

# EXCLUSIVE! FANTASTIC BEASTS 2

"Dumbledore is dealing with his past, regret and demons in this film" Jude Law

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EXCLUSIVE!

# AQUAMAN

GETTING WET AND WILD WITH DC'S BIG GAMBLE

*"It feels like Avatar,  
Indiana Jones and Star Wars...  
But also its own new world"*

*Jason Momoa*

CHRISTOPHER  
NOLAN ON...

**2001**

JOAQUIN  
PHOENIX

PLUS

SUSPIRIA

SPIDER-MAN

GODZILLA

WHITE BOY RICK

THE BEST OF  
THE 'OOS



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# WELCOME TO TOTAL FILM THE SMARTER MOVIE MAGAZINE



**W**at...er wonderful world, eh? Well, we hope – which is why we netted the cast of DC's last gasp at injecting fun into its universe, *Aquaman*, to find out if James Wan's eye-popping ocean spectacular will sink or swim. Above water, we stayed with mythical creatures as I tried to get any titbits out of the tight-lipped *Fantastic Beasts 2* team (spoiler: there are no spoilers); we went on-set of Steve McQueen's towering *Widows*; chatted with Matthew McConaughey and gang for *White Boy Rick*; mused about the cinematic importance of *2001: A Space Odyssey* with Christopher Nolan; and chased down Joaquin Phoenix to talk through his eclectic career. Plus, we reached the final film decade of our ongoing series with the noughties and got nostalgic about *Austin Powers* with Mike Myers. All in all – groovy, baby.

## ENJOY THE ISSUE!

Jane Crowther, Editor-in-Chief

## CALL SHEET THIS ISSUE'S EXTRAS



**MATTHEW LEYLAND**  
REVIEWS EDITOR

Was met by hordes of fans at a swanky Soho lunch; just as I was reaching for my Sharpie, I saw they were there for Justin Bieber...



**JORDAN FARLEY**  
NEWS EDITOR

Highlight of TIFF – witnessing Jamie Lee Curtis take to the stage after *Halloween's* midnight premiere. The walk home at 2am was a knee-knocker.



**MATT MAYTUM**  
DEPUTY EDITOR

My interview with Jason Momoa was interrupted by an LA thunderstorm. "You're in the safest room, bro – I've got you," he quipped, like a true superhero.

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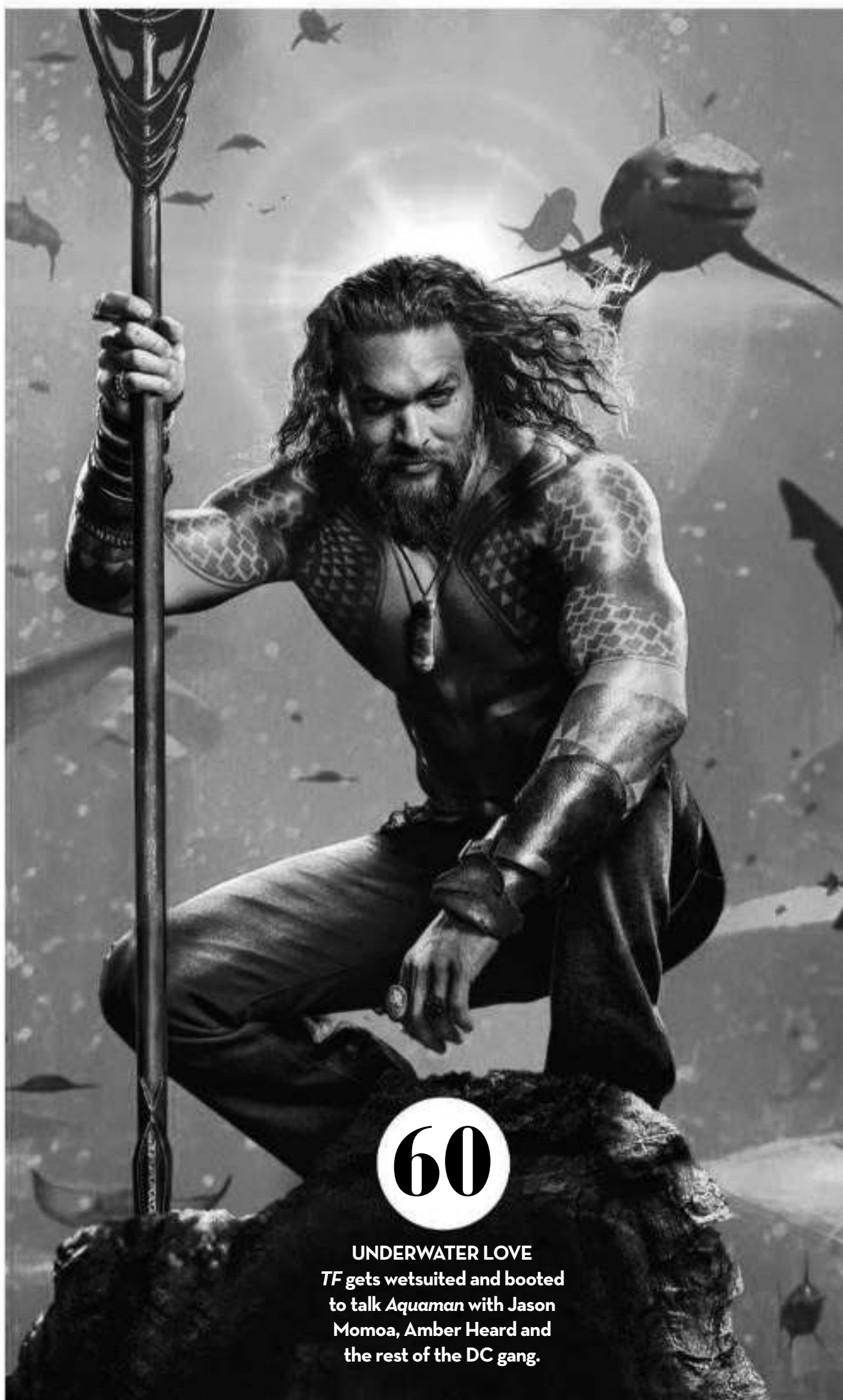
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# Dialogue

Mail, rants, theories etc.



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TF'S CINEMATIC AGONY UNCLE HAS YOUR BACK.

## DEAR WINGMAN,

Your (great) feature '20 Songs That Defined Cinema' [TF277] got me to thinking... is there a song that has been (over)used in films? For me, the one song that comes to mind is 'Beyond The Sea', which for a time popped up in everything from *Black Rain* to *GoodFellas* and continues in everything water-related from *Finding Nemo* to *The Meg*. Though I'm sure Bobby Darin's estate isn't complaining...

**PHIL LAWRENCE, STEVENAGE**

## WINGMAN SAYS...

Oh, there's enough to fill a triple album ('Now That's What I Call That Song From That Film'): 'Sweet Home Alabama', 'Mr. Blue Sky', 'Gimme Shelter', 'All Star', 'Auld Lang Syne', 'Happy Birthday To You'... Perhaps the most overused in one year is Katy Perry's 'Firework', which went off so heavily in 2012 that the fire brigade had to come and sort it out. Have a question for Wingman? Song request? Email me!



## STAR LETTER

★ Just had an inspired brainwave and intend to speak to Benny and Björn about it... *Mamma Mia* 3! I'd pack it with Abba showstoppers not already used in the first two movies: so plenty of unforgettable B-sides, album fillers we skip and formulaic toe-tappers that sound a bit like the big hits but were never quite as good. All shoehorned into a hotel re-re-opening party with a bit of how's and who's your father, along with the amazing Cher playing a great-grandmother and her 17-year-old self in a flashback sequence... Voulez-vous wanna see that?!?

**ELEANOR PALMER, VIA EMAIL**



In the words of 'The Shoop Shoop Song', ohhh NO. But you're likely bang on the money, money, money with your vision of the all-singing, all-dancing, bell-bottomed future. Next thing you know they'll be reverse-adapting the movie into a musical (which'll then

become a movie, an app, an escape room...). Eleanor and everyone with a letter printed here will receive a copy of the searing *Sicario 2: Soldado*, available on digital download from 22 October and 4K UHD, Steelbook, Blu-ray and DVD from 29 October via Lionsgate. Didn't send an address? Email it! See Del Toro, watch Brolin, digging the action scenes...

## PACKING HEAT

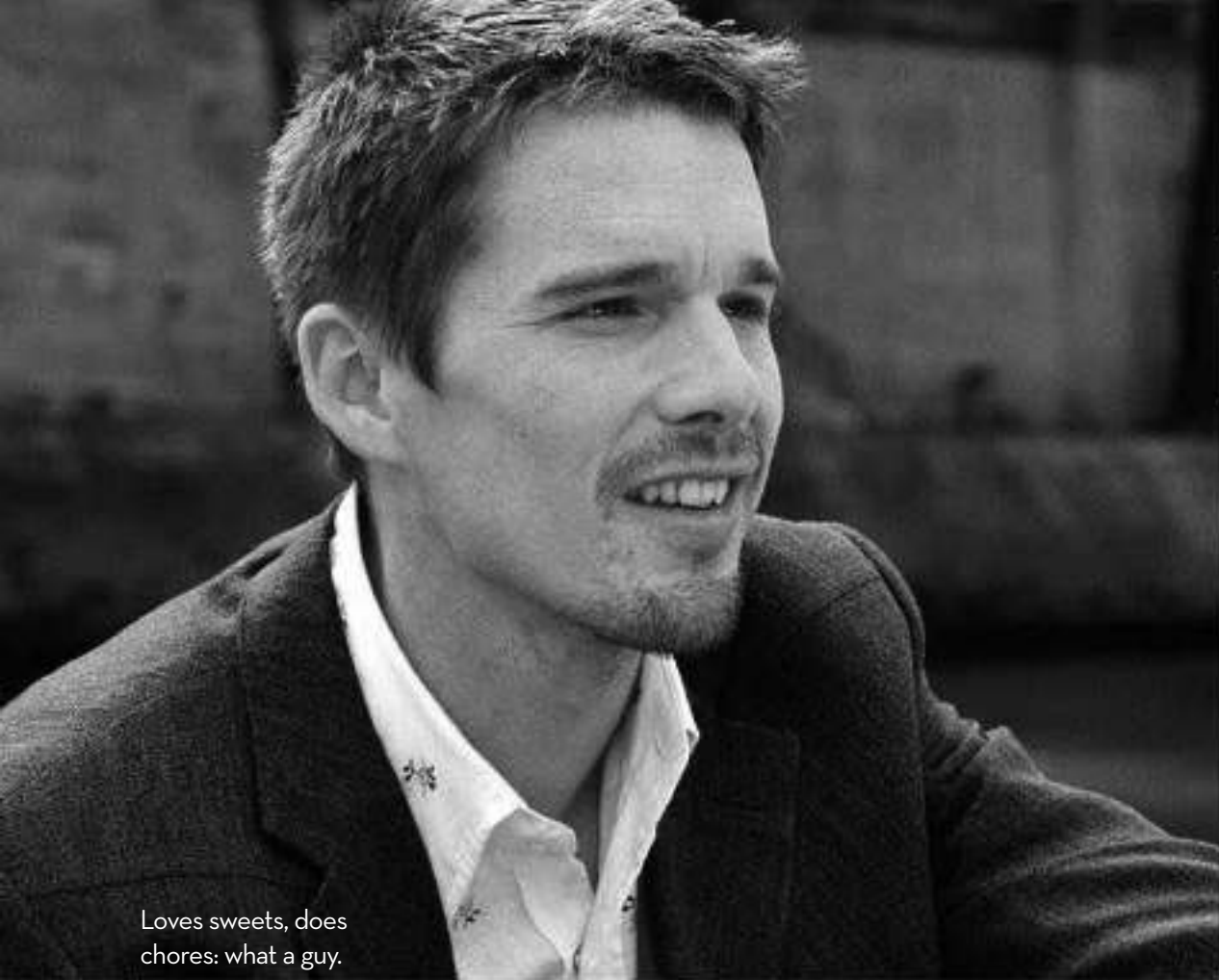
I've noticed something in movies and TV shows that happens whenever anyone needs to start a fire. Whether intentionally or on the spur of the moment, nine out of 10 people have a Zippo they can randomly pull out of their pocket and then casually throw

## OH, MOTHER...

Amanda Seyfried steels herself for another flashback.

## FILM REFLECTIVE INTEREST CURVE™





Loves sweets, does chores: what a guy.

onto the fuel source – even though they’ve not smoked a fag all through the movie/24-episode series. Maybe it’s just me who doesn’t have any fire-lighting equipment in my pocket...  
**DEV ORTON, LEEDS**

Like the saying doesn’t go, where there’s no fag smoke, there’s fire. And any lighter seen early doors in a movie will be handsomely engraved with a sentimental message/symbol/one half of the nuclear codes, not some disposable tat. We need to update ‘Chekhov’s Gun’ to ‘Chekhov’s Zippo’: “A lighter seen in act one will later be used to set off the sprinklers and/or immolate the vampire king.”

### TENTPOLES APART

A question. In relation to tentpole movies, has film critique followed politics/social media and lost the ability to find the middle ground? Can a movie like *Solo: A Star Wars Story*, whose recent *Small Screen* review included the line, “The plot is almost an afterthought. The real story here is a sequence of nods to *Star Wars* history,” really be a four-star film? Although your great mag often proves the exception,

I feel most reviews nowadays of big, franchise movies (*Star Wars*, *Marvel*) will lead me down one of two very opposing paths – those who LOVED it and those who HATED it. What happened to balance?  
**SIMON ELLIOTT, VIA EMAIL**

We’re all about balance at TF Towers. Reviewers are encouraged to tattoo their knuckles with ‘love’ and ‘hate’ à la *The Night Of The Hunter*, which oddly seems to give us first dibs on the Doritos in screening rooms. *Solo*, meanwhile, is what we refer to as – and this is very technical stuff, so pay attention – a ‘low four’, which means it’s a stand-out scene (or two) short of a ‘solid four’, but a meme-able one-liner (or two) ahead of a ‘high three’. There’s a chart explaining it all in the TF kitchen; it’s like an eye test designed by *The Matrix*.

### TALKING THE HAWKE

I enjoyed reading the ‘Between Takes’ interview with Ethan Hawke in *TF277*. Given his film roles, I was perhaps wrongly expecting someone a bit different. But he seems like a normal guy, talking about getting on

## OFFICE SPACED

Chatter ‘gems’ overheard in the Total Film office this month...

- \* “Had a George Lucas dream; he patted me like I was Chewie”
- \* “Jane! There’s another shark in the cupboard!”
- \* “Yes, it is an arse. But it’s a one-time arse.”
- \* “I’m tropical. Matt is fuzzy peaches.”



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#### CAINE-ING IT

[bit.ly/2P4pACT](http://bit.ly/2P4pACT)

Here at TF Towers, one theme has dominated 2018: pulverising cakes with mallets. This *King Of*

*Thieves* number saw us get away with a major break-in (before necking the evidence).



#### JOAQUIN PLAYS HIS JOKER

[bit.ly/2y8oePN](http://bit.ly/2y8oePN)

“Shows they’re aiming for a Ledger feel,” admired Alan Barbarin of the first still from the

*Joker* film. “He looks like a creative writing instructor,” said @BarryDALbrecht. Just, um, kidding?



#### WHO SHOULD BE SUPERMAN NEXT?

[bit.ly/2zLskzb](http://bit.ly/2zLskzb)

“Ray Winstone” (@corconian); “Deadpool” (@NukaWoelk); “Me” (@Neil\_Dev78). Lots of

support for Cavill to stay Supes, though @chemalino suggested: “Daniel Craig. Straight swap with Bond.”



#### DARK PHOENIX TRAILER: DISCUSS

[bit.ly/2y7AT5D](http://bit.ly/2y7AT5D)

“I thought it was great,” said Yiorgos Perris, following through with four exclamation marks.

Others weren’t so sure: “Not happy with no Wolverine,” said Jonnyb57, but “I’ll probably watch it.”



#### SOLO: A STAR AWWS STORY

[bit.ly/2Qocb8A](http://bit.ly/2Qocb8A)

Last month it was giant sharks; this month it’s wookiees. TF’s toy collection is as hard as they come.

Mind you, this furry fella looks as likely to lick your face and leave you limbless. Bring it in, fuzzball!



#### CAPTAIN MARVEL TRAILER: THOUGHTS?

[bit.ly/2NdQMwB](http://bit.ly/2NdQMwB)

“The wait was worth it... now just gonna have to sit here until

March.” (Stephen White) “How long is she going to wear the ugly green costume in the film?” (r1dogz)



#### CAKEY RICH ASIANS

[bit.ly/2zMIMzs](http://bit.ly/2zMIMzs)

Readers, we married them. The cakes. We married the cakes. Well, that’s what we assume the ring

was for on these *Crazy Rich* treats. They’re what we’ve always wanted (since they binned the vending machine).



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with people at work, having an Achilles heel for sweets (don't we all?) and always having loads to do at home. It got me wondering, who else has come across as really down to Earth in interviews, and who's a bit off-piste? **CHRIS GARLICK, PONTYPRIDD**

Well, that would be air-kissing and telling, wouldn't it? We'd be lying if we didn't say the odd interviewee has left us, well, piste-off; but the vast majority are civil, accommodating, really interesting, smell great and... why yes, we would like 10 minutes longer than all the other journalists, that would be smashing. Have you been away? You look radiant!

**KILLING TIME**

Well, I've just seen *The Predator*. Filled with excitement, I sat down ready to watch the movies' greatest killing machine (apart from Jaws). Shane Black said he looked to the original for inspiration. All I can say is he must have been in a pissed-off mood about being offed first, because the new film is absolutely awful. What was he thinking? An absolute joke of a film which had so much potential. I feel let down as I'm sure lots of others will too. **DANNY, BAGSHOT**

Although I love a good update on upcoming films, I've noticed that *The Predator* has made it on to your cover several times in the last few months. Half a page here and there...

but then [in TF277] you go further and reveal a vital plot element: Predators in army cargos! Semi-ruined the film before it was even out! Oh, and can we please stop doing BIG pieces on blockbusters that turn out shite, while little-known gems get five-star corner reviews? Just a thought. Otherwise, keep up the good work.

**PAUL FLANAGAN, VIA EMAIL**

One question: is *The Predator* a comedy?

**JOHN BASKERVILLE, BIRMINGHAM**

blockbusters, we never knowingly back a loser; and while we remain a broad church, our populist bent does mean we're more likely to put a Spidey or Stath on the stain-glassed windows.

**PLOTTING DEVICES**

I've finally watched the original *Predator* for the first time and the thermal vision got me thinking. Throughout the years we've had many interesting villains with different skills and abilities that've come out of nowhere. My question is, what villain's gadgets and abilities are your favourite? Not the best, just the ones you found fun to watch. **KYBER 73, VIA EMAIL**

*Despicable Me's* Gru has some corksers; every time we go in John Lewis we idly hope to buy a fart gun or squid launcher, only to come away with a new dustpan. Damn you, adulthood!

**FUNNY HOW?**

Preds loves an excuse to pull out his Joe Pesci impression.



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Well, not in the *Bridget Jones's Diary* sense, but yes, Black did seem as keen on funny-bone-tickling as spinal-column-stripping. As it turns out - anti-spoiler warning! - the bit with Preds in army pants didn't make it to the final cut; shame, we'd love to have seen them looking like the world's angriest All Saints tribute act. As for big, shite

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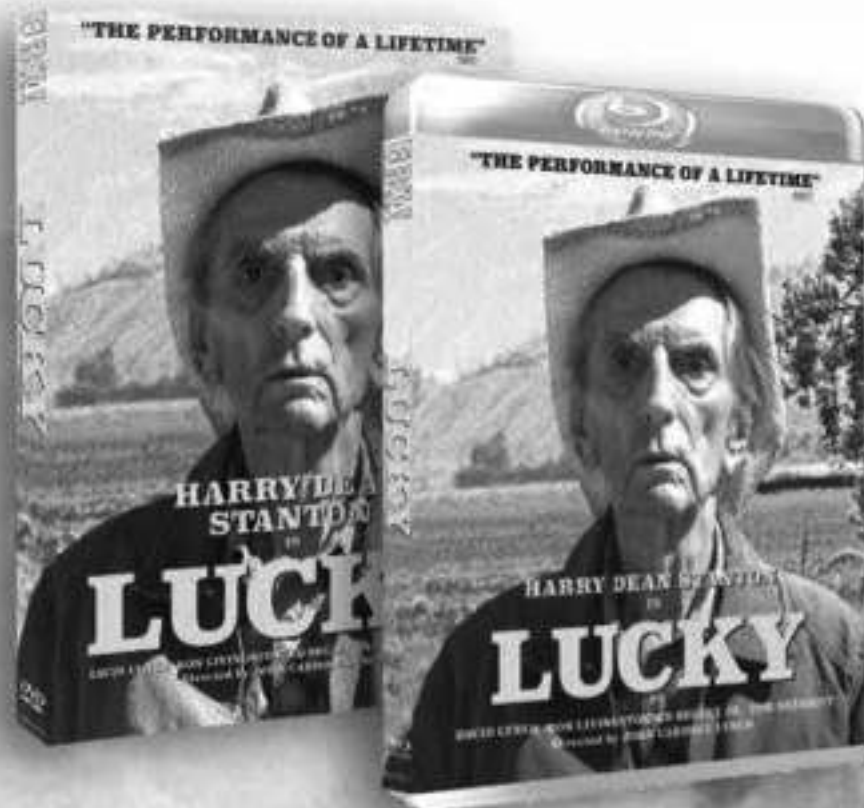
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EDITED BY JORDAN FARLEY



EXCLUSIVE

## BOY IN THE HOOD

**ROBIN HOOD** | Is a cool cast led by Taron Egerton enough to justify yet another take on Sherwood's mythical outlaw? Teasers investigates.

**W**hen the trailer dropped for Otto Bathurst's revisionist *Robin Hood* – starring Taron Egerton – confusion reigned, with the Mediterranean-looking Nottingham and machine-stitched hoodies greeted grumpily by cynics. “If you bring any historical expectation, you’re going to be very angry within 10 seconds,” says Bathurst, in London’s Soho Hotel. The British director is fully aware that his take on *Robin Hood* will antagonise purists. “It’s got some edge to it, it’s got a voice,” he argues. “It’s very different to any other [version].”

Since the silent movie era, Nottingham's iconic robber of the rich has reappeared on screen every decade, played by everyone from Errol Flynn to Kevin Costner. Most recently it was Russell Crowe in Ridley Scott's 2010 movie. No wonder Egerton

was reluctant when he was first approached. “I remember the email: ‘Are you interested in playing Robin Hood?’ And I said, ‘No,’” admits the *Kingsman* star, when *TF* meets him in New York's Mandarin Hotel. “It felt too soon, post the Russell Crowe one

– which had a mixed reception, but has to be said did very good business.”

But is that a reason simply to regurgitate Robin once more? With an impressive career in TV – helming episodes of *Peaky Blinders* and *Black Mirror* – did Bathurst really want to risk his feature debut on this? “My take on the *Robin Hood* story was initially: ‘Really? Another one? Why does the world need another *Robin Hood* story?’”

It's a point that was made to the cast, notes Jamie Dornan, the *Fifty Shades* star who signed on to play Robin's peer Will Scarlet. “And then he saw the opportunity to make it

**TAKING A BOW**  
Taron Egerton stars as the do-gooding thief in a radical reimagining of the Brit legend.

something that is his own. Even from the trailer, you can tell it's nothing like a *Robin Hood* movie that you'd expect."

Bathurst's *Robin Hood* is a fast-paced origin story showing how Robin of Loxley became the outlaw Hood as he returns from the Crusades with feelings of vengeance towards the corrupt crown. "I think what we tried to do, to make this one different, is reach a younger audience that are used to playing videogames and watching superhero films," adds Eve Hewson, who plays Maid Marian. "We tried to make Robin a superhero in a way."

The director wanted to get past the usual "myopic" Hollywood view of Robin. "My take on it is you don't become a legend for 600 years if all that you've done is stolen a few bags of money from some rich people and given it to some poor people," he says. "That's not enough for major legendary status. Clearly this guy was a militarised anarchist, a truth seeker, a freedom fighter, a justice warrior."

If Robin is the mythical rabble-rouser writ large in folklore, it's why Bathurst was finally convinced another telling was relevant. Egerton concurs. "There is a growing gap between how

wealthy people are, an inflating sense of wealth in the one per cent. I think in a climate like that, there is space for a *Robin Hood* story."

But will this be enough to convince cinemagoers to accept a new Robin after so many incarnations? "Audiences forget quickly. Just look at *Spider-Man*," argues Egerton. "We've tried to make a myth feel like something that resonates with an audience that are so thirsty and hungry for high-octane superhero fare. And I really feel we've succeeded."

Rather than go for A-list, Bathurst has cast intriguingly. "When you want to really re-version something, everything is open," he says. It's why he went for Jamie Foxx as Robin's ally Little John, here re-fashioned with Moorish origins. Meanwhile, *Rogue One*'s Ben Mendelsohn is the Sheriff of Nottingham. Can he match Alan

Rickman in 1991 gem *Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves*? "A huge portion of our audience will never have seen the Kevin Costner movie," the director shrugs. "It's a very, very different movie. Ben Mendelsohn's sheriff is much darker – there's no cancelling of Christmas."

Foxx compares it to another film he starred in, Quentin Tarantino's *Django Unchained*, "which was a story set in slavery [times], but it really wasn't about slavery." Likewise, *Robin Hood* shakes off the shackles of its predecessors. "When we were shooting, I didn't think about any other *Robin Hoods*. We were cooking in a whole different way. Literally, when you see that opening scene, you go, 'What the fuck am I watching?'"

Syria-set, this visceral sequence sees Robin and Little John at the Crusades pinned down by a Saracen sniper. "It feels like *Black Hawk Down*," says Bathurst, who desperately wanted to contemporise Robin's adventures. He also visualised the horse-set action

like car chases and re-imagined Nottingham as "the political, financial and cultural centre of Europe" to make the story feel bigger.

Further twists include Robin's relationship with Will Scarlet.

"They're not friends and it's not the half-brother thing," reveals Dornan. Instead, he's something of a rival – notably for the affections of Marian. "There is a cool, interesting, complicated love triangle that's going on," says Hewson, who promises Marian isn't merely decoration. "She's not pushed around by the guys."

While there was a delay in the release date, the film is now going up against the *Fantastic Beasts* sequel, suggesting a confidence that *Robin Hood* could be the start of a franchise.

"Hopefully we get a chance to make some more within this series," nods Dornan. And if they don't? "I would bet the ranch on the fact that after us there will be another re-telling of *Robin Hood*. It's just one of those characters." JM

ETA | 21 NOVEMBER / ROBIN HOOD OPENS NEXT MONTH.

## 'IT RESONATES WITH PEOPLE HUNGRY FOR HIGH-OCTANE, SUPERHERO FARE'

TARON EGERTON



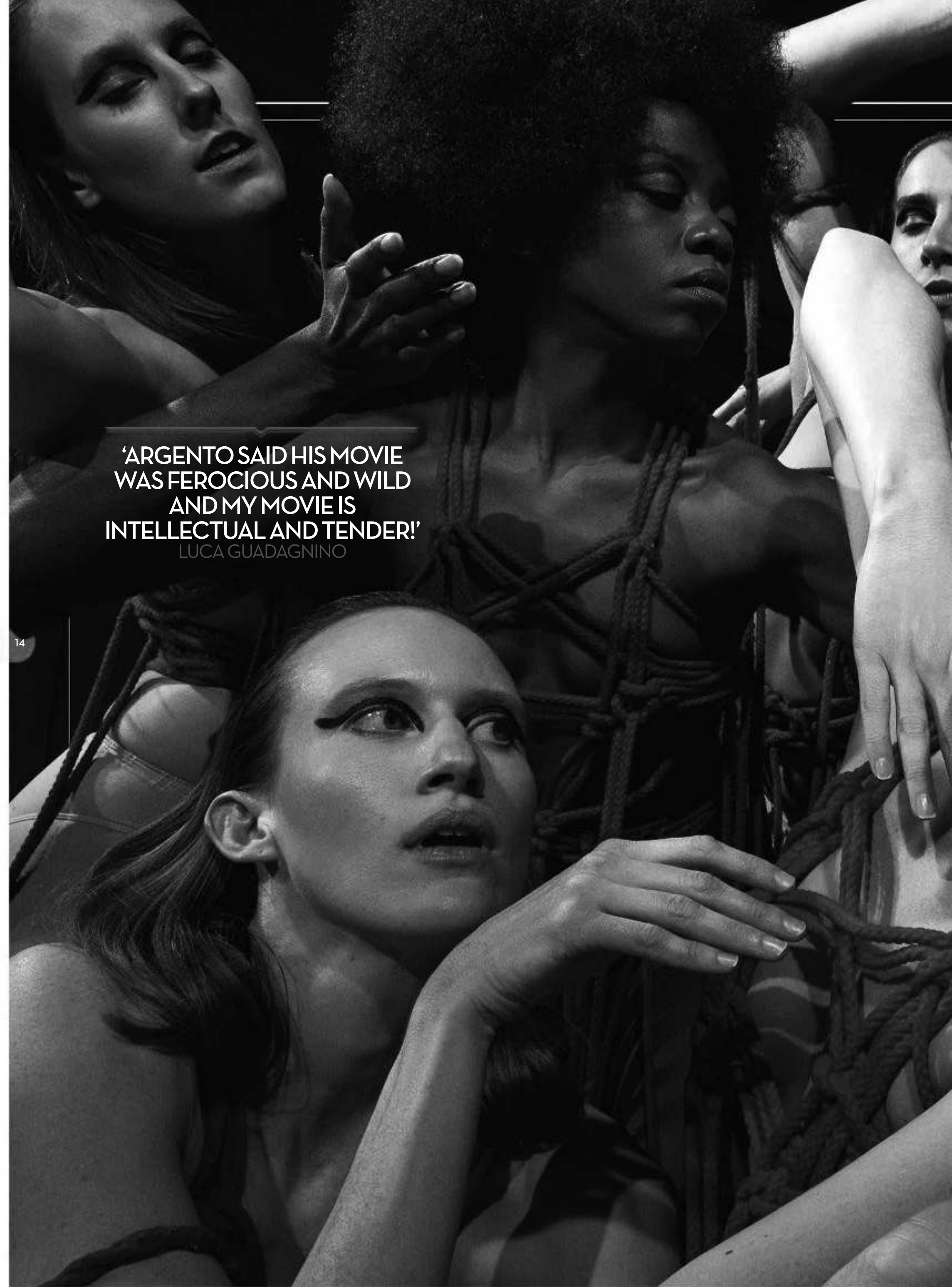
LOVE AND WAR  
Paul Anderson as the sheriff's head henchman Guy of Gisborne (top); Eve Hewson as Maid Marian (above).

LAW AND DISORDER  
Ben Mendelsohn as the Sheriff of Nottingham; Jamie Dornan as Will Scarlet (centre).





**NOTTS BOUNTY**  
Jamie Foxx is an all-action Little John, and Robin's gung-ho ally.



**'ARGENTO SAID HIS MOVIE  
WAS FEROCIOUS AND WILD  
AND MY MOVIE IS  
INTELLECTUAL AND TENDER!'**  
LUCA GUADAGNINO

EXCLUSIVE

## DANCE MACABRE

SUSPIRIA | Luca Guadagnino's remake casts a spell...

**P**alermo, 1985." Luca Guadagnino remembers exactly where he was when he first saw Dario Argento's 1977 horror masterpiece *Suspiria*. "It was the living room of my family home and I was all alone. It was 9 o'clock in the evening. I was scared and shocked."

Now it's his turn to crank up the scares with this chilling and challenging remake of Argento's vivid supernatural tale.

Hot off his Oscar-nominated *Call Me By Your Name*, Guadagnino has gathered a strong female cast led by his star from 2015's *A Bigger Splash*, Dakota Johnson. "An actress who never goes for the obvious," she plays Susie Bannion, an American dancer who joins a Berlin dance academy hiding a witches' coven.

While it's almost an hour longer than the original, Guadagnino does not feel his version is so different. "I like to think this film is a sibling, a cousin, a member of the Argento family," he says. Argento even gave his blessing after seeing the remake. "He said his movie was ferocious and wild and my movie is intellectual and tender!"

This may come from the exhilarating choreography by Damien Jalet and score

by Thom Yorke, the first time the Radiohead frontman has ever written a soundtrack. "I felt this movie needed the voice of our generation, for the music of this film." How did he get Yorke? "I always ask! I try! Sometimes you succeed, sometimes you don't!"

With the cast including Argento's original star Jessica Harper and Chloë Grace Moretz, Guadagnino's muse Tilda Swinton plays multiple roles, including an ageing male shrink (under prosthetics and credited to the fictional Lutz Ebersdorf). "Our aim was to have a new face born on screen," he grins. "That's what I can tell you." *JM*

ETA | 16 NOVEMBER / SUSPIRIA OPENS NEXT MONTH.



# YOU TALKIN' TO ME?

Film quotes pose as questions. Film stars try to cope.

IN THE CROSSHAIRS THIS MONTH **BEN SCHWARTZ**

## Are you talkin' to me?

I am, in fact, talking to you from a Tesla SpaceX rocket. I'm going towards the sky. I shouldn't even have brought it up, but I appreciate your candour and acting like it's not blowing your mind.

## Do you feel lucky, punk?

I do. I feel like I'm pretty lucky to be in this business in the first place, and I picked up a heads-up penny moments ago, and immediately after an anvil just missed me. So I do feel very lucky lately.

## You talk the talk, do you walk the walk?

I made a big deal of being like The Rock, and I haven't even been to the gym this week. So, I guess that's a personal attack on me and I'm not psyched about it.

## What's the last thing that you do remember?

I remember waking up, and then I had all these different words on my body telling me what to do. So the last thing I remember was looking down, and it said "call this number" on my arm. You're calling out my lack of memory. This is a very aggressive interview.

## Have you ever danced with the devil in the pale moonlight?

I have, and he's unbelievable at cha-cha. The movement and pizzazz of the devil? I cannot recommend doing it enough.

## You ever have that feeling where you're not sure if you're awake or still dreaming?

Yes. There's a term for it: sleep paralysis. It happened to me three times at college. This isn't even a joke. It was terrifying. I couldn't move, but I was trying to scream to my roommate to wake me up. And then I finally gasp for air, wake up and go, "Did you hear I was screaming?" He goes, "No, what are you talking about?" I don't know why I just told you a real, personal story. I thought this interview was supposed to be fun.



## 'I'M STILL IN AWE THAT PEOPLE LOVE JEAN-RALPHIO. IT'S ME TURNING INTO A CARTOON'

### When you can live forever, what do you live for?

I guess retweets and likes. Is that all anybody cares about now?

### Why so serious?

Because I want to have a real interview. I don't want to go goofing off. I want to make sure that you know I'm being serious, and all my answers are real.

### What's your favourite scary movie?

*Up*, because I'm terrified of balloons.

### If you could change something in your life, anything at all, what would it be?

I would be able to dunk a basketball, because this is nonsense. I'm 37 now, and I can't do it. When I was in high

school, I could dunk a softball.

And every year since then, I've gotten further and further away from my goal of dunking a basketball.

### You either surf or fight...

Get me and my arch-nemesis on a longboard, put us in the ocean, and let us scuffle it out. Whoever falls off first is the loser, *American Gladiators*-style.

### Do you like what you do for a living, these things that you see?

I love what I do for a living. The biggest appeal of [Blue Iguana] was Sam Rockwell. I think Sam is truly one of the best actors. This was before he won an Oscar, so I was on it way before then. But the other thing was to play in one of these heist movies that I watched growing up, and to also have that British flare to it. It's so fun that I get to fire a gun, or be that clumsy idiot, or talk too much shit. It was all those components.

### What would you do if you knew you had less than one minute to live?

I would google "coolest things to do in under 60 seconds". That would probably be the end of my minute.

### What's in California?

A lot of smog, but also Teslas. So it's weird. You're not quite certain what's happening.

### Why don't you turn that frizzown upside-dizity?

[laughs] You're right. I think that's a beautiful sentence, and you're right, I will. The idea that I've been feeling sad for one second makes me want to feel happy again. I'm still in awe that people love [Parks And Recreation's] Jean-Ralphio. If you watch that character, it's me slowly turning into a cartoon. I had so much fun doing it. *JF*

ETA | OUT NOW / BLUE IGUANA IS AVAILABLE NOW ON BLU-RAY, DVD AND ON DEMAND.



Schwartz with Sam Rockwell in *Blue Iguana*.



EXCLUSIVE

## RODAN WARRIORS

### GODZILLA: KING OF THE MONSTERS I

Michael Dougherty on his MonsterVerse love...

**L**ong ago, Michael Dougherty was swept away by a winged creature. “As a kid, there was a Rodan toy I wanted badly for Christmas and I never got it,” he tells *Teasers*. “Even into adult life, it always felt like the holy grail.” Though the *Krampus* helmer eventually fulfilled his dream via eBay, he’s getting to dream bigger with his position as co-writer/director of Legendary’s third MonsterVerse movie.

Previous entries *Godzilla* (2014) and *Kong: Skull Island* (2017) both distinguished their tentpole turmoil with a heightened pulp passion for their resident monsters. So, before gecko fights monkey in 2020’s *Godzilla Vs. Kong*, Dougherty promises similar levels of lizard-love: “Some of my earliest memories are watching *Godzilla* movies. My mother is Vietnamese, and *Godzilla* movies and kung fu movies were the only places I could see Asian people on TV. He’s been with me my entire life.”

Family connections fuel the film’s story, with *Stranger Things*’ Millie Bobby Brown making her movie debut as Madison Russell, daughter to crypto-zoological agency Monarch’s Dr. Emma Russell (Vera Farmiga). When the pair

are kidnapped by nefarious forces, Emma’s ex-hubby (Kyle Chandler) mounts a rescue campaign. Joining the mix are O’Shea Jackson Jr.’s military man and Zhang Ziyi’s mysterious scientist, while survivors of 2014’s *Godzilla* include Sally Hawkins, Ken Watanabe and daddy G himself, headlining the menagerie of outsized insect Mothra, dino-bird Rodan and triple-headed dragon King Ghidorah.

While Dougherty wanted to create “a film that could stand on its own”, he also set out to respect founding Japanese studio Toho’s kaiju canon. Declaring his monsters “very faithful” to the original films, he promises to honour both the “morality play”

**BRIDGE TOO FAR**  
Monsters in the mist; Millie Bobby Brown as Madison Russell (below).

angle and Mothra’s portrayal as a goddess. Notably, Emma and Madison first encounter her in an ancient temple. What’s more, Dougherty banked blessings from the source: “Toho had final approval on the creatures. I had to go to Japan and do a big presentation – which was intimidating. Thankfully, they signed off on everything without hesitation.”

Dougherty doesn’t hesitate, either, to praise Gareth Edwards’ 2014 *Godzilla*, which “loved the character as much as I do”, he says. His cast loved the creatures, too, with Brown falling for the goddess-in-residence. “Madison has a really, like, interesting connection to Mothra,” she teases.

Dougherty, meanwhile, maintains a love for Rodan, “because he’s always been a bit of an underdog.” If the MonsterVerse offers its own pulp-y underdog alternative to cinema’s slicker expanded universes, its secret weapon could be that very reverence. “I have such a deep-rooted love for these creatures,” Dougherty says.

“These aren’t just giant monsters, they’re ancient gods.”  
Get ready to hail the king. *KH*

ETA | 31 MAY / GODZILLA: KING OF THE MONSTERS OPENS IN SPRING.





EXCLUSIVE

## THEY'RE ALIVE!

JOHN CARPENTER |

Sometimes, they come back.

**J**ohn Carpenter's '80s classics *The Fog*, *Escape From New York*, *Prince Of Darkness* and *They Live* have all been restored to grace cinema screens once more before their release on EST, DVD, BD and 4K UHD.

Gleaming like never before, they thrill and chill as they always have, and perhaps viewers will now catch on to what Carpenter has always maintained – that the last two listed above, often overlooked, are among his finest.

"*They Live* was about Reaganism," Carpenter tells *Teasers*, before pointing out its themes are more relevant than ever in the Trump era. "It's stunning what's happened to my country. But it's always been there – I grew up in the Jim Crow south. Trump just brought it out. That's the sad thing. I looked at the white supremacist stuff at Charlottesville last year and thought, 'My God, the country's in trouble.'"

As for the dread-drenched Satanic shocker *Prince Of Darkness*, which blends theoretical physics with theology to singularly scary effect, he now reveals another influence beyond the oft-quoted *Quatermass* movies and TV show. "A lot of it was inspired by that Dario Argento movie, *Inferno*. It was nuts. I thought, 'I could do that.' So I pulled out everything on that film." JG

ETA | 26 OCTOBER-22 NOVEMBER / THE CARPENTER FILMS PLAY SELECTED CINEMAS, AND RELEASE ON HOME ENTERTAINMENT, FROM OCTOBER.



EXCLUSIVE

## BEYOND BORG

ALITA: BATTLE ANGEL | When Robert Rodriguez met James Cameron...

**W**hen James Cameron bought the rights to Yukito Kishiro's manga *Battle Angel Alita*, the plan was for it to be his next production after TV series *Dark Angel*. That was back in 2000. But then Cameron got lost in *Avatar*'s universe and *Alita* became an unmade Cameron script – until Robert Rodriguez stepped in. Asked by Cameron and his producer Jon Landau to take the helm, the director undertook a daunting prospect.

**'I'M JUST ASTONISHED ON  
A DAILY BASIS WHEN I GET  
NEW EFFECTS SHOTS THAT  
ARE MIND-BLOWING'**

ROBERT RODRIGUEZ

Wading through “a thousand pages of notes, a 200-page script and a tonne of artwork”, it’s been a “huge production”, says Rodriguez, dwarfing every movie he’s done, from *Sin City* to *Spy Kids*. Even now, some two years after the shoot, his team are still finessing the extensive visual effects. “I’m surprised it didn’t go longer,” he adds. “I’m just astonished on a daily basis when I get new effects shots in that just are mind-blowing.”

Based in the metropolis of Iron City (built extensively at Rodriguez’s Troublemaker Studios in Austin), Alita is a broken cyborg discovered by Christoph Waltz’s kindly doctor. Played by Rosa Salazar, via performance capture, Alita gradually comes to realise things about her past life. Or, as Rodriguez puts it, “It’s about a warrior finding their heart.”

With Cameron’s *Lightstorm* Entertainment behind the \$200

million project, Rodriguez has remained faithful not only to the manga but to the spirit of Cameron. When he first came on board, he made a promise to his screenwriter. “I said, ‘Hey man, I’m not going to turn it into a Robert Rodriguez movie. I’m going to shoot it as a missing Jim Cameron movie! I want to see that film!’” Don’t we all. *JM*

ETA | 5 FEBRUARY / ALITA: BATTLE ANGEL  
OPENS NEXT YEAR.



## TRAILER BREAKDOWN

## ABSOLUTE HERO

**CAPTAIN MARVEL** | Step aside Thor, Marvel's strongest super gets a debut teaser...



01

The MCU has progressed in real time (more or less). But as an amnesiac Carol Danvers (Brie Larson) falling into a Blockbuster shows, *Captain Marvel* is set mainly in the past. The early '90s, to be precise.



02

Further proof: digitally de-aged Samuel L. Jackson as a biocular Nick Fury. Long before the Avengers Initiative, Fury was a S.H.I.E.L.D suit ready to quit, until he met "renegade soldier" Danvers.



03

Skipping the usual origin story structure, Danvers is introduced as a member of elite Kree warrior team StarForce, alongside Gemma Chan's sadistic sniper Minn-Erva and Djimon Hounsou's Korath.



04

They're led by Jude Law's "devout" commander. Initially rumoured to be playing the heroic Mar-vell, speculation has shifted to Yon-Rogg, a Kree warlord with ties to "turblossom" Ronan the Accuser.



05

Shape-shifting aliens the Skrulls make their MCU debut. Amidst a war with the Kree, the Skrulls invade Earth under Ben Mendelsohn's Talos, who hides in plain sight as Fury's S.H.I.E.L.D. boss.



06

But with "powers that are off the charts" (Kevin Feige's words), Carol is more than a match for the ugly green E.T.s, especially when she taps into her 'binary form'. Thanos must be bricking it. *JF*

ETA | 8 MARCH / CAPTAIN MARVEL OPENS NEXT YEAR.



EXCLUSIVE

## SIX SHOOTER

### THE BALLAD OF BUSTER SCRUGGS I

The Coens go way out west...

**F**un fact: the Coen brothers' 2010 remake of the John Wayne classic *True Grit* was the biggest hit of their career. "It was wildly successful in the States for some damn reason," shrugs Ethan Coen. "Nobody expected that." Especially as the western is the genre that the industry perennially claims is out of fashion, despite making sporadic re-appearances. "It's hard to kill it," argues Joel. "Maybe this movie will!"

He's referring to their latest, *The Ballad Of Buster Scruggs* – a Wild West-set anthology of six shorts. The first episode – the titular tale of a singing, sharp-shooting cowboy, played here by Tim Blake Nelson – was written as far back as 25 years ago, which may explain its comic-book violence, à la early Coen movies like *Raising Arizona*. "It does feel like a throwback," admits Joel, "but something we were perfectly happy to re-engage with."

Over the years, they wrote further stories – including 'Near Algodones' (which stars James Franco as a luckless bank-robbing varmint), the gothic 'Meal Ticket' (Liam Neeson as a freak-show peddler) and 'All Gold Canyon' (a Jack London adaptation, with Tom Waits as a prospector). "[We took] little breaks to work on

other movies to pay the bills!" laughs Ethan, though in truth they had no idea what to do with the shorts.

Eventually, the idea of an anthology arose – and they promptly penned the final two episodes, wagon train yarn 'The Gal Who Got Rattled' and the stagecoach-set 'The Mortal Remains'.



#### BEST WESTERN

Liam Neeson as the Impresario, in 'Meal Ticket'; Tim Blake Nelson as the titular Buster (below).

While Netflix got involved, Joel is swift to point out that the project was never meant as a TV series, despite media reports. "It was a bit of a perfect storm of confusion," he says. "We never went back, modified, re-wrote, re-cut or re-organised what we were doing."

With the Coens shooting from Nebraska to New Mexico, it became one of the most difficult projects of their career, despite being surrounded by their usual collaborators. Take 'The Gal Who Got Rattled', which stars Zoe Kazan and Bill Heck. "The logistical parts of that are just unbelievable," says Joel. With wagons, livestock and extras to wrangle, "something is going to go wrong!" says Ethan. "Every take, it was always something... it was a fucking pain in the ass!"

While it's not as if the Coens had to whittle down a dozen or so stories to the final six, they do reveal that there is one short that got left unmade, 'The Warden's Hobby'. "It's too advanced even for this movie," says Ethan. "It was one of the sub-genres we didn't do – the Yuma prison western." Joel adds, "It was about a warden" – he glances at Ethan – "but we're not going to talk about that!" His brother starts snickering. "You couldn't handle it!" JM

ETA | 16 NOVEMBER / THE BALLAD OF BUSTER SCRUGGS IS AVAILABLE ON NETFLIX NEXT MONTH.



## EXCLUSIVE

# A WRINKLE IN CRIME

**THE OLD MAN AND THE GUN** | David Lowery directs Robert Redford's last stand...

**A**ctors don't always get to announce their retirement. Often, the industry simply stops casting them. But not Robert Redford. This year, the Sundance Kid announced that *The Old Man And The Gun* would likely be his last movie. "As a fan, I hope that it's not the final film he does," says *Old Man*'s writer-director David Lowery. "But if it is, as a filmmaker, I consider it a tremendous honour that he loves the movie enough to feel that it's a fitting note to go out on."

Telling the story of real-life perennial bank robber Forrest Tucker, the film comes across like an homage to Redford's illustrious career, with the actor carrying 60-odd years of cinematic baggage. "Just by virtue of him appearing in the film, you wind up having a film that is about the actor Robert Redford," says Lowery. "Rather than try to hide from it... I thought the natural thing to do was just let that be part of the film. It didn't take any extra effort on my part. It was just a matter of embracing it."

Notably, Lowery does so in the bravura montage that shows how the Florida-raised Tucker escaped from

prison multiple times. Some were based on reality. Others were nods to famous movie moments in films like *Escape From Alcatraz*. And then one was a clip from Redford's early 1965 effort *The Chase*, in which he played a convict on the lam. "It suddenly became not just about Forrest Tucker and how brilliantly he broke out of prison so many times, but also about Robert Redford and his career as a movie star and outlaw on the silver screen."

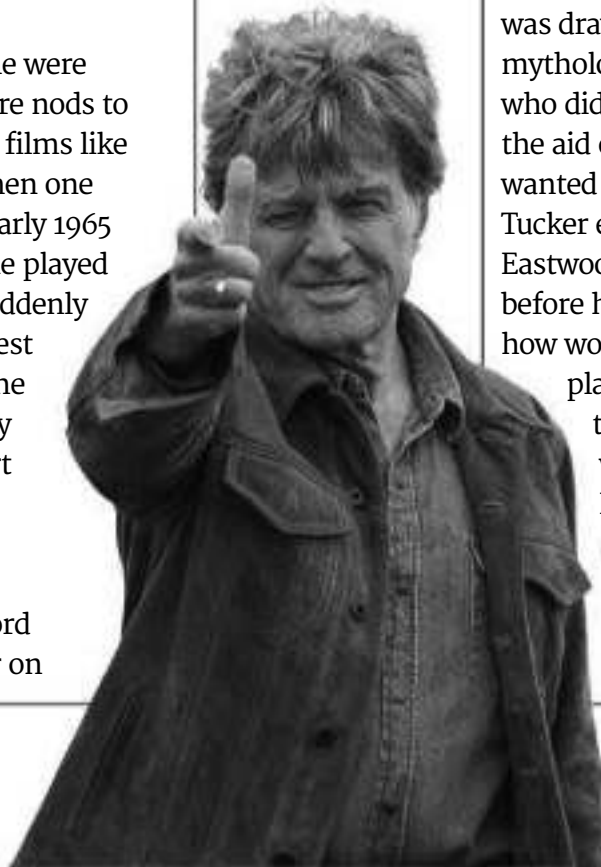
While Lowery and Redford previously worked together on

**FINAL WORD**  
Robert Redford plays bank robber Forrest Tucker, in what might be his last film role.

the 2016 Disney remake *Pete's Dragon*, that was a mere test run, allowing the filmmaker "to get over all the butterflies in my stomach". With Tom Waits and Danny Glover cast as Tucker's cohorts, Lowery brought in Sissy Spacek to play Jewel, a farm widow who offers the ageing robber a law-abiding life. Remarkably, Redford had never worked with – or even really met – the *Badlands* star. "I thought that was insane. They feel like they're cut from the same cloth."

When it came to Tucker, Lowery was drawn to depicting a self-mythologising "gentleman" criminal who did most of his stealing without the aid of a gun or violence. "He really wanted a movie to be made of his life." Tucker even sent his life story to Clint Eastwood when he was in prison, before he died in 2004 in Texas. So how would he have felt about Redford playing him? "He would've been thrilled," beams Lowery. "He would've ignored all the liberties I took with his story!" *JM*

ETA | 7 DECEMBER / THE OLD MAN AND THE GUN OPENS THIS WINTER.



## THE NEXT BIG THING

## HERA HILMAR

IS NO MERE MORTAL...

**B**est known for historical fantasy series *Da Vinci's Demons*, 29-year-old Icelandic actress Hera Hilmar is about to make a major splash on the big screen, starring alongside Ben Kingsley in *An Ordinary Man* and heading up the cast of Peter Jackson-produced post-apocalyptic sci-fi *Mortal Engines*, as revenge-fueled assassin Hester Shaw. "It's like being a big kid in a playground."

**Were you aware of Philip Reeve's *Mortal Engines* books before signing up?**

I wasn't. I was a bit like, "What is this? It sounds bonkers." But if you know Peter Jackson is making it, you go, "Well, it's probably going to be *good* bonkers!" There are cities on wheels that hunt other cities, so they can get their food and metals, and even people to use as slaves. So it's like capitalism on wheels.

**How would you describe Hester?**

Philip Reeve wrote her as the hero of the books, but she's allowed to be fierce and flawed. I feel very privileged to play her, because a lot of films have heroines that are sexy and cool, but Hester is just a normal girl trying to figure shit out. She's really damaged in the beginning and has to learn how to become human again.

**You come from a family of filmmakers. Did you always want to be an actor?**

Yeah. That was the world I lived in. I think you can grow up and hate it, but I really liked it. My dad would let me appear in his films sometimes, but they never put that pressure on me. When the time came, I did it on my own.

**Will you always return to Iceland between British/American projects?**

Of course. That's where I grew up, they're my people, first and foremost. It's always been important to me to be part of that, and not just start there then leave. I couldn't go through life without telling stories from my home. *JF*

ETA | 8 DECEMBER / MORTAL ENGINES  
OPENS THIS WINTER.

### ★ MAKING A CONNECTION

Ralph and Vanellope's relationship is at the sequel's heart. "Ralph is still defining himself by the way somebody else thinks about him," explains Johnston. "He still has a lot of insecurity, and Vanellope as a character is really just coming into her own." With scope for more emotional development, "we were thinking about the internet as a bigger, more fast, crazy, wild world" to test them further.

24

## EXCLUSIVE

# BACK OF THE NET

**RALPH BREAK THE INTERNET: WRECK-IT RALPH 2** | Deconstructing Walt Disney Animation Studio's biggest film to date...

**S**ix years after *Wreck-It Ralph*, Disney is reconnecting reluctant arcade villain Ralph (John C. Reilly) and his best pal, racing princess Vanellope (Sarah Silverman). This time they're surfing the web on a visit to the internet itself, in search of spare parts. Remarkably, this is the first theatrical Disney Animation sequel since *Fantasia 2000*, and the first ever to share the original's creative team. *Teasers* spoke to co-director/co-writer Phil Johnston and producer Clark Spencer about logging back in to Ralph's world, bit by bit.

### 📱 VIRAL SENSATION

As in *Wreck-It Ralph*, great care has been taken to balance known brands with new creations. So while a trip to eBay drives the plot, Spencer confirms, "The biggest pieces of the storytelling take place in websites we created ourselves. That gave us the latitude to make them fit the story." These include vintage search engine KnowsMore, online game *Slaughter Race* and social media sensation BuzzTube, run by trendy algorithm Yesss (Taraji P. Henson).



### 👑 DIVA FEVER

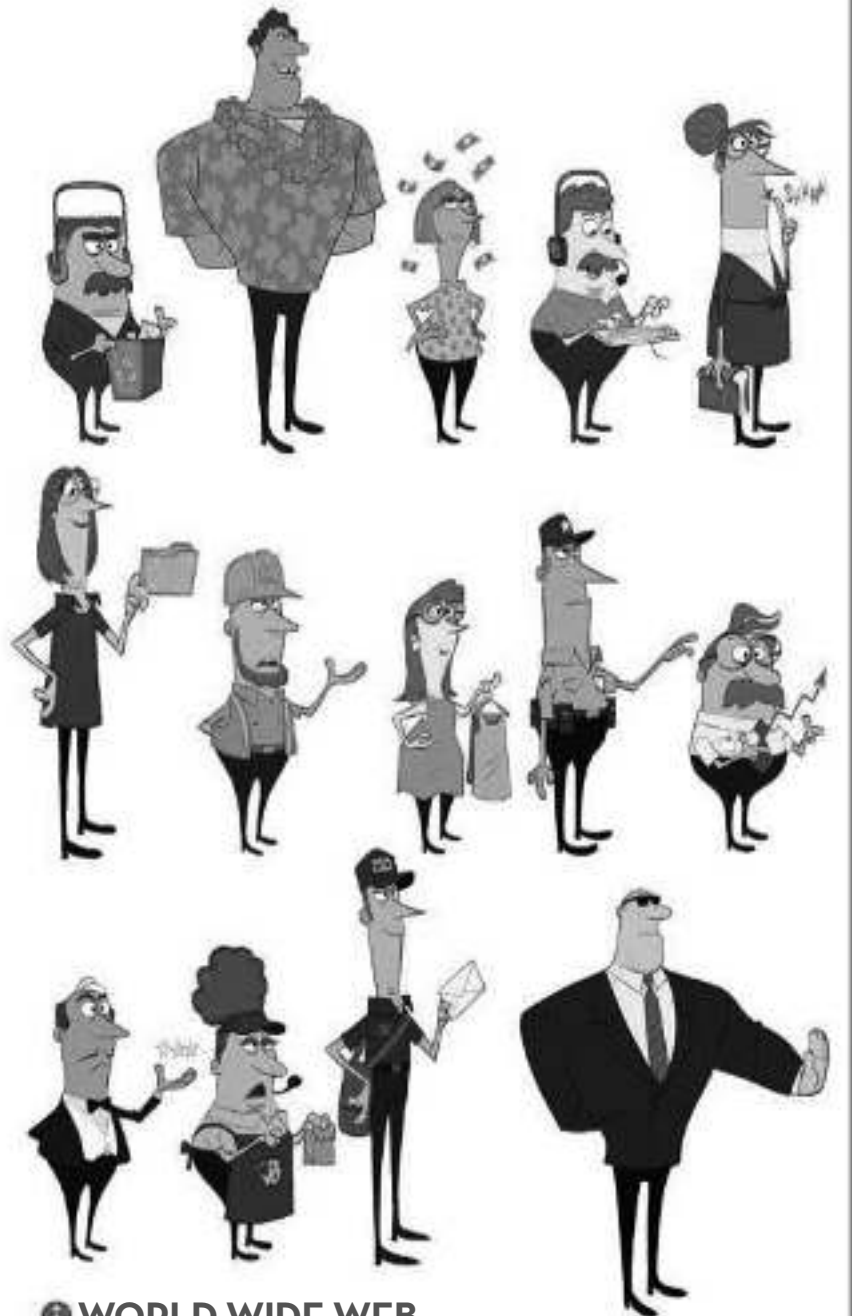
The film's trailer nearly broke the internet when Vanellope was seen hanging out with the Disney princesses in their loungewear. In a real casting coup, a dozen original voice actors – including Mandy Moore's Rapunzel and Kristen Bell's Anna – signed up for cameos. "There's a piece of them that's still those characters," reckons Spencer. "Importantly, they were able to influence how that character would act in those scenes."





### 1 INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY

With movies as diverse as *The Lego Movie* and *The Emoji Movie* following *Wreck-It Ralph* into the gaming world, it was vital that the film's depiction of the internet stood out. "The internet is the biggest city in the world that you can imagine," promises Johnston. "Our film is literally the biggest film that Disney Animation has ever done. There's one shot in our movie that has one million extras!"



### 2 GOING UNDERGROUND

Visiting the dark web, Ralph discovers the internet isn't all good news. After collaborating on *Zootopia*, with its thoughtful exploration of racism, the team was confident in shining a spotlight on the internet's murkier corners. "You can go and take an MIT class [online], and you can go and be bullied in a chatroom," muses Johnston. "We're hoping that people will come out of this feeling they can talk to their kids about all of that stuff."



### 3 WORLD WIDE WEB

Given Disney's global reach, it was vital that the internet's characters – the Netizens – reflected different cultures. "We wanted it to feel like there was Asia and Europe and South America all represented in that world," Spencer explains. To nail that authenticity, "We went to every market and we got brands from every country, so it wouldn't feel like it was just the internet for either North America or English-speaking countries." SK

ETA | 30 NOVEMBER / RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET:  
WRECK-IT RALPH 2 OPENS NEXT MONTH.



EXCLUSIVE

## MORAL COMBAT

**THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT** | Lars von Trier is back. And this time he's really upsetting people...

**T**he *House That Jack Built* is Lars von Trier's most controversial film yet – quite some statement, you might think. Matt Dillon plays Jack: architect, engineer, connoisseur of European art and history, and serial killer; mainly women, but children too. He arranges their bodies into horrific tableaux in a walk-in freezer.

Throughout the film, Jack recounts his 60 kills to Verge (Bruno Ganz), who offers counterarguments to his rationalisations and justifications. The pair also discuss the sexual politics of misogyny (the action is set in the '70s, but these dialogues seem aimed at the #MeToo movement), gun culture and the Third Reich – this last, presumably, as a meta-response to von Trier being made persona non grata at Cannes in 2011 following an ill-advised Nazi joke. The entire film feels like an internal debate. It's a provocation, certainly, but also a confession and an apology.

"You can see it that way," responds von Trier, who's clearly in a bad place, his words halting, his voice cracked and his body trembling. "But when I do something, my main characters – and all the characters, for that matter – are

part of me, and reactions to part of me. Jack is me, but I'm a few steps behind, because I don't kill."

But is the debate between Jack and Verge a discussion that he has in his own head – on the one hand defending his actions, and on the other meting out self-punishment?



**OUT FOR BLOOD**  
Matt Dillon is serial killer Jack, in what could be Lars von Trier's most divisive movie yet. Yes really.

"Yeah, that's pretty precise. If I had made this film earlier in my career, Jack would have got away with it. But he doesn't. I don't believe in punishment, but somehow it felt right and clean. I thought that if Jack was a part of me, then I'd throw him out: 'And don't you come back.'"

Judging from the walkouts at Cannes and the furious articles that followed, the self-loathing and atonement in *The House That Jack Built* are not seen as enough. Many, clearly, felt that the mea culpa coda was insincere, or a case of von Trier wanting to have his cake and eat it given the litany of distressing images that have come before. Calling the female characters Lady 1, Lady 2 and Lady 3 doesn't help, and nor does Jack naming Riley Keough's character Simple before mutilating her.

"When you put it that way, I can see what you mean," admits von Trier. "But then they [*Jack and Verge*] have a discussion: if he hates women, and feels superior, stuff like that. I don't feel superior to women at all. On the contrary."

The jury's still out, but this is a film you have to see for yourself to have an opinion on. *JG*

ETA | 14 DECEMBER / THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT OPENS THIS WINTER.

# IT SHOULDN'T HAPPEN TO A FILM JOURNALIST

Editor-at-Large JAMIE GRAHAM lifts the lid on film journalism.

## THIS MONTH WATCHING FILMS ON DIGITAL LINKS



It's been another tough day at the office for Jamie...

Worse, my old laptop always managed to lose the synchronicity of sound and image about 10 minutes into the movie. It left me with a choice: pause the film for a minute or so, which resynced sound and image, and then continue for another 10 minutes until the lag began again; or watch the entire movie in one go with the equivalent of terrible dubbing.

The ordeal was especially abhorrent when watching horror movies: characters lurched into the frame only for the blare on the soundtrack to arrive a second later; axes



**O**n page 84 of this very issue of *Total Film*, I sit down with Christopher Nolan to discuss

the glory of presenting *2001: A Space Odyssey* in 70mm on the biggest screen possible. Nolan, of course, is one of the loudest proponents for celluloid and the immersive cinema experience. His movies are screened to the press at IMAX theatres.

Imagine what he'd say, then, if he saw film journalists leaning into their laptops to scrutinise fuzzy images and decipher tinny dialogue. Not that a major studio is about to send out a digital link of their latest \$250m blockbuster so that a reviewer can watch it at home while doing the ironing. But we do now live in an age when 10 to 20 movies hit UK cinemas every Friday, while a deluge of content goes straight to DVD and/or streaming platforms. Whatever the breadth of the journalist's good intentions or depth of obsession, it's no longer possible to keep up with releases by dedicating your every evening to the screening rooms of Soho. And the smaller distributors know this, choosing to vie for eyes by emailing journos their latest title.

### THE HORROR

These days I've perfected a pretty sweet system, hooking my laptop up to my TV so I at least have a decent-sized screen and volume with oomph. I used to watch movies on the sofa with my laptop balanced on my chest – I needed to be that close to hear the dialogue. Each time I shifted my position, I'd recalibrate the angle of the screen or else lose details to the murk.

**'JILL FROM MARKETING DOESN'T EXPECT TO SEE LABEOUF GOING AT IT HAMMER AND TONGS'**

silently embedded into heads with zero impact, the sound effects guy never able to keep up with the killer.

### NSFW

The above brings to mind another problem with movie links – sometimes I have to watch one in the office in readiness for an interview, and do so with headphones firmly in place, oblivious to those walking by. All Jill from marketing wants is to collect a banana from the kitchen, but instead she sees someone mutilating a bird (*My Friend Dahmer*) or Shia LaBeouf going at it hammer and tongs (*Nymphomaniac*).

But the worst thing about digital links is the watermarking designed to ward off piracy. Usually the distributors go with the journalist's name – trust me, few things distract from a film like having your own moniker emblazoned across it – and frequently they opt to slam it right in the middle of the screen. Not being able to see the protagonist's eyes because they're hidden behind a ruddy great 'J' and 'E' is infuriating.

Nope, Nolan would not be impressed. But then one of the other key advocates of celluloid and cinema, Paul Thomas Anderson, told me in 2014 that he watches movies on aeroplanes and his phone because there aren't enough hours in the day and, well, needs must. Will film journalists one day be sent links of the new Nolan, PTA or Tarantino movies to watch on their iPad? Probably not, though those guys will be the first to embrace the next wave of tech when films are zapped straight into the cerebral cortex. Now that'll be immersive.

Jamie will return next issue...

For more misadventures, follow: @jamie\_graham9 on Twitter.



## EXCLUSIVE

## ANOTHER FINE MESS

**STAN & OLLIE** | Steve Coogan and John C. Reilly star in a heartfelt study of Laurel and Hardy...

**I**'m seeing Mr. Scorsese today," Jon S. Baird tells *Teasers* from a New York hotel. This is a humblebrag with a point – Baird's new film *Stan & Ollie* opens with a bravura tracking shot following legendary double act Laurel and Hardy through a Hollywood soundstage during the shoot for *Way Out West*. "He saw the film a few weeks ago. I said, 'You know where the first shot of the film is coming from?' He gave a little chuckle, as if to say, 'Yeah, you're not the first to do that...'"

Scorsese homages aside (Baird promises a "silver star" to the *TF* reader who spots the second), *Stan & Ollie* is no assembly line biopic. Focusing on Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy's little-known live tour of Britain in 1953, it's a poignant platonic love story between two men in the twilight of their careers. "The film is called *Stan & Ollie*, because we wanted to make a film about two friends who just happened to be these icons," says Baird. "There's a real sadness to what happens to these guys. They were exploited by the studio system. They're facing mortality and trying to hold onto that thing they had in their youth."

Pathos-fuelled it may be, but no Laurel and Hardy film would be complete without a steady stream of

chuckles. Enter Steve Coogan and John C. Reilly. The pair count Laurel and Hardy among their comedy heroes, and rehearsed with a clown choreographer for three weeks to perfect the duo's stage routines. "The first time [Steve and



**COMIC TIMING**  
Steve Coogan and John C. Reilly play the legendary slapstick stars.

John] walked on set I didn't watch the monitor, I watched the crew's faces," Baird recalls. "I knew by the expressions that they had got it, because it was like watching these ghosts appear in the room."

In a neat touch, Laurel and Hardy's antics aren't limited to their stage performances, with several famous skits bleeding into the pair's 'real' lives. "That was something we built into the script quite late," says Baird, who worked from a script by *Philomena*'s Jeff Pope. "One of the most iconic moments in a Laurel and Hardy movie is the piano that falls down the stairs in *The Music Box*. So we built that into the storyline, and wrote around it."

In a thrilling what-if? Baird also filmed a snippet of Laurel and Hardy's final, unmade picture – a Robin Hood feature the pair were hoping to finance with the British tour. "There was a lot of pressure doing that, because that's when you really have to get it right," Baird admits. "But it was great fun to do. Steve and John were getting very excited about doing a real Laurel and Hardy film, and saying, 'We should actually do this Robin Hood film. This should be the sequel!'" **JF**

ETA | 11 JANUARY / STAN & OLLIE OPENS NEXT YEAR, AND PREMIERES AT THE LONDON FILM FESTIVAL ON 21 OCTOBER.



## BETWEEN TAKES

# JAVIER BARDEM

The Oscar-winning actor chats long days and legs of ham...

## What's the first thing you do when you arrive on set?

I like to say hello to everyone. And then I head straight for the coffee. I can't function if I don't have coffee.

## What do you take on set with you?

I always carry a copy of the script and I cover the pages with notes. I believe in paper and pencil more than computers and buttons, but I also make voice notes on my phone during the rehearsals, and I make sure I have them with me on set too.

## Do you ever sleep on set?

Definitely not. I can't act when I've just woken up. If I have to be woken up to go to set, I'm gonna be bad!

## What's the longest day you've ever spent on a film set?

When I was doing *The Sea Inside*, I would do about four-and-a-half hours of make-up every day, plus 12 hours of shooting, plus one hour of taking the make-up off – so that was almost 18 hours. Every day. For a week. And I still didn't sleep!

## Hot or cold lunch?

I prefer the working lunch. I don't like to stop for an hour to eat – I prefer to eat whatever I can around the shooting... just snacks, here and there. It interrupts the rhythm of the acting sometimes and it's sometimes hard to get back into it again. I don't like stopping the process for anything.

## Worst on-set experience?

When I did *Jamón Jamón*, I was 21 and it was my first big movie. Penélope [Cruz] was only 16 at the time, and her character had this nightmare that I was hanging from a goalpost, naked, like a leg of ham. So I was strung up naked in the middle of nowhere... in December. I remember we had problems with the crane and it took forever to shoot. I was cold, I was humiliated and I felt like, "Shit, what the fuck do I want to be an actor for?!"

## Have you ever stolen from a film set?

No. Sometimes I take some clothes, but I always ask first. I was also told I could have the coin that I flip in *No Country For Old Men*, but the prop guy forgot to give it to me. But then Viggo Mortensen did a movie called *The Road* and apparently met the same guy. He gave the coin to Viggo and then Viggo came to Spain and gave it back to me. I keep it near the Oscar.

## Best ever wrap party?

Wow, there have been some good ones. The one that Julian Schnabel gave us for *Before Night Falls*, in Veracruz, Mexico, was a really wild party that ended up in the pool. We had so many nationalities of people there having a good time, it was fun. Also, I was 30 years old. Now I'm almost 50, I usually turn up, give everyone a hug, and then go back home!

## What was it like sharing the set with your wife on *Loving Pablo*?

It's great having Penélope there because we bring the kids with us too. It's hard when you have to work apart from each other on the other side of the world. But you have to be careful not to bring any of the character home. I think we're pretty good at that though. We've been doing it for a long time! *PB*

ETA | 2018 / LOVING PABLO RELEASES ON DEMAND LATER THIS YEAR.



Bardem with real-life wife Penélope Cruz, in *Loving Pablo*.

**'WRAP PARTIES? NOW I'M ALMOST 50, I TURN UP, GIVE EVERYONE A HUG, AND THEN GO BACK HOME!'**



## CHRISTMAS MOVIE PREVIEW



# DIE SCHOOL MUSICAL

**ANNA AND THE APOCALYPSE** | A Christmas zom-com-musical worth singing about...

**I**f you watch one Scottish zombie Christmas musical this year, it has to be *Anna And The Apocalypse*, the movie that's been drawing comparisons to *Shaun Of The Dead* and hoovering awards as fast as it hoses blood on the festival circuit.

"My favourite musical is *South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut*, but I didn't know musicals that well before I came on board – you'd have had to take me kicking and screaming," grins director John McPhail, whose previous romcom *Where Do We Go From Here?* won him the chance to pitch for the gig. "So I had to watch countless musicals. I fell in love with *West Side Story* – the cutting, the cinematography, the movement – but I only lasted 10 minutes of *High School Musical*."

Anna (Ella Hunt) is a teen living in the sleepy town of Little Haven. She longs to get out but excitement, not to mention terror, comes to her when a zombie apocalypse hits town on the night of the school Christmas concert.

"We filmed in a wee place called Port Glasgow," says McPhail. "It's rough as fuck but the Clyde runs through it and it's got these rolling hills. It was perfect: nice residential streets, parks, a school that we could base the production in... And the locals were great. They were so up for it."

What *Anna* lacks in budget it makes up for in verve, blending characters you care about with dynamic direction, big laughs, a bigger heart, truly terrific numbers written by Scottish singer-songwriters Roddy Hart and Tommy Reilly, nods to Romero, Raimi and Carpenter, a boo-hiss school principal in the form of Paul Kaye, and fountains of the red stuff.

"I wanted practical gore," says McPhail, who's a proud genre nerd. "I love horror, and I am not going to alienate 'my people'." Indeed, the kills are ickily inventive crowd-pleasers, with the decapitation of a zombie wearing an oversized snowman outfit even winning *Total Film*'s 'Best Death' award at horror festival FrightFest. "It was fun," says McPhail, grinning once more. "Lopping off a snowman's head and getting a blood cannon in there..." **JG**

ETA | 30 NOVEMBER / ANNA AND THE APOCALYPSE OPENS NEXT MONTH.

**SCHOOL'S OUT**  
Christmas carnage at the school concert; Ella Hunt as Anna (below).



**ELLA HUNT**

**Did you audition for the part?**

I got sent the script and just loved it. I've been an actress since [I was] 11. This came through and it was, "This is it." Anna doesn't have your stereotypical teenage girl's story arc. She doesn't ride off into the sunset with a boy. I liked that.

**You cop a lot of claret in this movie...**

I loved being covered in blood for two months! It's really sticky and makes you feel like a badass. But the fighting element was difficult for me. I'm naturally clumsy. I really built up and I had a female fight coordinator.

**And you get to dance...**

I dance and I fight but not usually at the same time. There's a song right at the end of the film where I combine the two. That was really tricky because I also sing, and had to get the right exertion sounds into my singing.

**As tricky as filming in the balmy Scottish weather?**

I love the Scots but God, I can't hack the cold. Filming in minus three! But I did get to wear a coat – we designed the costume to look like a Scottish schoolgirl in winter, not like Lara Croft in *Tomb Raider*. **JG**



# CLAUS AND EFFECT

THE CHRISTMAS CHRONICLES | Netflix launches a new festive franchise...

**A**re there five words in the English language more exciting than “Kurt Russell is Santa Claus”? Chris Columbus – the man behind yuletide classics *Home Alone* and *Gremlins* – thinks not. “He’s your dream Santa Claus,” Columbus tells *Teasers*. “It’s not *Bad Santa*. He’s incredibly charismatic, tough and confident when he needs to be. And really frustrated at the depictions of him on Coca-Cola ads!”

Russell stars as Saint Nick in *The Christmas Chronicles*, a Netflix original about a brother and sister who put Christmas itself in jeopardy when their attempt to photograph Santa goes terribly wrong. *Angry Birds*’ Clay Kaytis is making his live-action debut in the director’s chair, but Columbus was there “24/7” as a producer after identifying some familiar qualities in Matt Lieberman’s script.

“It’s got a bit of *Adventures In Babysitting* in it; it’s got a bit of *Home Alone*; it feels a little like *The Goonies* at times. It’s very inspired by the John Hughes world that I cut my teeth on as well,” says Columbus. “And it feels like *Potter*. It’s a North Pole unlike you’ve ever seen.”

Many of Columbus’ festive films tap into the dichotomy of Christmas – that, for some, it’s the most difficult time of year. And *The Christmas Chronicles* is no different.

“It’s a complicated time,” Columbus explains. “In this film there’s a chance that Christmas won’t exist in 2018. The theme of the film, and the theme of this particular Santa Claus, is: Christmas must endure.”

And endure it will if Columbus has his way, with plans for a wider Christmas-verse should the first film fly. “As we were making the film, I realised there was a much bigger world here. So I got excited about the potential of digging deeper, with maybe another film in the series, and treating the world of the North Pole and the mythology of Santa Claus with a seriousness that it’s never been treated with.” Christmas comes early in 2018. *JF*

ETA | 22 NOVEMBER / THE CHRISTMAS CHRONICLES LAUNCHES ON NETFLIX NEXT MONTH.



## SCREAM TEAM

HOME ALONE | Chris Columbus on his Xmas classic...

**Are you surprised by *Home Alone*’s legacy?**

Surprised? No. The mantra was really: when you’re home at two in the morning, 20 or 30 years from now, I wanted to make sure it felt as fresh as the day it was made. I last saw *Home Alone* a couple of years ago with the San Francisco Symphony orchestra playing live. I hadn’t seen the film with an audience since 1990. So to actually see that it still worked for an audience and that they were still laughing just as uproariously as they were from the film’s initial release? That’s a fantastic feeling.

**Did you have any ideas for sequels beyond *Home Alone 2*?**

There’s some parts of me that prefer the humour in *Home Alone 2*, but we knew we were doing basically a remake of the first film. I had a great time making *Home Alone 2*, because it was like making *Harry Potter 2*. There was not the pressure of making the first film. I felt that after we had finished the second film that was enough *Home Alone*. Trying to reboot it... you’ll never capture that magic again.

**Do you watch your own films at Christmas?**

No, no, no, no. I laugh about it with my family. We can’t escape it, from like Thanksgiving to 1 January, it seems like a lot of my films are on TV. Christmas is a very important time in the Columbus household. I’m at the tree loft the very first day it opens, picking out the biggest tree. I decorate my own tree. And because I don’t want to fall off a ladder, I have a company putting up a ridiculously embarrassing amount of lights in front of my house. I’m pretty obsessive. *JF*

ETA | 5 DECEMBER / HOME ALONE IS RE-RELEASED IN CINEMAS THIS CHRISTMAS.

### SLEIGH RIDE

Kurt Russell the way you’ve always wanted to see him – as Santa.





## CHRISTMAS MOVIE PREVIEW

# WHO, WHERE, WHY?



### GO TO TOWN

"You start with all these design clues that Dr. Seuss gave us in the book. The shape of the snow, the form of the buildings. In the book, Whoville is just a few pen lines."



### PICTURE PERFECT

"We wanted the town to be a place full of authentically good people. It had to look like a place that would still look pretty cool, even once the decorations were taken down."



### HOME SWEET HOME

"Most importantly, we wanted a place the Grinch might actually want to live. We wanted a bustling city that was full of life. It's not just a postcard of a happy town."



## GREEN IS GOOD

### THE GRINCH I

 Despicable Me studio Illumination tackles The Who Who Stole Christmas...

**F**or an animator, attempting to remake *How The Grinch Stole Christmas* is to step into some fairly big 'toon boots. "The first memory I have of the story is from the Chuck Jones cartoon," says director Yarrow Cheney. "It was such a big part of the holiday season for me growing up. Because that version is so wonderful, and so perfect, I really didn't want to remake it. So I decided to go back to the original instead."

Pushing aside Jones' 1966 classic short (and completely ignoring Ron Howard's 2000 live-action version starring Jim Carrey), Cheney and the rest of the Illumination team went back to Dr. Seuss' 1957 picture book for inspiration.

"We wanted the book to be the anchor of absolutely everything we did," he adds. "We looked at each illustration, each story point, each curve and angle, and we sort of filled in the gaps." For Cheney, co-directing with Kevin Smith stalwart Scott Mosier and taking on his second feature after 2016's

*The Secret Life Of Pets*, that meant finding the warmth in the Grinch's famously cold heart – a guy who hates Christmas so much that he can't even stand to see anyone else enjoying it.

"He starts out as a real jerk," laughs Cheney. "But we don't want people to not like the Grinch. He should be grumpy, but likeable. He lashes out, but only because he's hurt. It's a fine line, but we knew we didn't want a caricature of meanness."

Casting Benedict Cumberbatch as the voice of the Grinch ("We

needed someone who can do everything from subtle humour and wacky slapstick to real emotional depth, and there's just no one better," says Cheney), the biggest problem for the animators was figuring out how to make his world look convincingly Christmassy.

"Every single character in our film is covered in fur, and to make matters more difficult, everything else is covered with snow. So you've got furry characters trudging through snow, and the snow has to stick to their fur... Literally every pixel was a technical challenge. If the Grinch wore Lycra and lived somewhere sunny, it definitely would have been a whole lot easier!" **PB**

ETA | 9 NOVEMBER / THE GRINCH OPENS NEXT MONTH.

# STAY FROSTY

**SURVIVING CHRISTMAS** | The festive family comedy that tells it like it really is...

**I**t's not a Christmas movie," snaps director James Dearden. "It's a movie about a family that just happens to take place at Christmas." Standing in a rustic mansion near London's Canada Water, with decorations lining the walls and children bouncing around in glittery jumpers, Dearden is the one person who doesn't look like he's having a ball.

For Dearden, *Surviving Christmas* hits a particularly raw nerve. Writing the script after several manic Christmases of his own, Dearden decided to turn all of his bad festive memories into a family comedy with a rougher, more realistic edge. "There are some pratfall moments, but it's not a bloody Jim Carrey movie!"

He might not like to admit it, but *Surviving Christmas* is a comedy – set over three mad days in the life of Dan (Julian Ovenden) and Miranda (Gemma Whelan) as they spend their first Christmas together in a crumbling country house. He's still seeing his ex, she's invited her snooty sister (Joely Richardson) and a dozen other relatives – plus the plumbing doesn't work, the kids are fighting and the house is full of farm animals.

"Everything that could go wrong, goes wrong," laughs Whelan. "From leaky pipes and bad Wi-Fi to fights, infidelity and exploding turkeys. We've got dogs, cats, rabbits, donkeys, chickens and pigs running everywhere!"

With the film's producer pitching it as "*Meet The Fockers* and *Nativity* meet *Fatal Attraction*", it's back to Dearden to tell us just what makes it unique. "I think a lot of people can relate to this kind of Christmas – one that doesn't look like the sentimental vision shown in Hollywood," he says, taking another exasperated look around. "Sometimes everything goes wrong and we only realise how much fun it was after it's all over..." **PB**

ETA | 30 NOVEMBER / SURVIVING CHRISTMAS OPENS NEXT MONTH.



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# KIDDING AROUND

**NATIVITY ROCKS!** | How to make a sequel the hard way...

**W**hat's more difficult than trying to direct a class of eight-year-olds in a play? How about doing it while trying to direct a film at the same time? Not tough enough? Why not adlib the entire thing too? Debbie Isitt has been making *Nativity* films for almost 10 years now, so she really only has herself to blame, but she looks remarkably calm in the middle of the messiest, loudest, craziest set *TF* has ever seen.

"It's pretty much always like this!" she shouts, screaming over the sound of an entire class of kids all hurling themselves at a fancy dress box, a film crew trying to reset the lights, 50 parents clutching lint brushes, and one guy on the piano who's playing a live background score in the corner.

The script is fully improvised, as per the other three films in the series, so none of the actors know what's going to happen next – just as well your co-stars have been roped in from the local primary school. "I've already made two children cry today," says Craig Revel Horwood, making his film debut

between seasons of *Strictly Come Dancing*. "I always said I wanted to be in a horror movie and I guess this is as close as I'm going to get!"

Back in character, Horwood tells one little girl that she "looks stupid in her glasses" and she bursts into tears.

"It's tough when you get in the moment," says Celia Imrie, comforting the kids off camera as the "nice one" in the group. "I think these children are quite brilliant. And I think everyone making this film is utterly mad!" **PB**

ETA | 23 NOVEMBER / NATIVITY ROCKS! OPENS NEXT MONTH.



EXCLUSIVE

## KILLER QUEENS

**ASSASSINATION NATION** | Sam Levinson gives the Salem witch trials a modern-day spin...

**S**napped up for a whopping \$10 million-plus at this year's Sundance Film Festival, *Assassination Nation* is a 21st Century horror story about a small town that loses its "motherfucking mind" when a hacker exposes the salacious secrets of its residents. Centred on four inseparable young women who take the blame before fighting back, it's a hyper-stylised cautionary tale with plenty to say about the perils of the internet age. Writer/director Sam Levinson and his cast prepare *Teasers* for a night of terror...

*Sam Levinson* (writer/director) Social media is not the villain of this film. Righteousness is the villain – people who believe, with absolute certainty, that what they are doing in any given moment is right. That's a horror film. That's scary. Mobs are scary. I think all social media has done is it's allowed humans to be the best versions of themselves and the worst versions of themselves. It's a tool for us to be either crazier or kinder, more empathic or more violent.

*Abra* (Em) It's just a mirror. It's a big reflection of what's going on. Sometimes it's really ugly to look at, sometimes it's not. But to let people you don't know, and people who are

so far from you in real life, get into your head like that – it's a really weird space to live in. I'm saying that anyone can mind-fuck you from far away.



**LADIES IN RED**  
Abra, Odessa Young, Hari Nef and Suki Waterhouse play four teens demonised by their town.

*Suki Waterhouse* (Sarah) I always think it's so boring when you see texting in films. It's not in this movie. It's super-exciting. We all had our own phones, and we were taking behind-the-scenes footage ourselves. It actually makes it so terrifying, seeing violence through the lens of a phone, and hyper-real.

*Hari Nef* (Bex) #MeToo is about the very vulnerable, difficult process of speaking out about assault and processing trauma. This film is more about defending yourself from assault – it's this fantasy of fighting back. It's very rare that a woman who is going to be assaulted has a gun on her, or a samurai sword. But the fantasy of that is what is feeling so cathartic – particularly for women who watch this. It has a place in the #MeToo era, but there are nuances that are worth parsing.

*Odessa Young* (Lily) The red coats were a big deal because it symbolised that community. I remember when I saw us all [*in the coats*], I was like, "Oh, we look badass. I get it." I don't think we were told there would be that many teenage girls behind us. Watching this convergence of teen girls come up and be cheering behind you, and unified on the home front – it was fucking incredible. *JF*

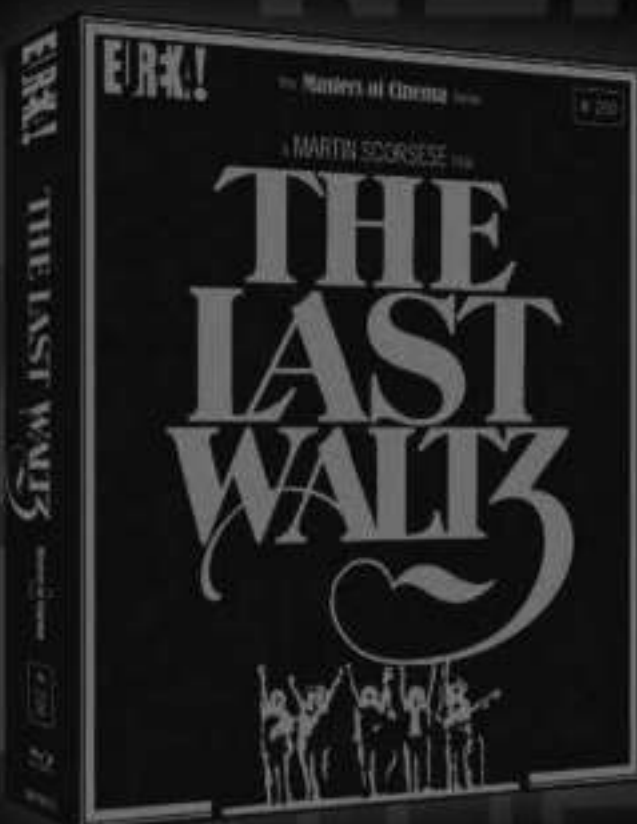
ETA | 23 NOVEMBER / ASSASSINATION NATION OPENS NEXT MONTH.

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## CAN WE TALK ABOUT...?

# CARY JOJI FUKUNAGA DIRECTING BOND

Why Boyle's exit isn't bad news...

**F**or six decades, we've watched iterations of Ian Fleming's gentleman spy that may have re-tweaked the franchise formula, but never radically departed from it. Yes, we could deal with the killing of a beloved character in *Skyfall*, but could we have tolerated the offing of 007 himself – reportedly what assigned director Danny Boyle and his screenwriter John Hodge suggested for their unorthodox *Bond 25*?

Ultimately, whatever it was that wouldn't wash with Bond maven Barbara Broccoli (an astute guardian of the franchise with a proven nose for what audiences want from their special agent) led to Boyle's departure three months before production started on the basis of 'creative differences'. Within a month, Broccoli and her co-producer, Michael G. Wilson, had announced dark horse replacement Cary Joji Fukunaga, a director whose most notable recent run-in with a franchise was bailing on *It* due to disagreements over creative direction and his self-confessed dislike of being "micro-managed". A rush decision? Wouldn't Fukunaga similarly struggle under Eon's legendary control and Daniel Craig's clout? Was he the right guy for this jewel in the British cinema crown?

Well, yes – having made a name with stylish, violent and urgent fare such as *Sin Nombre*, *True Detective* and *Beasts Of No Nation*, it's clear that Fukunaga can handle the action and cool required by 007. But more importantly, his experience with *It*, plus his working relationship with behemoth production houses like Netflix for *Maniac* and HBO should have primed him for Bond's high-wire balancing act of commercial and creative. He cannot have gone into negotiations with Eon without understanding exactly where his artistic control tipping point was – perhaps more so than Boyle – meaning he should be a steady hand as he steers this instalment to its new Valentine's Day 2020 release date.

And let's talk about that – for all Bond's gritty evolution, his romantic entanglements and treatment of women have remained problematic. Fukunaga (the franchise's first American director) showed with his outsider view of a British classic in 2011's *Jane Eyre* that he could create on-screen steam and strong female characters on top of a fresh spin on a known property. And as one of the youngest helmers of the series (at 41), he may ensure that *Bond 25* reflects more acutely the post-#MeToo world we live in today. Mission accomplished, Barbara Broccoli. *JC*





EXCLUSIVE

## PASSION WEEK

**DISOBEDIENCE** | Rachel Weisz and Rachel McAdams are illicit lovers in Sebastián Lelio's follow-up to *A Fantastic Woman*...

**S**ebastián Lelio has had a busy 18 months. After shooting three films back to back – *A Fantastic Woman*, *Disobedience* and a remake of his own 2013 feature *Gloria* – the Chilean writer/director capped it all by winning the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar. “I feel very lucky, because I’m not in a post-Oscar void of anxiety saying, ‘What am I going to do now?’” Lelio smiles. “Because I had already transitioned into English-language films.”

An adaptation of Naomi Alderman's 2006 novel, *Disobedience* is a story of forbidden love between two women in the Orthodox Jewish community of Hendon, north London. Rachel Weisz plays Ronit, a photographer shunned as a teen for her attraction to a female friend. When Ronit's estranged father dies she returns home, and rekindles a romance with Rachel McAdams' Esti. “You have two possible destinies for the same situation,” Lelio says. “One escaped – Ronit – and by doing that, she lost her origins. And the other one – Esti – stayed and lived a good life, but by doing that she lost herself.”

Admitting he was “crazy” to tackle such a hyper-specific subject for his English debut, Lelio strived for authenticity in his depiction of a world few truly know. Attending ceremonies

and Shabbat dinners, and spending a week in an Orthodox hotel during the scripting stage, there were as many as 12 consultants on set at any one time. “We became obsessed with trying to get the cultural texture right, in order to later on forget about it and



### FORBIDDEN LOVE

Ronit (Rachel Weisz) returns home, disrupting the lives of Esti (Rachel McAdams) and her husband Dovid (Alessandro Nivola, below).

concentrate on the people, which is what makes a story universal.”

That human drama is complicated by the fact Esti's devout husband Dovid (Alessandro Nivola) is a respected Rabbi, and the favoured successor to Ronit's father at the synagogue. “It was fascinating to use that to increase the temperature of the conflict that trinity was going through,” explains Lelio, who nevertheless felt it important that the community weren't painted as the villains. “We were trying to avoid falling into the trap of: ‘Oh, the Orthodox are the bad guys. They're throwing stones at lesbians.’ It's more complex than that.”

Which brings us to the film's much-discussed sex scene. Lelio placed great importance on a five-minute consummation that manages to be both erotic and meaningful. “I realised that was the heart of the film, and that we had to avoid making it generic – some rotation, some moaning, and then ‘next!’ Whatever.” Lelio scoffs. “So I became quite obsessed with the specificities of how those lovers physically manifest what they feel for each other. It was a beautiful, difficult day of shooting. And at the end, I remember Rachel Weisz opening a bottle of whiskey and we all drank as if we'd had sex together!” We'll drink to that. *JF*

ETA | 30 NOVEMBER / DISOBEDIENCE OPENS NEXT MONTH.



## WORLD CINEMA SPOTLIGHT

## SEA CHANGE

**THUGS OF HINDOSTAN I** Bollywood icons team up for India's answer to *Pirates Of The Caribbean*...

**P**op quiz: who's the biggest movie star on the planet? Tom Cruise? Jennifer Lawrence? How about Aamir Khan, the Hindi cinema superstar whose latest film beat *The Last Jedi* at the Chinese box office. Things are getting even bigger with *Thugs Of Hindostan* – a Bollywood blockbuster making Hollywood's high-seas efforts walk the plank.

Set in 1795, Khan stars as Firangi, the kind of man who would sell his own mother to get ahead. Firangi is recruited by the East India Company to infiltrate and dismantle the rebel pirates resisting British rule, led by Khudabaksh Azaad (Amitabh Bachchan). *Thugs* marks the first time Bollywood's biggest star, and its legendary elder statesman, will appear together onscreen – a momentous occasion not lost on writer/director Vijay Krishna Acharya. "It was a little daunting, to say the least!" says Acharya. "But I hope everybody will see that we had a lot of fun together."

Fun is the word, with Acharya describing *Thugs* as "an irreverent period film" in contrast to Bollywood's typically respectful depiction of Indian history. Case in point: the murderous Thuggee cult (best known as the bad guys in *Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom*), which terrorised India for centuries. *Thugs* will steer clear of the gang's grim reality in favour of a fictional story of con men, revenge and aquatic action.

For Acharya, no stranger to large-scale projects, shooting on water proved a new challenge. "We shot in Malta, because we needed somewhere that could give us water and not actually take us out to sea," Acharya explains. "So we built two ships and a boat, and then just hoped everything would float!"

While the \$42 million budget may seem modest by Hollywood standards, upon its release *Thugs* will be the most expensive Bollywood film ever made, with Acharya and Khan leading the charge in crafting accessible Hindi language films.

"[Bollywood filmmakers] are a pretty strange bunch, I think," Acharya laughs. "But we shouldn't be hiding behind the fact that our budgets are a fraction of the Hollywood budgets. In today's times every film has to be global." **JF**

ETA | 9 NOVEMBER / THUGS OF HINDOSTAN OPENS NEXT MONTH.

**RIDING HIGH**  
Indian superstar Aamir Khan (above) faces Bollywood legend Amitabh Bachchan (below).



Q&A  
**AAMIR KHAN**

**How would you describe Firangi?**

He's a very slippery character. He has absolutely no conscience. He's also very funny, which is why he's charming. But he's a survivor, and has his own agenda which he's constantly following... so he's a great character!

**You've made a lot of films with powerful social messages, is this the same?**

No, it's purely popcorn. [laughs] I'm sorry if you're disappointed. But I've done a lot of serious films so I think it will be fun to see me in a film that is pure entertainment.

**What was it like working with Amitabh Bachchan for the first time?**

It was one of the most exciting things for me, because I grew up watching his films. Every day we'd shoot, I would be sitting next to him and just enjoy the moment. I was like a little kid.

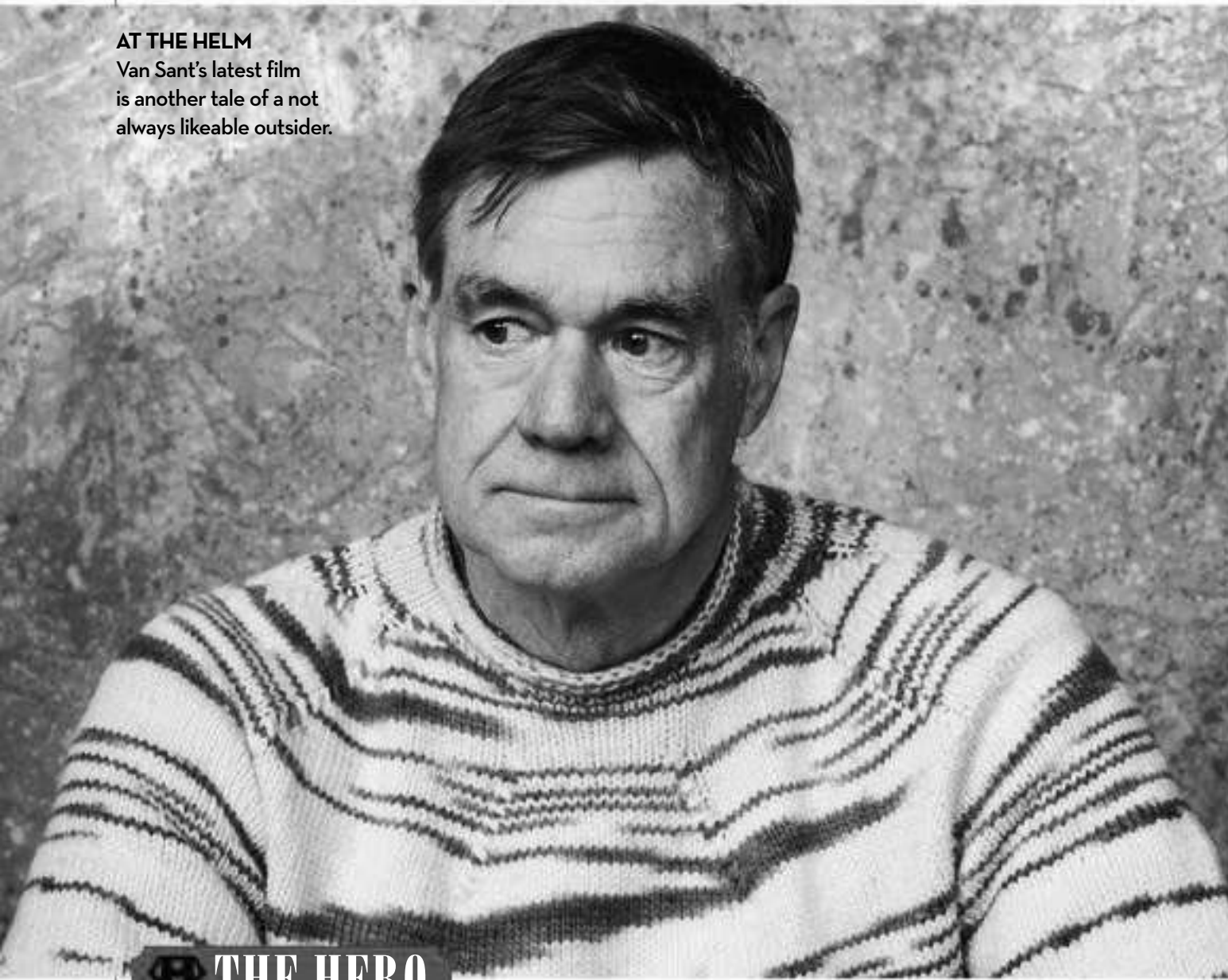
**Lagaan is one of three Hindi films to be nominated for an Oscar. Were you disappointed it didn't win?**

I'm not someone who's really crazy about awards. What makes me happy is the fact that people connect with my films, and I'm able to reach people's hearts. That's what really excites me – the potential to touch people's lives. **JF**



## AT THE HELM

Van Sant's latest film is another tale of a not always likeable outsider.



## THE HERO

## GUS VAN SANT

Talking actors, accolades and the avant-garde...

For 30 years, Gus Van Sant has hopped between mainstream titles and indies with the likes of *Drugstore Cowboy*, *Good Will Hunting*, *Elephant* and *Milk*. *My Own Private Idaho* helped establish the New Queer Cinema of the early '90s, and his films often deal with marginalised subcultures. His new film *Don't Worry, He Won't Get Far On Foot* stars Joaquin Phoenix as quadriplegic cartoonist John Callahan...

**You began working on *Don't Worry...* in the '90s. Why so long?**

It was initiated by Robin Williams. He had optioned the book. He knew Callahan's cartoons and his friend, Christopher Reeve, was a quadriplegic from a horse-jumping accident. It was also a story about alcohol problems, and Robin was familiar with that. He invited me to help guide a screenplay along. But it was enough of a personal project that the studios were afraid.

**How was it reuniting with Joaquin Phoenix all these years after *To Die For*?**

He doesn't seem to have changed. He's older so he's had more experience. He was very thorough. He had a version of the book I'd given him and he'd marked every page.

**You always cast very well.**

**What's your secret?**

I think there's a type that appears as you're reading the script, but I don't necessarily agree with the idea that it has to be a particular person. Sometimes a project comes with an actor attached. *Good Will Hunting* – Matt and Ben were always going to play the parts.

**Keanu Reeves and River Phoenix in *My Own Private Idaho* was inspired...**

*Drugstore Cowboy* had just won the New



**ODD ONES OUT**

(top to bottom) Robin Williams and Matt Damon in 1997's *Good Will Hunting*; Sean Penn as the eponymous Harvey Milk; Joaquin Phoenix starring in the upcoming *Don't Worry, He Won't Get Far On Foot*.

**'ALL THE MOVIES I'VE MADE ARE LONG SHOTS. IT'S EXCITING TO TRY AND PUSH YOURSELF'**

York Film Critics' Association and a few other awards. I met with Keanu, who wanted to do something that was a little more artistic. River had done *The Last Crusade*, *Running On Empty*, *Stand By Me*. He was friends with Keanu, who got him a script because River's agent was like, "He's not doing this." And River called back and said, "If Keanu and I do it together, it will be fun."

**What made you think of Sean Penn as Harvey Milk?**

I gave it to Sean in 1997. Tom Cruise was going to play [Milk's assassin] Dan White. Penn, at the time, was 37, not 47 as the character was. Then time went by and nothing happened. And then [Dustin] Lance [Black] came to me with a new script and all the ducks were in a row. We went to Sean with that version and he was still interested and now he was the right age. We went back to Tom, and then a few different people, before Josh Brolin.

**Do you consciously switch it up between the mainstream movies, indies and avant-garde projects?**

The films all have their own personalities. It's exciting to try and push yourself. But I don't know. When an audience decides it works, I go, "Yeah, of course." And when they decide it doesn't work, I also say, "Yeah, of course it doesn't work." All the movies I've made are pretty much long shots. *Good Will Hunting* was unknown writers, unknown actors.

**Is it true that *Elephant's* roving camerawork was influenced by Alan Clarke's *Elephant*?**

I hadn't seen it. It was called *Elephant* because our producer said, "I can't make *Columbine* because it's too much of a hot topic, but I can make *Elephant*." I said, "What's *Elephant*?" and he said, "It's a film that was commenting about Protestant-Catholic violence in 1989." Eventually I saw it, after I'd made my film. It was Béla Tarr's *Sátántangó* [that influenced the style].

**Are you ever fearful when you take on a risky project?**

If you're thinking in terms of whether it will play or not, it will just give you fear. I try to be happy when accolades come my way, and if they don't, that's OK too. *JG/JM*

ETA | 26 OCTOBER / DON'T WORRY, HE WON'T GET FAR ON FOOT OPENS THIS MONTH.

# BIG SCREEN

THE WORLD'S MOST TRUSTED MOVIE REVIEWS



**'A HEIST MOVIE  
THAT POSITIVELY  
EXPLODES OFF  
THE SCREEN'**

40

## NEW RELEASES

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Venom	★★★	p50

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Science Fair	★★★★	p49
The School In The Cloud	★★★★	p52
Touch Me Not	★★	p55

### 22 OCTOBER

The Hate U Give	★★★★	p45
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### 23 OCTOBER

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### 6 NOVEMBER

Widows	★★★★★	p42
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Overlord	★★★	p49
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### 9 NOVEMBER

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The Other Side Of Everything	★★★★	p55
Waru	★★★★	p55
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The Price Of Everything	★★★★	p48
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Suspiria	★★★★	p47
3 Days In Quiberon	★★★	p54
9 To 5	★★★★	p48

### ALSO RELEASED

We couldn't see them in time for this issue, so head to [gamesradar.com/totalfilm](http://gamesradar.com/totalfilm) for reviews of the following:

TITLE	RELEASE DATE
Bohemian Rhapsody	24 October
Goosebumps 2: Haunted Halloween	19 October
The Grinch	9 November
The Nutcracker And The Four Realms	2 November
Slaughterhouse Rulez	31 October

For more reviews visit [gamesradar.com/totalfilm](http://gamesradar.com/totalfilm)



**WIDOWS**  
Bold wives' tale...

**CERTIFICATE** 15 (TBC) **DIRECTOR** Steve McQueen **STARRING** Viola Davis, Michelle Rodriguez, Elizabeth Debicki, Cynthia Erivo, Colin Farrell **SCREENPLAY** Gillian Flynn, Steve McQueen **DISTRIBUTOR** Fox **RUNNING TIME** 128 mins (TBC)

## WIDOWS

Debt reckoning...

★★★★★ OUT 6 NOVEMBER

**F**aint incredulity greeted the news that arthouse powerhouse Steve McQueen would follow the Oscar-winning *12 Years A Slave* with a remake of 1983 Brit-TV crime series *Widows*. What next, a big-screen *Minder* reboot? But transformed into this tough, topical and unabashedly thrilling Chicago-set female heist movie, it positively explodes off the screen.

### SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

**WIDOWS** 1983-85  
ITV's two-series show earned Lynda La Plante her scripting breakout.

**GONE GIRL** 2012  
Gillian Flynn's tale of husbands and wives, secrets and lies.

**SUICIDE SQUAD** 2016  
Viola Davis is the one pulling the crims' strings in this DC adap.

McQueen's muscular, melancholic make-over starts literally with a bang, as Harry Rawlings (Liam Neeson), his gang and their big cash haul go up in smoke after a high-octane botched robbery. As Harry's devastated widow Veronica, Viola Davis essays a raw, dignified grief – one that's inflamed by local kingpin Jamal Manning (a smoothly menacing Brian Tyree Henry) insisting on a refund-or-death deal for his stolen \$2m. Owning nothing but Harry's secret blueprint for a major robbery, the heist she proposes to her fellow widows – single mother Linda (Michelle Rodriguez) and the flaky, helpless Alice (Elizabeth Debicki) is a life-saving necessity, not a caper.

The reluctant amateurs show a defiant desperation that injects some overdue realism into the genre, echoing gritty forebears such as Paul Schrader's *Blue Collar* (1978) or broke girls bank-job *Set It Off* (1996). There's real pleasure in watching them skill up (or screw up), while cajoling and blackmailing guns, a getaway van and vital info out of unsuspecting targets. Resolutely refusing to dumb down for the multiplex, the movie also weaves in a cynical, all-male story of Chicago corruption, as Manning battles Colin Farrell's devious Jack Mulligan,



The heist was going to be big; sorting a decent packed lunch was critical.

squabbling son of Robert Duvall's Trumpian politico, to win a lucrative election in a black-majority ward by any means necessary.

### TAKING THE RAP

Richly lensed by McQueen's regular DoP Sean Bobbitt, the settings offer some resonant contrasts. The Mulligans' lavishly antique Old Chicago offices clash with Veronica's stark glass penthouse and the widows' dark shabby warehouse HQ. Meanwhile, Mulligan Jr.'s limo glides through neighbourhoods beset by peeling poverty en route to his gentrified fortress.

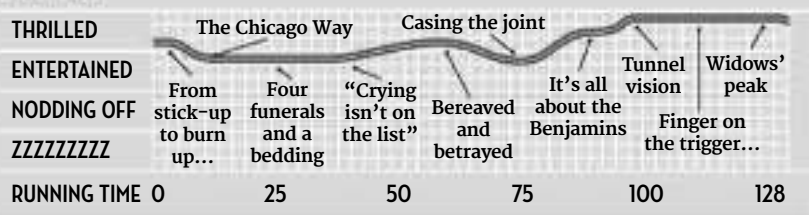
Tightening like a noose around both plots are the escalating suspicions of Jatemme (Daniel Kaluuya), Manning's psychotic enforcer. Committing a shocking act of brutality in a bowling lane ("This is like that Operation game"), or forcing a terrified freestyle rap from victims, he's proof that McQueen can muster sphincter-tightening gangland menace as well as heavyweight themes.

That said, there's some fascinating overlap with *Hunger* and *12 Years A Slave* in the gal-gang's stubborn refusal to submit. As Linda puts it: "I want my kids to know I did something. Didn't just sit there and take it." There's shared ground with *Shame*, too, in Viola Davis' powerful portrait of sustained suffering, dogged by knife-sharp flashbacks of loving Harry. Pole-axed by sorrow, scared, angry and vengeful,

**'CIRCLING PLOTS COLLIDE IN KINETIC CAR CHASES AND BLOODY PAY-OFFS'**



**FILM PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™**



Davis is the film's motor. It's Veronica's guts and gravitas that push the women's scrappy scheme on; their secret weapon the fact that "no one thinks we have the balls to pull it off".

**SAVED BY THE BELLE**

But the biggest surprise is Debicki, digging courage and ingenuity from battered Alice by masquerading as a mail-order bride to grab Glockes and other vital assets. Rodriguez shows a tenderness untapped in the *Fast & Furious* series, while Cynthia Erivo's

late-recruited getaway driver Belle flaunts a quiet toughness that lets her go toe-to-toe with Davis.

Characters this well drawn take time, however. The film's panorama of grief and grift is sprawling and absorbing, rather than swift-footed. It's lightened by co-writer Gillian Flynn's (*Gone Girl*, *Sharp Objects*) trademark grit and dark humour, novel stuff in McQueen's often punishing work. Indeed, there's a Black Lives Matter-style tragedy sprung here that has sharp emotional recoil. But after a midpoint gut-punch, revenge gives a booster rocket to the film's back half. Hans Zimmer's thrumming score steps up the pace, as the visceral tension of the robbery run-up starts to bite.

Clumsy, violent and threatened by rookie errors, the heist is the polar opposite of *Ocean's 8's* slick, jigsaw

puzzle of a job, heightened by the widows' desperation. Circling plots collide in kinetic car chases and bloody pay-offs, all favouring rough justice over sleek ingenuity. It leads to a searing showdown that's studded with loss and Davis' badass determination. If McQueen fans miss the lyrical, piercing depth of his earlier work, there's an echo of it in the quartet's faint, flawed nobility. Empowering and engrossing, with a cynical eye and a social conscience that adds heft and heart to the heist, it's a hugely accomplished and enjoyable addition to McQueen's oeuvre. **Kate Stables**

**THE VERDICT**

McQueen segues smoothly to the mainstream with a crackerjack thriller packing a chewy political message.



William Shatner isn't ageing brilliantly.

**SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...**

**HALLOWEEN: H2O** 1998  
Curtis' Laurie returns to kick ass after a 20-year hiatus.

**PINEAPPLE EXPRESS** 2008  
Green and McBride put a comedy spin on another well-loved genre.

**STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS** 2015  
A belated, crowd-pleasing sequel done right, revisiting familiar, craggy faces.

FOR MORE REVIEWS VISIT [GAMESRADAR.COM/TOTALFILM](http://GAMESRADAR.COM/TOTALFILM)

# HALLOWEEN

In decent Shape...

★★★★★ OUT 19 OCTOBER

**A**fter ditching the majority of the franchise's 40-year canon to serve as a direct follow-up to John Carpenter's 1978 original, is *Halloween* (2018) a worthy sequel? Well, yes and no. Thrill-seeking fans of Carpenter's definitive slasher will have a good time with the nods, call-backs and mostly relentless pace. But anyone hoping to see some *Blade Runner 2049*-style heft added to the mythology is likely to walk away unsatisfied.

The film opens with Michael Myers (played by James Jude Courtney and, in a key cameo, a returning Nick Castle) having been incarcerated in a high-security facility for 40 years. Two irritating podcasters arrive to try and get the mute killer talking, using his mask to taunt him. The fact that the

**CERTIFICATE** 18 **DIRECTOR** David Gordon Green **STARRING** Jamie Lee Curtis, Judy Greer **SCREENPLAY** David Gordon Green, Danny McBride, Jeff Fradley **DISTRIBUTOR** Universal **RUNNING TIME** 106 mins

facility allows this is symptomatic of the film's lack of logic – for better or worse, the emphasis falls on fun here.

The podcasters next visit the reclusive Laurie Strode (Jamie Lee Curtis), who has trained herself in survival skills. The interview is bungled badly, but director David Gordon Green (*Stronger*, *Pineapple Express*) is more sensitive in his treatment of Strode. One of the biggest delights here is Curtis' badass return to her career-launching role: the film lights up whenever she's at the forefront.

In a hint that trauma may have created a monster in Strode, her daughter (Judy Greer) has little time for her after a childhood spent learning weapons skills. But any chance of the subplots being examined goes out of the window (and disappears from the front lawn) as the hack-and-slash begins. After a slightly slow start and an ill-advised facility transfer, the pace doesn't let up once Myers starts murdering his way back to Haddonfield.

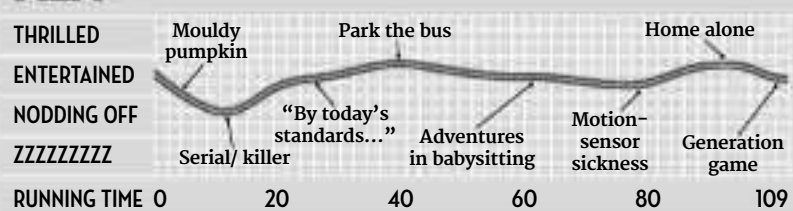
Between the gruesomely inventive kills and the visual stylings, Green operates with affection for Carpenter's original. If that's aided by Carpenter's exec producer role, the reprise of his score (alongside new music from Carpenter, his son Cody, and Daniel A. Davies) also adds to the atmosphere. But where *Halloween* 2018 deviates wildly is in the humour. Danny McBride co-writes, and it shows: while some knowing gags suggest you should just enjoy the fun, the insistent one-liners detract from the tension.

The humour and allusions suggest a film that's intended to be whooped along to at midnight screenings, and the cracking final sequence ensures audiences will leave on a high. But given all that has been sacrificed to give the franchise a shot at redemption, the end result feels flimsy and throwaway. There's enough ambiguity in the ending to suggest further sequels could be on the way, but on this evidence, there's not a lot left to be wrung from this well-worn franchise. **Matt Maytum**

**THE VERDICT**

The latest *Halloween* instalment is fun while it lasts, but unlike the original, it's not a classic for the ages.

**FILM PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™**



Amandla Stenberg shines as teen Starr Carter.



**SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...**

**BOYZ N THE HOOD** 1991  
Cuba Gooding Jr. goes from boy to man in John Singleton's classic.

**JUST ANOTHER GIRL ON THE I.R.T.** 1992  
A Brooklyn teenager grows up the hard way in this low-budget indie.

**CROOKLYN** 1994  
Spike Lee mines his childhood in this look at a '70s Bed-Stuy family.

FOR MORE REVIEWS VISIT [GAMESRADAR.COM/TOTALFILM](http://GAMESRADAR.COM/TOTALFILM)

# THE HATE U GIVE

Starr vehicle...

★★★★★ OUT 22 OCTOBER

**T**aking its title from Tupac Shakur's "Thug Life" acronym ("The Hate U Give Little Infants Fucks Everyone") and inspired by the same shooting that informed *Fruitvale Station*, George Tillman Jr.'s adap of Angie Thomas's novel is a teen movie with a difference. At its heart is a 16-year-old girl dealing with all the usual travails of adolescence: peer pressure, boyfriends, expectations. Yet Starr Carter (Amandla Stenberg) has an extra burden to bear: that of being the only witness to a friend's unwarranted killing by a trigger-happy cop.

The Black Lives Matter undercurrent gives *The Hate U Give* a relevance and topicality far beyond the teen pic's normal parameters. Even before the shooting though, Tillman Jr.'s film

**CERTIFICATE** 12A **DIRECTOR** George Tillman Jr. **STARRING** Amandla Stenberg, Regina Hall, Russell Hornsby, Anthony Mackie **SCREENPLAY** Audrey Wells, Tina Mabry **DISTRIBUTOR** Fox **RUNNING TIME** 133 mins

proves uncommonly astute at delineating the code-switching tightrope its young heroine must walk between the two worlds in which she operates.

At her upscale private school, she's a mild-mannered poster child for racial integration, coolly accepting of her classmates' casual bigotries and fetishising of black culture. Back in the ghetto she calls home, in contrast, she's a whip-smart latchkey kid with an ex-convict father (Russell Hornsby), a hard-working mum (Regina Hall) and a powder-keg neighbourhood just outside her front door that crackles with gunfire when the sun goes down.

After a routine traffic stop ends with Khalil (*Detroit*'s Algee Smith) breathing his last in her arms, Starr sets out to see justice done in his name – a quest that soon puts her on a collision course with the police, the judicial system and the local w crime kingpin (Anthony Mackie) for whom Khalil worked. Screenwriters Audrey Wells (*The Truth About Cats And Dogs*) and Tina Mabry deftly crank up the tension as Starr

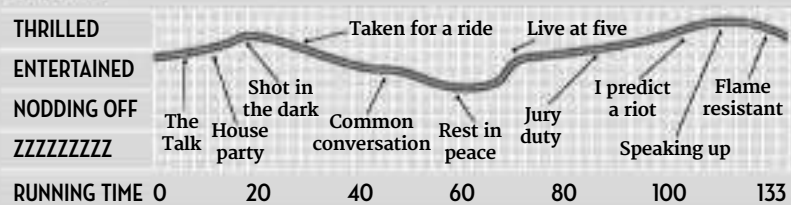
prepares herself for the grand jury appearance that will decide if 'Officer 115' pays for his actions. Yet she also finds time for some *Guess Who*-inflected humour: Hornsby's flabbergasted response to the prom-night arrival of his daughter's white beau offers a moment of tension-easing laughter.

Rightly being talked about as a potential Oscar contender, *The Hate U Give* could possibly have shed 20 minutes without losing any of its forcefulness and resonance. Yet any concerns over its occasional flabbiness are quickly dispatched by a riveting performance from *Hunger Games* veteran Stenberg that fizzes with intelligence, compassion and moral authority. Back when her casting was announced, some fans of the book voiced the view that her role should have gone to a darker-skinned actress. Stenberg repays the hate they gave with a charismatic, magnetic and startlingly mature turn that shows that she, like the teen movie genre itself, has triumphantly come of age. **Neil Smith**

## THE VERDICT

An all-too-familiar story is told with empathy and vigour in a film arguing for tolerance, activism and change.

### FILM PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™





Having a bear working reception didn't help...

**SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...**

**BARTON FINK** 1991  
The Coens book playwright John Turturro into the hotel from hell.

**THE CABIN IN THE WOODS** 2012  
Goddard takes the horror movie (and your brain) to another dimension.

**HOTEL ARTEMIS** 2018  
Bad times at a different Drew's (Pearce) ominous establishment.

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# BAD TIMES AT THE EL ROYALE

Heart-race hotel...

★★★★★ OUT NOW

Six years on from the belated release of *The Cabin In The Woods*, Drew Goddard returns with his second film as writer/director. A bloody 1960s-set crime yarn centred on the eponymous run-down Lake Tahoe hotel, *BTATER* comes armed with quick-draw dialogue, violent stand-offs, Motown cuts and casual allusions to real-life figures. Starring a juicy ensemble, it's got a *Pulp Fiction* vibe to it, even if Goddard doesn't have a voice as distinctive as Tarantino's.

After a prologue in which a crook stashes a bag of cash under the floorboards in one of the rooms, we fast-forward 10 years. The El Royale has

**CERTIFICATE** 15 **DIRECTOR** Drew Goddard  
**STARRING** Jeff Bridges, Dakota Johnson, Chris Hemsworth, Cynthia Erivo, Jon Hamm, Lewis Pullman **SCREENPLAY** Drew Goddard  
**DISTRIBUTOR** Twentieth Century Fox  
**RUNNING TIME** 140 mins

seen better days, but that doesn't stop a gaggle of guests arriving at the same time: priest Father Daniel Flynn (Jeff Bridges), put-upon singer Darlene Sweet (Cynthia Erivo), garrulous salesman Laramie Seymour Sullivan (Jon Hamm) and the mysterious Emily Summerspring (Dakota Johnson), who signs the register "Fuck You".

Once they've checked in with concierge Miles (Lewis Pullman), squabbling over their choice of rooms, Goddard begins to explore exactly why they're all here. With the first four chapters named after each room number the guests select, we soon learn that just about nobody is who they say they are. Moreover, the hotel itself creaks with secrets, not least because all the rooms are fixed with two-way mirrors and an observation corridor, allowing Miles to film any kinky goings on.

Goddard's script is such a treasure trove of twists that it might be fairer to resist wading into spoiler territory. That said, the late arrival of Goddard's *Cabin*

star Chris Hemsworth as bare-chested, flaxen-locked cult leader Billy Lee shoves a real stick of dynamite up the third act. Proclaiming "What does God mean to you?" Hemsworth is eminently watchable as a hair-trigger guru in the Charles Manson mould.

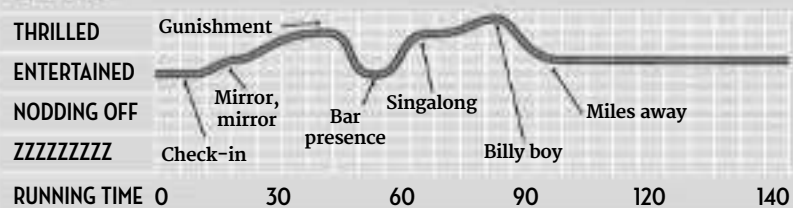
Likewise, Hamm is enjoyable with his effusive Don Draper-lite character, but it's the ladies who set the film on fire. Shedding her *Fifty Shades* good-girl image, Johnson has a blast as the ruthless Emily, though it's Erivo (who also stars in Steve McQueen's *Widows*, see p76) that really rocks the house. *BTATER* may not be a musical, but her renditions of 'You Can't Hurry Love' and other standards are captivating.

If the film isn't quite as inventive as the game-changing horror that was *Cabin* (which boasted Joss Whedon as co-scripter), it's infused with affection and craft. Even if the plot logic doesn't always hold up, it's rich on rain-drenched atmosphere as we're left trying to figure out who'll be the last woman or man standing. **James Mottram**

**THE VERDICT**

Bags of fun. Drew Goddard and his cast have a riot in a thriller that dances to its own beat.

**FILM PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™**





Madame Blanc, lady in... red.

**CERTIFICATE** TBC **DIRECTOR** Luca Guadagnino **STARRING** Dakota Fanning, Tilda Swinton, Chloë Grace Moretz, Mia Goth **SCREENPLAY** Luca Guadagnino **DISTRIBUTOR** Mubi **RUNNING TIME** 152 mins

# SUSPIRIA

Hurty dancing...

★★★★★ OUT 16 NOVEMBER

**C**all Me By Your Name director Luca Guadagnino's remake of Dario Argento's gonzo masterpiece is uncoincidentally set in 1977, the year the original *Suspiria* came out. There are a few more nods and winks, but like other successful horror remakes (Herzog's *Nosferatu*, Carpenter's *The Thing*, Cronenberg's *The Fly*), this is a wholesale reimagining.

The gist is the same – American dance student Susie Bannion (Dakota Fanning) attends a German academy run by a coven of witches – but we're now in Berlin in the shadow of the Wall. In place of Argento's dazzling colours and Goblin's hellish noise-mongering are wintry hues and Thom Yorke's eloquently evil arrangements. The two-and-a-half-hour runtime, meanwhile, is studded with digressions. In fact, the whole thing aspires to such upscale artiness it seems determined to be the last word on the 'elevated horror' debate.

But Fanning is good and Tilda Swinton, as the academy's formidable grand dame Madame Blanc, is better. Meanwhile Guadagnino, like Argento, is hell-bent on disorientating viewers. What's more, there are Grand Guignol flourishes that go straight into the genre's pantheon, including a death-by-dance number, and an outré climax that bursts, literally, with insanity, tumult and exultation. **Jamie Graham**

## THE VERDICT

Not all of it works and it naturally can't touch the original, but much of Guadagnino's remake is devilishly fine.



## FAHRENHEIT 11/9

★★★★★ OUT 19 OCTOBER  
 "How the fuck did this happen?" demands Michael Moore at the outset of his latest doc – and he's not only referring to Donald Trump. Targeting the woeful state of present-day America, Moore's polemic goes on too long and tries to cram in way too much. Still, the director's as feisty as ever and plenty of his points hit home, especially when he tackles the water-pollution crisis in his native Flint, Michigan. **Philip Kemp**



## DONKEYOTE

★★★★★ OUT 26 OCTOBER  
 As per the title, Chico Pereira's doc shares beats with Cervantes' classic novel: an old man (Pereira's uncle Manuel) journeying across Spain with his donkey on a tragi-comic quest. Manuel feels from a different age: a raconteur who sleeps outside and apparently prefers the company of animals (whom he hopes to take Stateside) to his family. But despite exquisite camerawork, the languid pacing ultimately exhausts. **Tim Coleman**



## SMALLFOOT

★★★★★ OUT NOW  
 This disposable monster 'toon feels like a stitch-job formed of numerous (better) family flicks, with little of its own invention or wit. Channing Tatum is goofily charming enough as yeti Migo, but James Corden – as a wildlife presenter – once again fails to prove why he keeps landing voice roles. Both abominable snowmen and the twist on monster/human relationships were done way better in *Monsters, Inc.* **Rob James**



## FUNNY GIRL: THE MUSICAL

★★★★★ OUT 24 OCTOBER  
 The life story of Broadway star Fanny Brice earned Barbra Streisand an Oscar, but the role's now almost as synonymous with Sheridan Smith, a bright-eyed Brice in this recording of the recent stage revival (in cinemas 24 October only). What you lose in live atmos you gain in a bigger spotlight for Smith's expressive turn, from tears to comedy 'tache antics. **Matthew Leyland**



Joaquin Phoenix stars as real-life newspaper cartoonist John Callahan.

**CERTIFICATE** TBC **DIRECTOR** Gus Van Sant **STARRING** Joaquin Phoenix, Rooney Mara, Jonah Hill, Jack Black **SCREENPLAY** Gus Van Sant **DISTRIBUTOR** MUBI **RUNNING TIME** 115 mins

# DON'T WORRY, HE WON'T GET FAR ON FOOT

Joaquin goes to 'toon...

★★★★★ OUT 26 OCTOBER

**G**us Van Sant delivers one of his more personal films with this biographical tale of Portland cartoonist John Callahan. A story brought to him by the late Robin Williams, after their collaboration on *Good Will Hunting*, this too touches on therapy and self-healing. Callahan (Joaquin Phoenix) is a heavy drinker, and it's an ill-fated hook-up with Jack Black's party-hound that leads him to a car accident.

Paralysed and in a wheelchair, Callahan's boozing gets worse until he finds his way to a rehab group run by Jonah Hill's touchy-feely soul-saver, with Kim Gordon and Beth Ditto as fellow patients. Just as his cartoons gathered as many detractors as admirers for their controversial content, so Callahan arrives as a disruptive, obnoxious presence.

Phoenix hits the right notes of screw-you bitterness and sardonic humour throughout. And with Van Sant adopting an appealingly loose-limbed structure, the only misstep is a miscast Rooney Mara as Annu, the angelic Swedish physical therapist Callahan falls for. Otherwise, this is a winning return to form for Van Sant. **James Mottram**

## THE VERDICT

A punchy, poignant and honest portrayal of recovery, Phoenix and Van Sant's reunion is cause for celebration.

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### SIBERIA

★★★★★ OUT 16 NOVEMBER

Keanu Reeves heads to Russia (actually Winnipeg) to find his missing partner in a sleepy thriller with artsy pretensions. With limited time to obtain diamonds for some shifty mobster types, our hero instead hooks up with a waitress (Ana Ularu), goes hunting with her brothers and Skypes his wife (Molly Ringwald) in a film whose mildly exciting finale is scant reward for the unmitigated tedium that precedes it. **Neil Smith**



### THE PRICE OF EVERYTHING

★★★★★ OUT 16 NOVEMBER

What makes good art? What makes valuable art? What makes good art that's valued at squillions of dollars? These and myriad other questions are chewed over in Nathaniel Kahn's conversation-starting doc. Artists, auctioneers and collectors all weigh in; if the style is more portrait than polemic, it paints the madness of the market in no uncertain strokes. **Matthew Leyland**



### 9 TO 5

★★★★★ OUT 16 NOVEMBER

It's 38 years since this spiky workplace satire came out, but in the wake of the #MeToo movement and greater focus on gender disparity, it's still depressingly relevant. Charting three women (Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin and Dolly Parton) wreaking revenge on their sexist bully boss (Dabney Coleman), it's dated only in technology, fashion and a payoff that flubs a feminist message. **Jane Crowther**



### DOGMAN

★★★★★ 19 OCTOBER

Matteo Garrone returns to Italy's criminal underclass for a biting intimate, emotionally complex story about the way violence can corrupt even gentle hearts. Marcello Fonte plays a dog groomer and pushover; dealing cocaine to pay for his daughter's holidays, his good nature is soon exploited. While the canine cast delights, Fonte deserves best-actor chatter as a hangdog you can root for. **Jordan Farley**



**BEETLEJUICE**

★★★★★ OUT 26 OCTOBER

Pre-CGI, pre-Johnny Depp: without his later crutches, Tim Burton's riotous 1988 goth-com ages well. Canny twists on home-invasion basics see newly deads Geena Davis and Alec Baldwin summoning bio-exorcist Betelgeuse (Michael Keaton) to rid their home of yuppies. Keaton's madcap incursions are unleashed judiciously, the visuals crackle and Winona Ryder makes winning work of Lydia. **Kevin Harley**



**BISBEE '17**

★★★★★ OUT 9 NOVEMBER

Robert Greene, director of 2016's *Kate Plays Christine*, plays with the form again in an exploration of a mass deportation of immigrant miners in 1917 Arizona. Enlisting the inhabitants of modern-day Bisbee to re-enact this shameful episode, Greene offers them a way to atone for an inherited guilt while giving us a troubling but redemptive examination of industrial relations and collective culpability. **Neil Smith**



**SCIENCE FAIR**

★★★★★ OUT 19 OCTOBER

Smart, charming and inspiring, this Sundance favourite tails nine international high-schoolers desperate to win big at ISEF, 'the Olympics of science fairs'. More *Hoop Dreams* than *Spellbound*, it celebrates the teens' ambitious projects (a Zika virus vaccine, 'flying wing' aircraft, and a water-pollutant detector), while casting a shrewd, sympathetic eye over their setbacks and struggles with schoolmates. **Kate Stables**



**HUNTER KILLER**

★★★★★ OUT 19 OCTOBER

Gerard Butler stars as Joe Glass, a submarine captain tasked with navigating foreign waters to save the Russian president from a coup. Co-starring Gary Oldman as a trigger-happy Pentagon bigwig, this patriotic action thriller may as well be called *Olympus Has Sunken*. Missile launches blend with camaraderie and a message of tolerance, but the script is submerged in clichés at least as old as the Cold War. **Matt Looker**

**CERTIFICATE** 18 **DIRECTOR** Julius Avery **STARRING** Jovan Adepo, Wyatt Russell, Mathilde Ollivier, Pilou Asbæk **SCREENPLAY** Billy Ray, Mark L. Smith **DISTRIBUTOR** Paramount **RUNNING TIME** 110 mins

**OVERLORD**

War is 'what the hell?!'...

★★★★★ OUT 7 NOVEMBER

**J**. Abrams loves to plunge viewers down a rabbit hole before dragging them backwards through a maze made up of hairpin turns. *Overlord*, which he produces while Julius Avery (*Son Of A Gun*) directs, is the latest example. No spoilers here, but suffice to say that what starts off as a men-on-a-mission World War 2 action-drama morphs with all the blood, blisters and body butchery of a Rick Baker werewolf transformation into an 18-rated horror movie.

The one-take opening is exceptional, as captain Ford (Wyatt Russell), greenhorn grunt Boyce (Jovan Adepo) and the rest of a hyperventilating squad parachute into southern France on the eve of D-Day. With their plane shot from the sky, they plummet through thunderous explosions and then creep past roaming Nazis until they reach a small town to take out its radio tower. And then things really start to get messy...

From its jolt-start as an airborne *Saving Private Ryan*, the only way is down, and the grisly horrors that await our heroes slowly slide from the surprising and the pleasingly queasy to the, well, a bit silly. That said, the soulful Adepo is a star in the making and Russell, best-known as stoner Willoughby in *Everybody Wants Some!!*, convinces as a gritty, bruised-heart leader. **Jamie Graham**

**THE VERDICT**

War movie, character piece, Cronenbergian body horror... there's a lot of good stuff here before it jumps the shark.



The lads from the village took apple scrumping really seriously.

The alien symbiote's a big fan of his new selfie stick.



## SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

### AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON 1981

Seriously scary, howlingly funny – the blend *Venom* is going for.

### THE FLY 1986

Goldblum grows super-strong when he fuses with a fly. Then his cock falls off.

### FIGHT CLUB 1999

*Venom* riffs on Jekyll and Hyde. So does Fincher's masterpiece.

FOR MORE REVIEWS VISIT [GAMESRADAR.COM/TOTALFILM](http://GAMESRADAR.COM/TOTALFILM)

# VENOM

A symbiote favour...

★★★★★ OUT NOW

**R**uben Fleischer's *Venom* has many questions to answer. Can it do justice to Marvel's iconic antihero, an alien symbiote that can run, leap and swing like Spider-Man but likes to bite off people's heads? Can it survive on its own merits while Spidey is otherwise engaged in the MCU? Will it compromise 1993 source series *Lethal Protector* as the PG-13 certificate – 15 in the UK – suggests (*Logan* and *Deadpool* dared to go hard-R)? And the two biggies: can it erase memories of Tobey Maguire dancing in a jazz club, and can Tom Hardy muster a villainous voice that's in some way intelligible?

The answers are sort of, just about, sadly yes, hmmm, and you betcha... with the help of an industrial subwoofer. The plot is your standard origin story, as investigative journalist Eddie Brock (Hardy) aims to take down

**CERTIFICATE** 15 **DIRECTOR** Ruben Fleischer **STARRING** Tom Hardy, Michelle Williams, Riz Ahmed, Jenny Slate **SCREENPLAY** Scott Rosenberg, Jeff Pinkner, Kelly Marcel, Will Beall **DISTRIBUTOR** Sony **RUNNING TIME** 112 mins

billionaire Carlton Drake (Riz Ahmed), whose Life Foundation has launched a space programme to find cures for overpopulation and climate change. As the film opens, we see a homeward-bound shuttle carrying four alien organisms that could hold the key to postponing humankind's extinction. Only the ship crashes and one of the ETs hotfoots it from the wreckage, while the other three specimens are delivered to Drake's San Francisco HQ, ready for experimentation to begin.

It's no spoiler to say that Brock – whose snooping costs him his job and his fiancée (Michelle Williams) – finds himself hosting a symbiote. "I am Venom," it growls after revealing itself in its full seven-foot, toothy, Gene Simmons-tongued glory. Brock spends the rest of the movie bicker-bantering with the voice in his head and fighting off Drake's henchmen via an array of CGI gymnastics.

Tonally, *Venom* leaps and stretches like the symbiote itself, hopping from

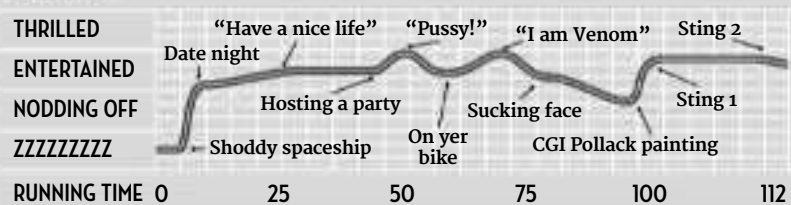
'edgy' character piece (shots of a hunched Brock walking the San Francisco streets are *Taxi Driver* minus the porno theatres) to multiplex-friendly body horror, to riotous buddy-com. Hardy might have been joking (or not) when he said the best 40 minutes of *Venom* are on the cutting-room floor, but it certainly feels rushed and gutted. The action's solid at best, the computer effects very, well, computer-y, and Williams' role is so thankless it makes one of the world's best actresses seem ordinary.

What saves *Venom* is Venom. And Brock. Meaning Hardy, flaunting a new-found knack for physical comedy. Throwing himself, literally, into the action, he also unleashes a series of yips, yowls and yelps that put Tom Cruise's *Mummy* memes to shame. It's a jerky, whiplash-inducing ride to get there, but come the final act, Venom and Brock have found the perfect symbiosis, and the movie's found its tone. **Jamie Graham**

## THE VERDICT

Fleischer made a better comedy-horror with *Zombieland*, but *Venom*'s a decent buddy actioner. You might even laugh your head off...

### FILM PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™





They're not sure if they like the look of the next life lesson...

**CERTIFICATE** PG **DIRECTOR** Mamoru Hosoda **VOICES** Moka Kamishiraishi, Haru Kuroki, Gen Hoshino **SCREENPLAY** Mamoru Hosoda **DISTRIBUTOR** National Amusements **RUNNING TIME** 98 mins

# MIRAI

The kids are all flight...

★★★★★ OUT 2 NOVEMBER

**T**he whimsical theme song to Mamoru Hosoda's animated domestic fantasy seems to promise sweeter, cutesier fruit than the director's more epic endeavours. But don't be fooled. With charm, vigour and dry wit, *Mirai* extends the familial themes of Hosoda's *Wolf Children* and *The Boy And The Beast* into a tale of sibling jealousy that holds true to kids' wayward imaginations and bolshy energies... not to mention seismic sulks.

Imagine *The Boss Baby* re-channelled via the snot-nosed nipper in Ghibli's *Ponyo* and you'll be halfway towards the situation facing four-year-old Kun (Moka Kamishiraishi), whose cosy home life is disrupted by his baby sister's incursion. Kun's tolerance soon devolves into titanic tantrums, heightened as mum starts work and (cue somewhat dated *Mr. Mom*-ish japes) dad assumes childcare duties.

Here, *Mirai* takes wing with Kun's retreat into a fantasy world populated by re-imagined versions of his family and pets. The life lessons they serve evoke *A Christmas Carol*, but Hosoda dodges moral didacticism to conjure child's-eye views of changes and challenges, rich in detail and sensation. The wondrous and terrifying train-station climax is exemplary: if it unavoidably echoes Ghibli, *Mirai* is too gently, fluently assured to suffer by the comparison. **Kevin Harley**

## THE VERDICT

Between its domestic intimacies and dragon trains, Hosoda's fable brims with home truths and surreal wonders.



## A WOMAN CAPTURED

★★★★★ OUT 27 OCTOBER  
When Marish, 53, met filmmaker Bernadett Tuza-Ritter, she had been a victim of modern-day slavery for more than a decade. Her captors allowed the director access, and for the next 18 months Tuza-Ritter recorded Marish's daily life, encouraging her to flee for freedom. While upsetting, the insights into hidden abuses make for one of the most remarkable docs of the year. **Tim Coleman**



## UTOYA - JULY 22

★★★★★ OUT 26 OCTOBER  
Released in the same month as Paul Greengrass' account of the 2011 massacre of Norwegian teens by a right-wing extremist (see p108), Erik Poppe's version is chillingly concentrated. In one unbroken take we follow 18-year-old Kaja (Andrea Berntzen) as she searches for her sister and tries to save herself and others from a brutal death. Shot in the real time that the killings played out, this is compelling stuff. **Philip Kemp**



## THE GUILTY

★★★★★ OUT 26 OCTOBER  
When emergency call centre operator Asger (Jakob Cedergren), answers a kidnap victim, he's meant to dispatch the cops and move on. Except Asger, driven by demons to play the hero, won't let go... Never leaving the office and conducted in real time, Gustav Möller's claustrophobic thriller is a thorny look at responsibilities and consequences. Not since *Locke* has such tension been mined from phone convos. **Simon Kinnear**



## GANGSTA

★★★★★ OUT 19 OCTOBER  
In a lively warm-up for their *Bad Boys* film, directors Adil El Arbi and Bilall Fallah bring stylistic flash to a tale of four small-time dealers out of their depth in Antwerp's criminal underworld. A clichéd third-act comedown hits the viewer hard, but until then it fair rattles along, with Matteo Simoni summoning a jittery energy reminiscent of Robert Pattinson in the superior *Good Time*. **Chris Schilling**



**BAD REPUTATION**

★★★★★ OUT 26 OCTOBER

Rock 'n' roll with a kick of raw feeling is the rousing recipe for Kevin Kerslake's Joan Jett portrait. Kerslake doesn't get under Jett's skin, but he plots her roller-coaster ride from The Runaways to the Hall Of Fame with rigour, hinged heavily on Jett's deep-drawl commentary. While her odd-couple bond with manager Kenny Laguna adds warmth, Jett's empathy for female rockers roars loudest of all. **Kevin Harley**



**MAKE ME UP**

★★★★★ OUT NOW

Artist Rachel Maclean's satire presents a bubblegum-pop dystopia where women compete in degrading challenges. Yet as vital as Maclean's call for female solidarity is, the film's message – that women feel obliged to adhere to unrealistic beauty standards, particularly in the social-media era – is hardly new, and it's hammered home with grinding repetition. Even at a slender 82 minutes, it feels overstretched. **Chris Schilling**



**THE SCHOOL IN THE CLOUD**

★★★★★ OUT 19 OCTOBER

Not as whimsical as it sounds, this doc nonetheless involves some blue-sky thinking: Professor Sugata Mitra's notion that web-based schooling is the future. TED talks and classroom trials (contrasting education in England and India) flesh out Mitra's ideas; dissenting voices, gender politics and the scene-stealing Cloud Grannies invigorate the debate. **Matthew Leyland**



**WAITING FOR YOU**

★★★★★ OUT 26 OCTOBER

His father's deathbed confession sees grieving Paul (Colin Morgan) turn sleuth in Charles Garrad's slow-burning thriller. Set mostly in France, the mystery surrounds Madeleine (Fanny Ardant), daughter to an acquaintance of his dad. It's a story built on secrets, where smart lensing probes for echoes of the past. The visual intelligence is matched by Morgan's smouldering, suppressed emotion. **Simon Kinnear**

She'd asked for the 'Rachel'...



CERTIFICATE 15 DIRECTOR Jim Hosking STARRING Aubrey Plaza, Jemaine Clement, Craig Robinson SCREENPLAY Jim Hosking, David Wike DISTRIBUTOR Picturehouse RUNNING TIME 108 mins

**AN EVENING WITH BEVERLY LUFF LINN**

Love and other rugs...

★★★★★ OUT 23 OCTOBER

**J**im Hosking's follow-up to *The Greasy Strangler* tones down the gore and gross-out and ups the star power. The absurdity level, meanwhile, remains the same; which is to say, through the roof. Like *Strangler*, which left even fans feeling queasy, it won't be everyone's cup of weird. But if your funny bone's in synch with Hosking's humour – with its running (sometimes into the ground) gags, deadpan performances, sleazy cartoon vibes and fashion crimes – you'll have a memorable *Evening*.

Rather than one man's lust affair with lard, the hook here is a love quadrangle, with all corners occupied by quality comic talent: Aubrey Plaza, giving great side-eye as runaway wife Lulu Danger; Jemaine Clement, giving good-bad wig (and other hairs) as lovestruck stranger Colin; Matt Berry as Rodney, platonic (and possessive) life partner to the titular Mr. Linn; and Craig Robinson, growling away as the man himself, whose sold-out show is the icing on a cake layered with sight gags, non sequiturs and an unexpected dose of sweet sincerity. Clearly, Hosking is no bullshit artist. **Matthew Leyland**

**THE VERDICT**

The *Greasy Strangler* director tries a little tenderness... with loony, loveable results.

**CERT** 12A **DIRECTOR** Mike Leigh **STARRING** Rory Kinnear, Maxine Peake, Neil Bell, Philip Jackson, Pearce Quigley **SCREENPLAY** Mike Leigh **DISTRIBUTOR** EOne **RUNNING TIME** 154 minutes

# PETERLOO

Talkin' 'bout a revolution

★★★★★ OUT 2 NOVEMBER

**O**n 16 August 1819, upwards of 60,000 protesters gathered at St. Peter's Field, Manchester, to rally for reform. Into this peaceful crowd waded the Salford Yeomanry and the 15th Hussars with sabres drawn. Mike Leigh's biggest and most overtly political film to date does what school textbooks do not – tells the tragic tale of the massacre that became known as Peterloo.

Tracking the four years between the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars and that fateful day in August, Leigh hops between several parties (monarchy, government, courts, various factions of dissenters) as unemployment, famine and hefty trade tariffs deepen class divisions. Exposition is rife, but is compensated for by lived-in performances (Rory Kinnear's reformer Henry Hunt is the standout), full-bore orations at a series of smell-the-sawdust, taste-the-ale underground meetings, and a surprising amount of humour. The Brexit parallels, meanwhile, add to the immediacy.

Leigh's previous period movies (*Mr. Turner*, *Vera Drake*, *Topsy-Turvy*) are among his very finest work. *Peterloo* isn't in that bracket, but it boasts faultless contributions from all of its technical departments, while the climactic massacre is a masterclass – spontaneous, squalid, sorrowful, it's the antithesis of the choreographed battle scenes of, say, Akira Kurosawa or Peter Jackson. **Jamie Graham**

## THE VERDICT

Meticulously crafted, long and talky, but this is politics with passion. You'll leave with fire in your fist.



Capturing the horror of when the peaceful protest turned into a bloodbath.



## SOME LIKE IT HOT

★★★★★ OUT 2 NOVEMBER

Nearly 60 years on, Billy Wilder's cross-dressing farce still warrants its 'best ever comedy' tag. That's not just because of its obvious pleasures: the note-perfect script, Marilyn Monroe's star quality, the gusto with which Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon embrace playing 'Josephine' and 'Daphne'. What's remarkable is how fresh it feels, thanks to Wilder's audacious blending of genres and insouciant bending of genders. **Simon Kinnear**



## JOHNNY ENGLISH STRIKES AGAIN

★★★★★ OUT NOW

The bad news? See title. The good? This is no worse than the previous misadventures of Rowan Atkinson's Brit-spy buffoon; in fact, a couple of set-pieces (one involving baguette-based battery) are classic Atkinson. Still, the character – pitting his analogue 'wits' against a digital mastermind – is as boorish as ever, and the Bond spoofery's less funny than the real thing. **Matthew Leyland**



## ORPHÉE

★★★★★ OUT 19 OCTOBER

A gleaming restoration of Jean Cocteau's reworking of the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Beginning in post-WW2 Paris, this monochrome fantasy follows its own dream-like logic as poet Orphée (Jean Marais) is captivated by an envoy of Death (María Casares). It's a film of matter-of-fact brilliance, where 'special effects' derive from everyday objects, and memories of the war haunt the atmosphere. **Tom Dawson**



## BLACK MOTHER

★★★★★ OUT 2 NOVEMBER

Khalik Allah's kaleidoscopic film is ostensibly a doc about pregnancy, but plays out as a free-form tone poem ruminating on Jamaican culture, motherhood and black identity. Deploying a mosaic of disjointed images and voiceover from (mostly unnamed) characters, Allah's bold choices exhilarate at first but then wear thin. The lack of a clear narrative anchor doesn't help a film that frustrates as much as it compels. **Tim Coleman**



The discovery of the "mixed colours" washing incident didn't help his mood...

**CERTIFICATE** 12A **DIRECTOR** Paul Dano **STARRING** Carey Mulligan, Jake Gyllenhaal, Ed Oxenbould **SCREENPLAY** Paul Dano, Zoe Kazan **DISTRIBUTOR** Kaleidoscope Entertainment **RUNNING TIME** 105 mins

# WILDLIFE

Parting shots...

★★★★★ OUT 9 NOVEMBER

**A**s an actor, Paul Dano majors in conveying the fraught feelings beneath precision-controlled fronts. A similar grasp of contained emotion is suggested by his directing debut, crisply adapted from Richard Ford's novel of marital meltdown in '60s Montana.

The story unfolds via photographer's apprentice Joe Brinson (Ed Oxenbould), a teenager who watches reservedly as parents Jeanette (Carey Mulligan) and Jerry (Jake Gyllenhaal) splinter over dad's job crises. As Jerry sinks into gloom, Jeanette teaches swimming; when Jerry leaves home to fight fires, Jeanette's simmering frustrations ignite into an affair. Pleasingly, Gyllenhaal never showboats, letting his slumped shoulders tell Jerry's tale; likewise Mulligan's body language communicates depths about a woman's eagerness to burst.

Rather than forcing his emotional hand, Dano's lingering camera teases at the truths behind seemingly blank surfaces; the excellent Oxenbould's undemonstrative expression, the Gregory Crewdson-ish suburban exteriors. True, Dano takes few risks, beyond a faintly over-heated fire metaphor. But his handling of cast, character and composition shows a natural director's intuition, right down to the marriage of surface reserve and under-the-skin emotion in the impeccably focused final shot. **Kevin Harley**

## THE VERDICT

Dano's slow-burn character piece suggests he could be fanning the directing flames for the long haul.

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## THE EVIL DEAD

★★★★★ OUT 26 OCTOBER

Two sequels, a remake, a TV spin-off... Not bad for the one-time 'video nasty'. Sure, this shocker remains disquieting (the 'tree rape' sequence is rightly notorious) but the infamy doesn't convey Raimi's unhinged exuberance and invention. With hurtling camerawork, shrieking sound design and gross-out FX, the funhouse atmosphere borders on outright, albeit pitch-black, comedy. **Simon Kinnear**



## NIGHT SCHOOL

★★★★★ OUT NOW

Hot comic properties Kevin Hart and Tiffany Haddish grate rather than spark in this scattershot comedy about a qualifications-hungry high-school dropout and his tough-talking teacher. Unable to trigger the raucous fun of *Girls Trip*, director Malcolm D. Lee settles for a bickering adult version of *Breakfast Club*. Diehard fans of Hart's big-hearted bluster will give it a passing grade, regardless. **Kate Stables**



## POSSUM

★★★★★ OUT 26 OCTOBER

"Can you spy him deep within, little possum black as sin?" Beautifully made but furiously obtuse, this Lynchian debut from writer/director Matthew Holness feels like *The Babadook* rewritten by Samuel Beckett. Set in the Norfolk backwaters, where Sean Harris is tormented by Alun Armstrong's abusive patriarch, the atmosphere unnerves, but it's more haunting short than fully realised feature. **Matt Glasby**



## 3 DAYS IN QUIBERON

★★★★★ OUT 16 NOVEMBER

This chamber drama from writer-director Emily Atef revisits the candid interview given by Austrian film star Romy Schneider to *Stern* magazine, conducted just a year before her untimely death aged 43. Handsomely photographed in black and white, this is worth seeing for Marie Bäumer's compelling central performance as the troubled yet defiant Schneider. **Tom Dawson**



**THE OTHER SIDE OF EVERYTHING**

★★★★★ OUT 9 NOVEMBER  
Srbijanka Turajlic was a Belgrade University professor in the early '90s when Yugoslavia started to collapse, and the decade-long wars began. Interviewed by her daughter Mila, she provides a personal and political lens through which to view Serbian history. A startling portrait of courage in the face of fascism emerges, making it challengingly relevant. **Tim Coleman**



**THE YUKON ASSIGNMENT**

★★★★★ OUT 2 NOVEMBER  
Kitted out with GoPros and handycams, British adventurer Chris Lucas leads his father Niall into the Canadian wilds before becoming a dad himself in this amateur doc. The result is essentially a home movie turned tourist ad: while there are glimpses of emotional resonance, any insight into the pair's relationship is dwarfed by the awe-inspiring surroundings. **Tim Coleman**



**TOUCH ME NOT**

★★★★★ OUT 19 OCTOBER  
A dream-like wandering into the intimate (and semi-fictionalised) lives of actor Laura Benson and director Adina Pintilie, this docu-fiction interrogates how we achieve closeness through touch. It claimed the Golden Bear at Berlin, but Pintilie's film only pleases when the camera diverts from the navel-gazing of its main two protagonists, showing sparse moments of uncomfortable brilliance. **Marion Koob**



**WARU**

★★★★★ OUT 9 NOVEMBER  
The impact of a child's death on a Maori community is laid bare across eight female-directed vignettes, each taking place in a continuous, 10-minute shot. Yet this gripping anthology is no mere experiment. From the trials of a struggling mum to a reporter fighting prejudice in a ghoulish newsroom, the episodes confront a cycle of violence and highlights the courage of the women seeking to break it. **Chris Schilling**

**CERTIFICATE** TBC **DIRECTOR** Jesse Peretz **STARRING** Rose Byrne, Ethan Hawke, Chris O'Dowd **SCREENPLAY** Evgenia Peretz, Jim Taylor, Tamara Jenkins **DISTRIBUTOR** Universal **RUNNING TIME** 105 mins

**JULIET, NAKED**

A stripped-down romcom...

★★★★★ OUT 2 NOVEMBER

**T**he ingredients look familiar in this British-American romcom – Nick Hornby source, awkward love triangle, kooky siblings – but it has enough going on under the surface to make it worth a look, with melancholic musings outweighing belly laughs.

The none-more-Hornby setup sees fanboy/manchild Duncan (Chris O'Dowd) thrilled when an unreleased demo tape by his idol, reclusive rocker Tucker Crowe (Ethan Hawke), surfaces. Duncan's long-suffering partner Annie (Rose Byrne) is less impressed; when she leaves a scathing review that catches Tucker's attention, the two start corresponding.

The cutesy seaside setting and Annie's job at a local museum of curiosities feel twee, but Byrne is reliably charming, and the role of enigmatic, washed-up musician fits Hawke like a bobby cardy. O'Dowd gets most of the laughs as the self-important cultural studies lecturer, but all of the leading trio contribute to the film's deeper themes of fandom, self-reflection and lives half-lived.

Directed by *Girls* regular Jesse Peretz and produced by Judd Apatow, *Juliet* is a little too low-key for its own good, never quite generating extremes of emotion. But it's poignant and sharp enough for anyone who pines for the days when romcoms had substance as standard. **Matt Maytum**

**THE VERDICT**

An understated, charming dramedy that can meander, but is elevated by the combo of Byrne, Hawke and O'Dowd.



# BOX OFFICE CHARTS 03.09.18 – 30.09.18



## KING OF THIEVES

There's now enough films about the 2015 Hatton Garden heist to make a boxset; clearly, this is the gift that keeps on giving. Can't wait for the musical: 'Easter Pa-raid?' 'OAP-lahoma'?



## SMALLFOOT

In order to obtain a U certificate, the UK distributor opted to remove one use of a certain C-word... a literal case of cutting the 'crap'. BTW, anyone else mistake this for Wampa: A Star Wars Story?



## THE NUN

Apt that the press screening for this conventional horror took place in a cemetery, given how many critics came to bury it. We're willing to forgive if they title the sequel Second To Nun.

## UK TOP 10

Pos	FILM	THIS MONTH	SINCE RELEASE	WEEKS OUT
1	<b>THE NUN</b> ★★	£10.6M	£10.6M	4
2	<b>THE HOUSE WITH A CLOCK IN ITS WALLS</b> ★★★	£5.5M	£5.5M	2
3	<b>KING OF THIEVES</b> ★★	£5M	£5M	4
4	<b>CRAZY RICH ASIANS</b> ★★★★★	£4.8M	£4.8M	3
5	<b>THE PREDATOR</b> ★★★	£4.6M	£4.6M	4
6	<b>CHRISTOPHER ROBIN</b> ★★★★★	£3.6M	£14.2M	7
7	<b>MAMMA MIA! HERE WE GO AGAIN</b> ★★★	£3.6M	£65.2M	11
8	<b>A SIMPLE FAVOUR</b> ★★★★★	£3.4M	£3.4M	2
9	<b>BLACKKKLANSMAN</b> ★★★★★	£3.1M	£6.2M	6
10	<b>INCREDIBLES 2</b> ★★★★★	£2.2M	£55.5M	12

## US TOP 10

Pos	FILM	THIS MONTH	SINCE RELEASE	WEEKS OUT
1	<b>THE NUN</b> ★★	\$109.1M	\$109.1M	4
2	<b>CRAZY RICH ASIANS</b> ★★★★★	\$54.7M	\$165.7M	7
3	<b>THE PREDATOR</b> ★★★	\$47.6M	\$47.6M	3
4	<b>THE HOUSE WITH A CLOCK IN ITS WALLS</b> ★★★	\$44.8M	\$44.8M	2
5	<b>A SIMPLE FAVOUR</b> ★★★★★	\$43.1M	\$43.1M	2
6	<b>PEPPERMINT</b> N/A	\$33.5M	\$33.5M	4
7	<b>NIGHT SCHOOL</b> ★★	\$28M	\$28M	1
8	<b>SMALLFOOT</b> ★★	\$23M	\$23M	1
9	<b>WHITE BOY RICK</b> N/A	\$21.7M	\$21.7M	3
10	<b>THE MEG</b> ★★★	\$21.5M	\$142M	8



## THE PREDATOR

Didn't make a killing, so maybe time to mull another team-up with a horror brand... Annabelle Vs Predator? The Invisible Mandible? President Evil? Or is that Michael Moore's next doc?



## NIGHT SCHOOL

Scored the best US opening weekend for a comedy in 2018 thus far, raising two questions: firstly, who's more unstoppable, Hart or Haddish? Secondly, what happened to comedy in 2018?



## A SIMPLE FAVOUR

This twisty thriller joins 2018's list of misleading titles: *The First Purge* (no it isn't); *Darkest Hour* (all those daytime scenes!) and *How To Talk To Girls At Parties* (we're still none the wiser).

## STILL OUT, STILL GOOD... OUR PICK OF THE MOVIES OUT NOW



## FIRST MAN ★★★★★

"*La La Land*'s Damien Chazelle broadens his horizons with this superbly detailed account of the 1969 Moon landing. As Neil and Janet Armstrong, Ryan Gosling and Claire Foy are out of this world. Ambitious, artful and authentic."



## A STAR IS BORN ★★★★★

"Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper deliver Oscar-worthy turns in a remake that hits the high notes... Raw and romantic, this is one film that sings from the heart."



## MANDY ★★★★★

"Nicolas Cage delivers his most infernal performance yet in a bloody, druggy, superbly crafted revenge thriller. A nightmare vision that's startlingly unique."



## COLUMBUS ★★★★★

"Sweet but never saccharine, this walking-and-talking two-hander echoes the *Before* trilogy... Meticulous direction, incisive dialogue, revelatory turns."

**COMING SOON** THE BIG HITTERS ON THE CARDS FOR NEXT MONTH...



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**CREED**

30 NOVEMBER

**T**here's a school of thought that *Creed* should have been a standalone, the perfect sign-off for the *Rocky* saga. Looking at *Creed II*'s trailers, one can't help but respond: shut up, school of thought. This isn't a mere 'sequel' to Ryan Coogler's 2015 hit; it's payback for *Rocky IV*, as boxer's son Michael B. Jordan gets in the ring with the son of the boxer who offed his pops. Dolph Lundgren is back in his star-making role as taciturn titan-turned-trainer Ivan Drago, giving ol' Sly the evils again (if not brain damage). Rumours are flying that other familiar franchise faces are also set to return... Can Creed Jr. avenge Creed Snr.? Will Stallone get the Oscar this time? What's Mark Rylance got coming out? See next issue's ringside coverage...



**RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET**  
30 NOVEMBER

Disney's loveable lummo returns for another wrecking rampage, presumably because CAPTCHAs, auto-run ads and "accept-cookies" pop-ups finally broke him. Or maybe he saw *The Emoji Movie*? Either way, hit the back key to page 24 for more on Disney's cyber-sequel.



**ROBIN HOOD**  
21 NOVEMBER

You can't tell us a livelier *Hood* than Ridley Scott's grumpy reboot is not worth fighting for, especially with Taron Egerton in the green. Director Otto Bathurst also oversaw *Black Mirror*'s piggy-sode, so who knows what mischief Ben Mendelsohn's sheriff might get up to. Merriment awaits on page 11.



**THE OLD MAN & THE GUN**  
OUT 7 DECEMBER

Robert Redford made superb work of his 'old man and the sea' in *All Is Lost*, so hope blooms for his reportedly final acting gig, a crime caper from his *Pete's Dragon* director, David Lowery. Tom Waits and Sissy Spacek provide vintage support. For more, fill that swag-bag on page 22.

PlayStation VR



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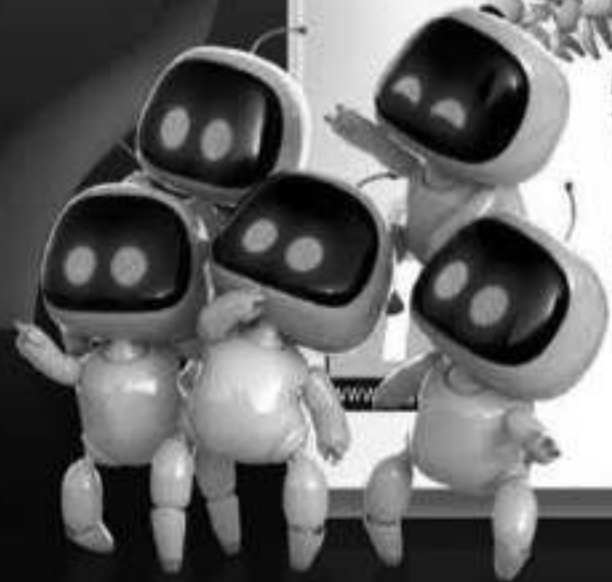
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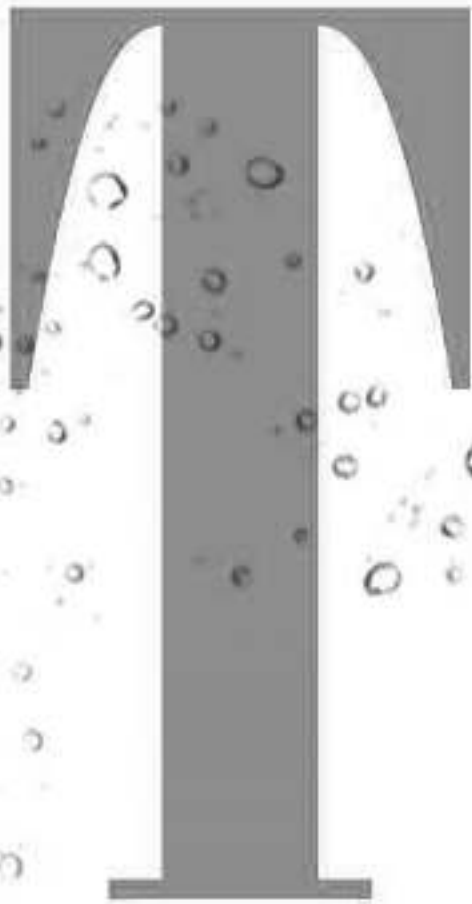
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# 61 AQUAMAN

Once the laughing stock of the comics stable, **AQUAMAN** is now set to carry the DC extended universe into a new era. TF meets the cast and joins the director in the edit bay of a standalone adventure that's more fantasy film than superhero story.

WORDS MATT MAYTUM

# COVER STORY



his was hell... none of it's comfortable, that's why it looks amazing." growls Jason Momoa of his Atlantean armour costume from *Aquaman*. It's on display in a room in The London Hotel, West Hollywood, and he's giving *Total Film* a guided tour of the most chafing area. "If you look in here," he says, tugging open the waistband with little regard for the mannequin's modesty, "this just rubs everywhere on you. And then if you have [fake] tattoos on, the costume rubs everything off."

It's a truth, widely if not universally acknowledged, that actors are generally smaller in the flesh than they appear on screen. Momoa pretty much takes this concept and grinds it to dust in his Herculean palms: 6ft 4in and built like a Dothraki warrior, sporting that wild hair and bushy beard, even dressed casually in a khaki t-shirt, jeans and Birkenstock

**IN THE FRAME**  
Jason Momoa as Aquaman with buddies Mera (Amber Heard) and Vulko (Willem Dafoe), discussing a scene with director James Wan.



clogs, Momoa cuts an imposing presence. Or at least he would if he didn't have such an eager, puppyish friendliness and charm. Every day is clearly an adventure, and he's loving riding the Aquaman wave; it's just days ahead of *Aquaman*'s footage debut at this July's 2018 Comic-Con.

This current screen iteration of Aquaman is so closely tailored to Momoa's own strengths, it's hard to tell where he ends and Arthur Curry, heir to the throne of Atlantis, begins.

"I think Aquaman definitely has a lot of me," he says, bundling his hair up into a bun as he speaks. "I'm not that jaded, but he's definitely ornery and playful and likes beer! He's a bit of a smartass. We obviously have a lot of hair."

*Aquaman*, the solo movie, has been a long time coming for Momoa. He was cast by Zack Snyder back in 2014, making a fleeting cameo in *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice*, and then taking a more prominent role in *Justice League*. From the outset, casting Momoa seemed like a drastic step away from the much-mocked comic character: within the DC Comics panels, Arthur Curry had blond ringlets and a gold-and-green costume, and he could talk to fish. His portrayal in Saturday morning cartoon *Super Friends* didn't do him any favours, and when *Robot Chicken* piled in, it seemed like game over for Aquaman's credibility. So the narrative certainly changed when *Game Of Thrones* man mountain Momoa was cast, and in an instant reframed expectations.

*Justice League* would disappoint, critically and financially, but it's worth remembering that the best DCEU movies so far have been the standalones: *Man Of Steel* and *Wonder Woman*. After being a team player, Momoa has no qualms about carrying a movie entirely on his shoulders. Not feeling nervous, "just

# AQUAMAN

chairman Toby Emmerich has called it “a bit of a bridge movie”. So, will this build a bridge to a new era? “DC gets bashed on a lot... you know, *Justice League*, obviously, what happened there,” says Momoa. “I just feel like, if it is [a bridge], then great. I just think it’s a great story. It’s definitely colourful. We’re underwater. It’s a world we’ve never seen before. If that’s what it takes to bridge it? Fuck. Put it on my back. I’ll guess I’ll help everyone if you need me!”

Moving away from the surface to the underwater world where *Aquaman* is predominantly set afforded Wan the opportunity to scour the very depths of his imagination, and to take inspiration from the master adventure filmmakers he grew up adoring: Spielberg, Lucas, Jackson. “I didn’t want it to take place in our world for very much,” Wan continues. “When it takes place in our world, I want it to be something you don’t go to all the time. There’s a big set-piece that takes place in a small fishing village off the coast of Sicily. It’s not stuff that we see every day.

**‘HE’S PLAYFUL AND LIKES BEER. HE’S A BIT OF A SMARTASS!’**

**JASON MOMOA**

So even that has a heightened romantic quality to it. I really wanted that magic and wonderment, with just that sense of nautical romance in there.”

Momoa points to some pretty weighty reference points when it comes to the feel and tone of this standalone movie. “I hate comparing things to it, but when I watched *Avatar* – and it’s not *Avatar*, and I don’t want to be like that – but when I watched it, I felt like that,” he says. “Or how I felt when I watched *Indiana Jones* and *Star Wars*, and there’s little things in it – the essence. But it’s also its own new world.”

While *Aquaman* will follow on from the events of *Justice League*, as well as flashing back to fill in Arthur’s origin story, it’s set to be a standalone film in the truest sense of the word – don’t go expecting any Justice League cameos. “It’s literally a standalone movie,” explains Wan. “Not because I wasn’t open to the idea of potentially another character from the bigger universe, but it just so happens that the roads that these characters go on are not associated with



**FINDING ATLANTIS**  
(from top) A young Aquaman (Otis Dhanji) plays with his trident; exploring Atlantis; shooting an above-the-surface scene; riding into battle.



completely stoked”, he says. “It’s been six years since Zack called me into his office... Now I’m finally here, and it’s all mine, and it’s phenomenal.”

You’d think that directing a colossus such as Momoa might be intimidating, but not so for James Wan. “I’ve directed *The Rock* and *Vin Diesel*,” he laughs. “So Jason is a piece of cake. He’s easy.” Horror maestro Wan (*Saw*, *The Conjuring*) has experience stepping into an established property with *Fast & Furious 7*. When he was brought on to the DCEU, he had a choice of taking on the Flash or Aquaman. “And the more I thought about it, the biggest thing that struck me at the time was the fact that we’ve seen incarnations of the Flash on TV and stuff like that, but we’ve never really seen an Aquaman movie at all,” says Wan, his dark hair flecked with red highlights.

“That part got me very excited. I feel like the landscape is quite littered with a lot of superhero movies, and the opportunities to do something that feels different and looks different, that no one has really seen before – it felt like the freshest path into the superhero world.”

## WORLD BUILDING

With a shift in tone and location, *Aquaman* would seem to mark a new era for the previously dark and brooding DC Extended Universe, and Warner Bros



any of the other superhero characters. I keep saying it would be weird to see Batman in Atlantis, or even Superman for that matter. Wonder Woman might be the only one that feels like they can belong, that they're siblings of some kind. But no, and that's the best way. This way, I can tell my own story and not be affected by what they're doing over there, and they're not affected by what I'm doing over here. But we all live in the same space."

## UNDERWATER ALLY

Even though this is a solo movie, Aquaman won't be navigating Atlantis alone. His main guide to the world below is Amber Heard's Mera, an Atlantean warrior and princess who teams up with Aquaman in an attempt to unite the sea in the face of an impending war. "I think I have PTSD from wearing that suit," says Heard (half-)jokingly, nodding at the emerald-green all-in-one that's positioned in the corner of the room where we meet. "At the very end, after I'd been doing it for eight months every day, I think the quickest I got in and out of it was about 30 minutes. That was by the end. it didn't start that way, let me tell you. It takes a team."

Today, Heard is looking sharp in a grey-check three-piece suit and red boots. Her character also got a brief introduction in *Justice League*, but it's in *Aquaman* that we'll really get to know her, and that we'll get to see her chemistry with Arthur, as the two bicker and flirt their way through this adventure. Heard admits to trepidation before her first meeting with Zack Snyder, but was won over once she got a better sense of how Mera was going to be portrayed. "I was interested because

**HAVING A BLAST** David Kane, aka Black Manta (Yahya Abdul-Mateen II), keeps a close eye on Aquaman (above); Abdul-Mateen on set with Wan (below); Djimon Hounsou as the Fisherman King (bottom).

I heard it was a warrior queen," she says. "To play an action superhero, not a damsel, not a love interest who needs to be saved, but to truly play a superhuman in her own right, was appealing."

In another change from *Justice League*, Wan was keen to tease out more of Momoa's sense of humour and charm, and the interplay between Aquaman and Mera was key to that. "Amber just really hit it off with Jason," says Wan of the screentesting process. "She understood his sense of humour, his goofiness. He's sort of brash, as well. And she stands up

to that. She's not intimidated by that. And that's what I wanted with this. She doesn't need saving. If anything, she's the one who saves him, because he doesn't quite understand that world."

"I think our chemistry shows, and we get to dig at each other," says Momoa of Heard. "Not that you could ever compare it to Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner, but I was raised by my mother, so we definitely watched *Romancing The Stone*, and I loved that bickering between the two. We strived for that... It was just really easy and effortless." Aquaman and Mera's journey will take in land and sea, where they'll explore the different realms of Atlantis, and the myriad creatures that dwell within. But there will be two chief threats along the way.

Firstly, there's David Kane, aka Black Manta, a mercenary with a grudge against Aquaman. He's played by Yahya Abdul-Mateen II, the stratospherically rising star best known thus far for *The Get Down*, *Baywatch* and *The Greatest Showman*. Kane crafts a bug-eyed supersuit in order to take out Aquaman, and he's the antagonist behind the laser-blasting Sicily sequence.

"I think if I do my job well, people will understand that there's a method behind his approach, and that it's rooted in something real," grins Abdul-Mateen, dressed top-to-toe in denim and beaming like you would if you'd packed



in your day job just a few years ago and were now starring in giant comic-book movies. “He’s not a guy who has a devious plot to take over the world. He’s a guy who’s out to get revenge, and I think a very relatable revenge. People will definitely be able to get behind his cause.”

A role like this comes with other perks, too. “The Black Manta costume: you put it on, and you’re immediately indestructible,” he says. “I felt like I could run through walls. I felt like I could break stuff. It’s so powerful. You can understand how this guy could give a guy like Aquaman a run for his money.”

## BAD COMPANY

The other villain who’ll be getting on Aquaman’s gills is Orm – aka Ocean Master, played by frequent James Wan collaborator Patrick Wilson. Orm is Aquaman’s half-brother, and he doesn’t like the fact that his half-Atlantean, half-human sibling is closer to the throne than he is. He also harbours a beef against the surface world, and the negative effects of their pollution on the sea, so he plans to wage war on them, leading an army riding sharks, crocs and other aquatic fantasy beasts.

The look of the character – blond-haired, elf-like Aryan – acts as a contrast to the reinvented Aquaman. “I just wanted to be as ‘opposite’ to Jason as

I could be,” says Wilson, looking buff in a pale pink t-shirt. “I wanted to get bigger. I wanted to get in shape and be a formidable opponent to Jason. I can’t do much about my height, but I can certainly go to the gym, and eat, and gain whatever it was: 15, 20lb. I wanted to do that.” He also cites his love of UFC, and the way that a height difference doesn’t really mean you can’t destroy your opponent in the octagon. “[Orm’s] got a chip on his shoulder,” Wilson continues, “but it’s very easy for me to look at a guy defending his world that’s

between the two blockbusters. “You could look at a monitor that was filming in a greenscreen room, with all these elements covered with green fabric and all these reference points, and then you could go to the monitor and see the completed set, but in a rendering that was laid over the live scene,” he explains. “So that was sometimes very helpful. So when you’re on this big object that’s moving around on the gimbal that’s supposed to be a shark – you could actually go to the monitor and see the size of the shark you’re on.”

## ‘I REALLY WANTED THAT SENSE OF MAGIC AND WONDERMENT’

JAMES WAN

been polluted and destroyed, and he can’t do anything about it... You definitely want people to understand where he’s coming from. It doesn’t matter if you like him. I don’t care if you like him. But you’ll understand.”

A friendlier face in Atlantis comes in the form of Willem Dafoe’s Vulko. “He’s an advisor to King Orm, and he’s also a mentor to Aquaman,” Dafoe tells *TF*. Returning to the comic-book movie world some 16 years after the game-changing *Spider-Man*, Dafoe did notice significant tech advances in the time

The sub-aquatic world is one of *Aquaman*’s defining features, and something that hasn’t really been done in a live-action movie – let alone a comic-book movie – on this scale before. “The VFX team were able to give us the underwater quality that was super-important,” says Wan. “And we did a lot of R&D early on. What would people look like underwater? When you go underwater, you don’t actually look wet. It’s only when you come out of water that you look wet.” In order to allow the characters to speak naturally

### SIBLING RIVALRY

Patrick Wilson as Aquaman’s half-brother Orm (below); Vulko enjoys an on-shark jaunt (below right).





Q&A

## AMBER HEARD

Mera, Mera...

### How would you describe your character?

Mera is a dedicated, committed, driven, powerful warrior who's set to be queen of a nation that she deeply cares about, and feels a deep sense of loyalty to. She's tough. She's fierce. She's a warrior. She has commanded armies, and she is willing to fight and die for her kingdom. [Arthur and Mera are] forced into a situation where they have to be unlikely and reluctant allies, and work together. We see this relationship unfold as their journey unfolds. It's really nice because at the end, you feel that it's earned.

### Did you have any hesitation about taking the role?

Because of my unfamiliarity with the comic-book movies and superhero movies, I was trepidatious because I had a vague image in my mind of a very specific type of representation of women. I thought it would be limiting to something that was superficial, or put me in a reactionary posture by making me a damsel or someone who needed to be rescued. So I was hesitant. I spoke to them, and I immediately had my interest piqued when I was pitched by Zack [Snyder] as... you know, he presented Mera as a strong, independent, powerful, feisty, intelligent warrior queen. I thought, "Oh, I get a crown and a sword. Man knows his audience!" Meaning me.

### Does it feel like there's been a positive change recently in the way these sorts of characters are presented in Hollywood movies?

The representation of women has been chronically poor, in that it's binary, limited, inaccurate and simple. I think in the wake of recent movements, we're hearing a surge of demand, of voices that are sick of seeing the old archetypal roles that have previously been available to women being played out again. The demand for more accurate representation of the female experience in its variety is long overdue, and it hasn't caught up with the times by any means. But it's nice to see Hollywood showing signs of responding to it.

### Is Mera a character you'd like to revisit again?

Hell yeah. I had so much fun making it. It was hard work. I think people are going to really enjoy seeing a badass chick in this kind of role, and it's about time we had some more superheroes and comic-book heroes that are women, and that are saving the day themselves. I like that. I'd revisit that any day, although I do need time before I go back in that suit.

### What's up next for you?

I'm working on some things that I am producing and trying to get made. I'm trying to find interesting content with complex roles for women. I'd like to find ways that I can work with other women who also want to do that, and have projects I'm trying to work on that would involve an all-female crew. And to just kind of add some momentum to make up for the deficit that is there in the industry as of now. **MM**

and move in a superhuman way, much of the underwater footage was filmed in studios. Wan whips out his phone to show *TF* the rigging equipment used to make the actors look like they're swimming, attached at the waist by a gliding crane arm. "It was so ironic - when we had to shoot the scenes where the actors are supposed to be underwater but we're shooting it dry-for-wet against a bluescreen, we have to make sure they cannot sweat. When they start to look glossy, it looks like we shot them on dry land."

It's not exactly a day at the beach for the actors being hoisted around. "I had to be able to have [the rigs and harnesses] attached to the sides of my costume, at my hips, and be suspended 18ft in the air, and run by a team of men in bright blue Lycra onesies," laughs Heard. "It was just a very weird experience all around." Of course, you can't make a film like *Aquaman* without occasionally getting a little wet. It meant that, sometimes, the actors would just have to get a soaking. "So, sometimes I would start my work day," remembers Heard with a giggle. "They would build me a little step, a little grate. I'd sit on the grate. They'd just hose me down, basically. I don't know many times I was like, 'Adult woman. A grown woman being hosed down.'"

Heard says of her water-loving co-star Momoa that, "He's a fish,

basically." Momoa has an affinity with the sea, not least through his Hawaiian heritage and marine biology studies. "I'm pretty good in the water," he concurs. "I'm a Hawaiian. I've been raised in it. I've drowned. I've had my ass handed to me. I've been celebrated. I've given gifts from the ocean. She's punished me for it." He pauses briefly. "But we had this great moment where I'm in this ridiculous outfit," he continues, pointing back to the displayed costume. "If a wave hit this, it's going to turn into a yard sale. The shit comes off. Velcro can't keep this together, with the power of the ocean. I think there's paparazzi that got pictures of it."

No matter where you rank on the call sheet, if you work on *Aquaman*, you're still going to get a soaking. "Nicole Kidman had to wear some pretty gnarly outfit in some pretty cold conditions, soaked to the bone, and do scenes with me over and over," remembers Momoa with a laugh. "James definitely likes to do a lot of takes..."

## WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE

When we catch up with Wan in the edit bay on the Warner Bros lot a couple of weeks later, he's in his usual buoyant mood, and despite being deep in post-production with a December release deadline looming, he's remarkably relaxed and welcoming.





TF takes a seat on the sofa in front of an enormous TV and speaker system to view some key sequences from the film, and the evidence suggests that Wan and his team have been very true to their word: what we see is very different to any other superhero fare out there.

An extended opening sequence shows how Kidman's Queen Atlanna falls in love with a human lighthouse keeper, becoming parents to Arthur. In a fluid and dynamic action scene, their house is raided by Atlantean soldiers who want Atlanna to return to the ocean. Other clips that Wan shares include some

**SEA MOTHER** (above left) Nicole Kidman as supermum Queen Atlanna, who couples up with Temuera Morrison's Thomas Curry to make little Arthur (Kaan Guldur).

desert-based bantz between Aquaman and Mera as they seek – and then find – a hidden temple in the sand. Trading quips and generating sparks, the duo look set to be fun company.

There's also a look at an extended ceremonial bout between Aquaman and Orm in one of the key underwater sequences; with VFX incomplete, the footage varies on a shot-to-shot basis between fully rendered and CGI-free. The scale of the ambition is clear though, and the contrast between the finished glimpses and raw footage shows just how much post-production work has gone into creating the world.

for his take on Aquaman. "The other thing I wanted to get right, too, is his classic weapon, his trident," he adds, in reference to Aquaman's five-pronged *Justice League* weapon. "I wanted to make sure that it's actually a trident."

"It's a hard suit to pull off," laughs Momoa. "He's been literally ridiculed his whole career. I feel like the real die-hard Aquaman fans are going to be like, 'Yes!'" It's all part of Wan's plan to give Aquaman the classic hero's journey, something he wanted to ensure from the outset.

And if the film succeeds and restores Aquaman to glory, what next? Wan is

## 'YOU PUT ON THE COSTUME AND IMMEDIATELY FEEL INDESTRUCTIBLE'

YAHYA ABBUL-MATEEN II

Wan also shares the Comic-Con sizzle reel again, the one that has so far only been seen in the hallowed Hall H. As well as showcasing the Sicily sequence, as Black Manta and his footsoldiers storm an idyllic village, leaping rooftops and bursting through walls in a unique style, there's a final tantalising glimpse of Aquaman in a classic green-and-yellow costume that pays tribute to the character's comic roots. "It took a long time designing it," admits Wan of the updated look. "The suit is kind of campy... So I'm like,

'How do I make it cool for today's audience?'"

Wan also had another sticking point

hesitant to jinx anything by thinking about sequels too early, but will say, "There's definitely stories, even within the world we've created, that you can actually see other storylines [*spinning off from*] as well. There's the Aquaman story, but then there's the stories of the seven different kingdoms as well. I think those would be very fun to explore."

Momoa is more forthcoming when it comes to ideas about a potential follow-up. "I definitely have an opinion," says Momoa. "Even when we were shooting *Aquaman*, I have the opening of *Aquaman 2* ready. I went in and pitched it to [*producer Peter*] Safran, and I pitched it to Toby Emmerich. They loved it. It's awesome... But yeah, I have plans for *Aquaman 2*."

AQUAMAN OPENS ON 14 DECEMBER.



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# Beasts of burden

*Newt Scamander is back and – nifflers aside – things are about to get a whole lot darker. Total Film talks wand injuries, kissing and custard creams with the cast of **Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes Of Grindelwald**.*

WORDS JANE CROWTHER

**D**espite the sweltering, sunny August weather, there is a palpable sense of dread hanging over the swanky Rosewood Hotel in Holborn, London. A pall of anxiety, a tangible tension. Is it the menace of Obscurus? Or the threat of Dumbledore arch-nemesis and baddie wizard, Grindelwald? Well, sort of.

With both ethereal dangers haunting the incoming sequel to *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them* and promising more peril and character introspection, there's also another shadow hanging, phantom-like, over the cast as they gather with *TF* in a glossy suite on the third floor. That of J.K. Rowling's displeasure or the fallout of breaking a contractually agreed code of silence if any of them should so much as hint at a plot development or talk specifics.

Eddie Redmayne does a nice line in answering (charmingly) a different question to the one you've asked. Ezra Miller deflects with tall tales about circus training and wide-eyed discussion of the Mandela Effect. "Whoops!" chastises Alison Sudol when she thinks Dan Fogler has inadvertently let a secret go (he hasn't). "That was smart! I was totally about to answer that question!" finger-wags Zoë Kravitz when *TF* thinks she's about to spill.

But, let's agree – not knowing is part of the fun of J.K. Rowling's sorcery world. So here's

what we *do* know: part two of a planned five-film arc sees returning magizoologist Newt Scamander (Redmayne) co-opted by Hogwarts' headmaster, Albus Dumbledore (Jude Law), to help track down escaped dark wizard Gellert Grindelwald (Johnny Depp), who is on a crusade to take over the world. As Newt is drawn deeper into a dangerous fight for power, relationships are tested, lines are drawn and sides must be chosen. Oh, and nifflers have babies.

Let's talk *around* that premise, shall we? *TF* sits down with Law, Redmayne, Katherine Waterston (Newt's MACUSA Auror friend and future wife, Tina Goldstein), Miller (Obscurial, Creedance Barebone), Claudia Kim (Maledictus Nigini, who can turn into a snake and will eventually become Voldemort's pet and horcrux), Fogler (Jacob Kowalski, Newt's no-maj mate), Sudol (Legilimens sister of Tina, Queenie), Callum Turner (Newt's older war-hero brother and Brit Auror, Theseus) and Kravitz (former Newt love-interest and now fiancée of Theseus, Leta Lestrange)...

### **Glamorous locations (erm, not)**

**Eddie Redmayne** Last time, the whole film was set in New York and we shot it all in Watford, just outside of London. So when Jude got cast, and I knew that the film was set in Paris, I emailed him going, "Mate, if you haven't done your deal yet, will you just not sign it until

you insist that they shoot some of it in Paris?" [laughs] We tried and failed.

**Jude Law** I shot in Lacock [near] Bath. That was about it.  
**Eddie Redmayne** I got to go to Canning Town [in London]. I was actually quite excited about that. I lived really close at the time so it was a very small commute.

### **Magic moments**

**Jude Law** Eddie encouraged me to be open and playful. One great piece of advice he did give me was during one of our early scenes. We were trying to come up with a device that would help create an element of mystery. He reminded me I had a magic wand, and therefore could do whatever I wanted!

**Katherine Waterston** The special effects department always panics when the actors start coming up with, "Oh, I could just..." But that's how we did the change in the first film, when we changed our outfits. Because I was an Auror, I thought it was like undercover work, so I'd need something so that I wouldn't stand out as a detective. You sort of go up to [the special effects team] and say, "Could I just..."

**Eddie Redmayne** Can I tell a story? There was one moment on set when Jude – or Dumbledore – out of nowhere pulls an address card out of the air [as seen in the latest trailer]. We got to rehearse the scene. We're shooting it. We were going to do it, and Jude was like, "Can I have the card?" David [Yates, director] and the effects guys said, "Oh, no, no, guys, you don't need the card. We'll just put it in with visual effects."



# IN CONVERSATION

Jude was like, "Give me the card. I've spent the first three weeks training with a magician to fucking pull this card out of the air." The look on his face when he was told they could just put it in, in post... He was like, "No way. That's not happening." I'll have you know, he did it himself, and that's the one in the film.

**Zoë Kravitz** It's very easy to feel silly [working with CG], because the thing is, you have to commit 100 per cent, or it doesn't look right. But you also feel so silly. I remember one day, it was me and Eddie, and we were fighting these creatures, and there's nothing there. We were both - they call "action!", and me and Eddie are like [makes fighting noises and waves arms around]. And if you watch playback, you watch yourself struggling by yourself on the ground, and you're just like, "I hope they put a creature there, or else it's going to look really awkward!"

## Taking on Dumbledore

**Jude Law** David [Yates] and Jo [Rowling] both gave me a huge amount of freedom right from the get-go, but I'd be lying if I didn't say that those two great actors [former *Dumbledores* Richard Harris and Michael Gambon] were somewhat hanging over my head, even if it was just subconsciously. But in a way, you know, it's a blessing. It's very rare you play a part where you can close your eyes and picture your character as an older person. Knowing that that's where he gets to... so I didn't really feel restricted by it. [I was] more curious about things that we've all read in the novel. There's things I read in the novel that I was able to demonstrate a bit more visually, the challenges that he's going through as a man, as opposed to being an older man having resolved all of those issues, or at least put them to bed. I was able to physicalise them a little bit more, or emote them a little bit more. I was free - with impending doom!

## Newt and Dumbledore

**Jude Law** There's a certain element of master and apprentice, but I feel like Newt's capacity to be himself against all odds is something that Dumbledore's admired. Newt's always sort of loved Dumbledore - but there's a moment when the kid is becoming the adult, and forgetting to question his motivations, and what his agenda is, and whether he's going to speak cleanly to him. Quite often, in that way Dumbledore has, everything is through the gauze of caprice. I think the dynamic of Harry Potter and Dumbledore is... the age gap is far more accentuated. He allows Harry to grow up and he's steering him, but at the same time he's allowing him to make the discoveries himself. He's aware there are certain things he can't help him with, just because of his age, and that he has to grow up.

That's not present in this relationship. I think it's a much more mutual and balanced relationship. But at the same time, there's still a certain amount of manipulation going on. And I think there's also a huge amount of admiration. Without giving too much away, I think Albus in this film is dealing with a certain amount of his past and regret, and demons that he's trying to deal with that have put him in a certain position. He sees in Newt someone who is pure and more upstanding. There's a great line in it, which I'm going to paraphrase, which is to do with how Newt

sees the good in all beasts and monsters. There's a part of Albus that sees himself as a monster, and loves the fact that this companion is someone who'll not judge that, and sort of see the good in him.

## Newt and Tina

**Katherine Waterston** One of the most amazing things about being in this process with Jo is that she doesn't short-change any of the characters. There's time and room to grow throughout the entire series. Obviously, in the first film, I've been demoted at work, and then at the very end, I get my old job back. So that's a big change for Tina. And she certainly has a great deal more confidence in this film than she did in the first. She was right about what was wrong in the first film, so she feels a little bit more confident in her instincts - and I think quite proud to have that position back, and to be doing what she thrives at doing. But it's not all coming up roses for her, because there's still some things keeping her on slightly unstable ground, because some boys aren't always what they seem to be!

**Eddie Redmayne** It's a bit like what Jude was saying about knowing who Dumbledore [becomes]. We all know that Tina and Newt live happily ever after, hopefully, in Dorset somewhere, I think. But at the same point, it's about how you're going to get there. Newt has always been very content in himself and his own world, after struggling to socially engage for so long. And throughout the last adventure, he connected with three people, and particularly Tina, and suddenly it's opened up a whole chunk of his heart. At the beginning of the film, that's all he wants, to regain that. But suddenly, all these things are put in his way...

## Favourite Beasts

**Katherine Waterston** I feel like it's going to be Pickett for life for me.

**Eddie Redmayne** I love how loyal you are.

**Katherine Waterston** No creature is going to top Pickett. He's so expressive and tender.

**Eddie Redmayne** He has a tiny little face. There are baby nifflers in this new film and there's a little scene where they're just causing havoc, and Newt's trying to recapture them. I worked with this woman, Alexandra Reynolds, who's a dance choreographer. We looked at hacky sack. There are guys in the States and all over the world who, like you keep a football in the air - they do it with hacky sacks, and they catch them in all these places. So that was like my inspiration.

**Alison Sudol** We're all very excited about the fact that everyone loved the niffler - I'm obsessed with the niffler. And then there's babies! We're all just...

**Dan Fogler** They're very cute. Really cute.

**Alison Sudol** I can't deal.

**Zoë Kravitz** I love the baby nifflers! They're so cute! I mean, the nifflers are cute, and then the baby niffler is even cuter. It's going to make you swoon.

**Dan Fogler** There's a really cool creature. It's a Chinese lion dragon, the Zouwu. A long tail. They've mastered the fur. It just looks like it's there. And it's aggressive. I'm very excited about that one.

## Joining the Potter universe

**Zoë Kravitz** I remember when the first book came out when I was in sixth grade or something. I just

remember my whole school, it was all anyone talked about. I didn't have Daniel Radcliffe on my wall...

**Callum Turner** I had Daniel Radcliffe on my wall. I can say that! [laughs] It was really, really nerve-wracking [to join the project], but exciting at the same time. By day two, it felt like I'd been part of a family for years. It was lovely. I screen tested with Eddie, and kissed Eddie on the forehead in a scene. I think that's why I got it. It wasn't warranted in the scene. If in doubt, kiss Eddie!

**Zoë Kravitz** It's so funny. I kissed Eddie in my screen test, too - no, I didn't, really. [laughs] I taped myself at home, and then I did a Skype session with David and Eddie, where I had to read the scene. I got off that call and was like, "I've bombed that. That was so awkward." But they brought me to London to screen test with Eddie. It was a long process.

**Callum Turner** Theseus is head Auror at the British Ministry Of Magic - it's a tongue-twister! - and is really straight-laced. And Newt's not. He's the complete opposite, and he actually wants him to get in line and try to save the world. Because he knows he's special, but he won't do that. And that's the tension. That's what's going on between the two brothers. A brother trying to boss his other brother around, basically! But I feel very lucky to be part of it. Privileged,





actually. I did the house sorting with my girlfriend and her friends - they all got Slytherin, and I got Hufflepuff. I was so annoyed.

**Zoë Kravitz** You're not Slytherin!

**Callum Turner** Yeah, exactly. It's very Hufflepuff of you.

**Zoë Kravitz** I'm Slytherin.

## Perfecting an English accent

**Zoë Kravitz** I was very nervous, especially being around all English people and wanting to not make a fool of myself. But I worked really hard. I guess the key is not thinking about it while you're doing it, so you can still be in the moment in terms of the emotion in the scene. So I tried to stay in the accent all day, and I would make myself do it at the weekends, getting coffee or getting in a taxi or whatever, just to keep it up or see if people could tell I wasn't really British.

But it was a great challenge, and I hope it sounds OK. Do I have a favourite English expression?

**Callum Turner** You like custard creams.

**Zoë Kravitz** That's not an expression!

**Callum Turner** I introduced Zoë to custard creams right towards the end.



**Zoë Kravitz** And I was going crazy. They were like, "Where's Zoë? Oh, over by the custard creams."

But I like that you guys say "brilliant" for everything. "Brilliant. It's brilliant." Or "fabby!" That's what David [Yates] always says. If he likes a scene, he goes, "Fabby! Fabby!"

## Training and injuries

**Katherine Waterston** Something I learned on the first film, there's bits of wand work or stunts that we have to do that we practised for weeks. But sometimes, you get to a set, and they say, "Right, you're going to tumble down these massive stairs and reach across here." And you just have to do it that day.

**Eddie Redmayne** And there's nothing you can do to prep for it, really. The weird injuries are still the same injuries. There was a bit where Callum and I were having to fend off some huge spell. The reality of shooting that is, one would be like [acts pushing an invisible force]. You put so much tension into your arms to try to make it look like something is pushing against you. You do sort of wake up with the oddest injuries. Wand wrist and wizard's elbow!

**Ezra Miller** We started with tightrope walking, and then we were juggling swords. We started sword-swallowing. There was an injury, and it was really bad. We had to take a two-month hiatus from all circus training. And then we got back on those balls - you just walk on those balls. At the time, when Claudia had to do the lion stuff, I had to go and do a different esoteric training in the Alps. It's a very particular cave where you can go. But you, of course, have to kill a zebra to get a map, and they're endangered. So I can't recommend it to anyone else.

**Claudia Kim** [shaking head at Ezra's fibs] So I worked with the movement coach that helped Eddie do that dance in the first movie. So that was really interesting. But I will say it's more of an emotional journey that she led me into. I would love to say more...

**Zoë Kravitz** Yeah, I did mess up my arm at one point. Not anything serious, but you're fooling around, and it's easy to get hurt.

## Going darker

**Jude Law** What I loved about the *Potter* series was that it evolved into that. The darkness was allowed to bubble up over a period of films. And it's that element I like about [Rowling's] world in particular, that everyone has darkness, as we all do. I think it's why it's so relatable, that we all have demons. It's how you handle them and what you learn from them and what choices you make.

**Zoë Kravitz** Leta is a pureblood wizard, and she has a darkness to her, which in the film, you'll see what that's about, and where that comes from. And I just love the way that Jo writes these incredibly complex characters. No one's good, no one's bad. Everyone's just human. Yeah, it's really refreshing, as a woman especially, to get a character that has so many layers.

**Ezra Miller** Grindelwald deceives people by giving them popcorn ideologies that are instantly appealing or gratifying, or enforce their sense of identity. We're all so void of purpose, I think, that we're all really vulnerable to manipulation. Because we just want to feel like we have something to do on this dying planet.



# IN CONVERSATION

And I think the same thing is happening on a broader scale with a certain type of thoughtless, political alignment.

## Working with Johnny Depp

**Jude Law** Well, I've yet to work with him. It's all hinted at in this one. I'm just looking in a mirror at him. Lovingly.

**Katherine Waterston** I didn't encounter him too much. But I got to be sort of skulking around while he was giving this big speech [seen in the latest trailer]. It was amazing to see him work and his commitment to the work. It was probably 90 per cent extras while he was giving that speech.

**Eddie Redmayne** It was in this massive amphitheatre, it's this huge rally. He's having to seduce everyone with charisma. It's interesting, because in film, you're used to playing to cameras here [indicates close-up], and he was having to play to an audience of hundreds and hundreds of people [throws his arms wide]. It was extraordinarily compelling, and he had to do it again and again and again.

**Jude Law** I have to say, I'm so excited for the journey this film takes that character on. Because obviously Jo's already created one of the great villains in cinematic history, and this guy is so different and just as threatening. And yet, like Voldemort, he's seductive, too. It goes back to what we said before about everyone having demons. They're always sort of seductive, too. It's exciting. You're in for a treat.

**Callum Turner** Did Zoë and I work with him?

I think that's a... We can't answer that, can we?

**Zoë Kravitz** Oh, yeah, it's a spoiler. Sorry.

## The introduction of Nagini

**Claudia Kim** I can tell you she's the Maledictus...

**Ezra Miller** Right there, you've got her gender identification and occupation. It's a lot. I hope you're paying attention. She's the Maledictus. Go on...

**Claudia Kim** So, yes, she will one day permanently transform into a beast. She's a circus performer. Her powers are exploited by the circus master.

And I would think that she only dreams of freedom. And that is the very thing that Credence gives to her. It's just incredible to see how excited the fans are, and they're so incredibly knowledgeable, that all of their [Nagini] theories are so convincing.

**Ezra Miller** [laughs] Yeah. We've got a lot of fringe theories that honestly we wish were true. Do you know what I mean? We'll be like, "Oh, that would be awesome." We were like, "Jo, have you read this fan theory? Is that a good idea or what?" She's like, "Nuh uh." She's got it all mapped.

## Credence, suffering and survival

**Ezra Miller** Like all people who carry trauma, to figure out how to reconcile that with their life and identity, that's the prayer of the Obscurus. When survivors do that they become incredibly powerful bodies and voices in this world. A lot of the people who have given us the greatest works in human history have come from a place of transforming their own trauma. We also know that it's the kid who gets abused at home who often becomes the bully on the playground, and that there are cycles of abuse where you can fall

into the patterns written into that trauma. I think that's the metaphor at play with the Obscurus. Obviously we know that the Obscurial Credence is an anomaly in the sense that he shouldn't have lived this long with this force inside of him. So we just don't know what's going to happen.

I think that what Jo has given people is a very useful and powerful metaphor, because it applies to all of us in some way or another. Our human power is repressed by the societies that we've created. And the cultural normative standards that exist within those societies I do feel prevent us from acknowledging and tapping our full potential of our human power.

I think we all react in different ways when we're growing up, and adopting that conditioning. But there are definitely specific cases of humans all over this world who, because of that conditioning, they internalise the idea that that power is not OK. So they push it down into the shadows. And then the shadows themselves will come to call. They want that power. So it's the idea that if you deny your calling, it will come for you with increasing violence and aggression. And I think it is a really powerful metaphor for people all over the world who feel like they cannot express their potency in their own social contexts, or in the societies in which they're raised.



## Dumbledore's sexuality

**Ezra Miller** It is being addressed! It's a funny idea to me that every form of representation has to look the same. For me, personally, I find Dumbledore's queerness extremely explicit in this film. I mean, all around. He sees Grindelwald, his young lover who's the love of his life; he sees him in the Mirror of Erised. What does the Mirror of Erised show you? Nothing more than the most desperate desire of your heart. If that's not explicitly gay, I don't know what is.

I think it's also really powerful to have characters who are fascinating, dynamic people, doing magical works in the world, and that the story does not only pertain to their sexuality. People have to also take a moment and acknowledge the gift that Jo Rowling gave us by writing one of the greatest characters in literary history, one of the most beloved characters across the whole spectrum of civil society, and the beliefs and ideologies there; one of the most beloved characters; and then, at the end of writing that series, was like, "Oh, yeah, and he's gay. What? Step to me." She is forever a god for that. But everybody chill. Why don't you wait until you see the film before you start talking shit on Twitter? Or wait to make

up your own mind about something for once in your life. Do your own research. Make up your own mind. Follow your heart, and really, really investigate situations before you identify yourself and pick a side, and start throwing things at the opposition.

Because that's what's totally screwing everything up right now. And it polarises us. We're all human, and there's a lot of things we can agree on. Yeah, I'm ranting...

## Queenie and Jacob

**Alison Sudol** It's complicated, right? We're not supposed to know each other, let alone love each other. That's very, very, very forbidden, in a very backwards system of the state's magical law. So Queenie is not having that, basically. It's so hard to find love. It's so hard and so rare. But also, Jacob's been through a lot of life that maybe Queenie hasn't seen yet - of war, and of real division, and seeing the dangers that can happen in the world. So he's much more conservative than she is. She's very like, "Nope, I love you, and this is happening."

**Dan Fogler** Jo's written these iconic, classic hero's journey characters. They just work, man.

Like any relationship, it gets more complex as spells wear off, and wars are brewing. Things get crazy. And everyone's got a wand. [Being a non-maj is] like being in a western without a pistol, you know? But Jacob is magical in his own right. My great-grandfather was a baker on the Lower East Side of New York, probably on the same street that we were emulating. And holy crap, that was weird, just to read it and be like, "I know this. This guy is like an ancestor." So I think I'm being one of my grandfather's brothers or something. I look like Uncle Manny.

## Where do we go from here?

**Dan Fogler** I have an idea what's going on in the next movie. But in the first movie, J.K. sat with some of us. She gave me the arc. She was like, "Here's his arc for the entire five-episode run." I was like, "Oh my God, this is the greatest journey in the world." And then I came back for this [film]. We all met for a dinner at the beginning of rehearsals. I was just like so content. I was like, "Aha, I know everything that's happening." And then I just sat with Jo for a second. I was like, "I just wanted a recap. So just going into this one, we'll be doing this and that's going to happen..." And she was like, "Oh, no, that's all changed." "Damn it!" I don't know what the method to her madness is, but maybe she's just changed the whole thing. Now I'm like, I don't want to get my hopes up or get too excited about it. It could be one storyline or one arc, it could anything.

**Alison Sudol** Yeah. She said one thing to me which I can't repeat, which was such a giant bomb, but then didn't say... You know when someone tells you half of something huge, and they're like, "I can't tell you the rest." I harangued her. I was at the wrap party, and I was like, "Can you just a little... can you just elaborate a little bit?" She's like, "Nope." It's kind of fun in that you don't know what your future is. None of us know what our future is, right?

FANTASTIC BEASTS: THE CRIMES OF GRINDELWALD  
OPENS ON 16 NOVEMBER.

# FANTASTIC BEASTS 2



ON SET



a  
**MATTER**  
of **WIFE**

What happens when a pulpy 1980s  
ITV drama is reworked by Oscar-winning  
filmmaker Steve McQueen? A game-  
changing heist movie that casts four  
women in the leads and reflects the world  
we live in. TF visits the set of **WIDOWS**  
to find out more about the year's most  
scintillating thriller. WORDS JAMES MOTTRAM

WIDOWS

and  
**DEATH**

**W**ith its magnificent mosaic-patterned dome, the Chicago Cultural Center has welcomed royalty, presidents and diplomats. Today, it's playing host to *Widows*, the hugely anticipated fourth movie by Britain's Steve McQueen

– and his first since the Oscar-winning *12 Years A Slave*. Three-hundred extras, all dressed in tuxedos and gowns, are gradually filing in to the Preston Bradley Hall to sit at 20 immaculately laid tables.

Joining them will be Robert Duvall and Colin Farrell, playing father and son politicians Tom and Jack Mulligan – part of the old money elite in a multi-layered story co-scripted by McQueen and *Gone Girl* author Gillian Flynn. “This film is tackling so many subjects, it really is,” marvels Farrell, when he greets *Total Film*.

“It’s about the heart of Chicago, the heart of America. But it’s about the heart of the civilised world.” He pauses. “There’s a lot of ugliness in this film.”

There’s also a lot of empowerment – “Buzzword of the day,” laughs Farrell’s co-star, Elizabeth Debicki. But it’s true. As the title suggests, this is not about the men in charge, but the women left behind, after their criminal husbands are killed in an armed robbery. McQueen refers to the quartet of lead female characters as “fingers”. He clenches his hand shut. “Together they make a fist.”

Intriguingly, *Widows* is based on the ITV series by Lynda La Plante that ran for two series in the mid-’80s. “I had this connection with the women,” remembers McQueen. “They were being judged by their appearance and deemed as not being capable. A 13-year-old black child in London... I was having the same kind of impressions put on me and therefore it just stuck with me – these four women and their journey.”

The idea to adapt *Widows* came to McQueen after first being courted by the studios. “I remember going to Hollywood and noticing these amazing actresses were not working.” Here was a chance to rectify that. Alongside Debicki, there is *Fences* Oscar-winner Viola Davis, *Fast & Furious* star Michelle Rodriguez and British newcomer Cynthia Erivo. “We could not be any more different,” says Davis. “We could not be any more unapologetic.”

It’s Davis’ Veronica, a teacher’s union rep, who instigates the meet-up with Debicki’s Alice and Rodriguez’s Linda. Unbeknown to the women, their husbands all worked together, led by Veronica’s partner Harry (Liam Neeson). But when a robbery goes wrong, leaving the men dead and the money up in flames, Veronica is confronted by Jamal Manning (Brian Tyree Henry) – a local gang boss running for election against Farrell’s Jack Mulligan, whose \$2m campaign funds were stolen by Harry.

Facing violent recriminations, the only way to repay Jamal, reasons Veronica, is to pull off Harry’s next meticulously planned \$5m job – the blueprints for which have been left in a safety deposit box.



**WHAT WOMEN WANT**  
Elizabeth Debicki, Viola Davis and Michelle Rodriguez fend for themselves after the deaths of their husbands, and are joined by single mum Cynthia Erivo.



**END RUN**  
Liam Neeson (below) plays the ill-fated partner of Davis (above, left).

But *Ocean’s 8* this is not. “The heist is almost like a metaphor for these women surviving and surviving really difficult circumstances,” says Debicki. “Surviving grief, surviving financial difficulties, then actually surviving a super-dangerous experience. It’s life or death.”

## Carrying on

While such male-skewed stories would never focus on the characters’ domestic lives, *Widows* considers the economic realities its women are under. “It’s just interesting how people navigate these domestic worlds,” says McQueen. Linda has two kids to raise and a failing shop to keep open; Alice is so broke, her mother (Jacki Weaver) not-so-subtly hints she should join an online escort service. Even Veronica’s wealth is dwindling.

“These are women who were married to men who failed them,” says Davis. “Completely failed them. Now they’re dead, they’re gone. So now they have to make their lives what they will. They have to make their lives. It’s not just about using their body parts or being cute in a scene; it’s about them using their intelligence, using their fortitude, and doing it in community with each other.”

They’re also recognisable. “She is a woman that I saw a lot growing up in Jersey City,” says Rodriguez of Linda. “A woman who got pregnant young. Ended up staying with the husband, who’s a bad boy... this character is in many ways what could’ve happened to me very easily had I not been who I am. I probably would’ve been attracted to the same things. Had a kid early and maybe decided to settle down, because of my life situation.”

Newest to the group is Erivo’s Belle, a mother who lives in Chicago’s run-down South Side and works two jobs – as a hairdresser and as





## OPEN FIRE

Steve McQueen (above) had no problem with Michelle Rodriguez's 'difficult' reputation.



a babysitter. “She doesn’t pull any punches,” says Erivo. “She’s the kind of a woman who has had more of a life than you would expect her to, even though she’s really young.” It’s through minding Linda’s kids that she gets brought into the gang as a driver. “I think she’s an intelligent and resilient woman.”

While *Widows* has been in development for years, its arrival feels apt at a time when gender rights are high on the social agenda. McQueen is pleased it’s part of the conversation, but calls it “bittersweet” that the film is coming out now. “When I saw this TV show 35 years ago, you expected things to change. But they haven’t. If this film could help in a way to pay attention to this time for women... [then] great, fantastic, excellent.”

Even so, assembling this diverse group was anything but easy. For Veronica, when McQueen cast Davis, he told her to wear her hair naturally. “There is an element in cinema that has erased the dark-skinned woman with the natural hair,” the actress says. “They don’t find her feminine or attractive or sexual or viable. So it’s great he has a 51-year-old dark-skinned woman with her natural hair in the forefront of a movie.”

It’s with these small but ground-shifting moments that cinema can change; McQueen simply wasn’t interested in trusting conventional wisdom. “Michelle Rodriguez, I was very interested in working with her but people were telling me, ‘Don’t work with her, she’s difficult.’ I was like, ‘What’s that about?’ I thought: ‘It’s like me being described as difficult which I often am.’ I’ve been deemed to be a perfectionist. And because she’s a woman who speaks her mind, she’s been deemed as difficult.”

Rodriguez initially turned McQueen down, unconvinced by Linda. “That person reminded me of my mother,” she says. “I was judging her. When I spoke to Steve, he’s like, ‘I really

think you have more colours to show the world than what you’ve been doing for most of your career.’ I was like, ‘Yeah, I know but I like those colours because they’re strong. And these colours look weak and I don’t like weak.’ We have enough weak in the real world.”

## Sweet home Chicago

Back on set, the evening scene – as Duvall’s character is being honoured by the Chamber of Commerce at a glitzy gala dinner – is just beginning. When Duvall arrives, taking his place at a podium to give a speech, the extras spontaneously applaud.

Hunkered down over a monitor, McQueen watches Duvall intently as he runs through Mulligan’s speech. “He turned me down three times!” the director reveals later (it took Francis Ford Coppola to change Duvall’s mind). Fortunately,

he takes less persuading to speak to *Total Film*. “For me it’s a love-hate relationship between father and son,” Duvall explains, “[set] against this city of Chicago, which is one of the most corrupt cities in America, they say.”

McQueen is familiar with Chicago; his first museum show was exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art there in 1996. He calls it a “fertile ground” to explore politics, economics, race, religion and gender, a city where the one per cent live in gated communities just round the corner from the deprived. “It doesn’t just reflect Chicago but reflects how we live today,” he says. “We were

taking Chicago under a microscope, but if you turn it around, it’s a telescope reflecting the world.”

Nevertheless, *Widows* shows a city where those in power are desperate to keep it from those that crave it. “I have a line where I say, ‘We made this city. We can’t have it taken away from us by people who come here illegally or people who can’t stop making babies,’” says Duvall, who can’t stop waxing lyrical about a scene he did earlier with Farrell where father and son “fight like crazy”. The Irishman smiles on hearing this. “Oh that’s beautiful. I’m glad he enjoyed it but I shit myself!”

Violence is also sewn deep into the film. For Davis it’s been a guilty pleasure. “I’m not going to lie. I love it!” she cackles. But from Alice suffering domestic abuse to cold-blooded executions handed out by Jamal’s brother Jatemme, played by a terrifying Daniel Kaluuya, the reality isn’t pretty. “Violence brings violence,” shrugs McQueen. “Again, look at Chicago – and how the cops treat black males. It’s a sickness. An epidemic.”

Somehow, McQueen has stirred all of these elements into a “roller-coaster” heist story that’d make Michael Mann proud. Take the opening robbery. “We go from zero to 60 in four seconds! I wanted to throw things around... and just shake up the audience.” Yet amid all the adrenaline, “It’s a lesson for men and women,” says Davis. The housewife “who had your hot meal on the table as soon as you came home and waxed her private parts... she doesn’t exist”. The times, they are a-changing.

**‘These are women who were married to men who completely failed them’**

**Viola Davis**

WIDOWS OPENS ON 6 NOVEMBER. READ TF’S REVIEW ON P42.

# MAKING OF

Matthew McConaughey and '71 director Yann Demange team up for an unbelievable true crime story, as an unassuming Detroit teen becomes the youngest ever FBI informant and a drug dealer. Total Film meets the crew behind **WHITE BOY RICK**, an original gangster movie.

WORDS MATT MAYTUM



# Newt DID ON THE BLOCKS

81

**I** found it fascinating, but I didn't see a film in it," says Yann Demange of the true-crime article that inspired *White Boy Rick*. "I wasn't interested in that story. So I passed on acquiring the rights to the article, actually." Not quite how you expect a director to start a conversation about the source material of their latest film.

It's September 2018, and *Total Film* is meeting Demange in a grandiose boardroom ("It's like *The Hudsucker Proxy*," he laughs) in the Fairmont Royal York hotel in Toronto. Demange and his cast are in town for the Toronto International Film Festival, and like the movie itself, the conversation moves in not-at-all-obvious directions. Perhaps unsurprising, given the true story – the headline account of it, anyway – falls into the stranger-than-fiction bracket.

In the '80s, Detroit teen Richard Wershe Jr. (aka 'White Boy Rick', due to his outsider status in a predominantly black community) became embroiled with drug dealers as the youngest FBI informant ever, fathered a child, and started his own drug-dealing racket, all before turning 16. Not that it was ever quite as simple as the headlines,

# MAKING OF

or even the film's own trailer and taglines, would have it.

"About a year-and-a-half later, I got sent the script... and there were these amazing scenes of a father and son," adds the disarmingly unpretentious Demange in his unmistakable London accent. "And then the father disappears, and it became the rise and fall of a gangster. I was like, 'Oh my God, this father and son relationship' – I really identify with it." As a person of mixed race (Algerian-French) who was born in Paris and raised in London, the straight-talking Demange (whose previous work includes '71 and TV's *Top Boy*) related to the outsider aspect

With Oscar-winner McConaughey on board, the rest of the cast fell into place: Bel Powley as Rick's sister Dawn; Bruce Dern and Piper Laurie as Rick's grandparents, and Jennifer Jason Leigh, Brian Tyree Henry and Rory Cochrane as the FBI agents who engage the young Rick in undercover activity. Just one piece was missing: Rick Jr. himself.

"There was a little concern when I was meeting actors that you could feel these kids hadn't really been around African-American kids," Demange explains. "They were appropriating the culture from a distance. They were YouTubing, they were acting. Not to diss..." Demange, who had street-cast



## 'WORKING WITH A YOUNG PERSON WHO'S NEVER ACTED BEFORE EXCITED ME. IT TELLS ME THEY WON'T WATER IT DOWN'

MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY

of Wershe Jr., but didn't want to have a third act that devolved into stereotypical gangland thrills.

Thankfully, the A-list star he was courting to play Rick's father, arms dealer and street hustler Richard Wershe Sr., was on the same page. "In the original script I read, the third act turned into this sort of *Scarface* rise and fall of this young kingpin," says Matthew McConaughey, who's an unadulterated blast of Texan charisma when *TF* encounters him in the same boardroom. "It was exciting and stuff, but it was a different movie, and the family was nowhere to be found."

McConaughey came to his first meeting with Demange ready to quibble, but the director allayed his fears immediately. "I pushed my notes across for him, and said, 'Have you been reading my mail?'" He cracks a wolfish grin. "And then we were off..."

before, insisted they also explore that avenue, even though it freaked some execs out. "It's gold-digging," he says. "You're sieving through, but if it happens, you can get something that can just give your film an authenticity that you need in a story like this."

## ABOUT A BOY

Casting director Jennifer Venditti – who scouted *American Honey*'s non-pro cast – was in the head's office of a Baltimore school as part of the search. He suggested she start with the kid sitting outside: Richie Merritt. This untrained teen would go on to nab the title role. "I'm real known in my school, because I've got five brothers, and all three of my older brothers went [there]," Merritt tells *TF*. Sporting an ostentatious satin jacket, Merritt's clearly tired from working his first film

festival, but also very happy to talk about this life-changing experience. The crazy real-life story didn't faze him at all. "I believed it 100 per cent: I've seen it with my own eyes," he says in a low mumble. "I've seen how cops can manipulate kids... [Demange] didn't want somebody who had to play 'from the streets'. He wanted somebody that knew exactly how it is."

In fact, Merritt was so green that he hadn't even heard of the project's A-list star. "I'm like, 'Who? Matthew McConaughey? I'm trying to paint a picture in my head. Who is Matthew McConaughey?'" he recalls with a sheepish smile. "He pulls up one day, and I'm like, 'Oh, that's who. I know who you're talking about.'"

McConaughey himself had no qualms about starring opposite an untested talent. "Because with a decision like this, it tells me, 'Oh, they're not going to try to water this down,' which I would not have liked," drawls McConaughey, pausing for a sip of green tea. "And the fact I'm working with him, that excited me. I was like, 'OK, great, because I do know that if you can get a young person who's never acted before... [this is like] someone behaving honestly in a documentary.' There's no better acting than that."

**MAKING A MARK**  
Director Yann Demange on set with Matthew McConaughey (below left); Rick (Richie Merritt) makes his bid to enter the local crime circuit (below).



# WHITE BOY RICK



of White Boy Rick, Demange repeatedly points out that he didn't want to tell the 'procedural'. "I'm trying to give you an emotional experience, rather than a factual breakdown of the events," he says. That emotional connection was no doubt deepened by the time Demange spent in contact with the real Rick Wershe Jr., who was paroled last year but is still awaiting release from prison after serving 30 years for being busted with a significant amount of cocaine aged 17. His work with the FBI was no help when it came to reducing the sentence. "It really struck me," says Demange of Wershe Jr.'s situation. "Kids not getting a chance to have a childhood really resonates with me. I was fostered between four and 12. I just cared about him deeply. I was like... it's almost like an exercise in compassion."

McConaughey also spent a lot of time talking with Wershe Jr. "The main thing I got from him [was] how honest he was," says McConaughey. "I've met a lot of people in prison, and 99 per cent of them would say they were innocent. He's like, 'No, I'm not going to say I wasn't a criminal. I wasn't a criminal to the extent that they made me out to be. But I'm no choir boy. I was doing this and doing that. Yeah, I was dealing.'"

McConaughey also points out Wershe Jr.'s parole was coincidentally reappraised when the film kicked into production. "I'm not saying the movie is responsible," he says. "I'm asking the question. Did making a Hollywood movie about this, and a man who's been in there for 27 years for getting caught dealing drugs, did it put a spotlight on the case? Did it make them have a closer look?" He theatrically grabs *TF*'s notebook and examines the pages to emphasise his point, before sliding it back. "I don't know, but the timing sure is interesting."

Whether you come armed with knowledge of the outcome or not, it's a sobering, shocking and moving conclusion to a film that rails against the formula of boilerplate rags-to-ill-gotten-riches crime stories. In short, *Scarface* it ain't. "I think people keep wanting and hoping he'll be smarter, and he's got a grand plan, and he's going to outwit them," says Demange of Rick. "He was just a dumb kid. A dumb, uneducated, streetwise kid that wasn't ahead of the game, had no grand plan, wasn't going to become a kingpin. He wasn't a *Scarface* tactician."

Merritt's presence grounded the film in practical ways too: he helped Powley – playing Rick's crack-addict sister, Dawn – nail a specific accent. "I've done lots of standard American accents," says Powley, today looking a million miles from her strung-out character in a white t-shirt and cream skirt, her bright blue eyes beaming. "But Detroit in the '80s – and it's an urban accent – was the most difficult accent I've ever done. I had a coach who helps you try to do it phonetically, and that's been really useful to me in the past. But in the end, the best way to do it was: I literally sat down with Richie and had him read every single one of my lines – with no intonation – and then I would just listen to them on repeat, and just listen to him in general."

While on paper the characters seem like they could be larger-than-life stereotypes, they're presented with genuine empathy. "It was trying to marry that emotional throughline of the themes of an impoverished family, and corruption taking advantage of the impoverished," considers Demange. "I was like, here's an opportunity to engage. What does life look like at the coalface of poverty in America when you've got fuck-all options? Who are we to judge? Let's spend some time and have compassion for them."

## NO SECOND ACTS

[The rest of this feature contains spoilers, so if you'd prefer to go into the film cold, stop reading now.] In telling the story

**ON THE UP**  
Rick heads to Vegas to mix it up with major underworld players (top); with sister Dawn (Bel Powley, above left) and dad Rick Sr. (McConaughey, above right).

WHITE BOY RICK OPENS ON 7 DECEMBER.



# EVOLUTIONARY LEAP

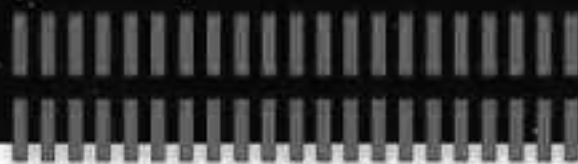
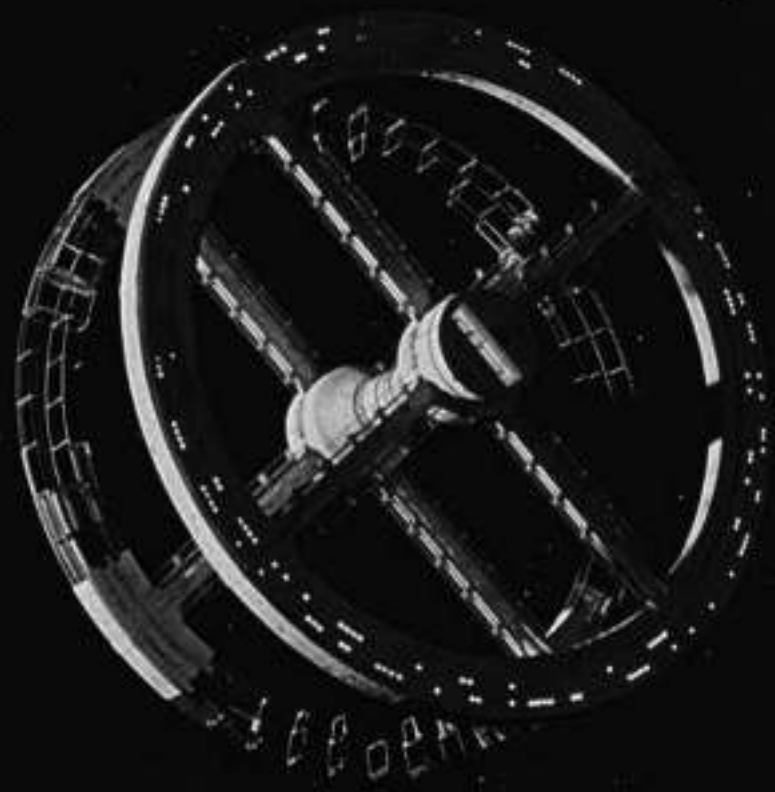
**CHRISTOPHER NOLAN** tells Total Film why he's bringing his favourite film, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, to a new generation... and we journey back to its making with Keir Dullea, Jan Harlan and Stanley Kubrick's daughter Katharina.

WORDS JAMIE GRAHAM

Christopher Nolan was seven years old when his father took him to Leicester Square to watch Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. "The thing that I really remember is the scale and awe of the spectacle of it, and the idea that the movie screen can transport you anywhere," he tells *Total Film* 40 years later. "That has absolutely stayed with me: the scale of the imagery and the sense of immersion... it's something I've been chasing in cinema ever since. You're looking to get back to that childlike sense of wonder."

It is 14 May, and the previous evening Nolan marked the 50th anniversary of his favourite film by screening it at the Cannes Film Festival, to a standing ovation. A lot of painstaking work went into *2001*'s tip-top presentation – all of it overseen by Nolan, a renowned perfectionist, working from Kubrick's notes. And yet, cutely, he has dubbed it the "unrestored" version, for there has been neither revisionism or interpretation: new 70mm prints were struck from the original negative; digitalisation was eschewed ("You tend to lose the emotional impact of the shot in ways that are more subconscious than conscious"); and even the original six-track mono soundtrack of the film's 1968 release was adhered to.

In six months' time – as you read this article, in fact – Nolan's own personal odyssey to deliver Kubrick's star-trekking, soul-searching epic to a new generation will continue with *2001*'s release as a 4K Ultra HD Blu-ray with High Dynamic Range. "4K UHD allows the closest recreation of viewing the original film print in your own home," explains Nolan, immaculate in casual suit and open-necked shirt. "Kubrick's masterpiece was originally presented on large format film and the deeper



colour palette and superior resolution comes closest to matching the original analogue presentation.”

## SOLAR FLARE

After the release of his seventh movie, *Dr. Strangelove*, in 1964, Kubrick decided that his eighth film should be a science-fiction spectacle that would grapple with Big Questions rather than outsized monsters. He had a colleague reach out to writer and futurist Arthur C. Clarke, and Clarke responded that he'd be “frightfully interested in working with that *enfant terrible*”. Kubrick and Clarke first met in April 1964, in New York, and spent many months reading books on science and anthropology, and watching sci-fi movies. Clarke's short story *The Sentinel* – about the discovery of a signal-transmitting artefact on Earth's Moon – would act as the basis for the screenplay and novel that were being developed. But it needed expanding.

**HIGHS AND LOWS**  
From the first mammals to brandish tools (below) to the dizzying majesty of outer space (above).

What slowly came together was [spoiler warning ahead for anyone who has not yet seen the 50-year-old classic] a story bridging millions of years, from apes wielding bones on the African veldt to a pair of astronauts, Dr. David Bowman (Keir Dullea) and Dr. Frank Poole (Gary Lockwood), journeying to Jupiter, their quest signposted by mysterious monoliths. With them are three scientists in suspended animation, while the ship's computer, HAL 9000, mostly operates their vessel, Discovery One. Then HAL undergoes a terrifying breakdown and Bowman, who's exited Discovery One in an EVA pod, is pulled into a vortex to travel vast distances of space. He arrives at a neoclassical bedroom to view older versions of himself until he is lying in a bed as a dying man. A monolith appears and he is transformed into a foetus that floats through space in an orb of light.

## ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS IT AIN'T

The film – shot at MGM-British Studios and Shepperton Studios between December 1965 and September 1967, with Kubrick overseeing the 205 special effects shots from June 1966 to March 1968 – underwent many changes. Often it was a case of Kubrick taking away: removing a prologue of scientists talking of extra-terrestrial life; extracting a voiceover; jettisoning an early draft's proposal to have the climactic Star Child set off nuclear weapons carried by Earth-orbiting

satellites; ditching Alex North's score in favour of strains of classical music and deep spells of silence.

Kubrick described the finished film as “basically a visual, non-verbal experience that hits the viewer at an inner level of consciousness, just as music does, or painting”. And 50 years on, viewers are still debating *2001*'s meaning. Existentialism, evolution, technology, AI, destruction, hope, rebirth, extra-terrestrial life, God... themes and theories float and glimmer like stars in our solar system.

“Neither of them [Kubrick or Clarke] were religious,” says Kubrick's brother-in-law and long-time producer, Jan Harlan. He is in Cannes with Kubrick's daughter Katharina and *2001*'s leading man, Keir Dullea. “But both of them were totally respectful that there is so much more than we can understand,” Harlan continues. “They wanted something that tells the audience that we know nothing. It's just impossible to know: billions of stars just in our galaxy. Stanley takes a bow to the unknowable. You can call it God, you can call it extra-terrestrials... I don't know. Stanley didn't know. Arthur didn't know.”

“As characters, we didn't have an overall awesome view of what was happening... there was no deep insight into the meaning of the film,” shrugs Dullea. “To paraphrase Stanley: ‘How do you explain in words your experience of Beethoven's ‘Fifth Symphony’?’ You can't. Every human being has



# 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY

a different experience because you bring a different persona to hearing that music. It's the same with *2001*."

## CHILD'S PLAY

For Katharina, what *2001* means to her is a period of her life. She was 10, living in New York, when her father started work on it, and then the family moved to Elstree, England, and she spent many amiable days on set.

"We would play with the chimpanzees and walk on the centrifuge [*a huge rotating set*] and eat the food," she smiles. "The sandwiches in the film were actually sponge cake, because he didn't want them to crumble. They were trying to make it as real as possible yet *2001* was made with glue and string and tape and models – Airfix kits. The art department was the most amazing place to visit. All these people beaver away and being inventive."

"The set was polish and paint and plywood and gears, and velvet with holes in it," Harlan agrees. "There were no computer graphics. It had to be done real."

Dullea, naturally, adored having such sets and practical effects to work with. He grins while recalling how he would just walk on the spot in the centrifuge and it was actually the entire set, including Gary Lockwood eating food at his station, that was revolved down to him ("When they first shot it, the food all dropped. It took an hour to clean up the mess"). In fact, representing zero gravity on a 38ft Ferris wheel was a doddle compared to getting through the dialogue scenes with HAL...

"For HAL, we didn't yet have the voice of Douglas Rains," says Dullea. "Stanley couldn't make up his mind so he said, 'I'll worry about it in post-production.' He turned to his assistant director Derek Cracknell and said, 'You do the voice of HAL.' It was [*adopts Cockney accent*], 'Y'know what I mean?' Like working with Michael Caine. Now that was acting – keeping a straight face."

As for the famous 'Star Gate' sequence, that too was all achieved in-camera, using slit-scan photography of thousands of high-contrast images on film, plus printed circuits, electron-microscope photographs of molecular and crystal structures, and slow-motion photography of coloured paints and chemicals swirling in a cloud tank.

"That Star Gate sequence would so obviously become digital now," says Nolan, whose own films favour practical effects and whose revolving corridor fight sequence in *Inception* borrowed wholesale from Kubrick's centrifuge. "And it wouldn't have the same impact. The impact is to do with a tactile, handmade, hand-crafted quality that has a massive sophistication to it, and real-world textures. That's something animation can never do."

## FANTASTIC VOYAGE

Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* broke all the rules, narratively, visually, technically. For many, at the time, it was too much – there were 240 walkouts at the New York premiere and it got mixed reviews, with Pauline Kael labelling it a "monumentally unimaginative movie".

But the counterculture youth got it (a tagline reading 'The Ultimate Trip' tapped into the market) and *2001* became the biggest box-office hit of 1968. Now, 50 years on, it is considered one of the greatest films – and pieces of art, period – of the 20th Century, still inspiring viewers and filmmakers alike.

"Every time you watch it, it changes," says Nolan. "There's a primal simplicity to the way the images tell the story that sustains many, many watchings and many, many readings. I think the change in the film is partly you changing in your own life. But I think it's mostly because it's about the future. Its relationship with the future ebbs and flows." Nolan goes on to reference FaceTime, iPads and Siri, all predicted, in kind, by *2001*, and points out that "its relationship with our world has never been stronger; it feels taken from the headlines".

As for Nolan's own moviemaking, he acknowledges his debt (he refused to watch *2001* as he prepared to make *Interstellar*, saying it was "frankly too daunting") and explains, "You try and not lift anything from Kubrick in any conscious sense, because he works on a plane far above the rest of us. The inspiration you take is a general one: movies can be anything. You can make up your own rules. *2001* just whole cloth reinvents cinema. So as an aspiration, that's what you look to. It's something to chase – how a filmmaker can carve out a space for autonomy within mainstream cinema, and how radical films can be."

2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY IS AVAILABLE ON 4K ULTRA HD BLU-RAY FROM 29 OCTOBER.



DIRECTOR'S CHAIR (top) Kubrick with production designer Tony Masters; (above) *2001* super-fan Christopher Nolan.

I'M AFRAID, DAVE Keir Dullea as astronaut David Bowman (left).



WORDS JAMES MOTTRAM PORTRAITS RICCARDO GHILARDI

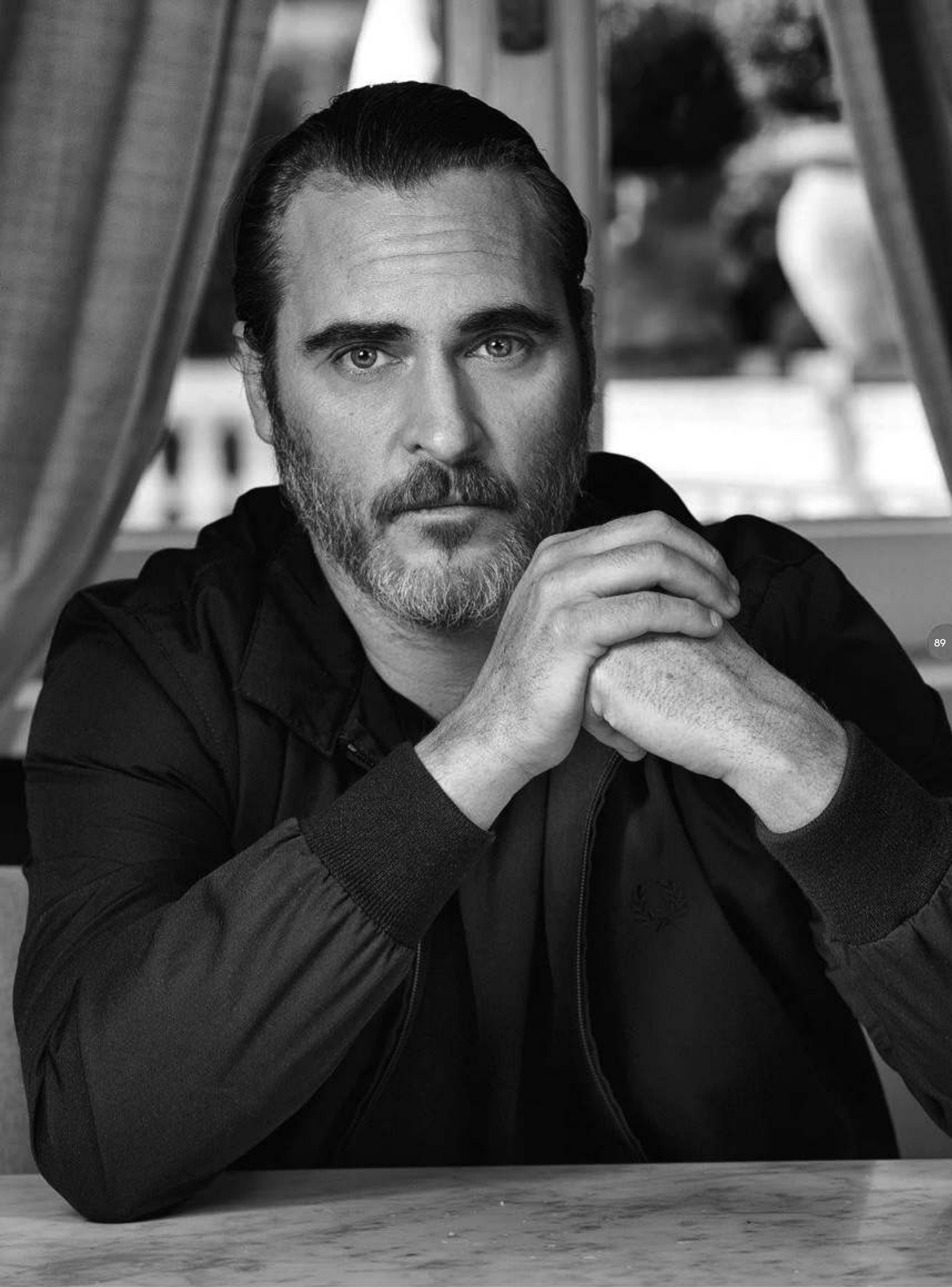


YOU DON'T REALLY  
KNOW IF A MOVIE IS  
GOING TO BE SHITTY OR  
NOT. YOU JUST KNOW  
IF THE EXPERIENCE  
IS SHITTY, RIGHT?



# JOAQUIN PHOENIX

From *Gladiator* to *The Master*, Joaquin Phoenix's trademark intense turns have seen him hailed as his generation's greatest actor. As he returns for biopic *Don't Worry, He Won't Get Far On Foot*, and preps to play the Joker, Total Film discovers a man who's still able to set fire to the screen.



# I

n Berlin's Regent Hotel, Joaquin Phoenix enters the room a little flustered. He's just been trapped on a floor above without the right keycard to operate the lift. "I feel like I'm five minutes late," he says. In fact, he's 10 minutes early. "That's not early for me – that's on time." He grins. Well, it's good to know he takes his press duties seriously. After more than 35 years in the business, Phoenix could easily have grown jaded. Instead, he seems more enthused than ever.

Wearing khaki trousers and a navy jumper, with a checked scarf wrapped around his neck, the 43-year-old is between roles when we meet. So that scraggly beard is not for a character? "This is just to cover up my double chin," he jokes. It's shortly before he will be officially announced as the lead in Todd Phillips' forthcoming *Joker*, an origin story that will tell how Batman's nemesis came to be. If anyone can wrestle the mantle from Heath Ledger and Jack Nicholson as the greatest ever big-screen Joker, it's

Phoenix – and his version of the character already looks streets away from previous incarnations. Last month, Phillips released a shiver-inducing make-up test online, showing Phoenix both in streetwear as failed stand-up comedian Arthur Fleck, and in creepy paint-job as Fleck's crime-lord alter ego the Joker. Shooting scenes on location in New York, Phoenix inevitably attracted the attention of fans, but he's characteristically unfazed by the scrutiny of taking on such a high-profile role. "I don't really think that much about what people think," he's said. "Who cares, who cares? My approach to every movie is the same. What I'm interested in is the filmmaker and the idea of the character."

Famed for his on-screen intensity, Phoenix's three Oscar nominations – for his Roman emperor in *Gladiator*, his pill-popping Johnny Cash in *Walk The Line* and his damaged WW2 vet in *The Master* – don't even begin to tell of the contribution he's made to contemporary cinema. "He's the best actor in the world," says Lynne Ramsay, who steered him to a Best Actor prize in Cannes last year as an urban vigilante in *You Were Never Really Here*.

In person, Phoenix can be laid-back or on-edge, depending on his mood. He famously parodied himself in *I'm Still Here*, Casey Affleck's wry mock-doc that showed him out of control – the in-character gonzo prep he did sparking misplaced concerns that he was off the rails and heading for self-destruction (his late brother River Phoenix died of a drug overdose in 1993). Rather, it re-energised him, following it with films for

Paul Thomas Anderson, Spike Jonze, James Gray and the aforementioned Ramsay.

He now adds Gus Van Sant to that list with *Don't Worry, He Won't Get Far On Foot*. His second outing with Van Sant, after 1995's *To Die For*, here he plays John Callahan, a real-life cartoonist who was paralysed after a car accident, which left him requiring the use of a wheelchair. While the film once more pairs him with Rooney Mara, his real-life girlfriend and co-star from *Her* and *Mary Magdalene*, Phoenix captivates as the controversial, cynical and caustic Callahan.

It marks yet another milestone in a career that stretches back to 1982, when he co-starred with River and sister Liberty in a TV version of *Seven Brides For Seven Brothers*. After a curious start in life – his parents were Children of God missionaries, and the family travelled across South America – it was his mother's job at NBC that led Phoenix to audition. He's barely stopped working since, plunging headfirst into roles again and again. But he refuses to mystify the process. "As long as it feels challenging and satisfying," he shrugs, "then that's all you can do."

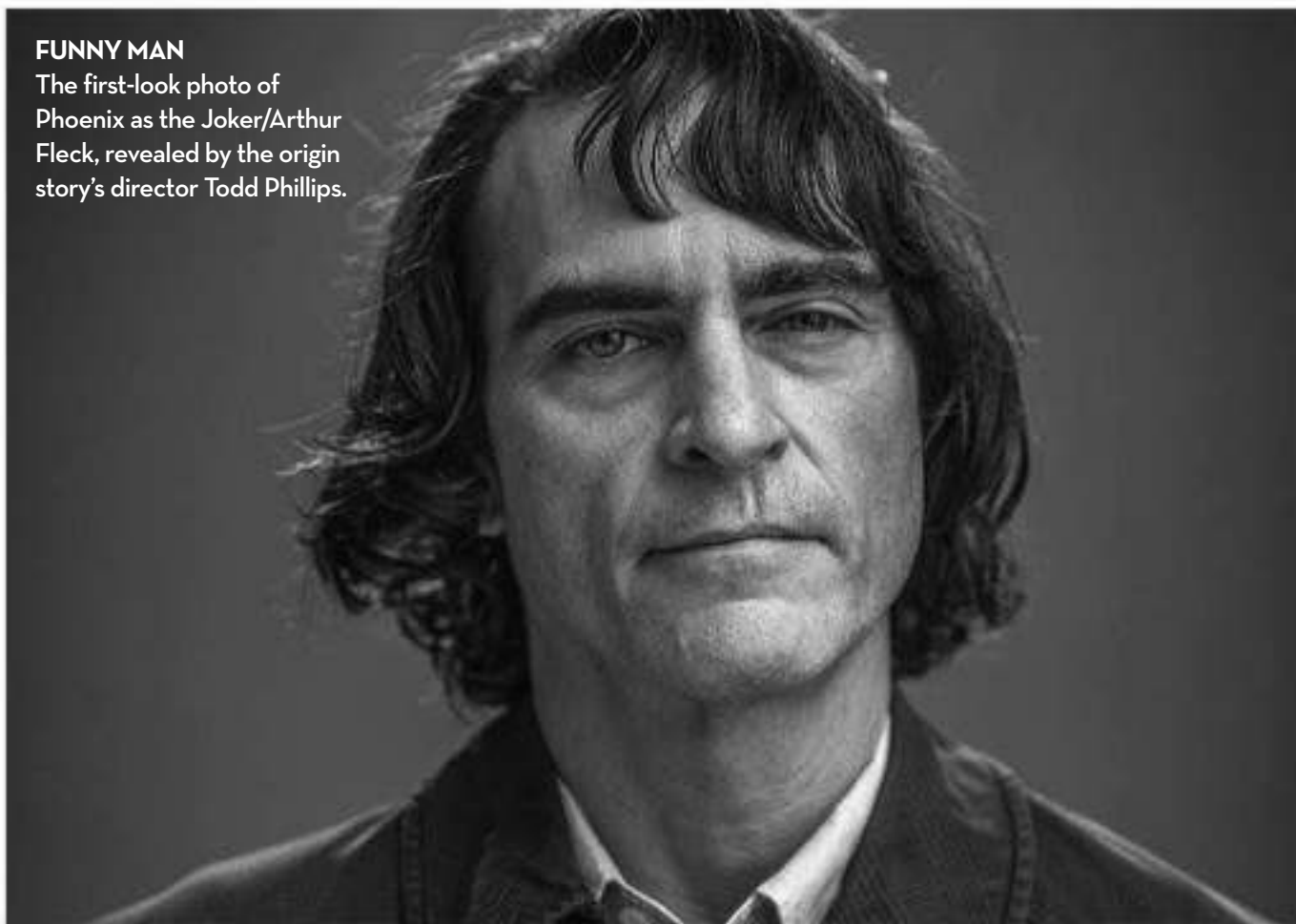
## Did you know anything about John Callahan before you started?

No, nothing. I was most excited because I knew it was a project Gus had been working on for a long time. Any time a filmmaker is obsessed with something – they develop a project, they go away from it and do something else, they come back to it, and keep coming back to it – there is something that is personal to them in the story. So I really liked that idea. It was the first script that Gus had written in a long time. I love his writing, it's really unique.

But I'd actually told my agent, "I don't want to make a biopic. I'm so fucking sick of traditional biopics." And so I was a little bit apprehensive when Gus told me it was based on a real guy. And then I got this script that was classic Gus and didn't feel like a traditional biopic. We talked about it and he said, "I'm going to do another pass." And he wrote another version, and each time he worked on the script, he focused on these different aspects of John's life or career. Sometimes the creative would be more prominent, or the relationship with his family. And then there came a point where he sent a script and it felt like it had all the best pieces of all the previous drafts. I had a really visceral reaction to it. It just felt really emotional and honest. And so I was like, "Gus, this is really good. I love this version. We should do this."

### FUNNY MAN

The first-look photo of Phoenix as the Joker/Arthur Fleck, revealed by the origin story's director Todd Phillips.





#### DEAR JOHN

Playing cartoonist John Callahan, with Rooney Mara, in *Don't Worry, He Won't Get Far On Foot*.

#### What was your research process?

Well, obviously Callahan's book. The script is based on his book. It's super-personal, really honest. I love that. I love it when people are really honest, so that was the starting point. Gus also had seven hours of footage he had shot in the late '90s of Callahan, because he'd been working on this since then – he was going to do a movie with Robin Williams originally. And so I watched that tape and it was really nice to see him at home and working on drawings and talking about drawings and his process.

#### Was there anything else you did for research?

I went to Rancho Los Amigos, which was the rehabilitation centre that he actually went to. It was really helpful to spend time there, and it was fucking cool, too, because at one point, there was five of us. There was a gang. And there were these four other guys from Rancho Los Amigos, who had been patients and worked there. It's vast grounds, this hospital. So we would just ride everywhere [in wheelchairs].

It was like being in this super-cool gang. Just learning how to open a door, which is terrifying, because you have to throw your arm and loop it in the door, and then move your chair so that it forces it open, and then spin around and catch it. There was this moment where your arm is hooked into the door and you're moving the chair simultaneously and there's this feeling you can get caught.

**I DON'T WANT TO KNOW THE REALITY. THE REALITY WILL BE DISAPPOINTING**

#### The group therapy scenes are really well executed. Do you feel therapy is a useful tool?

John, when he first went to AA... he'd been sober for a month. Just like in

the movie, he had this experience. He got sober. But he was just filled with rage and paranoia and fear, and became hyper-aware of how uncomfortable he was and how trapped he was. So when he first went to the meetings, he was distrustful. He was paranoid about everybody. He didn't trust them. After a while, he came to realise that this is a group of people that are honest, or at least trying to be. I thought that was really amazingly telling. It did really shape

him both as a person and as an artist. Somebody who was really courageous and really honest, in a way that I think a lot of people aren't. It obviously changed his life.

#### It's your second time with Gus Van Sant. Do you have strong memories of working together on *To Die For*? That was early on in your career...

Yeah, it was early on. I'd only worked as a child actor previously. That last time was 14 or 15. So it was my first job as an adult. I remember we were rehearsing this scene one day and I was struggling with it. I don't know why. I can't remember the details of what it was. And Gus said, "Oh well you can do anything. You can stand on the table when you say the line." What? What do you mean? He said, "There's not a right way to do it." It seems obvious now, but at that stage in my career... I think because I had worked in television as a child, in which things are really regimented and they really try to teach you to hit your mark and say your lines. But here was a director saying, "You can do anything, there's not a right way to do it." And I really remember that moment so vividly. It was like the landscape completely changed. I suddenly became aware of the entire room. Instead of this seat and this table, it suddenly

seemed like everything was wide open to me. It's really something that... a way of working I've employed since. So I really credit Gus for helping shape me as an actor. It was one of those revelatory moments when something pops. It was nice to work with him. I don't know why it took him 25 years [to come back to me]. I was feeling very insecure, I have to say! He worked with all of my friends several times! I was like, "Oh man, he must think I'm not a good actor."

**All your siblings acted when you were young. Was there a feeling of rivalry between you?**

No, it was very supportive. I remember this TV pilot that my sister and I were both up for to play brother and sister. She got the part and this other kid got the part that I was up for. I remember that my agent and my parents really didn't know how to tell me this. It's really funny, especially now, because no one's even heard of it. They were really cautious, but I thought as long as one of us got it, that was OK.

**After films like *U-Turn*, and *8mm* with Nicolas Cage, you really hit your stride in 2000, with *Gladiator*, which won you an Oscar nomination. Were you surprised by its success?**

Completely. Because I am the most naïve man in the entire world. I guess I thought the kids – the repeat viewers – who loved *The Matrix* would love black leather and 9mms. So I figured I didn't know how they are going to sell this. I wasn't sure. During the shoot, you never think about that kind of thing. That's the biggest mistake, because then you're catering, and you're trying to make it appealing to an audience. By the time we were gearing up for press, I saw that all the executives were all smiling and walking around on air. Then I thought this might really hit.

**The same year, you made *The Yards* and *Quills*. Was that an exhausting period of time for you?**

*Quills* was one of my toughest shoots. I'd finished *Gladiator*, and I went and did reshoots on *The Yards* for a week, and came back to London and started rehearsals for *Quills*. I was exhausted. The last three weeks on *Quills*, I didn't know if I could make it through the day. We shot virtually in order; some of the most intense scenes were in those last weeks. Usually, I wake

up, go straight to work and do it. There were times when I woke up and I'd get to set and sit there going, "Fuck, fuck!" But Geoffrey [Rush] would come in, or Kate [Winslet], and inspire you. It's a joint effort; you need everyone around you.

***The Yards* was your first film with James Gray, who you reunited with on *We Own The Night*, *Two Lovers* and *The Immigrant*. What is it that you love about working with him?**

I enjoy making movies with James. He is somebody I worked with very early on in my career, and he was one of the first people to really help me have a different feeling about acting in a film. I didn't go to acting school. I didn't grow up with this appreciation for cinema in a way, and he was one of the first people to talk about films with me in a certain way. So I feel a closeness to him for helping me in that way. He just talked about acting in a way that no one had ever talked about acting, and I found it very interesting. I love the way he sees the world and how he sees interaction and human behaviour. That's the thing, when you work with

a director, seeing how they see the world, what they think and what that means when you study human behaviour. That reveals something about how we're really feeling – and

he was one of the first to help me be aware of that in some ways.

**When you came to make *Walk The Line*, playing Johnny Cash, you undertook an extreme amount of preparation. Did you embrace that?**

In some ways, I'm accustomed to what happens when you work on a film. I've been acting since I was eight years old, so I know what it takes. It's not like I'm some soap star, who suddenly put a lot of work into a performance and goes, "Fuck me! I don't know what this is like." I know this experience. I've worked hard on films throughout my career. But I'd never done six months of prep for a movie. The longest I've done is three months. So it was twice as much prep as I'd ever done for a movie. So in that sense it had become my life. It was all I listened to. The only thing that I read was his books and interviews with him. So, inevitably, you go through a process when you're done making a movie where your life changes. In Baltimore, where I made *Ladder 49*,

“ THERE ARE TIMES I REALLY LIKE THE SCRIPT BUT NOT THE FILMMAKER ”



FIVE STAR TURNS

GLADIATOR 2000

It was Emperor Commodus that brought Phoenix's transformational abilities to the mainstream. "I made him flabbier, to show how this scrawny prince had kinda ripened into an emperor," he says. Thumbs up.

WALK THE LINE 2005

Phoenix strummed his way to a deserved Oscar nod for his rigorous take on Johnny Cash, singing and playing The Man In Black's songs himself. "It was terrifying," he recalls.

I'M STILL HERE 2010

Car-crash interviews, a career as a rapper, and a face hidden behind sunglasses and a beard... This divisive piece of performance art crystallised Phoenix's oddball public persona and his taste for the unconventional.

THE MASTER 2012

"There was nothing solid or consistent about Freddie," says Phoenix of his flighty character, seduced by Philip Seymour Hoffman's charismatic cult leader. It's a challenging film that makes full use of Phoenix's raw intensity.

YOU WERE NEVER REALLY HERE 2017

Phoenix's most recent performance might be his best yet. With pools of internalised rage buried under his muscular exterior, tightly coiled avenging angel Joe is the closest thing this generation has to Travis Bickle. **MM**





every day I hung out with firefighters. I was living in a fire house and that had become my whole life. Suddenly the movie is done, and I don't have that experience any more. Inevitably, you go through these changes. It has an impact on you, as it would anybody. If you went down to Memphis, and you learned to play guitar and played Johnny Cash songs every day, started dressing differently, and didn't talk to friends back home, you would start to change. It's inevitable, but it's something I work at and am accustomed to.

**If you're playing an intense character, does their pain and angst begin to chew you up inside?**

The truth is, it doesn't really affect you that much. Do you really want to tear down the mystery and the mythology? Do you really want to know what goes into a scene? I don't! When I hear a fucking record, do I want to think that John Lennon on 'Mother' wasn't screaming his heart out? Do I want to think that it's take 15? I want to believe it's the first take and he was pouring his heart out. I don't want to know the reality. The reality is going to be disappointing to me. Things are rarely as exciting or dramatic as we make them out to be in the press. It's not the press so much, but what actors and publicists do. I can't tell you how many times I've looked at the press kit and gone, "What? Are you serious?" When I did [*M. Night Shyamalan's*] *The Village*, there was this whole story about how I'd faced my demons and I went into the night and I slept in the woods. The truth is, I ran across Bryce [*Dallas Howard*] and said, 'I'm going into the woods!' and it turned into this story.

**You made the mock-documentary *I'm Still Here* back in 2010, showing a version of yourself as out-of-control all the way through filming, which people initially believed was real. Were you taken aback by the negative reaction to it?**

I feel bad about some of the... People feeling that we were in some way trying to make a movie that was attacking them, or an industry. I didn't like that at all. We were really making fun of ourselves. That's all that it was. We were never going after other actors. Yeah, we took stories that maybe other actors had told us, experiences we had, and we used it, but not in a way that they would know. And it wasn't trying to make fun of them in any way, and we weren't trying to attack the press in any way.

## JOAQUIN PHOENIX IN NUMBERS

3

Oscar nominations (for *Gladiator*, *Walk The Line* and *The Master*).

\$1.87bn

Joaquin Phoenix's total box-office gross to date.

2

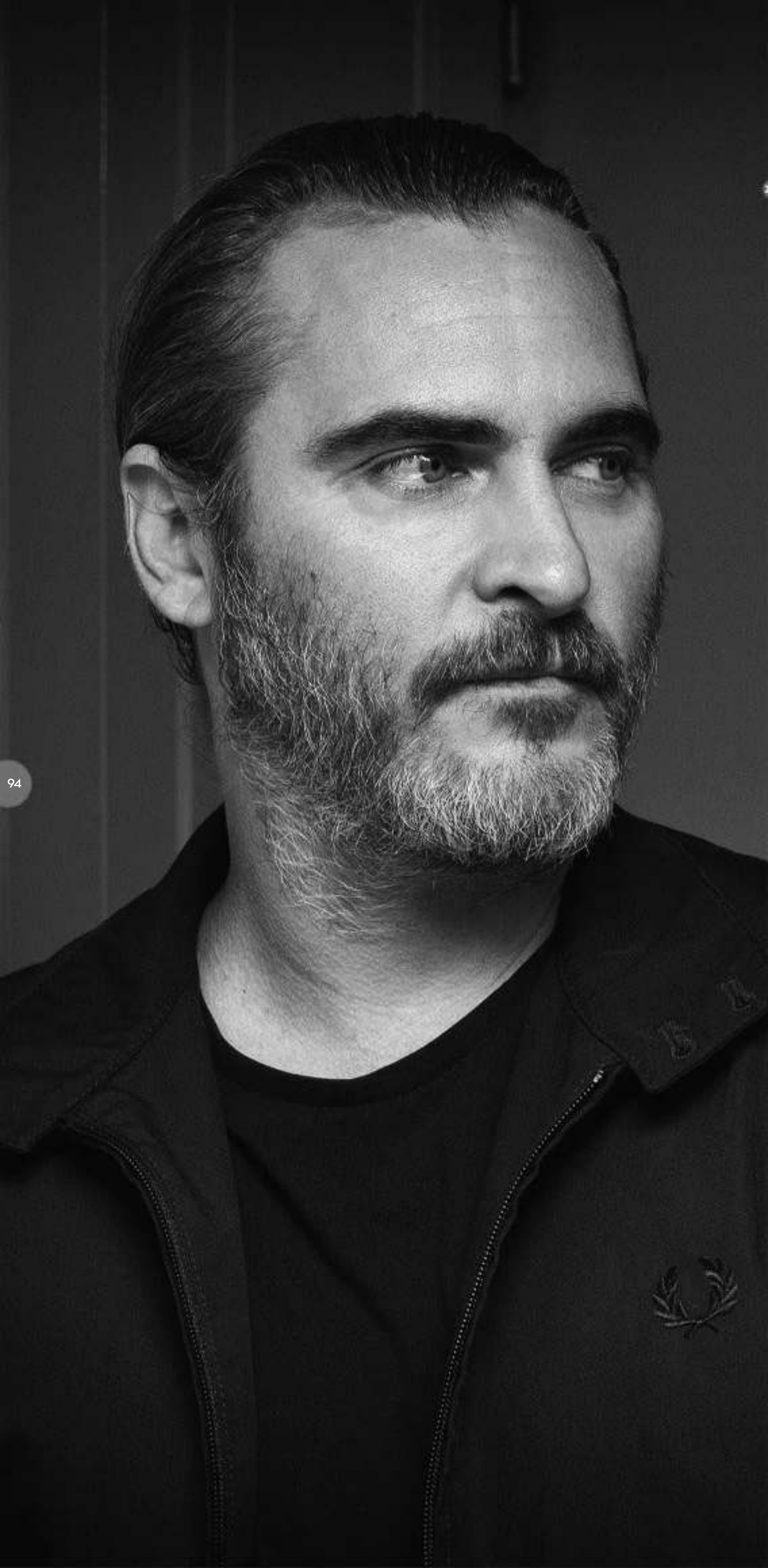
Number of times Phoenix shared the screen with his brother, River.

51

Acting credits to his name (including 17 as Leaf Phoenix).

6

Actors who have been big-screen Jokers before Phoenix (Cesar Romero, Jack Nicholson, Mark Hamill, Heath Ledger, Jared Leto, Zach Galifianakis).



**Did that experience change your ideas about acting?**

Very much. That was really the intention. What I was after more than anything was just to change my approach to acting – because I was bored with it. It wasn't exciting anymore, and I wanted to do something... I wanted to go in and be receptive to what's happening in the room, and open to the possibility I could be something else. And then I think if you can achieve that, hopefully you see that there are a number of emotions, sometimes conflicting emotions that a person or a character can experience, and that's just what I was trying to get back to. That had happened very instinctually when I was young, and as I worked more and more, I think it started to become more controlled, in a sense. I wanted to get to a place where I just acknowledged that I'm not steering the ship.

**You followed it with *The Master*, the first of two films you made with Paul Thomas Anderson, and it won you a third Oscar nomination. How difficult was that role?**

It's so funny. I wonder, you know when you're in a relationship and you get out of them and you go, "Oh, that relationship wasn't so tough." It's so hard. You look at things differently once you have time away and you go, "That wasn't that hard." I remember being hungry and angry all the time. I just don't have that feeling now, so I think, "What was the big deal?" But at the time I would be angry about anything.

**Is it true you'd said no to Paul before?**

I think it was that there was a particular period when one of the earlier films came up, I didn't want to go into that subject matter. I wanted to do another kind of movie, and not have anything that was that intense. It just didn't feel right. And the next time, the part wasn't good enough!

**You went on to make *Her* with Spike Jonze, playing a writer who falls for his computer's operating system. How weird did that feel to act?**

I remember when we went to the New York Film Festival and screened the movie, you come in at the end and you wave or some shit, and I was waiting outside the door and hearing some dialogue at the end of the movie, and I was yelling at Samantha [*the OS, voiced by Scarlett Johansson*] saying, "What do you mean you can't stop it?" And it was the first time that it really hit me. I was objective enough to go, "I'm fucking talking to my operating

system!” But throughout the course of the film, we made that commitment early on, that this is a real relationship and we approached it as such. We really played it for real – and you have to.

**In Cannes, you won Best Actor for *You Were Never Really Here*. How did that make you feel?**

I’m always surprised to get any kind of recognition at all. I think it would be really meaningful... [but] it’s strange. Of course, there’s a part of every human that wants to feel like what they’re doing is connecting with other people and that other people value it... [And] in practical ways, it’s really good for a movie. Especially for smaller films. It potentially creates more awareness of the movie. I was really happy to be there with Lynne, and for Lynne to get an award [for Best Screenplay].

**What do you look for in a project? Is it the director, character or story?**

When it’s at its best, it has to be all three. There are times where there are certain filmmakers that I admire that are making movies, but I didn’t feel like there was enough in the character so I had to say no. There were times when I really like the script or character – I go, “Fuck, this is really good!” – but I don’t like the filmmaker! So all of those pieces have to come together, and when they do, you still might have a shitty movie. But that gives you your best shot in some ways.

**How do you survive a shitty movie if you’re in the middle of the shoot?**

You don’t really know if a movie is going to be shitty or not. You just know if the experience is shitty, right? I haven’t had that, or certainly not recently. I’ve felt really fulfilled and challenged by all the



**VIRTUAL INSANITY**  
Phoenix’s writer falls in love with a computer operating system in Spike Jonze drama *Her*.

movies I’ve been working on, and the filmmakers I’ve worked with and the other actors. So you never know... the movie still might be shitty, right? The only thing you know when you’re working every day is whether the experience is satisfying.

**Does it take time to shake off a role? Do you have a specific process?**

I don’t know what the process is. I’ve been making it up! I think when things are most effective, it slowly seeps in to you and out. Any time

I hear other actors talking about that, I go, “Oh, shut up!” What’s difficult is... when you make a movie, there’s a certain part of your life that becomes easy because basically you abandon it, right? You don’t have to worry about some of the basics of everyday life. You are just focusing on this other life, this movie life, this emotional life. And so when it’s over, there is this

moment where you go, “What the fuck do I do?” I’ve spent the last few months where all I’ve had to focus on is this, right? I’ve known what my week is going to be like; I know this in advance. So then you finish and you wake up and go, “What do I do?” It’s like anything; anyone who works in any job experiences that.

**What have been your thoughts about the #MeToo movement in the industry over the past year?**

It really does feel like there are changes that are going to happen. It can only be something good for our culture. It’s a really exciting time. It’s a shame that things have to get so difficult and painful for certain people for the rest of us to become aware, or at least to pay attention. But sometimes that’s what it takes. It’s an amazing period and it’s something we’ll look back on and go, “I was there! I was in that movement.”

**DON’T WORRY, HE WON’T GET FAR ON FOOT OPENS ON 26 OCTOBER.**

## WHEN YOU’RE DONE MAKING A MOVIE, YOUR LIFE CHANGES

### JOAQUIN PHOENIX FAN CLUB

“He’s incredibly unpredictable. There’s so much energy around him; he’s like dynamite. I wouldn’t say he’s scary. I’d say he’s thrilling, sometimes a bit maddening.”

Paul Thomas Anderson

“I had this funny idea that Joaquin would be this marvellous Prince of Darkness of Rome [in *Gladiator*]. Joaquin stepped up to the plate on what would be classified as the first big epic he’d been in.”

Ridley Scott

“He’d tell you himself, he doesn’t know how to act. If he’s faking it, he won’t do it. And so, I think in that way, he’s intense, but he’s intense in the most beautifully sincere way.”

Spike Jonze

SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES...



DOCTOR WHO JODIE WHITTAKER EXCLUSIVE

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##### MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE - GHOST

PROTOCOL 2011  
Bird takes flight with Tom Cruise's Burj Khalifa climb.

##### GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2 2017

More raccoon/'baby' sparring (in the verbal sense).

One of the reasons behind the enduring success of *The Simpsons* is that its characters never age. For nearly three decades, Bart has been 10, Lisa eight and Maggie a toddler. So why worry when Brad Bird (a *Simpsons* veteran himself) decides to return to the world of *The Incredibles*, 14 years after their debut? To put that gap in perspective, the revival of *Doctor Who* hadn't been broadcast back in 2004, and we're now on the fifth new Doctor. Closer to home, Pixar has delivered *Wall-E*, *Up*, *Inside Out*, *Coco*, three *Cars* movies and several other follow-ups to its beloved early hits.

But hey, just seconds into *Incredibles 2*, it feels like we've been with the Parr family all along. True, the film doesn't scale the heights of the original, which had an emotional resonance that's largely lacking here. But it comes a lot closer to sustaining its predecessor's quality than, say, *Finding Dory* or *Monsters University*.

Picking up immediately where the first film left off, the sequel sees the Parrs tackle the Underminer (John Ratzenberger), only to realise that one

loose thread was still hanging from the first film's perfect narrative. Namely that, technically, superheroes are still illegal. Cue a quick return to mediocrity, now with the added insult of being housed in a motel, until a mysterious request for the family's services arrives from telecoms guru Winston Deavor (Bob Odenkirk) and his sister Evelyn (Catherine Keener).

Bird pulls off a delicate balancing act here. On the one hand, this really could have been made a decade

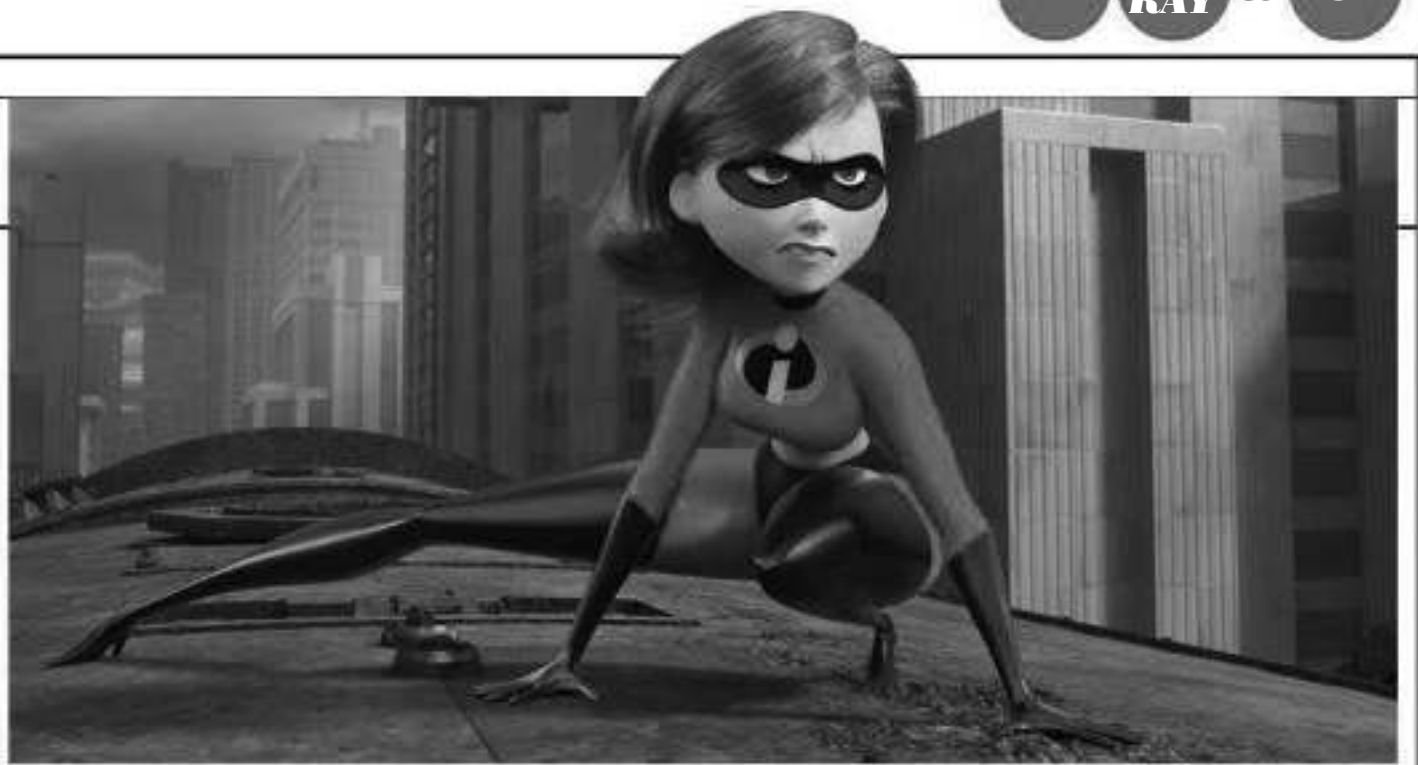
ago, notwithstanding that Bird's experiences in live action (especially *Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol*) have clearly helped refine his gift for action set-pieces.

#### HELEN BREAKS LOOSE

On the other hand, *Incredibles 2* is infused with a genuine feel for the political sensibilities of 2018. It swirls with topical undercurrents. Where the first film saw Mr. Incredible (Craig T. Nelson) headhunted for a mission, this time it's his wife who's in demand, plus noticeably hired under her pre-marriage nom de plume Elastigirl. Suddenly, Helen (Holly Hunter) wears the trousers – well, thigh-length boots and tights – and Bob is left to play out-of-his-depth house-husband to the three children.

This is smart storytelling, not only in giving Hunter the lion's share of the dialogue (a boon in itself given the richness of her unmistakable drawl), but also in the way it toys with the themes of the original. Bird took some flak for the Ayn Randian-esque subtext that superheroes should flaunt their superiority. Here, that's subverted,

The super-family are back, only this time it's very much mum Helen, aka Elastigirl, taking the lead.



with the alpha male getting his mid-life crisis while Helen kicks ass.

Think this is coincidental? Certainly not, when the villain of this movie – the Screenslaver (Bill Wise) – is conspicuously addressing the haves and have-nots of the modern world. When we try to set up the select few as worthy of slavish devotion, the sequel suggests, it instils an in-built complacency and intellectual lethargy in everybody else.

### NAPPY EVENT

It's a theme that resounds far more now – after a decade of MCU supremacy – than it would have done if the sequel had been made pre-*Iron Man*. It also has pointed things to say about social media, fake news and the cult of personality that surrounds a certain president.

It's bold stuff, but decanted into breezy entertainment. Bird came a cropper in 2015's *Tomorrowland* by trying

### DADDY DAYCARE

(above) The gang meet mysterious new recruiters Winston and Evelyn Deavor; (below) Bob swiftly discovers that looking after Jack-Jack could be his greatest challenge yet...

to be overly serious and sermonising, but there was a good hour in the middle that fizzed and ricocheted with gags, action and excitement. Here, he's allowed these elements to overrule the life lessons.

If some of the first *Incredibles*' peril and pathos are in shorter supply, there are dazzling displays of technical bravura. Bird's best set-piece is a gripping bike-versus-train chase;

about everything, is Pixar's funniest, most energised and politically on-point subplot in years, as the Parr family gradually discovers the full extent of Jack-Jack's powers.

Only hinted at in *The Incredibles* (and confirmed in 2005's spin-off short *Jack-Jack Attack*), here we get the full Looney Tunes symphony of what the youngest Parr is capable of. The variety keeps the action unpredictable and the

## 'IT'S BOLD STUFF, BUT DECANTED INTO BREEZY ENTERTAINMENT'

runner-up goes to a spooky search of a gloomily lit apartment that suddenly explodes into a vivid, eye-scorching fight. There are throwaway gags, both visual (a nappy change on a boat) and verbal (a very familiar tale about how hard it is to buy the right batteries). There's also a delectable score

by Michael Giacchino which, even by the composer's standards, is a blast.

And, coursing through just

laughs free-flowing, especially in Jack-Jack's stand-off against a raccoon, a contender for the year's best fight scene. More than that, the message – that we all have potential, and should be allowed to express it – is a fittingly woke refinement of everything the first film attempted to say.

Extras include the charming short *Bao* and a new mini-movie, *Auntie Edna*, which gives us more time with Edna Mode than the main film's brief but on-point cameo allows. **Simon Kinnear**





100 **light bite**

BAYONA KEEPS IT SNAPPY...

House training was not going well...

## JURASSIC WORLD: FALLEN KINGDOM 12

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

OUT 19 OCTOBER Digital HD 5 NOVEMBER DVD, BD, 3D BD, 4K EXTRAS Featurettes, Chris Pratt's Jurassic Journals

**A**t the tail-end of *Fallen Kingdom's* featurettes, there's a telling exchange. "When you guys look back on *Jurassic Park*, does it look primitive to you?" asks Jeff Goldblum. Responding in the negative, co-writer/producer Colin Trevorrow says, "Unfortunately, you're held to that standard every time. The question is, why doesn't [a new *Jurassic film*] look so much better than [in] 1993?"

Ostensibly, they're talking about the VFX; and on that front, yes, those galloping gallimimus do look a bit primitive, especially in juxtaposed clips from Spielberg's original and this J.A. Bayona-helmed fivequel. But the remarks are pertinent to the movies per se: *Jurassic '93* remains set in amber as the standard-bearer, its sense of awe still fresh despite the ripe CGI.

Still, with Spielberg remaining in the backseat, the franchise hasn't suffered a *Jaws*-like drop-off. It's even managed to evolve, to a point. Where

the Trevorrow-directed *Jurassic World* re-opened the gates with an efficient imitation of *Parks* past, *Fallen Kingdom* goes more off-road.

Just when you think you're getting *Dante's Peak* with dinos, Bayona shrinks the spectacle to an old dark house. Despite suggestive use of shadows and nods to 1979's *Dracula* (a Bayona fave), the fear factor peaks with the oceanic opener, which out-Megs *The Meg*. The mansion section is more about runaround thrills and the familiar ritual of seemingly intelligent people making

catastrophically dumb decisions (irksome if done poorly, but Bayona makes a crowd-pleasing fist of it).

Act three is also a showcase for the Indoraptor, whose lab-designed DNA appears to include a helping of skeksis. Undoubtedly b(e)ast in show, the Indo's crocodile-eyed charisma surpasses its human co-stars. Our heroes aren't unlikeable; they're merely... able. As the (bitty, breezy) extras' *Jurassic Journals* attest, Chris Pratt as Chris Pratt is tons more fun than Chris Pratt as Owen Grady. Post-heelgate, we get a less calculating, more caring Claire (Bryce Dallas Howard), but the series is still shy of an icon à la Ian Malcolm (brimming with anecdotes, Goldblum scores more screentime in the featurettes than the film).

The ending, meanwhile, lets loose a threequel-baiting twist that tantalises while making *Fallen Kingdom* feel very much a bridge to bigger, hopefully bolder things. In any case, a third *World* appeals because, to quote Spielberg, "The T-rex is never going to lose its bite." That's true of Bayona's monster merry-go-round, but the marks don't linger too long. **Matthew Leyland**

**SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...**

**JURASSIC PARK**  
1993  
FK's extras honour Goldblum's open-shirt moment...

**TELETUBBIES**  
1997-2016  
...while an Easter egg awaits for fans of the colourful kiddie show.

**GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL.2** 2017  
Pratt-led sci-fi sequel that delivers the goods, but not the great.



**OCEAN'S 8** 12

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

**OUT NOW** Digital HD **22 OCTOBER**

BD, DVD, 4K **EXTRAS** Featurettes, Deleted scenes (BD)

**D**espite the star wattage of its leads, Gary Ross' breezy relaunch of the *Ocean's* series is more enjoyable diversion than full-on dazzler. It's put together with Soderberghian slickness, while there are standout turns from Helena Bonham Carter as a disgraced fashion designer and Anne Hathaway, a hoot as the preening starlet whose diamond necklace is the target. But the heist goes a little too smoothly: fun though it is to watch the pieces fall into place, it lacks the nail-gnawing tension of a vintage caper. *Chris Schilling*



**THE BREADWINNER** 12

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

**OUT NOW** DVD, BD, Digital HD **EXTRAS** Commentary, Intro, Making Of

**M**arking an Oscar-nom hat-trick for Cartoon Saloon, this tale of life under the Taliban in Afghanistan circa 2001 is tighter and grittier than earlier outings, without sacrificing charm or whimsy. The latter's represented by storybook segments that punctuate and illuminate the journey of Parvana, an 11-year-old out to find her falsely imprisoned father. If it's not always clear whom this too-tough-for-tots adap of a kids' book is aimed at, it strikes a keen balance between horror and hope. Extras include intro from exec-prod Angelina Jolie. *Matthew Leyland*



**SKYSCRAPER** 12

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

**OUT 5 NOVEMBER** Digital HD

**19 NOVEMBER** DVD, BD, 3D BD, 4K

**EXTRAS** Commentary, Featurettes, Deleted/Extended scenes

**A** post-*Rampage* Dwayne Johnson swaps knowing cobblers for earnest cobblers with this *Die Hard* redux, which ups scale and lowers smarts. You can swiftly tell where it's going, but once Johnson's security assessor starts not only climbing cranes freehand, but climbing cranes freehand in order to jump onto burning buildings (occupants: family members, terrorists), guilty pleasure takes hold. Extras offer tales of dick pics and pineapples. *Matthew Leyland*



**OPERATION RED SEA** 18

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

**OUT NOW** Digital HD **29 OCTOBER**

DVD, BD **EXTRAS** Featurette, Deleted scenes, Gallery

**O**ne of the year's biggest hits (\$579m worldwide) skipped a UK cinema release. Perhaps it was because this gung-ho account of an elite naval unit taking on terrorists is unadorned military propaganda. Nonetheless, it's a riveting example of how the Chinese film industry is taking on Hollywood. Director Dante Lam's sustained set-pieces are the definition of overkill, outdoing even Michael Bay. And, given the level of gore, they're not kidding about the red, either... *Simon Kinnear*



**THE HAPPY PRINCE** 15

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

**OUT NOW** Digital HD, DVD, BD

**EXTRAS** Making Of

**R**upert Everett shows commanding range as writer, director and star of this thoughtful Oscar Wilde biopic. Rather than repeat Wilde's oft-dramatised rise and fall, however, Everett focuses on the writer's final years in European exile, battling penury and prejudice while inexorably drawn back to the affair that ruined him. Naturally, there's waspish wit to spare, but this is mostly a melancholy, moving tragedy. Everett's direction has a suitably faded, fin de siècle grandeur and his performance bursts with wounded romance. *Simon Kinnear*

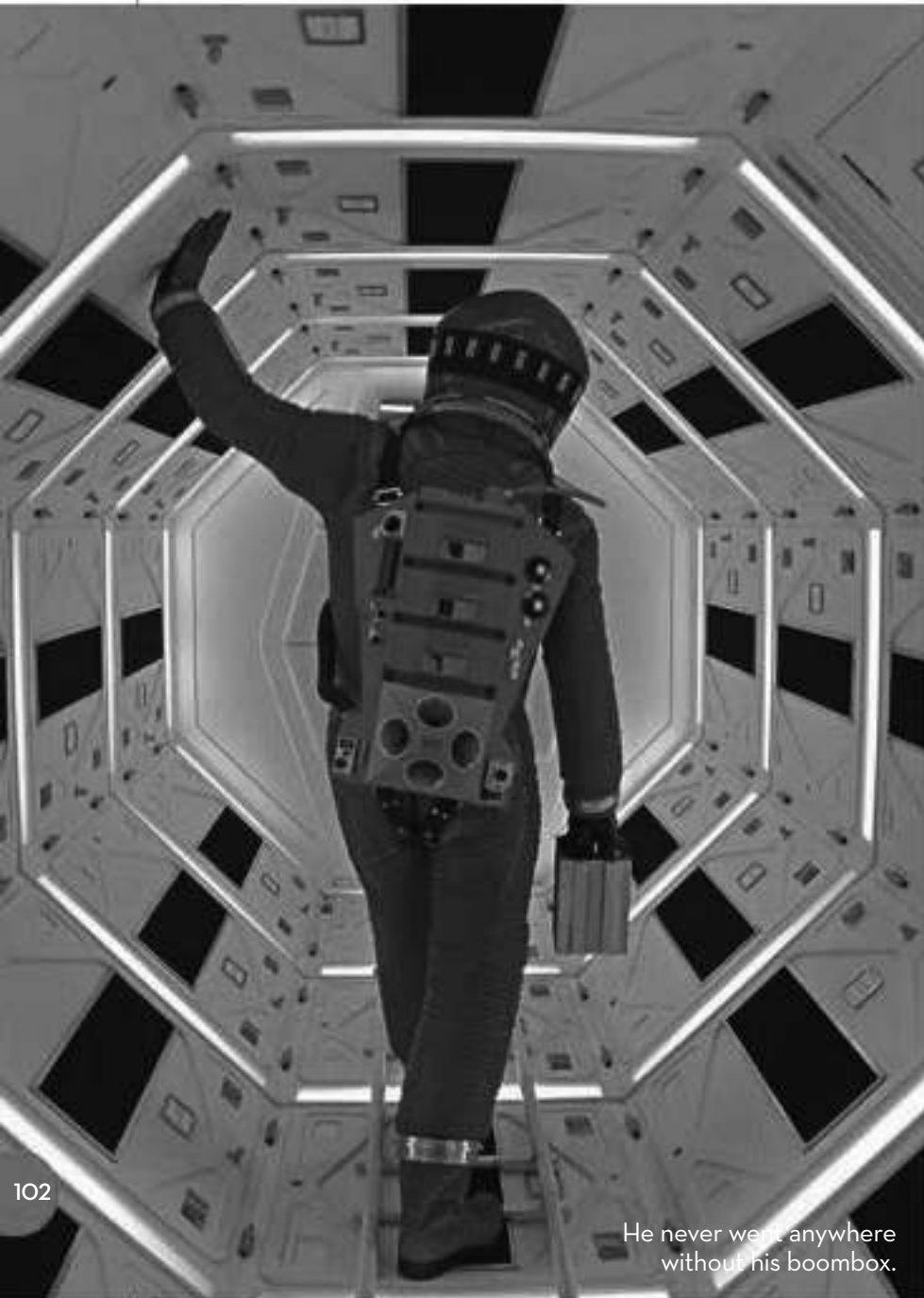


**SICARIO 2: SOLDADO** 15

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

**OUT 29 OCTOBER** DVD, BD, 4K, Digital HD **EXTRAS** Featurettes

**D**espite losing some MVPs at the border, the sequel to 2015's tense narco-thriller carries over – and adds – enough clout to hold its end up. Though Emily Blunt is missed, returnees include Josh Brolin's shady CIA agent and Benicio Del Toro's magnetically inscrutable hitman, this time tackling people trafficking. Director Stefano Sollima (*Suburra*) can't quite match Denis Villeneuve's suspense-basting efficacy, but Taylor Sheridan's script trades in richly grey-shaded complexities and – replacing Jóhann Jóhannsson – Hildur Guðnadóttir's huge score grinds your skull nicely. *Kevin Harley*



He never went anywhere without his boombox.

## stargazing

SCI-FI CLASSIC LOOKS BETTER THAN EVER...

### 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY 12

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

1968 **OUT 29 OCTOBER** 4K BD, Digital UHD **EXTRAS** Commentary, Documentaries, Interviews, Art cards, Booklet

**T**his summer, on the 50th anniversary of its big-screen debut, *2001* was re-released in an ‘unrestored’ format overseen by Christopher Nolan (see page 84). This Ultra HD 4K Blu-ray transfer – mastered from the 65mm original camera negative – is, according to Nolan, “the closest recreation of viewing the original film print in your own home”.

There’s no chance of a rewatch feeling like an academic exercise in celluloid preservation, though. It’s almost impossible to hold yourself at a remove when you’re immersed in the overwhelming sensory experience.

The film is still one of the most intense U-certificates ever released (an archive interview with Kubrick earns the disc its 12). From the howling void-like overture, to the burnished sunsets of ‘The Dawn Of Man’ sequence, to the outer-space scenes that impress to this day, it’ll hold you

rapt. Kubrick leaps millennia in service of a story that, like all great art, will be interpreted differently by everyone who approaches it. The label ‘masterpiece’ doesn’t seem strong enough.

Extras – all ported from previous editions – feature big names waxing lyrical about its legacy, but it’s a shame there’s no new Nolan featurette specific to this version, as insight into the restoration process would have been fascinating. But it’s still an essential purchase for fans seeking another hit of the ultimate trip. *Matt Maytum*



### RUSHMORE 15

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

1998 **OUT NOW** BD **EXTRAS** Commentary, Making Of, Featurettes, Storyboards, Poster

**T**he curtains, compositions, connoisseur-ish music, cutting drollery... Even with Wes Anderson’s tics set, his second pic remains a wickedly wrong-footing treasure. You never know where you are as Jason Schwartzman’s precocious student (15 going on 48) battles Bill Murray’s millionaire (48-ish going on 15) for Olivia Williams’ love (and carrots). Should we cringe, cry, or cackle? Anderson keeps the tonal balance spry, aided by the late-’90s Murray-sance in full (anti-)bloom. Criterion extras are on-point. *Kevin Harley*



### BLOODY SPEAR AT MOUNT FUJI 12

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

1955 **OUT NOW** BD **EXTRAS** Commentary, Intro, Interviews, Booklet

**T**omu Uchida’s period drama is a samurai movie – but forget thoughts of invincible swordsmen. The samurai here, Lord Sakawa, is an amiable, slightly feckless figure who turns nasty when drunk. The hero is Gonpachi, his bulky spear-carrier, who lumbers along keeping an eye on his master – and proves formidable when the chips are down. For most of its length this is a relaxed, humorous road movie; only in the last few minutes does the violence explode, and is all the more fearsome for it. *Philip Kemp*



### CHILDREN OF MEN 15

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

2006 **OUT 5 NOVEMBER** BD **EXTRAS** Commentary, Documentary, Featurettes, Deleted scenes, Gallery

**W**ith every passing year, Alfonso Cuarón’s portrait of an isolated, anti-immigrant Britain circa 2027 looks increasingly prescient, frighteningly plausible and very much a masterpiece. Abandoning the usual dystopian clichés, this is sci-fi recast as social-realist action thriller, as Clive Owen’s world-weary misanthrope becomes the unlikely midwife to society’s rebirth. Cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki remains the film’s MVP for his startlingly lucid long-take set-pieces, but it’s Cuarón’s sure grasp of tone that locates hope and humanity amid the horror. *Simon Kinnear*



**SCHLOCK 12**

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★  
 1973 **OUT NOW** BD **EXTRAS** Commentary, Q&A, Interviews, Booklet

**M**ore *Kentucky Fried Movie* than *An American Werewolf In London*, this handmade creature feature is the debut of 21-year-old writer-director John Landis. The proto-auteur also proves a winning mime within Rick Baker's ape suit – he is Schlockthropus, the prehistoric beast who falls in love with a blind woman, goes to the movies to watch *The Blob*, and plays a little jazz piano between killing 789 people. The humour is skit-and-miss, but the affection glows. Don't miss the cracking yak-track by Landis and Baker. **Jamie Graham**



**WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION U**

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★  
 1957 **OUT NOW** BD **EXTRAS** Commentary, Featurettes, Booklet

**H**okum played to the hilt," says Simon Callow of Billy Wilder's Agatha Christie adap. And no one plays it better than Charles Laughton as the ailing but unassailable barrister defending murder suspect Tyrone Power (in his final role). The Oscar-nommed Laughton's stair-lift shenanigans, monocle mischief and bickering with real-life wife Elsa Lanchester engross just as much as the courtroom dramatics. End credits implore punters not to blab the killer twists; even though you can spot one fake-out a mile off, this hokum still holds up. **Matthew Leyland**



**TUCKER: THE MAN AND HIS DREAM 12**

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★  
 1988 **OUT NOW** BD **EXTRAS** Commentary, Deleted scene, Featurettes

**A** rare flight of non-fancy from Lucasfilm, this period piece still ticks off exec producer George Lucas' pet themes: dreaming big; fighting the system; cars. It's also a passion project for Lucas' pal, director Francis Ford Coppola, whose biopic of '40s motor maverick Preston Tucker (Jeff Bridges) was originally planned as a musical. The result has a spring its step, but Coppola's camera tricks tend to distract as much as dazzle. Extras include old footage of the beardy peers enjoying edit-suite bantz. **Matthew Leyland**



**A RAISIN IN THE SUN 12**

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★  
 1961 **OUT NOW** BD **EXTRAS** Interviews, Video essays

**A**dapted by Lorraine Hansberry from her own Broadway play – and retaining its original cast – this absorbing melodrama movingly highlights the hardships of a black Chicago family and their conflicting dreams. Staid direction means it never quite escapes its theatrical origins, but it's impeccably acted, with a live-wire Sidney Poitier matched by Claudia McNeil's dignified matriarch. Extras examine Poitier's desire to beef up his part and the play's enduring influence on black theatre. **Chris Schilling**



**TROLL: THE COMPLETE COLLECTION 18**

FILMS ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★  
 1986-2009 **OUT NOW** BD **EXTRAS** Commentary, Making Of, Deleted scenes, Featurettes, Music video, Booklet

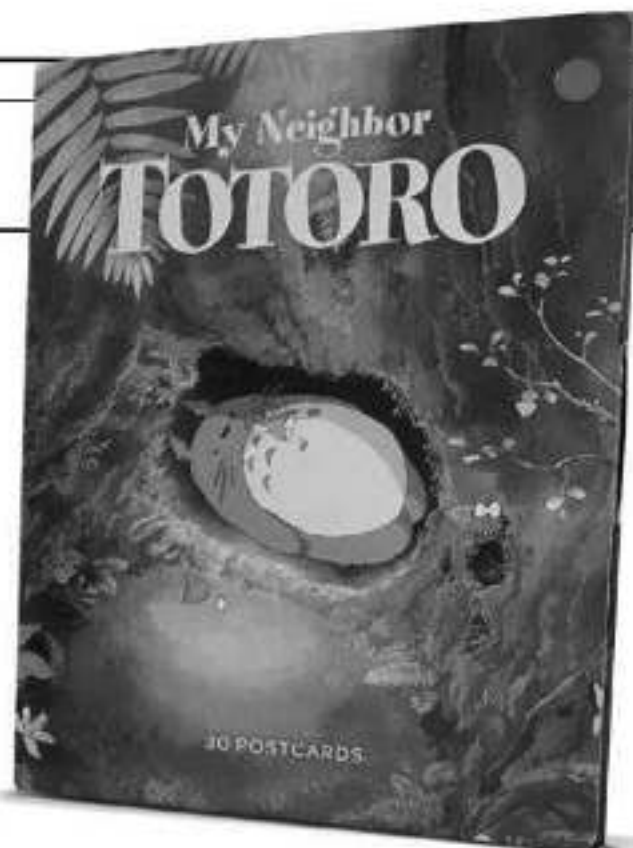
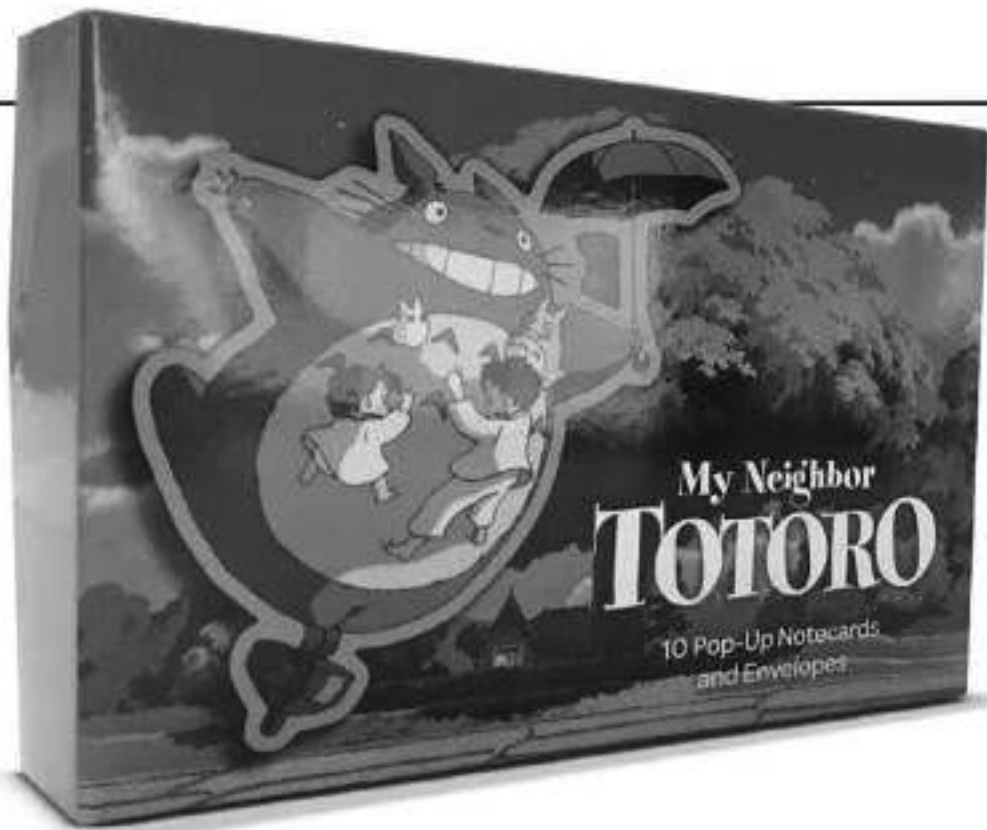
**T**his is a rare horror 'franchise' that actually improves as it goes along. Packaged with exhaustive extras, 1986's *Troll* is naff monster mayhem; the completely unrelated *Troll 2* (1990) is a meme-tastic train wreck of staggering cine-incompetence (NB: this is a *good* thing); and 2009's *Best Worst Movie* is a decent, cast-made doc glorifying the latter and ignoring the former. Confused? You will be. Guiltily entertained? That too. **Matt Glasby**



**THE UNINVITED PG**

FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★  
 1944 **OUT NOW** BD **EXTRAS** Visual essay, Radio adapts, Booklet

**R**eckoned to be Hollywood's first 'serious' shot at a ghost story (with cinematographer Charles Lang picking up an Oscar nomination), director Lewis Allen's atmospheric movie isn't as serious as all that; star Ray Milland's corny frivolities persistently lighten the tone. After buying an old Cornish cliff-top house, siblings Roderick (Milland) and Pamela (Ruth Hussey) get embroiled with the previous owners: grumpy old Donald Crisp and his naïve granddaughter (Gail Russell). There are some elegantly staged fright moments, while Victor Young's score includes the haunting 'Stella by Starlight'. **Philip Kemp**



## MY NEIGHBOUR TOTORO STATIONARY

VARIOUS OUT 23 OCTOBER

This year marks the 30th anniversary of two Studio Ghibli classics: *Grave Of The Fireflies* and *My Neighbour Totoro*. One of these lends itself more to cute merch than the other. Both adorable and functional, Chronicle Books' new line of *Totoro* stationary includes a 30-postcard set (featuring final frames from Hayao Miyazaki's masterpiece) and a top-up notecards kit (five designs, repeating twice). Imagine one of these on your desk/doormat/bedside table; you'd be grinning like a Cheshire catbus.

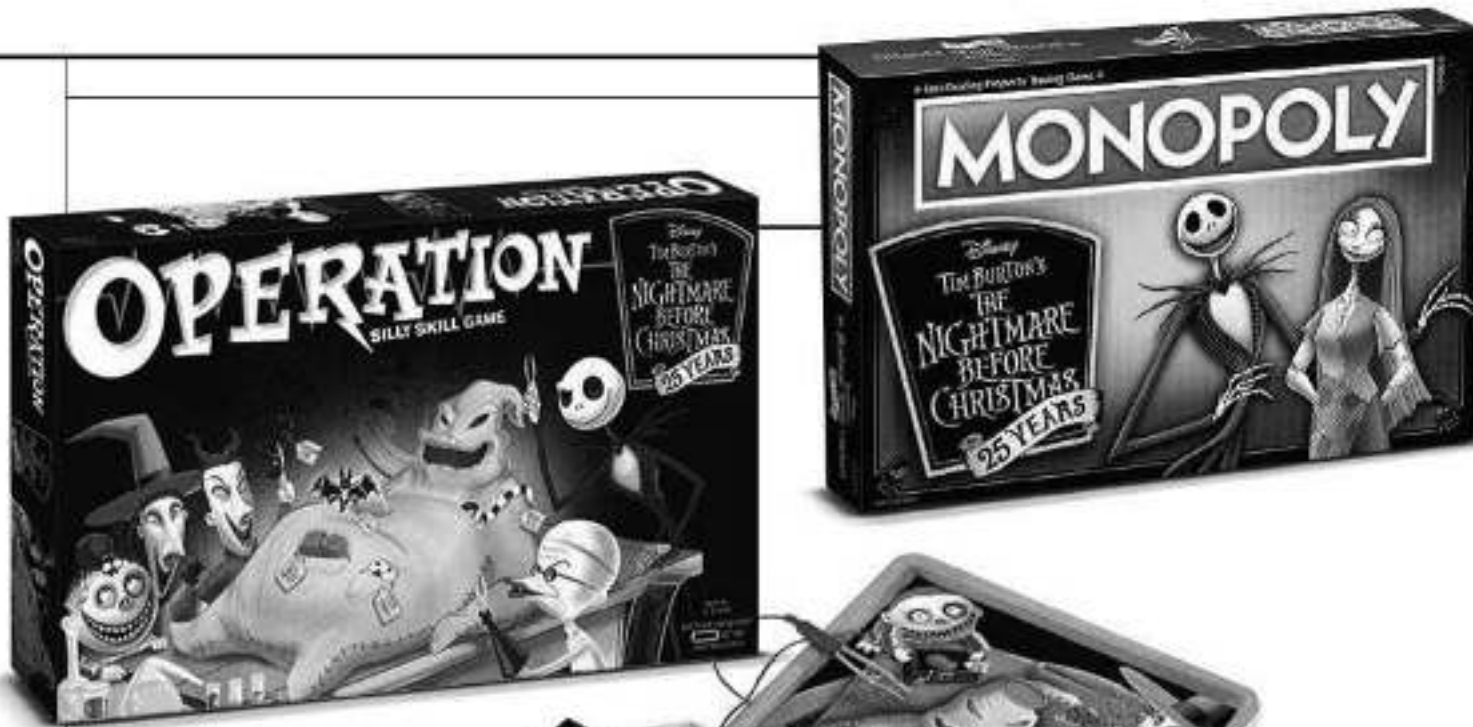


## SUPERHERO SLIPPERS

FOOTWEAR OUT NOW

Yes, saving the world's a noble cause, but you don't want to be bothering with all that when the nights are drawing in. Instead, reinvent yourself as an armchair superhero with some slippers based on comic-book heroes. If you're a Marvel kid, there's Groot and Captain America (both open-backed, like something from the Avengers Facility spa). DC lovers, meanwhile, can choose from Batman (cape, belt, embroidered abs) and Aquaman (modelled on the comic version rather than Jason Momoa's bare feet). Available from ThinkGeek/GameStop.





**THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS GAMES**

BOARD GAMES OUT NOW

This is Halloween, this is Halloween... and if you can't be arsed to dress up, or risk life-changing injury for the sake of a decorative pumpkin, why not stay in with a Burtonian board game? There are two twisted twists on old favourites: Operation challenges you to remove bats, bugs, worms and other nasties from the body of Oogie Boogie, while Monopoly hedges its seasonal bets with Halloween and Christmas game cards and... what's this? A zombie duck token?! Sold!



**HAN SANDWICHES**

BOOK/KITCHENWARE OUT NOW

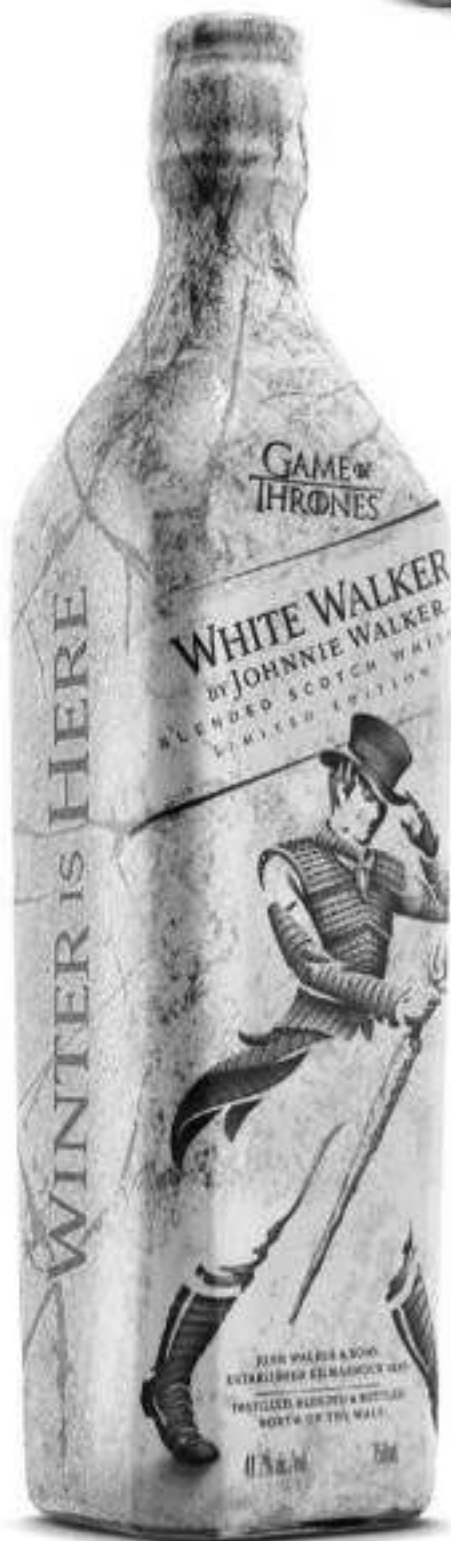
It's been a bit of a (H)annus horribilis for the *Star Wars* saga: ongoing *Last Jedi* backlash, plus a new movie that made less money than *Hotel Transylvania 3*. But this latest *Star Wars Cookbook* (from *BB-Ate* author Lara Starr) is a source of cheer for the puns alone: 'Quesogreedos'; 'Hoth Dog'; 'Scruffy-Looking Nerf Burgers'. But the USP is a pair of sandwich cutters shaped like the Millennium Falcon and Chewie's shaggy noggin. Munch it! *ML*



**WHITE WALKER WHISKY**

ALCOHOL OUT NOW

Enjoy a pre-winter warmer with Johnnie Walker's White Walker (then try saying that after you've had a few glasses). Inspired by *Game Of Thrones'* undead, unthawed army, this limited-edition whisky will tingle your taste buds with notes of caramelised sugar and vanilla, red berries and orchard fruit. And when the bottle's been chilling a while, it reveals a secret message... Who'll claim the Iron Throne? Season 8's broadcast date? "All men must rye"? Available from Amazon.





## MAKING OF



# casting a spellman

THE NEW SABRINA, SET FOR NETFLIX AND CHILLING... ADVENTURES.

### SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

**SABRINA, THE TEENAGE WITCH**  
1996-2003

Melissa Joan Hart worked her magic over seven seasons.

**MAD MEN** 2007-15  
Shipka's star-making role, as tearaway teen Sally Draper.

**RIVERDALE**  
2017-PRESENT  
TV series derived from Archie Comics, the original source for *Sabrina*.

**C**omic books, animation, TV... and now the teenage witch enters the world of streaming with Netflix's *Chilling Adventures Of Sabrina*. A dark reimagining that mixes horror with (wicked) humour, it stars Kiernan Shipka (previously best known as Don Draper's daughter on *Mad Men*), who introduces *TF* to this fresh spin...

### How would you pitch this new take on *Sabrina*?

In many ways it's about a girl growing up, so it's analogous to a teenage experience. But it also has elements of fantasy, of dealing with the two separate sides of Sabrina Spellman. It really turns into this beautiful journey back and forth between the mortal world and the witch world; [*Sabrina*] goes to great lengths to save a lot of people, which gets her into some crazy situations you've never seen before.

### Sabrina shares a comic-book universe with Archie... will we see a *Riverdale* crossover?

*Riverdale* is technically the next town over. It's not something that's touched on a lot in the show, but it is referenced, so anything is possible in the future. Both shows are not set

in any period but are timeless. I'm a big *Riverdale* fan so I'm excited about that possibility, too.

### What's your history with *Sabrina*?

I didn't really watch the [1990s] show growing up. But when we were shooting in Vancouver, I got chatting to some girls from Ireland in an elevator and they went crazy over the old show, like, "Oh my God! Harvey! Salem the cat!" It was eye-opening what a cult following the show still has.

### Did you have any second thoughts about doing another TV show post-*Mad Men*?

I wrapped *Mad Men* when I was 15 and started filming this when I was 18, so I definitely had time there to figure myself out, figure out what I wanted to do and work on

other things. I got to try different experiences, which is super important. I truly feel like it's the right time for me to do something like this. I was totally itching to get back to TV because it's fun to keep growing over time as a character.

### Does this show pay homage to previous versions?

One of the main charms – no pun intended; I can't believe I just said that! – of the original *Sabrina*, *The Teenage Witch* was that it was funny, and I think *Chilling Adventures* honours that. But at the same time, it's super dark and scary, taking inspiration from *Rosemary's Baby* and *The Exorcist*.

### What would you use witchcraft for yourself?

I would love to be able to heal people. I'd also love to fly. Any time I'm in traffic in Los Angeles I think it would just be so convenient to fly over it!

*Jenny Cooney Carillo*

CHILLING ADVENTURES OF SABRINA STARTS ON NETFLIX ON 26 OCTOBER.



## MAKING OF



# better off red

THE LOWDOWN ON NEW MISSION-TO-MARS SHOW THE FIRST...

## 1 IT'S MOSTLY EARTH-BOUND...

After an extraordinary opening sequence on the launchpad, sci-fi drama *The First* focuses on the crew as they prepare for their proposed mission to Mars. "Some people would have liked us get to Mars sooner," admits showrunner Beau Willimon. But the story remains Earthbound for a while in order to foster investment in the crew and the task ahead. "We fully explore how much work and preparation goes into just getting to the launch. Getting to Mars is not an easy proposition!"

## 2...BUT THAT'S NO BAD THING

Especially when the personal dramas are so intriguing. Take widower and mooted mission commander Tom Hagerty (Sean Penn, in his first TV drama), who wrestles with leaving his daughter behind as she struggles with addiction. "Her journey into herself is in some ways as dangerous as her dad's journey to Mars," says Willimon. Other members of his crew are coping with ill parents or marital difficulties, as well as a heightened sense of their own mortality. "Their lives are flawed and messed up like the rest of us," says Willimon. "But against the backdrop

of eventually travelling 50 million miles away." Then there's Laz Ingram (Natascha McElhone), the driven, slightly awkward visionary behind the mission. "There's a subdued anxiety with Laz," McElhone explains. "She's like a well-polished fortress, but there's also an undercurrent of paranoia about winning and coming first. It's quite an American attitude."

## 3 THE STARS ARE SHINING

"Tom is a hero, but deeply flawed," says Willimon. "You need an actor with that range and level of commitment that Sean will bring. He has to tap into the ugliest, most difficult aspects of a human soul, while convincing you he's capable and deserving of leading a mission to Mars. And Natascha is so generous, warm, open and smart. Everything she brings makes you root for a character who can be difficult to relate to at times."

## 4 IT'LL GET HOUSE OF CARDS FANS ONBOARD

Although considerably more hopeful than the bleak Washington DC saga that made Willimon's name, *The First* offers political

## SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

**THE RIGHT STUFF** 1983  
Seminal space-training film centred on Chuck Yeager.

**THE MARTIAN** 2015  
Matt Damon fa(e)ces life alone on Mars.

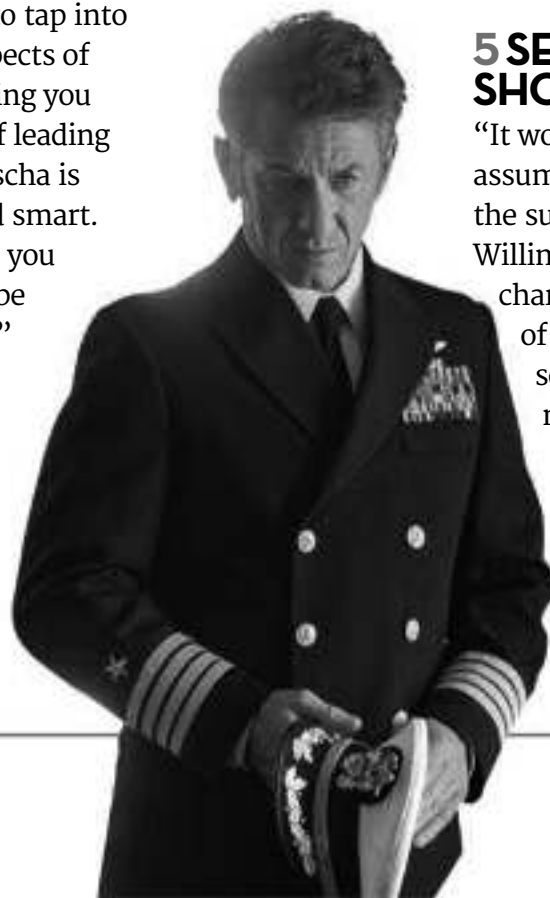
**MARS** 2016  
Ron Howard's TV docudrama series about a 2033 mission.

machinations aplenty as Laz attempts to persuade a recalcitrant Congress to fund her proposals. "Laz's argument about needing an alternative to Earth, given the difficulties this planet faces, falls flat with the senators," explains Willimon. "Generally people respond more to an inspiring narrative and she's not good with language, so she brings Hagerty in to help make the case. She's smart enough to know her limitations and know he exudes that thing language can't quite touch. You can't underestimate the importance of inspiration."

## 5 SEASON 2 MIGHT SHOW MORE OF MARS

"It wouldn't be unreasonable to assume a crew may even make it to the surface of Mars itself," promises Willimon. "You've got to know the characters well enough by the end of Season 1 that you'd want to see them being split up next," muses McElhone. "How will those relationships play out when they're as far apart as anyone ever has been in the history of mankind?" *Gabriel Tate*

THE FIRST STARTS ON CHANNEL 4 LATER THIS AUTUMN.





## 22 JULY *TBC*

FILM ★★★★★

AVAILABLE NOW | NETFLIX

**O**n 22 July 2011, right-wing terrorist Anders Behring Breivik detonated a car bomb in Oslo, killing eight people, before heading 40km north-west to a Labour Party Youth Camp on Utøya Island, where he shot dead another 69.

From such horrific events, Paul Greengrass has made a dignified, inspiring film, at once dispassionate and compassionate. Far from focusing on the terror attack (Erik Poppe's

*U – July 22* takes that approach, and does so responsibly), Greengrass presents the massacre swiftly and harrowingly, neither sanitising the violence nor resorting to gratuitous bloodshed. He then concentrates on the healing process of one survivor, Viljar Hanssen (Jonas Strand Gravli), and the trial of Breivik (Anders Danielsen Lie).

Such a structure presents the same challenge to Greengrass as that which faced the Norwegian courts – how to

### DAY OF HORROR

Jonas Strand Gravli (right) as Viljar, one of the survivors of the terror attack.

allow Breivik the freedom of speech to expound his anti-immigration manifesto without granting him the platform he craved so that others might follow. The answer is to show democracy operating at its finest and to surround Breivik's gospel of hate with survivor tales of tolerance and optimism.

Though *22 July* is engrossing from first frame to last, Greengrass sensibly tames the frantically kinetic visuals that became his trademark in the *Bourne* movies – better a somewhat mechanical progression through events than a tasteless thriller dynamic. The result is a film that matches *Bloody Sunday* and *United 93* for conscience and impact. **Jamie Graham**



### OPERATION FINALE 15

★★★★★

**NOW** | NETFLIX  
Lacking *Argo*'s pace and *Schindler's List*'s weight, Chris Weitz's thriller about the capture of senior Nazi Adolf Eichmann remains very watchable, particularly when sparks fly between Ben Kingsley and Oscar Isaac.



### DARKEST HOUR PG

★★★★★

**TBC NOV** | SKY  
Gary Oldman dons Oscar-winning prosthetics for an Oscar-winning performance as Winston Churchill, barnstorming his way through classic speeches and holding the story together, even in its daftest hour (gathering vox pops on the Tube).



### THREE BILLBOARDS... 15

★★★★★

**TBC NOV** | SKY  
Frances McDormand on ferocious, Oscar-winning form as a grieving mother demanding justice for her dead daughter in Martin McDonagh's tightrope walk between hard-hitting drama and black comedy. Just pretend you missed the deer...



### SEVEN PSYCHOPATHS 15

★★★★★

**NOW** | NETFLIX  
Here's one McDonagh made earlier, a meta meditation on crime movies that starts to self-deconstruct in act three. But when it's good, it's great; and when it's great, that usually means Christopher Walken is being random.



### CELLULAR 15

★★★★★

**NOW** | AMAZON  
From the writer of *Phone Booth* comes this more mobile, none-more-noughties thriller, in which a pre-Cap Chris Evans responds to kidnapped Kim Basinger's call. With The Stath as the baddie, its batteries stay charged for the duration.



### BEST IN SHOW 12

★★★★★

**26 OCT** | AMAZON  
Call it pooch perfect, as canine owners compete to be top dog in Christopher Guest's mock-doc. The (human) cast are all well deserving of improv rosettes, not least Guest himself as a bloodhound owner with a hang-dog face and a nose for nuts.



### ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN 15

★★★★★

**26 OCT** | AMAZON  
Redford and Hoffman are Watergate whistleblowers Woodward and Bernstein in the newspaper movie by which all others are judged. Alan J. Pakula's cool direction keeps you hooked.



# blood island

GARETH EVANS RAIDS HIS HORROR TOOLBOX...

## APOSTLE 18

FILM ★★★★★

AVAILABLE NOW | NETFLIX

**B**rit director Gareth Evans built his rep on Indonesian actioner *The Raid* (2011) and its sequel. Four years on from the latter, he's back, and on no-less spectacular form with *Apostle*. A twisted, Netflix-produced horror, it's a cult-centred story that seems destined for cult status. Set in 1905, it stars Dan Stevens as Thomas Richardson, a prodigal son who renews family ties when he sets out to find his missing sister, Jennifer (Elen Rhys), who has been abducted by a mysterious cult based on a remote island; Thomas' plan is to infiltrate their ranks then save his sibling.

The isolated group is led by a self-appointed prophet named Malcolm (Michael Sheen, with a face as severe as his haircut), and it's only a matter of time before Thomas finds out just how weird life is on the isle, where books from the mainland are banned. Spending his nights stealthily gathering information, he witnesses a woman being forced to cut her arm and drain blood into a receptacle – a bizarre ritual expected of all newcomers.

In the first half, Evans gradually cranks up the tension, centred mostly

on whether Thomas will be revealed as an interloper. But there are further secrets to be unpicked, as young lovers enjoy covert assignations and animals are born onto the island in mangled form. As Thomas discovers, not everyone appears so keen on this devout lifestyle – take, for example, Andrea (Lucy Boynton), who also happens to be Malcolm's daughter.

Moreover, this apparently utopian community is in dire straits, with failing crops causing consternation. If that's a direct nod to Robin Hardy's

### SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

#### THE WICKER MAN 1973

Robin Hardy's towering pagan scarer is clearly an influence on *Apostle*.

#### THE RAID 2011

Evans' breakout stunner redefined action cinema.

#### THE GUEST 2014

Taut thriller with Stevens as the hellish houseguest.

iconic *The Wicker Man*, Evans doesn't follow up with any giant flaming effigies. Instead, he ventures into fantastical territory with enough 'eww' factor to satiate most gore hounds (anyone squeamish about eyes really needs to look away for one scene).

As the aforementioned blood-letting hints, Evans' film is awash with the red stuff. An early scene, in which a government spy/assassin gets stabbed with several spears, sets the brutal tone, while fingers get wrenched and flesh is torn in an increasingly grisly final act. Extra thrust is also added by the power play between Malcolm and his associate Quinn (Mark Lewis Jones).

Stevens compels as the disenchanted missionary with the scars to prove it, while Sheen is superb. At over two hours, however, it could arguably do with a trim; some subplots weave an overly tangled web.

But as the main thread reaches its climax, Evans hits full flow, with as many bruising and bloody body blows as *The Raid*. This is one cult worth offering yourself to. **James Mottram**

# protect and swerve

DON'T HAVE TO BE MADDEN TO WORK HERE, BUT...

## **BODYGUARD** 15

SHOW ★★★★★ EXTRAS *TBC*

2018 **OUT NOW** DVD, Digital HD EXTRAS *TBC*

**R**ichard Madden plays Costner to Keeley Hawes' Whitney in a scarily tense thriller from *Line Of Duty*'s Jed Mercurio that had half the nation biting its fingernails in September. Liberally festooned with sadistic surprises and bookended by two nerve-shredding sequences involving suicide vests, *Bodyguard* is a prime example of watercooler TV – one that left ITV's *Vanity Fair* adap trailing in its wake.

After defusing a terrorist incident on a London-bound train, troubled war vet turned specialist protection copper David Budd (Madden) is given a plumb new assignment – shadowing Julia Montague (Hawes), a home secretary with designs on Number 10.

The scale of the task becomes clear after she narrowly survives a sniper attack. Yet the greater threat may be Budd himself, whose concern for her well-being masks a resentment of the policies she supported that left him with physical and psychological scars.

Mercurio's love of fiendish conspiracies, long interrogation scenes and the wanton dispensing of key characters makes for an occasionally credulity-stretching saga. Indeed, one particular act of thwarted self-harm pushes the narrative seriously close to shark-jumping territory.

Like the best *Line Of Duty* arcs, however, *Bodyguard* cries out to be watched in its compulsive entirety – for one thing, it sees Madden stake a claim to a certain super-spy role that could soon be up for grabs. *Neil Smith*

Doing what's required... but for who?



## **FLEABAG S1** 15

SHOW ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

2016 **OUT NOW** BD EXTRAS *TBC*

**G**rief, sex, depression and family resentment are all in the crosshairs of Phoebe Waller-Bridge's caustic comedy, finally released on Blu-ray. A supporting cast of rich characters, including Olivia Colman's devastatingly passive-aggressive stepmother, surround Waller-Bridge's Bafta-winning performance as the irrepressibly selfish and perverse – but ultimately tragic – Fleabag. She delivers unfiltered honesty, slyly switching between direct-to-camera commentary, mournful gazes and wicked smiles. Hilarious and heartbreaking. *Matt Looker*



## **STAR WARS REBELS S4** PG

SHOW ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

2017-18 **OUT 26 OCTOBER** DVD, BD

EXTRAS Commentary (BD), Featurettes

**I**t's a wrap for the pre-*Ep IV* adventures of the Ghost crew. Some characters already have their names on *Rogue One* Easter eggs, but what fate awaits the rest (not to mention a certain Thrawn in our heroes' side)? That question raises the stakes even as the narrative narrows its focus; the Rebels' mission to liberate one planet seems positively intimate by *Star Wars* standards. Some business with talking wolves makes you thankful this isn't live action, but this is a strong finish for a show that's sometimes struggled to slip the shadow of its *Clone Wars* predecessor. *Matthew Leyland*



## **THE CROWN S2** 15

SHOW ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

2018 **OUT 22 OCTOBER** DVD, BD

EXTRAS Featurettes, Tea-time trivia (BD)

**C**laire Foy and Matt Smith bow out as Liz and Phil in a second serving of Netflix's regal soap opera that places their rumoured marital difficulties centre stage. The result is a more intimate (and slightly cheaper-looking) affair than the lavish Season 1, with seismic world events – the Suez Crisis, JFK's assassination – taking a back seat to Margaret's love life and the education of Charles. The impending cast overhaul (Olivia Colman and Helena Bonham Carter incoming) should see the show's third season fully recover its dramatic mojo. *Neil Smith*



# higher power

WHAT'S NEXT IN HOME-CINEMA TECH...

**A**long with January's Las Vegas-based tech bonanza CES, Berlin's IFA is one of the world's biggest gadget fests. The largest names in tech recently gathered on German soil to showcase the latest in home cinema – and it was 8K TV that stole the show...

## WHAT IS 8K?

With 4K having pretty much taken over from High Definition (HD) as the

current standard for large TVs, 8K is the next big leap. With a picture resolution of 7680x4320 pixels, 8K has four times as many pixels as 4K. And more pixels means better picture quality. So far, there isn't really much 8K content, but early 8K TVs will be able to upscale HD and 4K images for a better picture.

## HOW ABOUT HDR10+?

HDR10+ is a brand-new High Dynamic Range (HDR) format. HDR tech is designed to boost the colour and

**REALITY CHECK**  
Wait, you thought your 4K TV was cutting edge? Meet Philips' OLED+ 903, with added HDR10+.

contrast on your TV to make the picture more realistic. Unlike its predecessor, HDR10, which only allows for an entire movie to be set at one level of brightness, HDR10+ permits filmmakers to vary the brightness, not just in each scene, but frame by frame.

The idea is you get to see the film just how the director intended. HDR10+ is a joint venture between Samsung, Panasonic and 20th Century Fox, and will go head to head with rival HDR format Dolby Vision. *Libby Plummer*

## future views

The best kit to buy...



**SAMSUNG Q900R**  
OUT TBC OCT  
£TBC  
[samsung.co.uk](http://samsung.co.uk)  
The first 8K TV to launch, Samsung's QLED panel packs HDR10+ and will also upscale HD and 4K to 8K using artificial intelligence.



**BOSE SOUNDBAR 700**  
OUT NOW  
£799 [bose.co.uk](http://bose.co.uk)  
Amazon Alexa support means you can control this compact soundbar with your voice, while Bose's QuietPort tech renders dialogue crystal-clear.



**PHILIPS OLED+ 903**  
OUT TBC OCT  
FROM £2,499  
[philips.co.uk](http://philips.co.uk)  
Ambilight tech projects lights for more immersive viewing, while Bowers & Wilkins audio gives extra bass on this HDR10+ panel.



**PANASONIC DP-UB9000**  
OUT NOW £899  
[panasonic.co.uk](http://panasonic.co.uk)  
The most advanced 4K deck yet, with built-in Prime and Netflix 4K streaming, it features HDR10+ and Dolby Vision, plus Google Assistant and Alexa voice control.



**PANASONIC FX700**  
OUT NOW  
From £749  
[panasonic.co.uk](http://panasonic.co.uk)  
Most of Pana's 2018 line-up will be getting a firmware upgrade to support HDR10+, including this 4K LED panel, which ranges from 49 to 65 inches.



**SONY UBP-X500**  
OUT NOW £200  
[sony.co.uk](http://sony.co.uk)  
Sony's budget 4K Blu-ray disc spinner is its most affordable yet. Features Dolby Atmos support for immersive sound that comes from above as well as around you.



**SONY MASTER SERIES AF9**  
OUT NOW  
FROM £2,999  
[sony.co.uk](http://sony.co.uk)  
This flagship OLED 4K TV packs an exclusive Netflix Calibrated Mode to preserve post-production tweaks on Netflix output.

fresh spin

TF scores the latest soundtracks...



MANDY

★★★★★

The late Jóhann Jóhannsson leaves us with a thing of filthy majesty. After searing/sublime scores for *Sicario* and *Arrival*, Jóhannsson follows through with ethereal synth drone and doom-metal distortion for Panos Cosmatos' revenge movie. With guitars from avant-rock worshippers Sunn O)))'s Stephen O'Malley and drums from hell, 'Waste' and 'Temple' are sulphurous scalp-melters.



HALLOWEEN

★★★★★

Even if you can't improve perfection, John Carpenter, Daniel Davies and John's son Cody do their damndest to respect and reinvent Carpenter's trail-blazing 1978 score for 2018's sequel. With gnarled guitars, pulsing beats and pulverising effects adding density, 'Michael Kills Again' and the spoiler-ish track 17 stylishly sustain the original's nerve-scunching purity of purpose.

CLASSIC SOUNDTRACK



beetlejuice  
DANNY ELFMAN / GEFEN

**T**hirty years ago, a bug-eyed bio-exorcist liberated Danny Elfman's spirit. "*Beetlejuice* was tons of fun because it was way off the radar," the composer recalled. "I was so amazed that my score to *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* wasn't thrown out... So, by the time *Beetlejuice* came along, I decided to just really have fun with it."

Previously the singer of new-wave performance-art project The Mystic Knights Of The Oingo Boingo, Elfman came to movies via the comic fantasy *Forbidden Zone* (1980) and Tim Burton's 1985 *Pee-wee* pic. Elfman would make bigger (*Batman*), more romantic (*Edward Scissorhands*) music for Burton than 1988's *Beetlejuice*, his second collaboration with the director; *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, meanwhile, banked him an eternity of reissues.

But it was *Beetlejuice* that flung the doors wide open on the duo's goth-com circus, thanks to its delirious disregard for restraint and its foreshadowing of Elfman highs to come.

A high-theatre curtain-raiser of tremendous vim, 'Main Titles (*Beetlejuice*)' sets the hyperactive

pitch gloriously. After Harry Belafonte's vocal cameo, galloping pianos, ghostly voices, whooshing strings, clamouring clarinets and thrusting rhythms jostle with an anything-goes vigour. It really shouldn't hold together, but it does, thanks to the force of Elfman's invention and sly structural know-how.

With Betelgeuse's frenetic theme established, Elfman sustains a flair for character themes in mock-jaunty down-home parodies (for the Maitlands) and gothic waltzes (for Lydia). From here, the afterlife dominates as Elfman's score swerves every which way, lurching from church to fairground at the click of a castanet. Strings and harps swoop; woodwinds circle; organs boom; percussive jitters nibble at the score's fringes. 'In The

Model' evokes key Elfman influence Bernard Herrmann possessed by a punk spirit; 'Juno's Theme', meanwhile, pre-emptly Elfman's Gotham City symphonies.

As the disparate parts merge on 'The Incantation', Elfman syncs his sonic chaos to Burton's madcap narrative with a sure sense of intuition. A little showtime thus earned, Elfman's score resembles a poltergeist lobbing sonic furniture around for the multiple climaxes. Fairground music and calliope chaos bustle restlessly, before reprisals of the core character themes remind us of the guiding hand steering the shape-shifting lunacy.

Along the way, Belafonte's 'Day-O (The Banana Boat Song)' and 'Jump In Line (Shake, Shake Señora)' provide deliciously random calypso digressions. Much to Belafonte's delight, 'Day-O' even re-charted thanks to *Beetlejuice*. "I'll be around for a while," the singer noted. Likewise, Burton and Elfman were here to stay. **Kevin Harley**

# GAMES



## stumble in the jungle

CROFT'S CATAclysmic quest is not a Lara fun...

### SHADOW OF THE TOMB RAIDER

GAME ★★★★★

OUT NOW | PC, PS4, Xbox One



The concluding chapter of this prequel trilogy promises the final steps of Lara Croft's journey to "become the Tomb Raider she was destined to be". Yet there's little evidence she's ready: the game begins with Lara stealing an ancient dagger, setting off a Mayan apocalypse that can only be stopped by finding another artefact. And so she heads to the Mexican island of Cozumel, in a race against militant organisation Trinity.

However, they're only a sporadic threat. Outside a few stalk-and-stab sequences in which Lara must smear herself in mud to avoid detection from

armed patrols, this marks a shift away from the more combat-heavy recent instalments, with a keener focus on exploration. True, there are more crypts

and caves to probe, environmental puzzles to solve and treasures to pilfer this time around. But recurring control prompts take the joy out of traversal, and the challenges require little thought to complete.

Cozumel offers some breathtaking scenery, though the (barely) hidden city of Paititi never quite convinces, coming off more like a tourist resort. The storytelling is a mess, its po-faced dialogue and sombre mood at odds with the fanciful plot. And early hints that Lara's thoughtless actions might finally be addressed are swept aside by a tone-deaf climax that attempts to paint her as some kind of righteous saviour – one last stumble in an adventure that rarely puts a foot right. **Chris Schilling**

### two more

Recent thumb-twiddlers...



WANDERSONG

★★★★★

A cheerful minstrel seeks to stave off imminent armageddon through the healing power of song in this offbeat adventure that uses its hero's versatile voice as a kind of musical Swiss army knife. Its unusual puzzles are supplemented by a story that hits few false notes en route to its soaring climax.



DONUT COUNTY

★★★★★

A satire about gentrification masquerading as a quirky indie puzzler, this engaging little curio casts you as a hole, which steadily widens as you swallow up increasingly large objects until nothing remains. The occasional creative flourish enlivens these amusing vignettes, but despite droll dialogue, it's mostly empty calories.



### FORZA HORIZON 4

GAME ★★★★★

OUT NOW | PC, Xbox One

Microsoft's racing festival pitches up in England, but it's not just the familiar setting – rendered in astonishing detail – that makes this fourth instalment so memorable. The ability to create your own races should sustain players well beyond an already substantial single-player mode, while seasonal weather has much more than a cosmetic impact: when winter arrives, you'll be able to drive across the Lake District's icy waters. And now you can buy your own in-game property, you're even more likely to stick around. **CS**



### VALKYRIA CHRONICLES 4

GAME ★★★★★

OUT NOW | PC, PS4, Switch, Xbox One

Sega's cult strategy series recovers from last year's misguided spin-off *Valkyria Revolution* with painterly panache. Its story runs concurrently to the decade-old original, tracking a squad of likeable young soldiers on a high-risk operation behind enemy lines. Combining real-time manoeuvres with thoughtful strategy, its scenarios are as riveting as they are varied, while its distinctive watercolour art and comic-book framing look better than ever. **CS**



### TRANSFERENCE

GAME ★★★★★

OUT NOW | PC, PS4, Xbox One

Combining film footage with first-person exploration, this movie-length chiller is an impressive debut for Elijah Wood's SpectreVision. Co-directed by Wood himself, the story hinges on tech (built by Macon Blair's frazzled scientist) that allows users to inhabit another's consciousness: in this case, three members of a family, whose home becomes a nightmare as technical hitches cause increasingly disturbing effects. It's undoubtedly best experienced in VR, with its unsettling audio and perspective shifts. **CS**



## two more

These won't send you to hypersleep...



### THEY DREW AS THEY PLEASED VOL. 4

★★★★★

The *Hidden Art Of Disney* series reaches the '50s and '60s: the era of *Cinderella*, *Alice In Wonderland*, *Peter Pan* and, saving the best for last, *The Jungle Book*.

A wordless section on the latter feels like a vintage picture book; but text is abundant elsewhere, shining a spotlight on five key animators' lives and working methods. And as ever, there are tantalising teasers of projects unrealised: Disney's *Don Quixote*, anyone?



### ALIEN COVENANT: DAVID'S DRAWINGS

★★★★★

Charting one stranded android's nervous breakdown, this in-universe sketchbook starts innocuously with flora, fauna and anatomy studies... before going full Giger with what concept artists Matt Hatton and Dane Hallett call a "lovingly crafted and perverted homage to Dr. Elizabeth Shaw". Less a coffee-table book than a splutter-your-coffee book...

## THE MAKING OF PLANET OF THE APES

BOOK ★★★★★

J.W. RINZLER | HARPER DESIGN

**A** rip-roaring horror story, a classic thriller [and] the most unusual movie ever made!" So proclaimed producer Arthur P. Jacobs as he tried to drum up interest in an adaptation of Pierre Boulle's 1963 novel *La Planète Des Singes*, a sci-fi spectacular that might have starred Paul Newman and been directed by Blake Edwards.

How it instead became a modestly budgeted B-movie toplined by a largely naked Charlton Heston is detailed at length in a lavishly illustrated volume that sets out to be the final word on Franklin J. Schaffner's 1968 classic.

That it largely succeeds is less down to the syrupy foreword from Heston's son Fraser ("Dad had an uncanny ability to choose the right projects") and more

to the wealth of concept art, on-set photos and other memorabilia that accompanies author Rinzler's (*The Making Of Star Wars*) exhaustive text. (Highlights include a four-page mock newspaper published to coincide with *Apes*' UK release and pictures of Edward G. Robinson in orangutan make-up.)

Along the way we're told the odd choice anecdote, one concerning a script draft in which writer Rod Serling had Lady Liberty salute Heston's astronaut with a raised middle finger. But what really jumps off the page is the incredible forbearance of his latex-wearing co-stars, one of whom – Kim Hunter – needed a daily dose of valium just to get through it. *Neil Smith*



### BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER: A PICTURE BOOK

BOOK ★★★★★

KIM SMITH | QUIRK

Following re-tellings of *Home Alone*, *E.T.* and others, the Pop Classics series turns *Buffy* into a bedtime story. It avoids any of that awkward teenage stuff by depicting the Slayer and her besties ("It's pronounced 'Zander'") as adorable eight-year-olds afraid of the dark (with, it turns out, good reason). Not an awful lot of vampire action, but fun for first-generation fans with kids, especially the busy (and Easter egg-y) final spreads. *Matthew Leyland*



### STEVEN SPIELBERG FAQ

BOOK ★★★★★

BARRY MONUSH | APPLAUSE

Fan-fired enthusiasm helps make up for a lack of searching analysis in this Spielberg tribute. Gunning for detail over depth, Monush reels in nuggets such as Ellen Brody's preferred salad dressing in Peter Benchley's *Jaws* novel. Criticisms of Spielberg, meanwhile, are largely ducked. The box-office chapter runs surplus to needs, but Monush treads lightly over the minutiae of adaptations, shoots and cameos, banking goodwill for his robust (and correct) A.I. defence. *Kevin Harley*

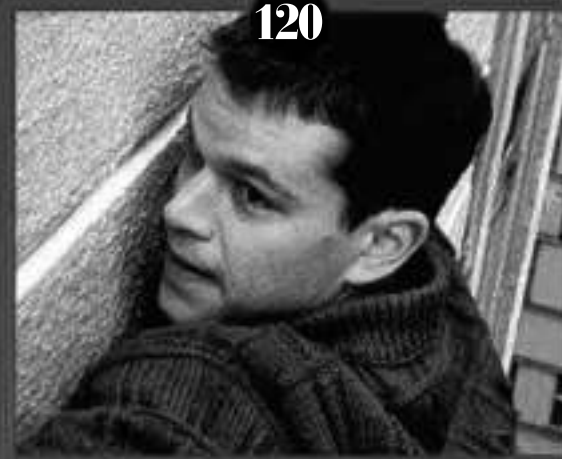


### STRANGER THINGS: WORLDS TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

BOOK ★★★★★

GINA MCINTYRE | CENTURY

Like the '80s-based show, this official making-of companion has a loving eye for period detail, from the faux-weathered cover to the yearbook-style cast profiles and vintage 'ads' for the *Duffers*' fave paperbacks and videos. Though weighted towards Season 1, the book tackles S2's key points (ie the infamous seventh episode) and offers a picture-less 'look' at what's to come in S3 – "Our grossest season," promises Ross Duffer. Rad! *Matthew Leyland*



TOTAL  
**FILM  
 BUFF**  
 CINEMA CELEBRATED  
 AND DEBATED. BOOSTING  
 YOUR MOVIE GENIUS  
 TO SUPERHERO  
 LEVELS...

this  
 issue

PANTS PALAEOLOGY?  
 WET WONDERS  
 MERRY AT MIDNIGHT

DOMESTIC DEATH TRAPS  
 GROOVY, BABY!  
 NOUGHTY NOUGHTY

HOME ALONE WITH 007  
 10-4, BANDIT!  
 IF IT BLEEDS...

**INVESTIGATION**

**IS IT BOLLOCKS?**

Film Buff investigates the facts behind outlandish movie plots.

**THIS MONTH  
STATHAM'S FINNED FRIEND**



In *The Meg*, a prehistoric shark appears from an undiscovered ocean trench. A bit fishy or factual?



**DR. TOM FLETCHER**, SHARK PALAEOBIOLOGIST,  
UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER @FOSSILGUYTOM

With more than 80 per cent of the ocean unexplored, it's possible that creatures as large as the megalodon could be found, but unlikely. Sharks such as megalodon would have shed their teeth constantly, but the latest we've found are 2.6 million years old. We haven't found a trace of it in modern oceans – nothing's washed ashore or been detected in photos. I'd love it to be out there, but the scientist in me says it's long gone.

But if it was around, would it want to eat Jason Statham? Megalodon probably ate whales, so unless Statham had eaten a lot of cheesecake and beer, the likelihood is he wouldn't have packed the calories a shark really wants. I can't account for how annoyed the shark is though, and The Stath seemed to annoy it a lot in this film! But sharks are beautiful machines – they're capable of almost supernatural perception. As well as an incredibly good sense of smell, they have sensory organs all over their bodies that can detect small movements in the water, and they can even pick up the electrical signal of a distressed animal. Megalodon would have had the same arsenal at its disposal. Terrifyingly cool.

**VERDICT BOLLOCKS**

Want us to investigate if a movie scenario is bollocks? Ask us at [totalfilm@futurenet.com](mailto:totalfilm@futurenet.com)

**ALTERNATIVE  
BOX OFFICE**

THE BIGGEST MOVIES... WITH  
KEY ROLES FOR AQUATIC MEN



01	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST 2006	\$1.1BN
02	STAR WARS: THE PHANTOM MENACE 1999	\$1BN
03	JUSTICE LEAGUE 2017	\$657.9M
04	STAR WARS: RETURN OF THE JEDI 1983	\$475.1M
05	MONSTERS VS. ALIENS 2009	\$381.5M
06	WATERWORLD 1995	\$264.2M
07	THE LITTLE MERMAID 1989	\$211.3M
08	THE SHAPE OF WATER 2017	\$195.2M
09	HELLBOY II: THE GOLDEN ARMY 2008	\$160.4M
10	HELLBOY 2004	\$99.3M

**ON LOCATION**

REEL SPOTS BEHIND THE CAMERA



**WHAT?** In *Midnight In Paris*, a wine-happy Gil (Owen Wilson) wanders the French capital's streets, resting on some church steps before he time travels to the 1920s.

**WHERE?** Saint-Étienne-du-Mont Church, Place de L'Abbé Basset, Paris.

**GO?** The steps are by the church's north-facing side door so you need to wander, tipsy perhaps, round the building to find them and lounge there. *Thanks to Rebecca Sharp*

Snapped yourself at a film location? Send us the details at [totalfilm@futurenet.com](mailto:totalfilm@futurenet.com)

TOP 10

# DEATHS BY HOUSEHOLD OBJECTS

Danger lurks at home...



01

## SHALLOW GRAVE

Hot on the trail of the traitorous Hugo, two thugs torture their way through a series of informants to track down their missing cash. Perhaps most memorably, one unfortunate soul is sent for an indefinite lie down in a chest freezer. Cold-blooded.



02

## GREMLINS

The kitchen scene is a gem of gruesome glory, but there's nothing that says Christmas like the fate of the dog-hating Mrs. Deagle. As the mini-monsters run amok, they tamper with the old lady's stair-lift and send her skyrocketing into orbit.

## BETTER WATCH OUT

Looking to settle a bet about *Home Alone's* booby traps, one budding serial killer sends a paint can crashing into the face of a hostage. Needless to say, the results are decidedly more splattery than Chris Columbus' Chrimbo classic.



03

## HALLOWEEN

It's easy to forget that before the slasher boom of the '80s, John Carpenter's '78 masterpiece helped to create the clichés: such as when mass murderer Michael Myers uses an everyday carving knife to impale randy youth Bob to the wall like a literal teen pin-up.



04



05

## YOU'RE NEXT

After surviving a home invasion from animal-masked attackers, survivalist Erin (Sharni Vinson) faces down the last assailant by smashing a blender onto one guy's head and hitting the power. Brings a whole new meaning to "a little off the top".



06

## TORN CURTAIN

Largely considered one of Hitchcock's lesser works, this 1966 Cold War thriller nevertheless contains a sequence where Paul Newman dispatches Soviet agent Gromek via choking, stabbing and cramming his head into an oven. It's bake off, spy-style.

## FINAL DESTINATION

The *Final Destination* movies manage to see peril in the most mundane of objects, such as in the 2000 original, when unlucky Tod (Chad Donella) avoids the opening plane crash only to be choked to death by an innocuous clothes line.



07

## THE DRILLER KILLER

Power-tool murder movies are a genre unto themselves, but few are as notorious as Abel Ferrara's sick-flick. Failed artist Reno (Ferrara himself) merrily plugs holes in a cross section of New York's underworld. DIY indeed.



08



09

## THE HAPPENING

During the pre-*Split* nadir of Shyamalan's career, this unintentionally hilarious film still has moments of inspired carnage. During an epidemic of mass suicides, one person decides to end it by lying in front of a lawnmower. Pretty much how the audience felt too.



10

## JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2

"I once saw him kill three men in a bar... with a pencil," Michael Nyqvist's mobster notes in *Chapter One*. In the sequel, Keanu's titular assassin makes good on that promise, driving a scribbler deep into one man's brain. Ouchy. TC

**FILM  
BUFF**

YEAH, BABY, YEAH  
(right from top) Mike  
Myers' Austin Powers  
with spy partner  
Vanessa Kensington  
(Liz Hurley); Joe Son's  
Random Task; fembot  
frenzy; Task with  
Myers' Dr. Evil; Powers  
frozen in time.

118  
**RETROSPECTIVE**

# Austin Powers

**INTERNATIONAL MAN OF MYSTERY**

As Mike Myers returns to the big screen in *Bohemian Rhapsody*, Buff catches up with him to reflect on the grief that inspired the swinging super-spy who defined his career. **WORDS SIMON BLAND**



**I**t's a very odd thing growing up in Canada in an English immigrant house," smiles Mike Myers, tracing the homegrown origins of *Austin Powers: International Man Of Mystery*. Following its 1997 release, this spy spoof launched a franchise, infected pop culture and redefined Myers in the wake of his previous mega-hits *Wayne's World* and *Wayne's World 2*. However, as the film celebrates its 21st birthday, the man behind the Powers myth reveals its roots lay less in spies, espionage and the swinging '60s, and more in a desire to pay loving tribute to his parents.

"There's nobody more English than an Englishman who no longer lives in England, and my house was almost a little colony of Liverpool," he tells *Total Film*. "Things like James Bond weren't just great movies, they were part of my heritage, so I wanted to honour my parents with tales of World War 2, or one of the greatest film series ever created," recalls the star. "I always had jokes about the inconsistencies of the James Bond world and the magical realism of it, so that's what I did."

Having written the script in just two weeks, Myers began bringing his super-spy to life. First stop: a name. "I wanted the name to be a British car and some attribute," he recalls. "Healey was a name for a while and Morris – then it was Austin. Francis Gary Powers was the guy who got shot down in his U-2 plane over the USSR, so it became Austin Powers, sort of like 'Powers by name, Powers by reputation'," says Myers. "I put together a band called Ming Tea, which is the band that's in *Austin Powers*, and we played a number of gigs around Los Angeles. The banter between songs was how I got the sea-legs to do Austin."

And as for his arch-enemy... "I also knew I was going to play Dr. Evil but there wasn't really a way to workshop that," he continues. "I'd always loved the guy who brings you to his lair, tells you his plan and shows you all of his exotic things," laughs Myers, switching to a decidedly more Dr. Evil-like voice. "Have you ever seen a unicorn, Mr. Bond? There's only two in the world and I own one... for now." They're brothers and were always designed that way, he says. "It justified things later on if I looked too much like Dr. Evil as Austin Powers. There's a family resemblance."

While a lot has been written about Austin's aesthetic inspirations – the Michael Caine glasses, Mick Jagger cravat, Beatles boots – a large part of the character's persona comes directly from Myers himself. "With Austin, it's admiring people that have confidence," he admits. "I'm not a terribly confident person and the thing I love about James Bond is that confidence that I don't naturally have. With Dr. Evil, it's that nothing technological in my life works for me. I have the Midas touch in reverse when it comes to anything technological. Clouseau is a big influence, too, which is a similar belief in your own confidence in the face of nothing working."

To realise Austin's sexualised '60s, Myers and director Jay Roach found inspiration in old print interviews and adverts. "I went to a thrift shop, bought every magazine they had from 1967 and tore out everything I thought was in the movie," says Myers. "When I knew I wanted Jay to direct, I gave him the script and he returned it with 10 pages of typewritten notes. They just made it better, sharper and heightened. I invited him over to my house, put all the pull-outs on the floor and a style guide emerged. It was AT&T blues, Coca-Cola reds, Kodak yellows... polka dots were in that world but no tie-dye because this was Carnaby Street, not Woodstock."

Twenty-one years and two sequels later, the Austin Powers mythos continues to resonate, with a fourth film regularly rumoured. Back in 1997, however, nothing was certain. "Audiences weren't sure what to make of it at first," remembers Myers. "It was people old enough to know the tongue was firmly implanted in the cheek and young people who just liked the enthusiasm and primary colours. It hung in there and then one day, it tipped. That was one of the most satisfying things," he smiles.

"*Austin Powers* was a tribute to my father and it was really my way of handling grief. Both of my parents made a huge impact on me culturally – just by giving me the idea that pop culture is a subject worth looking at. I think the personal significance for me is just being able to turn complete grief into celebration," says Myers. "That's what was most gratifying."

AUSTIN POWERS IS AVAILABLE ON DVD AND BLU-RAY NOW.

Buff's ongoing series reaches its final instalment, as the turn of the new millennium paves the way for Harry Potter, extreme horror, gross-out comedy and a new kind of action movie.

WORDS JORDAN FARLEY



The history of cinema is one of technological advance, from talkies to colour film to widescreen projection and surround sound, and the noughties were no different. Computer-generated imagery had been in its infancy since the '80s, but it was the '00s that saw CGI become an integral part of a filmmaker's toolkit, used for everything from invisible set enhancements in *Cast Away* to the building of fully artificial, photo-real alien worlds in *Avatar*.

The biggest breakthroughs came at the start of the decade, with Peter Jackson's celebrated *Lord Of The Rings* trilogy. Where previously filmmakers had reached for the sun only for their

one that began in the '90s, but reached its zenith in the noughties – the move from hand-drawn 2D animation to computer-generated 3D by American animation studios such as Disney, Pixar and DreamWorks. It was Pixar that proved it could be done, to breathtaking effect with *Toy Story* in 1995, but it took the rest of the animation houses half a decade simply to catch up.

*Shrek* proved a huge hit for DreamWorks, but it was Pixar that dominated the '00s with one of the hottest filmmaking streaks in cinema history. From *Monsters, Inc.* to *Up*, there wasn't a single dud in the bunch. *Up* capped the decade off with a Best

## 'Performance capture became a viable technique thanks to Weta, Andy Serkis and Gollum, just two years after Jar Jar Binks had filmgoers furious at what CGI had wrought'

wings to melt (see 1998's *Lost In Space* or even the *Star Wars* Special Editions for how horribly it can go wrong), Jackson understood both the opportunities that CGI provided, and its limitations. Throughout the trilogy, the combination of massive miniatures (or 'bigatures') with CGI resulted in the creation of the most convincing fantasy world ever seen on screen, while motion capture, or 'performance' capture, became a viable technique thanks to the pioneering work of Weta and Andy Serkis in the creation of Gollum, just two years after Jar Jar Binks had filmgoers furious at what CGI had wrought.

Computers were also at the forefront of another major shift,

Picture Oscar nomination – only the second animated film to do so following *Beauty And The Beast* in 1991.

CGI was also a crucial factor in the explosion of comic-book and superhero movies in the noughties. Starting with Bryan Singer's *X-Men*, filmmakers now had the means to convincingly realise the impossible abilities and powers that separate the supermen from the boys.

This technological event horizon coincided with the coming of age of filmmakers who grew up reading comics, such as Sam Raimi, who shepherded childhood favourite *Spider-Man* to colossal critical and commercial acclaim. Over at DC, Christopher Nolan rebooted Batman with a trilogy of films that resurrected



1

the Dark Knight in the wake of Joel Schumacher's disastrous '90s efforts, while the Marvel Cinematic Universe kicked off in earnest with *Iron Man* and *The Incredible Hulk* in 2008.

With ultra-stylised comic-book adapts *300* and *Sin City*, directors such as Zack Snyder and Robert Rodriguez also proved that "comic-book movie" didn't always have to mean "superhero movie", or even "kid's movie".

## HARDCORE HORROR

At the opposite end of the budget spectrum, young filmmakers were getting their hands dirty (in most cases, literally) with low-budget horrors that offered ample freedom with little risk, but potentially huge rewards. James Wan's *Saw* (2004) is often credited with the birth of the "torture porn" genre, but is a much smarter, and more finely crafted horror than most give it credit for. What's undeniable is its legacy

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2



3



# 10

Films that defined a decade...

## 1 CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON 2000

*The Matrix* had ignited a passion for martial arts in American audiences, and *Crouching Tiger* was perfectly placed to capitalise, proving a surprise hit on release despite being subtitled.

## 2 GLADIATOR 2000

Briefly inspiring a wave of sword-and-sandal films (*Troy*, *300*), *Gladiator* made a megastar out of Russell Crowe, while putting director Ridley Scott firmly back on the map.

## 3 DONNIE DARKO 2001

Richard Kelly's ambitious indie sci-fi was the kind of cult smash that only comes along once a decade, and was proof that ultra-weird works, albeit in small doses.

## 4 THE LORD OF THE RINGS 2001-2003

Still a gargantuan achievement, Peter Jackson's definitive *Rings* trilogy fed the appetite for fantastical escapism, and simple good vs evil stories, while being a near-perfect Tolkien adap.

## 5 FINDING NEMO 2003

Pixar led the way when it came to animation in the noughties, and *Finding Nemo* was its biggest hit, thanks in no small part to the film's sensational underwater visuals.



4

– not just six sequels, but a wave of films designed to elicit shock and scares from the extremity of their bloodshed, including *Hostel*, *The Devil's Rejects*, *Wolf Creek*, *The Collector* and more. This in turn led to the New French Extremity, best exemplified by Pascal Laugier's transcendently brutal *Martyrs* and Xavier Gens' *Frontier(s)*.

By the end of the decade, the appetite for extreme violence had largely been replaced with nostalgia, with studios seemingly hellbent on remaking every '70s and '80s horror movie going, not limited to *Dawn Of The Dead*, *Halloween*, *Friday The 13th*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *The Hills Have Eyes*, *The Last House On The Left* and *Black Christmas*. The decade closed with a glimpse of horror's future as *Paranormal Activity* went from micro-budget home movie to one of the most profitable motion pictures of all time, a template producer Jason Blum has repeated with great success ever since.

Comedy, meanwhile, was also pushing boundaries, but with gross-out laughs rather than shock and gore. Hot on the heels of *American Pie*, *Road Trip*, *Scary Movie* and *Superbad* took teen depravity to its bodily fluid-covered

extremes. But this was nothing compared to the adults behaving badly in the likes of *Step Brothers*, *Wedding Crashers* and *The Hangover*. Judd Apatow was undoubtedly the most influential voice of the decade. His features – *The 40 Year-Old Virgin* and *Knocked Up* – set a stoner comedy template that many imitated, but never mastered.

The Brits also kept their end up with *Shaun Of The Dead* proving an instant horror-comedy favourite on both sides of the Atlantic, while Sacha Baron Cohen took America by storm with his satirical mockumentary *Borat! Cultural Learnings Of America For Make Benefit Glorious Nation Of Kazakhstan*.

## KEEPING IT REAL

Documentary cinema also went through a renaissance in the early noughties with *Super Size Me*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *March Of The Penguins*, *Grizzly Man* and more proving surprise hits at the box office and, in some cases, having a major impact on the real world. It was Michael Moore, however, who proved the decade's undisputed documentary superstar. The outspoken filmmaker's



5



# 10

Films that defined a decade...

**6 SHAUN OF THE DEAD** 2004

Edgar Wright's homage to the horror movies of his youth was a breath of fresh air amid the Apatow productions dominating American comedy, and inimitably brilliant to boot.

**7 THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM** 2007

The quintessential noughties action movie, *Ultimatum* perfectly encapsulates the series' trailblazing action and real-world smarts. Every US action movie since has existed in its shadow.

**8 THERE WILL BE BLOOD** 2007

Paul Thomas Anderson's tale of a success-obsessed oil tycoon boasts not only one of the decade's best performances, but a soundtrack that has influenced composers ever since.

**9 THE DARK KNIGHT** 2008

Still the best superhero movie ever, Christopher Nolan's Bat sequel ushered in the era of gritty comic-book movies, and features one of the all-time-great villains in Heath Ledger's Joker.

**10 AVATAR** 2009

Like *Titanic*, many expected James Cameron to make his first great folly with *Avatar*. He quickly proved critics wrong with groundbreaking tech breakthroughs and staggering box-office success.

20+

investigation into gun violence, *Bowling For Columbine*, was the first documentary to compete in competition at the Cannes Film Festival in 46 years, while George W. Bush polemic *Fahrenheit 9/11* became the first documentary ever to win Cannes' top prize – the Palme d'Or – and the first documentary to cross the \$100m mark at the box office (though it couldn't prevent Bush's re-election in 2004).

Real world events were also being filtered through cinema in other ways. The destruction of the Twin Towers on 11 September 2001 had a major impact on American filmmakers. War movies

Despite increasing suspicion and intolerance of outsiders, foreign language cinema became more popular than ever in the noughties. Thanks in part to the proliferation and accessibility of DVDs, the works of world cinema's greatest filmmakers were now simply a click away.

At the multiplex, meanwhile, the likes of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, *The Passion Of The Christ*, *Apocalypto*, *Amélie*, *Downfall* and *City Of God* all had significant crossover appeal for an audience that would typically turn their noses up at subtitles. The success of Studio Ghibli's *Spirited Away* also

'Comedy was pushing boundaries with gross-out laughs. Judd Apatow was the most influential voice of the decade, his stoner template often imitated but never mastered'

fell out of favour for much of the decade, as did action movies depicting terrorism. Spike Lee was one of the first filmmakers to address the aftermath of the devastating attacks indirectly in *25th Hour* – a post-9/11 examination of racial intolerance in New York.

It would take five years for a mainstream American movie to depict the events of 9/11 onscreen. First came Paul Greengrass' intense and upsetting *United 93*, swiftly followed by Oliver Stone's sentimental but heartfelt *World Trade Center*. Both proved only modest successes at the box office. Escapism, understandably, was the order of the decade.

saw the remaining films in the Japanimation powerhouse's beloved back catalogue dubbed into English for release in America, many of which were overseen by Pixar's head honcho John Lasseter.

**BRAINS AND BRAWN**

Audiences, it seemed, were less and less interested in checking their brains at the door – a fact most apparent with the success of the *Bourne* series. Starting with *The Bourne Identity*, the Matt Damon-fronted trilogy had smarts to match its highly influential action, taking place in a recognisable



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world shaped by global politics and the paranoia of contemporary surveillance culture. There's little question the action helped, too, particularly when Paul Greengrass took the reins of the series, instilling *Bourne* with his signature shakycam style.

So impactful were the *Bourne* movies that the near 50-year-old James Bond franchise was forced to reinvent itself to keep up with the times. Out went Pierce Brosnan after the disastrous *Die Another Day*. In came hard man with a heart of gold Daniel Craig. Fan reaction was overwhelmingly negative to news of his casting, but dissipated after the release of *Casino Royale* – not only a wildly successful, *Bourne*-tinged reinvention of the series, but arguably the best Bond movie ever.

The only British movie franchise to rival Bond also took flight in the noughties – *Harry Potter*. J.K. Rowling's boy wizard proved an instant smash hit on the big screen, despite requiring a perplexing title change in the States, and opened the doors to a series of young adult literary adaptations later in the decade – most notably *Twilight*, which briefly made Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart more popular than dogs on the London Tube.

Finally, it was a decade of several significant firsts at the Oscars. In 2002, Halle Berry became the first black woman to win the Best Actress gong (for *Monster's Ball*), while 2009's *The Hurt Locker* saw Kathryn Bigelow beat

her ex-husband James Cameron to the Best Director Oscar, making her the first woman to scoop the prize.

In 2002, the Best Animated Feature Oscar was introduced (*Shrek* being the first recipient). In 2004, *The Lord Of The Rings: The Return Of The King* swept the board, winning 11 Oscars – a record equalled only by *Titanic* and *Ben-Hur*. In 2006, Paul Haggis' *Crash* pulled off one the greatest Oscar upsets of all time by beating Ang Lee's superb *Brokeback Mountain* to the top prize. In 2007, Martin Scorsese was finally awarded a long overdue Best Director Oscar for his *Infernal Affairs* remake

*The Departed*. And in 2009, Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire* captured the cultural zeitgeist, chiming with a new era of tolerance in the wake of Barack Obama's election.

Capping off the decade in style was James Cameron, who didn't just put the cherry on the tech-powered noughties with *Avatar*, a film that remains on the cutting edge of technology to this day, but made the highest grossing film of all time. Even *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* fell half a billion short, and that's with the help of inflation. Decades in cinema don't get much bigger.



THE BIG SHOT

# BOND'S HOME ALONE MOMENT

**T**otal Film could feel the extreme heat of the conflagration despite standing more than 500 metres away. In March 2012, we were the only press on-set of *Skyfall*, as 007's childhood Scottish home went up in flames, stunt helicopters swooping in the inky sky above, faces of the crew pinkening from the scorch – and an iconic film moment was made.

Turns out we couldn't write about that day spent on Hankley Common, near Godalming in Surrey (not actually the wilds of Glencoe), poking about the full-scale, intricately detailed Bond

family mansion – it was a major spoiler moment in an instalment that made Britain's most famous spy essential again after the disappointment of 2008's *Quantum Of Solace*.



Here, for the first time in the franchise's 50-year history, we saw something of Bond's backstory. We were invited, along with Judi Dench's M, to see the cold, brooding place, complete with hidden recesses, that made 007. And witness him take that personal history and destroy it.

Though interiors were built on Pinewood sound stages, this epic set on MOD training ground – that had

previously played host to *Gladiator* – featured flanking stag gateposts and drive, house, barn, chapel and graveyard (complete with Bond clan names and dates). It was designed by art director Dean Clegg and constructed over six months, based on the look and feel of Duntrune Castle in Argyll.

Production designer Dennis Gassner wanted this house to represent the personal demons at battle inside Bond.

“It was a harsh place against the elements. What does Bond do to fight back? He goes home, back to his deepest instincts. It's a privilege for us to see it.” And a privilege to watch it go up like a torch – warning audiences that nothing is sacred and foreshadowing the ultimate demise of a character we thought indestructible. A literal scorched earth policy that proved Bond could still be a game changer. *JC*

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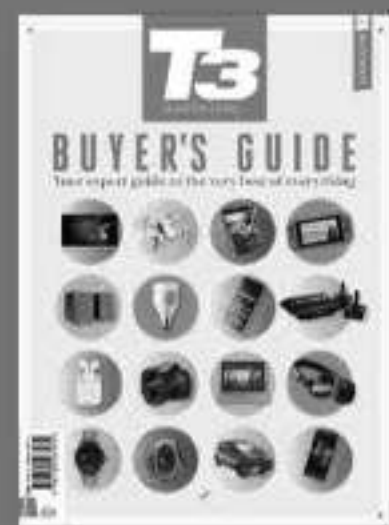
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1936-2018

## BURT REYNOLDS

**R**ated America's number one box-office attraction for five successive years between 1977 and 1981, and with a 60-year career across film, TV and theatre, Burt Reynolds was one of Hollywood's most resilient stars. "My being nominated this year is no comeback story," he said upon being shortlisted for 1998's Best Supporting Actor Oscar, for *Boogie Nights*. "I simply refused to go away."

Born in Lansing, Michigan, on 11 February 1936, Burton Leon Reynolds Jr. headed to New York to become a stage actor, appearing in a 1956 production of *Mister Roberts* with Charlton Heston. Television work followed in *Riverboat*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Gunsmoke*, *The Twilight Zone* and *Hawk* over the next decade, along with several movies, with Reynolds often in Native American roles.

His big break came in *Deliverance* (1972), playing Lewis, the leader of a group of city slickers whose rafting

adventure in the Appalachians descends into a gruelling battle for survival. Reynolds' brand was man of action and good ol' boy, with movies such as *The Longest Yard* ('74), *Hustle* ('75) and *The Cannonball Run* ('81) cementing his credentials.

He also proved a capable filmmaker, directing himself in such vehicles as *Gator* ('76) and *Sharky's Machine* ('81). The *Smokey And The Bandit* series, meanwhile, utilised Reynolds' twinkley-eyed humour and capabilities as a stuntman to hugely popular effect.

Reynolds' life comprised vertiginous ups and downs: turning down Bond when Sean Connery stepped aside, and passing on John McClane in *Die Hard*; posing nude in *Cosmopolitan* in 1972; two marriages, to actresses Judy Carne and Loni Anderson, that both ended in divorce; an addiction to triazolam in the '80s; and a reputation for abusive relationships with female co-stars such as Sally Field and Kathleen Turner.

But through it all he kept working, winning an Emmy for *Evening Shade* ('90-'94) and racking up more than 300 TV credits and a lot of movies, not all of them good ("My movies were the kind they only show in prisons and planes, because nobody can leave," he quipped).

Reynolds died of cardiac arrest on 6 September 2018. He is survived by his adopted son, Quinton. JG

60 Second Screenplay



**SPOILER ALERT!**

TF SAVES YOU A NIGHT OUT EVERY MONTH. THIS ISSUE: THE PREDATOR...

**FADE IN:**

**EXT: SPACE**

A big Predator ship chases a small Predator ship, which falls down a wormhole towards Earth. Thanks a bunch, wormhole.

**FALLING PREDATOR**

Everything's out of control! It's all fire and noise! We're going into a giant nosedive! Also - I think there might be a metaphor in there somewhere!

**EXT: JUNGLE**

The ship crash-lands near sniper **BOYD HOLBROOK**, who happens to be taking out some members of a Mexican drug cartel in the area.

**FALLEN PREDATOR**

Drug cartel? What is this, Sicario Vs. Predator? Look, I don't want to get caught up in any politics, I'm just here to do some slaughtering!

The PREDATOR starts a game of skin the bit-parter, only to be incapacitated by **BOYD**, using his own gauntlet against him.

**FALLING ASLEEP PREDATOR**

So it takes Arnie an entire film to stop one of us, and this guy like five minutes? That wasn't a wormhole, it was a plot hole!

**BOYD HOLBROOK**

Hmm, what to do with all this strange, potentially lethal alien technology? I know, I'll pop it in the post to my schoolboy son! Can't wait to see the look on his face. If he still has one, of course.

**INT: SUBURBAN HOUSE, US**

**JACOB TREMBLAY**

A package from Dad! Wait, what's all this state-of-the-art space crap? That deadbeat promised me Ninjago!

**JACOB** presses a button that sends an e-vite to **THE GALAXY'S BIGGEST, HARDEST PREDATOR**.

**THE GALAXY'S BIGGEST, HARDEST PREDATOR**

Thanks, kid! Where'd you say you lived? Wait a mo, I'll get a pen. Yeah, yeah, that's right, I'm just like E.T. Tend to be a bit lairier when I've had a beer, mind.

**INT: GOVERNMENT LAB**

The earlier PREDATOR lies restrained with sticky tape and pipe cleaners (double knotted).

**HAPLESS SCIENTIST**

There, that should hold 'im! Now, who's up for the world's most suicidal game of Operation? Oh look, my left arm's suddenly missing.

The PREDATOR legs it, massacring anyone who's not in the trailer. Also given a free pass: anyone gratuitously naked called Olivia.

**OLIVIA MUNN**

Quickly, deploy the callback one-liners! Come on! They're here! Kill them! Do it now!

**OLIVIA** teams up with **BOYD** and a group of military vets who swap 'mum' jokes that date back to 1987.

**BOYD HOLBROOK**

Here comes another Predator, twice as tall as the first! My years of combat experience tell me there's only one way to defeat it: find somewhere with a low ceiling.

**TREVANTE RHODES**

Oh shit, there are also two Predator dogs! Why couldn't it be Predator cats?! They'd give us a bit of a scratch, get bored and go back to licking their mandibles.

The big Predator kills the little Predator and kidnaps Jacob.

**JACOB TREMBLAY**

Well, at least I don't have to listen to another 40 minutes of knob gags...

**EXT: FOREST**

Our heroes battle **THE GALAXY'S BIGGEST, HARDEST PREDATOR** in scenes of explosive carnage too poorly lit to actually see.

**BOYD HOLBROOK**

Who's dead? Am I dead? Or did it just butcher a hedge instead?

**THE PREDATOR**

Shall we do this in my ship instead? I think I just harpooned my own shin...

**INT: GOVERNMENT LAB**

With **THE GALAXY'S BIGGEST, HARDEST PREDATOR** defeated, it's time for the big sequel-baiting reveal...

**OLIVIA MUNN**

What's it gonna be then? An Arnie cameo? Zombie Carl Weathers? An actual ending?

No, it's a new Predator suit that does... nothing.

**AUDIENCE**

You set us up! Get to the car park!

**FIN**

**NEXT ISSUE: VENOM**

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**NEXT ISSUE ON SALE 16/11** SHATTERING COVERAGE OF A LONG-AWAITED SUPER-SEQUEL! RINGSIDE SEATS AT A GRUDGE MATCH DECADES IN THE MAKING... AND A COUNTDOWN TO KEEP YOU WARM DURING THOSE DARK, DARK NIGHTS! PLUS! GETTING READY FOR CHRISTMAS WITH A DIFFERENT KIND OF ANGEL... DON'T RISK MISSING IT! SUBSCRIBE NOW AT [myfavourite magazines.co.uk](http://myfavourite magazines.co.uk)





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