

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

# Famous

october 2003 | volume 4 | number 10

**CLOONEY  
DIGS**  
INTOLERABLE  
CRUELTY

**BACON &  
ROBBINS ON**  
MYSTIC  
RIVER

FOOLPROOF'S  
**RYAN**  
REYNOLDS

**DON  
MCKELLAR**  
INVITES YOU TO  
THE EVENT

Uma  
**Thurman**  
TALKS KILL BILL: VOLUME ONE

THE LATEST  
**Video  
& DVD**  
PAGE 43

ANTHONY HOPKINS, KATIE HOLMES AND OTHER STARS ON SCARY MOVIES

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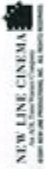


THIS HOLIDAY, DISCOVER YOUR INNER ELF.



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IN THEATRES NOVEMBER 7

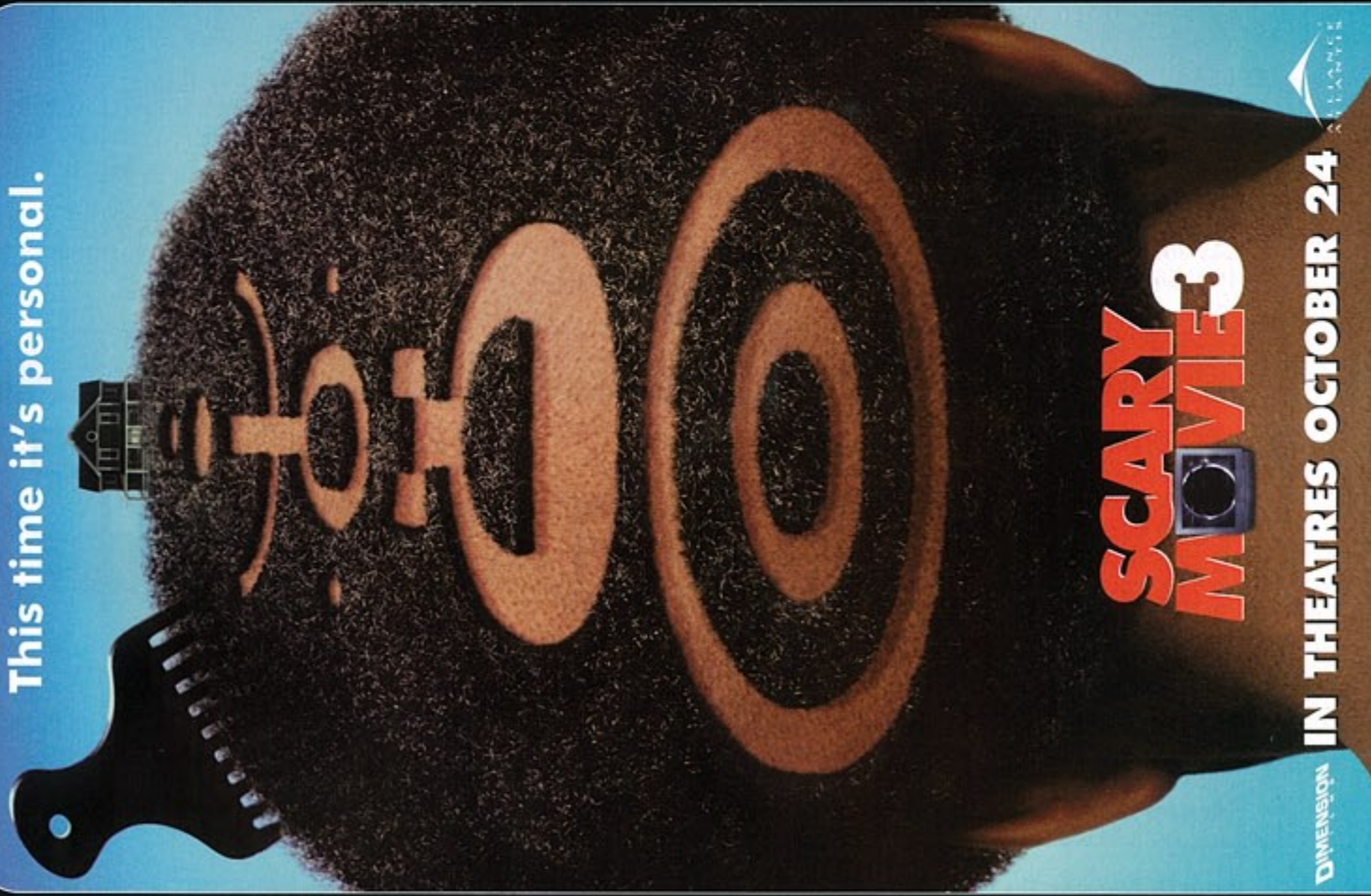


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This time it's personal.







# SCARY MOVIE 3

DIMENSION **IN THEATRES OCTOBER 24** 

# THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

INSPIRED BY A TRUE STORY

NEW LINE CINEMA

        **IN THEATRES OCTOBER 17**

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Engage the enemy.



GEORGE CLOONEY

CATHERINE ZETA-JONES

# INTOLERABLE CRUELTY

A romantic comedy with bite.

UNIVERSAL PICTURES AND IMAGINE ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT A BRIAN GRAZER PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH ALPHAVILLE GEORGE CLOONEY  
CATHERINE ZETA-JONES "INTOLERABLE CRUELTY" GEOFFREY RUSH CEDRIC THE ENTERTAINER EDWARD HERRMANN RICHARD JENKINS AND BILLY BOB THORNTON  
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OCTOBER 10

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# Getting his kicks



**S**o, you're a film geek who has an obsession with kung fu films and a bad crush on **Uma Thurman**. In your mind, you meld the two, imagining the shapely blonde zipped into Bruce Lee's tight yellow jumpsuit — the one he wore in his last movie, *Game of Death*. It's better than Viagra, and there are probably a few thousand more of you out there, all with the exact same fantasy.

But only one of you has the clout to actually make it happen.

That geek is director **Quentin Tarantino**, who hasn't had a film in theatres since 1997's *Jackie Brown*. The quirky auteur has long had a fascination with kung fu movies and Hong Kong filmmakers. And he's been intimately familiar with Thurman's intoxicating screen presence since she played the wife of a drug dealer in his 1994 crime romp *Pulp Fiction*. As you'll find out in our interview with Thurman, "Paying for Bill," page 34, it was while filming *Pulp Fiction* that Tarantino came up with the idea to squeeze two of his passions together and create *Kill Bill*.

Another relationship to watch is the one developing between **George Clooney** and the directing/producing Coen Brothers, Joel and Ethan. A few years back, the trio hooked up for the deep-south period piece *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*, in which Clooney took the biggest creative risks of his career. Now they've reteamed for the courtroom romantic comedy *Intolerable Cruelty*, which Clooney promises will be just as unusual. In "Court of Appeal," page 24, the leading man tells you why this particular romance flick is no *One Fine Day*.

**Kevin Bacon** and **Tim Robbins** were at Cannes when they hooked up with *Famous* to discuss their latest, *Mystic River*. And, although the warm breezes and swaying palms of the French Riviera seemed an odd place to be thinking about the film's subject matter — child abuse, murder and the ripping apart of very old friendships in a tough part of Boston — the Cannes crowd lapped it up. Read "Navigating Dangerous Waters," page 28, to find out why Bacon and Robbins lapped up every minute of their time with director **Clint Eastwood**.

We've also got stories about two rather divergent Canadian films in this issue. The first piece is "The Life and Death of **Don McKellar**," page 20, about the Toronto actor's latest, *The Event*. The film stars McKellar as an AIDS patient who takes charge of his own death in a very unique way. It's the sort of movie we've come to expect from Canadian filmmakers — weighty, serious, emotional, important (*The Hanging Garden's Thom Fitzgerald*, who was actually born in New Jersey but has lived here for years, directed).

But there's a new trend in Canadian cinema — accessible, fun, and even (if all goes well) commercial. Which brings us to our other homegrown interviewee, B.C. native **Ryan Reynolds**. In "The Canadian Job," page 32, Reynolds tells you all about his slick, new Canadian action pic (yes, we said "Canadian action pic"), *Footloose*.

—Marni Weisz

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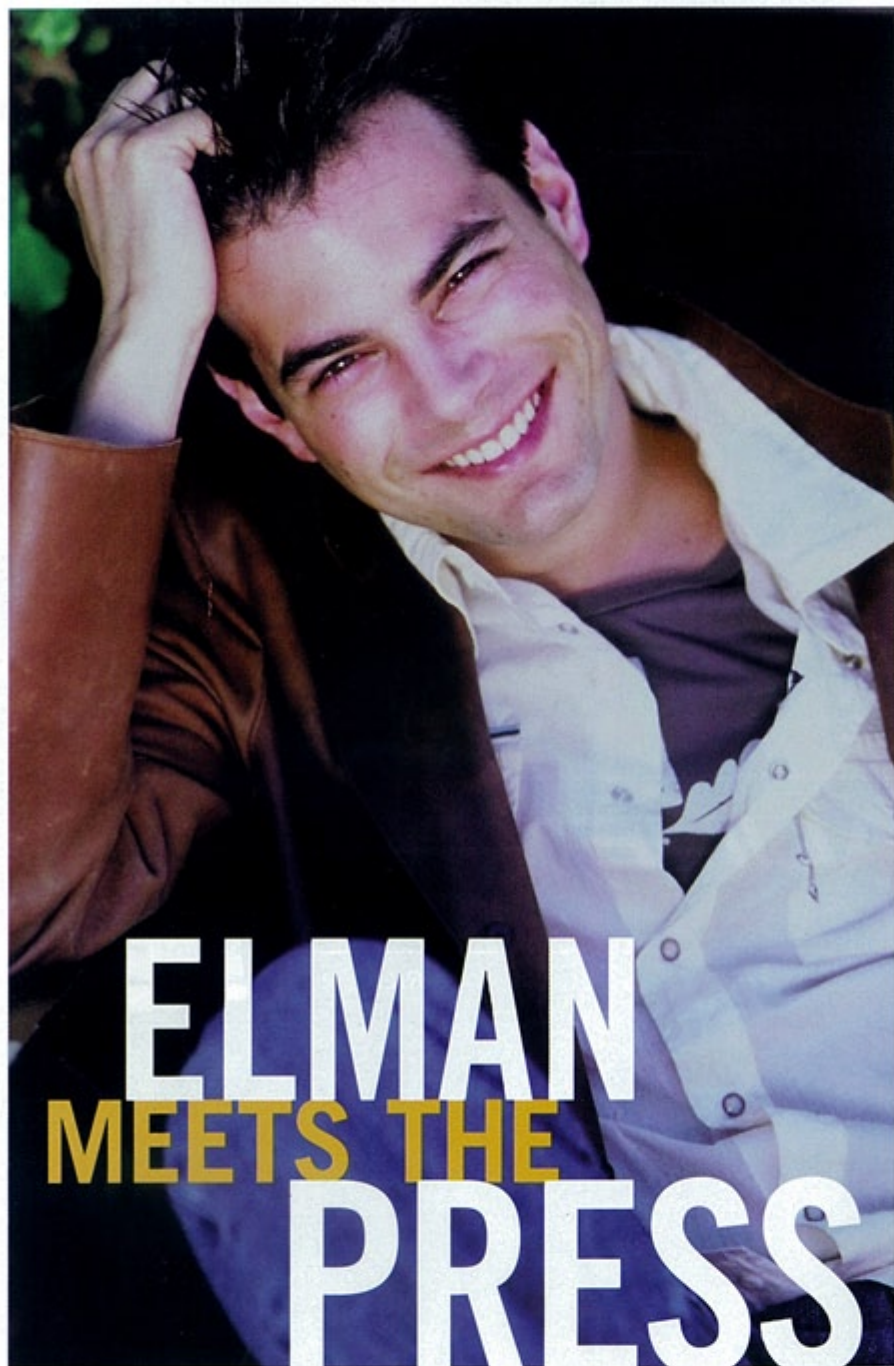
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# ELMAN MEETS THE PRESS

**W**hile most people watched in horror last spring as fibbing writer Jayson Blair shredded *The New York Times'* formidable reputation, there was a small group of filmmakers who couldn't have been happier.

This, after all, wasn't the first time a journalist had been caught obliterating the line between news reporting and creative writing, and a movie about another notorious liar, *The New Republic* scribe Stephen Glass (played by Thornhill, Ontario's own Hayden Christensen), had just finished shooting in Montreal.

"I thought it was a great plug for the movie," says Montreal native Jamie Elman, who plays reporter Aaron Bluth in the film, *Shattered Glass*. "The fact that it happened again recently, and is in the public eye right now, and that there are all these ethical questions about what they both did — I'm thrilled about it."

Glass was still in his mid-20s when he became a star writer at the Washington, D.C. magazine, and freelanced for such high-profile publications as *Harpers*, *George* and *Rolling Stone*. Problem was, more than half of his stories were either

partially or entirely made up. He was finally discovered when a fellow-reporter sensed too many unbelievable facts in his May 1998 story *Hacker Heaven*, about the wild exploits of a 15-year-old computer hacker.

"I do feel bad for the guy. Twenty-five is pretty young to be skewered and have your life ruined, at least temporarily," says Elman. "He's a guy who's under a lot of family pressure to succeed, and then he rises to the absolute top in his field and the pressure gets to him and we find out he kind of starts to crack."

At 27, Elman knows something about the pressures of being thrust into the limelight. On this L.A. morning he's still a bit sleepy, having just woken up after a string of 16-hour days on the set of his NBC series *American Dreams*, where he plays hip piano teacher Luke Foley. But young Canadians probably know him best as heartthrob Cody Miller from the YTV series *Student Bodies*. Elman now lives in the L.A. suburb of Los Villas, where, when he stands on his balcony, he can see the "Hollywood" sign peaking out from the Hollywood Hills.

"It's one of the few places in Hollywood where you can walk to bars and restaurants and movie theatres. There's a whole little community here, actually a hint of culture, which is rare for L.A.," Elman says, slowly waking up.

His role in *Shattered Glass* is a supporting one in an ensemble cast which also includes Hank Azaria, Steve Zahn and Rosario Dawson. "I play a reporter at *The New Republic* who's friends with Stephen, who respects Stephen, and who, like everyone else there, gets duped by Stephen," Elman explains.

But it's a role that creates a funny twist in this film about the perils of stretching the truth in order to create a better story: Elman's character never existed. He's a composite of several reporters who worked alongside Glass at *The New Republic*.

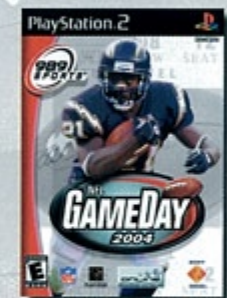
"Yeah, I see the irony," Elman concedes. "On the other hand, I can tell you that, originally, I think that the filmmakers probably tossed around the idea of not using Stephen Glass's name at all. Doing it sort of based on his story, and thought, 'Now, that's unethical.' You know, the story's about this guy, and his mind, and his persona, and what he went through.... [But] there's a certain amount of dramatic license that has to be taken. It's a movie."

—MARNI WEISZ

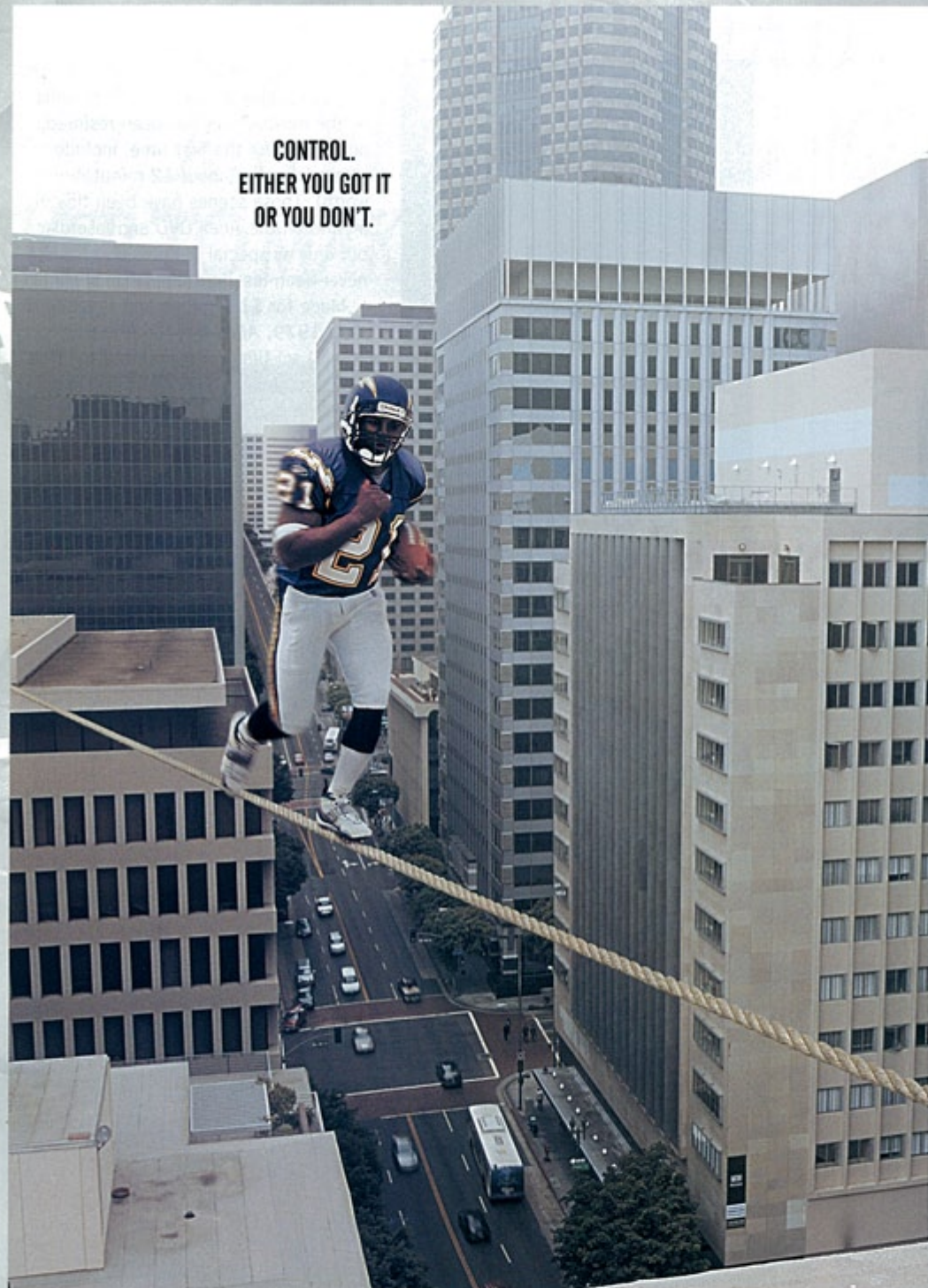




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## ALL HAIL ALIEN

**H**ollywood celebrates the scariest  
month of the year with a slew of  
thematic releases, including the remade  
*Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, the frighten-  
ingly silly *Scary Movie 3* and the spine-  
tingling *Gothika*. But October 31st, the  
day, has been reserved for the queen of

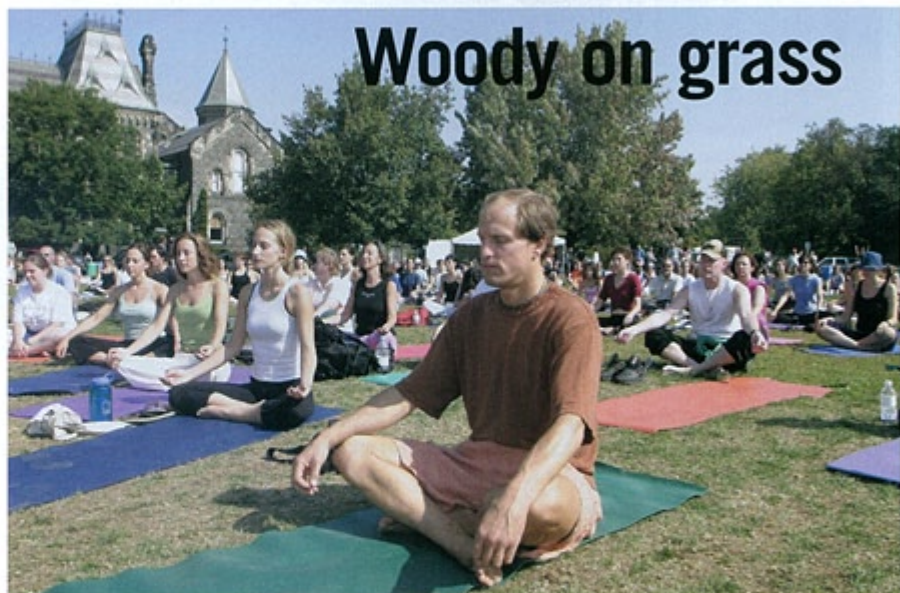
scary movies, *Alien: The Director's Cut*.

This re-release rocks for two reasons  
— the master print has been restored,  
and it will, for the first time, include  
deleted scenes (about 12 minutes  
worth). Those scenes have been floating  
around on the *Alien* DVD and laserdisc,  
but only as special features and have  
never been inserted into the movie itself.

Made for \$11-million and released in  
May, 1979, *Alien* was the first truly suc-  
cessful sci-fi/horror hybrid and the first  
movie to showcase a bad-ass female  
action hero (Sigourney Weaver — seen  
left — as Ripley) who saved the day  
using her brains (and a colossal flame  
thrower) rather than her feminine wiles.

But Weaver's takin'-care-of-business  
'tude would mean nothing if the alien  
creatures sucked, and as we know they  
rank among the best horror creatures ever  
created. Designed by Swiss surrealist artist  
H.R. Giger, the aliens — “the baby,” “the  
face hugger,” and “the mother” — had to  
be changed several times because Giger's  
initial designs were overtly sexual. Even  
with the adjustments, they remain both  
terrifying and provocative.

Because of *Alien*, audiences have had  
to endure a whole genre of not-so-scary  
space movies, such as *Event Horizon* and  
*Supernova*, none of which can compare  
to the first and the best. —IR



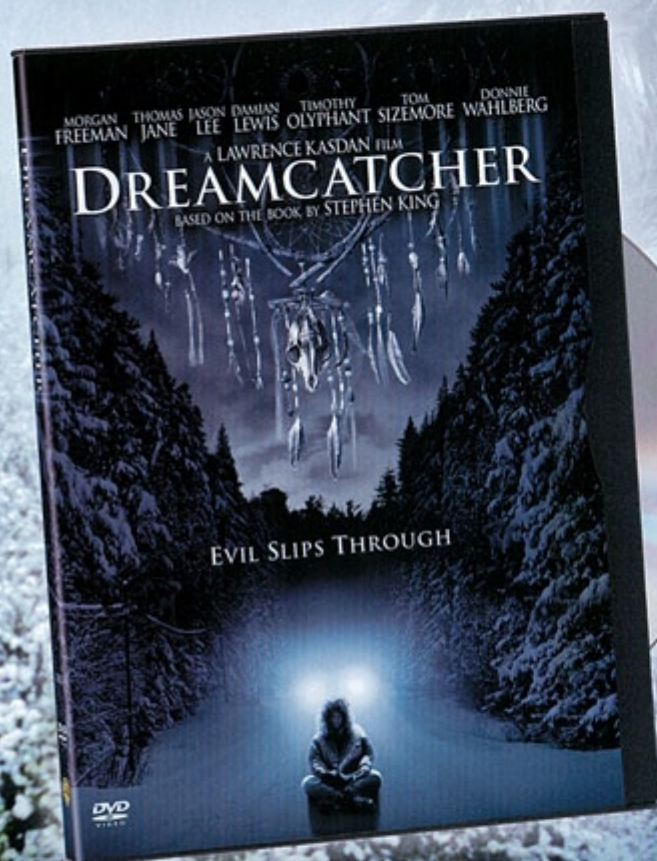
## Woody on grass

**C**all it a stunt, call it a love-in, call it transcendental or call it a brilliant marketing  
scheme, but Woody Harrelson's call for a mass yoga class at the University of Toronto  
attracted more than a thousand limber participants to King's College Circle. Harrelson was  
in town to promote his green documentary *Go Further* (directed by Torontonians Ron Mann)  
at the Toronto International Film Festival.

PHOTO BY ALEX UROSEVIC/PHOTO

**"THE FINEST ADAPTATION OF  
A STEPHEN KING NOVEL  
EVER TO MAKE IT TO THE BIG SCREEN."**

— Jeffrey K. Howard, ABC NEWS



**"DREAMCATCHER  
OOZES WITH HORROR."**

— MIAMI HERALD

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# CAUGHT ON FILM

THE STARS WORK, PLAY AND PROMOTE THEIR MOVIES



PHOTO BY TONY GENTILE/REUTERS

▲ Somehow, while at the Venice Film Festival to present his latest, *Matchstick Men*, Nicolas Cage also managed to place third in the Boston Marathon! Actually, we're not sure why the nattily dressed star was in such a hurry, but it sure makes for a good picture.

▶ Keanu Reeves takes a break during a celebrity hockey game in support of SCORE (Spinal Cord Opportunities for Rehabilitation Endowment — now there's a tortured acronym, well-meaning as it may be). Reeves played goal for the cause — which, like his *Matrix* movies, sees a future where the relationship between the central nervous system and the brain can be retooled. With any luck, SCORE's version will have less bad guys.



PHOTO BY SHELLEY CASTELLANO/ICON SMI

Reunited and it feels so good. The winning team of Gwyneth Paltrow and Joseph Fiennes tries to conjure some of their *Shakespeare in Love* magic for a fundraiser to benefit the Prince's Trust charity. Here they rehearse a scene from (what else?) *Romeo and Juliet* at London, England's Globe Theatre.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL CRABTREE/REUTERS

No, *Roots* did not give us any money to run this picture. But it seems Halle Berry gave *Roots* some money during an afternoon of shopping in Montreal. The Oscar-winning actor was in town — with hubby Eric Benet — to finish filming her thriller *Gothika*, which lands in theatres this month.



PHOTO BY MARTIN GRIMES/PHOTOGRAPHER SHOWCASE

That's Orlando Bloom — a.k.a. Legolas Greenleaf — fighting the Gs on a coaster at Disney's California Adventure in Anaheim. The heart-throb-du-jour was there for a screening of *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*, but spent the rest of the day exploring the theme park with girlfriend Kate Bosworth, of *Blue Crush* fame.

▼ That's the top of her terrified head trembling to the left.



PHOTO BY WESTLEY HARGRAVE/PHOTOGRAPHER SHOWCASE

# now in theatres

Make your choice *Foolproof*, run to *Runaway Jury*, attend *The School of Rock* or start thinking *Beyond Borders*



OCTOBER 3

## THE SCHOOL OF ROCK

**WHO'S IN IT?** Jack Black, Joan Cusack  
**WHO DIRECTED?** Richard Linklater (*Tape*)  
**WHAT'S IT ABOUT?** Guitarist Dewey Finn (Black) gets booted from his band and winds up masquerading as a substitute teacher at a posh private school.

## THE EVENT

**WHO'S IN IT?** Don McKellar, Olympia Dukakis  
**WHO DIRECTED?** Thom Fitzgerald (*Beefcake*)  
**WHAT'S IT ABOUT?** An assistant district attorney (Parker Posey) investigates the circumstances surrounding the death of an AIDS patient (McKellar). See Don McKellar interview, page 20.

## FOOLPROOF

**WHO'S IN IT?** Ryan Reynolds, Kristin Booth  
**WHO DIRECTED?** William Phillips (*Treed Murray*)  
**WHAT'S IT ABOUT?** Three computer geeks (Reynolds, Booth and Joris Jarsky), who get their jollies planning virtual bank heists, are blackmailed by a British baddie (David Suchet) who forces them to actually pull off one of their high-tech robberies. See Ryan Reynolds interview, page 32.

OCTOBER 10

## MYSTIC RIVER

**WHO'S IN IT?** Sean Penn, Tim Robbins  
**WHO DIRECTED?** Clint Eastwood (*Unforgiven*)

**WHAT'S IT ABOUT?** Three pals — Jimmy, Sean and Dave — who survived a terrifying childhood incident, are reunited when Jimmy's (Penn) daughter is murdered, and cop Sean (Kevin Bacon) suspects the psychologically unsound Dave (Robbins). See interviews with Kevin Bacon and Tim Robbins, page 28.

## GOOD BOY!

**VOICES:** Matthew Broderick, Megan Mullally  
**WHO DIRECTED?** John Hoffman (debut)  
**WHAT'S IT ABOUT?** In this kids film, dogs are portrayed as alien spies who were sent to Earth to prepare for an invasion, but liked it here, so never went back.

## KILL BILL: VOLUME ONE

**WHO'S IN IT?** Uma Thurman, Lucy Liu  
**WHO DIRECTED?** Quentin Tarantino (*Jackie Brown*)  
**WHAT'S IT ABOUT?** This first half of Tarantino's homage to kung fu flicks, samurai films and spaghetti westerns finds an assassin (Thurman) gunned down at her wedding by her boss (David Carradine). She awakes after a five-year coma itching to get even. See Uma Thurman interview, page 34.

## INTOLERABLE CRUELTY

**WHO'S IN IT?** George Clooney, Catherine Zeta-Jones  
**WHO DIRECTED?** Joel Coen (*Fargo*)  
**WHAT'S ABOUT?** Clooney is a nasty divorce

## OUT OF TIME

**WHO'S IN IT?** Denzel Washington, Eva Mendes  
**WHO DIRECTED?** Carl Franklin (*One True Thing*)  
**WHAT'S IT ABOUT?** Washington stars as a Florida police sheriff who steals a pile of dough from the evidence locker to help his ailing ladylove. But, alas, she bites the dust and Denzel realizes he's in a whack of trouble.

HITS THEATRES OCTOBER 3

lawyer who frames the wife (Zeta-Jones) of a client so she receives no settlement. But her plan to get even by marrying, then divorcing, him backfires when they fall in love. See George Clooney interview, page 24.

OCTOBER 17

## VERONICA GUERIN

**WHO'S IN IT?** Cate Blanchett, Colin Farrell  
**WHO DIRECTED?** Joel Schumacher (*8MM*)  
**WHAT'S IT ABOUT?** Based on a true story, this drama recounts the life of Irish journalist Veronica Guerin (Blanchett), who was murdered after writing articles about Dublin's underground drug scene.

## TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

**WHO'S IN IT?** Jessica Biel, Eric Balfour  
**WHO DIRECTED?** Marcus Nispel (debut)  
**WHAT'S IT ABOUT?** This blood-soaked remake of the 1974 horror classic finds a group of teens set upon by the cannibalistic, chainsaw-wielding psycho, Leatherface.

## RUNAWAY JURY

**WHO'S IN IT?** John Cusack, Rachel Weisz  
**WHO DIRECTED?** Gary Fleder (*Impostor*)  
**WHAT'S IT ABOUT?** The latest adaptation of a John Grisham novel focuses on a jury deciding a case against a gun manufacturer, and the mysterious member (Cusack) who tries to sway their vote.

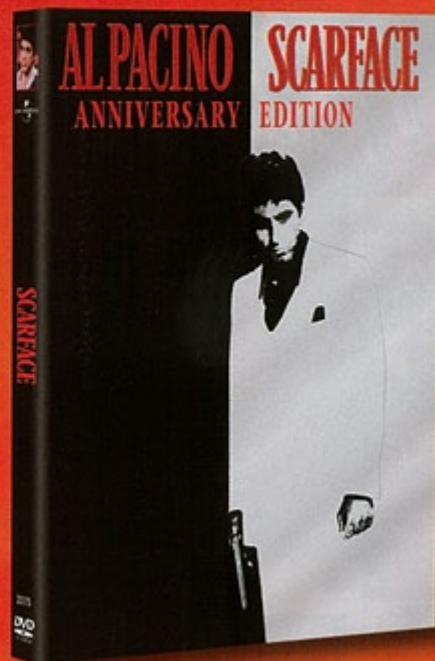
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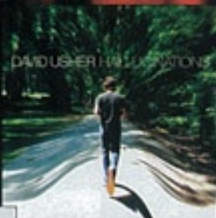


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# what's on the Famous Players Radio?



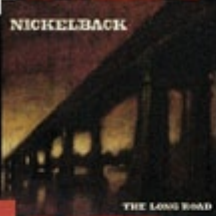
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### PIECES OF APRIL

**WHO'S IN IT?** Katie Holmes, Derek Luke  
**WHO DIRECTED?** Peter Hedges (debut)  
**WHAT'S IT ABOUT?** It's Thanksgiving hell for April (Holmes) when she hosts her first holiday dinner for her estranged parents and boyfriend in her tiny New York City apartment.

HITS THEATRES OCTOBER 17

### OCTOBER 24

#### BEYOND BORDERS

**WHO'S IN IT?** Angelina Jolie, Clive Owen  
**WHO DIRECTED?** Martin Campbell  
(*Goldeneye*)  
**WHAT'S IT ABOUT?** A wealthy socialite (Jolie) follows her lover (Owen), a disaster relief worker, around the world as he helps save lives.

#### SCARY MOVIE 3: LORD OF THE BROOMS

**WHO'S IN IT?** Anna Faris, Charlie Sheen  
**WHO DIRECTED?** David Zucker (*My Boss's Daughter*)  
**WHAT'S IT ABOUT?** *The Ring*, *Harry Potter*, *LotR* and *The Matrix Reloaded* all get spoofed in the latest *Scary Movie* entry.

#### IN THE CUT

**WHO'S IN IT?** Meg Ryan, Mark Ruffalo  
**WHO DIRECTED?** Jane Campion (*The Piano*)  
**WHAT'S IT ABOUT?** Meg Ryan sheds her girl-next-door image to play a creative writing teacher who reacts to the grisly murder of neighbouring women by seeking out dangerous and kinky sexual encounters. Nicole Kidman bought the rights to Susanna Moore's novel, but pulled out to spend more time with her kids.

### OCTOBER 31

#### ALIEN: THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

**WHO'S IN IT?** Sigourney Weaver, John Hurt  
**WHO DIRECTED?** Ridley Scott (*Gladiator*)

**WHAT'S IT ABOUT?** Finally, the definitive cut of *Alien* arrives in theatres with all its deleted scenes restored. So, on Halloween night, after you've tossed a handful of Rockets and Kisses into the kiddies' pillow cases, head to the theatre for your very own Halloween treat.



### GOTHIKA

**WHO'S IN IT?** Halle Berry, Penélope Cruz  
**WHO DIRECTED?** Mathieu Kassovitz (*Hate*)  
**WHAT'S IT ABOUT?** A criminal psychologist (Berry) wakes up in the hospital where she works to discover that not only is she accused of killing her husband, but that an evil spirit inhabits her body. Looks like the film will make its release date despite the fact that Berry broke her arm while shooting and was off work for a month.

HITS THEATRES OCTOBER 24

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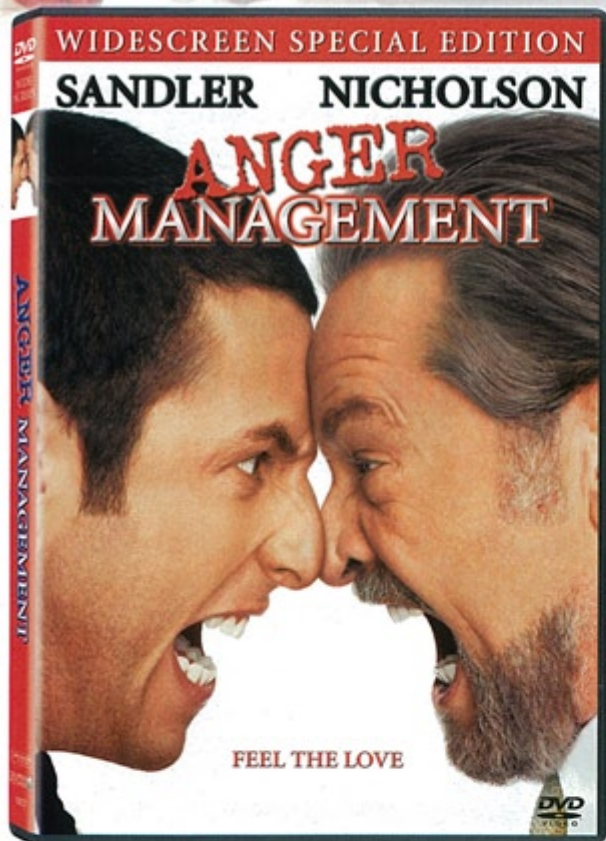


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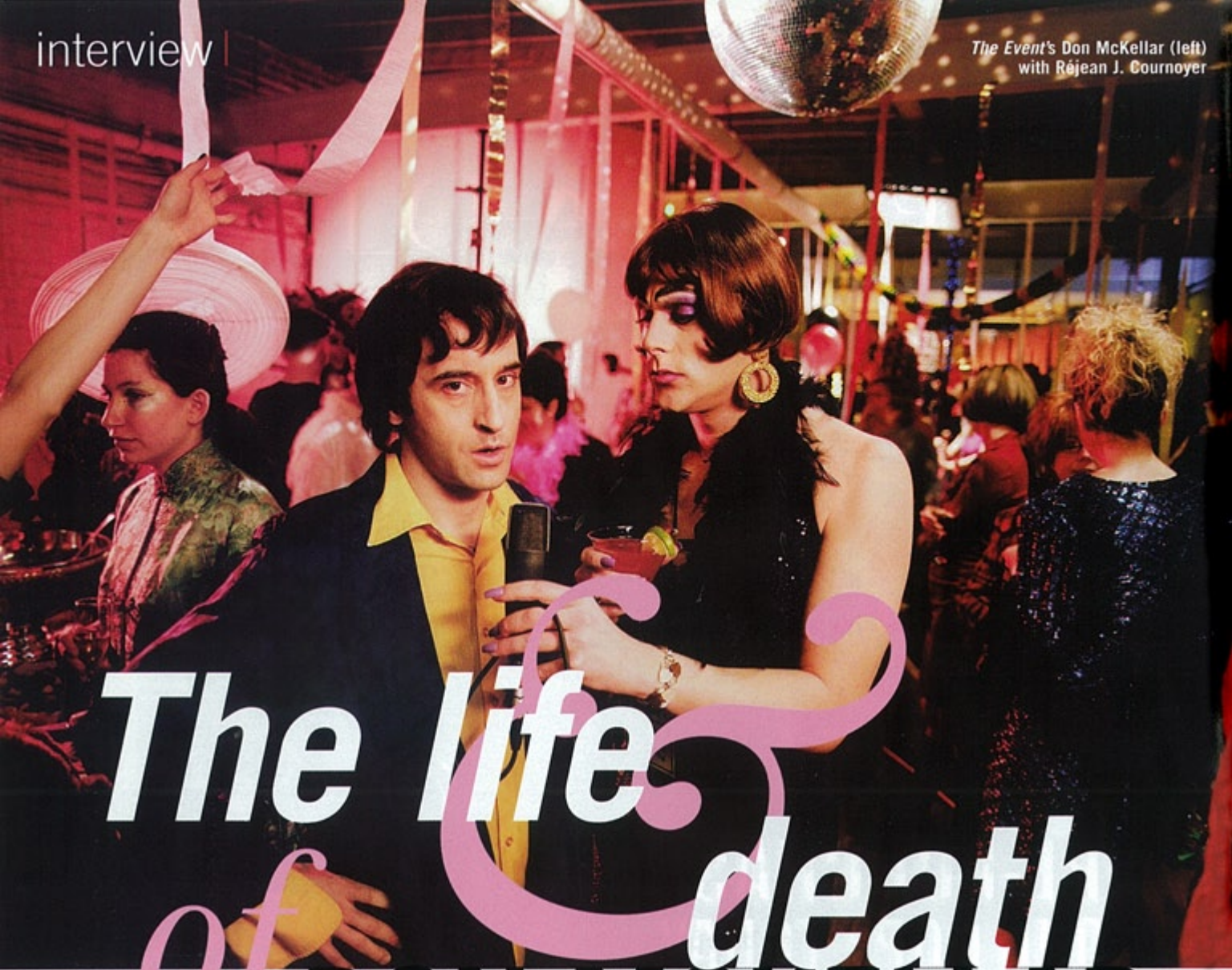


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# The life of death DON MCKELLAR

The versatile filmmaker talks about his reluctance to play an AIDS patient, turning 40 and moving into the next phase of his career — directing his most challenging project to date | BY INGRID RANDOJA

**D**on McKellar is gearing up for life's second act, but first he has to die.

The ubiquitous Canadian filmmaker — who moves between acting, writing and directing with ease — suffers an on-screen death in *The Event*, an ensemble drama that was directed by Thom Fitzgerald (*The Hanging Garden*) and co-stars Parker Posey, Olympia Dukakis, Sarah Polley and Brent Carver.

McKellar plays Matt, a gay, New York

musician living with AIDS. When Matt's condition starts to worsen, he decides to die on his own terms and arranges a party — an event — at which he'll commit suicide. The film is told in a series of flashbacks as an Assistant District Attorney (Posey), who's been sent to investigate Matt's suspicious death, interviews his friends and family.

It's a surprisingly moving film, one that sneaks up on you, so by the time Matt makes his exit, surrounded by his loving

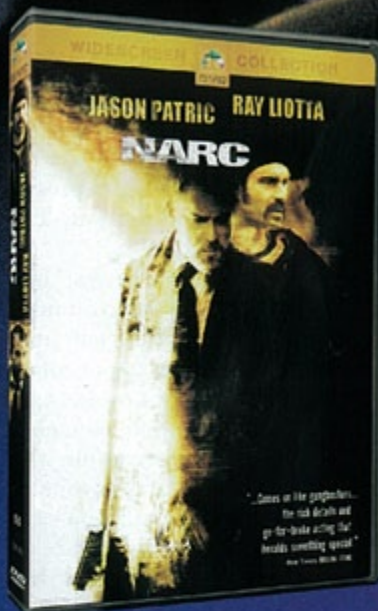
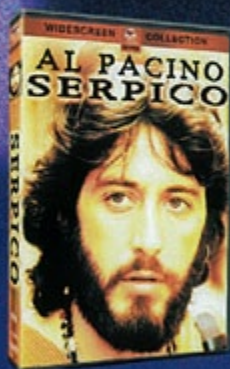
clan, you find yourself in tears. It's also a film that reminds us AIDS is still, mercilessly, taking its toll on men and women.

The role is a departure for McKellar, whose paranoid on-screen persona usually elicits laughs, not tears. From *Roadkill*'s serial killer, to *Twitch City*'s TV-addicted antihero, to *waydowntown*'s office loser, McKellar often plays characters who allow traces of their fantasy lives to bubble up to the surface.

"This is a part I would naturally resist," says McKellar. "The first thing I said to Thom [Fitzgerald] is 'I don't know, this terrifies me.' I've known people who have died, like everyone has, and there's a certain responsibility you have to them.

"And when I did it, I realized I was right to be scared. Thinking about

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McKellar and his on-screen mom  
Olympia Dukakis



▶▶ death all the time, well, it was a strangely emotional shoot. I was kind of a wreck some days, mostly dealing with Olympia [who plays McKellar's mom]. She is so present, so right there, and you get this instant emotional connection with her."

McKellar chats over lunch at a restaurant in Toronto's Portuguese neighbourhood. He has changed very little since we first met in 1991, when he was promoting *Highway 61*. He still looks and dresses like a university student. He still speaks in a deliberate manner, weighing each word, making sure he doesn't reveal too much. Francois Girard, who directed the McKellar-penned *The Red Violin*, has called McKellar "the slowest writer I've ever known," but Girard also said that pace produces "tremendous economy and an immense quality of writing."

You soon realize that although McKellar can come across as guarded and cautious, he's also very down-to-earth and accessible.

And he's a Torontonian through and through, having bought a house in this working-class Portuguese 'hood, not too far from his previous, and much loved, Kensington Market digs. His wry TV series *Twitch City* was set in Kensington's dingy, but hip, streets and alleyways.

But the Market wasn't a place conducive to house buying, which is something you do when you hit a certain age. It may surprise you to know that McKellar turned 40 in August. How does he feel about hitting the big four-o? "I'd really rather not talk about it, next question," he says in a serious tone, then starts to laugh.

"I've heard people say  
AIDS is passé, and that's  
a horrible thing to say.  
People are still dying"

"I don't know, I haven't really dealt with it. I think about aging, but it's funny, in the Canadian film industry you become an old veteran after your first film. I remember thinking that after *Roadkill*. It was in the [Toronto International Film] Festival, it won an award, I was nominated for a Genie. That was about as far as you could go on a certain level. It's depressing, but it's also liberating in a way, 'cause any new territory is gravy.

"It's different in America," he continues. "I think at this age you might have a crisis. But I put myself in circumstances where it's not about competition, because that's what I prefer. Of course, there is a competitive element all the time, but the Canadian film industry is pretty supportive, and anyone's success is good for you. And you should be smart enough to know that."

McKellar began in theatre, writing and performing first in high school, then university (University of Toronto), and then with his own company. He made the move into movies when he hooked up with director Bruce McDonald, and their creative see-saw partnership has seen McKellar either act in, or write, McDonald-directed

projects such as *Roadkill*, *Highway 61* and *Dance Me Outside*, while McDonald has directed *Twitch City* episodes.

It was just a matter of time until McKellar got behind the camera himself. The result was his assured first film, *Last Night*, in which he documented, in his low-key and heartbreakingly amusing way, how a few Torontonians spend their final hours before the end of the world.

He's only directed the one film, but has two more in the queue. This month he begins shooting *Child Star*, which McKellar explains "is about an American child star who comes up to Canada and goes on a lost weekend."

He wrote *Child Star* while waiting for his most ambitious project to-date to come together, an adaptation of José Saramago's Nobel Prize-winning novel *Blindness*, about a city that's devastated by an epidemic spread of blindness.

McKellar travelled to Saramago's remote home in the Canary Islands to ask the 80-year-old author if he could adapt the book.

"The island he lives on, Lanzarote, is this bizarrely beautiful volcanic island — all stone, very little vegetation — and his house is on top of this extinct volcano," describes McKellar. "There are no trees around, except for one olive tree that he's growing in his yard, in the courtyard he designed, beside the house he built. His house looks out over the sea. It's exactly as you would imagine. What a great, poetic place to live."

And wouldn't you know, the soft-spoken Canadian beat out hordes of Hollywood production companies for the rights. The script is finally complete, and the day after our interview McKellar will fly to Madrid to show Saramago the final version, then it's off to London to raise some much-needed cash.

Working on a tight budget is second nature to McKellar, and films like *The Event* represent a labour of love for everyone involved. In many ways *The Event* is a throwback film, a movie about AIDS in an age where AIDS has all but disappeared from the headlines.

"When you read [the script] you think, 'Is this even relevant anymore,'" says McKellar. "And it is. It's bizarre, I've heard people saying AIDS is passé, and that's a horrible thing to say. People are still dying. When I was in New York I went to hospices and met people in the same situation as my character. The cocktails don't work indefinitely for everyone." **F**

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# COURT OF *appeal*

In spite of his astonishing good looks George Clooney has retained the respect of moviegoers by balancing boffo box office with quirky art-house pics. How will his popularity be affected by the role he calls “one of the scariest” he’s ever played — a nasty lawyer in the Coen Brothers’ romantic comedy *Intolerable Cruelty*? **BY BARRETT HOOPER**

A common question journalists ask of actors is how much they are like the characters they play on screen. George Clooney, for example, seems very much like the roles he’s played in such films as *Out of Sight* and *Ocean’s 11*. Indeed, the 42-year-old actor — and Hollywood’s most eligible bachelor — seems to have cultivated his devil-may-care persona with the same care he’s taken in choosing movie projects, tinged both with just the right amount of Cary Grant insouciance.

But in the case of the slick L.A. divorce lawyer he plays in his latest movie, the dark comedy *Intolerable Cruelty*, the lines between actor and role are more clearly drawn. About the only things Clooney has in common with his

character are an aversion to marriage and an ability to seduce Catherine Zeta-Jones. “George is amazing, so sweet and generous and talented and funny,” gushed a very pregnant Zeta-Jones during an interview last winter to promote *Chicago*.

In *Intolerable Cruelty*, Clooney plays Miles Massey, a too-good-for-his-own-good attorney whose latest client is a philandering fuddy-duddy named Rex Rexroth (Edward Hermann). When Massey manages to keep Mrs. Rexroth (Zeta-Jones) from getting her claws into her soon-to-be-ex-husband’s very deep pockets, she sets out to exact a little revenge, but ends up falling in love with him.

Of course, this being a film by the Coen Brothers — the art-house auteurs

who made dead bodies and a wood chipper funny in *Fargo* — *Intolerable Cruelty* is certain to defy the usual conventions of the genre.

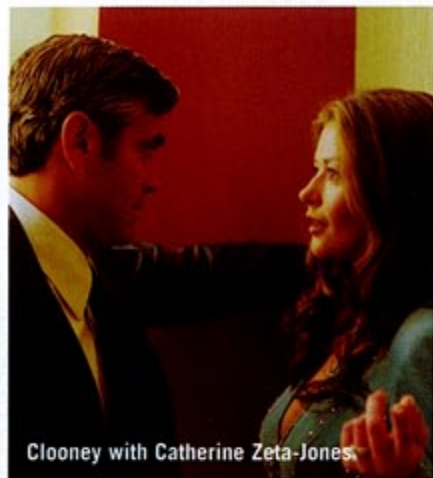
“This is not your typical romantic comedy,” admits Clooney. “It’s about sex and greed and all kinds of nastiness. It’s not *One Fine Day*,” he says in reference to his own storybook — and by-the-book — movie with Michelle Pfeiffer from seven years back.

And his Miles Massey is not your typical bottom-feeding ambulance chaser. “To say he’s not a very nice person would be putting it mildly,” says Clooney, who first teamed with Joel and Ethan Coen on the bluegrass jail break movie *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* three years ago. Playing Massey is one of the “scariest performances I’ve ever given,”





"THIS IS NOT YOUR  
TYPICAL ROMANTIC  
COMEDY. IT'S ABOUT  
SEX AND GREED AND ALL  
KINDS OF NASTINESS.  
IT'S NOT *ONE FINE DAY*,"  
SAYS CLOONEY



Clooney with Catherine Zeta-Jones

he continues.

As the 42-year-old actor chats comfortably in a New York hotel room, it's hard not to marvel at the metamorphosis his career has gone through — because for a long time, and not so long ago, it seemed the best Clooney could hope for was to be known for playing a doctor on TV. Now, he is perhaps the most envied actor in Hollywood, with both critical and commercial success and artistic credibility, thanks to such risky films as *Out of Sight*, *O Brother and Three Kings*.

Clooney credits how well he's handled his success to the example of his late aunt, singer Rosemary Clooney, with whom he lived when he first moved from Cincinnati to L.A. to be an actor. And, he says, his advanced age also makes a difference. "It helped that I was

33 before I started to make it," he says. "I can't explain to you enough what an advantage it is to have been in so many failed things."

Given his current popularity, it's easy to forget just how forgettable Clooney's early career is. He made his acting debut in an episode of the detective series *Riptide* in 1984, and appeared in more than a dozen pilots that never made it to air. Those that did, including *Baby Talk*, *Bodies of Evidence*, *Sunset Beat* and a hospital-based sitcom called, coincidentally, *E/R*, didn't last. He had recurring roles on *The Facts of Life*, *Roseanne* and *Sisters*, but failed to stick.

"I thought I was really brilliant when I was on *Facts of Life*," he says, only half-joking. "I was so horribly overconfident and under-talented. If things had hit for me then, I'd have been in big trouble. It would have gone straight to my head and I'd have been saying, 'Oh, I'm a genius.'"

Then came *ER*, one of the most successful dramas in television history and a catapult to a movie career. While he'd made a few movies before *ER* — "*Combat High* was pretty good," he says, "and *Return of the Killer Tomatoes!* is a classic" — Clooney was suddenly getting offers for major Hollywood productions. "The hardest part for me was to come out of this really popular TV show because I knew the films I was going to make while I was doing that show weren't going to be popular — if they can watch you for nothing on Thursday nights, why would they pay," he asks.

His first starring role was fighting vampires with Quentin Tarantino in the under-performing splatterfest *From Dusk Till Dawn*. Likewise, his attempt at being an action star, *The Peacemaker*, was a dud. Then came *Batman & Robin*.

While the movie was a mess, even by comic book standards — "I pretty much killed the franchise," Clooney says — we have the Caped Crusader to thank for the risks he's taken since. "I'm in a position right now where I can live off the interest [from his *Batman & Robin* earnings] for the rest of my life," he says. "If you're going to survive at all, you want to do films that will last longer than opening weekend. So then it comes down to 'What is your legacy going to be?' You want to be able to say you made a couple of good movies."

And if he hadn't done *Batman & Robin*, Clooney says, "I wouldn't have got *Out of Sight*."

Based on the novel by Elmore Leonard (*Get Shorty*) and directed by Steven Soderbergh (*Traffic*), 1998's *Out of Sight* cast Clooney as a cool but fallible bank robber who kidnaps and then romances a trigger-happy federal marshal played by Jennifer Lopez. The film was a hit with critics, who praised Clooney's performance as the debonair con, and doors started to open.

He followed up not with another above-the-title performance, but with a cameo appearance in the poetic World War II epic *The Thin Red Line* for reclusive director Terrence Malick (*Badlands*).

Then Clooney turned up in David O. Russell's *Three Kings*, a daring film about the Gulf War that proved both a critical and commercial hit and prompted his departure from *ER*. "It's been such a weird road, you know. I was 33 when I did *ER*. I'd done eight television series before that. I'd been around. I just got lucky. I mean, you create your own luck, obviously, by being available and by working hard."

By the time Clooney made *The Perfect* ►►



►► *Storm* in 2000, even the scruffy beard and ballcap he wore as the captain of a doomed fishing boat couldn't hide the fact that he was a star. And the the Rat Pack remake *Ocean's 11*, with Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt and Matt Damon was his coronation.

But, in the past year, he has offset the surefire hit of that all-star crime caper with a pair of smaller, riskier films. The first was the philosophical sci-fi film *Solaris* with pal Soderbergh and producer James Cameron, in which he played a psychologist who is haunted by his wife's suicide. "It should have been called *Uranus*," he jokes, referring to his brief, backside nude scene in the film.

The second risk was *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind*, based on the autobiography of *Gong Show* host and could-be CIA assassin Chuck Barris, which marked Clooney's directorial debut.

"You only have one window of opportunity where you get to be creative and you have to seize it," he says. "I feel like I have to do that just now. Just for once, I'm in a position to force a studio to do what I want. If a picture looks like it isn't getting made, I can make them make it. But that might not last very long."

In a nifty bit of Hollywood muscle flexing, Clooney has joined with Soderbergh to form a production company, Session Eight.

"We're the Martin and Lewis of Hollywood," Clooney says. And it's more than just a star vanity project, as Session Eight's roster has included *Solaris*, *Confessions* and Todd Haynes' *Far From Heaven*. "We have gotten to a place right now where we are having fun. We are getting to play with the toys in the toy box," Clooney continues. "We're pushing the envelope and getting things made within the structure of the studio system."

It's all part of Clooney's plan to take advantage of his fame while it lasts. "You learn [that your level of fame] has very little to do with you," he says. "The truth is, I'll probably end up on *Hollywood Squares* no matter what I do." **F**

Barrett Hooper writes about movies for the National Post.

# coming soon

## ELF >> NOVEMBER

Stars: Will Ferrell, James Caan

Director: Jon Favreau (*Made*)

Story: Shot in and around Vancouver last winter for that authentic North Pole feel, this quirky Christmas pic revolves around Buddy the Elf (Ferrell) who, despite a height of six-feet-plus, has no clue that his pedigree is human. Seems little Buddy got mixed up in a sack of presents one Christmas and was carried off to Santa's Village where he was raised as an elf. But now a gawky adult, Buddy is sent to the big city to find his real pa (Caan). So is this a kids' movie? You've got us. Ferrell can go either way — sweet or crude. Best clue is probably that it was written and directed by Favreau, whose previous credits include the gritty-but-charming breakup flick *Swingers* and the gritty-but-charming punk-hood comedy *Made*.

## DR. SEUSS' CAT IN THE HAT >> NOVEMBER

Stars: Mike Myers, Dakota Fanning

Director: Bo Welch (debut)

Story: Originally it was Tim Allen who was supposed to get all painted up to resemble the famous furry feline who likes to wear chapeaus. But the star of the *Santa Clause* pics didn't want to be typecast as prosthetics-laden icons from children's movies, so dropped out. Myers takes over in this adaptation of the Seuss classic about the trouble that ensues when Mr. Cat drops in on a couple of bored kids one rainy day. Expect sales of spongy, pastel-coloured furniture to skyrocket if this movie is any sort of hit.

## THE LAST SAMURAI >> DECEMBER

Stars: Tom Cruise, Ken Watanabe

Director: Edward Zwick (*Legends of the Fall*)

Story: Call it the samurai *Dances with Wolves*, with Cruise playing Costner's part of an American Civil War vet who comes to appreciate the foreign culture which he first sought to destroy. This time our hero, Captain Woodrow Algren, broken and disillusioned after the war, sets off to Japan as a Winchester guns salesman. He's there to train the emperor's troops on how to use his guns to, among other things, kill samurai warriors. But when he's captured by the samurai and learns of their impressive code of honour, he has a change of heart.

## THE LORD OF THE RINGS:

### THE RETURN OF THE KING >> DECEMBER

Stars: Elijah Wood, Viggo Mortensen

Director: Peter Jackson (*LoTR: The Two Towers*)

Story: Sure, we know how it ends...but if you haven't already plodded your way through Tolkien we're not going to give it away. Officially, precious little has been revealed about this third and final film, and since it was shot at the same time as the first two, keeping things quiet was quite a feat. Suffice to say that all the storylines come together and there are at least a couple of battles that will shock and awe. Plus, there's lots more of that pasty little Gollum who stole our hearts in *The Two Towers*.

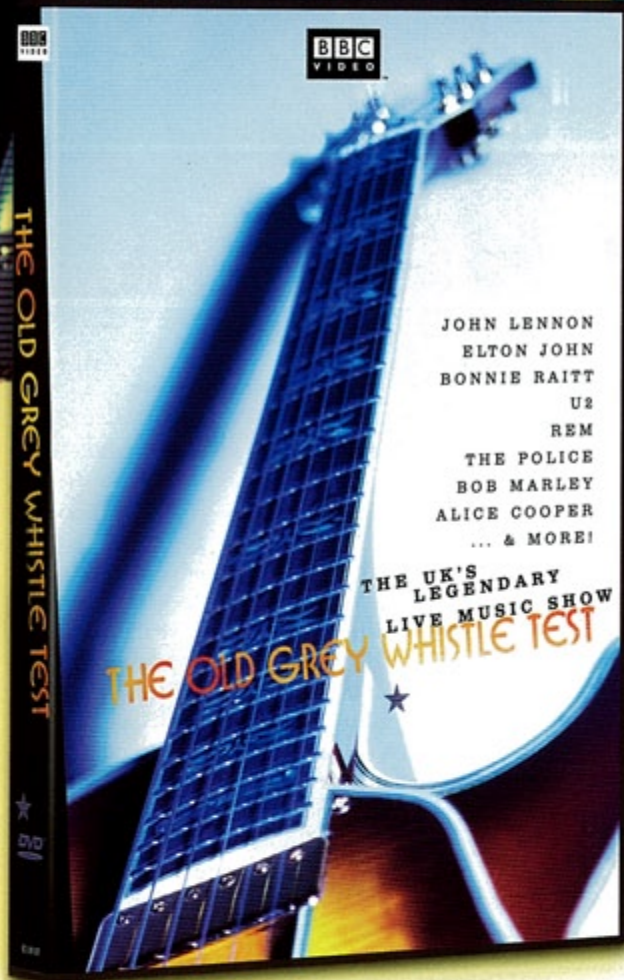
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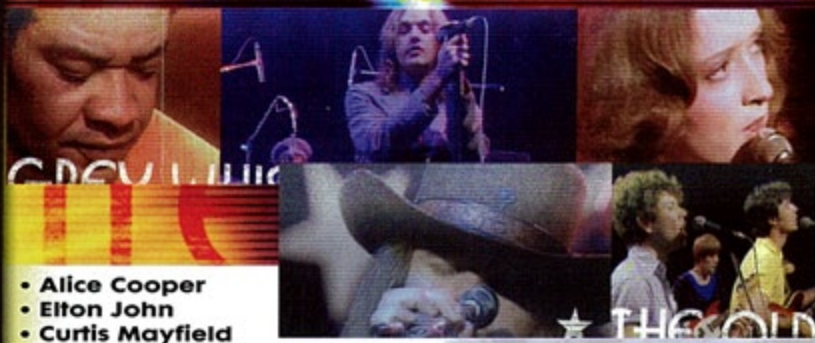
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From left: Kevin Bacon, Laurence Fishburne and Tim Robbins in *Mystic River*



# Navigating dangerous waters

| BY RON DICKER

In *Mystic River*, Tim Robbins and Kevin Bacon tackle the disturbing repercussions of child abuse. But with veteran director Clint Eastwood at the helm, they were willing to take the risk

**T**im Robbins and Kevin Bacon are veteran actors who have also directed. It takes a legend to earn their reverence.

So when they got the chance to work with director Clint Eastwood in his latest film, *Mystic River*, about the shockwaves of childhood trauma, they jumped at it like 22-year-olds just out of drama school.

Bacon says he was star-struck when he first heard Eastwood's voice on his answering machine. It was only after he arrived on the set and got into the daily routine of filming that he was finally able to separate Eastwood the boss

from Eastwood the idol.

As for Robbins, he admits his admiration for Eastwood runs so deep that he would have taken the role even if he thought *Mystic River* was going to be a mediocre project. "I think Sean Penn put it best," says Robbins, "Clint is the least disappointing icon he's ever met. There's a humility to him and an integrity that we can all learn from."

Not that *Mystic River* is mediocre, given its enthusiastic reception at this year's Cannes Film Festival. Written by Brian Helgeland (*A Knight's Tale*), based on Dennis Lehane's book, *Mystic River* revolves around three childhood friends

— Jimmy (Penn), the neighborhood thug; Sean (Bacon), a cop; and Dave (Robbins), a damaged ne'er-do-well — who were all affected by the kidnapping of Dave when they were 10 years old.

The trio is reunited as adults when Jimmy's daughter is murdered, and signs point to Dave as the possible killer. It's Sean's job to investigate the crime and sift through the rubble of their buried past.

Bacon and Robbins were in a good mood following the premiere in Cannes. And who wouldn't be? The film earned positive reviews and Eastwood, already a French favourite, had worked his leathery charm on the Croisette the day before. Now Bacon and Robbins were having lunch at Du Cap, a \$1,700-a-night (cash only, please) hotel overlooking the Mediterranean.

Robbins has made large-scale dramatic films before. He directed himself in the political satire *Bob Roberts*, steered his

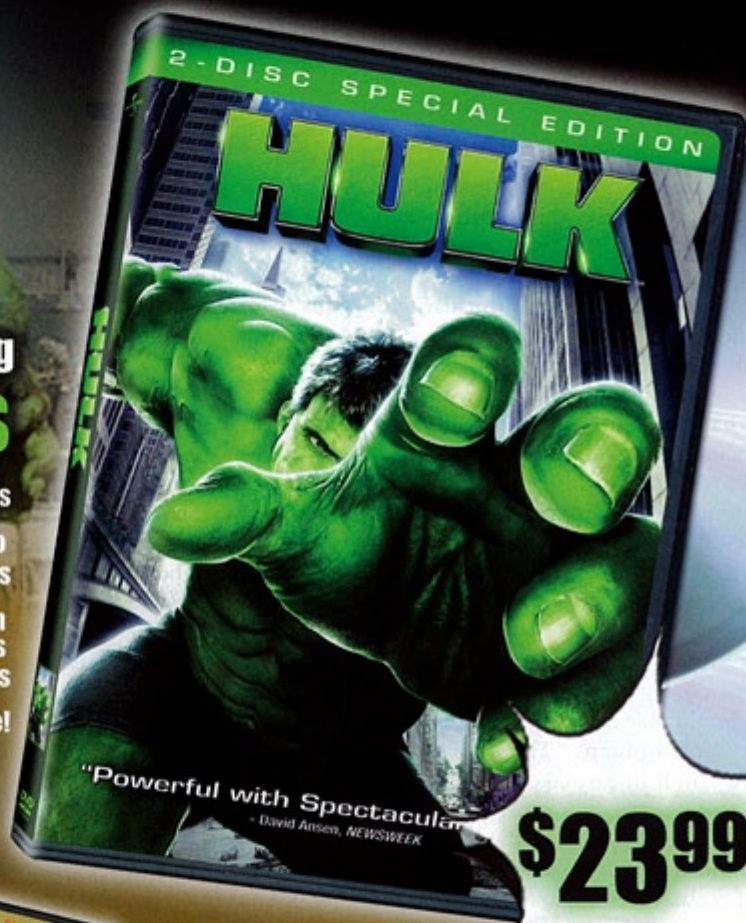
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From left: Sean Penn, Tim Robbins and Clint Eastwood on set <

wife, Susan Sarandon, to a Best Actress Academy Award in the death-penalty drama *Dead Man Walking* and reined in an ensemble cast for the politically charged, depression-era musical *Cradle Will Rock*.

But he found himself acting like an eager apprentice under Eastwood, who is perhaps best known for playing lean, mean men in a series of westerns and the *Dirty Harry* movies.

Behind the camera, however, Robbins says Eastwood is lean without being mean, commanding a streamlined set. The working-out of scenes is done on the actors' time and he expects a minimum of takes to get from "Action!" to "Print!"

"I would like to aspire to that efficiency," says Robbins. "The revelation is, you can do it in two takes, that you can have that discipline. It's incredibly liberating. These are pretty dark places to go to emotionally with these characters, with my character in particular. To know that you're going to do it twice means you can really go there emotionally."

Bacon, who directed his wife Kyrá Sedgwick in the 1996 summer drama *Losing Chase*, claims the tutorial he received from Eastwood came mostly "by osmosis."

"Clint is so good at playing guys that have a secret or a certain sadness or weight to their heart that you don't actually see," he says. "My character is a very held-back guy who is very much alone with his demons. I play a lot of demonstrative characters, and to trust that I'm still going to have some kind of a presence in the film, without what I'd classify as the 'big scene,' was a challenge."

Robbins' character generates perhaps the most pathos of any he's ever played.

The New York City native got his big break as a sex-starved pitcher in the comedy *Bull Durham*, then graduated to playing evil cynics whose actions belied his sweet, boyish appearance — like the anything-for-a-hit studio exec in *The Player* and the Oklahoma City-style bomber in *Arlington Road*.

But in *Mystic River* he plays a man who is little more than a walking scar. The movie begins with an excruciating scene in which a younger Dave is playing street hockey with Sean and Jimmy in their Boston neighborhood, when they are approached by a man pretending to be a cop. The result is every child's nightmare. Dave eventually escapes his ordeal, but the trauma stalks him and his friends into adulthood.

"I think that if you have the kind of parents that, when something like this happens and they think that if you don't talk about it, it will go away, then it will never go away," explains Robbins. "I don't think Dave is from a particularly involved parental background."

Since filming *Mystic River*, Robbins

has kept busy writing a screenplay (but won't reveal the contents until it's finished) and performing. He played a fireman who eulogizes his fallen colleagues after the September 11th attacks in a Los Angeles theatre production of *The Guys*. And he recently wrapped the movie *Code 46*, a futuristic love story with Samantha Morton.

Of course, he wouldn't be Tim Robbins without engaging in the occasional political scrape. Last April, The Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y., disinvited him and Sarandon from a ceremony honouring the 15th anniversary of *Bull Durham* because of the couple's opposition to the United States' invasion of Iraq. The Hall of Fame feared Robbins would use the celebration as a platform to criticize the war. Robbins, a baseball fan, said he was just looking forward to a fun weekend with his family.

"I think a lot of people in Major League Baseball were embarrassed by this," he says. "And I think a lot of people at the Hall of Fame were embarrassed by it too."

For the record, Robbins states, "I'm morally opposed to war as a way to solve problems and I think it just creates more problems. I still feel that way."

The ripple effects of physical violence were also top-of-mind for Bacon while shooting *Mystic River*. Child abuse is an especially horrific crime, and the father of two kids believes it's a tragedy that effects people in different ways. "There are people in my life who have suffered unbelievable tragedies in their childhoods who are healthy, happy, decent people and good parents," he says. "But *Mystic River* is the story of these guys." **F**



> Kevin Bacon (left) and Sean Penn in *Mystic River*

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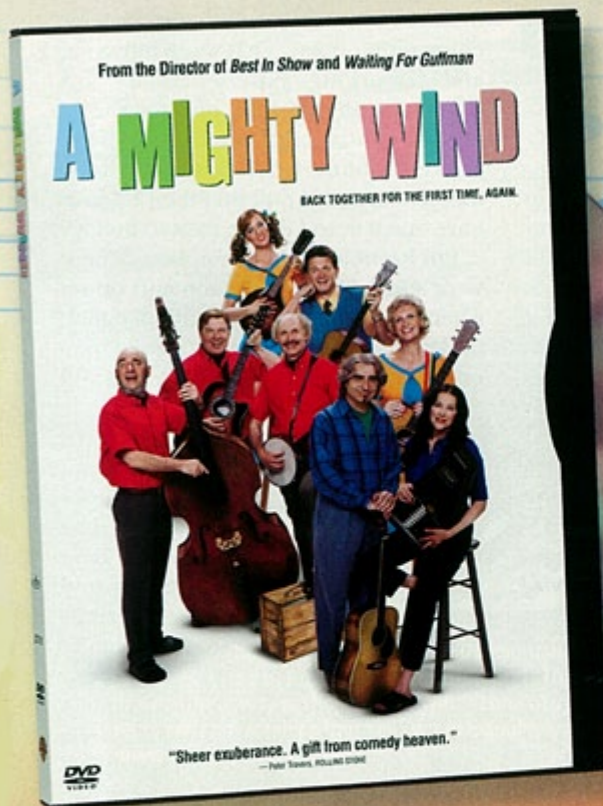
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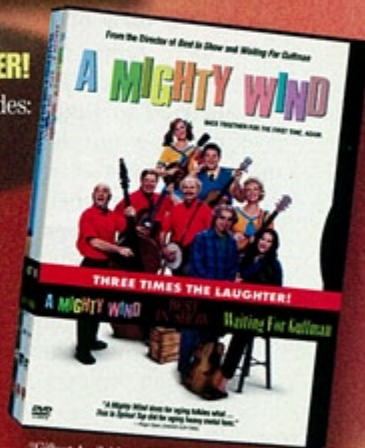


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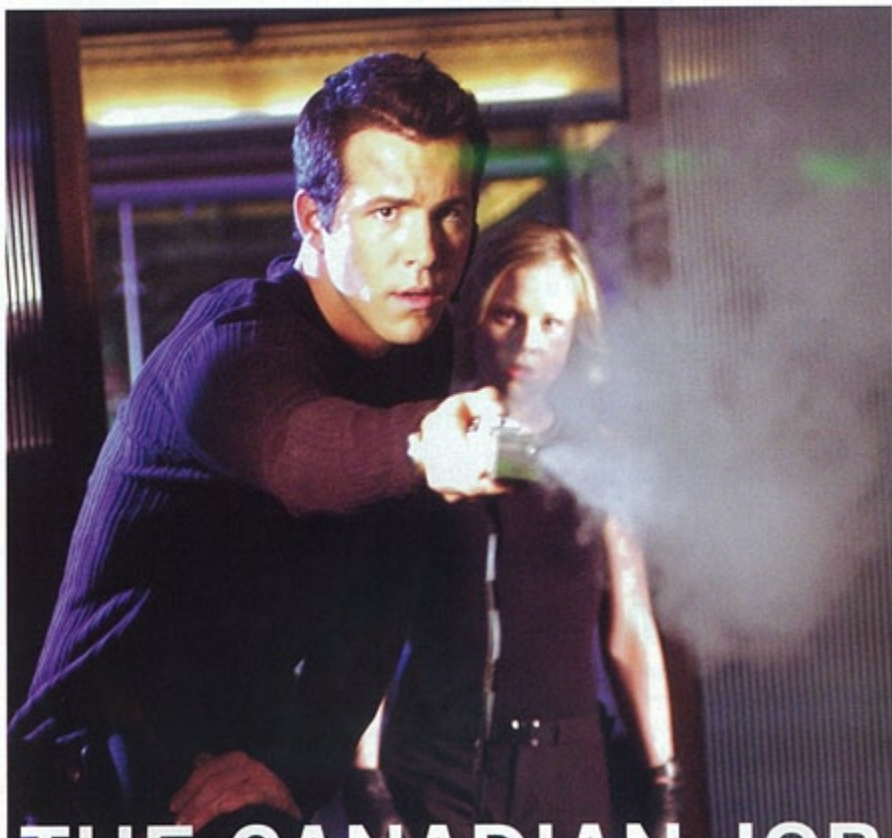


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## THE CANADIAN JOB

RYAN REYNOLDS EXPLAINS WHY THE HOMEGROWN HEIST FLICK *FOOLPROOF* CAN'T FAIL | BY MARNI WEISZ

In the '80s it was Vietnam films (*Platoon*, *Full Metal Jacket*, *Casualties of War*). In the '90s it was natural disaster pics (*Twister*, *Volcano*, *Deep Impact*). Each decade yields at least one big trend, and the one we're in right now is all about the heist.

Since the turn of the millennium, *Snatch*, *Sexy Beast*, *Ocean's 11*, *Heist*, *Welcome to Collinwood* and *The Italian Job* have all tried to find unique ways to make carrying out that unbelievable hold-up, believable. And now it's Canada's turn, with the Alliance Atlantis-created, Toronto-filmed, Atom Egoyan-produced, government-funded *Foolproof* — starring a very Canadian leading man in B.C. native Ryan Reynolds.

"I think it's the concept of treasure. People love a treasure hunt," muses Reynolds. "Whether they're stealing from a company or a bank, or looking for it in the ocean somewhere, people are just a little bit obsessed with the thought of finding something shiny."

Reynolds is at home in the Vancouver suburb of Kitsilano preparing for his

next film, *Blade III*, which will shoot in Vancouver with him as vampire hunter Hannibal King. If it's a success, his character might even get a spin-off.

The 26-year-old star of *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* (2002) and last May's remake *The In-Laws* ("which had a box-office gross of \$16 because my parents went to see it," Reynolds jokes) grew up in Kitsilano and now owns a house there, in addition to one he bought in L.A. when he got his Fox TV series, *Two Guys and a Girl*, six years ago.

Shot in Toronto last winter, *Foolproof* follows three friends (Reynolds, Kristin Booth and Joris Jarky), who spend most of their free time writing a computer program. "It's an academic exercise to see what security systems they can [hypothetically] hack at different companies," explains Reynolds.

They're forced to get into the heist-biz for real, though, when a British gangster (David Suchet) blackmails them into putting one of their most ambitious plans into action. Although it sounds like a slick American-style action flick,

Reynolds insists it will appeal to the "highbrow artistic tastes of Canadians."

How so? "Well, there's a deep psychological aspect. My character is dealing with a notion of hubris, he's taking his friends down this path and is faced with the possibility of sinking them along with him, but his pride is getting in the way. He wants to see if he can actually pull off a heist in which he steals \$50-million and no one ever knows he was there."

Toronto's CIBC Commerce Court stood in as the exterior of the burgled building, but the interiors were filmed on a soundstage to accommodate the stunts, including some in which the characters rappel down an elevator shaft.

And, while shooting such scenes is nerve-racking for any actor, Reynolds had extra permission to be tense when director William Phillips (*Treed Murray*) told him to strap on a harness and jump 30 feet into a black cavern. A few years back, Reynolds almost didn't return from a day of skydiving after his parachute didn't open.

"It definitely was scary and I had pangs, nostalgic and otherwise, of that moment when I jumped out and my chute didn't open. That was a terrifying and harrowing experience, for my friends on the ground, and for me in the air. [In the end] the backup chute worked wonderfully, but my idiotic mentality said if I pull that then I'll only have one left, so I didn't want to pull it."

But Reynolds didn't complain. "There were a lot of very tense moments on set when you have someone that's dangling up in the air and the their tonsils have been replaced by their testicles. It's not exactly a comfortable feeling."

What is comfortable is his current relationship with someone else who knows what it's like to be a cross-border star — Alanis Morissette. He says the fact that they're both Canadian doesn't have much to do with why their relationship has worked so far. "I mean, we certainly love the fact that we share a similar culture. [But] we met as organically as two people who live in Los Angeles could. We shared a mutual friend, so she came down to a show of mine when I was doing *Two Guys and a Girl*."

And when asked when he's happiest, he mulls the question, "I am happiest when I am...God, when am I happiest?" After a short pause his demeanor lightens and he says simply, "I'm happiest when I'm with my girl." **F**



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# PAYING *for* BILL

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JUST SOME OF THE WAYS  
**UMA THURMAN** PAID TO STAR  
IN QUENTIN TARANTINO'S  
LONG-AWAITED *KILL BILL*

| BY EARL DITTMAN

**I**t might be a first.

Where movie taglines are usually vague, evocative statements like *Chicago's* "If you can't be famous...be infamous," or *Total Recall's* "They stole his mind, now he wants it back," the tagline for Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill* (the director's first movie in six years) is all about his leading lady, explicitly citing her by name — "In the year 2003, Uma Thurman will kill Bill."

It's a testament to the interconnectedness of Thurman and this project. Part of the reason it's taken so long for Tarantino to produce only his fourth film, after *Reservoir Dogs*, *Pulp Fiction* (which also starred Thurman) and *Jackie Brown*, is that in 2001 Thurman became pregnant with her second child, bumping the production schedule back. She and husband Ethan Hawke now have two kids — five-year-old Maya and one-year-old Roan — but recently separated following rumours that Hawke had an affair while shooting *Taking Lives* in Montreal this past summer.

In her first film since giving birth (she lost 25 pounds in six weeks before reporting to the set) Thurman plays The Bride, a trained assassin who is betrayed on her wedding day by her boss, Bill, who orders her, and all of her wedding guests, gunned down. But she survives, and four years later wakes from a coma with only one purpose in life, to kill Bill.

Last July, it was announced that the karate genre-inspired film, which also stars Daryl Hannah, Lucy Liu and David Carradine as Bill, would be chopped into two films, so that Tarantino wouldn't have to cut too much out of his beloved, but lengthy, picture.

The 33-year-old film goddess was in New York City when Earl Dittman talked with her about the film's beginnings, pushing herself until she was rail-thin, and whether she'd ever work with Quentin Tarantino again.

**Tarantino said he decided to make *Kill Bill* after having an intense conversation with you. When did this happen and what exactly did you say to him?**

"He'd already written eight pages of it, initially, when we did *Pulp Fiction*. One day, I was just talking about a kind of character I've always wanted to play and he was talking about the type of movie he's always wanted to make. He was getting excited and coming up with all these great ideas. So, after a half-an-hour of conversation, Quentin was like, 'Yeah, and there'll be this guy and he's the one who did it. He's an agent for assassins and his name is Bill. It's going to be called *Kill Bill!*'" It was like this crazy conversation. You can have 50 of those a day with Quentin. But he wrote eight pages of it and read it to me, and then it sort of went away."

**At what point did he pick it up again?**

"Three-and-a-half-years ago I ran into him at a

party. I hadn't seen him in a long time. I asked him what he was doing. I was curious, so I asked what had happened to those pages. Did he lose them? And he said, 'No, no, I didn't. I still have them.' He found the pages and he began secretly writing a script. He was overcome with a kind of creative bug to go back to this thing. Then we started seeing a lot of each other, and he said he was going to present me with a finished script on my birthday. Of course, it wasn't ready [laughs]. But that was when the whole thing came together."

**What did you think when you read the final script and saw that you had to learn to work with knives and speak Japanese?**

"I was in suspended disbelief. It was similar to when I read *Pulp Fiction*. I would go through each page and go, 'What!' Who is this guy?' Not really knowing him, he hadn't really defined himself yet, I didn't know what to think. But reading this script, it was like, 'Yeah, sure. Well, that's cool.'"

**What was the most challenging part to film?**

"The shoot was so long, so involved and so challenging, but when I watch the movie, my favourite thing was this giant action sequence, which was bloody murder to shoot. But just to see myself get through it and to see it all put together."

**How did you prepare for all the swordplay and martial arts fighting?**

"I trained with the Master Woo-ping Yuen and his team. They did all the action in *The Matrix*. I trained with them five days a week, from nine to five, for three months. Then I would have sword lessons. There were two kinds of kung fu, and then the knife guy would talk to me about what to do with a knife. Then I would go into Japanese classes to get familiar with the language, so I could do all the dialogue. Then I'd get into the wire work — front flips, back flips, spin around, jump on someone's back, flip over and do more sword work. It would just go on like that all day."

**Was working with Quentin Tarantino different the second time around?**

"It was very interesting. In a lot of ways, it was nothing like working with him before, but that was so long ago. That project [*Pulp Fiction*] was so specific, it was all laid out. This film is so different. It's not a normal movie in that it's a selection of scenes that build to a moment. It's a very tactile film. It's sort of an experience movie in a way. So you'd go into these grey areas of what, in the script, is like four pages of rough action description, and it turns into eight weeks of an experience because it's creatively letting loose."

**Did Tarantino allow you to bring your own ideas to the story or change your dialogue?**

"It's really all Quentin's world. I was a sounding



Thurman watches as Tarantino instructs on the set of *Kill Bill*

board. He just lays on the demands, and we fight [laughs]. He wrote me a part which seemed impossible to do and asked me to do things that seemed impossible to learn. But I just put one foot in front of the other and focused on each immediate moment."

**I suppose you were ready for a long vacation after you wrapped *Kill Bill*.**

"No, I just needed a regular dose of a healthy acting job! I was so thin when I finished, it was scary. I had been cut to the bone. I went home thinking I would relax for a while, but I was too stressed out, and I had to go back to work. Interestingly, I went back to work with John Woo for the movie *Paycheck* [which comes out in December]. We went to Vancouver, but it was a very relaxing job compared to *Kill Bill*. Ben Affleck had all the heavy-lifting in the movie, and I was along for the ride."

**How do you choose your movies?**

"It pretty much depends on the directors. And that sort of started when I was younger. From a really early age, I went from Terry Gilliam [*The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*] to Stephen Frears [*Dangerous Liaisons*] to Phil Kaufman [*Henry & June*], all during my formative years of developing my acting skills.... It really left an imprint on my mind of

what it felt like to be on a set with people who were that cinematically involved. It wasn't really about me, it was about the film. It wasn't about the stars, it was about filmmaking."

**Which of your movies do most people who stop you on the street want to talk about?**

"*Batman & Robin*. I still get mothers bringing their kids to introduce them to Poison Ivy. And they scream! But that's really fun. And, of course, *Pulp Fiction* has a massive following."

**Would you do a third Tarantino movie?**

"Don't start! Who knows? I love the guy, he's a madman. He's brilliant. But, technically, I do have a third one with *Kill Bill*. Quentin made me shoot two movies in one. He certainly got his money's worth [laughs]. The second part of *Kill Bill*, is coming out next year."

**Could you kill somebody with one of those Samurai swords now?**

"I didn't keep up with the practice, but I think it definitely increased my hand/eye coordination. So, if I couldn't kill you in a sword fight, I could definitely beat you playing one of those really tough videogames [laughs]." **F**

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

## famous trivia

**1** This month's *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* is a remake of the 1974 horror classic. But which two then-unknown, future stars from Texas appeared in the cheesy 1994 sequel *The Return of the Texas Chainsaw Massacre*?

**2** *Mystic River* is the 24th film Clint Eastwood has directed. Can you name the first? (Clue: It came more than 20 years before his best-known directing effort, *Unforgiven*.)

**3** Meg Ryan stars in this month's erotic thriller *In the Cut*. With which star of TV's *ER* did Ryan have a serious romance before she married Dennis Quaid?

**4** The terrifying 1979 sci-fi *Alien* gets a re-release this month. The film's original tagline began "In space no one can hear you..." How did it end — "die," "cry," "scream" or "breathe"?

**5** Duplex star Ben Stiller's famous father played a father in a famous '90s sitcom. Name the sitcom and the character whose father he played.

## ANSWERS

1. Renee Zellweger and Matthew McConaughey 2. 1971's *Play Misty for Me* 3. Anthony Edwards 4. *Scream* 5. George Costanza's dad on *Seinfeld*

# OPRAH PICK LEADS TO PITT MOVIE AND BALDWIN HAS DESIGNS ON HALSTON | BY INGRID RANDOJA



## BALDWIN'S FASHION STATEMENT

In what has to be one of the oddest casting choices in some time, gruff, hairy and uber-straight **Alec Baldwin** will star as '70s fashion designer **Halston** in the bio-pic *Simply Halston*, based on **Steven S. Gaines'** dishy biography. Halston was the designer of '70s, the man who made caftans and halter pantsuits must-have items. His frenzied partying, especially with best pal **Liza Minnelli**, eventually cost him his fashion empire and he died of AIDS-related causes in 1990. **Jane Krakowski**, who played nosy receptionist **Elaine** on *Ally McBeal*, has been cast as Minnelli, but there's no word on who will round out the rest of Halston's posse, which included celebs such as **Andy Warhol**, **Lauren Bacall** and **Liz Taylor**.

## OPRAH BOOSTS STEINBECK'S CAREER



If **Oprah Winfrey** so much as burps the name of a book you can bet it'll rocket to the top of the best-seller list, which suits **Brad Pitt** just fine. Oprah recently sang the praises of **John Steinbeck's** 1952 novel *East of Eden* on her Book

Club, which sent sales of the classic soaring and encouraged Pitt to contact Steinbeck's estate to acquire the movie rights. *East of Eden*, which tells the story of two brothers vying for their strict father's attention, was first filmed in 1955 and starred moody movie legend **James Dean** as the "bad" brother. Pitt, who wants to play the lead, can surely pull off a Dean-like pout and slouch in a role that screams, "Hey Oscar, look at me, over here!" That Oprah, next thing you know she'll mention the bible and someone like **Mel Gibson** will come along and...oh right.

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# CROWNED KING ARE ON FIRE, A CHEAT SHEET FOR YOUR HALLOWEEN SOUNDTRACK, AND THE STROKES FINALLY DELIVER | BY INGRID RANDOJA



Shaun Frank, centre, with Crowned King

## SOUND THE HORNS

It isn't easy pounding out rock 'n' roll tunes when you're a seven-piece band that includes a three-piece horn section. Ever heard of a thrash trombone solo? But Vancouver's Crowned King pull it off without giving up a chord of power pop.

Formed in 1998 by seven pals from Argyle Secondary (the same North Vancouver high school that spawned Bryan Adams, Jason Priestly and Soul Decision), Crowned King began their rock lives playing predominantly horn-friendly ska music.

"Our first indie record, *Tempting Fate*, was ska/punk," says Crowned King lead singer Shaun Frank on the line from his Vancouver home. "But to tell the truth, not one guy in the band likes, or even listens to, that kind of music.

"We tried to figure out what kind of music people wanted to hear, but that was really tough. Then we said, 'Well, what kind of music do we want to hear? What do we want to do with horns?' We listened to a lot of soundtracks and orchestral music. So, it was, 'We'll do that with our horns, we'll write orchestral rock tunes.'"

Their music isn't exactly orchestral, but listening to Crowned King's major-label debut CD, *Break the Silence* (in stores October 14), you hear the horns slipping and sliding around their head-banging songs in subtle ways.

However, subtle is the last word you'd use to describe the band's live shows. "We've always been pretty wild on stage," admits Frank, who possesses a raw voice that he pushes to its limits. "We've come on stage in costumes — one Halloween I was dressed as Gwen Stefani and I was breathing fire. We have a trumpet that shoots fire and a trombone that shoots smoke," he says proudly.

Frank, who's joined on stage by his sax-playing brother Jordan, is known for his fire-breathing (inhaling a flammable gas then lighting it on fire), which leaves his mother a bit nervous.

"My mom hates it when I do that," he says. "Every day I wake up with a new warning that she's read on the internet, 'Look, I've read fire-breathing causes cancer!' She got this one warning from that show *Xena*. The star [Lucy Lawless] stopped doing it because of this warning. But you just have to be careful."

## TRICKS OR TREATS?

Anyone into making Halloween mixed tapes knows there's a core group of scary songs out there to choose from. Here we give you the lowdown on three of these ghoulish classics.

- "THE MONSTER MASH" (BOBBY "BORIS" PICKETT AND THE CRYPTKICKERS)

This Halloween anthem was written in 90 minutes by two members of the group the Cordials to cash in on the novelty songs craze of the '60s. It reached number one on October 20, 1962, and then rose back to number 10 a decade later. It has sold four million copies and remains one of the most popular novelty songs of all time.

- "I PUT A SPELL ON YOU" (SCREAMIN' JAY HAWKINS)

Hawkins was drunk on whisky and depressed (his girlfriend caught him cheating and dumped him) when he recorded this grunting, moaning, screaming classic in 1956. It was initially banned from radio due to its "cannibalistic delivery," but has since been resuscitated and recorded by Nina Simone, Sarah Vaughan, Marilyn Manson and others.

- "THE ADDAMS FAMILY THEME" (VIC MIZZY)

In 1964 Mizzy composed the score to *The Addams Family* TV show alone in the studio, snapping his fingers and singing the song, which was overdubbed three times to make it sound as if there were more singers. He even plays Lurch's harpsichord. Mizzy wisely agreed to write the theme for free, as long as he got to keep the publishing rights — a decision which became even better when the two *Addams Family* movies came out in the early '90s.



## OUT THIS MONTH

### TRAVIS

*12 Memories* >> OCTOBER 14

This is the first album for the Scottish quartet since drummer Neil Primrose broke three bones in his neck in a diving accident. Primrose is fine, as is this album, which boasts a collection of sweet-sounding, sorrowful tunes.

### THE STROKES

*Room on Fire* >> OCTOBER 21

The current "It" band finally cough up their much-anticipated sophomore album, and the boys from New York City deliver the same gushing guitars and precision percussion playing that pushed them to the top of the rock heap.

### THE BARENAKED LADIES

*Everything to Everyone* >> OCTOBER 21

Our homegrown heroes hand over their sixth studio album, featuring the first single, "Another Postcard."

# FALL ALL OVER YOURSELF

HOT TRENDS FOR THE COOLING SEASON

## BOOT STITCH

Here's your luxury item ladies. Got \$995 to spare? These **Patchwork Leather Boots** are made by Gianni Barbato in Milan and are available at Toronto's Zola Shoes



## SHORT COATS

The long, thin silhouette has been trumped by short and sassy outerwear this fall. Check out these little numbers — **White Fur Coat with Pink Sash** from Anne.X, \$299, and **Khaki Shearling Jacket** from Montreal designer M Siamo, \$1,870



## PLEATS PLEASE

Schoolgirl cute gets an update with all the little pleated skirts out there. Winners offers this **Olive Kilt** for \$30, while Levi's counters with a **Denim Skirt** for \$70



## GRAPHIC PRINTS

Custo Barcelona's playful designs (available in more than 50 stores across Canada) have been worn by Julia Roberts and Penélope Cruz, and on shows like *Friends* and *Gilmore Girls*. This season's fare is as funky as ever with eye-catching patterns brightening simple shapes. **Men's Shirt**, \$183, **Women's Tank Top**, \$341, **Long Skirt**, \$550



# PICK UP YOUR PIKMIN

The popular Gamecube title spawns a sequel | BY MARK MAGEE

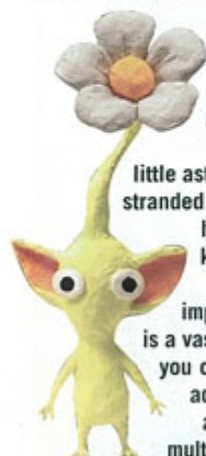
## PIKMIN 2 [GC]

When the Gamecube was first launched, most Nintendo fans assumed that the new console would be accompanied by a fresh *Mario* game. But acclaimed designer Shigeru Miyamoto — the brains behind everything from *Mario* to *Donkey Kong* to *Zelda* — shocked gamers by ignoring the red-suited plumber and throwing his heart and soul into a quirky little offering called *Pikmin*.

Released without much fanfare, *Pikmin* quickly earned kudos for its inventive and addictive gameplay. The concept behind the game was as simple as it was unique — players control a tiny spaceman who in turn controls roving gangs of “Pikmin,” small plant-like creatures who help you in your quest to repair your busted-up rocket.

The sequel begins after the events of the first game. Having fixed his ship, Olimar (the little astronaut hero) returns home, only to discover that his company has gone bankrupt while he was stranded on the other side of the galaxy. So now he must return to the Pikmin-infested planet and make his fortune by collecting a variety of unusual trinkets to sell (apparently there's a booming market for giant rubber duckies and oversized donuts).

This second chapter is just as fun and habit-forming as the original, but there are a few improvements that help make *Pikmin 2* a much better game. For one thing, the new control scheme is a vast improvement over the original's sluggish setup. Also, this time, the game has no time limit, so you can wander around with your Pikmin to your heart's content. But the best tweak has to be the addition of a multiplayer mode that lets you and a friend play together as Olimar and his assistant. Because, after all, scouring alien worlds for doodads with the help of multicoloured walking plants is really the kind of job that requires at least two people.



XIII



Grabbed by the Ghoulies



Medal of Honor: Rising Sun

## GRABBED BY THE GHOULIES [XB]

In this gag-filled adventure, you play Cooper, a young fellow whose girlfriend has been kidnapped and taken away to Ghoullhaven Hall. Of course, like any good haunted house, Ghoullhaven is jam-packed with ghosts, ghouls and other assorted monsters, which means Cooper's going to need some help fighting all those undead nasties. Luckily for you, you've got plenty of weird weapons (such as a garlic-launching gun) at your disposal.

## XIII [GC • PS2 • PC • XB]

One of the more unusual trends in gaming today is “cell-shaded” graphics. Games like *Jet Set Radio Future* and *Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* have made great use of the cartoony look that cell-shading gives, but, until now, nobody has made a first-person shooter game using cell-shading. That honour goes to *XIII*, a stealth-oriented action game that looks and plays like a stylized *Splinter Cell*. So if you're tired of fragging pixel targets, set your sights on this game's cartoon villains and open fire.

## BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE II

[PS2 • XB]

The hack-and-slash dungeon crawler genre got a serious shot in the arm with the release of the original BG:DA, a fast-paced game

that revitalized the art of hacking kobolds into tiny pieces with a two-handed axe. This sequel is basically more of the same, but with more character classes to choose from, snazzier weapons and almost twice the number of levels. Hey, if it ain't broke...

## BILLY HATCHER AND THE GIANT EGG

[GC]

Billy is a plucky young lad who has been charged with ending the everlasting night that has taken over his homeland. But instead of using weapons or powered-up jumps to defeat his enemies, Billy uses a magic chicken suit that allows him to hatch (and subsequently order around) all kinds of strange animals from the eggs that litter the game's landscape. Guess good breeding really does count.

## MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN

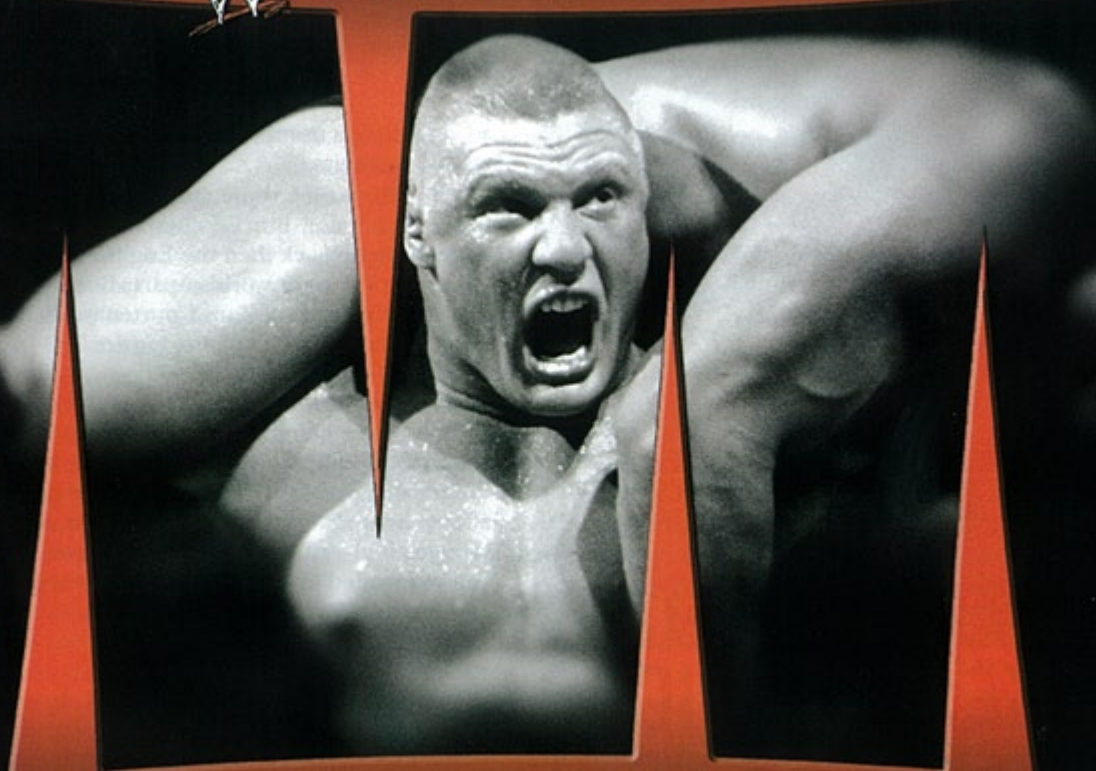
[GC • PS2 • XBOX]

The long-running WWII franchise leaves the hedgerows and bombed-out villages of Europe for the tropical islands of the Pacific in this new outing. The game begins with the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, and then dumps you in battlefields ranging from the jungles of Burma to Guadalcanal. You even get to visit the famous “Bridge on the River Kwai” and rescue POW survivors of the Bataan Death March! And they say history is boring.



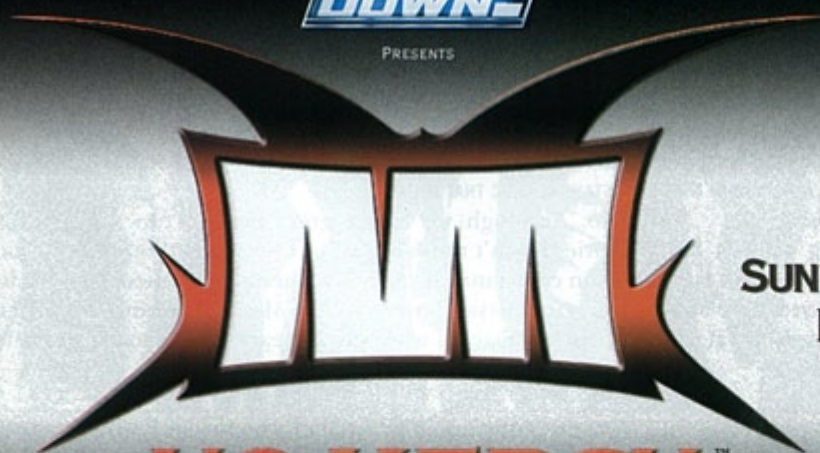


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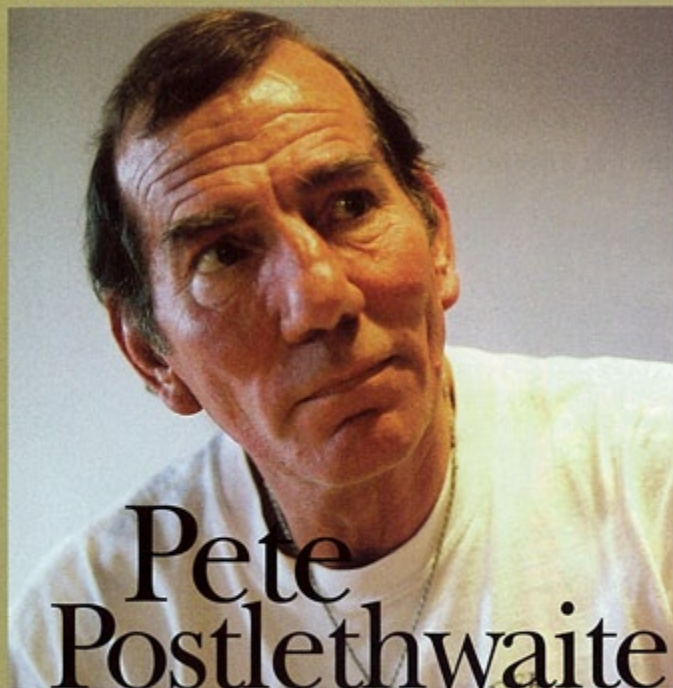
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# Pete Postlethwaite

## MAKES HIS PICKS

Steven Spielberg has called Pete Postlethwaite “the greatest actor in the world,” and if you foolishly quote the line back to Postlethwaite be prepared for a withering stare that says, “Don’t fool with me mate!”

The 58-year-old Brit began his working life as a teacher at a convent school, but, at 24, decided to study acting. A long list of stage credits in productions with the Manchester Royal Exchange, Old Vic and the Royal Shakespeare Company finally lead Postlethwaite to work in TV and films. You may recognize him as the abusive dad in *Distant Voices*, *Still Lives* or Daniel Day-Lewis’s da in *In the Name of the Father*, which earned him an Oscar nomination. He also appeared as the elusive Kobayashi in *The Usual Suspects*, the priest in William Shakespeare’s *Romeo + Juliet* and the big-game hunter in Spielberg’s *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*.

Famous spoke with the humble, chain-smoking actor at the Windsor Arms Hotel in Toronto. His critically acclaimed, one-man show, *Scaramouche Jones* (in which he plays a 100-year-old clown facing his death), begins a three-month run on October 16th at the city’s Winter Garden Theatre.

### WHAT ARE YOUR FIVE FAVOURITE FILMS?

“Number one is *On the Waterfront* [1954]. I was brought up on mainly American cartoons and Flash Gordon serials — that’s how old I am — but when I was a teenager I saw *On the Waterfront* and I couldn’t believe it. Marlon Brando was doing things that had absolutely never been done before by any actor. • Number two is *Tom Jones* [1963]. Albert Finney talking to the camera! I thought, ‘What?’ Finney and the director Tony Richardson broke the mold, they broke through what we in the theatre call ‘the fourth wall.’ • Number three is *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* [1960]. There’s Albert Finney again, playing a drunken factory worker. • Number four is *This Sporting Life* [1963], which stars Richard Harris as a rugby player from Northern England, which is similar to my background. All these

British films of the early ’60s were dealing with real life, human issues. • Number five is *Raging Bull* [1980]. Whoa! Martin Scorsese is simply amazing.”

### ALL THE FILMS YOU MENTIONED ARE DEFINED BY GREAT PERFORMANCES FROM VERY MASCULINE MEN.

“Yeah, well, for me those are the films that inspired me to become an actor. But I’d always thought I’d work on the stage, because back then the English film industry and the theatre world were worlds apart. But then theatre actors like Richard Burton, Tom Courtenay, Richard Harris and Albert Finney started making movies.”

### DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE AMONG YOUR OWN FILMS?

“They are like hangers that hang in your life wardrobe and you can take them out every once in a while and examine them. They mean so much to you because you’ve cared about them. Every role you play, even someone like the wife-beating, drunkard father in *Distant Voices*, *Still Lives*, you’ve invested with a great deal of love, a great deal of care and intensity.”

### YOU WERE SIMPLY TERRIFYING IN THAT MOVIE.

“Poor Terence Davies [the director]. It was a completely autobiographical film about his life with his father and I would have to comfort *him* before we shot my scenes. It was an art house movie that took the critics by storm, and all of a sudden people were asking, ‘Who’s that guy with the funny name?’”

### THAT WAS EARLY ON IN YOUR CAREER, WERE YOU TYPECAST AFTER THAT MOVIE?

“To some degree, but then I played Giuseppe Conlon, Daniel Day-Lewis’s father in *In the Name of the Father*, and you could not find two more different father figures than those two men.”

### DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA THAT *THE USUAL SUSPECTS* WOULD BECOME THE INSTANT CLASSIC THAT IT HAS?

“No. Although we had a great deal of fun making the movie, I don’t think any of us ever really thought it would attain cult status. It really is a phenomenal piece of work by [director] Bryan Singer [*X2: X-Men United*] and the writer, Chris McQuarrie, who was 25 years old when he wrote it. Unbelievable.”

[We are interrupted by a waiter who brings Postlethwaite a can of Guinness, a glass and a note.]

### WHAT DOES THE NOTE SAY?

“It’s a football update from a pub owner around the corner. It says ‘After 20 minutes, England nil, Turkey nil.’ England is playing a World Cup qualifier. He sent me a Guinness, how nice. [He opens the can releasing that unmistakable Guinness hiss.]”

### YOU LIKE GUINNESS?

“I love Guinness and I love football. But I’ll tell you, it’s nothing like hockey. Now that’s a tough sport!”

—INGRID RANDOJA

# new RELEASES

OCTOBER 7

## DOWN WITH LOVE

**Stars:** Renée Zellweger, Ewan McGregor

**Director:** Peyton Reed (*Bring it On*)

**Story:** In this homage to Rock Hudson-Doris Day pics, an author who's given up on love (Zellweger) finds herself falling for a complete cad (McGregor), all while wearing some really stylin' duds.

## THE ITALIAN JOB

**Stars:** Mark Wahlberg, Edward Norton

**Director:** F. Gary Gray (*A Man Apart*)

**Story:** After ripping off a stack of gold bars in Italy, a gang of thieves is betrayed by one of their own (Norton). Now they must use wit, guile and Mini Coopers to re-steal the loot from the backstabber.

OCTOBER 14

## THE MATRIX RELOADED

**Stars:** Keanu Reeves, Carrie-Anne Moss

**Directors:** Wachowski Brothers (*The Matrix*)

**Story:** For the second chapter of the *Matrix* trilogy, the filmmakers amped up the special effects and car chases. Unfortunately, they also increased the "nonsensical stoner philosophy" factor tenfold.

OCTOBER 21

## 28 DAYS LATER

**Stars:** Cillian Murphy, Naomie Harris

**Director:** Danny Boyle (*The Beach*)

**Story:** A guy wakes up from a coma in London, England, and discovers that the entire country has been infected with a virus that turns its victims into super-angry zombies.

## CHARLIE'S ANGELS: FULL THROTTLE

**Stars:** Drew Barrymore, Cameron Diaz

**Director:** McG (*Charlie's Angels*)

**Story:** The Angels return for another round of bubbly crime fighting. This time, they have to do battle with a fallen angel (Demi Moore) who used to work for their boss.

OCTOBER 28

## THE HULK

**Stars:** Eric Bana, Jennifer Connelly

**Director:** Ang Lee (*The Ice Storm*)

**Story:** To bring a comic book about a giant green monster to the screen, art house darling Lee decided to eschew "action" and "excitement" in favour of "talking" and "boredom." Movie dull!!! Hulk smash!!!

new to DVD

## THE LION KING: SPECIAL EDITION

The former box-office king of animated films (*Finding Nemo* wrested the crown away from Simba earlier this year) comes to DVD for the first time with this mammoth special edition. There are plenty of games and lots of behind-the-scenes stuff here, but the real treat is a previously unseen sequence that includes the all-new song "Morning Report."



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C. W. Nevius, San Francisco Chronicle

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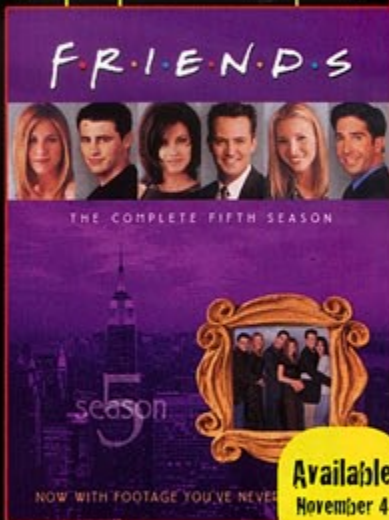
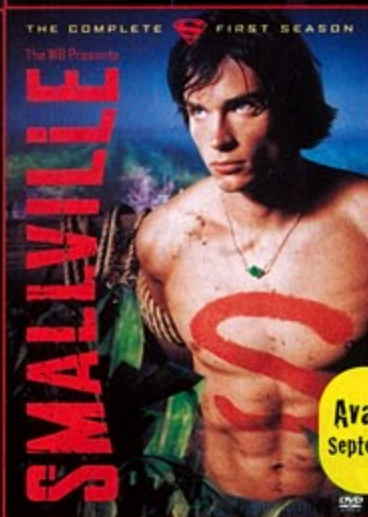
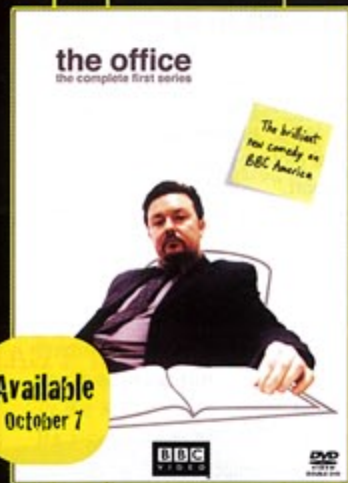
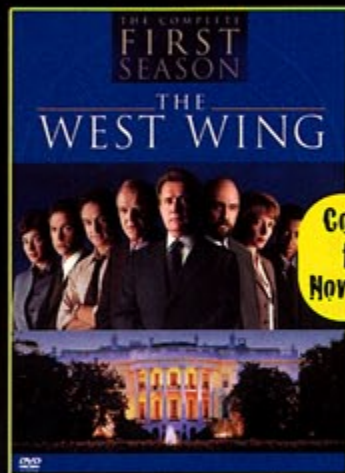
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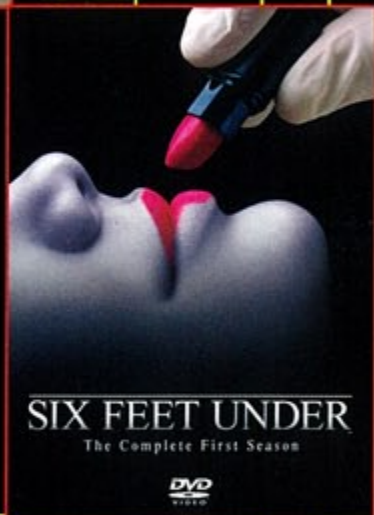
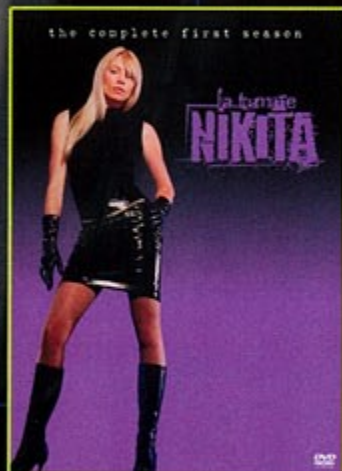
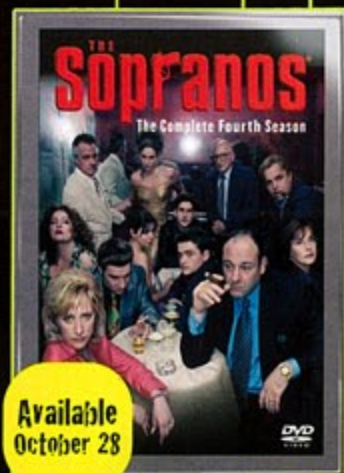
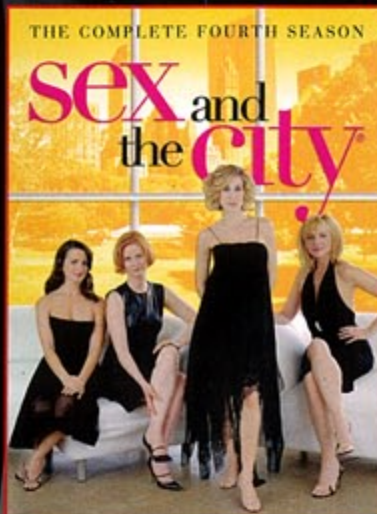
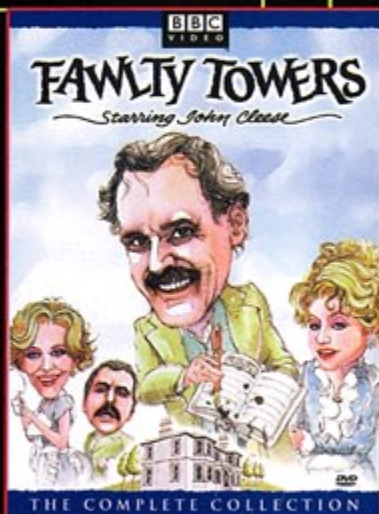
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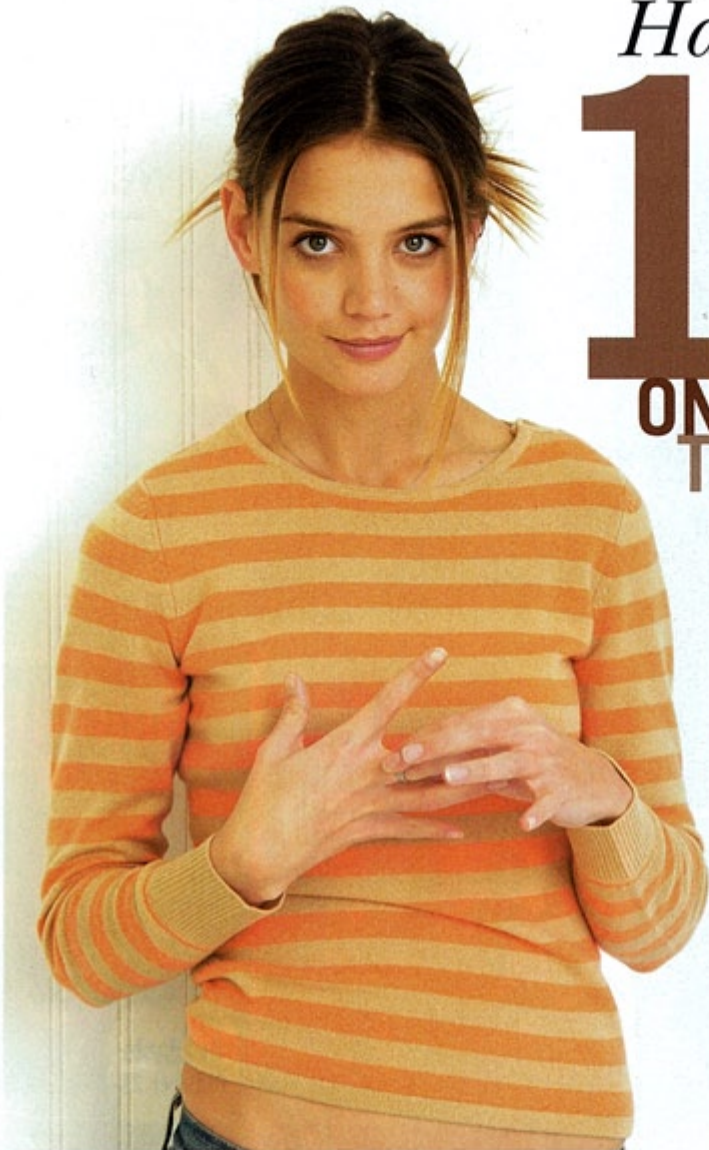


PHOTO BY JEFF VESPA/WIREIMAGE

# Halloween tips: 10 stars ON THE FLICKS THAT MAKE THEM tremble

| BY SUSAN GRANGER

**KATIE HOLMES** "THE FIRST *SCREAM* MOVIE FRIGHTENS ME. I KNOW THAT MOST PEOPLE DON'T REALLY CONSIDER IT THAT SCARY BUT I WON'T WATCH HARDER-CORE SLASHER FILMS BECAUSE THEY WOULD KEEP ME UP AT NIGHT. I'M GOOD FRIENDS WITH KEVIN WILLIAMSON, THE GUY WHO WROTE *SCREAM* (AND CREATED HER SERIES *DAWSON'S CREEK*). HE'S SUCH A NICE PERSON, I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S CAPABLE OF WRITING SOMETHING SCARY LIKE THAT."

**REESE WITHERSPOON** "*Red Dragon* just scared the hell out of me. My heart was beating super-fast throughout the whole film. Man, that was frightening! Before that *The Shining*, because it's creepy and reminded me of the apartment building in which I lived."

**JENNIFER LOVE HEWITT** "*The Amityville Horror* really scared me and gave me nightmares. I thought about it for days. But *The Shining* scared me to death. To know that a supposedly normal being can go crazy, like Jack Nicholson does in that movie, is so freaky."

**ANTHONY HOPKINS** "*Psycho* because I just love Hitchcock. He had the ability to scare you and also make a brilliant movie at the same time..To this day, ever since I saw that film, I still look over my

shoulder in the shower. That's the mark of a great director — to leave a lasting impression like that."

**TIM CURRY** "Nicholas Roeg's *Don't Look Now* with Julie Christie and Donald Sutherland... It's surreal, incredibly suspenseful, dazzlingly sharp, wonderfully acted and set in Venice, my favourite city."

**NATASHA HENSTRIDGE** "*The Seventh Sign* because it's kinda weird — it's the whole religion thing. No matter what your background, there's something in it to have feelings about."

**JACKIE CHAN** "I love action but I hate violence, so *The Exorcist* blows my mind. The first time I saw it was in a movie theatre in Australia. The audience was screaming when that girl's head spun

around — an ambulance had to come to take away one person who passed out."

**PAUL SORVINO** "*The Mummy* with Boris Karloff. It was a brilliantly told story, perfectly acted, perfectly believable."

**BENJAMIN BRATT** "*I Was a Teenage Werewolf* with Michael Landon still haunts me. I was seven or eight when I first saw it, and it gave me nightmares. The whole idea of a man turning into a wolf and then going out and randomly killing people terrified me. I'm also quite scared by the original *Night of the Living Dead*. I even own a copy on tape."

**EDWARD NORTON** "I saw *The Exorcist* recently and I was amazed at how scary the movie still is. It freaked me out years ago, and it still does."

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