

FAN THE FIRE

#15
December 2008

formerly LOAD Magazine

GOLDEN SILVERS
WE CHAT TO LONDON'S HOTTEST NEW SYNTH BAND

BEHIND THE SCENES OF TERMINATOR SALVATION

WINTER FASHION WITHOUT LOSING YOUR COOL

THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE WEIRD
LATEST MOVIE FROM GENRE JUMPING
KIM JEE-WOON

HAN-COCK COMPETITION

THE KILLERS ALBUM REVIEW

WALTZ WITH BASHIR ANIMATION TURNS TO DOCUMENTARIES

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GHOST PATROL

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After over three years online, this issue has been by far the hardest to roll onto the web. With barely a handful of technical problems troubling the magazine to date, a raft of back luck, broken graphics cards and faulty motherboards all hit at once. So one week late, it's here at last, and not looking too shabby in comparison with the computers left in its wake.

The big news this month, however, is the start of our very own club night. London readers will want to get themselves down to Proud, in Camden, on Thursday 11th December. There'll be fantastic up and coming bands, our very selves on the decks as well as guest DJs as Mirror Kisses hits the London indie/alternative/electro club night scene. More on that later in the issue.

Back to our staple, and issue 15 at last brings Golden Silvers to our pages. Winners of this year's Glastonbury Unsigned competition, we chat to the London trio about the after effect of opening the world famous music festival and plans for a debut album. The Killers' third album takes centre stage in our album reviews but sadly we were disappointed with their new material.

On the film front, we've been very busy this month. As well as attending a world premiere of new footage from Terminator Salvation we also give previews to Up, Watchmen, Australia and Revolutionary Road. On the reviews front, we get to grips with Kim Jee-woon's brilliant new Asian western The Good, The Bad, The Weird, plus Waltz With Bashir, Choke and Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa.

Our style section this month is a inner city wandering, shot by Jason Lee Parry, and for art-types, the cover story, a spread of work by design imaginarium Ghost Patrol, who's stunning sketched work is winning plaudits amongst waves of online bloggers. And finally for gamers, we give a in-depth review to Spider-Man: Web of Shadows.

Enjoy the issue, and if you live in London, we hope to see you at Proud!

Sam Bathe



CONTRIBUTOR OF THE MONTH



With his work featured for a third time this month, LA-based **Jason Lee Parry** is quickly becoming our favourite photographer. Learning everything he knows from friends, family and simply getting his hands on a camera, Jason prides himself on his passion for the artform, and his photographic flair comes across in every one of his shots.

Life in Hollywood can be hard in the arts industry, but when you're as talented as he is, there's nowhere better for a dreamy existence.

FAN THE FIRE IS...

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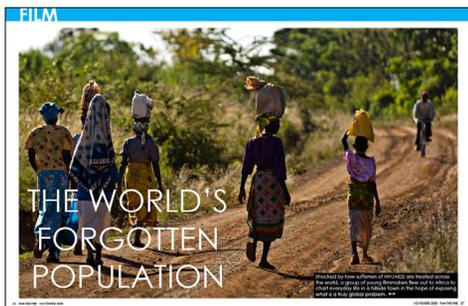
© FAN THE FIRE MAGAZINE 2008.



WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE

It's good to see a lively band starting to make impressions in the music scene, although unlike a lot of others who stomp around on stage, Dead Kids have got the music to back it up. Their performance at Concrete & Glass sounded fantastic, though with their penchant for tearing up the stage, hopefully promoters won't get too scared they'll be left with a hefty bill for broken equipment.

Mark Feltham, via email



MAN ON A MISSION

I was in awe after reading your feature on Ryan Roco's HIV/AIDS documentary Wazi. The project is a fantastic idea and to put in all that work, travelling to Africa and spending several weeks filming in a remote mountainside town is an amazing commitment. The team sounded like they had an experience that will change their lives

forever, so let's hope it is picked up by a distributor and can make a real difference for those suffering from HIV/AIDS too.

Rachel Young, via email

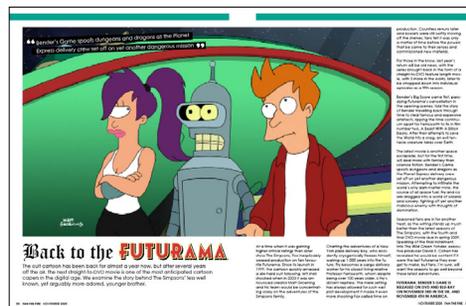
It's a fantastic cause, we're just happy to spread the word.



THE ART OF MUSIC

After the amazing selection of artwork so far in Fan the Fire, your poster spread did not disappoint. These are the talented artists keeping old fashioned, but thoroughly inventive, screen-printing alive today. After everyone has been pushing digital technology the past few years, with vinyl coming back into fashion, hopefully design studios like these will stay in work and keep bringing us such imaginative designs.

Georgia Little, via email



PLANET EXPRESS DELIVERS

I enjoyed reading your article on

Futurama to find out that I wasn't the only one perplexed and rather annoyed at Fox's decision to halt the TV show's production. And likewise I was delighting when Comedy Central twisted their arm to commission some new material. I find myself even more confused that they decided to axe Futurama, after tuning in every week to watch new Simpsons episodes. From season 11 the writers have let the ball slip, so hopefully when the decision is being made next year about which shows to order for Fall 2009, Futurama wins out and the Simpsons is left on the sidelines to refocus.

Tom Hedgewick, via email

If we were the decision makers at Fox, we'd do the same.



ZOMBIE EXCITEMENT

After the decidedly average films, I'm delighted to see the Resident Evil franchise getting back to what it does best, games. With The Outsider not due until next Christmas, I couldn't agree more with your anticipation of Resident Evil 5, surely set to be one of the best games of 2009. After the great steps forward made with Resident Evil 4, I can't wait to see what surprises they have in store this time around.

James Blakely, via email

2009 is looking good for games.

OUR OTHER SITES...





LOSING PATIENCE

I've never quite understood why clubs feel the need to change their music style at the end of a night. At our choice venues, for several hours they'll flow through a selection of indie, alternative and electro tracks but when it comes to the last hour, and worryingly even earlier on a couple of nights, the DJs start to put on a playlist of so-called 'classics'.

When you've been enjoying the likes of Late Of The Pier, LCD Soundsystem, Bloc Party and Mystery Jets

all evening, the last thing you want is Cindy Lauper or 'Great Balls Of Fire', but DJs persist with putting them on. I wouldn't mind if everyone else was enjoying the 'classics' as much as all the new stuff, but an audible groan can always be heard when the music starts to stray. It's gotten so extreme in London now that we think enough is enough. It's time to start our own night.

On Thursday 11th December, Fan the Fire Magazine presents Mirror Kisses at Proud in Camden, London's



ever-popular nightspot. There'll be great music all night with us on the decks and two very special guest DJs. A couple of live bands will take to the stage in between with the launch night secret headliner to be announced in the run up to the event.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT
CLUBMIRRORKISSES.COM OR CHECK OUT OUR
MORE DETAILED WRITE-UP LATER THIS ISSUE.**

SPIN-OFFS AND ORIGINS

As a comic book fan, and an appreciator the many great characters therein, why is it that I should still harbour doubts about the upcoming release schedule?

Well, for a start, its overclogged. These films have become so popular that even minor characters and villains are beginning to get their own dedicated films. This is not fundamentally a bad thing, but phrases such as 'cranking them out' and 'scraping the barrel' come to mind. And when the genre becomes oversaturated and diminishes in quality due to overloading, there's always the risk that the big companies will just give up on them as the money dries up.

There are already an extraordinary amount of comic-book inspired films on release and in production. But as the big comic-book houses plum their depths for new films based on more abstract and little known characters, who is going to pay to see them? Upcoming projects such as Thor and the recently announced Dr. Strange aren't inherently uninteresting, but those characters carry such little weight compared to international mainstays like Batman that it will be much more difficult to sell them. Green Lantern and a Magneto spin-off are further examples; the list is endless.

The real fear is undoubtedly born out of fandom, which admittedly a lot of people will not share; this is the reason why most average cinemagoers will tell you that Spider-Man 3 is a fun, exciting film. As a long-time fan of the character, it is impossible for me to watch that film without being filled with rage. A lot of the time bad films - or even average ones - grow on you with repeated viewings. That film goes the other way. So I suppose mishandling of characters is the primary concern.

This is why the announcement of the continuation of the Spider-Man series is a double-edged sword, as is the rumoured Venom spin-off. What needs to be avoided is a parallel situation to the one that the computer game faithful find themselves in: going to the cinema to watch films based on their favourite titles and never really thinking they'll be any good. It's throwing money away just to support a franchise, paying for two hours of boredom and irritation based on a tiny hope that this time they might get it right. But they never do.

Becoming the monumental cash-generator that comic book movies have is both a blessing and a curse. Fans get more films and higher quality productions, but also a higher potential for disappointment. Maybe its an ungrateful sentiment, after all, ten years ago nobody would have imagined we'd have comic-book films of the quality of The Dark Knight and X-Men 2 coming out each year. Perhaps the message is simply not to expect too much; great successes will hopefully always overshadow a myriad of disappointments. That said, I will still never forgive Sam Raimi for Venom.



While talent will always shine through, Golden Silvers owe a lot of their newfound fame to their management. Lost in a sea of small London bands hoping to make the step into popular knowledge, the three-piece curators of melodic synth indie-pop, more famous for their Bronze Club at the Macbeth pub in Shoreditch than any single, were entered into this year's Glastonbury Unsigned competition by their manager. As singer/songwriter and synth

player Gwilym explains, "I just got a call one day saying that we'd been chosen for the final twelve and that was the first we knew about it!"

Entered by their manager without telling the band, Golden Silvers soon found themselves winners and awaiting the prospect of opening the world's biggest music festival. All in all, it has been a whirlwind year and a half for a band that only formed last summer.

Championed by Zane Lowe, Huw Stephens, Steve Lamacq and Jo Whiley, a number of whom found out about the band while serving on the Glastonbury competition panel, Golden Silvers have since gone on to support the Mystery Jets on tour and perform at Latitude and Bestival, the latter to a half naked crowd as the band before called for onlookers to strip down to their pants and roll around in the mud, but their greatest thrill was in first



SILVER SERVICE

With vocals like Morrissey and synths from the '80s, **Golden Silvers** are the next indie band to make strides into the mainstream, only with much more to offer your average Camden skinny jean wannabees

hearing their track on Radio 1. "We will always remember the first time we were driving back from playing with the Mystery Jets and Huw Stephens played 'Lily the Lover'. We got out and danced around the petrol station," reveals Gwilym.

Boasting vocals akin to Morrissey, enticingly pacey drumming and a smooth bassline to each track, with influences including Brian Wilson and Prince, Golden Silvers are al-

ready pulling droves of fans to gigs across the country, but they aren't resting on their laurels. Recently heading into the studio to record an eagerly anticipated debut album, at the moment plans are to simply record as many tracks as they can then picks their favourites at the end. The one surprise is that they haven't yet been swept up by a label. Releasing first single 'Arrows of Eros' on a one song deal with Young And Lost Club and recent

track 'Magic Touch' on their own label, the band are yet to pick their long term home. Asked if major support will be in place when it comes to releasing their full length, Gwilym coyly replies, "there are a few things in the pipeline", but even without a big label on their back, Golden Silvers have the potential to go very far indeed.

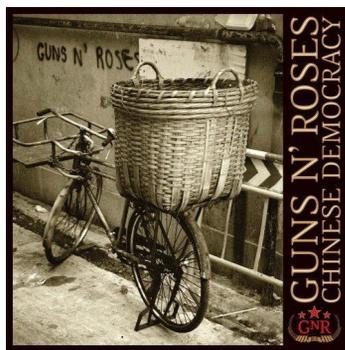
NEW SINGLE 'MAGIC TOUCH' IS OUT NOW ON BRONZE RECORDS.



Razorlight
'Slipway Fires'
(Mercury)

More people hate Johnny Borrell than there is space on this page to mention, and sadly for Razorlight, 'Slipways Fires' just digs his hole even deeper. Often dull, and never the world beating music he claims, Razorlight have to do a lot better to re-capture fans.

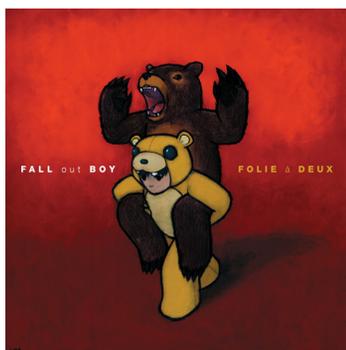
★★★★★



Guns N' Roses
'Chinese Democracy'
(Geffen)

13 years in the making, Guns N' Roses' 'Chinese Democracy' was always going to feel dated, though lacking the band's signature riffs is more surprising. Die hard fans need only seek this out as the rock legends do little to boost their modern profile.

★★★★★



Fall Out Boy
'Folie à Deux'
(Island)

After their breakneck emo/punk debut, Fall Out Boy's tender pop transition is complete with 'Folie à Deux'. With Wentz's angsty lyrics driving each track and a rock undertone to keep old followers happy, Fall Out Boy remain top dog in the evolving emo niche.

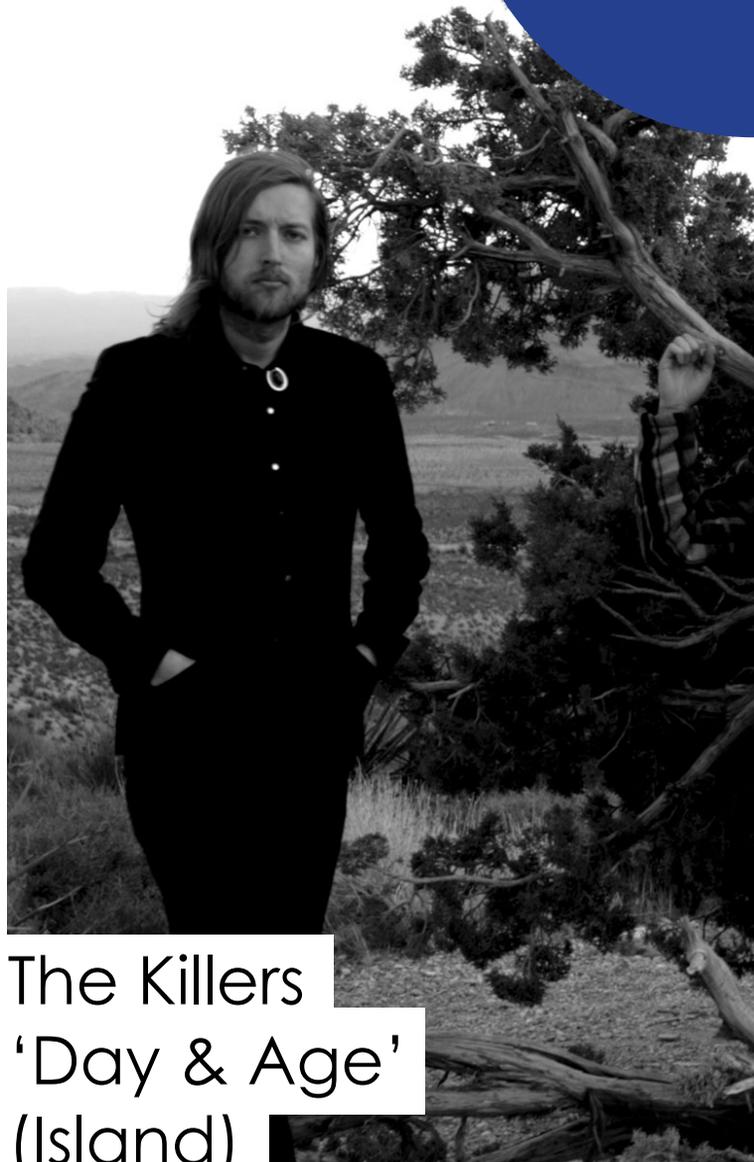
★★★★★



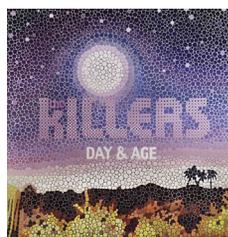
Chairlift
'Does You Inspire You'
(Kanine)

Soon to blow up after single 'Bruises' was used for the new iPod nano advert, Chairlift's infectious electro-pop lies somewhere between Frou Frou and Goldfrapp. While 'Does You Inspire You' drags on at times, it is a promising debut from an impressive young band.

★★★★★



The Killers
'Day & Age'
(Island)



If a couple of years ago, the indie music industry all went new rave, the current penchant is '80s synth pop.

Mystery Jets added rock to it, Iglu And Hartley used a little rap while Chairlift slowed everything down for a subtle pop album. The Killers are next up to take a shot.

After their public feud with The Bravery, calling Sam Endicott's band copycats after their similar synth-led debut albums, The Killers were outshone by the Bravery's impressive sophomore 'The Sun And The Moon', showing them the direction they should have taken with 'Sam's Town'. Sadly with 'Day & Age' it's another disappointment for the Las Vegas four-piece.



Cold War Kids Astoria, London 07/11/08

Leading the breakout of the LA indie scene, Cold War Kids came good on their second album after a striking debut. Taking to the stage in London for the last day of their UK tour, the Long Beach rockers tore through a selection of new and older tracks including an energetic rendition of 'I've Seen Enough' and fan favourite 'Hang Me Out To Dry'.

Lighting up the crowd with a set of torches during 'Robbers', the quartet made the most of a sold-out Astoria crowd, thriving on stage to give another wonderful performance, it won't be long before they're back.

The Walkmen ULU, London 28/10/08

Joined on stage by a handful of local trumpeters, The Walkmen put out a special performance for one of their biggest London gigs to date.

In support of their recently released second album 'You & Me', one of America's rising bands is starting to make a real impact on UK shores, although with Fan the Fire favourites Delta Spirit supporting the five-piece in American-only on recent outings, the night was only ever going to slightly disappointing without Matt Vasquez et al opening the gig. Still, The Walkmen held the night on their own, and will be back in bigger venues next year.

Treading water in electronic chordal pop for the entire 42 minutes, opener 'Losing Touch' is an unfortunately apt description of The Killers recent form. The brilliance of 'Hot Fuss' relied strongly on the band's forceful melodies and memorable guitar and synth hooks but if 'Sam's Town' was a watered-down effort, then 'Day & Age' is a mere shadow.

Single 'Human' suggests there's something still there, but after the track gets under your skin it only serves to irritate. Nonsensical lyrics power through the rest of the LP, as what would have been an filler on 'Hot Fuss', 'Space-man', is forced to be a frontrunner for the already dated 'Day & Age'.

There's probably brilliance in there somewhere, it's just very very hard to find, and by the end of the record you'll have given up and moved onto something you can instantly enjoy. 'Day & Age' feels like it is missing something, that secret ingredient that turns an average album into a pivotal moment, only here it simply lacks that knockout blow, the harsh synth or guitar you feel is necessary in their work.

The Killers need to refocus and remember what propelled them to the top of the game in the first place. Even take a leaf out of once arch-enemies The Bravery's book.

★★★★★

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PRESENTS

MIRROR OR KISSES

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Expect a night of indie/alternative/electro music with everything from Late of the Pier to Tokyo Police Club, Foals to Bloc Party and LCD Soundsystem to CSS, as Fan the Fire Magazine presents Mirror Kisses at Proud.

In anticipation of their eagerly awaited second album, Good Books will be performing live with the hotly tipped and soon to play at Club NME, Sirens to support.

Chloe Little (Club NME) and the Halogens (FOR3IGN!) will take to the decks, with resident Fan the Fire DJs controlling matters in between as the party continues late into the night.



Good Books

Recently breaking away from old label Columbia Records, Good Books are currently prepping their currently untitled sophomore album for a release next spring. Their debut 'Control' was a roaring success, mixing indie rock with a subtle electronic background, launching the band into sold out shows across the UK.

With new material under their belts after a lengthy spell recording in Germany over the summer, the band proclaimed by NME as 'the best new band in Britain' are ready to take over the scene all over again. Their live performances are not to be missed so expect a wonderful set as Good Books headline the launch night of Mirror Kisses with songs new and old.



Sirens

Forming just seven months ago after meeting at college in Southend, Sirens have already been booked for a Club NME at the start of 2009 after residencies in their hometown. Mixing indie with rock, and a touch of the jittery riffs that make Foals so good.

Sirens' early demos show a lot of promise so expect an exciting set to kickstart Mirror Kisses' live music.

TERMINATOR SALVATION

Set in a post-apocalyptic 2018, after computer network Skynet has taken control of the world, Terminator Salvation will be the fourth film in the franchise, and while not necessarily a reboot, will refocus the series. Abandoning the usual format set in the modern day with a Terminator sent back from the future to kill future leader of the resistance John Connor, Salvation instead follow the battles of Connor, this time played by man of the moment Christian Bale, as he takes his fight to the robots controlling the world.

Confirmed by director McG at a world-exclusive preview showing of new Terminator Salvation footage in London, the film will centre on the development of the Model 101 Terminator, played by Arnold Schwarzenegger in the previous releases. Shot with a very ethereal style, using silvers and greys in the cinematography, the action feels gritty and steely, with raw effects on the whole and CGI only where necessary.

Schwarzenegger himself will not be reprising his role, although McG spoke coyly about technological advances placing him in the action so only time will tell if the Governor of California will return to the screen once more, but even without Arnie, a bunch of new Terminators will provide ample competition for Connor.

Written by The Dark Knight screenwriter Jonathan Nolan, a story arc has been planned for a trilogy, which given Salvation's expected success, is a shoe-in for confirmation, although one rumour recently circling the web has been categorically denied by McG and the revelation that John Connor is a robot won't be the series' last word.

TERMINATOR: SALVATION WILL BE RELEASED ON MAY 22ND 2009 IN AMERICA AND JUNE 5TH 2009 IN THE UK.







UP

Surely the next in a long line of wonderful animated film by Pixar, *Up* sees pensioner Carl Fredrickson explore the world from the comfort of his own home. Threatened by developers wanting to take over his land, Carl uproots his house, literally, and sets off on his own adventure. Strapping hundreds of balloons to his home then releasing them into the sky, his house is wrenched off the ground and blown on nature's course.

Directed by Pete Docter, the man behind *Monsters, Inc* and the stories for a raft of Pixar's greatest films, you would expect a tale of friendship to tenderise *Up*'s grouchy central character, and Docter doesn't disappoint. Hearing a knock on the front door while surfing the clouds, Carl opens up to find a young boy on his porch, stuck there since they took off. Begrudgingly, Carl has no choice but to let him in.

Pixar have been tight lipped so far on what sights and sounds the flying house will take Carl and the young boy Russell to, but with such creative minds behind it, expect the unexpected where *Up* is concerned.

Set to become the first Pixar film released in Disney's new digital 3-D technology, *Up* will also become the first true test of how animated cinema shapes up in an extra dimension, with *Fly Me The Moon* amongst others doing little justice to what many deem as the future of film. Though you can be sure at least that if Pixar are doing it, they'll do it well.

UP WILL BE RELEASED ON MAY 29TH 2009 IN AMERICA AND JULY 17TH 2009 IN THE UK.



REVOLUTIONARY ROAD

Who would've thought, all the way back in 1997, when James Cameron's big budget, world dominating Titanic was still sinking and still drawing in the dollars, that Leonardo DiCaprio's career would turn out so darned well? I'm not talking about success here – obviously he was never going to fade away – but rather acting calibre and choice of roles.

He is reunited in Revolutionary Road with Titanic co-star Kate Winslet, under the directorial eye of her husband Sam Mendes. On paper, this is quite the collaboration; Mendes' two leads have 8 Oscar nominations between them and, of course, he was himself a receiver of the best director award for American Beauty. Kathy Bates, another Oscar winner, provides support. Dream teams such as this one, of course, do not always pay off; the heavyweight partnership of DeNiro and Pacino (itself a reassembly of a pairing that had previously seen success with Heat) could not raise Righteous Kill above mediocrity, proving that there must be more in place than great on-screen talent. Good thing then that this film has a critically lauded and widely loved novel as its inspiration.

Richard Yates' novel of the same name was released in 1961 and has since been acclaimed a modern classic, so Mendes certainly has reliable material to work with. The narrative is at heart, a love-story, played out between a young Connecticut couple (DiCaprio, Winslet) who aspire to greater things than suburban mediocrity after realising that they've become stuck in a rut. Their relationship comes under strain, however, when arguments and jealousy begin to take their toll. The chemistry between the two leads will naturally be crucial to the success of this project, and footage currently on show suggests that they're both on top form. This is also the first time Mendes has directed his wife, and here's hoping that their relationship can produce something special on-screen, as it did recently when Darren Aronofsky directed his fiancée Rachel Weisz in The Fountain.

From a visual perspective the film already looks impressive, recreating '50s America with a visually arresting style. This should come as no surprise of course; Mendes has done period drama before, and done it well, both visually and emotionally in Road to Perdition. This too is aiming to be thought-provoking and powerful, like its source material, and history teaches us that films with these kinds of aspirations always live and die by their leads' performances. DiCaprio and Winslet have matured no end since Jack Dawson became a permanent resident of the Atlantic in 1997, and there is more than enough here to make it an exciting winter prospect.

REVOLUTIONARY ROAD WILL BE RELEASED ON DECEMBER 26TH IN AMERICA AND JANUARY 30TH IN THE UK.







WATCHMEN



Easily the most talked about film at this year's Comic-Con and based on what are often described as the finest graphic novels published to date, it's no surprise *Watchmen* is quickly becoming 2009's most anticipated release. Mired for some years in development hell, the project passed hands between all of the major studios, at one point deemed unfilmable by then-attached director Terry Gilliam, but *Watchmen* at last landed on Warner Bros. desk for a second time, and they had the sense to take it into production.

Set in an alternate 1985 where Richard Nixon is still American president and war is looming with the Soviet Union, superheroes walk the street in an attempt to protect society from its evil side. But the superheroes are losing. Investigating the murder of former hero the Comedian, vigilante Rorschach uncovers a plot to discredit and murder the rest of the heroes and then a wider conspiracy that could change the course of history.

With Zack Snyder at the helm, as he did with *300*, key scenes from the novels were storyboarded still for still to be replicated in the cinematic release, and as a big personal fan of graphics novels himself, you can expect Snyder to go to every length to respect the source material. Using CGI, Rorschach's ink blot morphing mask will be recreated while the graphic novel's iconic spacecraft has already been revealed to rave reviews in the trailer.

Expect *Watchmen* to be 2009's *Batman*, though it won't reach the same box office scales, in terms of rave reviews, Snyder is certainly en-route to making what could be the finest comic book adaptation in cinematic history.

WATCHMEN WILL BE RELEASED ON MARCH 5TH 2009.

AUSTRALIA

Baz Luhrmann's latest film, his fourth, is epic. One glance at the trailer or even still shots from the film will tell you that. From the musical excess of his last film *Moulin Rouge* – which is already seven years old – Luhrmann turns his attention to the nation of his birth.

Aesthetic flamboyance is to be expected from Luhrmann, but the stylised visuals on display here must be seen to be believed, and are surely a step up from anything he's attempted before. This is film-making on a much grander scale than we've seen him in before, and it's clear this film is to serve as his personal ode to the country; an attempt to portray the 'mythical Australia' to use his words.

Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman occupy the lead roles. Jackman plays a drover (a livestock handler) who assists Kidman's English aristocrat to escape with her cattle as the nearby city of Darwin is bombed by the Japanese, mid-way through the Second World War. Over time, a romance develops between them as they make their way through the challenging countryside. Kidman, of course, worked with Luhrmann on *Moulin Rouge* whilst Jackman stars opposite her in a role originally expected to be filled by fellow Australian Russell Crowe. The film seems very much to be striving for the same kind of experience found in classic cinema epics such as *Gone with the Wind*; indeed some of the promotional stills released, including some of the posters for *Australia*, are clearly meant in homage to that film. Taking inspiration from a film regarded as one of the all time greats cannot be a bad idea, although *Australia* would have to be something truly special to match the 10 Oscars lavished upon the former. Put potential inspirations to one side and *Australia* still looks very much its own movie. Luhrmann clearly knows what he's trying to achieve with this one; epic.

AUSTRALIA WILL BE RELEASED ON NOVEMBER 26TH IN AMERICA AND DECEMBER 26TH IN THE UK.





THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE WEIRD

Directed by: Kim Jee-woon Starring: Lee Byung-hun, Song Kang-ho, Jung Woo-sung, Uhm Ji-won, Ryo Seung-soo, Yoon Je-moon, Song Yeong-chang & Son Byeong-ho
 Studio: CJ Entertainment Films Distributor: Icon (UK) IFC Films (USA)
 Release: Q4 2008 (UK) 2009 (USA)

Genre jumping director Kim Jee-woon is quickly becoming Korea's most exciting and sought after filmmaker. Making big strides into the mainstream with the devilishly scary, and already Hollywood remade, horror *A Tale of Two Sisters* and more recently gaining great acclaim with crime thriller *A Bittersweet Life*, it's no surprise for Kim's latest film that he was given the biggest ever budget for a Korean film to date, at just over \$17m.

Making strides this time in the Western genre, after finishing *A Bittersweet Life*, Kim found inspiration for *The Good, The Bad, The Weird* when travelling the vast lands of the once Manchurian region, wondering what it must have been like for the many Koreans journeying across the region before their nation was divided.

Set across the vast deserts of Manchuria, *The Good, The Bad, The Weird* centres around a map. Hired to steal the document from a wealthy bank owner, bandit leader Chang-yi (Lee) knows little about the target only that there's a hefty pay check in waiting. Tight on his tail is bounty hunter Do-won, losing his long running battle to capture Chang-yi. But before either can get their hands on their target, chance robber Tae-go holds up the banker's train and stumbles across the map, pocketing the package and some stolen cash before making a getaway.

Slowly putting the pieces together, Tae-go comes to the conclusion that whatever the map is pointing to must be worth a fortune. With Chang-yi and Do-won never more than one step behind, Tae-go races across Manchuria in search of the treasure, caught in a fair few gun fights along the way before the three meet for a final showdown to capture the prize their heart really desires.

Something of a who's who in modern Korean cinema, the leading men are each perfect in their roles. Lee Byung-hun gives Chang-Yi

the outright arrogance any cold blooded gang leader demands. A steely performance from Jung Woo-sung provides the perfect adversary, but bungling criminal Tae-go remains the most watchable, with a subtly but incredibly effective performance by Song Kang-ho. The trio complement each other in an ensemble cast to match any Hollywood production.

After the remarkable action and fight sequences in *A Bittersweet Life*, with a bigger budget, it was never in doubt that *The Good, The Bad, The Weird* would flourish in its showdown clashes. In particular during the shootout in the town, the choreography and action scripting is second to none, as the gunfight closes with Do-won swinging above the rooftops on crane chains while offloading his rifle at any moving target.

Kim Jee-woon's stylistic flair continues throughout the rest of the film, and to suit the 1930s setting with long cuts and deep colours, magnificent cinematography and the stunning Manchurian backdrop make *The Good, The Bad, The Weird* simply breathtaking.

Sadly along the crew's 300 day long trek around Korea and the Gobi Desert, there were all too many desert-scapes to be homed in the film, as between the two showdowns the film struggles to develop beyond an epic cross-land footrace. The build-up to the finale drags on a little as Tae-go forever evades his captors, but this is the only downside to the film.

With a surprisingly effective fast-paced, quirky soundtrack and an ironic, funny ending, *The Good, The Bad, The Weird* is the finest film out of Korea, well, since Kim Jee-woon's last effort, as the talented filmmaker builds on his already burgeoning reputation.

★★★★★





WALTZ WITH BASHIR

Directed by: Ari Folman Starring: Ari Folman, Ron Ben-Yashai, Ronny Dayag, Dror Haraz, Yehezkel Lazarov, Mickey Leon, Ori Sivan & Zahava Solomon
 Studio: Bridgit Folman Film Gang Distributor: Artificial Eye
 Release: November 21 (UK) TBC (USA)

So rarely do animated documentaries make it to general release, if financed at all, that when *Waltz With Bashir* emerged on release schedules the industry instantly sat up and took notice.

Widely tipped to win the highly coveted Palm D'Or at this year's Cannes Film Festival, ultimately losing out to French film *The Class*, the hype though surrounding *Waltz With Bashir* stepped beyond the stunning visuals, said to boast rich dialogue and a powerful story.

Based on the life of director Ari Folman, an ex-Israeli soldier in the Israeli army, after meeting an old friend for a drink, the pair start talking about their time in the Defence Forces but to his shock, Ari he can remember very little about their time fighting in the Lebanon War. Intrigued by his memory lapse, Ari decides to interview old friends and comrades in an attempt to fill in the gaps and rediscover his experiences.

Despite the very powerful and harrowing story as *Waltz With Bashir* takes a closer look into some of the atrocities of the Lebanon War, the remarkable animation undoubtedly remains the film's showpiece.

Fans of video games such as *Jet Set Radio* or *The Legend of Zelda: Wind Waker*, will feel instantly at home as *Waltz With Bashir* takes inspiration from designers in the interactive industry. The audio was recorded in full as a 90-minute video project and then the animation produced from scratch to suit a cell-shaded style. The visuals are just as stunning as anything out of Pixar or Studio Ghibli, some of the most breathtaking sights in modern cinema.

The narrative and story sadly don't quite live up to the creative design. Though the subject is hugely powerful as *Waltz With Bashir* investigates the horrific Sabra and Shatila Massacre, at times the film struggles to hold your attention suffering from slow development and drawn out interviews.

Waltz With Bashir is an immensely ambitious project that, on reflection, was always going to struggle to live up to expectation. The visuals certainly make the grade but compared with the immersive *Man On Wire*, the narrative struggles to keep up with everything else on show.

★★★★★







CHOKE

Directed by: Clark Gregg Starring: Sam Rockwell, Clark Gregg, Brad William Henke, Anjelica Huston & Kelly Macdonald
 Studio: Contrafilm Distributor: Fox Searchlight Pictures Release: Out now (USA) November 21 (UK)

Given the tagline 'based on the novel by the author of Fight Club, Chuck Palahniuk' and Choke is already guaranteed a substantial audience at the box office. As was the brilliance of Fight Club, and Palahniuk's novel, even an ounce the same magic would be enough to have fans purring once more, though to produce another film of quite the same quality would always be near impossible.

Let's not head into Choke with an instant impression of 'good, but not Fight Club' as for the literary piece, Choke is regarded as being up with the Palahniuk's very best, and it's no surprise why. Fight Club was entirely character driven, and Choke is no different.

Victor (Rockwell) is a 30-something guy, struggling to make the right choices as his life ticks on without ever really offering fulfilment. By day, he spends his time as a Colonial village re-enactor and by night

he fails to cure himself of his sex addiction, though it is what happens in between that proves most intriguing. With his mother suffering from dementia, and the care bills totting up, Victor's second income is particularly imaginative. Pretending to choke on food in restaurants, he carefully picks his saviours, stepping aside from the tables of well worn trainer toting diners to land a-strewn on a rich man's lap.

Befriending the knights in shining armour, Victor tricks them out of money with tails of mishap and medical expenditure, still struggling to meet hospital payments. As the film progresses, Victor's mother grows steadily worse before letting slip that she knows the identity of his long lost father, and Victor stretches to any means to draw out the details before she passes away.

Not unfamiliar to quirky characters, Sam Rockwell is very strong in the role of Victor, and attended several

sex addict meetings to prepare for the role. Indeed it is his strong performance that holds the film together in a very personality centred narrative. At times, the awkwardness of Rockwell's character, in particular his strange relationship with his mother is very hard to watch, but the humour still comes through in what is a very well written script.

Sadly the ending, as Victor's mother deteriorates and misplaced flashbacks intrude, lets the film down a little. Despite a clever twist involving her doctor, and somewhat expectedly, Choke falls some way short of Fight Club, but then they follow very different plot points. Choke is almost a great film, and still a strong effort by screenwriter/director/actor Clark Gregg, whom you may know better as the S.H.I.E.L.D agent in Iron Man, and proves somewhat more fulfilling than a lot of autumn's luke warm releases.

★★★★★



BODY OF LIES

Directed by: Ridley Scott Starring: Leonardo DiCaprio, Russell Crowe, Mark Strong, Golshifteh Farahani, Oscar Isaac & Ali Suliman
 Studio: De Line Pictures Distributor: Warner Bros. Pictures Release: Out now (USA) November 21 (UK)

If pre-release buzz, or there lack of, was to be believed, *Body of Lies* was another miss on Ridley Scott's CV. After last year's wonderful *American Gangster*, the English director seemed to be back on track after a couple of decidedly underwhelming releases, but coupled with his bizarre attachment to the new *Monopoly* project, sorry reviews of *Body of Lies* were almost condemning Scott to be losing his inspiration, despite an indisputable wealth of talent. But it was foolish to even doubt him in the first place to be honest.

Following a number of Hollywood's leading men into Middle Eastern politics, *Body of Lies* barely escapes the war torn cities and desolate deserts of Iraq and Jordan for the entirety of the film.

Played by Leonardo DiCaprio, Roger Ferris is U.S. Intelligence's best man on the ground, but even Ferris' ear to the ground cannot prepare

the rest of the world for a slew of bombings around Europe. Orchestrated by a new emerging al Qaeda campaigner, the attacks are flying under the radar of America's sophisticated intelligence network.

Tasked by stay-at-home C.I.A. director Ed Hoffman (Crowe) to infiltrate the terrorist underworld, Ferris is faced with his most dangerous assignment yet, and the impossible choice of who to trust when the lives of those he cares most deeply are at stake.

As you would expect from Scott, *Body of Lies* is brilliantly made. Every single shot feels carefully hand-crafted with effortlessly stunning cinematography, critics have instead cited problems with the narration and an underdeveloped story. While the plot moves fast in the opening act, and take note that if you miss a moment you'll be somewhat lost for the duration of the film, the jumpy narration comes together

nicely and all starts to make sense as the bigger picture emerges.

Where *Syriana* went wrong, the pace and excitement in *Body of Lies*, mixed with a lesser investigation into the politics, pays heavily in its favour, keeping the edge of international conflict that won George Clooney his Oscar. The raw action sequences move hand in hand with the plot, unlike a number of other recent thrillers, *Eagle Eye* carrying most of the blame.

You can't deny *Body of Lies* is not more of the same in an overpopulated genre but it is far better than most of the politically motivated thrillers thrown on the pile. Crowe and DiCaprio play off each other well, despite the Australian's background role, and you'll find more than enough entertainment wise. Rumours dispelled, Ridley Scott has far from lost his form.

★★★★★



MADAGASCAR: ESCAPE 2 AFRICA

Directed by: Eric Darnell & Tom McGrath Starring: Ben Stiller, Chris Rock, David Schwimmer, Jada Pinkett Smith & Sacha Baron Cohen
Studio: DreamWorks Animation Distributor: Paramount Pictures Release: Out now (USA) December 5 (UK)

Undoubtedly the best animated film of the year, the one criticism of WALL-E is that it forgot what many classed to be its target audience, children. Throughout the almost silent first act, though the visuals were as stunning as we have seen from any CGI, kids were said to be losing interest as the cute little robots ran about on an abandoned earth barely passing a word.

The same certainly cannot be said of Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa. Pandering to the young market, not

a moment goes by without a crash or a bang as almost the entire cast of the original returns for another Madagascan adventure.

After a brief preface, the film cuts to right where the original left off, with the New York zoo escapees in Madagascar, with a plane ready and taking to take them home. Strapped in and ready for take-off, the gang probably aren't expecting a gentle flight with a bunch of penguins in the cockpit though after they run out of fuel, a crash

landing was probably less comfortable than they had hoped.

Touching down in a wildlife reserve in mainland Africa, the plane happened to crash in lion Alex's childhood home where he is at last reunited with his family. However, when Alex is introduced to the pack, a challenger to his father's throne tricks him into being banished along with his parents. As the others settle into reserve life, Alex is left to fight his way back into the pack and save all the animals from a drought.



The story is not as strong as the original, which it must be said was far from a masterpiece, and while the characters feel fuller, once group leave Madagascar and crash land on in a wildlife reserve, which is pretty early on, it feels like the film is killing time until they make their final trip back to New York, which isn't until the third instalment.

Plot-wise, Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa could have easily be cut into a 10 minute short as a prequel the next movie.

The side stories though are thoroughly entertaining as the one of real stars of the film, the penguins, marries a bobblehead toy and Sacha Baron Cohen's lemur king hilariously explores the new land.

There are ample jokes for kids and adults, although the laughs on the whole seem to miss the older teen and young adult audiences, rather hitting the extremes of young children and older parents.

With the animation up to the usual

grade, Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa is a bright and attractive film, that'll entertain you throughout.

Old children who loved the first movie might find a sticking point this time around, like-wise with older audiences before we move into parent territory, but there is still easily enough to justify 95 minutes of your time. Not the finest animated film in 2008, but arguably the best animated kids movie of the year.

★★★★★



WHAT JUST HAPPENED

Directed by: Barry Levinson Starring: Robert De Niro, Bruce Willis, Stanley Tucci, John Turturro, Kristen Stewart, Lily Rabe & Sean Penn
 Studio: Art Linson Productions Distributor: Pathé
 Release: Out now (USA) November 28 (UK)

Produced, written and based on the memoirs of Hollywood producer Art Linson, *What Just Happened* gives an insight into the intense non-stop pressure of working behind the camera with some of the industry's biggest egos.

Though Linson's original book was well received, sadly *What Just Happened* is ironically a very troubled film about making a very troubled film. When Hollywood producer Ben (De Niro) starts filming on a new project, lead actor Bruce Willis proves more than difficult to manage. Growing a monstrous beard after completing a clean shaven part, Willis is unwilling to shave off his facial hair which causes untold problems in the production.

All the while stuttering through a difficult divorce and struggling to control the post production of his previous film, Ben's hectic life gives a great insight into what it is like behind the scenes in Hollywood. Unfortunately the would-be accuracy doesn't save *What Just Happened* from falling into mediocrity. Despite a thoroughly intriguing concept, with lazy performances by the entire cast, *What Just Happened* feels like a stop gap for the big stars, filling time before their next major picture.

Though well written, the script is simply not funny enough to maintain your attention. Drawing to a close at only 102 minutes, the film feels much longer and starts to bore as you approach the end. Those with a real thirst for finding out what goes on under the film industry's Hollywood exterior will want to hunt down *What Just Happened* at their local independent, but for most this is all too forgettable.

★★★☆☆



RIVALS

Directed by: Jacques Maillot Starring: François Cluzet, Guillaume Canet, Marie Denarnaud, Clotilde Hesme & Mehdi Nebbou
 Studio: LGM Productions Distributor: Studio Canal
 Release: December 5 (UK) TBC (USA)

Based on a book by the Papet brothers, French film *Rivals* is a gritty crime drama about two brothers, one either side of the law.

Fresh out of prison, serving a decade for murder, Gabriel (Cluzet) is the troubled son of the family, struggling to win back his brother's faith and trust. François (Canet) is a police inspector, tasked with cleaning up the street from people like his brother.

Meeting for the first time since Gabriel's incarceration, the pair are willing to draw a line under the past but with Gabriel heartbroken than François would not visit him while he was in prison, and François ashamed his own flesh and blood was one of the criminals his department was in charge of locking away, tranquillity could only ever last for so long.

As the murky characters in Gabriel's past slowly start to catch up with him, it seems it is only a matter of time before he again falls off the straight and narrow, only this time it is up to his brother whether he'll sink or swim.

Held back by a confused and complex narrative, *Rivals* struggles to capture your attention despite an intriguing and, for the most part, enticing plot, leaves you lost at certain point in the films as the narrative never catches up with the action. Furthermore the interplay between the brothers is strangely underplayed despite forming the backbone of the film as the pair share far too little screen time together.

Rivals is not an entirely unsuccessful film, it simply lacks an injection of pace, that made fellow French film *The Serpent* such an exhilarating experience, and a lot more work on the cutting room floor to tidy up section where *Rivals* loses its way.

★★★☆☆



CHOKING MAN

Directed by: Steve Barron Starring: Octavio Gómez Berríos, Eugenia Yuan, Aaron Paul, Mandy Patinkin & Kate Buddeke
Studio: Ghost Robot Distributor: Soda Pictures
Release: Out now (UK) TBC (USA)

'From the director of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Movie* and *Mike Bassett: England Manager*' gives a strange introduction to new film *Choking Man* that you would not expect to befit Steve Barron.

After trying his hand in a slew of cinema's endless genres, Barron's next work is an unassuming indie film about a New York diner dishwasher. Jorge (Berríos) is a shy, reserved young man who spends his day with his hands in hot soapy water, under the gaze of a Heimlich manoeuvre poster. Sitting idly by as the world spins on without giving him little but a thought, Jorge is teased by his chef, holding onto a sense of a relationship with waitress Amy (Yuan) that helps get him through the long hours at work.

A tender film that explores Jorge's failed integration into society after emigrating from Ecuadoria, *Choking Man* is almost a masterpiece without ever really clasp onto the top of the pile mantle. Instead the film feels unfocussed and unsatisfying, as the almost speechless character carries the film emotionally but without a big enough on screen prominence to really pull it off. Whereas indie films in the past have made up for problems with charm and a sense of care and attention, *Choking Man* feels like an underperformer.



W.

Directed by: Oliver Stone Starring: Josh Brolin, Elizabeth Banks, Richard Dreyfuss, Thandie Newton & Jeffrey Wright
Studio: Emperor Motion Pictures Distributor: Lionsgate
Release: Out now

It was no surprise to find a biopic of soon to be former US President George W. Bush (Brolin) in the run up to the Presidential election, and given his haphazard and mispronounced leadership, it was only ever going to be a comedy.

Charting the emergence of George Bush's campaign from under the wing of his father, *W.* tells the story of how a unemployable college boy worryingly became president of the world's most powerful and influential country.

You might not have expected it but Josh Brolin is a revelation as George W. Bush. Replicating his mannerisms, accent and personality perfectly, Brolin instantly transforms into 'Dubya'. Despite their obvious contrast in appearance, Brolin soon becomes Bush's double, encapsulating everything that has made him a fascinating, if thoroughly underperforming, president.

Despite a slew of witty interludes, *W.* finds most of its humour in cheap shots at Bush's deemed lack of intelligence. On the outside a smart and thought out comedy drama, *W.* is undermined by the snide gags that may at the time draw out a quick laugh, but in the long run hold the film back. Furthermore, *W.*'s probe into Bush's past, at times dwells a little too long on certain moments. Even political fanatics will struggle to sustain interest during some portions of Bush's earlier life.

Brolin's performance proves to be the saving grace as this mostly factual take on George W. Bush's life will fill an undoubted need during election fever, but don't expect the DVD to do anything like as well.

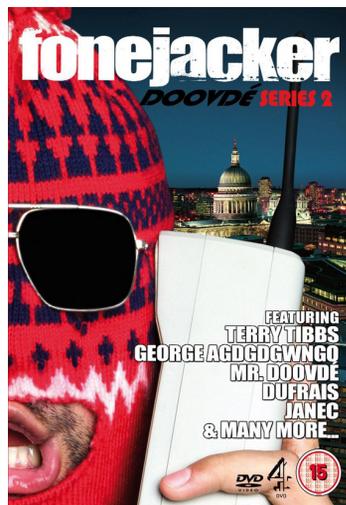




One Way

A dark blackmail thriller as a man is forced to abandon his friend to protect his brother-in-law. The dialogue and narrative are gritty without ever coming truly aight though the end result is solid enough.

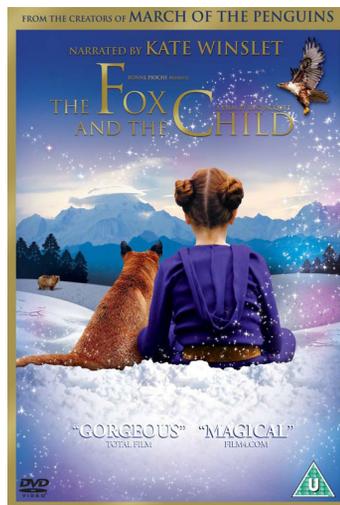
Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



Fonejacker: Season 2

Hilarious comedy show about a man prank calling the nation. Though the more complex layout doesn't prove as successful as season 1, it is still effortlessly funny.

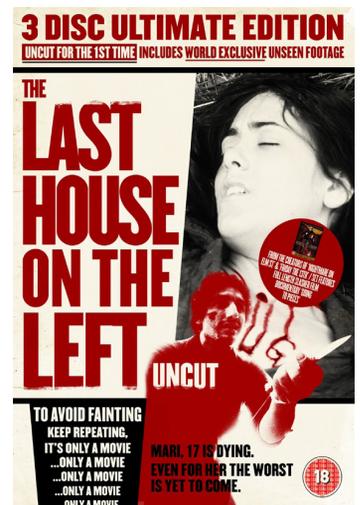
Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



The Fox And The Child

Sweet and charming tale about a young girl who finds friendship with a fox. From the makers of March Of The Penguins, The Fox And The Child will be a kids favourite.

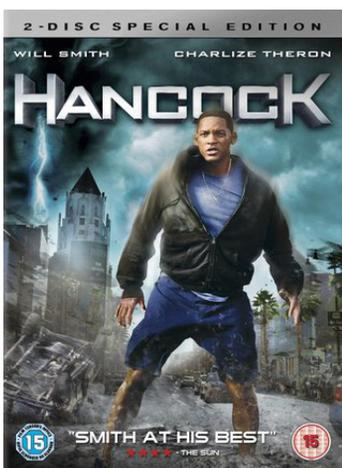
Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



The Last House On The Left

Regarded as the first ever slasher film, The Last House On The Left might be overshadowed in today's standards but in terms of raw intensity and classic status, will never be outdone.

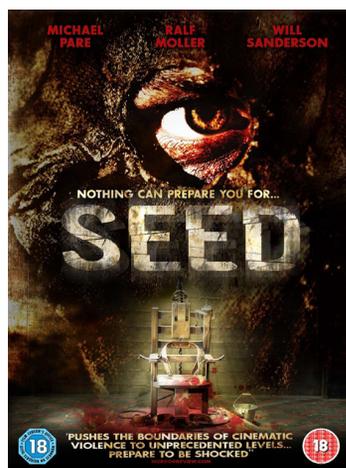
Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



Hancock: SE

Extended to flesh out the story arc, Hancock sees Will Smith garner super powers as LA's would be superhero, though alcohol and lust often get in the way. Flawed but worth it alone for Smith's role.

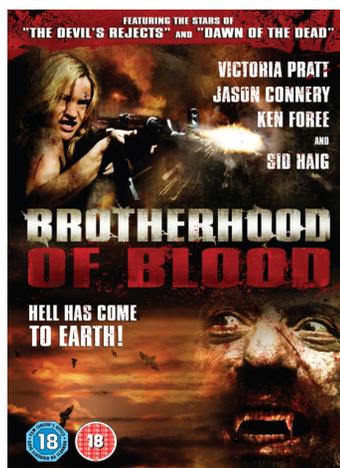
Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



Seed

After 666 murders, a serial killer is at last captured, but when the electric chair cannot lay him to rest, he goes out on another graphic killing spree. One more for the ever torture porn library.

Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



Brotherhood Of Blood

In a world riddled with vampires, a group of hunters unite to rescue a friend trapped captured by the evil race, though sadly the film proves unfulfilling despite its edgy look.

Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



While She Was Out

Lost in the woods and being chased by a group of devilish thugs, Kim Basinger stars as your average housewife caught up in a little more than she expected when going out for a last minute shop.

Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★

COMPETITION



To celebrate the release of action movie Hancock on DVD and Blu-Ray across the UK on December 1st, we're giving you the chance to win one of 4 copies of the 2 disc, extended edition. To be in with a chance of winning, simply answer the following question:

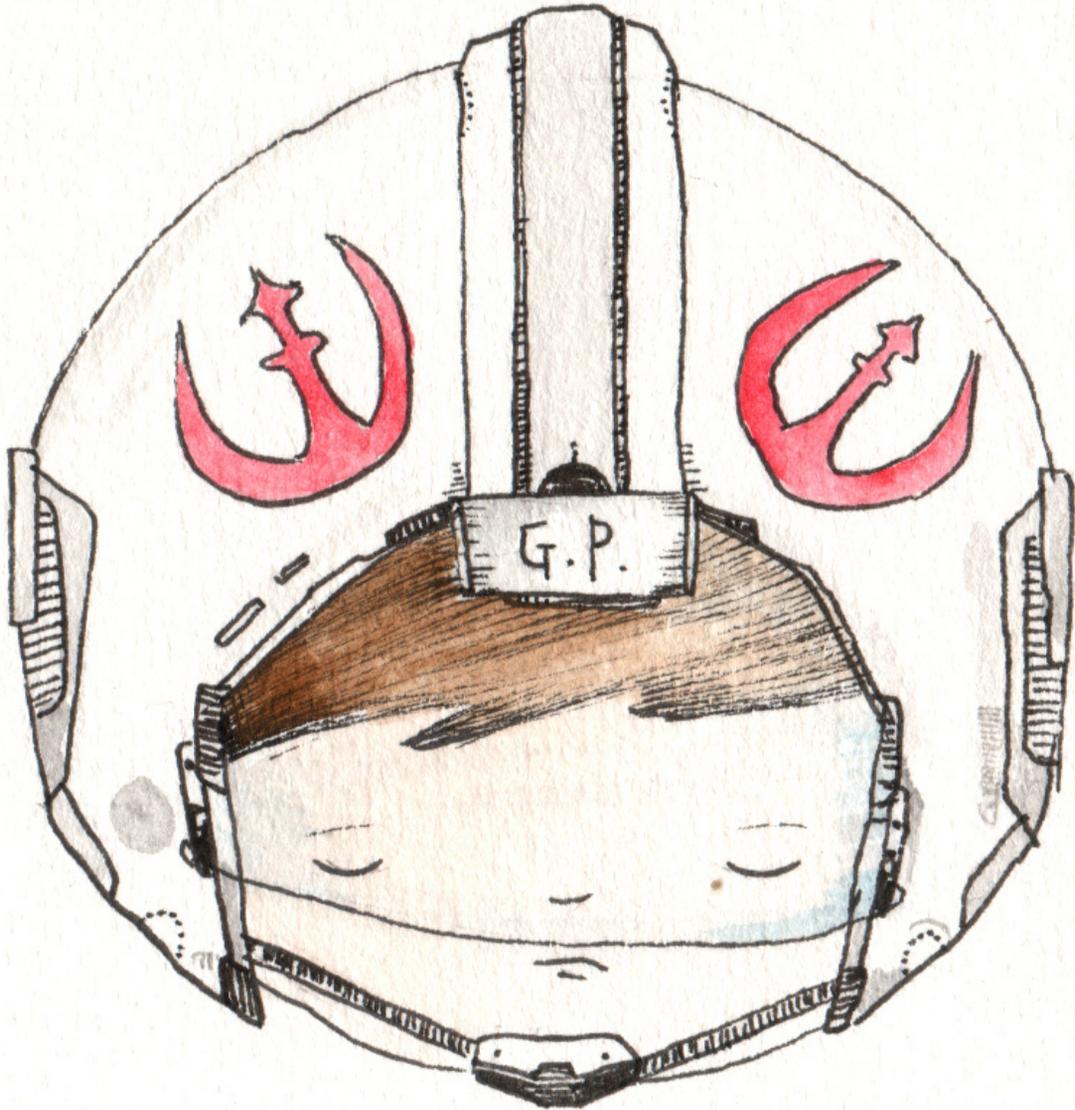
Will Smith starred in 2007's Oscar nominated The Pursuit Of Happyness, but what was Smith's real life character Chris Gardner was striving to become?

A. an investment banker B. a professional footballer C. a ballet instructor

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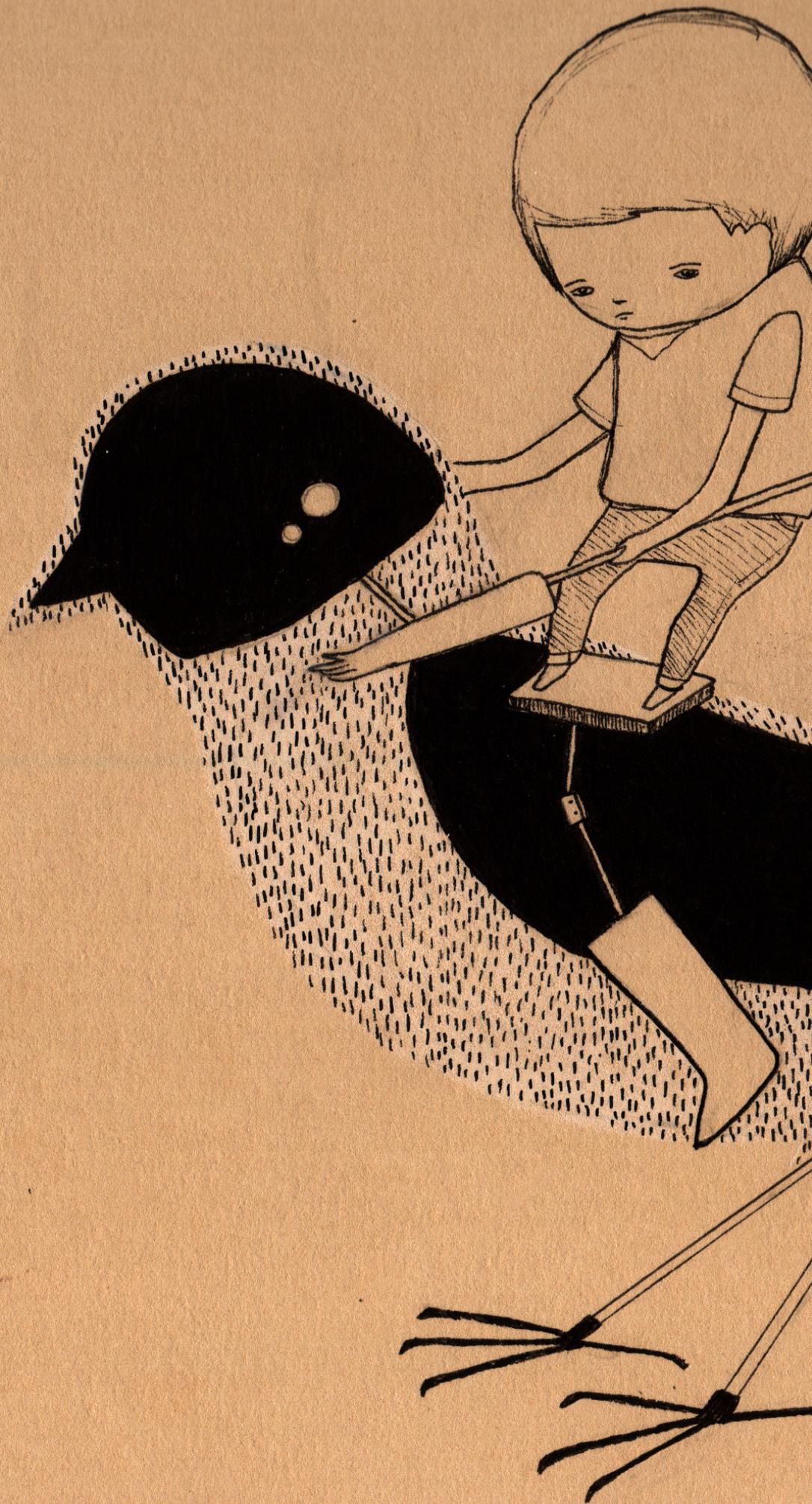


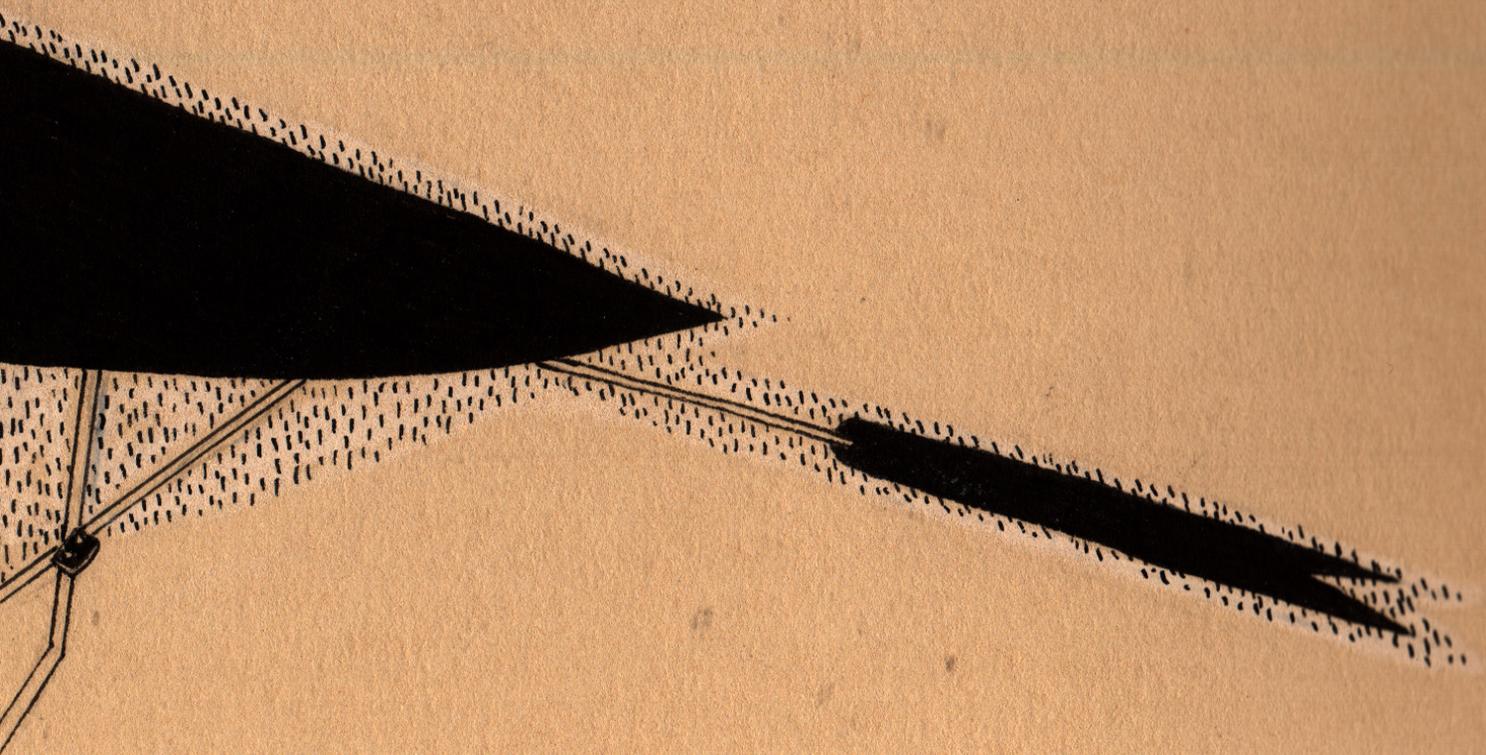
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SPIDER-MAN: WEB OF SHADOWS

Format: Xbox 360 (reviewed), PS3, Wii, DS, PSP, PS2, PC Developer: Treyarch Publisher: Activision Release: Out now

Spider-Man: Web of Shadows is in many ways a frustrating game, not just because of its niggling flaws, but mainly because those flaws throw a negative disguise over what is otherwise a pretty damn good release. Spider-Man games have never been much more than average over the years, so fans will be pleased to hear that if they can look past Web of Shadows' shortcomings, they will find a fun and exciting game hidden underneath.

The game follows an original plotline unbound to the recent film trilogy and benefits from it, though it does cover some similar ground to film three. The story itself is nothing particularly special, but it has given the developers free reign to incorporate a decent amount of fan touches and include a range of satisfying Marvel cameos. We begin with Spider-Man distraught that the city is seemingly on the verge of collapse, overrun by symbiotes that bear a striking resemblance to Spider-Man's web-spinning nemesis

Venom. Cue a lengthy flashback that occupies most of the game's play time.

Throughout the game the player is able to switch between Spidey's regular blue and red threads to the symbiotic black suit recently seen in Sam Raimi's Spider-Man 3. The game operates a shallow but enjoyable morality scale, the kind of device most often seen in RPGs, and playing in the red and black suits will alter your 'good' and 'bad' ratings respectively. The suits have different move sets and can be upgraded in a variety of different ways to more effectively combat Spidey's foes. A robust and compelling combo system allows for attack strings upwards of two hundred moves, and makes the combat both satisfying and varied, be it on the ground, on the wall, or even in the air.

Suit upgrades are purchased by earning experience points which are accumulated as the player works through the various missions



on offer. The game plays in a free-form 'sandbox' style, allowing you free reign over the city of Manhattan, going where you please and picking up missions from different NPCs. There are problems, however. Although the city is huge, the different areas are not clearly signposted, in fact they aren't signposted at all, and are largely indistinguishable from one another. There is a sense of progression from the beginning areas to the broader city but that progression is really only marked by more buildings and taller skyscrapers. It may be realistic, but it doesn't make for a great game world. Similarly the graphics, whilst generally quite good, render overly samey environments which make the gameplay a little stagnant at times. This isn't helped by a fairly useless map accessible from the menu which basically consists of a blue holographic cityscape and very little else. The mini-map does give you helpful icons and notifications to follow as you go about your business, ➔



REVIEWS





but they are often difficult to distinguish and the game fails to provide adequate information as to which one is which on the overall map. At some points, you will be presented with two yellow waypoints leading to different missions or NPCs, and there will be no indication as to which is which short of cutting back to the pause menu.

Fortunately the repetitive nature of the environment, and indeed the optional missions, which almost always entail going out and killing 'x' number of cretins, does not detract from the overall gameplay, which is flowing and exciting. Web-swinging is easy and thrilling, the scale of city being its key redeeming feature; it does feel epic to swing through the streets firing web balls at flying enemies as the generally decent score rises around you. The voice acting is worth a quick mention at this point. In general it is fairly good, although Spider-Man's voice is irritating and unfortunately he has by far the most lines. A Mr. T inspired Luke Cage provides some early humour. Boss fights are frequent and almost always excellently implemented, even if some of them are a little repetitive. They are often followed by classic 'light-dark' choices in which Spider-Man may choose to follow the path of the red or the black suit. The morality system, as I said, is largely for show. You will see different cutscenes and

receive an altered ending depending on which path you choose, but the game play does not change in any meaningful way, short of police officers taking pot-shots at you or pedestrians running scared.

The hectic web-slinging and gigantic combos are sadly hindered at times by the camera, which frequently jumps between adequate and awful. Generally when you're making your way through the city its fine but in cramped areas, which are thankfully few and far between, and when running along walls, the camera seems to go into overdrive, swirling and veering like it wants to get you killed.

So why are there only three stars at the bottom of this review? Surely these flaws can be overlooked in favour of the positives? Ordinarily I would just about agree, but it

would be remiss of me to conclude this review without mentioning the game's unfortunately numerous technical issues. Slow down, in the first two thirds of the game, is a rare occurrence; but in the final third, when everything kicks off and there is more going on, the game chugs frequently and at times it goes beyond what most of us can usually ignore. More damning than that, however, are the myriad of tiny bugs that have somehow made it into the game. At times I actually had to reload to previous saves because NPCs had vanished or civilians I was supposed to be saving had got stuck in buildings and were unreachable. A couple of times the game froze for a short time before throwing me back in unawares, and from time to time characters and enemies jerked unattractively through their otherwise good animations. Thankfully (although it almost seems like cynical design) the autosave feature kicks in regularly meaning you won't ever lose much progress, but needless to say these are more than minor irritations.

Whenever words such as 'technical issues' and 'bugs' are mentioned in a review it will always conclude leaving a sour taste in the mouth, but it should be noted that Web of Shadows is a great game despite all of its flaws. If you can look past the rough exterior and ignore some niggling issues, then this game will provide a solid, longer-than-average adventure, particularly for Spidey fans.

★★★★★



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