

7/8 2 BAD WORDS COMEDY
\$9 MILL BO 2122 SCREENS R 89 MINUTES

Jason Bateman (TV'S ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT—FILM—IDENTITY THIEF, HORRIBLE BOSSES, COUPLES RETREAT, UP IN THE AIR)

Alison Janney (TV'S THE WEST WING, MASTERS AND JOHNSON---FILM—JUNO, THE HELP, A THOUSAND WORDS, AMERICAN BEAUTY)

Kathryn Hahn (TV—PARKS AND RECREATIONS, BOB'S BURGERS—FILM---THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY, WE'RE THE MILLERS, STEP BROTHERS, AROUND THE BEND)

Here's an entertaining and very occasionally unpredictable comedy. America's most gifted and reliably dry comic lead Jason Bateman stars as Guy Trilby, a monomaniacal axe-grinder with one goal in life, to win the annual Golden Quill spelling bee. The problem is that he's a middle-aged man exploiting a bylaws loophole to compete against kids who barely know what puberty means, much less what it's like.

Unsurprisingly, Trilby is custom-made for Bateman's perfected admixture of laconic sharpness. Instead of the more explosive brand of destabilizers favored by US comedy, your John Belushis and Will Ferrells, Bateman upends the norms of this closed micro-society of over-schooled spelling quants by having Trilby simply plant himself there and refusing to move or explain his motivations. Occasionally he'll try to get a leg up in competition by upsetting his preteen opponents with some verbal guerrilla warfare. But in the main, Trilby is a stoic pillar of nasty. (Having played the put-upon and exasperated nice guy in everything from *Arrested Development* to *Identity Thief*, Bateman gets some mileage here out of going so far to the dark side.) He's Bartleby, and will not be moved.

None of the other adults in the film comprehends Trilby's motivations, and they're all infuriated by that fact. That includes the two women in the film who, instead of being understandably annoyed by Trilby's antics, must embody different pinpoints on the shrewishness index. Allison Janney makes an appearance as the Golden Quill director, just another authoritarian to be taken down by Trilby's hyper-verbal and autodidactic insult machine. Kathryn Hahn plays the frazzled-haired, pre-cat-lady reporter who's accompanying Trilby on his mysterious quest in order to get a story out of it. The two of them have occasional bouts of curious hate-sex that only demean her.

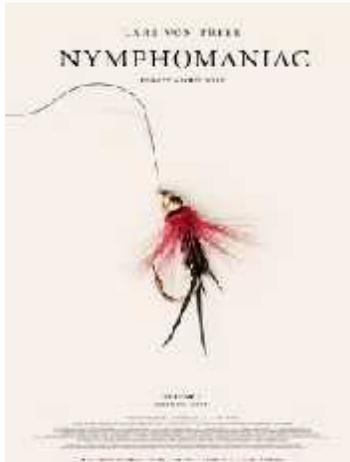
The only person in the story who appreciates Trilby is his nine-year-old sidekick, Chaitanya Chopra (Rohan Chand, a genuine find). A short, bubbly, and tireless fellow competitor, Chopra attaches himself to Trilby seemingly out of sheer loneliness. The kid is fazed by nothing that Trilby throws his way. Trilby tells the boy to "Shut yer curryhole," and nicknames him "Slumdog," but such aspersions have no effect. And since Chaitanya doesn't fight back, apparently yearning for a bad influence to break open his overly controlled nerd life, Trilby consents to his companionship. Pretty soon, the two are having a grand old time of it, raiding the minibar, playing pranks on strangers, and walking in slo-mo to the Beastie Boys.

Between its inventive insult comedy and the sweet-sour pairing of Chopra and Trilby the movie could have settled into the same cycle of raw-then-heartwarming coda that the Judd Apatow comedy age



has taught us to expect. In other words, we just know that beneath the raised hackles and adolescent lashing out of its (invariably) stunted-growth male hero lurks the soul of a wounded child, needing just one compassionate lover or friend to give him that last boost into maturity. So just forget all the tearful children and "curryhole" remarks, because really it's Trilby who is supposedly the victim.

Fans of **WE'RE THE MILLERS**, **THAT AWKWARD MOMENT**, **SAVING MR. BANKS**, **DELIVERY MAN**, **THE INTERNSHIP** and **THE HEAT** will enjoy this one too.



7/8 2 NYMPHOMANIAC: I DRAMA
\$2 MILL BO 487 SCREENS NR 118 MINUTES

Stellan Skarsgard (THOR, KING OF DEVIL'S ISLAND, THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO)
Uma Thurman (PULP FICTION, THE ACCIDENTAL HUSBAND, BE COOL, KILL BILL 2, GATTACA, PAYCHECK)

Lars von Trier's *Nymphomaniac: Volume I* is a cryptic morality tale whose occasional impulse toward simplistic voyeurism is offset by its adamant hyper-narrativity and its main character's agonized quest for meaning. In the film, Charlotte Gainsbourg, along with Stacy Martin in the film's flashbacks, plays Joe, a downcast nymphomaniac who takes shelter with a solitary bachelor, Seligman (Skarsgård), a coolly cerebral, and increasingly dubious Good Samaritan. Bruised and battered, Joe ventures to narrate her youthful sexual adventures, from arousing play as a child and losing virginity at the age of 12 to sexual encounters with strangers.

Von Trier stages Joe's first sex rampage, on a night train, with visual bravado: As Joe and her friend, B (Sophie Kennedy Clark), bet who can score more men, a series of tense, suggestive glances and gestures builds up to a pictorial catalogue of arousal, heightened by the time compression, and spliced with text on the screen, to evoke the girls' play and wantonness. We're close in these scenes not only to Joe's actions, but also to her thoughts, directed at a single aim of asserting her sexual prowess and debonair air. Her single-mindedness is evoked again in a brief scene, in which Joe and her sexual liberation conspirators recite, "mea vulva, mea maxima vulva," a moment so comical in its depiction of an infantile sorority that we can only take it to mean that Joe is puzzled by her original, youthful naïveté, and wishes to distance herself from it. But Joe's retelling ultimately lacks self-irony, and her rebellious liberation soon becomes a shackle, as she cannot shake off her ravenous sexual appetite, even as she falls in love. Love, in fact, becomes the ultimate threat, and part one of von Trier's opus ends with Joe and her sweetheart, Jérôme (Shia LaBeouf), in tormented coitus.

Dark hints aside, von Trier does a masterful job of presenting Joe's life as dominated by and, in large parts, electrified by sex. All other private details—a despised mother (Connie Nielsen) and beloved, doting father (Christian Slater); education; and laissez-faire approach to work—are pushed to the background. Von Trier draws on Freudian psychoanalysis sufficiently enough to hint at deep-seated childhood trauma—or at the very least, fixation. Mrs. H (Uma Thurman), and children of a man who has abandoned them for Joe's sake. Thurman shines in the high-voltage, somewhat operatic role of a betrayed spouse—a reminder that von Trier's art often lies in the cleft between cool, essayistic detachment, frequently conveyed via voiceover, and harrowing immediacy. There's discernible tension between how little impact the family tragedy has on Joe, and yet how, slowly, at times almost undiscernibly, it propels her toward acting out and, in turn, harshly judging her own actions. But whereas female sexuality was borderline vampiric in **ANTICHRIST**, this time we're in more ambiguous, contextually richer terrain, where desire is complicated not only by love, but also by a deep need for self-determination, and pride.

This, as with VOL II, is a touch call for some. If you enjoyed **SHAME, ANTICHRIST, SESSIONS, 10 YEARS, BEGINNERS, BLUE VALENTINE, and STRIP TEASE** this one will be enjoyed.





7/8 2 **NYMPHOMANIAC: VOL II** DRAMA
\$3 MILL BO NR 123 MINUTES

Shia LaBeouf (TRANSFORMERS, LAWLESS, EAGLE EYE, WALL STREET: MONEY NEVER SLEEPS)
Stellan Skarsgård (GOOD WILL HUNTING, THOR: THE DARK WORLD, MELANCHOLIA, PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN)

As in the first film, Joe's trysts are imbedded with a variety of psychosexual signifiers that are desperately contrived so as to be provocative. Joe picks up an African black man (Kookie) off the street, and arranges, through a pasty-white translator, to have the man meet her at a dingy motel room. The stranger brings his brother along, and the two bicker, in their native language without accompanying subtitles. Based on Joe's narration as well as the men's physical gestures, it appears they're undecided as to who should enter which of Joe's orifices, which leads to a coitus interruptus that affords von Trier the opportunity to make a prolonged foreground fetish of their impressive semi-hard cocks, which are always threatening to touch and engage in the kind of "swordfight" that's much ballyhooed in homophobic frat-boy circles.

Von Trier is partially on to something here: the acknowledgement that sex, for outcasts, is defined by its cruel sense of exclusion, and that its inclusive properties are taken for granted by those lucky enough to be deemed attractive by society. But von Trier doesn't have that kind of empathy; the sex in *Nymphomaniac* is inhuman, mechanical, boring, and predictably viewed through the (male) scrim of someone who characterizes women solely as withholders. Joe's promiscuity is an arch, hypocritical dodge. We're truly encouraged to wonder why Joe will fuck everyone *except* her new benevolent and courtly friend, a surrogate von Trier, who cares for her enough to bore her with a variety of self-serving historical, philosophical, and musical factoids. Beneath its posturing, *Nymphomaniac* is another of von Trier's odes to self-absorption: He punishes women for refusing to reciprocate interest that he never deigns to initially extend.



This film certainly is not for the faint of heart or those who are offended by sex on screen. Those that will enjoy this one would be those that liked **ADULT WORLD, SHAMELESS, DON JON, DALLAS BUYER'S CLUB, THE PAPERBOY, and THE LAST TANGO IN PARIS.**



7/15 3 THE FACE OF LOVE DRAMA
\$3 MILL 658 SCREENS PG-13 92 MINUTES

Annette Bening (AMERICAN BEAUTY, THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT, BEING JULIA, THE GRIFTERS, THE SIEGE, BUGSY)

Robin Williams (MRS. DOUBTFIRE, POPEYE, GOOD WILL HUNTING)

Ed Harris (A BEAUTIFUL MIND, GRAVITY, THE CLEANER, APOLLO 13, AN EYE FOR AN EYE)

This film has a promising hook for a romantic melodrama. Nikki (Bening) is a successful widow who frequently turns to her memories of her dead husband, Garrett (Harris), for refuge from her new life of rattling around alone in a fabulous but empty Southern Californian

home. Occasionally, her friend and neighbor, Roger (Williams), swings by to provide and receive companionship, but he's even more depressed and stuck in the past than Nikki. A widower, Roger nurses an inevitably melancholic crush on Nikki, whom he sees as a companion for navigating what he appears to assume will be a generally hopeless final act of their lives. Eventually upsetting this uncomfortable but stable arrangement is Tom (also played by Harris), a studly painter who falls for Nikki and happens to look and sound exactly like Garrett.

The plot is knowingly reminiscent of a number of classics concerned with a romantic death obsession, but the resemblance to those films is ultimately revealed to be superficial and exceedingly hopeful. Those movies were driven by a tightening sense of emotional claustrophobia that drew you closer into the protagonists' points of view the further they drifted from reality.



This is a small film with a good cast telling a story for those that liked **LABOR DAY, STILL MINE, HER, ENDLESS LOVE, SIGHTSEERS, SAFE HAVEN** and **HOPE SPRINGS**.



7/15 1 NOAH ACTION

\$98 MILL BO 3978 SCREENS PG-13 133 MINUTES

Russell Crowe (L. A. CONFIDENTIAL, VIRTUOSITY, A BEAUTIFUL MIND, MYSTERY ALASKA, 3:10 TO YUMA, THE INSIDER)

Jennifer Connelly (BLOOD DIAMOND, LITTLE CHILDREN, MULHOLLAND FALLS, THE HOT SPOT)

Anthony Hopkins (THE ELEPHANT MAN, RED 2, SLIPSTREAM, PROOF, BAD COMPANY, THE REMAINS OF THE DAY)

Russell Crowe brings his gravelly presence to the part of Noah, a descendant of Adam and Eve's not-evil surviving son, Seth. He lives a simple life with his wife Naameh (Connelly) and sons Ham (Logan Lerman) & Shem (Douglas Booth), until a ghastly premonition informs him of an impending downpour that will send the sinners of the world to a watery grave. Those sinners, led by the barking Tubal-cain (Ray Winstone), are born of Adam and Eve's murderous offspring, Cain. Hey, everyone has a side of the family they're not super proud of. Tasked by God and encouraged by grandfather Methuselah (Anthony Hopkins), Noah gets to work on a giant ark to protect the innocent animals that should be spared extinction. Much of the building is actually done by The Watchers, a fleet of fallen angels, cursed with misshapen rock bodies and, in one instance, burdened further with the voice of Nick Nolte. Emma Watson also helps out as Ila, an orphan girl picked up on Noah's travels as a wife for Shem. Ham, as you would imagine, is pretty peeved that his dad didn't pull the same 'wingman' move for him.



NOAH is, surprisingly, not all that concerned with all those animals; traditionally the most fixated-upon element of the saga. Rather, Aronofsky explores Noah's mighty emotional load, the result of him having to actively fight people off his vessel when the rains finally come, and later having to hear their dying screams through the ark's wooden walls. Those darker shades of the story are especially affecting, and find the humanity within the sillier aspects of the legend, which go largely unquestioned and are sometimes flat-out ignored. Notice how no-one brings up the inevitable incest that's required to repopulate the recently cleansed planet. Sounds like it would make for one memorable family meeting.

The special effects are remarkable, chiefly the charmingly-clunky Watchers, Clint Mansell's score is booming, as you'd expect, and cinematographer Matthew Libatique captures some stunning moments on some truly unusual vistas (the colour palette of the landscapes is entirely alien). Still, for all its nuttiness, this is a po-faced telling of the tale, often guilty of sliding back into the comfortable sandals of your typical old-fashioned epics when it should be forging fresh, freaky ground. *Noah* is admirable and watchable, sometimes very interesting and also incredibly cruel and strange. I have conflicting feelings towards the picture, which is perhaps as muted a reaction someone *can* have to it. This adaptation wasn't quite a transformative experience, but it was weird as hell, just not frequently enough. I will offer Darren Aronofsky this one unqualified compliment: at times, **NOAH** is unlike anything that's been done before.

This film will be great for all that loved **POMPEII**, **WINTER'S TALE**, **CAPTAIN PHILLIPS**, **ESCAPE PLAN**, **WHITE HOUSE DOWN**, **WORLD WAR Z**, **42**, and **SKYFALL**.



7/15 2 **OPEN GRAVE** HORROR
\$3 MILL BO 983 SCREENS R 102 MINUTES

Sharlto Copley (ELYSIUM, OLDBOY, THE A-TEAM, DISTRICT 9)

Thomas Kretschmann (KING KONG, WANTED, VALKYRIE, BLADE II)

The opening hook is undeniable: A man wakes up in a mass grave, alone among dozens of corpses, without any memory of who he is or how he got there. Writers Chris and Eddie Borey have assembled an appealing template for narrative cartwheels, and as diverting entertainment, this horror-mystery hybrid mostly delivers.

After an effectively moody opening, the film encounters trouble with the arrival of the other principal characters, five strangers who are hiding out in an abandoned mansion near the grave. The unit's collective lack of memory leads them to comb the house and its woodland surroundings for any hint about their identities, but the real tension in these sequences is internal. The grave-fleeing protagonist (Sharlto Copley), whose name is eventually revealed to be Jonah, is immediately marked as an outlier (the others all woke up inside the house, with photographic proof that they once knew each other), and the film's most successful moments focus on the question of his possible culpability. Jonah constantly struggles to determine whether he's the hero or villain of this nightmare, and as played by the always-compelling Copley, his crisis makes for a tense and engaging journey.

What's going on outside Jonah's head isn't always as gripping, as the other characters are weirdly devoid of personality along with memory. The exception is a mute woman (Josie Ho) who seems more knowledgeable than the others, but can only communicate via written Chinese. Gripped by crises of responsibility and communication, she's the only character other than Jonah who feels real. As these compellingly ambiguous characters suggest, **OPEN GRAVE** works best when it's difficult to read: In its most disorienting sequences, it teases out just enough information to suggest an array of horror tropes, resembling a Jonestown parable one moment, then an insane asylum thriller, then a zombie apocalypse.



Not a bad little horror film for those that liked **VAMPIRE ACADEMY, MACHETE KILLS, YOU'RE NEXT, PARANOIA, THE CONJURING,** and **THE PURGE.**



7/15 1 RIO 2 FAMILY ANIMATED

\$118 MILL BO 3256 SCREENS G 108 MINUTES

VOICES: Jesse Eisenberg, Anne Hathaway, Jamie Foxx, Andy Garcia

Believing themselves to be the only remaining specimens of their kind, the avian clan have been living like kings (or, more to the point, like humans) within their posh nature preserve digs. While they're been flipping pancakes and creating iPod playlists, though, conservationists Linda and Tulio, who brought Blu and Jewel together in the first film, have been tracking down what appears to be a whole undiscovered colony of Spix macaws deep in the Amazon. A colony that also happens to be perched in a swath

of trees a lollipop-addled logger intends to raze. Oh, and in case anyone needed more narrative clutter, that Cockatoo ham Nigel who got sucked into a plane engine in the first film wants to kill Blu as well.

Unlike its predecessor, **RIO 2** centralizes Blu only out of obligation. The clueless bird is for most of the film entirely unaware of the threat posed by both the shady loggers and the now flightless and grudge-drudging Nigel. And instead of using those thousands of blue-winged brothers and sisters to send its protagonist into a crisis of character, the movie settles for fish-out-of-water yuks aimed at the city-slicker pet bird who can't go anywhere without his fanny pack.

This will be huge for all that loved **FROZEN, EPIC, WRECK IT RALPH, TURBO 2, and FRANKENWEENIE**



7/15 3 UNDER THE SKIN DRAMA

\$3 MILL BO 692 SCREENS R 108 MINUTES

Scarlett Johansson (THE AVENGERS, THE NANNY DIARIES, THE PRESTIGE, THE HORSE WHISPERER, LOST IN TRANSLATION)

Michel Faber's 2000 novel *Under the Skin* doesn't lack for incident or metaphoric frisson. It tells of an extraterrestrial, Isserley, on assignment in Scotland. Her mission: to cruise the A9 in the Scottish Highlands, near Loch Ness, for the burliest of hitchhikers, who are chemically altered in a processing center before being made into fillets of braised "voddissin" for the snobs on her home planet. It's science fiction as social satire, a politically pointed attack on battery farming and a reflection on class, humanity, and, above all else, sexual identity. Now it's been made into a film that, in the hands of Jonathan Glazer. It willfully shoves them to a place beyond the corners of the

frame, conveying through throbbing sound and image a furious sensory experience that mimics what it might be like to view our world through otherworldly eyes.

In the novel, Isserley is quite literally a construct, her alien body painfully remade to resemble what her victims might want to ravish. But even alien science can only go so far, and most of the men who board her vehicle are struck by her short stature and awkward appearance (thin legs, nonexistent chin, enormous eyeglasses), though they readily take the weird with the humana humana, namely her enormous breasts. And in the first of many perverse, and telling, rewirings of Faber's text, he casts a perfect though de-glammed beauty, Scarlett Johansson, as his alien praying mantis, renamed Laura for the film.

No longer hitchhikers, but passersby, a revision that works to tighten the story's hellish grip on audiences by ratcheting up the sense of randomness to Laura's stalking, the well-muscled men are lured toward deaths that are rendered with a maddening, near-oneiric momentum. In a pitch-black room in a seemingly abandoned building, Laura uses her body as a poisoned carrot, stripping her clothes as she waltzes away from her victims, who drop trou and reveal perfectly erect cocks before sinking into a sticky black nothingness she safely walks over. Auteur of impression, Glazer is uninterested in the nuances of this most dangerous intergalactic game, hinting at conspiracy only in the aide provided to Laura by a shadowy, ever-silent motorcyclist, and that their victims are destined for supermarket aisles on some unknown planet only in the shot of pulverized body parts sliding down a conveyor belt. For Glazer, what truly matters is articulating through visual and aural enticement the unconscious power of our death drive.



This notion is compellingly evinced in Laura being interrupted—by a looming tragedy at sea—as she sizes up a surfer. Eerily and sexily complemented by Mica Levi's score, a weirdly fetching mix of live and synth strings and percussion that rumbles like the sea's angry waves, Glazer frames a woman's pursuit of her drowning dog, the husband's pursuit of the wife, and the surfer's pursuit of the husband as a primordial daisy chain of self-destruction. Failing to save the husband, who fails to save the wife, who fails to save the pooch, the surfer rolls onto shore like a dead seal, after which Laura knocks him out with a few blows to the head using a nearby rock. And just as unsettling as the obliviousness that radiates from the men who sink into the horrible blackness of their deaths is the absence of feeling from Laura's face as she walks toward her van and her motorcyclist cohort scrubs the beach clean of all evidence of their crime—the wailing of the dead man and woman's baby, stranded alone on the sand, echoing through the night like a war horn.

Laura, while no different than Isserley in that she's aware of her appeal to men, views sexual fulfillment as an abstraction, and when she allows herself to be penetrated by a comforting stranger, her reaction sends her spiraling into an oblivion not unlike that into which she drops her victims. She's still not of this Earth, but now her alienness is a marker of her naïveté, of a very recognizable sense of estrangement. And in a haunting sojourn through a woodsy gulf between fantasy and reality that's as bracing as the story's ellipses, the existentially uprooted Laura seems to understand herself in the way she does her victims, as commodity, and recoils from the horror of her sentience manifesting itself from sexual initiation and, subsequently, degradation. And that, the film articulates through its abstract movie-ness, is no way for a girl to come to understand her body, regardless of what's under her skin.

This is a film that needs to be digested and paid attention to. It is not the usual summer fare but will be enjoyed by those that liked **AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY, DEVIL'S DUE, A WINTERS TALE, THE GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL, I FRANKENSTEIN, PROMETHEUS** and **AFTER EARTH**.



7/22 3 THE ANGRIEST MAN IN
BROOKLYN COMEDY/DRAMA

\$2 MILL BO 496 SCREENS R 83 MINUTES

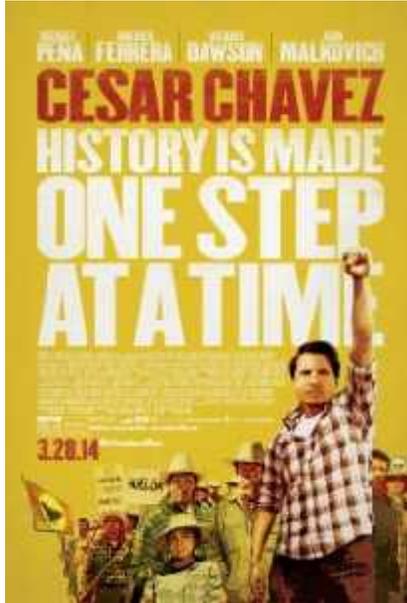
Robin Williams (GOOD MORNING VIETNAM, THE FISHER KING, PATCH ADAMS, THE BIRDCAGE)
Peter Dinklage (HBO'S THE GAME OF THRONES—FILM—LOWDOWN, A LITTLE BIT OF HEAVEN, THE STATION AGENT, DEATH AT A FUNERAL)
Mila Kunis (BLACK SWAN, OZ THE GREAT AND POWERFUL, BLOOD TIES, DATE NIGHT)

Playing an intensely agitated New Yorker in the scatterbrained dark comedy, Robin Williams once again proves he can insufferably crank the energy to 11 without batting an eye, only this time his frenzied comic demeanor is replaced with equally harried

contempt. This is a redemption story that focuses on a character who doesn't seem worthy of being redeemed given how awful he is to the people who care about him. And just as Henry Altman (Williams) searches for the meaning of life, director Phil Alden Robinson clearly struggles to achieve a confident tone throughout the film, which artlessly mixes comedy and drama. The filmmaker strives for the nervous tension of the Joel Schumacher vigilante thriller, as in a scene where Henry steps out of his car to argue with a cabby he's just collided with, but his efforts are repeatedly undone by William's unthreatening demeanor. In the end, this is a one-man show, with the strong ensemble, which includes Mila Kunis, Peter Dinklage, James Earl Jones, Melissa Leo, and Louis C.K., playing second fiddle to Williams and his incessant ramblings.



Williams gives a typically strong performance as he did in **ONE HOUR PHOTO**. It is so totally against type and shows his range as an actor.. Fans of **FALLING DOWN, HER, PHILOMENA, NEBRASKA, THE SPECTACULAR NOW,** and **THE COMPANY YOU KEEP** will like this one too.



7/22 3 CESAR CHAVEZ DRAMA
\$6 MILL BO 956 SCREENS PG-13 102 MINUTES

Michael Pena (TOWER HEIST, SHOOTER, END OF WATCH, GANGSTER SQUAD)
America Ferrara (TV—UGLY BETTY, THE GOOD WIFE---FILM—SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PANTS, END OF WATCH, IT'S A DISASTER)

Diego Luna's passion project, follows the latter strain of **MANDELA**, but to recognize the film as a successful piece of historical info-tainment is to concede a certain political toothlessness; by now, Chavez's virtue is a given, as is the civil rights movement birthed by his United Farm Workers. The film's euphonious attitude toward its namesake, played by Michael Peña, imposes itself from frame one, when Chavez recounts his humble origins to a London radio station. Spinning a folksy wisdom, Peña practically glows as the camera

hovers around him, pulling the story back a few years to the grape fields of southern California.

Between historic bullet points, the film has a considerable amount of on-screen texture: magic-hour BBQs in Chavez's backyard, huddled dormitories full of migrant braceros in the dark, brooding night drives along California's endless highways. Beginning at the outset of the UFW's Delano Grape Strike and charting growth of both the boycott and Chavez's nonviolent political philosophy—a relatively tight five years in rapid fire. By breezing through so many immaculately detailed real-life environments, *Cesar Chavez* stands in noteworthy contrast to the studio historical epics that blow their bank on a handful of glistening sets or double-retouched master shots.



Pearson and Sexton's screenplay doesn't waste time fuming over the complicity of state police and landowners in violence against migrant workers, gradually narrowing its perspective to find a supervillain in vineyard-owner Bogdnoavitch (John Malkovich). The actor gives his role whatever shreds of ambiguity are allowed in this type of biopic, but *Cesar Chavez's* otherwise sonorous attitude toward the UFW's actions mean Bogdnoavitch and his cronies appear mainly as comic relief whenever Chavez and his team have another hard-won victory. Luna's granular approach to the campaign's steady trickle means the entire film is invested in Peña's performance, and to that end Luna's casting pays off: Not unlike Peña's prior supporting roles, Chavez is marked by an explosive anger kept under a cherubic, sweet-natured mask, providing the surprise lacking in the story's text. After all, Luna wouldn't be making the film if the boycott had failed.

Fans of **MANDELA: LONG WALK HOME, HITCHCOCK, FRUITVALE STATION** and **12 YEARS A SLAVE** will appreciate this one too.



7/22 1 HEAVEN IS FOR REAL DRAMA
\$84 MILL BO 2354 SCREENS PG 99 MINUTES

Greg Kinnear (LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE, AS GOOD AS IT GETS, WE WERE SOLDIERS, ANCHOR MAN 2)
Thomas Hayden Church (SIDEWAYS, WE BOUGHT A ZOO, KILLER JOE, SPIDERMAN 3, THE SPECIALS)

It tells the "true story" of Colton Burpo (Connor Corum), a four-year-old boy whose near-death experience supposedly took him to heaven, where he conversed with Jesus (who rode a rainbow-colored horse), stood in God's presence, hung out with dead relatives he never met, and encountered a bunch of other apparently irrefutable things he recounted to his family in the months following. His father, Todd Burpo (Kinnear), a reverend, small-business owner, and volunteer firefighter, is at first dubious, but eventually convinced of his son's claims and uses

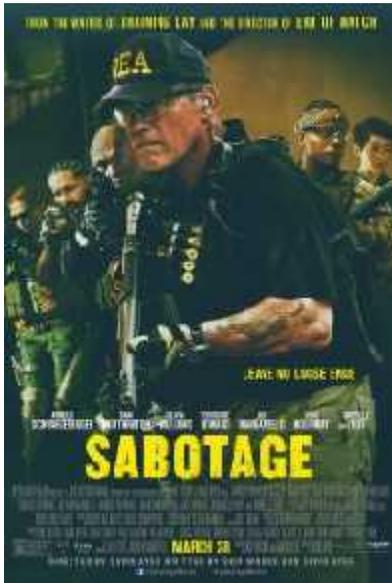
them to kick-start both his own waning beliefs and those of his skeptical flock.

Quite dogmatically, the film demands we accept the second- and third-hand accounts of things that allegedly happened to Colton as fact, leaving non-believers to look for their inspiration elsewhere. *Heaven Is For Real* is, then, a film by Christians, for Christians, and deliberately, if subtly, antagonistic toward everyone else.

In adapting the book, Wallace and co-screenwriter Chris Parker excise a good deal of Burpo's thinly veiled judgments (concerning nonbelievers, the author condescendingly wonders, "In times of crisis, where does their support come from?") and more assertions (toward the end of the book, he writes that his son also claimed to have caught a sneak peek of the end of days—of Satan, hell, and the apocalypse), though his "conservative values" are still felt in the film's depiction of agency-free wives and minorities as mere window dressing. Like Colton's visions (or, more accurately, his father's fishy novelization of his visions), these aspects are central to *the film* faith-is-for-winners narrative, which ultimately proclaims that Jesus lives, and he's exactly what Pat Robertson says he's like.



The appeal for this film will be for those that liked **SON OF GOD, POMPEII, MANDELA-A LONG WALK HOME, CLOUD ATLAS, and WARHORSE.**



7/22 2 SABOTAGE ACTION

\$13 MILL BO 1946 SCREENS R 109 MINUTES

Arnold Schwarzenegger (TWINS, COMMANDO, TOTAL RECALL, THE TERMINATOR, COLLATERAL DAMAGE, THE EXPENDABLES)

Sam Worthington (MAN ON A LEDGE, AVATAR, WRATH OF THE TITANS, HART'S WAR)

It's clear that David Ayer's *movie* isn't exactly **SERPICO** long before Joe Manganiello's *Grinder* accuses himself and his team of "fingering the devil's pussy." The hyperbole, however, is warranted, as the elite DEA tactical team that *Grinder* works with, led by the legendary Breacher (Schwarzenegger), is getting picked off one by one in seeming retribution for skimming \$10 million from a drug cartel bust.

Things start grimly, with Breacher watching footage of his wife's torture and death, but Ayer's latest quickly drums up ample "humor" through the pervasiveness of the characters' homophobia and dick talk.

From these less-than-auspicious beginnings, one might expect a run-of-the-mill swinging-dick actioner, but *this film* is a beast of another sort. For one, there's no central villain to speak of and the story eventually evolves into a bizarre whodunit. There's talk of an elusive, high-grade Guatemalan hit squad hired to take out the team, which is composed of dudes with nicknames like Monster (Worthington), Sugar (Terrence Howard), and Neck (Josh Holloway), but this rival squad proves to be a red herring. As the grisly murders start racking up, the film begins taking cues from popular horror (primarily the *Saw* and *Final Destination* franchises) by centering scenes on the improbability and inventiveness of the killing style. One of Breacher's men is found nailed to his ceiling, his guts ripped out and hanging like streamers, and another good ol' boy meets his end by getting hit by a train...while relieving himself in his Winnebago's sink.

This modest flair for the grotesque gives **SABOTAGE** an agreeable sense of macabre levity, one helped amply by the fact that Ayer never feigns any sort of moralism or condescends to "family values." The writer-director has the good sense to generally avoid portraying these piggish brutes as heroes or role models of any sort. Olivia Williams proves vital to this pursuit in the role of Caroline, a local detective, by playing up how comical her no-bull caricature is and making her characters' barbs against the team's alpha-male posturing really sing. The character of Lizzy, Monster's wife and the sole female member of the unit, is similarly elevated by Mireille Enos's willingness to go full tilt into what ends up being the film's most preposterous role.

But the fact that Caroline inexplicably beds a team member speaks to the film's attitude toward women: that they're to be used or protected, and never trusted. The dialogue, with its tonnage of off-putting one-liners, has a certain style, but the film defers to an atmosphere of fake urgency brought out by the standard-issue digital photography. The supporting players are convincing enough but largely inconsequential, an odd byproduct of which is that the female performances are the most memorable elements of the movie. It's a fitting irony after all the crude flexing **SABOTAGE** indulges in, but it's not a purposeful act by the director and paltry in comparison to the film's cock-of-the-walk excesses.



Action galore and fans of **JACK RYAN: SHADOW RECRUIT, 3 DAYS TO KILL, NON-STOP, HOME FRONT, RUSH,**

ESCAPE PLAN and **BROKEN CITY** will love this one too.



7/22 2 THE SINGLE MOM'S CLUB

COMEDY

\$18 MILL BO 1936 SCREENS PG-13 111 MINUTES

Nia Long (BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE, BADASSSS, BOILER ROOM, HELD UP, THE BEST MAN'S HOLIDAY)

Amy Smart (THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT, CRANK: HIGH VOLTAGE, NO CLUE, MIRRORS, STARSHIP TROOPERS)

This film follows five diverse women who are raising their children alone for a variety of reasons. Some are rich and on the heel of divorce. Others are struggling to make ends meet and facing issues with the area in which they live. After all five of their children are involved in an incident at their private school, the moms are

brought together to plan a school function. This unexpected partnership brings the group together to form a sort of informal support group for their families and themselves.

While technically a comedy, the story has plenty of moments of heavy drama, which is to be expected from a Tyler Perry movie. However, without Madea prancing around, the story doesn't take the jarring dramatic shifts that I've become used to. There is a moment where things get pretty dark in the middle, but it's still pretty tame for the normal character-punishing trials Perry's stories entail. This film also gives Perry a chance to stretch out a bit and try to connect to an audience outside of his standard African-American female brand.

However, compared to many of Perry's previous films, this one manages to not be overly offensive and draconian to its characters. The conflicts in the story are pretty standard and cliché, setting up strawmen for the single moms to defeat at the end in a rambling denouement.

Ultimately, this movie isn't as much about moms as it is about female bonding. The children in the film are shamefully underwritten, serving as nothing more than set dressing and fight-starters. It's a shame that a movie with parenting alluded to in the very title really has very little to say about actually being a parent beyond cheap platitudes. Still... at least no one gets punished with AIDS.

Fans of **ABOUT LAST NIGHT, THAT AWKWARD MOMENT, RIDE ALONG, THE BEST MAN'S HOLIDAY, BAGGAGE CLAIM, PEEPLES, BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE** and **HALL PASS** will get laughs from this one too.





7/29 2 A HAUNTED HOUSE 2

HORROR/COMEDY

\$19 MILL BO 1734 SCREENS R 86 MINUTES

Marlon Wayans (THE HEAT, A HAUNTED HOUSE, WHITE CHICKS, SCARY MOVIE 2)

A Haunted House 2 continues its comedic tale of ghostly hijinks about a year after the original reached its conclusion. Malcolm (Marlon Wayans) has moved on with his life as he hopes to forget the terrible situation that turned him into a single man after being with Kisha (Essence Atkins) for so long. As of now, he appears to be over his harsh episode and has picked up a new love of his life along the way in the form of Megan (Jaime Pressly).

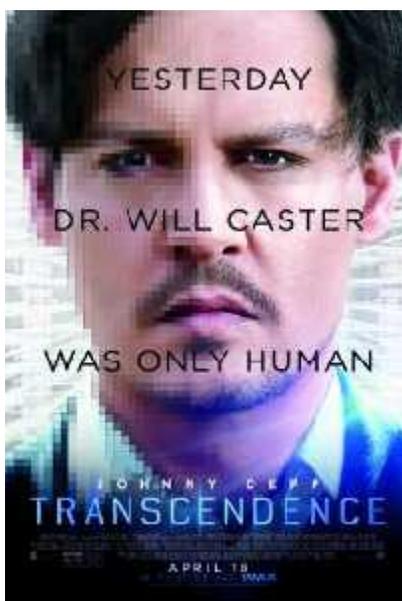
Together, Malcolm and Megan move into a home with a two children from a previous relationship. This new living arrangement for

Malcolm and his instant family gets off to a good start, but that all changes once some strange things begin to happen on the property. At first, Malcolm finds a mysterious box that appears to left inside the home, then he discovers a doll that looks to have a mind of its own. Along with a bunch of other things following behind, the events in the house go from positive and loving o down right evil.

Malcolm doesn't know what to do at first, but he soon realizes that the evil apparitions that he believed he had left in his past are back and stronger than ever. In order to defeat this enemy and keep his new family safe, he must muster up the courage to fight ,but he may also need the help of his old friends and some new compatriots. For all involved, this proves to be dangerous, but it's also necessary while being raucous and hilarious for some.

Fans of **ABOUT LAST NIGHT, ROB THE MOB, DELIVERY MAN, WE'RE THE MILLERS, PEEPLES, MOVIE 43,** and **SCARY MOVIE 5** will laugh out loud with this one.





7/29 2 **TRANSCENDENCE** SCI/FI
\$28 MILL BO 2128 SCREENS PG-13 119 MINUTES

Johnny Depp (EDWARD SCISSORHANDS, BLOW, SLEEPY HOLLOW, PUBLIC ENEMIES, THE TOURIST)

Rebecca Hall (THE TOWN, THE PRESTIGE, CLOSED CIRCUIT, VICKY CHRISTINA BARCELONA)

Morgan Freeman (UNFORGIVEN, THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION, THE BUCKET LIST, NOW YOU SEE ME, GONE BABY GONE)

As Christopher Nolan's go-to cinematographer, Wally Pfister was as responsible as anyone for turning caped crusading and interlocking dream-bound heists into the new fantasy realism. His eye for dense images arguably gave Nolan's trendy downbeat fanboy bait their

weight, and his penchant for high saturation on the dark end of the color spectrum made plausible more than a few CGI sequences. In a similar fashion, Dr. Will Castor (Johnny Depp), the protagonist of Pfister's debut film as a director, **TRANSCENDENCE** has spent his life chasing down the chimera of creating fully functioning artificial intelligence. Unlike other scientists, he believes that human consciousness is a code that can be cracked. And, if his relationship with his "partner in science and in life," Evelyn (Rebecca Hall), is any indication, the code ain't that byzantine. His research is in the bull's eye for RIFT, an underground terrorist movement whose fear of Bayesian babies toddling around without guarantee of conscience is couched within concerns about identity theft. (Hello, Heartbleed!) Their concerns, as it turns out, are just the tip of the silicon iceberg. Following the group's series of attacks on the research community, Will accelerates his research and becomes, literally, the ghost in the machine.



It's all in good fun and the appeal will be to those that liked I, **FRANKENSTEIN, ROBO COP, JACK RYAN: SHADOW RECRUIT, ENDER'S GAME, MACHETE KILLS,** and **KICK ASS 2** will be happy with this one too.