



2/5 1 **HERE COMES THE BOOM** COMEDY

\$43 MILL BO 3014 SCREENS PG 105 MINUTES

Kevin James (PAUL BLART: MALL COP, ZOOKEEPER, GROWN UPS, HITCHED)

Henry Winkler (THE ONE AND ONLY, THE WATERBOY, CLICK, SCREAM)

Salma Hayek (GROWN UPS, SAVAGES, WILD WILD WEST, TRAFFIC)

Middle-aged biology teacher Scott Voss (James) becomes a mixed martial arts fighter to raise money for his High School in this latest movie from Kevin James. Voss was Teacher of the Year 10 years ago, but what a difference a decade makes. He now shows up late, reads the paper in class, and advises his best student that school "just doesn't matter." His only interest,

understandably, is in nurse Bella (Hayek), who (also understandably) wants nothing to do with him. When Principal Betcher (Greg Germann) announces that budget cuts will eliminate extracurricular activities, it threatens the music program of his friend and colleague Marty (Winkler). This drives Voss to fight for Marty's job, and for Bella's heart.

Voss learns that even losing in a high profile fight will earn him much more money than will his moonlighting job teaching English as a second language. Immigrant student and former Ultimate Fighter Niko (Bas Rutten) agrees to train Voss to do what he's already a natural at: losing.

This is where this movie becomes graphic in both a bloody and cartoonish sense. The epic beatings Voss takes are less damaging to him than they arguably are for the kids watching the movie. His only addressed injury is a dislocated shoulder, and a vague reference to a previous hospital visit, which "cost me more money than I made in the fight."

There's no reason why Voss is not killed or permanently injured the first time he finds himself in a cage, aside from the convenience of also finding himself in a family movie. Likewise it can be no surprise that Voss ends up at the Ultimate Fighter Championships in Las Vegas, because...just because.

Real-life Ultimate Fighting commentator Joe Rogan (as himself) and real-life fighter Krzysztof Soszynski (as The Executioner) add some authenticity to an otherwise wish-fulfilling fantasy.

Kevin James is his affable self, here taking a baby step into more mature territory. Salma Hayek's talents are under-utilized, though she maintains her game face in a romance that may be the only thing less believable than the movie's premise. Henry Winkler gives an inspired turn as an ethereal music lover who floats like a butterfly throughout the movie.

Fans of **THE SITTER, JACK AND JILL, TOTAL RECALL, PREMIUM RUSH, TED, THE CAMPAIGN,** and **THAT'S MY BOY** will love this one too.



2/5 2 **CLOUD ATLAS** DRAMA/FANTASY

\$26 MILL BO 2023 SCREENS R 172 MINUTES

Tom Hanks (BIG, GREEN MILE, SPLASH, PHILADELPHIA, TURNER AND HOOTCH)

Halle Barry (NEW YEAR'S EVE, X MEN: LAST STAND, CAT WOMAN, DIE ANOTHER DAY, SWORDFISH, MONSTER'S BALL)

Hugh Grant (ABOUT A BOY, MUSIC AND LYRICS, NOTTING HILL, FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL)

CLOUD ATLAS is enormously ambitious in scope, bizarrely experimental in execution, and equal parts straightforward and confounding in its ideas. The film imagines itself to be a hopeful fable about the significance of any given individual for the furtherance of humanity's ideal. Pragmatically, though, that idealism is overshadowed by the cyclical nature of its six-part narrative. Here are stories about our tendency to kill, to oppress, and to conquer.

Past is not only prologue but also prophecy in this all-encompassing worldview. While witnessing how one man tries to subtly and then overtly fight the concept of slavery in the mid-19th century, we are also shown the world of a dystopian future over 100 years from the present, where, once again, one segment of society has deemed another to be inferior and subjugates them to labor and eventual death. It's no wonder the last tale—at least in terms of chronology—is set some

time after "the Fall;" from what we see before that, humankind has always had, continues to retain, and will apparently forever possess a death wish to one degree or another.

The film's confidence in the better angels of our nature is affecting, even though we can't help but think that eventually the scattered remnants of humanity in that distant future will find a way to repeat the mistakes of their ancestors. Considering their bloody fights for territorial dominance, they already have a good start.

The story, the first—in chronological order—tells of Adam Ewing (Jim Sturgess), who learns of the horrors of the slave trade in the Pacific while enlisting the skills of Dr. Henry Goose (Tom Hanks) to cure him of terrible headaches. Ewing eventually shields Autua (David Gyasi), a slave, who has stowed away on Ewing's ship back home. Ewing's journal serves as the connection to Robert Frobisher's (Ben Whishaw) story in 1936, as he serves as an amanuensis for the composer Vyvyan Arys (Jim Broadbent). Forty years later, Frobisher's lover Rufus Sixsmith (James D'Arcy) serves as the inciting incident for a journalist named Luisa Rey (Halle Berry), who winds up investigating a nuclear reactor where Sixsmith is employed.

Rey's story is a manuscript that comes across the desk of Timothy Cavendish (Broadbent), a book publisher in the present day who finds himself the victim of a prank and the newest resident at a retirement home. His story is eventually turned into a film (Cavendish is played by an actor played by Hanks) that becomes an unlikely rallying cry for a group of clones, led by Sonmi-451 (Doona Bae), in New Seoul in 2144, and that clone is something of a prophet or messiah in an unspecified time and place in the distant future. There, Zachry (Hanks) and Meronym (Berry) hope to discover what happened to their ancestors in a cave that Zachry's tribe believes is haunted by the Devil (Hugo Weaving, whose characters all seem to be the embodiment of some form of evil).

These are but superficial connections, giving the stories a semblance of continuity on the surface (One imagines repeated complaints of migraines in the editing room). A character in each segment also has a birthmark in the shape of a shooting star as a symbol of something. The correlation goes deeper when considering the thematic ties and the way Tykwer and the Wachowskis use their relatively limited cast to fill in roles throughout the various time frames.

This is a movie that you need to pay some attention to. Those that liked **ARBITRAGE**, **THE DESCENDANTS**, **BERNIE**, **HOPE SPRINGS**, **SEEKING A FRIEND FOR THE END OF THE WORLD**, **THE BEST EXOTIC HOTEL**, **THE KING'S SPEECH**, **MOONRISE KINGDOM**, and **THE IRON LADY** will love this one too.



2/5 2 ALEX CROSS ACTION

\$26 MILL BO 2541 SCREENS PG-13 101 MINUTES

Tyler Perry (MADEA'S WITNESS PROTECTION, MEET THE BROWNS, WHY DID I GET MARRIED, DADDY'S LITTLE GIRLS)

Matthew Fox (TV's LOST, WE ARE MARSHALL, SMOKIN' ACES, VANTAGE POINT)

Jean Reno (THE PROFESSIONAL, RONIN, ROLLER BALL, JET LAG, FRENCH KISS)

Ed Burns (THE BROTHERS MCMULLEN, SAVING PRIVATE RYAN, 27 DRESSES, LOOKING FOR KITTY)

The notable commercial implications of Rob Cohen's **ALEX CROSS** are twofold: It's the first film wherein Tyler Perry has led a cast that he isn't also writing for and directing, and also serves as a reboot of a potentially hugely profitable franchise, that of the series of novels by James Patterson focusing on the titular detective and forensic psychologist.

The familiar and entertaining facets of popular action entertainments are as plain as day in the film. Explosions, car crashes, implied savagery, shootings and shoot-outs, brutal beatings and cleverly impossible tactics are strewn across the screen, and at the center is a rather by-the-books game of cat and mouse between the eponymous hero (Perry) and an ultra-sadistic killer for here known only as the Butcher, (Fox) Aided by longtime best friend and partner Tommy Kane (Burns), Cross's hunt through Detroit for the Butcher turns toward vengeful obsession when, thwarted during a planned assassination of tycoon Leon Mercier (Reno) and his minions, the Butcher tortures and slaughters Kane's girlfriend, fellow agent Monica Ashe (Rachel Nichols), and merely kills Cross's pregnant wife, Maria (Carmen Ejogo).

This is somewhat surprising new ground for Perry, but it doesn't seem to be a decision made out of any pure impulse. Indeed, the movie is calculated in every single movement of its mechanism to appeal to the action-driven male demographic that's proven absent in Perry's audience thus far.



The cast does a pretty good job, especially a small role for Cicely Tyson as Cross's aunt. The story and action will appeal to all that liked **TOTAL RECALL**, **THE RAVEN**, **LAWLESS**, **SAFE**, **PARANORMAL ACTIVITY 4**, **DREDD**, **END OF WATCH** and **THE BOURNE LEGACY**.



2/5 3 CELESTE AND JESSE FOREVER COMEDY
\$4 MILL BO 629 SCREENS R 92 MINUTES

Rashida Jones (TV's PARKS AND RECREATION, FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS, THE SOCIAL NETWORK, OUR IDIOT BROTHER)
Andy Samberg (WHAT'S YOUR NUMBER?, FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS, I LOVE YOU MAN, SNL)

Breaking up is hard to do, and so is pulling off a high-concept romantic comedy that's also meant to be a study of type-A personality issues. Glibly amusing and fitfully perceptive as it follows a wife and husband determined to stay best friends following their weirdly amicable split, this movie earns lots of points for bucking formula. Whether performing lewd sight gags or reading restaurant menus with exaggerated accents, Celeste (Jones) and Jesse (Andy Samberg) make such an insufferably cutesy couple that it takes several minutes for the audience to realize they've technically been separated for months. A professional trend spotter for a high-end Los Angeles marketing firm and a recently published author, Celeste is fed up enough with aspiring artist Jesse's perpetual unemployment to end their six-year marriage, though both parties secretly hope and expect they'll wind up back together soon enough.

That all changes when Jesse learns he's about to become a dad, as a result of a one-night stand some months earlier with beautiful stranger Veronica (Rebecca Dayan). Though Celeste is outwardly supportive of his decision to settle down with the mother of his child, the news sends her into an emotional tailspin that she seeks to recover from by dating other men, such as guitar-strumming model Rupert (Rafi Gavron) and, more promisingly, her hunky yoga classmate Paul (Chris Messina). Yet no rebound relationship can keep this high-strung overachiever from continually alienating those closest to her as she wrestles with her conflicted feelings about herself and her soon-to-be-ex-husband.



That title, too, turns out to be misleading: For better and for worse, this is Celeste's movie, and Jones' typically sharp performance delights in revealing the character's worst traits, specifically her need to be right all the time and what one character rightly calls out as her "contempt prior to investigation." Yet by focusing so heavily on the comedy of female self-improvement, arguably letting Jesse off the hook, the pic inadvertently suggests that a lazy, unmotivated man is preferable to a smart, opinionated woman. That Celeste just needs to lighten up is repeatedly pounded home in the string of redemptive, reconciliatory encounters that make up the pic's final passages.

The laughs are there in a nicely told story with a good cast. Fans of **TO ROME WITH LOVE**, **HOPE SPRINGS**, **LIBERAL ARTS**, **RUBY SPARKS**, **THE WATCH**, **SPARKLE**, **THE VOW**, and **THAT'S MY BOY** will find a lot to enjoy here.



2/5 2 DEADFALL THRILLER
\$4 MILL BO 1106 SCREENS R 95 MINUTES

Eric Bana (HULK, LUCKY YOU, BLACKHAWK DOWN, HANNA)
Charlie Hunnam (TV's SONS OF ANARCHY, GREEN STREET HOOLIGANS, COLD MOUNTAIN, CHILDREN OF MEN)
Olivia Wilde (PEOPLE LIKE US, THE WORDS, THE CHANGE UP. IN TIME, BUTTER)

Addison (**Bana**) and Liza (**Wilde**) are siblings that just ripped off an Indian casino in upstate Michigan, who end up stranded in the middle of a blizzard when things go wrong. Meanwhile, disgraced boxer Jay (**Hunnam**) is just being

released from prison and attempting to get reunited with his parents, June (**Sissy Spacek**) and Chet (**Kris Kristofferson**) for Thanksgiving Day.

If you can't tell right away from the set up, this movie is a classic 60s-style noir thriller. The hardened palooka, the sibling robbers-on-the-run, it all has a **Dashiell Hammet** feel to it, and the murder and snow factors are sure to draw comparisons to **FARGO**. If I'm going to make a comparison to a **Coen Brothers** film, I'd liken it more to **Blood Simple** than **Fargo**, although the settings are starkly different. As Addison and Liz plan their next move, Jay makes his, seeking revenge on the man that sent him to prison in the first place, only for things to take an unexpected, violent turn. When Liz and Jay meet up, Addison is left to his own devices that his life has taught him. Meanwhile, the police are starting to put things together regarding Addison's escape, and Jay has his own reasons to avoid them, the two stories begin to intertwine, as Hannah (**Kate Mara**) acts as the catalyst between the two crimes that have been committed.



The plot is not as complicated as it sounds, but it's well executed to the point where even the predictability of it is outweighed by the style of the action and acting. The plot is a slow burn, but the film never drags, and the strong acting from all involved powers it along nicely.

Fans of **THE BOURNE LEGACY**, **TAKEN**, **SAVAGES**, **SAFE HOUSE**, **BATTLESHIP**, **SAFE**, **THE EXPENDABLES 2** and **LOCKOUT** will enjoy this one too.



2/12 2 SILENT HILL: REVELATION 3D HORROR

\$18 MILL BO 2933 SCREENS R 94 MINUTES

Sean Bean (TV'S MISSING, GAME OF THRONES, THE HITCHER, SILENT HILL, MIRROR MIRROR)

Adelaide Clemens (TV'S LIE TO ME, THE PACIFIC, VAMPIRE, CERTAINTY)

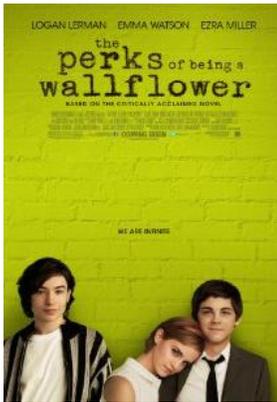
The story picks up a few years after events in **SILENT HILL** (2006) and takes inspiration from **SILENT HILL 3**. An older Sharon is posing as a girl named Heather Mason and her dad Chris/Harry (Sean Bean) protecting his adopted daughter from a vindictive, ever-pursuing cult that has forced the pair to move around America as drifters.

Heather/Sharon, played with pluck by Adelaide Clemens, is haunted by visions both day and night and acts like a first-class nutjob tripping out at any given moment. What saves this fun sequel is stunning cinematography by horror specialist Maxime Alexandre and equally brilliant production design. There are ghoulish monsters a-plenty and sinister set pieces to prop up the duller moments, including a return for Pyramid Head. The hulking beast gets an immense and bone-chilling scene – complete with booming score – as he walks down a corridor lopping off the arms of incarcerated lunatics in an asylum.

The **SILENT HILL** films boast a rich and inventive backstory involving a bizarre cult, a child demon and sorcery in modern-day America. Yet one of the major failings is the sometimes cack-handed use of such material. A viewer, during any part of the film, should not be thinking, 'I'd rather be playing the game'. Are the films tied too completely to the video game source out of wrong-headed respect?

SILENT HILL: REVELATION is to be enjoyed for the nightmarish tone and those warped creatures that lurk in the dark. A spider-like monster, made entirely of mannequin models, is as inventive and surreal as anything dreamed up by Dalí. This all helps it to appeal to that that liked **THE POSSESSION**, **HOUSE AT THE END OF THE STREET**, **PARANORMAL ACTIVITY 3**, **I SAW THE DEVIL**, **SAW**, **CABIN IN THE WOODS** and **INCENDIES**.





2/12 2 THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER DRAMA
 \$17 MILL BO 745 SCREENS PG-13 102 MINUTES

Emma Watson (MY WEEK WITH MARILYN, all HARRY POTTER movies)
Paul Rudd (YEAR ONE, OUR IDIOT BROTHER, I LOVE YOU MAN, FORGETTING SARAH MARSHALL)

Powerful and full of emotion, this movie tells a moving story of a shy freshman that will have many tearing up frequently.

Based on the novel written by **Stephen Chbosky**, It's great that he's the one actually directing the film as well. We see Charlie bracing himself for the start of the school year as a boy with no friends. His English teacher Mr Anderson (**Rudd**), is quick to befriend him and is a character that is utilized well.

Miller and Watson play seniors at the school, who for one reason or another have their own problems to deal with as well. It's certainly a film that focuses on the characters' lives and the issues they are facing, both hidden and public. There are a few subplots throughout that show the true characteristics of the teen's and the hardships they've had to endure.

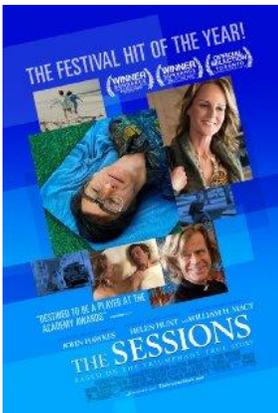


While the performances are all fantastic, the characters are relatable too. That being said, it's an emotional film and it's hard to fight back your feelings at times. There are highs of happiness and relief, coupled with lows of pity and sadness, as well as a climatic twist that hits you just when you thought you were starting to cope--



The cat is terrific and the appeal will be very strong to those that liked **THE ODD LIFE OF TIMOTHY GREEN, HIT AND RUN, CROOKED ARROWS, FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY,**

THE LUCK ONE, PROJECT X, CHRONICLE, and CHARLIE ST. CLOUD.



2/12 3 THE SESSIONS DRAMA
 \$4 MILL BO 516 SCREENS R 95 MINUTES

Helen Hunt (AS GOOD AS IT GETS, TV'S MAD ABOUT YOU, WHAT WOMEN WANT, SOUL SURFER, PAY IT FORWARD)
John Hawkes (CONTAGION, HIGHER GROUND, WINTER'S BONE, AMERICAN GANGSTER)
William H. Macy (TV'S SHAMELESS, WILD HOGS, FARGO, THE LINCOLN LAWYER, CELLULAR)

A film of tenderness and humor married to the unlikeliest of subjects, **THE SESSIONS** presents the story of poet and polio survivor Mark O'Brien, who left behind an oeuvre of life-affirming writing despite his condition. But this is no mere biopic. Instead, writer-director Ben Lewin's film focuses on perhaps the most unusual chapter of O'Brien's life, in which the iron lung-bound writer (here played by John Hawkes) arranges to lose his virginity with the help of a sex therapist (Helen Hunt). Careful treatment makes for an exceptional, expertly acted crowd-pleaser.

These are the facts, which the film shrewdly weaves throughout the story: O'Brien contracted polio at age 6, losing the use of pretty much everything below the waist and unable to live without artificial respiration for more than a few hours at a time. Rather than being sent to a nursing home, where life expectancy was 18 months, he was cared for by his parents, attended college on a self-propelled gurney and pursued a successful journalism career. Though his body was weakened, sensation remained, and after being assigned a series of interviews on sex and the disabled, he began to investigate the prospect of experiencing things for himself.

By avoiding the impulse to explain everything up front, Lewin foregrounds Mark's sense of humor, allowing his personality to show through his potentially depressing circumstances. From the beginning, he exhibits a frisky interest in sexuality, which feels unusual not because of his disability, but because so few films have been willing to deal with the subject as a source of anything other than shame or stimulation.

For this reason, the film is a refreshingly sex-positive picture, serving to break down many of the barriers Mark (and audiences, too) have toward good, clean intercourse. In Mark's case, the issue is complicated by his Catholic upbringing. Mark spends much of the film in confession with his church's priest (William H. Macy), who serves as a form of therapist, while earning laughs for his drinking, smoking and slightly flexible moral guidance.



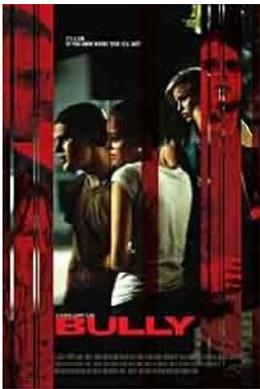
With considerable trepidation -- matched by equal encouragement from his assistants (Moon Bloodgood and W. Earl Brown) -- Mark books an appointment with Cheryl Cohen Green (Hunt), a wife and mother whose unusual vocation involves putting patients in touch with their sexual feelings so they can later share intimacy with future partners. Though the entire picture is infused with a warm sense of comedy, the humor comes across most strongly in Mark's first meeting with Cheryl, which mixes situational laughs with body language-based awkwardness, no easy feat for a performer confined to acting with his face.

Lewin doesn't get coy when it comes to the actual sex, and the same goes for Mark's faith, which plays a strong role in his worldview. "I believe in a God with a sense of humor," he says, displaying a dash of his own wit later by adding, "I would find it absolutely intolerable not to be able to blame someone for all of this."

But performances are paramount in a film like this, and Hawkes works some kind of miracle despite the self-evident physical limitations of the role. His voice captures O'Brien's unbeatable spirit as well as the sheer physical challenge of breathing, while his face is an open book to the man's innermost hopes and fears. Hunt and Macy are similarly at the top of their game, underplaying the sentiment in favor of capturing the deeper humanity of their respective characters.

Fans of **TO ROME WITH LOVE**, **SEVEN PSYCHOPATHS**, **THE WORDS**, **YOUR SISTER'S SISTER**, **MOONRISE KINGDOM**, **BLUE VALENTINE**, and **THE IRON LADY** will appreciate all aspects of this movie.

2/12 3 BULLY DRAMA/DOCUMENTARY
\$4 MILL BO 10 SCREENS R 96 MINUTES



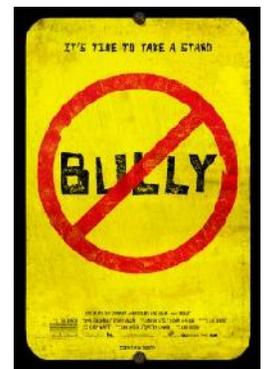
Lee Hirsch's **BULLY** has been in the news lately at the center of a ratings war between the Weinstein Company, the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) and the National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO). The documentary earned and retained an R rating from the MPAA, despite an appeal by the distributor, which has elected instead to release it unrated, inciting a warning from NATO that such a move may encourage its movie theater members to treat it as an NC-17-rated film.

All the better for despite the strong language that garnered it an R, this movie deserves—nay, demands—to be seen, and all the hoopla surrounding its controversial rating has galvanized a movement in support of its release that hopefully will inspire parents, educators and especially

kids to check out what all the fuss is about.

According to the Department of Education, 13 million children will be bullied this year. **BULLY** profiles five of these victims, including 17-year-old Tyler and 11-year-old Ty, whose parents mourn the bully-provoked suicides of their sons; 16-year-old Kelby, whose tight-knit community turned on her when she came out of the closet; and 14-year-old Ja'Meya, whom we meet in a juvenile detention center after bullying drove her to brandish a loaded handgun on the school bus one morning.

But most memorable, and the face of the film's anti-bullying campaign, is Alex, a 12-year-old seventh grader at East Middle School in Sioux City, Iowa. Alex's victimization, as well as the well-meaning yet highly ineffectual efforts of school administrators and even his parents to deal with what they don't fully understand, is caught on tape. This is where the film's R rating comes in, for Alex is subjected to the foulest of threats and name-calling by his peers, impossible to edit out and a disservice to the movie's message if bleeped. He's also hit, pushed, poked and stabbed—all on film.

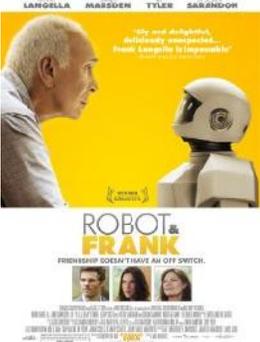


Hirsch was able to capture such shocking behavior by blending into the fabric of the school while shooting over the course of the 2009-2010 academic year. He also wielded a Canon 5D Mark II, which looks like a regular still camera, an equipment choice that also yielded footage that struggles to stay in focus. Still, the camera yields exquisite imagery with the intimate feel of home video, especially in Hirsch's moving interviews with the parents of Tyler and Ty.



More distressing than the actions of the children, however, is the inaction of the adults, who are portrayed as underreacting to the issue and in some cases even blaming the victim. Alex's parents, who have four other children, seem young, overwhelmed and unaware of the severity of his abuse. (At one point the filmmakers step in and share their footage with them, the school and the police, to disappointing results.)

This movie is not for all viewers but is a “must see” for all parents. This is an epidemic and awareness is still not what it needs to be. You will make a great statement and take a step toward this awareness by stocking at least one copy. Even consider making it a free rental to get the message out there. That’s a huge contribution.



2/12 2 ROBOT & FRANK COMEDY
\$4 MILL BO 309 SCREENS PG-13 89 MINUTES

Frank Langella (UNKNOWN, SUPERMAN RETURNS, THE BOX, WALL STREET II, BODY OF EVIDENCE, BAD COMPANY)
Susan Sarandon (BULL DURHAM, ATLANTIC CITY, DEAD MAN’S WALK, ARBITRAGE, THELMA AND LOUISE)

The addition of the robot, who becomes complicit in the final crime spree of the titular retired jewel thief (Frank Langella), allows is a certain visual flair: the sight of a small futuristically designed automobile and a few conversations taking place on a slightly advanced Skype-type apparatus are the most obvious examples.

The most visible instance of this sort of lazy showboating is in fact central to the plot. Suffering from long bouts of memory loss, Frank is doted on by his globetrotting daughter (Liv Tyler) and proves a source of tremendous frustration for his family-man son (James Marsden). The robot, voiced by Peter Sarsgaard, is a gift from and a solution for Frank’s son, designed to watch Frank’s diet, get him on a schedule, and keep him busy. Frank’s only real escape is his bi-daily trips to the library to pick up some old tomes and make chitchat with the lovely librarian (Susan Sarandon). It’s the library’s decision to go completely digital, masterminded by a shallowly constructed software-obsessed yuppie (Jeremy Strong), which sets Frank back to his old profession, using the suggestible robot as his partner.

At heart, Christopher D. Ford’s script is about the stagnation and loss of one’s mental and physical capacities as one draws nearer to the inevitable, but it doesn’t echo very strongly in Schreier’s direction. And there’s something to the distance between being capable of doing something and knowing how to do something that’s only briefly accounted for here. If Frank is well pronounced as a character, it’s only because Langella is an actor whose very presence and unique timbre suggest a worn-in, salty wisdom and just the slightest hints of an internalized wildness. The rest of the cast, including an underutilized Jeremy Sisto does an OK job. So, Frank’s eventual scheme to rip off the high-end jewels that the yuppie prizes his wife with becomes a central inciting incident, one which pays dividends.



Fans of **HIT AND RUN, BUTTER, ODD LIFE OF TIMOTHY GREEN, MAGIC ON BELLE ISLE, DOLPHIN TALE,** and **BIG MIRACLE** will enjoy this one too.



2/12 2 THE MAN WITH THE IRON FISTS ACTION
\$17 MILL BO 1862 SCREENS R 95 MINUTES

Russell Crowe (GLADIATOR, A BEAUTIFUL MIND, MYSTERY ALASKA, THE INSIDER, AMERICAN GANGSTER, STATE OF PLAY)
Lucy Liu (KILL BILL, CHICAGO, DOMINO, LUCKY NUMBER ELEVEN, CHARLIE’S ANGELS)

This movie arrives nine years after Quentin Tarantino’s **KILL BILL**. Of late, he’s more notorious for productivity than the meticulousness of his actual work, and the film doesn’t break that tradition. After producing a slew of brilliant debut albums for the extended Wu empire, each steeped in its own version of chop-socky mythology, RZA became a home-video distributor, menswear exec, solo MC, philanthropist, movie star, medicine man, and finally, sought his own kung-fu education. In *this one*, he stars, doe-eyed as ever, as a beleaguered blacksmith who’s a long, long way from home, quietly making weapons for both sides of a vicious intra-clan power struggle in a place known as Jungle Village.

"Every dog has his night," Blacksmith intones in voiceover, saving up gold pieces one sack at a time until he can escape with his girlfriend (Jamie Chung) from the gauzy brothel where she works under Madam Blossom (Lucy Liu). Just as the place comes under the thumb of the nefarious, renegade Bronze and Silver Lions (Cung Le and Byron Mann, respectively), a paunchy Englishman named Jackknife (Russell Crowe, hanging loose like never before seen) swaggers into town, accompanied by Morricone-style music on the soundtrack, to sample the merchandise. Drafted by the Lions to make poison darts, Blacksmith soon finds himself caught up in the turf war, but teams up with Jack after the Lions, abetted by a huge villain made out of brass, kidnap his girlfriend and slice off his arms.



The movie's emotional gravitas comes from Blacksmith's rediscovery of self, with a backstory (told between Bogart-worthy cigarillo puffs) that boomerangs from suffering racism in the South, being shipwrecked, and finally being absorbed into Zen Buddhism, all the way to somehow forging for himself a new pair of iron fists. The script, co-written by Eli Roth, takes itself just seriously enough to get from one ludicrous set piece to another, and paints the curious picture of a RZA more interested in hammy intra-clan warfare than bringing his own supposed spiritual journey to the masses.

The wire-fu scenes are beautifully choreographed, but pretty crudely edited; despite its gourmet neo-grindhouse trappings, the film won't bring the heat like you've never seen before. But as with everything else in RZA's non-producing career, even if not outright spectacular, the film serves up spectacle in bulk quantity. Make that stoner-friendly bulk quantity. The funniest (and truest) bits are the tweaks and flourishes any Golden Harvest disciple will pick out immediately: deliberately fake-y beards and eyebrows, Jess Franco-worthy zooms, and scads of cornball, meticulously dubbed-sounding dialogue. But does RZA take it seriously? You bet your life, and that deliriously stone-faced dedication—even, when it seems, to its own bottomless silliness—makes everything work and come to life.

The appeal will be very strong for those that liked **TAKEN 2**, **THE IMMORTALS**, **KILLER JOE**, **THE EXPENDABLES 2**, **LAWLESS**, **BATTLESHIP**, **THE HUNTER**, **MAN ON A LEDGE**, and **GONE**.



2/12 3 ANNA KARENINA DRAMA
11 MILL BO 522 SCREENS R 129 MINUTES

Kara Knighly (PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN, LOVE ACTUALLY, SILK, NEVER LET ME GO)
Jude Law (HUGO, 360, CONTAGION, REPO MEN, MY BLUEBERRY KNIGHTS, BREAKING AND ENTERING)

As an adaptation of a 19th-century literary property about love stifled by society strictures, the film contains far more passion and a tad more complexity than the dominant and typically more staid model of middlebrow costume drama—not to mention loads of extra aesthetic frippery.

Against the background of 1870s Russian court society, in both St. Petersburg and Moscow, the film tells the story of Anna (Knightley), not unhappily married to stodgy statesman Karenin (Law, sufficiently uglified), at least until she catches the eye of young Count Vronsky (Aaron Taylor-Johnson). That dandy is poised to marry Anna's brother's sister-in-law, Kitty (Alicia Vikander), until he begins a tumultuous affair with the title character, essentially leading to Anna's excommunication from society. Meanwhile, Levin (Domhnall Gleeson) laments his own failed bid to win Kitty's hand and, after hearing of Vronsky's rejection of his intended, begins to plan a second attempt.

The writers expertly navigate the complex web of interrelationships between Tolstoy's original characters, using the supporting players to comment on and enhance the central story of Anna and Vronsky. Through Knightley's robust performance, the film powerfully conveys Anna's passion and despair, the latter emotion predominating as the woman finds herself ostracized from society and prevented from seeing her son due to her "breaking the rules" of courtly behavior. Similarly, the film also captures the boredom and hopelessness that result from a love affair forced to perpetuate itself in isolation, leading to irreconcilable tensions in the central couple after the pleasures of sex have begun to wear off. Equally impressive, the film excels in quieter self-contained moments, as in a supremely lovely scene in which Levin and Kitty communicate their feelings via lettered blocks, with their intuitive understanding of each other signaled by their ability to guess what the other means to say by being given only the first letter of each word. Ns of

The cast works well in telling the story and making it a bit more available to today's younger audiences who may have not enjoyed the complexity of the original. Fans of **TO ROME WITH LOVE**, **SHAKESPEAR IN LOVE**, **THE BEST EXOTIC HOTEL**, **BERNIE**, **THE IRON LADY**, **THE KING'S SPEECH**, **BEGINNERS** and **COMPANY MEN** will love this one.





2/19 1 ARGO THRILLER
\$98 MILL 3247 SCREENS R 120 MINUTES

Ben Affleck (THE TOWN, PAYCHECK, THE SUM OF ALL FEARS, CHANGING LANES, GOOD WILL HUNTING, BOILER ROOM)
Alan Arkin (LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE, THE IN LAWS, GROSSE POINT BLANK, GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS, FREEBIE AND THE BEAN)
John Goodman (THE BABE, THE ARTIST, THE BIG LEBOWSKI, SEA OF LOVE, EVERYBODY'S ALL AMERICAN)

These days, when most Hollywood types want to get political, they write checks or talk to empty chairs. But back in 1980, makeup artist John Chambers and a special-effects colleague went above and beyond, assisting the CIA to invent a phony film production as a front for a daring hostage rescue in Iran. Declassified after 18 years, "Argo" is the gripping story of how Hollywood helped save the day. White-knuckle tense and less self-congratulatory than it sounds, Ben Affleck's unexpectedly comedic third feature has the vital elements to delight adult auds, judging by the enthusiastic response to this Oct. 12 release's Telluride sneak.

Intercutting faux newsreel footage with an energetic widescreen restaging of the Nov. 4, 1979, storming of the U.S. embassy in Tehran by angry militants, **ARGO** gets the pulse racing from the start, conveying the panic foreign service workers felt at the scene. (A brief historical prologue reminds viewers of the CIA-backed coup that put the Shah in power in Iran, and how the Iranians felt justified in their actions after the U.S. offered amnesty to the then-deposed Shah.) While most of the embassy staff scrambled to destroy files, six Americans snuck out a side door and found shelter in the Canadian embassy, where they remained trapped for months.

Halfway across the world, a phone rings and a bearded but otherwise too-relaxed-looking Tony Mendez (Affleck) stirs into action. When the U.S. government needs an extractor, Mendez is the man they call, and though he's never left anyone behind, the obstacles have never been greater than they are in extracting six Americans from revolutionary Iran.

Mendez' scheme -- the agency's "best bad idea" -- involves posing as a film producer scouting a location in Iran. He intends to set up a production office there, and even buys an ad in Variety to establish legitimacy. Then, he flies in alone, aiming to return with the six refugees (technically not hostages, since they weren't captured like their compatriots, trapped for 444 days in the U.S. Embassy) role-playing as his film crew.

It's a kooky idea that sounds all the more hilarious every time a new character repeats it, as Chambers (Goodman) and veteran producer Lester Siegel (Arkin) incredulously do in Hollywood, each surrounded by the kitsch of their trade. Historically speaking, Chambers was the makeup pro who applied Spock's ears on "Star Trek," while Siegel is a fictional character based on Chambers' actual accomplice, effects guru Bob Sidell, who worked on the movie "E.T." Still, Arkin's caricature makes for good comedy, as the ex-player takes the CIA meeting before stepping out to collect another lifetime achievement award to add to his already overcrowded mantel.

Much of **ARGO** -- named for the fake sci-fi production at its core -- comes from well-researched fact, meticulously translated into richly textured retro-looking sets by production designer Sharon Seymour, captured with nostalgic '80s-styled cinematography by d.p. Rodrigo Prieto -- the production team's detailed work underscored by an end-credits slide show (and an interview with former President Jimmy Carter conducted by Affleck) that depicts characters and scenes alongside their real-life counterparts. Still, the script takes its share of liberties to amplify either the tension or the satire, as when Siegel buys the rights to the movie (which Chambers already owned) from a rival producer.

For the breath-stopping final act, the film rewrites history so that Iranian intelligence figures out Mendez's plan at a particularly awkward moment (in fact, the operation had a far quieter denouement). But the change not only makes for a thrilling finale it corrects the uncomfortably xenophobic way every Iranian is shown in the movie, and suggests they were at least as smart as Mendez.

Ultimately, the thrill here is in watching how the illusion-making of movies found such an unlikely application on the world political stage, where the stakes were literally life and death. Not only did Mendez have to manufacture the artifice of a non-existent film, but the American embassy workers were required to become actors overnight, pretending to be film professionals lest they be found out and executed.

This movie will be a huge hit for all that loved **LOOPER, END OF WATCH, THE DARK KNIGHT RISES, MEN IN BLACK 3, SNOW WHITE AND THE HUNTSMAN, BERNIE, WE BOUGHT A ZOO,** and **THE AVENGERS.**





2/19 1 SINISTER HORROR/THRILLER
\$48 MILL BO 2454 SCREENS R 110 MINUTES

Ethan Hawke (ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13, GATTACA, TRAINING DAY, SNOW FALLS ON CEDARS, THE NEWTON BOYS, A MIDNIGHT CLEAR)
Vincent D'Onofrio (FULL METAL JACKET, MYSTIC PIZZA, THE BREAK-UP, BROOKLYN'S FINEST, MEN IN BLACK, MR. WONDERFUL, DYING YOUNG)
James Ransone (TV'S LIE TO ME, HAWAII FIVE O, TREME, LAW AND ORDER)

Law enforcement doesn't like Ellison Oswald (Hawke), who has made a career of exposing their mistakes on high-profile cases. But it's been more than a decade since he's had a hit book, and as the writer's realization that he may be a one-hit wonder settles in, his methods become more desperate.

The movie opens with an 8mm snuff film depicting a scene most auds would rather never see: A mom, a dad and two kids stand beneath a tree, tied by noose to a branch that snaps up, lifting them all into the air where they thrash to their deaths. With no suspects, the local police got nowhere in their attempt to explain the murders; nor were they able to find the family's third child, Stephanie (Victoria Leigh).

Ellison aims to solve the mystery, allowing the film to operate in heavy-exposition mode for much of its running time, goosing the investigation every now and then with hints that he's getting help from whoever made that sinister home movie. In contrast with previous cases, in which Ellison moved his family into a house down the street from past crimes, this time, he actually bought the victims' home, empty except for a single box in the attic that contains five old film canisters, each more nightmarish than the last.

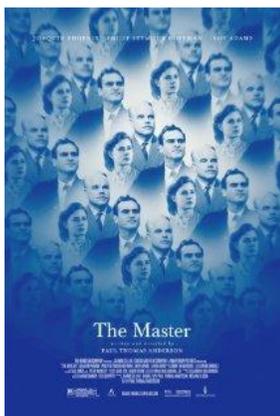
While his supportive wife (Juliet Rylance) and two kids uneasily adjust to their new life, Ellison cracks open the whisky and fires up the projector. As if the deaths captured on film aren't upsetting enough, other clues reveal themselves in his obsessive research -- details that suggest a supernatural force may be at play. Through it all, one message is clear: Ellison needs to get his family out of that house.

In concept, the movie offers yet another twist on the found-footage device so popular among horror pics these days, but instead of using that setup to throw production value out the window, Derrickson and co-writer C. Robert Cargill (an Ain't It Cool News reporter who pitched the helmer his concept) favor the classical chiller approach. Blending darkly atmospheric widescreen lensing by Chris Norr (who also shot Hawke's "The Hottest State") with bump-in-the-night sound design from Dane A. Davis, the crew transforms the Oswald's new house into a claustrophobic, crazy-making space.

Except within the gritty home movies, which implicate both Ellison and the audience in their unflinching voyeurism, the camera hangs close to Hawke's increasingly agonized face, capturing Ellison's deteriorating state of mind with a relish that recalls "The Shining." Though the film isn't the type to distract with in-jokes and references, the appearance of an ax in the final reel can't be accidental. Unlike Kubrick's classic, however, **SINISTER** gives its writer-hero an enviably stable wife, one capable of politely reminding her legacy-obsessed husband that his kids should take precedence over his work.

As the disturbances intensify, Ellison becomes convinced that some sort of figure can be seen lurking in each of the films, a menacing painted-face personage with white skin and black triangle eyes. He consults a local occult specialist (D'Onofrio, literally Skyping it in), who spins tales of an ancient "eater of children," cementing the movie's status as the sort of tale that would paralyze kids' psyches, rendered from the anxious perspective of a parent torn over whether to serve as provider or protector. This will be a huge hit for those that liked **CABIN IN THE WOODS, TAKEN 2, PREMIUM RUSH, FINAL DESTINATION 5, PARANORMAL ACTIVITY, APPARITION, BATTLE SHIP, THE DEVIL INSIDE, IMMORTALS,** and **FRIGHT NIGHT.**





2/26 2 THE MASTER DRAMA
\$17 MILL BO 864 SCREENS R 144 MINUTES

Joaquin Phoenix (WALK THE LINE, BUFFALO SOLDIERS, THE YARDS, GLADIATOR, TO DIE FOR, CLAY PIGEONS)

Philip Seymour Hoffman (PIRATE RADIO, IDES OF MARCH, MONEY BALL, JACK GOES BOATING, CAPOTE, ALONG CAME POLLY)

Amy Adams (THE FIGHTER, JULIE AND JULIA, DOUBT, SUNSHINE CLEANING, ENCHANTED, THE WEDDING DATE)

“Excuse me ... excuse me ... excuse me,” the voice insistently repeats. It is a thin voice, not imbued with the same presence as the one it interrupts. Prior to this moment in Paul Thomas Anderson’s **THE MASTER**, Freddie Quell (Phoenix) has drifted in the current of the charm and charisma of Lancaster Dodd (Hoffman). But suddenly some dweeb is outlining all the logistical holes in Dodd’s nouveau religion. Dodd and his followers react with disdain and, for a moment, so does the film’s audience. Here at last is a voice of reason, but right now we are not seeking reason. We are in a dream, and damn anyone who dares to wake us.

This scene from early in the movie signals one in a series of awakenings in Dodd and Freddie’s relationship. It sets in motion the story’s key tension: the desire to follow something amazing versus the sneaking suspicion that it’s all crap.

The film studies its characters with such mystique, tragedy and humor that there’s not a moment that isn’t enthralling. Dodd and his religion, The Cause, are obviously inspired by L. Ron Hubbard and Scientology, and that link was the focal point of the film’s pre-release press coverage. The parallels between the two ideologies are inescapable, yet they’re not the point. Anderson never adopts the viewpoint of religion/cult as freak show. Even in a brilliant montage depicting a series of grueling exercises that Freddie can’t or won’t let enlighten him, the personal struggle is in the forefront. The bizarreness of the rituals is almost incidental.

Phoenix gives the performance of his career as a booze-soaked World War II veteran with mental and physical scars. Having gleaned little benefit from a psychiatric crash-course for returning soldiers with post-traumatic issues, he stumbles around one place until he must flee to another, obsessing over sex and making experimental hooch. He resembles a mad scientist as he creates his concoctions, mixing booze with whatever hazardous substances he can find—paint thinner, photo chemicals, rocket fuel—whatever’s handy.



The most amazing part of Phoenix’s portrayal stems from his ability to take full advantage of the humor within his character. He is a sad man, a desperate man, an angry man—but there’s no denying the absurd humor inherent in his person. After Freddie drunkenly stows away upon Dodd’s river cruise party, Dodd takes a liking to him and takes him on board. He soon subjects Freddie to a nearly hypnotic question-and-answer session. The manner in which Phoenix delivers even the simplest one-word answers is remarkable.

If Freddie represents the uninged and out of control, Dodd exudes precision charm. Philip Seymour Hoffman is one of the best actors working today, and this is some of his finest work. His performance has an unmistakable magnetism that makes it easy to understand why people follow Dodd. The most interesting thing about him may be his draw toward Freddie, a man whose unpredictability could ruin the religious empire he’s trying to build. Perhaps establishing control over Freddie would be the ultimate achievement. The greatest comparison between the two characters comes in a brilliant jail-cell scene that explores their dueling demeanors in one continuous, static shot.

Anderson populates The Cause with a rich cast of characters, none more prominent than Dodd’s wife, played with no-nonsense by Amy Adams as the brains behind the operation. We see people who willfully and happily accept The Cause and let it enlighten their lives with windows into their past ones. Freddie, however, receives no enlightenment, just torment.

Freddie never verbally expresses his own belief in The Cause or his love for Dodd, but he acts out in angry violence whenever anyone else casts dispersions. He knows it’s bogus, but he doesn’t want to know. He shows the same denial toward his hometown quasi-girlfriend from during the war, whom he obsesses over yet refuses to visit. He wants to be with her, yet doing so would require that he face reality instead of his dream.

The cast is amazing in its ability to tell this complicated story. It is well worth the view and will appeal to all that liked **HOPE SPRINGS, BEGINNERS, ARBITRAGE, TROUBLE WITH THE CURVE, TO ROME WITH LOVE, CLOUD ATLAS** and **THE BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL**.



2/26 1 FLIGHT DRAMA
\$76 MILL BO 2638 SCREENS R 138 MINUTES

Denzel Washington (TRAINING DAY, UNSTOPPABLE, REMEMBER THE TITANS, BOOK OF ELI, HURRICANE, THE BONE COLLECTOR)
Don Cheadle (CRASH, TALK TO ME, OCEAN'S II, RUSH HOUR 2, DEVIL IN A BLUE DRESS)
John Goodman (SEA OF LOVE, THE BIG EASY, ALWAYS, EVAN ALMIGHTY, SWEET DREAMS, RAISING ARIZONA)

Audiences buckle up for one kind of movie but end up strapped in for another in "Flight," director Robert Zemeckis' welcome return to live-action after a dozen years away. Serious-minded drama steers a horrifying nightmare at 20,000 feet into one man's turbulent personal struggle with his drinking problem -- and not in the jokey "Airplane!" sense, either. Denzel Washington is aces as a commercial airline pilot who pulls off a miraculous mid-air stunt while flying with a 0.24 blood alcohol concentration, only to face his demons on the ground.

For most alcoholics, crash-landing a jetliner would qualify as rock bottom -- reason enough to quit drinking and seek help. In the case of Capt. Whip Whitaker (Washington), however, it's just the beginning of a battle in which his greatest adversary is himself. Though technically an ensemble piece, FLIGHT is as much a one-man showcase as Zemeckis' CAST AWAY was for Tom Hanks.

Whitaker (Washington) is flying high, sleeping with a comely stewardess (Nadine Velazquez) and chasing away his morning hangovers with a line of cocaine before stepping into the cockpit, until a mechanical malfunction sends his plane into a nosedive. Judging by the cool and collected way Whitaker handles the situation, he could be the poster boy for high-functioning alcoholism. Attempting to re-create the same scenario on a simulator after the fact, no other pilot could pull off the same maneuverer. And yet, had Whitaker not literally been asleep at the wheel when the plane pitched forward, maybe the entire situation could have been avoided, sparing the six lives lost in his stunning recovery move.

Few events are more visceral to experience onscreen than an airplane crash, and this movie ranks alongside FEARLESS and ALIVE in the sheer intensity of its opening act. But John Gatins' perceptively original script takes the rest of the story in a far different direction. For the first week or so, Whitaker vows to get sober, raiding every hiding place in his grandfather's Georgia cabin for stashed liquor bottles and pouring them down the drain. It's a symbolic gesture, but one that ultimately represents little more than wasted money for a man so hooked on hooch that within a few scenes, he's sucking down Stolli vodka straight from its half-gallon jug (while driving, no less).

Enter a number of concerned supporting characters -- figures essential to Whitaker's journey and yet dwarfed by the dominant attention Zemeckis pays his deeply conflicted protag, through whose eyes we experience all but an early digressive scene setting up Nicole (Kelly Reilly), a lovely yet self-destructive masseuse. Nicole stands the best chance of getting through to Whitaker, though trying to save a fellow addict could backfire. It doesn't help that Whitaker's dealer (John Goodman) repeatedly swoops in with fresh supplies.

Whitaker's near-constant, never-glamorous state of intoxication has long since alienated him from his ex-wife (Garcelle Beauvais) and estranged son (Justin Martin, who leaves a strong impression in two scenes). The only other friend in his corner is old service buddy Charlie Anderson (Bruce Greenwood), now a rep for the pilots' union, who's put in the tricky position of wanting to remain loyal to Whitaker even as blood tests reveal criminal levels of intoxication.

While Whitaker works through his personal issues, an imposing investigation into the crash looms. As corrupt back-room negotiations build to a hearing, overseen by a no-nonsense Melissa Leo, in which Whitaker can all too easily lie his way off the hook -- assuming he can stay sober long enough to get through it. (Looks like he picked the wrong week to stop drinking.)

This is a terrific movie with excellent acting and storytelling. Fans of TAKEN 2, MONEYBALL, HOPE SPRINGS, MEN IN BLACK 3, SAFE HOUSE, THE HUNGER GAMES, and IRON LADY will love this one too.





2/26 **2** FUN SIZE COMEDY
11 MILL BO 3013 SCREENS PG-13 85 MINUTES

Victoria Justice (TV'S EVERWOOD, THE GILMORE GIRLS, UNKNOWN)
Johnny Knoxville (JACKASS, and JACKASS TV)

Victoria Justice stars as Wren, a high school student struggling to find her identity while dealing with the recent passing of her father. A brief prologue gives us a peek inside her home and the family's coping mechanisms. Her mother (Chelsea Handler), Wren's little brother Albert (Jackson Nicoll), meanwhile, has a borderline dangerous affinity for sweets and hasn't spoken a word aloud since his father's death. Wren finds herself in the undesirable position of mother hen while the family sorts through their emotions. This includes but is not limited to taking Albert trick-or-treating on the same night she's meant to go to dreamboat Aaron Riley's party. THE HUMANITY!

Determined not to let the little monster (or, as is the case here, one-armed Spiderman) ruin their night, Wren's best friend April (Jane Levy of ABC's *Suburgatory* and the upcoming *EVIL DEAD* remake) whines a lot while also scheming to find a way to convince or trick Wren into going to Dreamboat's party. They manage to lose Albert almost immediately while bickering with one another at a haunted house, and the rest of the movie follows them on their shaggy mission to find him.

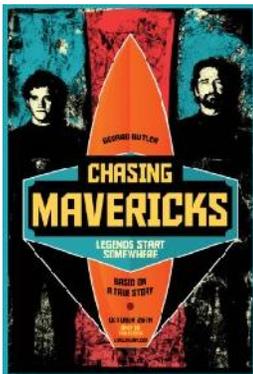


Using their manipulative/seductive prowess, the girls enlist the help of nerdy peers Peng and Roosevelt. Roosevelt (Thomas Mann) harbors a crush on Wren, and one touch of her hand is enough to convince him to steal his parents' car and go on a city-wide search for Spidey.

One such impacted stranger, Fuzzy, works at a convenience store that Albert strolls into. Lovelorn, earnest and desperate for friendship, Fuzzy (comedian Thomas Middleditch) is far and away the highlight of the movie. He scores some of the biggest laughs, most of which seem off-the-cuff or at least partially improvised. Whether this is the case or not, the fact that we even question it is nothing if not a compliment to his skills. Albert becomes the pint-sized accomplice as Fuzzy darts off to win back the affections of his ex-girlfriend (a tragically underused Abby Elliott), leading to slapsticky but amusing results. Riki Lindhome and an uncredited Johnny Knoxville also pop up, but neither leaves much of a lasting impression.



Things conclude as they must and a touching scene near the end is executed quite nicely. As far as coming-of-age flicks go, the film is ok and will be enjoyed by those that liked **BUTTER, THE WORDS, THE WATCH, THE LUCKY ONE, OCTOBER BABY and SAFETY NOT GUARANTEED.**



2/26 **3** CHASING MAVERICKS DRAMA
\$7 MILL BO 2030 SCREENS PG 116 MINUTES

Elisabeth Shue (HOPE SPRINGS, PIRANHA, HOLLOW MAN, MOLLY)
Gerard Butler (MACHINE GUN PREACHER, THE BOUNTY HUNTER, GAMER, THE UGLY TRUTH)

CHASING MAVERICKS follows the true-enough and tragic story of Jay Moriarity (Weston), the hugely talented surfer who died in 2001 from a free-diving accident in the Maldives, one day before his 23rd birthday. We're moved to enjoy the inspirational bent of Moriarity's teenage years as he learns from legendary California surfer Frosty Hesson (Gerard Butler), romances soon-to-be wife Kim (Leven Rambin), and deals with the quotidian annoyances of adolescence, not least of which is his unreliable, alcoholic mother, Kristy (Elisabeth Shue). Scenes of Moriarity's physical training are favored over chatter about the spiritual benefits of the sport, which partly explains why directors Curtis Hanson and Michael Apted fail to tap into surfing's joy and wildness, its ability to transform a man on various levels.

The story focuses on Moriarity and Frosty's bonding in Santa Cruz and the young man's hopes of being able to surf the fabled Mavericks at Half Moon Bay during El Niño, touching on themes of fatherhood and will power, specifically

Frosty's slow acceptance of his place as both a real father to his children and as a father figure to Moriarity, who, sadly and ironically, gets lost in the shuffle as a character. The neophyte is unimaginatively portrayed as a figure of cherubic purity and goodness, an athlete who already looks like he's ready for the Olympics when we first set eyes on him and whose sense of decency is blatantly counterpointed with the careless meanness of the damaged characters who surround him. The one friend he has outside of Kim and Frosty, Blond (Devin Crittenden), is a drug dealer, openly working for a local malevolent hood who consistently pesters Moriarity, and Blond's salvation, of course, only comes when Moriarity forgives him toward the end of the film.



The cast is good in bringing the story to us as this will help the movie appeal to all that liked **THE PAPERBOY**, **THE WORDS**, **SAVAGES**, **LAWLESS**, **TAKE THIS WALTZ**, **THE HUNTER**, **PUNCTURE**, and **THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU**.