembers with a laugh. "There are some things that I am good at, but not practical jokes. I just got there and said, 'Listen, I'm the wrong guy. I can handle a lot, but I can't handle practical jokes.' And he didn't. But he tortured Nancy Meyers, the director. I think she wanted to strangle him at times, but he's so lovable, she always forgave him. He's a real charmer, which made him perfect for the role of Nick."

Directed, co-written and co-produced by Nancy Meyers, *What Women Want* is the story of Nick, a Chicago-based advertising exec, who discovers a whole new outlook on life when a fluke accident gives him the ability to read women's minds. When he is first bestowed with the extraordinary gift, he is thrown for a loop, realizing it may not be such a good idea to know everything that women think. But slowly, Nick realizes that he can exploit his newfound abilities, especially when it comes to wooing his new boss (Hunt). Against all odds, however, Nick eventually learns to understand what it is women really want from men.

"It's a wonderful love story," Hunt beams. "It's a fable, in a lot of ways. It's a comedy, and it's really funny, but it has some really wonderful messages about relationships and real love. I think people could really learn a few things about love from it." ▶▶

▶▶ Sadly, these days, Hunt could use as much help as possible when it comes to romantic relationships. Almost exactly a year to the day that she and Azaria exchanged "I dos," it was announced that the two had separated. While neither of their spokespersons will speculate on whether their time apart will end in divorce, many gossip columnists predict the marriage is now over. Not surprisingly, it's a subject Hunt would rather not discuss. When asked if her personal life is finally settling down, she quietly offers, "The only shot I have at that happening is to not talk about it." And what about the published reports that the two are calling it quits? "I don't read things about me. And I certainly don't read things if they are inappropriate. A lot of it is screened by a team of experts, because I don't feel mentally strong enough to read it and not care at all."

Hunt says that winning an Oscar doesn't erase the fact that she's a human being. Like everyone else, she confesses, she has her own moments of self-doubt and anxiety.

"Becoming an award-winning actress doesn't automatically turn you into some kind of superhuman," she admits. "We all

have times when we feel unloved and uncool. I feel uncool all the time. Very often. I mean, I have a team of experts who have gotten me cool-looking today. A whole team was brought in," she says, then adds with a laugh, "They are now exhausted upstairs."

So when does Helen Hunt feel the most "uncool"?

"When I act in a scene and it doesn't go well," she says. "There's a line from *The Seagull*, where Nina says, 'There's nothing like acting when you know it's bad.' That will make you feel uncool. And in all of us, in our family life, in our histories, there are things that make us feel uncool."

But, perhaps surprisingly, Hunt says being a celeb doesn't necessarily magnify feelings of inadequacy, or add much undue pressure.

"I think I feel things just the way everybody else does, being a star doesn't make it harder or easier to deal with problems," she confides. "I think all of us, on some level, are five-year-olds in the schoolyard who don't want to be embarrassed. There's a knee-jerk thing in all of us where we just don't want to be the guy who is on the outside. But if you try to amputate those parts of yourself

that you are embarrassed about, or you don't feel confident in, then you have nothing to work from.

"I've gone through things in my life where people have said to me, 'It must be so hard because you are in the public eye.' The truth is, when you go through hard things, they are just hard, period! Being 'a star' might make them 10 per cent harder. But I'm in a good place in my life, right now. Professionally, things couldn't be better. Tomorrow morning, I start a Woody Allen movie. How much more cool can that be? It's mind blowing to know that he wanted me."

And when that project wraps, Hunt says there are several other films she's committed to, so we haven't seen the last of her yet.

"It's not like I planned this big burst of activity and then I would disappear again," she says. "I took a rest for a reason. I want to make movies until people are sick of me. And my Oscar is getting a little lonely on the shelf, so I need to get off my butt and try and win him a partner...hey, I have my priorities." **F**

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

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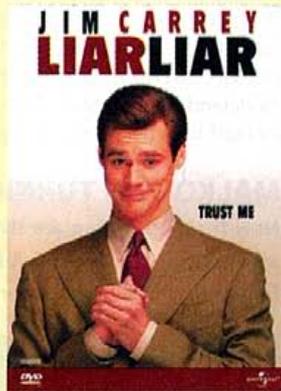
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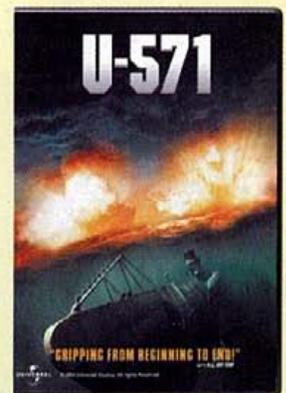
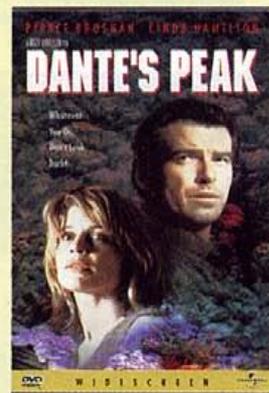
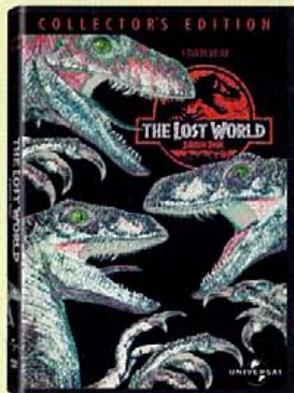
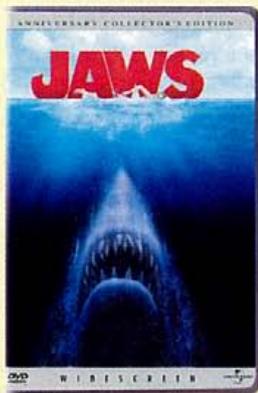
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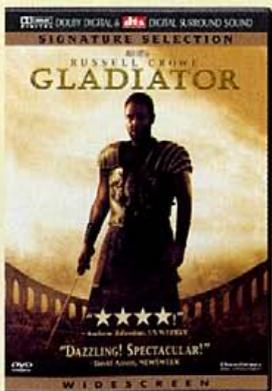


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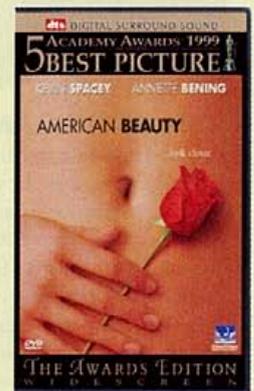
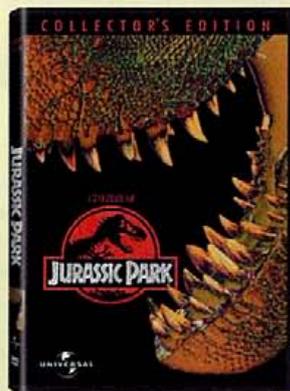
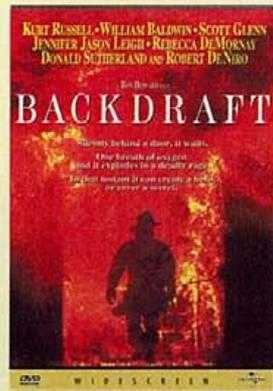
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4 Dueling Men 3 Giant Fires 2 Angry Dinos And a Beautiful Look

KIDMAN CRUSADES • DAMON LOSES IDENTITY • MALKOVICH PONDERES SPIDEY-MOVIE

KIDMAN FOR PREZ

We can only assume that she never saw his movies *Showgirls* or *Basic Instinct*, because **Nicole Kidman** (*Eyes Wide Shut*) has agreed to play 19th-century feminist **Victoria Woodhull** in a bio-pic by director **Paul Verhoeven**. An early crusader for women's rights and free love, Woodhull has the distinction of being the first woman to run for the U.S. presidency, which she did in 1872. She also worked briefly as a prostitute, psychic and newspaper editor before becoming mired in a highly publicized sex scandal. Verhoeven, to put it mildly, is not known for his positive or realistic portrayal of women. Will he and his as-yet-untitled film ruffle feminist feathers yet again?



Nicole Kidman



Franka Potente

RUN, MATT DAMON, RUN

Robert Ludlum's spy thriller *The Bourne Identity* will get the movie treatment, with pretty boy **Matt Damon** (*Dogma*) in the lead alongside Germany's **Franka Potente**, best known to foreign film fans as the orange-haired sprinter from 1999's hit *Run Lola Run*. Penned in 1980, the novel tells of a man who washes up on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea with no memory and a chest full of bullets. Potente plays the Canadian diplomat Damon's character kidnaps, and then falls in love with. Director **Doug Liman**, known for his hipster hits *Swingers* (1996) and *Go* (1999) is calling the shots on this one, with a script penned by **David Self** and *Proof of Life's* **Doug Gilroy**. This will be the third Ludlum book redone as a movie, following 1983's *The Osterman Weekend* and 1985's *The Holcroft Covenant*.

LOVE-HEWITT IS THE DEVIL

Will she wear horns and a tail? Or just a little red dress? *Party of Five's* **Jennifer Love-Hewitt** is set to star as Lucifer herself in the remake of the 1941 film *The Devil and Daniel Webster*. **Alec Baldwin** (*Outside Providence*), also making his directorial debut, stars alongside the teen TV star as a washed-out writer who sells his soul in exchange for 10 years of literary fame. When the Devil comes to collect, Baldwin's character hires a high-powered lawyer (Anthony Hopkins) to defend him in court. This is the second time Baldwin and Hopkins have worked together — the first was 1997's *The Edge*.

MALKOVICH TURNING GREEN?

Now that **Tobey Maguire** (*Wonderboys*) has signed to play Spider-Man, who will be the Green Goblin? The makers of the long-awaited comic book adaptation have been shopping around for someone to play Spidey's impish arch-enemy and, now that **Nicolas Cage** (*Bringing Out the Dead*) has dropped out of the race, **John Malkovich** (*Being John Malkovich*) is the leading candidate. Cage, who has lost all hope that the Superman movie he'd been attached to will ever be made, considered playing the rocket-riding, bomb-dropping villain but passed so that he could do **John Woo's** new film *Windtalkers*. *Spider-Man* begins shooting in January, with **Sam Raimi** (*A Simple Plan*) at the helm.



John Malkovich

MYERS GETS PINK?

Austin Powers star **Mike Myers** is in the running for the role of Inspector Clouseau in a planned remake of the 1963 comedy *The Pink Panther*. MGM reportedly wants the Canadian ex-pat to revise the role made famous by **Peter Sellers**, who played the bumbling French lawman in the Blake Edwards original and its many sequels. **Kevin Kline** and **Kevin Spacey** were also up for the part. If he signs, Myers will likely start work on the film in February.

B R I E F L Y

Meg Ryan is in talks to star in a bio-pic about porn star Linda Lovelace. ■ Verne Troyer, better known as Mini-me from the second *Austin Powers* flick, will play the poltergeist Peeves in the upcoming *Harry Potter* film. ■ Oddball filmmaker Terry Gilliam (*Brazil*) has signed on to direct the big-screen adaptation of *Good Omens*, the popular 1990 novel written by fellow Brits Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman. ■ David Duchovny (*The X-Files*) turned down a part in the third *Star Wars* movie to star in the Ivan Reitman-directed sci-fi film *Evolution*. ■ Human punching bag Jackie Chan (*Shanghai Noon*) is in talks to star in *Stretch Armstrong*, an action comedy inspired by the 1970s elastic toy. Can a Hungry, Hungry Hippos movie be far behind?

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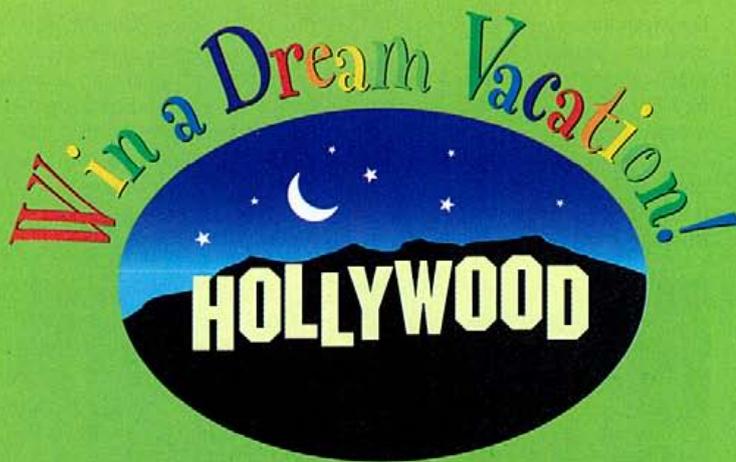
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Raiding the costume department

CANADIAN COUTURIER FINDS INSPIRATION FOR ITS CLASSIC CLOTHES AT THE MOVIES BY MARNI WEISZ



Two great reasons to go wardrobe shopping: It's winter and you need (want, crave, etc.) nice new clothes to keep you warm. And Christmas — with its relentless stream of office and cocktail parties — is upon us. Sure, you could just throw on your old wool coat. And that shiny green dress would probably last one more holiday season. But those outfits are just so...Nineties.

If you're ready to make a wardrobe investment that will make you feel good year after year after year, look to the past. Or better yet, look to how movies have portrayed the past. That's how Jim Searle and Chris Tyrell, the designers at Toronto-based **Hoax Couture**, came up with their creations that are both retro and contemporary at the same time. Sure, these garments may cost a bit more than that mall-bought coat and dress. But their classic origins mean they're sure to stand up to the fickle winds of fashion for decades.

◀ FUCHSIA FINERY

Gwyneth Paltrow managed to emerge from 1998's *Shakespeare in Love* even more of a sex symbol than before. No easy task, since she spends half the movie wearing a beard and mustache and loping around like an awkward boy. But in the other half of the movie, she gets to wear fabulous gilded dresses, corsets and bustiers. The latter were the inspiration for this stunning fuchsia body-hugger. "It's constructed and proportioned like a 16th-century garment but it's made in a thoroughly modern iridescent taffeta that keeps it from looking too costumey," says Searle.

Bustier: \$595



◀ DANGEROUS DUDS

Yes, this is indeed popster Clint Moffatt of The Moffatts decked out in Hoax wear. Do you see a similarity between Clint and oddball actor John Malkovich? How about that stand-up collar with the stock tie? Searle says the 18th-century look was inspired by Malkovich's garb in 1988's *Dangerous Liaisons*. That's Clint's brother Scott in the background, wearing the same tie but with a more contemporary knot. Pair the silk taffeta crush tie with a contemporary jacket and taffeta shirt and you've got a fun look that will also keep you warm this winter.

Tie: \$45, Shirt: \$225, Jacket: \$750

L.A. LOOK ▶

Kim Basinger's gorgeous gown from 1997's *L.A. Confidential* is the unmistakable inspiration for this flowing, ankle-length stunner. "It epitomizes 1930s Hollywood glamour," Searle says. That's for sure. Imagine showing up at a Christmas soiree, or perhaps a performance of *The Nutcracker*, draped in this ode to Basinger's damaged diva.

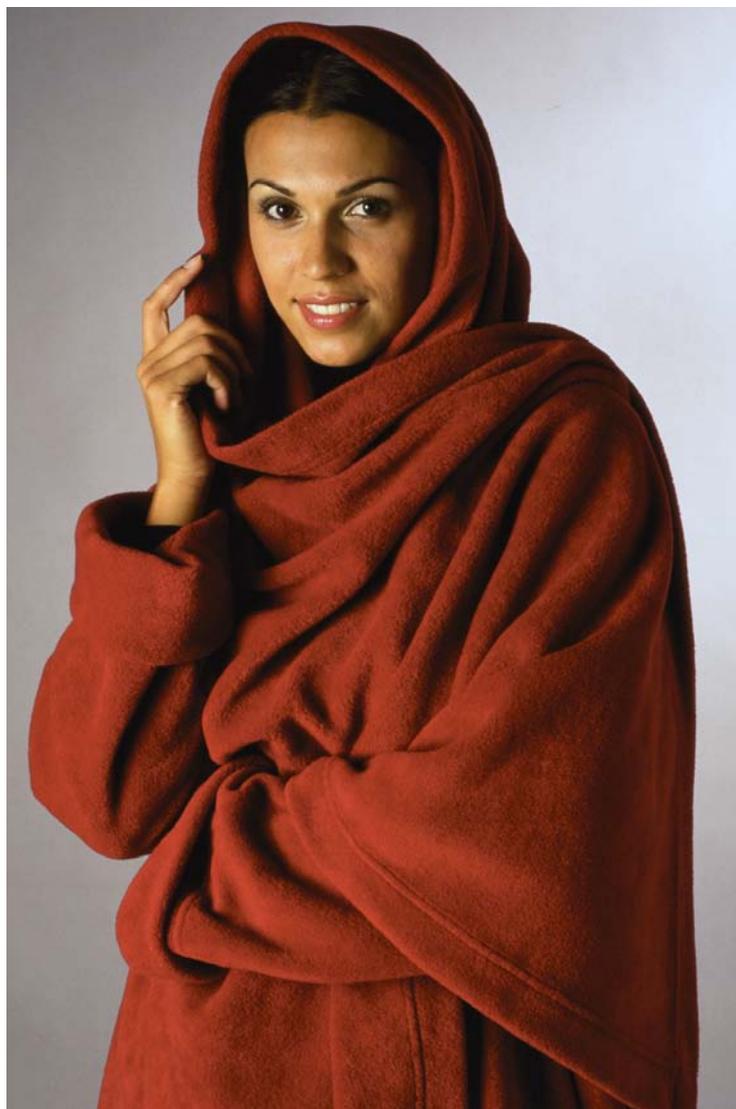
Gown: \$750

▼ IT'S A WRAP

The most enduring image in the 1981 drama *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is of a despairing Meryl Streep, swathed in a hooded cape of dark, depressing blue, staring toward the sea and waiting for her lover's return. Hoax Couture's version captures the drama of that image, but with a less dismal edge. "It has been translated into a red microfibre polar fleece and it now says more 'Mystery Woman' than 'Abandoned Lover,'" says Searle.

Snug Coat: \$395

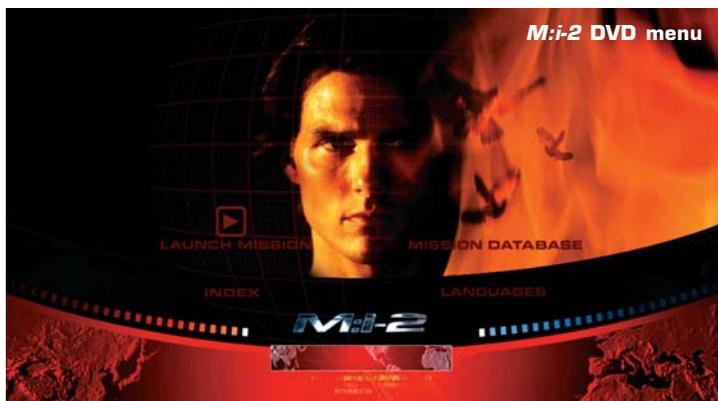
All items are available through Hoax Couture, call 1.888.333.HOAX or visit their website at www.hoaxcouture.com. The bustier can also be purchased at Ogilvy's in Montreal.



FUTURE OF FASHION

The past not your style? Don't like to wear anything that could remotely be called retro? Well, Hoax Couture doesn't want to leave you out in the cold this winter. These full-length leather coats are inspired by Keanu Reeves' slick ensemble from 1999's *The Matrix*. And they're guaranteed not to go out of style...for at least a couple hundred years.
Coat: \$1800





CONSTRUCTING the DVD

A LOT OF EXTRA WORK GOES INTO THOSE LITTLE DISCS

Unused footage, trailers, out-takes, interviews with cast and crew, behind-the-scenes scenes, historical footnotes, software — movie studios are packing a lot of extra material onto DVDs. It seems as if every stage of the movie-making process, from pitch meeting to thanking the Academy, now gets its own chapter on the digital video release. Add up all the “extras” and you almost have the equivalent of a second film.

Case in point: *Mission: Impossible 2*. Paramount worked on the disc for the flash-and-dazzle action picture for seven months and crammed in roughly an hour’s worth of “B-roll” footage, interviews, stunts and special effects segments.

Michael Arkin, senior vice-president of marketing at Paramount Home Video, did several of the interviews himself, including a marathon session with director John Woo that took place on the Honolulu set of Woo’s next movie, *Windtalkers*. “He’s unassuming and

very kind,” says Arkin, on the phone from L.A. “He gave us over six hours...that’s a long time to ask someone to sit in a recording studio.”

Tom Cruise, who starred in and co-produced *M:i-2*, was also very involved, providing an interview and meeting with studio execs to discuss the DVD’s various features. “He wanted it to be the coolest, best DVD that had been done to date,” says Arkin.

Aside from chats with Woo and Cruise, the DVD features interviews with co-stars Ving Rhames and Thandie Newton. And for a mini-feature called “Impossible Shots,” stunt director Brian Smrz and Cruise’s stunt double Keith Campbell discuss the movie’s impressive stunt sequences. Remember the climactic fight scene? The one where a razor-sharp knife stops about a centimetre from someone’s eyeball? Smrz recounts how Woo came up with the idea for the shot at the last minute, leaving the stunt director to figure out the details. Details, such as how to film it without killing anyone.

“John gets these visions,” says Arkin, “and then it’s up to Brian to execute the vision.” (Execute? Whoa, bad choice of words.)

That mini-feature also describes how Cruise filmed the movie’s opening rock-climbing scene without falling to his death, and how, in a later scene, he plunged down the side of a skyscraper. “He’s on what you call a decelerator,” says Arkin. “I couldn’t explain the technology to you if I tried, but it allows someone to freefall and stop almost on a dime. Cruise literally stopped just a few inches from the camera.”

Also squeezed onto the disc are a Metallica music video (they did the soundtrack), an alternate title sequence and the *M:i-2* parody that was performed by Woo, Cruise and Ben Stiller at the 2000 MTV Movie Awards. Anyone with a DVD-ROM on their computer can also access dossiers about key movie characters, a screensaver and games.

One can’t help but wonder how much advance planning goes into the making of a DVD. Are directors and marketing departments setting aside footage for the disc in mid-shoot? Arkin says, absolutely, some filmmakers now start planning the DVD when they’re still filming the movie — especially if that movie happens to be an action picture like *M:i-2*. “It depends on the filmmaker and it depends on the film,” he says, “but those movies lend themselves so perfectly to it that I think, clearly, the filmmakers have visions of the DVD.”

—Sean Davidson

Dynamite DVDs

No one is happier than DVD makers and distributors that a DVD is the perfect size to cram into your regulation-size Christmas stocking — except perhaps the fanatic movie buff. Here are some of the year’s best:



The Perfect Storm — George Clooney and Mark Wahlberg star in this reality-based thriller about a fishing crew battling a deadly storm. Extras include feature-length commentaries by director Wolfgang Petersen, Sebastian

Junger (who wrote the book on which the movie was based) and special effects mavens Stefen Fangmeier and Helen Ostenberg Elswit.



Fight Club — Brad Pitt and Edward Norton’s twisted psychological battle-drama might have been a disappointment at the box office, but fans of the brutal flick are of the passionate kind and will appreciate the

DVD’s alternate takes, alternate angles, alternate versions of the main title sequence, deleted scenes and interviews with the stars, writer, director and effects gurus.



Men in Black — This past September, three special editions of the DVD for the 1997 Will Smith/Tommy Lee Jones intergalactic action movie were released: the *Men in Black Collector’s Series*

featuring exclusive footage and a documentary; the *Men in Black Limited Edition*, a two-disc version of the film in both the wide-screen and full-screen formats that also includes an interactive editing workshop; and the *Men in Black DTS Collector’s Series*, which features all of the above plus a Dolby digital soundtrack enhanced with the Digital Theater Systems sound option.



Gladiator — Russell Crowe stars as a general-turned-slave who is thrown into the gladiator arenas of ancient Rome. As if the movie wasn’t enough of a sensory overload, this two-disc set has more than four

hours of bonus material, including commentary by director Ridley Scott, deleted scenes and a behind-the-scenes photo gallery.



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TWAIN spotting



Timmins commits its country goddess to history with an elaborate Shania Twain museum

By Jessica Aldred

The holidays have gotten so predictable: Pile “the fam” in the car, drive over to Nanny and Grampy’s, eat turkey until you lose consciousness. Sure, you could take an exotic vacation instead, but wherever would you go? Disneyland? Too commercial. Graceland? Too American. The Shania Twain Interpretive Centre and Underground Gold Mine Tour? Hmm...

Come next holiday season — actually, by Canada Day, 2001, if everything goes well — country music lovers can learn everything they ever wanted to know (and undoubtedly more) about their favourite rags-to-riches Revlon spokesperson and Grammy winner by making a pilgrimage to Twain’s hometown of Timmins, Ontario. (Of course, it remains to be seen if even Shania-philes will brave Northern Ontario highways in the winter, but we’ll let the provincial government, who donated several million to the museum and the expansion of the adjoining mine tour, worry about that.)

The scrappy little mining town will honour its favourite daughter with a museum dedicated to showcasing *all Twain, all the time*. For example, Shania’s wedding dress will be on display, providing a much-needed reality check for lovesick male fans in denial over her nuptials to producer/songwriter Mutt Lange. Envious musicians — convinced the sultry Shania married the unfortunately named Mutt purely so he could write her songs — might want to check out pages of song lyrics penned alternately in Lange’s and Twain’s handwriting. And anyone who consults the *National Enquirer* for celebrity gossip should take the Twain trivia true-or-false quiz, guaranteed to set the record straight. The centre’s design will mimic a backstage tour. After a trip down Twain memory lane in the “Hall of Inspiration,” fans will enter the quick change/makeup area where they’ll see what Shania goes through to prep for a concert. Then, they’ll be ushered into the “Music Discovery

Space,” where they can record and mix their own music...perhaps even record a song with Shania on back-up vocals. The grand finale will be a multi-screen, interactive Shania concert, complete with pyrotechnics and stereo surround-sound.

Twain (who now lives in Switzerland) was so excited about the proposed centre that in June she held a marathon eight-hour meeting with planners to hammer out the details. “Shania suggested things we’d never thought of in the initial planning,” says Jack Watson, city clerk and operations manager for the Timmins Gold Mine Tour and Museum. For example, new trees will be planted outside the centre as an homage to Twain’s mother and stepfather — both reforestation workers — who were killed in a car crash when Twain was a child. And, at the singer’s request, the Hall of Inspiration chronicling Twain’s early, pre-stardom life in Timmins will now include a map of her old haunts, including the clubs she used to play and the pizza joint where she ate poutine. Watson is also trying to hunt down the recipe for Shania’s favourite sticky donuts, as well as an obscure type of licorice Twain loved as a girl. (“You know, the flat licorice that’s about half an inch wide?” Watson explains, sounding slightly exasperated that I, perhaps along with several candy merchants he’s contacted, haven’t heard of.)

“She’s just a ball of fire — one of the smartest people I’ve ever met,” says Hugh Spencer, the exhibit space designer in charge of the Shania centre. He admits that he “expected to stare at her for the entire meeting,” but chuckles about how the casually dressed, down-to-earth Twain kept everybody’s mind, and eyes, on the project at hand.

And for those who think Twain is probably the type to let everyone else make all the sacrifices — she ain’t. The willowy warbler will donate more than a million bucks worth of unique memorabilia, including many of her awards, midriff-baring outfits and audio and video clips.

Jessica Aldred is a Toronto-based freelance writer.

outthismonth

Artist: Cypress Hill
Title: Live at the Fillmore
Label: Columbia/Sony

Artist: Enya
Title: A Day Without Rain
Label: Warner

Artist: Ricky Martin
Title: Sound Loaded
Label: Columbia/Sony

Artist: Methodman
Title: Tical O...The Prequel
Label: Def Jam/Universal

Artist: Run DMC
Title: Crown Royal
Label: Arista/BMG

Artist: Sade
Title: Lovers Rock
Label: Epic/Sony

Artist: Simply Red
Title: It’s Only Love
Label: Warner

Artist: The Tea Party
Title: Tangents: The Tea Party Collection
Label: EMI Canada

Artist: Usher
Title: All About U
Label: Arista/BMG

Artist: Vitamin C
Title: More
Label: Elektra/Warner

Artist: Roger Waters
Title: In the Flesh — Live
Label: Columbia/Sony

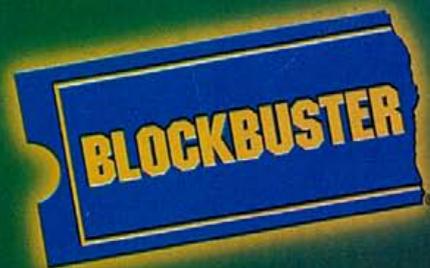
Artist: Xzibit
Title: Restless
Label: Epic/Sony

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the good, the bad and the violent

GAMING AFICIONADO MARC SALTZMAN PICKS THE MOST MEMORABLE GAMES OF 2000

Year after year, hundreds of publications publish "Best of the Year" guides just in time for the holiday shopping season. This practice makes particular sense for the videogame industry, since more than 40 per cent of all games are purchased in November and December. (They make for ideal stocking stuffers.) But, this year, we thought we'd try something a little different. Rather than list the top action titles or best PlayStation games, we've got a few new categories.

BEST INJURIES: *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2*
Activision, for PlayStation

Without a doubt, the crash sequences in *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2* are some of the most painful looking in history, including failed "ollies," "nosebluntsides" and "900s." Definitely falls into the "don't try this at home" category.

MOST VIOLENT GAME: *Soldier of Fortune*
Activision, for PC

This game's guns 'n' gore, and a whole lot more, prompted authorities in British Columbia to make this controversial 3D shooter the first game in their province's history that can't be sold or rented to anyone under 18 years of age. Gee, what's wrong with disembowelment and decapitation?

BEST NOOKIE: *The Sims*
Electronic Arts, for PC

In the year's best-selling computer game, players manage the lives of little simulated people who often engage in steamy kisses, swinging hot tub parties and even bouts of "cuddling" on heart-shaped vibrating beds.

BIGGEST WASTE OF TIME: *Daikatana*
Eidos, for PC

The game that took more than four years to make, and was hyped up the

wazoo, turned out to be the year's biggest piece of garbage. Leave this 3D shooter, by *Doom* designer John Romero, in the bargain bin unless you're into repetitive and uninspiring gameplay.

BEST PERIPHERALS: *Samba de Amigo*
Sega, for Dreamcast

Sure, dancing mats for games are becoming all the rage here in North America but it's hard to top a pair of gravity-sensing maracas. In *Samba de Amigo*, players must shake, rattle and roll their way to the high score list with these special controllers. The Latin tunes are worth the price of admission alone.

BEST ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK: *SSX*
EA Sports, for PlayStation 2

While *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* and Acclaim's *Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX* are tied for the best licensed music from today's top alt-rock artists, the best music created specifically for a game goes to Mix Master Mike (of Beastie Boys fame) for his exceptional jungle, house and hip-hop beats in the snowboarding supercross game, *SSX*. Runner-up: Sega's toe-tappin' *Space Channel 5*.

BEST DRESSED: *Space Channel 5*
Sega, for Dreamcast

The space age meets '60s retro in this *Barbarella*-esque dancing game from Sega. Our heroine, Ulala (pronounced "Oo-la-la") is outfitted in a variety of futuristic uniforms including orange plastic mini-skirts and matching knee-high boots. Yowza.

BEST DIALOGUE: *Seaman*
Sega, for Dreamcast

Taking care of this mouthy half-man/half-fish is often an exercise in



The mouthy star of *Seaman*

patience. You see, our friend Seaman has a vocabulary of over 12,000 words and will egg you on (the game ships with a microphone) with such zingers as "You know, if I was a dog you'd feed me..." or "You're an ass-scratching baboon."

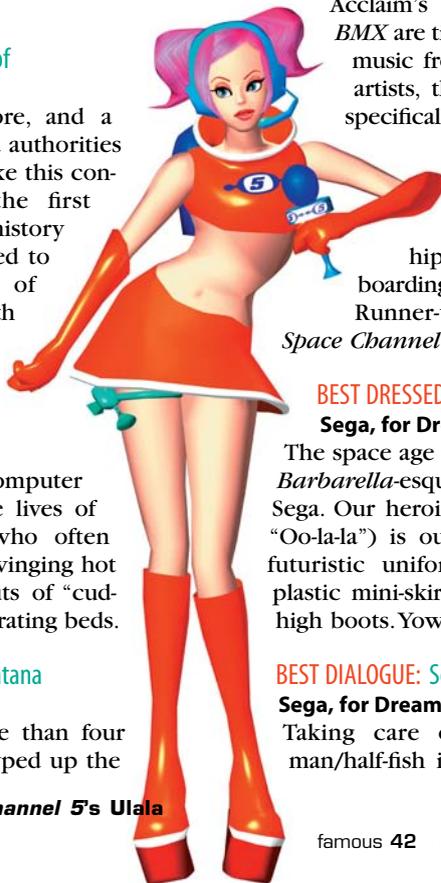
BEST CUT-SCENES: *Final Fantasy IX*
Squaresoft, for PlayStation

The ninth instalment in the addictive *Final Fantasy* role-playing game series is arguably the best yet, with some of the most stunning cinematic sequences ever to grace a video game system, like when our hero Zedane is chased through the forest by deadly bugs and monstrous trees.

BEST GAME NO ONE PLAYED: *The Longest Journey*
Funcom, for PC

This Norwegian adventure game was a hit in Europe but has yet to land on North American shores. Too bad — it's one of the most beautiful, deepest and most challenging PC titles in recent memory with more than 150 different locations, 70 speaking characters and 50 hours of gameplay. If it shows up at your local game store — grab it.

Marc Saltzman is the author of Game Design: Secrets of the Sages (Macmillan Publishing).



Space Channel 5's Ulala

new RELEASES

TAKE THE ROAD TO EL DORADO, GET WHIPPED OR CHECK OUT THE CELL



Eddie Murphy times six in *The Klumps*

The Replacements (Dec. 1)

Stars: Keanu Reeves, Gene Hackman

Director: Howard Deutch (*Grumpier Old Men*)

Story: During the NFL players' strike of 1987, a washed-up quarterback (Reeves) and a group of desperate, wannabe pro-football players realize that becoming scabs may be their last chance. Gene Hackman plays their curmudgeonly coach. Also available on DVD.

Nutty Professor II: The Klumps (Dec. 5)

Stars: Eddie Murphy, Janet Jackson

Director: Peter Segal (*Tommy Boy*)

Story: Sherman Klump (Murphy) thought he had seen the last of his alter ego, Buddy Love. But he was wrong. Having done his best to keep Buddy buried in his subconscious, the portly and painfully shy professor is horrified to find him resurfacing in untimely outbursts and threatening his plans to marry colleague Denise Gains (Janet Jackson). Also available on DVD.

The Road to El Dorado (Dec. 12)

Voices: Kenneth Branagh, Kevin Kline

Directors: Bibo Bergeron, Will Finn

Story: In this animated feature modeled after the old Bob Hope/Bing Crosby road movies, two swindlers (voiced by Branagh and Kline) win a map to the fabled city of gold and set out to seek their treasure. But when they arrive they're hailed as gods by the local residents. Will they take advantage of the misunderstanding, or rise above their moral mediocrity and do the right thing? Also available on DVD.

Gone in 60 Seconds (Dec. 12)

Stars: Nicolas Cage, Angelina Jolie

Director: Dominic Sena (*Kalifornia*)

Story: This remake of the 1974 B-movie cult classic follows Randall "Memphis" Raines (Cage), an automobile aficionado and retired car thief

who returns to the illicit biz to save his debt-ridden younger bro (Giovanni Ribisi) from the mob. To pay his brother's debts, Memphis has to steal 50 cars in a single night. Jolie plays Cage's love interest. Also available on DVD.

Scary Movie (Dec. 12)

Stars: Shannon Elizabeth, Cheri Oteri

Director: Keenen Ivory Wayans (*A Low Down Dirty Shame*)

Story: Director Wayans satirizes a satire — *Scream* and its sequels — in this over-the-top slasher send-up. Elizabeth plays Cindy (based on Neve Campbell's Sydney), the unwilling target of a mask-wearing, knife-wielding psycho, while Oteri plays Gail Hailstorm, a clone of Courteney Cox's relentless news hound, Gale Weathers. Also available on DVD.

Whipped (Dec. 12)

Stars: Amanda Peet, Brian Van Holt

Director: Peter M. Cohen (debut)

Story: A group of studly college buddies who think they're God's gift to women swap stories about their conquests at the local diner. That is, until a fateful weekend when they discover they have all fallen in love with the same woman (Peet).

The Art of War (Dec. 12)

Stars: Wesley Snipes, Anne Archer

Director: Christian Duguay (*The Assignment*)

Story: An American operative for the UN (Snipes) is framed for the murder of a Chinese ambassador and forced to go underground until he can prove his innocence.

Shaft (Dec. 12)

Stars: Samuel L. Jackson, Christian Bale

Director: John Singleton (*Rosewood*)

Story: Jackson plays John Shaft, the nephew of the 1970s Shaft of TV and movie fame. In this sequel of sorts, the new Shaft is an ex-cop turned PI who tracks down a rich-kid fugitive (Bale) suspected of murdering a black man. Also available on DVD.

The Cell (Dec. 19)

Stars: Jennifer Lopez, Vincent D'Onofrio

Director: Tarsem (debut)

Story: A child psychologist (Lopez) agrees to take part in a medical procedure that will put her inside the mind of a psychotic serial killer (D'Onofrio). He's in a coma, so the new-fangled version of the Vulcan mind-meld may be the



Samuel L. Jackson in *Shaft*

only way to find out where his latest victim (who's probably still alive) is hidden.

Also available on DVD.

Chuck and Buck (Dec. 19)

Stars: Mike White, Chris Weitz

Director: Miguel Arteta (*Levin' Thing*)

Story: In this art house favourite, an emotionally stunted man named Buck (White) tracks down his old childhood friend Chuck (Weitz) expecting to resume the relationship where they left off 16 years ago. But Chuck is uncomfortable with Buck's odd, child-like behaviour and doesn't want anything to do with him. Also available on DVD.

Love's Labour's Lost (Dec. 19)

Stars: Kenneth Branagh, Alicia Silverstone

Director: Kenneth Branagh (*Hamlet*)

Story: In this musical version of the Shakespeare play (tunes courtesy of Cole Porter and Irving Berlin), the King of Navarre and three of his friends take an oath to give up women for three years. But then a French princess and her three beautiful attendants show up for a diplomatic visit. Who saw that coming? Also available on DVD.

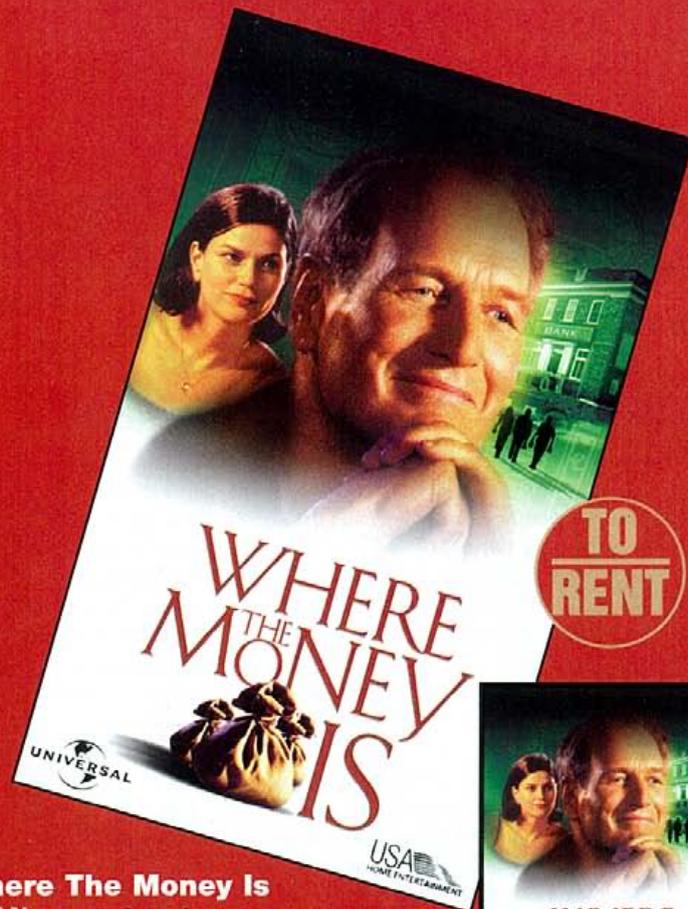
Loser (Dec. 19)

Stars: Jason Biggs, Mena Suvari

Director: Amy Heckerling (*Clueless*)

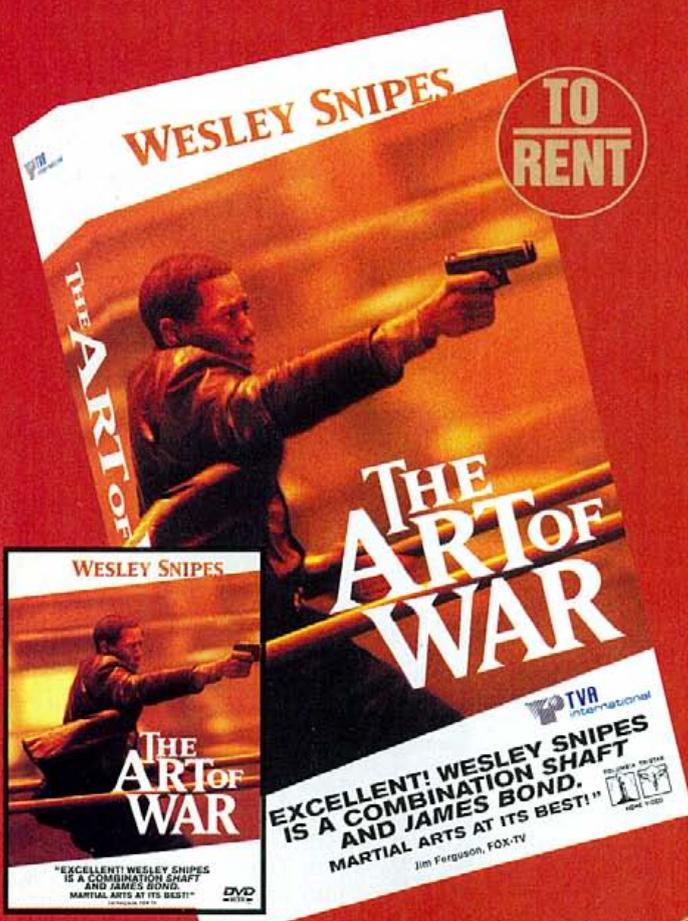
Story: When Midwesterner Paul Tannek (Biggs) moves to the Big Apple to attend NYU, he's ridiculed by his roommates for being a loser. Paul then turns to another outcast, Dora (Suvari), for emotional support, and their friendship eventually grows into a romance.

MOVIES TO GO DECEMBER 2000



**TO
RENT**

Where The Money Is
Paul Newman. A restless young nurse at a rest home convinces an old thief to join forces with her for one last heist.
AVAILABLE: DECEMBER 19



**TO
RENT**

The Art Of War
Wesley Snipes. A United Nations operative framed for the murder of Vietnamese refugees and the Chinese ambassador must elude the FBI and Triad gangsters until he can prove his innocence.
AVAILABLE: DECEMBER 26



**TO
RENT**

The Replacements
Keanu Reeves. Set during the 1987 NFL players' strike, a washed up quarterback and a group of wanna-be pro-football players hit the field as scabs in an effort to keep the league alive.
AVAILABLE: DECEMBER 1



stargazing

By Dan Liebman

SAGITTARIUS

November 22-December 22

You walk a tightrope early this month, good luck guessing whether it's space or TLC that your unpredictable partner craves. Friends from childhood make the month highly nostalgic. As the year's final credits start rolling, think back on recent trends and consider how they'll affect you in 2001.

CAPRICORN

December 23-January 20

Renewed commitment — in romance and in friendship — is the theme, thanks to your recent initiatives. Remember the favours that older family members extended over the years? Try to reciprocate, though not in a tit-for-tat fashion. Finally, don't let the season's festivities distract you from fiscal responsibilities.

AQUARIUS

January 21-February 19

The month is a little thin on plot, but performances are larger than life. You're being considered for a prize job, so act as professionally as possible. Meanwhile, a neighbourhood feud could pit two friends on opposite sides. For sanity's sake, adopt a neutral stance.

PISCES

February 20-March 20

Spontaneous invitations, last-minute trips and unexpected drop-ins make for an animated month. You'll also be called on to provide emotional support for those close to you. First, kids — not necessarily your own — look to you for encouragement. Then, just before or after the holidays, friends and neighbours count on you for guidance.

ARIES

March 21-April 20

Ever think about writing comedy? This month is sure to include a couple of slapstick scenes, so keep your notepad handy. It's also a good time for looking into courses to take in the new year. Consider something you tried years ago, but never quite mastered. Holiday gatherings include a celebrity guest.

TAURUS

April 21-May 22

The early part of the month is for making choices, with the emphasis on putting your priorities in order. A moody friend brightens, thanks to your recent efforts. Financial planning is most critical before — not after — the holidays. A partner is in a generous and romantic mood. Now it's up to you to provide the perfect occasion.

GEMINI

May 23-June 21

The month highlights your ingenuity. Creative solutions lead to a breakthrough at work. At the same time, you can express your feelings through the presents you make or select. If the month has a downside, it's that neighbours tend to make much ado about nothing. Annoying, but once again your cleverness saves the day.

CANCER

June 22-July 22

You finally overcome any reluctance to speak out to your doctor, boss or other authority figure. Holiday events begin earlier than usual. And romance is in the air. The guest list at one gathering — and don't even try to guess which — may include an ex-flame or a new heartthrob.

LEO

July 23-August 22

Career is a central theme for December. First, a new friend is instrumental in opening an important door. Then, near the middle of the month, you win belated praise for work done ages ago. Travel or other plans may be delayed. Between Christmas and New Year's, you can help a friend's love life get back on track.

VIRGO

August 23-September 22

Virgos must be ultra-cautious about volunteering (or being volunteered) this month. If your brightest ideas wind up on the cutting room floor, your most mundane ones earn "oohs" and "ahhs." The holiday cards and emails you receive include a hidden message.



KATIA SMIRNOVA

LIBRA

September 23-October 22

Anticipate a period of intense negotiating that builds until the full moon of the 11th. Your hard bargaining pays off, but stay on your toes until at least the 18th. This year, be a little more sentimental with your gifts, a little more sensitive with your seating arrangements and a little more creative with your menus.

SCORPIO

October 23-November 21

If the year's big plans didn't materialize in 2000, don't abandon them now. They're much closer to fruition than you realize. While everyone else is distracted by the season, you can use this month to fine tune and revise your work. And there's still time to plan an intimate getaway for the new year.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1st Bette Midler
- 2nd Britney Spears
- 3rd Brendan Fraser
- 4th Jeff Bridges
- 5th Little Richard
- 6th Tom Hulce
- 7th Ellen Burstyn
- 8th Kim Basinger
- 9th John Malkovich
- 10th Kenneth Branagh
- 11th Teri Garr
- 12th Dionne Warwick
- 13th Christopher Plummer
- 14th Patty Duke
- 15th Don Johnson
- 16th Liv Ullmann
- 17th Eugene Levy
- 18th Brad Pitt
- 19th Daryl Hannah
- 20th John Hillerman
- 21st Kiefer Sutherland
- 22nd Ralph Fiennes
- 23rd Susan Lucci
- 24th Ricky Martin
- 25th Sissy Spacek
- 26th Jared Leto
- 27th Gérard Depardieu
- 28th Denzel Washington
- 29th Mary Tyler Moore
- 30th Tiger Woods
- 31st Val Kilmer



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