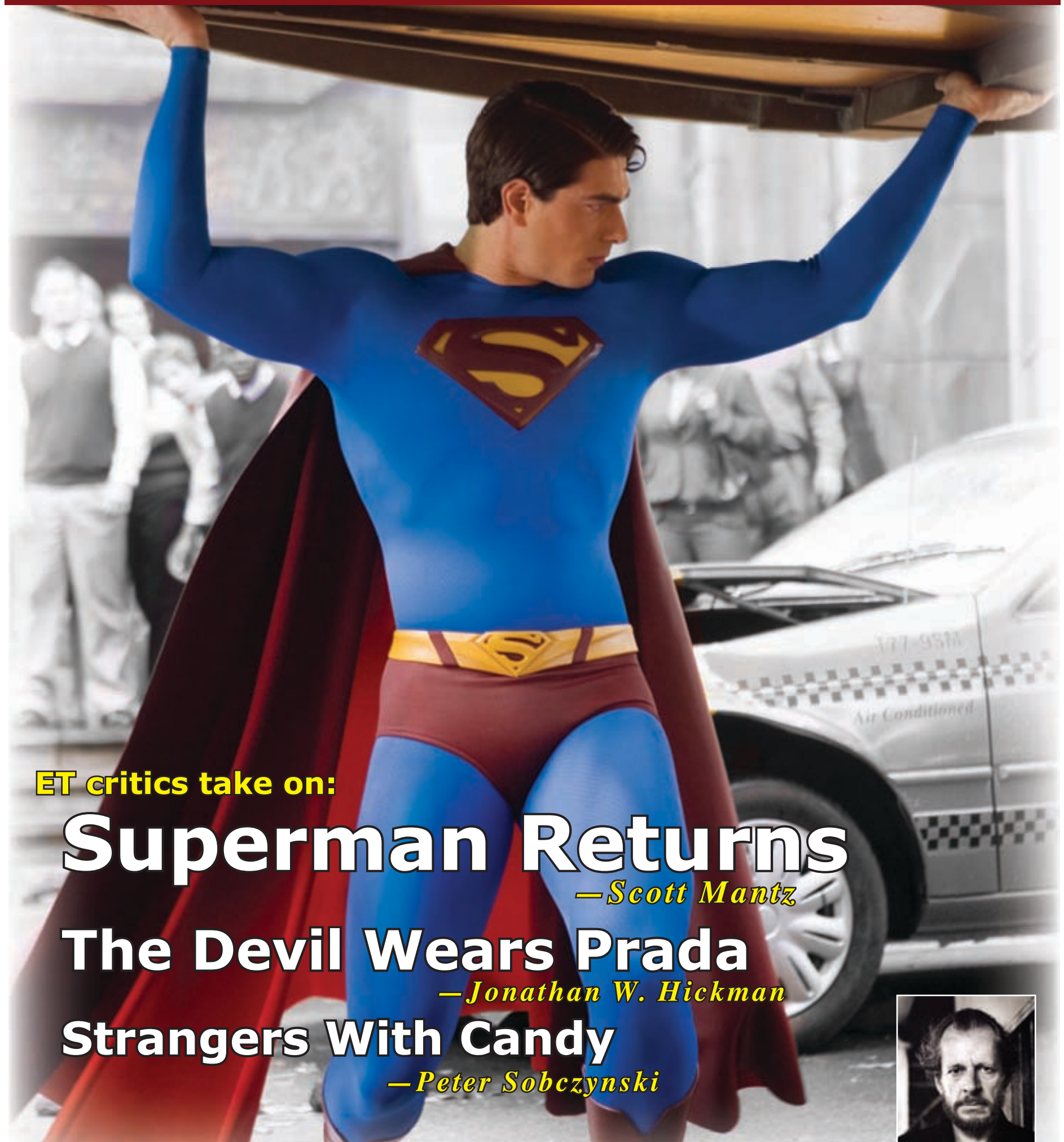


# ENTERTAINMENT

Vol.38, No.38 ~ Friday, June 30, 2006

TODAY



**ET critics take on:**

## Superman Returns

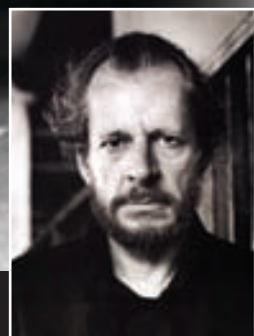
—*Scott Mantz*

## The Devil Wears Prada

—*Jonathan W. Hickman*

## Strangers With Candy

—*Peter Sobczynski*



**INSIDE:** One on One with *Kids & Wassap Rockers* director Larry Clark

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# Critics differ on primacy of *Dancers*

by Gail Roberts

William Hanley's 60's showpiece *Slow Dance On The Killing Ground* is an involved story of the period's culture clash, generation gap, morality, pretense, guilt, and not the least, redemption. Most of the action in this three-character piece takes place in a dusty old Brooklyn soda shop on a dark and dangerous street. Hanley calls his first act a *Pas de Deux*: an elderly shopkeeper and a young black fugitive perform a conversational dance on the topography of age, background, and race amid 60's mores.

Charles Howerton turns in a fine performance, marked by understatement and restraint, as a non-Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany named Mr. Glas. His counterpart, Matthew Thompson as Randall, is a jive-talkin', opinionated young renegade who masks his panic with contrived cool.

The second act becomes a *Pas de Trois* when young Rosie (Veronique Ory) enters the shop on her way to an abortion clinic. Rosie's attitudes and false bravado (not quite disguising her naiveté) bring the two men together in a sensitive effort to save her while facing their own demons.

Director Mark Thomas Boergers takes an interesting step by adding two background tango dancers to the production. Perhaps the playwright was using dance imagery as a metaphor—for the characters and their interplay—but this literal interpretation with actual dancers may not be as essential or effective. *FR*

## *Slow Dance On The Killing Ground*

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by Beth Temkin

The Athena Theatre Company's production of William Hanley's *Slow Dance on the Killing Ground* is a gloomy play with well-drawn characters, performed by a brilliant trio of actors. Two smooth dancers (Kim Parmon and Adrian Vatsky) open to seductive Argentine tango music, and the backdrop becomes a dirt-frosted shop window. The storekeeper Glas (Charles Howerton) takes inventory late at night as a young black man named Randall (Matthew Thompson) dashes into the shop. Randall has escaped from, as he puts it, the "killing ground" outside.

Wearing a hat and sunglasses, Randall speaks in rapid jive talk, asking endless questions. The conversation is mostly one-sided, as the inscrutable Glas is wary of the young stranger. Glas walks with a limp, his voice tinged with a German accent, and wears a tattoo on his arm. He does not take Randall seriously until he removes his glasses and hat. Thereafter, Randall's speech turns quite cultured. Glas repeatedly calls Randall Sonny, exacerbating Randall's Jeckle-and-Hyde personality.

The end of Act One sees Rosie (Veronique Ory) enter the bar and collapse. She hasn't eaten for 24 hours and is three hours late for her appointment to see an abortionist. Gradually, these three troubled souls from very different backgrounds become closely connected. Their confessions are softly spotlighted by Johnny Ryman, the dark mood sustained by realistic set design by Stefan Depner, as well as sensuous tango dancing between acts. *FR*



*Slow Dance on the Killing Ground's* Randall (Matthew Thompson), Glas (Charles Howerton), and Rosie (Veronique Ory). Background: Kim Parmon and Adrian Vatsky.

## Theater Review

# Jesus, Elvis team in *Heaven*

by Mary Mallory

A combination of *Forever Plaid* and *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, Jason Mershon's *Rock and Roll Heaven* is an entertaining musical comedy with campy, adult humor. Mershon, who also directs, presents 16 original songs in a variety of styles lampooning the lives, deaths, and careers of several legendary musicians.

On Christmas Day, rock and roll icons Elvis Presley (Thomas Garcia), Jimi Hendrix (Gugan Deep Singh), John Lennon (Jose Sinatra), and Janice Joplin (Allison Lynn Kramer) assemble to perform a concert in Heaven, with the blessing of Jesus Christ (Jacob Magnuson). Will Satan (John Moschitta, Jr.) shut the show down with legal tricks, or will Moses (Smokey Miles) save the day?

Several performers stand out. Karen McClain steals the show with her electric gospel singing. Magnuson brings a dry wit to the role of Jesus. Miles channels the Borscht Belt in his comic portrayal of Moses. Moschitta cackles with pleasure as the sarcastic, cunning Satan. The women possess strong, expressive singing voices, including Kramer as Joplin and Alex Spencer as Judy Garland.



*Jacob Magnuson and Smokey Miles as Jesus and Moses.*

A tad long and occasionally repetitious, *Rock and Roll Heaven* celebrates the notoriety and larger-than-life personas of famous dead musicians. It brings to life people who loved performing for the music, not the money.

The show is definitely for adult audiences, containing adult language, situations, and sexual innuendo. *FR*

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Theater Review



Anthony DiNovi, Doug Newell, Vonessa Martin, and Ammar Mahmood.

## Throat delivers message

by Gail Roberts

Acclaimed Arab-American playwright Yusef El Guindi's post-9/11 piece *Back Of The Throat* covers the territory of fear, both American and Middle Eastern, racial prejudice, and the present state of civil liberties.

The cast of five, directed by Damaso Rodriguez, takes on the demanding material with great skill and commitment. Ammar Mahmood, in the lead role as a young Arab-American writer named Khaled, captures his character's journey from naive and mild-mannered, to fearful and resistant, to outraged and panicked as he recognizes the gravity of his interrogation. When he argues that he is being falsely accused, he's told, "At no time should you think this is an ethnic thing. Your ethnicity has nothing to do with it other than the fact that your background happens to be the place where most of this crap is coming from. So naturally the focus is going to be on you. It's not profiling, it's deduction."

Anthony DiNovi carries off his primary Intelligence Agent role smoothly, although DiNovi probably has an edge—his cast bio indicates he was, in his own life, an Army intelligence analyst involved with Middle East Operations. Doug Newell turns in an interesting performance as the other intelligence agent and Vonessa Martin is impressive in three, diverse female roles.

*Back Of The Throat* now playing at Pasadena Playhouse's Balcony Theatre, can be, at times, intentionally uncomfortable and disturbing. But it also delivers comedic moments and incisive dialogue in presenting a powerful and thought-provoking message. *FR*

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Doug Newell and Ammar Mahmood in *Back of the Throat*  
Photos by Anthony Masters.

Restaurant Review

## Sky's the limit at Typhoon



Dining with  
Shirley Firestone

Typhoon is one of the most creative restaurants that I have been to. It's a hangout for airline pilots and appreciators of Pan-Asian food, as well as diners who love the atmosphere and energy one feels from the moment they enter. The eclectic menu features delicacies from Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Burma and the Philippines—rated "mild," "sunny," or "heat wave," so tell your waiter in advance how hot you like to trot. Located near the Santa Monica Airport, the concept of this place is air travel, and it might even resemble an officers club, starting with a gorgeous mirrored weather map as a backdrop to the colorful bar.

One can walk out on the deck for a panoramic view, or watch through walls of glass as planes take-off and land. You can take an elevator or stairway to the entrance, or go one more floor to "The Hump" for some of the best sushi in California. At times voluminous vocal chords clash with background music, but you can fasten your gustatory seat belt for some innovative cooking.

Seating choices include padded booths with candlelight under personal chandeliers and ceiling spots. For an amusing sight, look for the colorful, three-dimensional, blown-up crickets on a portion of ceiling. Other seating can be had at wooden tables and chairs, or mushroom stands with stools nearest the display

kitchen. Although the place has a casual familiarity about it, the huge platters are served with panache! That's when dining becomes an event.

The most memorable dish is their catfish, the best preparation that I can remember since my trip on a Mississippi river boat many years ago. The entire fish is deep fried, with a choice of Szechwan or Black bean sauce. Most of the fresh fish is presented whole because it attains a better flavor cooked with the bone in. You might find the Asians fighting over the cheeks of the fish, the way some of us go for the drumstick on a turkey! But their newest delightful item is the humongous, deep-fried, four-to-five pound lobster, gorgeously crusted and marvelous to the bite. It's my latest favorite on the menu.

I'm partial to their rice dish with vegetables, pineapple and chicken, as well as the Pad Thai noodles, (with egg, shrimp, bean sprouts & peanuts). Another noodle dish is the Pad See Ew (wide noodles with broccoli and chicken). More exotic palates might be lured to Taiwanese stir-fried crickets with raw garlic, chili peppers, and Asian basil. The Manchurian ants sprinkled on potato strings are popular, as are Thai style, white sea worms crisply fried on spinach leaves with ginger, chili pepper, pea-

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nuts, and lime. Or, perhaps frog legs! You just don't see too much of that around, and although it's not my kind of dish, I saw people ordering it.

I counted 14 hot appetizers, including grilled Taiwanese sausage. And the kitchen prepares a unique salmon filet, wrapped in banana leaves with Typhoon tartar sauce. A couple of chicken dishes got my attention: one was made Filipino style, and another was a steamed 1/2 chicken, served with a soy ginger sauce. I think you could have fun with four people splitting four entrees, because the portions are large and it would be nice to taste a variety of items. The minced chicken lettuce cups, loaded with pine nuts, are excellent starters.

Vidor, the owner, flies helicopters and also fixes winged aircraft, and although he furnishes tie-down spaces at the restaurant for pilots flying in, "there's no valet service!" *FR*



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## Restaurant Review

# Seaweed greener at Aqua



Dining with  
**Shirley Firestone**

Confucius said, “The enjoyment of food is one of the beautiful and gentle things that contribute to the peace and harmony of society.” ...Which brings me to my latest dining experience.

The new Aqua Restaurant and Lounge on the former site of Larry Flynt’s Hustler Club in Beverly Hills is cosmopolitanly stylish and handsome, with an entrance that makes you think “wow!” It reeks with nostalgia for the Sunset Strip of the 40’s, crying out for vintage glamour, feathers and boas in this air of sophisticated sensuality. Some might imagine a speak-easy of the 20’s, with fabulous libations, excellent dining, dancing—and a spot that deserves to be called one of the hottest places in town. Although not overly large, the clever design is compact, and there’s lots of room for a dance floor, two spacious bars, and a luscious VIP room for more privacy, along with a full stage for entertainment.

There are walls of bubbly water tanks reminding us that the name of this place is Aqua. Even the entrance at the bottom of the stairs has surprises, like the waterfall and humongous fish tank, followed by more undersea visuals inside. In addition, the four sections of beautiful velvet lounges are comfortable for snacking with drinks or dining on an excellent fusion of Hawaiian/Pacific Rim cuisine created by Chef Ian Kleinman. Some might call this new supper club a revival of class, and as they say when overwhelmed, “VaVaVoom!”

The sidewalk doorway to Aqua sort of blends into the structures along Beverly Drive, and one could easily drive past without seeing it. Although it’s part of the Beverly Hills scene, it might as well be on another planet because there’s nothing like it

around. I’m sure a bunch of cookie-cutters will be popping up shortly.

And kudos to the working owners, three classy gents, Peter Pocsaji, David Ross, and Solomon Moskovich whose “savoir-faire” trickles down to expertly trained service people who truly enjoy being helpful.

After entering, the first thing noticeable is the luxurious surroundings under professional lighting, and spiffy orchids on each table, over black linens. The chef has a changeable bistro type menu of “small” plates, generous enough for two as appetizers, in addition to the “big” plate entrees.

My choices were geared for several small plates, especially the chef’s signature shrimp phyllo rolls with citrus risotto, prepared in a cider reduction. Another of my selections was the goat cheese wontons filled with dried cherries, goat cheese, and scallions. They’re fried and served with tomato jam. An unusual seared Hawaiian “Walu” (fish) flown in from Hawaii was my third small plate, (topped with mangos and flying fish roe). Although I didn’t order any meat dishes, the menu listed Kobe beef sliders with spicy bacon and cheese sauce, roasted short rib, (slow roasted for 14 hours) with potato pancakes, and Asian beef ceviche with plantain chips. Some of the unusual tacos were filled with “Tuna Poke” and seaweed salad. Another was completed with “unagi” (eel) dressed in caramelized shallots and guacamole. The crispy lump crab cakes with avocado relish would have been my next course, but it was important to leave room for one of the “big” plates of Tasmanian salmon (flown in



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daily). It was pan-seared and served with Asian vegetables, finished with Ponzu sauce (made from sake, mirin, soy, and yuzu).

Other big dishes included organic chicken, pasta, truffle risotto with lobster custard, and Hawaiian Sunfish sided with corn polenta. In addition to Colorado Lamb T-bone with salad Nicoise, there was New York steak with mushrooms, onions and peppers on Olive bread.

It’s fair to mention that the kitchen is still being organized and new items will be added. But I’m sure they will keep the magnificent dessert of toasted Cashew ice cream over a warm rum-syrup-baked pineapple.

Think of it as a place to put romance back in your relationship. If it doesn’t work, at least you’ll have a terrific meal! ☺

Community

# Big eaters in Little China

*Fear and gluttony at the Chinese Food Festival*

by Clayson DeBurger

While the Los Angeles Film Festival and Erotica LA were drawing crowds this weekend, a much different festival unfolded in our very own Chinatown. The 3rd Annual Chinese Food Festival, which took place from June 24-25, still has some kinks to work out, but any festival that offers karaoke, Shaolin monks, and a noodle-eating contest can't be all bad.


Located on North Broadway in the heart of Chinatown, the festival attracted patrons with one desire in common: FOOD! Several of Chinatown's mainstay establishments opened stands at the festival, including dim sum powerhouse Empress Pavilion, Hop Woo restaurant, and the boba chain Lollicup. With everything priced at \$3.00 or below (and most at a buck!), food favorites included a Chinese breakfast stand selling salty eggs and soybean soup, and the Kien Giang Bakery stand featuring the authentic delicacy of Chinese donuts filled with... hot dogs. Other appetizing specialties included coconut tapioca with yam and taro root, a Tsingtao beer garden, and fried squid.

Aside from the food, the festival offered cooking demos such as The Art of Dim Sum and How to Make a Traditional Moon Cake. For entertainment, the Shaolin monks were on hand for performances throughout the day. Meanwhile, teenage girls lined up to perform Céline Dion impressions by the dozens. And no Chinese festival would be complete without a casino.

But nothing captivated of the stuffed and sweltering crowd as much as Chinatown Fear Factor, where 12 eagerly foolish contestants competed by devouring such delicacies as 1,000-year-old eggs, jellyfish, and seaweed. The highlight of the competition was a cheating granny who started to cram jellyfish in her mouth well before the race began. She didn't win, but was presented with a giant fortune cookie as her consolation prize. ☞



photos by Cecilia Tsai



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## A Week to Remember



Hollywood Beat with  
Marcie Weiner

It hasn't been a good year for Farrah Fawcett. Several months ago she attended the Memorial Services for comedian Rodney Dangerfield and just a few weeks ago, one for her former agent and best friend, Jay Bernstein. We were at Rodney's memorial given at the hilltop home of his beautiful widow Joan, where Farrah led the mourners by setting free a flock of butterflies to release his indomitable spirit. At last, Rodney received the respect he deserved.

At Jay's Memorial, held at the Polo Lounge (Jay's favorite watering hole) Dr. Susan Stafford officiated at a love-in which brought scads of celebs and friends of the late, great mega agent to the stars. Present was Jay's adorable daughter, Amber, along with her mom, Simona and Grandma from Austria. They were joined by the legendary A.C. Lyles and Jay's longtime mentor, Warren Cowan, who said there will be an other Memorial for Jay on June 29<sup>th</sup> at Paramount studios.

Okay, maybe Geena Davis is no longer Madame President on the cancelled TV series *Commander in Chief*, but she triumphed at the Women in Film Crystal Awards, when she received their Lucy Award, named in honor of the late Lucille Ball. As Gina stated, "This is really special for me. I have

seen Meryl Streep and incredible people get this award, and it is thrilling to be included." Geena is also to be lauded for her work with the Facing Forward Foundation; an LA based non profit volunteer medical organization, committed to treating children with severe craniofacial deformities.

Others honored at Women in Film included Jennifer Lopez, for her strong portrayal of women. The inimitable Lopez stated, "I already have a love affair with diamonds, and now with crystal as well." The theme of the event was Film Brings Us the World, and highlighted the entrance of the new Women in Film President, Cici Holloway.

And last, but not least, in a very busy week, Jean-Michel Cousteau, Carol Connors and Barbi Benton were recipients of top honors at a major fundraiser for Reef Check at the home of Suzanne Hughes in Beverly Hills. Cousteau gave a passionate speech about the importance of preserving the world's most precious treasures.

Some of the celebs in attendance included David Chokachi, Kelly Hu, Marilyn McCoo & Billy Davis Jr., former Mousketeer Cheryl Post (who was honorary chairman of the event along with philanthropist Mara Beltrami New, who are to be lauded for their contributions to marine conservation. A most worthwhile event on the Hollywood Beat. ☞

## A Worthy ghost story

by Sean Reynolds

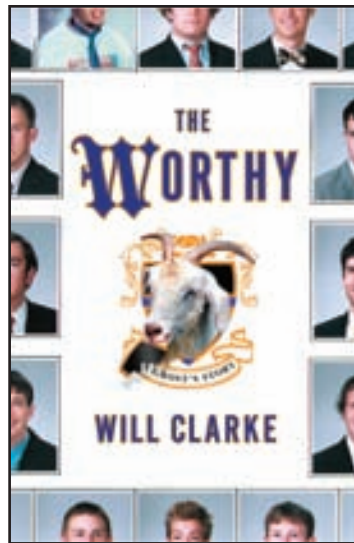
Will Clarke's sophomore novel, *The Worthy: A Ghost Story*, is set against the corrupt and vile pursuits of lust and revenge concealed behind the fresh paint, polished wood and shining brass fixtures of a college fraternity house. Clarke walks and—at times—shoves the reader down the shadowy, carpeted halls of the Louisiana State University (LSU) fraternity, Gamma Chi (a fabricated association), with dark humor, stunning irreverence, and stinging social commentary. *The Worthy* is a pleasantly uncomfortable and outrageously funny read.

Clarke has fashioned a tale from the ragged threads of society's bleakest deficiencies, and illuminated them by the faithful lamp of their virtuous aspirations. The story is compelling and savagely humorous. But Clarke's balance of structure, attention to detail, and sublime cast of characters make *The Worthy* a fine American novel, reminiscent of the introspection of Ken Kesey and the biting humor of Chuck Palahniuk.

The story spins around a handsome, young, affluent Gamma Chi legacy named Conrad Avery Sutton III. "I won't lie, I had it pretty good," Conrad explains. "The Porsche, the pretty girls, and a trust fund full of oil money."

At nineteen Conrad has a great life except that he is dead. He has been violently disposed of by the antagonist of the tale, Ryan Hutchins. Ryan is solidly placed on the dark side. His resume of wickedness is flawless. He is a murderer, torturer, misogynist, drug addict, rapist and all those things that drift up from the chaos of vanity and ego. Conrad vows to avenge his death by possessing the bodies of other LSU students.

The problem is he's not sure how life after death works. He must wait until his hosts are at a disadvantage—when they are intoxicated or emotionally unhinged (which



happens often amidst the college crowd)—so he can force his way into their bodies and operate like a teenager on a joy ride. His vehicle of choice is a large farm-boy pledge named Tucker who idolizes Ryan as the Big Man on Campus. Tucker is huge and kindhearted and delivers a hearty punch when possessed. Unfortunately, Conrad cannot control the durations of his possessions, and he is ejected at some awkward moments. Tucker awakens miles from the campus, without the faintest idea



Will Clarke

where he is or any recollection of having beaten the dust out of Ryan. This complicates Tucker's life immensely, and it's up to Conrad to protect him.

Conrad wants desperately to right the many wrongs that Ryan has levied upon his classmates, but something unassailable blocks his path—Gamma Chi's cook, Miss Etta. She bakes lemon pies that can save souls. She can also see and talk to Conrad, and she advises him on his life after death. Miss Etta is one of a fine group of characters adding depth and complexity

of *The Worthy*. Clarke uses her stream of adolescent aggression with a benevolent voice of reason, served up with backhanded compassion.

Conrad is insulated from the atrocities of the living. Voyeuristic, yet detached and preparing for revenge, he is the perfect guide to the various crimes of the disturbed fraternity. Clarke struggles to depict the moral responsibilities of the deceased, but the conceit is the perfect way to navigate the ritualistic abuse at the hands of the fraternity's trusted leaders.

Through a haze of speculation and revelation, Clarke questions society's intentions. Conrad says, "I'm here to tell you, forgiveness is highly overrated. In principle it sounds good, but in practice, revenge is the only way to pay the bills." Clarke sketches an evocative portrait of university culture, contrasting the LSU/Ole Miss Halloween football rivalry with the still life of Conrad's bedroom, untouched after his death, including a Wilco movie poster adorning the wall, an iMac and a worn-out copy of *Fight Club*.

*The Worthy: A Ghost Story* has been optioned for film by Sony Pictures. Clarke has written the screenplay, and Douglas Wick and Bobby Cohen, producing partners on *Jarhead* and *Memoirs of a Geisha*, plan to bring it to the screen. His debut novel, *Lord Vishnu's Love Handles: A Spy Novel (Sort Of)*, was purchased by Paramount Pictures. ☞

Will Clarke will appear at  
Book Soup in Los Angeles  
on July 14<sup>th</sup>, at 7 PM,  
8818 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood  
For more information:  
[www.BookSoup.com](http://www.BookSoup.com)

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## Opinions, observations, & aphorisms



My Town with  
**Michael Levine**

\*Occasionally some democrats sound like they hate President Bush more than they do Osama Bin Laden.

\*We are living in an age of dismal customer service, but even with that said Best Buy is the worst of the worst. Getting them to answer a simple phone call is like pushing a wet mattress up a spiral staircase.

\*Movie producer Gray Fredrickson is writing a book about what it takes to break in the Hollywood industry.

\*Rocket Video on La Brea is a fun place but their late fees are outrageous.

\*Former L.A. City Councilman Nate Holden is now President of the Marina City Homeowners Association. He is also writing a book about inside politics and it should be fascinating.

\*A brand in need of updating: Ben and Jerry's ice cream.

\*Fire your flaky friends and you will change your life radically, instantly and permanently.

\*If an alien wanted to understand the Beatles' unique magic and could only listen to one song, I would recommend, "A Day in the Life." Living is easy with eyes closed.

\*The acclaimed documentary filmmaker Patrick Shen now turns his lens to the art of "pitching" in Hollywood.

\*Howard Stern can occasionally be entertaining on the radio with the thoughts that tumble in his head, making and breaking alliances like underpants in a dryer without cling-free. The problem is I have a distinct feeling I'm losing brain cells every second I hear him.

\*My friend complains that his ex-wife had a "deep, throaty laugh, like the sound a dog makes just before it throws up."

\*Watching Ann Coulter screech is enough to make a grown man cry.

\*Let's face it, anytime you have to bring your car to an auto shop, it is not fun and the experience can be draining. That said, for years I have found Harry's

Auto Body on La Brea to be extraordinary pros with an accommodating attitude that is the secret to their success.

\*Several people in the media describe John Tess as a blonde Frankenstein.

\*It's hard to argue that the smartest man in America is Thomas Friedman for the *New York Times*.

\*When I'm at a coffee shop I can always tell the customers who are not from NY. The ones standing in line gazing around as if they have all the time in the world, with the sense of urgency of a turtle, are not from the Big Apple.

\*Santa Monica has agreed to buy the Sears auto store at Colorado and 4th streets with an eye toward bringing the Exposition light rail line there.

\*MSNBC is getting a divorce from the *Connie Chung/Maury Povich* team. The Saturday chat experiment, "Week ends with Connie and Maury," didn't work out and will come to a merciful end.

\*Controller Laura Chick says her staff has discovered that vendors owe the city close to \$500,000 in outstanding payments.

\*I'd rather laugh with the sinners than die with the saints.

\*Things you can count on in L.A.: 1. Horrible traffic on the 405. 2. Long line of customers at Pinks Hotdogs on La Brea. 3. Slow service at The Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf. 4. Consistently great pizza at Louise's Trattoria.

\*Unfortunately radio legend Ira Fistell is no longer on KBC on week-ends. Neither is Kim Serefin, bless fully.

\*If there's a finer Italian restaurant in NYC than Sandomenico, I don't know of it.

\*Club of Intriguing People, Places and things: Al Gore, Mark Peel of Campanile, and Producer Stacy Eckstein.

\*Club of Tiresome People, Places and things: Keith Oberman, Vice-President Dick Cheney, and Closet Factory. ♪

Michael Levine is the founder of the celebrated PR firm, LCO-Levine Communications Office.  
[www.LCOonline.com](http://www.LCOonline.com)



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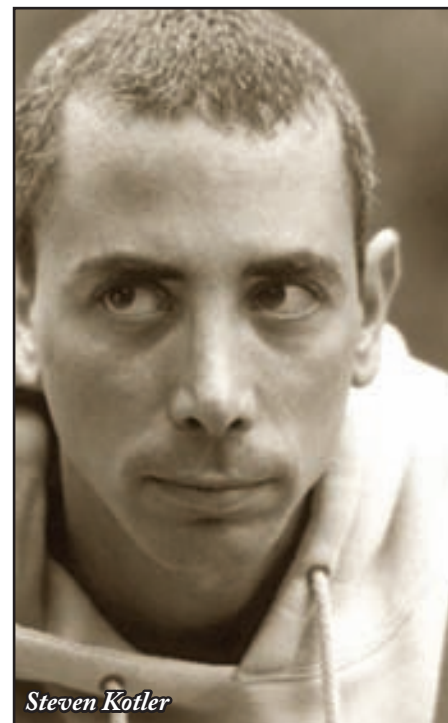
Column

# Chatting with a curious man



Hollywood Insider  
Dawn Miller

(though, I think, four of those actually made it into the book).



Steven Kotler

Steven Kotler is a freelance writer who has been published in the *New York Times*, *GQ*, *Details*, *Variety*, and many others. His second book *West of Jesus: Surfing, Science and the Origin of Belief* was released June 13th by Bloomsbury.

**Do you have any tips or advice for those looking to get into your industry?**

Get really comfortable with uncertainty. Don't be afraid of being poor. Don't be afraid to be stupid. Play to your strengths—figure out 10 subjects that get you really excited and learn everything you can about them. Work three times as hard as anyone you know. At the moment you think you understand a subject, know that you've just scratched the surface—so call ten more experts and read five more books. Figure out how to be funny—a lot of people can write, not all of them can be funny when they do so. In graduate school, John Barth told me, "You can never have too many arrows in your quiver." He meant, "Know how to write in dozens of styles about dozens of subjects because you'll need to use all of that before it's over." It was great advice. Find other writers who do things with language that astound you, figure out what they're doing and try to do that with your own flair. Over time, your own version of their voice will emerge. Do that dozens of times and sooner or later you'll find your own voice. Most importantly, if you want to be a writer: love the words.

**Describe your typical day.**

When I'm not traveling, it's nothing fancy. I get up ridiculously early. Then I write, read, surf, hang out with my dog, ask strangers questions, write some more, read some more, try to spend time with the people I love, and then go to sleep.

**What was your first job?**

I started working when I was eleven. I was a magician—coin tricks, card tricks, that sort of thing—for kids' birthday parties at a restaurant in Cleveland, Ohio. Why they hired an eleven year old is still a puzzle I'm trying to solve.

**What do you like most about your job?**

I'm an insanely curious person. Every time I get curious about a subject, I have an excuse to call the world's leading experts and ask questions. Since I like being in the deep end of the pool, the subject is often something fairly complicated. Because I don't mind feeling stupid, I get to ask these experts to explain things to me as if I was a five year old. Because I'm a journalist—and this part still amazes me—they do.

**What is the most interesting project you have worked on?**

Right now I'm pretty partial to my latest book. Primarily because it ties together much of what I've spent the past decade trying to learn, both in terms of writing style and intellectual pursuits. Plus, I'm an adventure junky and writing meant fumbling my way through five continents

**Who are some of your influences?**

I'm a big fan of influences: Joan Didion, John McPhee, Tom Wolfe, Elizabeth Gilbert, Tom Junot, Charles Pierce, Thomas Pynchon, Rob Schutten, James Salter, Malcolm Gladwell, David Quammen, Tim Cahill, Bruce Chatwin, Ryszard Kapuscinski, Martin Amis, Don DeLillo, Michael Cunningham, E. Annie Proulx, Rick Moody, Michael Thomas, Susan Orlean, Sam Harris, Richard Manning, William Gibson—for starters.

**How do you spend your time out of work?**

I don't really think in those terms. The only thing I know for certain is that I get one shot at this life, so I try to fill that life with things I'm passionate about. Whether or not I'm getting paid for those things is a lot less important.

**What are some current projects that you're working on?**

I'm better when I'm busy, so this week it's a story about the FBI for *New York Magazine*, a ski story for *Skiing*, a primate story for *National Geographic Adventure*, an animal emotion story for *Psychology Today*, a screenwriter story for *Variety*, and I'm starting to work on the idea for my next book, which right now means learning about the neuroscience of altruism.

**What book are you currently reading?**

I read in batches, usually rotating through four or five books depending on my mood. These days it's *American Thracacy* by Kevin Phillips; *Finishing Touches* by Deanna Kizis; *Affective Neuroscience* by Jaak Panksepp; *Eat, Pray, Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert; and *The Singularity is Near* by Ray Kurzweil. ♪

# Now Playing: Capsule reviews from of Entertainment Insiders

## Capsule Authors:

WC – Warren Curry

JG – Janos Gereben

MG – Michael Guillén

JH – Jonathan W. Hickman

EL – Eric Lurio

SM – Scott Mantz

### *The Break-Up*

\*\* (PG-13) One might be so inclined to walk into a screening of “The Break-Up” thinking that the title says it all. Except in this case, it doesn’t. Now if the film had the more appropriate title of “The Argument,” then that would have been more like it. (SM)

AMC Loews Universal City 18 & IMAX, The Grove, AMC Century City 14, Arclight, Pacific Culver Stadium 12, Pacific Galleria Stadium 16, AMC Santa Monica 7, AMC Burbank 16, AMC Media Center 8, Mann Glendale Exchange 10, Plant 16, Laemmle’s One Colorado, Pacific Paseo Stadium 14

### *Cars* \*\*\* 1/2 (PG 13)

Pixar is unique in the history of movies. It’s the only studio not to have ever produced a flop. Even Walt Disney himself during his heyday would produce the occasional financial disaster. But not Pixar. The only bad movie they ever produced was a short called “Boundin” and that doesn’t really count, which leaves expectations so high as to cause breathing trouble to see them up close. (EL)

AMC Loews Universal City 18 & IMAX, Pacific El Capitan, AMC Century City 14, Pacific Galleria Stadium 16, AMC Santa Monica 7, Century 8, AMC Burbank 16, AMC Media Center 8, AMC Media Center North 16, Mann Glendale Marketplace 4, Mann Glendale Exchange 10, Laemmle’s One Colorado Cinemas, Pacific Paseo Stadium 14

### *Click* \*\* (PG-13)

Since a magical remote control turns out to be the cause of Adam Sandler’s problems in his latest comedy, I couldn’t help but hope that a real fast-forward button would appear out of nowhere and bail me out of the last 40 minutes. That’s because despite an amusing set-up that aims higher than you’d expect from a Sandler comedy, “Click” tunes out with an ending that’s sappy, redundant and

not nearly as funny as the hour or so that preceded it. (SM)  
AMC Loews Universal City 18 & IMAX, The Grove, AMC Century City 14, Arclight, Pacific Culver Stadium 12, Pacific Galleria Stadium 16, Mann Criterion 6 Theatres, Century 8, AMC Burbank 16, AMC Media Center 8, AMC Media Center North 6, Mann Glendale Exchange 10, Pacific Beach Cities Stadium 16, Plant 16, Laemmle’s One Colorado Cinemas, Pacific Paseo Stadium 14

### *Da Vinci Code, The* \*\*1/2

(PG-13) Time to state the obvious: the movie was NEVER going to be as good as the book and everyone knows it. Remember the first Harry Potter film or “Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil.” Both were fine films, but you can’t do things as nuanced as some novels and remain faithful unless you’ve got a miniseries lasting a total of four or five hours. This is not to say that Akiva Goldsman and Ron Howard don’t TRY. They did a damn fine job of doing an almost exact transcription of the Dan Brown novel, but the simple fact is that the book was at it’s best when expectorating conspiracy theories than doing chases. (EL)  
The Grove, Arclight, Pacific Galleria Stadium 16, AMC Burbank 16, AMC Glendale Exchange 10, UA Marina Del Rey 6, AMC Santa Monica 7

### *Devil Wears Prada* \*\*\* (PG-13)

For full review please see p.14. Arclight, AMC Loews Universal City 18 & IMAX, The Grove, AMC Century City 14, Pacific Culver Stadium 12, Los Feliz 3, The Bridge: Cinema de Lux, Laemmle Grande 4 Plex, AMC Loews Marina 6, Pacific Galleria Stadium 16, AMC Loews Broadway 4, Century 8, AMC Burbank 16, AMC Media Center North 6, Mann Glendale Marketplace 4, Plant 16, Laemmle’s One Colorado Cinemas, Pacific Paseo Stadium 14

### *Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift* \*\* (PG-13)

We know that the “third” sequel had to be made. The first two were to some extent hits, and so the studio really had no choice in the matter. The big question is does “F&F 3” have anything that qualifies as a script. The answer sadly, is no. (EL)  
AMC Loews Universal City 18 & IMAX, The Grove, Mann Chinese 6, Laemmle Grande 4 Plex, Pacific Galleria Stadium 16, Century 8, AMC Burbank 16, AMC Media Center 8, Mann Glendale Exchange 10, Pacific Paseo Stadium 14

*Friends With Money* \*\*1/2 (R) With Jennifer Aniston, Frances McDormand, Catherine Keener and Joan Cusack. An episodic, fairly enjoyable movie, but never raises its stakes high enough to become truly absorbing. Holofcener declines to deeply venture into her characters’ trials and tribulations. She opts instead to sugarcoat the film with a litany of whimsical scenes that offer mild amusement. (WC)  
Laemmle Music Hall, Academy 6 Theater

### *Heart of the Game, The* \*\*\*\* (PG-13)

*The Heart of the Game* is a terribly inspiring documentary that’s about more than Darnellia’s story, it’s a story about a coach with odd ideas about basketball and a heart big enough to overcome the odds. That coach, Bill Resler, comes from the oddest of places: a college tax class. As a college taxation professor, Resler immersed himself in the Internal Revenue Code, a world of numbers and black and white answers. But behind his white beard and growing pot belly hid a passion for the game of hoops. One day, Resler decided to apply for the head coaching job of a high school girls’ basketball team. (JH)  
Landmark NuWilshire Theatre

### *An Inconvenient Truth*

\*\*\*\* (PG) Is Al Gore is doing a Chicken Little act in *An Inconvenient Truth*? I wish he were. This stunning documentary about global warming is a well-reasoned, clearly-proven, intelligent, cogent, irresistible torrent of scientific data, in a curiously warm, engaging, often funny presentation. What an entertaining horror movie this is! (JG)  
AMC Century City 14, Arclight, Los Feliz 3, Pacific Galleria Stadium 16, Laemmle Monica 4, AMC Media Center North 6, Laemmle Playhouse 7

### *Keeping Up With The Steins* \*\* (PG-13)

The Bar Mitzvah (Hebrew for “first blessing”), is one of the most important ceremonies in the Jewish religion. In olden times, the 13-year-old boy, would come up to read the torah at the synagogue for the

first time. Then he would be given a party prior to being kicked out of the house and forced to get a job. (EL)  
Laemmle Music Hall, Academy 6

### *The Lake House* \*\*1/2 (PG)

Ya gotta have a gimmick, as they say. And “The Lake House’s” got it. Here it’s magic dog of sorts working for the postal service that somehow creates a time warp allowing architect Alex Wyler (Keanu Reeves) to correspond with Doctor Kate Forster (Sandra Bullock). Forster just happens to live in the future. Not all that far in the future, however, about two years to be exact. And as luck would have it they live in the same house. In Forster’s future Alex moved out well before. (EL)

AMC Loews Universal City 18 & IMAX, The Grove, AMC Century City 14, Arclight, Pacific Galleria Stadium 16, Pacific Sherman oaks 5, Mann Criterion 6 Theatres, Century 8, AMC Burbank 16, AMC Media Center North 6, Mann Glendale Exchange 10, Plant 16, Laemmle’s One Colorado Cinemas, Pacific Paseo Stadium 14, UA Marina Del Rey 6

### *Leonard Cohen: I’m Your Man* \*\*\* (PG-13)

This concert documentary gathers solid interviews, anecdotes, recitations and tribute performances that present a fairly engaging portrait of the wry, dark poet who became a distinct voice in pop music. Unlikely to appeal much beyond Cohen’s loyal fans or bring converts to the brooding whimsy and dense wordplay of his songs. But the reclusive Cohen offers warm and amusing recollections. –David Germain, AP  
Laemmle Sunset 5, Laemmle Monica 4

### *Loverboy* \*\*1/2 (R)

Even devoted fans of “Loverboy,” based on Victoria Redel’s novel and directed by veteran actor Kevin Bacon, will have to admit it’s a mess of a movie. With a tone so uneven and scattered that you can almost (but not quite) believe it’s actually what the director intended, *Loverboy* is an odd little movie... but not always in a good way. Primarily a vehicle for Bacon’s wife Kyra Sedgwick to dive into what has to be the most bizarre role of her career, the film sputters in more than a few spots, yet its quirkiness manages to

keep you intrigued to some degree. (WC)  
Laemmle Sunset 5

### *Nacho Libre* \*\* (PG)

Jared Hess’ sporadically funny “Nacho Libre” is a messy film carried through on the misanthropic charisma of its lead Jack Black. Lots of unique sketch type comedy can’t make this incomplete story work. And this despite some inspired moments from anti-star Black. (JH)

AMC Loews Universal City 18 & IMAX, The Grove, AMC Century City 14, Mann Chinese 6, Pacific Culver Stadium 12, Mann Los Feliz 3, Pacific Galleria Stadium 16, Century 8, AMC Burbank 16, AMC Media Center 8, Mann Glendale Marketplace 4, Plant 16, Laemmle’s One Colorado Cinemas, Pacific Paseo Stadium 14, UA Marina Del Rey 6, AMC Santa Monica 7

*The Omen 2006* \*\*\* (R) is an awfully good film. Surprisingly, it exceeds its predecessor but could not have been made without it. Though it has been a while since I’ve seen the Richard Donner directed original, I believe that the 2006 remake is fairly faithful to its source. But instead of feeling like a dirty impostor (ala Van Sant’s technically excellent but something missing *Psycho*), this version is sleeker and more consistently entertaining than the first. (JH)

AMC Loews Universal City 18 & IMAX, The Grove, Pacific Sherman Oaks 5, Mann Criterion 6, AMC Media Center 8, Plant 16, Academy 6 Theater, UA Marina Del Rey 6

### *Over The Hedge* \*\*\* (PG)

Between the controversy surrounding its subject matter, the popularity of its star and the fact that just about everyone on the planet has already read the book, theater owners can finally count on getting that big opening weekend they’ve been waiting for. And if “The Da Vinci Code” doesn’t do it for them, then “Over the Hedge” probably will. That’s because the computer-animated big screen adaptation of the popular comic strip series created by Michael Fry and T Lewis is a clever, charming and often funny movie that the whole family can enjoy. (SM)  
Mann Culver Plaza 6 Theatres

see LISTINGS p. 17

# Looks like a job for *Superman*



Brandon Routh is Hollywood's latest Man of Steel.

## SUPERMAN RETURNS

★★★☆☆  
(3 out of 4 stars)

DIRECTED BY BRYAN SINGER  
STARRING: BRANDON ROUTH,  
KATE BOSWORTH, KEVIN SPACEY  
154 MINUTES, RATED PG-13

by Scott Mantz

Nineteen years after the last son of Krypton flew off into the cinematic sunset with *Superman IV: The Quest for Peace*, and despite more than a decade of development kryptonite (during which Tim Burton, Kevin Smith and Brett Ratner all failed to resurrect the franchise), the DC Comics icon is finally up, up and...back on the big screen.

But does the big screen still need a Superman? Since 1978, when the first, Richard Donner-directed *Superman* ushered in the era of blockbuster comic book movies, other superhero franchises like *Spider-Man*, *X-Men* and

*Batman* swooped in to dominate the box office and rewrite the book on how movies like these should be made. Besides, Superman, or rather his alter-ego, Clark Kent, is doing just fine on the small screen with *Smallville*, which is now in its fifth season.

But in an effort to do for the Man of Steel what last year's *Batman Begins* did for the Dark Knight, Warner Bros. gave the keys to the kingdom to director Bryan Singer, whose critical and commercial success with the first two *X-Men* films proved that he was the right man for the job. (And how ironic that Brett Ratner, who was supposed to direct *Superman* at one point, stepped into Singer's shoes to direct the third *X-Men*). But resurrecting an iconic franchise can be a lot harder than starting one from scratch, and even an experienced director like Singer must have felt some pressure to deliver the goods on a highly anticipated summer

tent pole that carried a reported budget of around \$300 million.

The good news is that *Superman Returns* is a very good movie—it's not quite super, but it's definitely good. It's exciting and emotionally engaging, and Singer's clever device to link to previous Superman films by incorporating John Williams' theme music, familiar dialogue, and unused footage of Marlon Brando will surely give longtime fans the chills. But by relying so heavily on references to the first two classic films, it invites comparisons that it simply cannot live up to. And with a running time of 2 1/2 hours (making it the longest "Superman" yet), it doesn't exactly move faster than a speeding bullet.

Kal-El, a.k.a. Superman (Brandon Routh), comes back to earth after a 5-year absence, during which the people of Metropolis have moved on without him—particularly

Daily Planet star reporter Lois Lane (Kate Bosworth), who now has a young son and is engaged to the editor's nephew (James Marsden, who performed the role of Cyclops in the "X-Men" films). But when his archenemy Lex Luthor (Kevin Spacey) once again unveils an affinity for beachfront property and a plan that will kill billions of innocent people, Superman faces his greatest challenge yet, while at the same time trying to win back the trust of the public and the heart of the woman he loves.

The film takes full advantage of today's special effects with some visually stunning moments—partic-

ularly early on, when Superman saves a passenger jet carrying Lois Lane from crashing into a baseball stadium—but *Superman Returns* is a love story first and an action movie second. In fact, it might be



Kate Bosworth as Lois Lane

too much of a chick flick. There's not enough action and the film drags to a somewhat anticlimactic conclusion, but the trade-off is a more sensitive and emotionally vulnerable Superman than we've seen before.

While newcomer Brandon Routh does a fine job of filling Superman's upgraded red-and-blue tights, his performance is just not as dynamic as the one given by the late great Christopher Reeve. He's got the look, but he doesn't have the magic touch. Reeve was charming as the bumbling, clumsy Clark Kent, and he had that irresistible twinkle in his eye as Superman, but Routh, while passable, comes across as a bit stiff in both parts.

Kate Bosworth fares better as the lovelorn Lois Lane, if only because Margot Kidder's shoes weren't as big to fill. But where Gene Hackman effortlessly played Lex Luthor as the type of villain you love to hate, Kevin Spacey tries too hard to steal his scenes as a darker and more violent version of Superman's archenemy (particularly during a brutal scene, where Superman is beaten to within an inch of his life).

Parker Posey provides some comic relief in what is basically a retread of the Miss Teschmacher role that Valerie Perrine played in the first two films, while Frank Langella plays a more level-headed version of Perry White, the role Jackie Cooper nailed in the earlier movies.



Kevin Spacey as Lex Luthor

Despite numerous references to Superman's past, director Singer (who also cowrote the story with screenplay writers Michael Dougherty and Dan Harris) leaves his own unmistakable imprint on *Superman Returns*. Just as he did with the mutants in the *X-Men* movies, Singer depicts Superman as an outcast trying to come to terms with who he is and where he belongs.

Singer is more overt with the religious allegories that have long been linked to Superman, as references to sacrifice, death and resurrection become hard to ignore.

So does the big screen still need a Superman? The answer is a resounding yes. It may take itself a little too seriously, and the love story tends to overwhelm the gee-whiz fun of it all, but Superman is finally back on the big screen, and really, that's all that matters. And since *Superman Returns* leaves the door open for a sequel (and maybe even a spin-off), it looks like he'll be fighting for truth, justice and all that other stuff for many years to come. *R*

Reviews by Scott Mantz appear courtesy of *Entertainment Insiders*. For more reviews by Scott Mantz go to: [www.EInsiders.com](http://www.EInsiders.com)

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# Streep wears *Prada* devilishly well

## THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA

★★★★☆  
(3 out of 4 stars)

DIRECTED BY DAVID FRANKEL  
STARRING: MERYL STREEP,  
ANNE HATHAWAY, STANLEY TUCCI  
106 MINUTES, RATED PG-13

by Jonathan W. Hickman

Fashion is high art you can wear. The point is driven home devilishly by the suitably named Miranda Priestly in *The Devil Wears Prada*. The Priestly persona is worn so well by Meryl Streep that you can forgive the softness of the film. *Prada* deals with adult issues but handles adult situations from a distance to make it appropriate viewing for a large audience spectrum. And while this may help at the box office, it waters down the effectiveness of the story.

*The Devil Wears Prada* is an adaptation of Lauren Weisberger's best-selling book by the same name. Like the novel, the film tells us the story of recent Northwestern University graduate Andy Sachs (Anne Hathaway) who, out of desperation, takes a job with a fashion magazine. Andy aspires to be a journalist and her college resume is impressive. But for some largely unexplained reason, she can't find a writing job. So, by a trick of fate, she finds herself being interviewed by Priestly, the editor of Runway Magazine (a *Vogue* imitation) for a position as her second assistant. The first assistant is a snooty gal whose attitude appears borrowed from Priestly herself.

Prior to the matching of Priestly with Andy, the opening title sequence impressively employs a montage of fashionable women making their way to their job at Runway. Obviously, one must look the part to work at a fashion magazine. *The Devil Wears Prada* is a film that will make you feel that whatever you have in your closet or presently on your body is just wholly



Meryl Streep as Miranda Priestly

inadequate. It will make you rethink your style and consider adopting a new one. And when the grungy, (should I dare to say, "journalist" looking?) Andy walks into Priestly's office, resume in hand, the expressions on the faces of those in the room tell all. Adorned with bulky sweaters and grandmotherly looking skirts, Andy is just not right for the job as Priestly's number two. And that's exactly why she's hired.

At first, *Prada* feels as though it will go down a familiar, fish-out-of-water path, but it refreshingly takes some unique turns. The formula is followed early on, when Andy is given darned

little instruction on just how to do her job, which is as frustrating for her as it will no doubt be for those watching. My immediate thought was that more training should have been afforded Andy, especially given the responsibility that's hoisted upon her inexperienced shoulders. While computers are present on both assistants' desks, neither makes use of a PDA, and instead bulky calendar books are carried around. But no matter, the settings are authentic and the characterizations, especially by Streep and Stanley Tucci as Nigel, are rich and intelligent.

New York City is captured well with the McGraw Hill



Stanley Tucci outfits Anne Hathaway in *Prada*

building serving as the headquarters of the fictitious Runway magazine. In real life, the building houses, among others, the headquarters of *Businessweek*. Scenes are shot on the streets of the Big Apple, adding an authentic flavor to the film. I liked the look of one scene that appeared to have been shot in Central Park. When the location moves to Paris, time is spent showcasing the city. This small travelogue made me remember complaints I heard

about the season finale of HBO's *The Sopranos* also taking place partially in Paris. I argued with such detractors that showing the ancient city so patiently was sublime. In *Prada*, Paris is featured long enough to change the mood from New York City, offering those who haven't traveled to Paris a moment to consider making the trip.

And, thankfully, *Prada* doesn't mess around with brand names. Last year's *Two For the Money* tried to avoid the use of actual company names and trademarks by referencing them vaguely. For example, New York's famous steakhouse, Smith and Wollensky, is referenced in Money

by Al Pacino as something like "Wolls." In *Prada*, they not only identify the restaurant by name, but Andy makes a trip there to pick up a filet for Priestly directly from the kitchen. While I think that the film had the hours of operation wrong, they sure got the place right. Such uses of real names were critical to *Prada* and kept me attached to the narrative.

Although sanitized to achieve a PG-13 rating, *Prada* works primarily because Meryl Streep is so good at being wicked. Her timing with cutting words couldn't have been better. In one critical scene, Streep's Priestly reduces Andy to zero by explaining the origin of the color of her frumpy sweater. Streep is so evil and deadly accurate that you might find yourself studying the color of the shirt you're wearing to determine whether it is out of style.

And Stanley Tucci makes the most of a role that could have been a total cliché. Nigel is a creative member of the Runway staff. Ordinarily, his character would be a throw-away with little to do, but in *Prada*, enough time is given the gifted Tucci to craft a believable, three-dimensional person. This means that instead of some over-the-top sidekick, Tucci's Nigel has more than just plot advancing significance. I wish that I could say the same about Andy's friends who are



Anne Hathaway

shameless filler. Sizzling hot Adrian Grenier (of HBO's *Entourage*) is dumbed down as Nate, Andy's boyfriend and wannabe chef. In one poorly formed scene, Nate makes Andy a positively uneatable grilled cheese sandwich, which does not bode well for Nate's culinary aspirations.

While I might quibble about various parts of the film, *Prada* is still devilishly fun entertainment. Every time Streep was on screen, a sly smile came to my lips. And the relationship between Nigel and Andy feels warm and genuine enough, especially when Nigel explains the order of things at Runway. Fashion

is everywhere in the film and there is fun to be found in dressing up Hathaway, whose girl next door looks and subtle beauty make her the perfect subject for the transition from frumpy duckling to Runway swan.

The concept of fashion as art is a theme given a proper send-up in *The Devil Wears Prada*. And when that art is worn by the likes of Meryl Streep, you can be assured that *Prada* never looked better. ♪

Reviews by Jonathan W. Hickman appear courtesy of *Entertainment Insiders*. For more reviews by Jonathan W. Hickman go to: [www.EInsiders.com](http://www.EInsiders.com)

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Column

# Kat Talk from LA Film Fest



Words n Music with  
Kat Kramer

Well Folks, I've been having a blast at the 2006 Los Angeles Film Festival (LAFF), held for the first time in Westwood Village. The honorary festival chairs this year are Harrison Ford, Virginia Madsen, Aidan Quinn, Allison Janney, and Christina Applegate. Janney hosted the opening night premiere and party for *The Devil Wears Prada*, and Applegate will host the closing night festivities for *Little Miss Sunshine* on Sunday July 2nd. The centerpiece film, on Friday June 30th, is the Sundance award-winner *Quinceañera*.

Some of the highlights for me included a series called "Green Day at LAFF," which focused on tips to reduce, reuse, and recycle—everyone that attended learned about ecology and conservation. Among the special films screened were *An Inconvenient Truth* featuring Al Gore in person at California Plaza, *Who Killed The Electric Car*, a unique documentary narrated by Martin Sheen and starring Tom Hanks, Mel Gibson and Ed Begley, Jr. One of my favorites was *The Creek Runs Red*, directed by Bradley Beesley, Julianna Brannum, and James Payne. There was also a riveting poolside chat at the W Hotel featuring filmmakers Dean Devlin, Chris Paine, Harry Thomas, Jason Reitman and Hany Abu-Assad called "Global Crisis: Can Films Save the World?"

One of the most anticipated screenings during the festival was *Leonard Cohen*:

*I'm Your Man*, which featured Cohen in person, and a musical performance by Martha Wainwright at The Ford Amphitheatre. Also, I really enjoyed *Boffo! Tinseltown's Bombs and Blockbusters*, a documentary based on Peter Bart's book *Boffo: How I Learned to Love the Blockbuster and Fear the Bomb*. It was directed by Oscar-winning filmmaker Bill Couturié. Stars appearing in the doc include George Clooney, Danny DeVito and Charlize Theron. Stay tuned to my column next week for lots more on LAFF 2006, presented by Film Independent and The Los Angeles Times. For tickets and passes, go to [www.LAFilm-fest.com](http://www.LAFilm-fest.com).

the son of legendary actor Dustin Hoffman, who came to the L.A. Mission event to support Jake and Chef Yossi. I congratulated Dustin on Jake's success. "He's going to be a major star like his dad," I told him. Jeremy Piven, star extraordinaire, of HBO's *Entourage* fame also came to sample Chef Yossi's delectables. Memphis Hollywood is the hotspot of the moment.

## Kat Calendar

**Fourth of July:** Come on all you Mods & Rockers! The American Cinematheque presents "A July 4th English Tea Party at The Egyptian Theatre: A Kick-off for



Chef Yossi with Dustin and Jake Hoffman.

## L.A. Mission Party

I had a ball recently at Memphis Hollywood where Chef Yossi, a top personal chef to the stars, introduced his deluxe personal care line for gourmet chefs and food lovers as a benefit for the L.A. Mission.

Actress Rachel Bilson presented and hosted the event, which featured Jake Hoffman as DJ. Hoffman is quite a thespian, and does a fantastic job portraying Adam Sandler's son in the summer comedy *Click* from Columbia Pictures. Jake is

Mods & Rockers" (July 13 August 16). It's a celebration of England's mid-sixties supremacy in soccer and pop music sponsored by Bass Pale Ale. Check it out! [www.InterFootballDay.com](http://www.InterFootballDay.com)

## July 20th: *Labyrinth*

20th anniversary reunion screening will take place at The Academy. There will be a panel discussion to follow with Brian Henson and others from Jim Henson's creature shop. 1986 classic stars David Bowie and Jennifer Connelly. Call (310) 247-3000. Don't miss it! ♪

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**Film Interview**

**Wassap Larry Clark?**

*A chat with the controversial director of Kids and Wassap Rockers*

by **Michael Guillén**

*"A strange boy is weaving a course of grace and havoc. On a yellow skateboard through mid-day sidewalk traffic."*

I doubt very much that Joni Mitchell was envisioning a longhaired, Latino punk rocker when she penned those lyrics, though grace and havoc is precisely what is woven into Larry Clark's *Wassup Rockers*. Bravely appropriating punk rock, skateboards, and the steps of Beverly Hills High School, the Latino boys of *Wassup Rockers* face off with white kids who don't want them taking what's "theirs," black kids who don't want "Mexicans" on their hip-hop gangsta turf, and Latinos committed to being skinhead cholos. In other words, just about everybody.

I sat down with Larry Clark over a cup of Mexican coffee in his room at San Francisco's Prescott Hotel for a brief chat about *Wassup Rockers*.

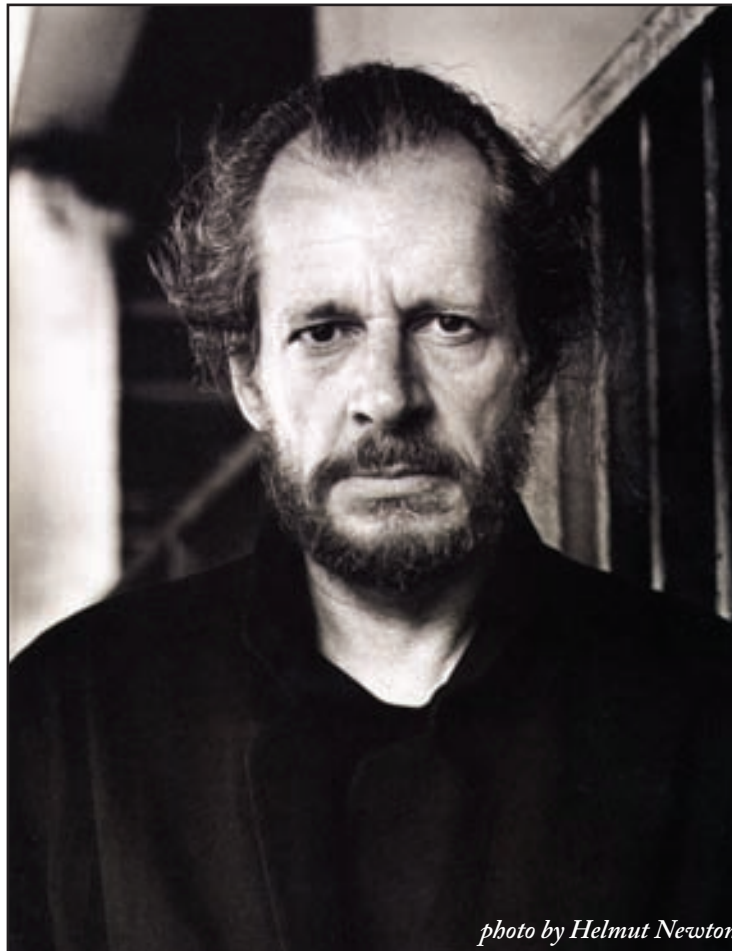
**Michael Guillén:** The first film I saw of yours was *Ken Park*—

**Larry Clark:** Oh really?

**MG:** I was in Paris and it was premiering at the multiplex. I went because my traveling companion was a great fan of yours and you were supposed to be there. There was a boy in line in front of me—14 years old, who had come with a script to give to you. For one reason or another you weren't there, but....

**LC:** I wasn't even supposed to be there.

**MG:** Oh? Well for some reason it got out that you were going to be there. The point being that I was so impressed that this 14-year-old boy wanted to meet you, wanted to collaborate with you, had brought a script, and trusted you.

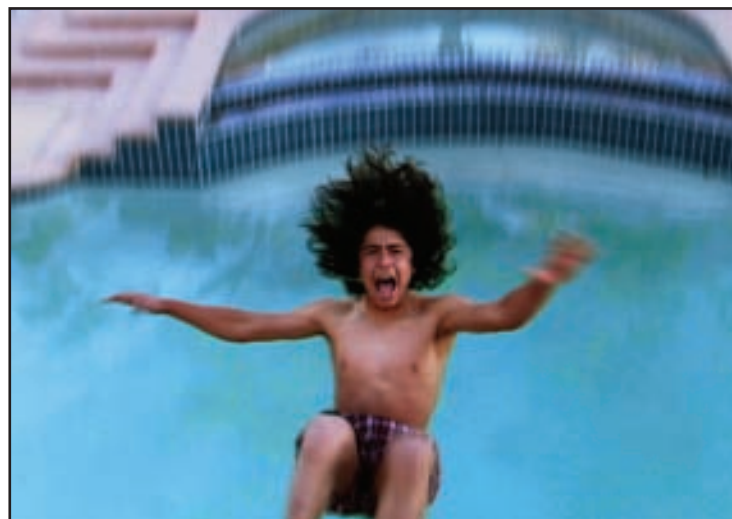


*photo by Helmut Newton*

**LC:** I wish I'd have been there.

**MG:** Last night at the Q&A after the press screening you were talking about that trust that you develop with young people. It's this association with young people that has earned you much—in my estimation, misperceived—criticism. I look at you as an anthropologist of the authentic and that you see in young people, in youth, a unique authenticity. Can you talk a little bit about that?

**LC:** Well yeah, I think [youth] is an important time of our life when things that happen dictate what we're going to be like as adults. And I find that kids can be so open and honest, you know? I'm trying to show the reality of being that age and I'm making a social comment. It's as simple as that. I find it amazing that so many people who make films or do work about kids discount what's really going on, the way the kids really are. I let the kids bring themselves to the work.



*Kico (Francisco Pedrasa) soon to be swimming in a Beverly Hills pool.*



**MG:** You show that young kids wrestle with feelings, have sexual experiences, fight against things they don't believe in. Here in America young kids are demonized, youth is demonized. In some ways the most important thing about youth in America is that they are a niche market for commodified agendas...

**LC:** Yes.

**MG:** ... so I appreciate that your films express that tension. In Paris a 14-year-old boy can go see *Ken Park* at the multiplex; but, here in the U.S., that wouldn't happen.

**LC:** No, no.

**MG:** So I'm curious: Your films are about young people, but are they for young people?

**LC:** Well, yeah, they are for young people and young people see them. Everything's on DVD now and everything's accessible on the Internet. Kids see everything. If you try to keep them from seeing my films, they're going to see my films. I was in a skate park with the kids from *Wassup Rockers* a few weeks ago and a boy asked me if I was sponsoring these kids. I said, "No, I'm a filmmaker. I just made a film about them." And he said, "What other films have you made?" And I said, "Well, I made a film called *Kids*, have you ever heard of it?" He looked at me as if I was crazy and he said, "Everybody's heard of that."

**MG:** Another thing I like in your films is how you have your finger on the pulse of music. I heard that music rights caused the delay of *Ken Park* being distributed in the United States.

**LC:** Yeah. We had a crazy producer who didn't clear some music but hopefully, at some point, we'll get that resolved. The music in *Wassup Rockers* is Latino punk rock from the ghetto. These are all unpublished bands, garage bands from the neighborhood. They're terrific. What an amazing phenomenon it is that punk rock has this big resurgence in the Latino com-

munity, which I understand is happening around the world. It's great music. Music is such an important part of my films. Like *Another Day in Paradise* was the soundtrack of my youth, all that great music, all that soul music was wonderful.

**MG:** One of the film's most authentic scenes was of the black girls quarreling with the "Mexicans" who had come into their neighborhood, telling them to take their seven burritos and eat them somewhere else. Are things still set up the same? I had a friend from LA telling me that it was precisely because the Latinos came into South Central that the black population shifted to Palmdale, or something like that, and that now South Central is actually more of a Latino neighborhood.

**LC:** No, it's both, it's mixed. It's interesting there are no white people in South Central, it's all Black and Latino, and the racial politics of the ghetto is interesting, which I didn't know about until I was there, but there is a lot of conflict between the young Latinos and the young blacks.

**MG:** I had one complaint about *Wassup Rockers*, so I wanted to ask you about it directly. I didn't understand how the boys could leave their homies behind? They had the one scene where they were expressing concern and regret about it, but, relatively they seemed emotionally unaffected by the loss of a companion, and I was curious about that.

**LC:** Well, Carlos gets busted by the police and what are you going to do about that? Kids get arrested all the time and [their friends] have to run from cops. If one of them gets shot, what can they do? They can't get shot too, you know?

**MG:** I was wondering if you were trying to say that the

young people have become inured to violence, that they are accustomed to it?

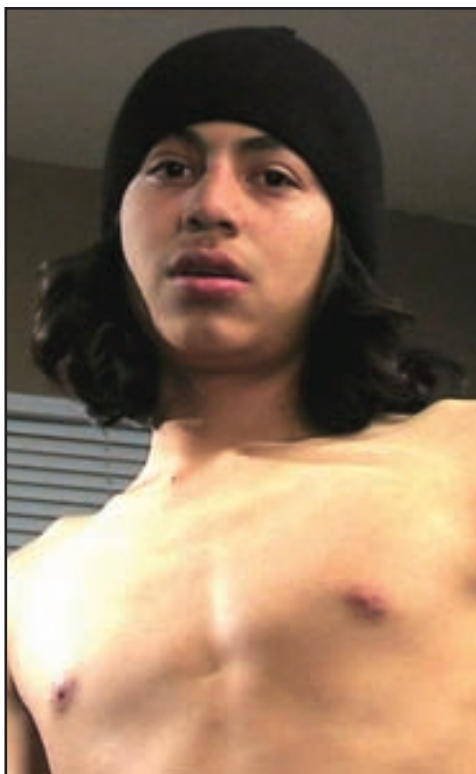
**LC:** It is part of it. I also had too many characters! [Laughs.] I had to get rid of a couple of them! My God, coverage for seven people is really difficult.

**MG:** The scene I absolutely loved, and where I think you are a master at catching the natural, was the talk between Kico [Francisco Pedrasa] and the young woman...

**LC:** ...Nikki on the bed, yeah, that's a great scene.

**MG:** Who was the young actress?

**LC:** Jessica Steinbaum, a 14-



Francisco Pedrasa as Kico.

year-old actress, a schoolgirl who was taking acting....

**MG:** She's amazing!

**LC:** She's amazing. She was the only one with any real experience. She had actually done one TV show. She had done an episode of *Law and Order* or something, but, she was great. And I think that she has a career ahead of her—she's going to be hot!

**MG:** I agree. Can you talk a little bit about that scene and how you achieved it?

see *ROCKERS*, p 19.

## LISTINGS from p. 11

**A Prairie Home Companion** \*\*\*\*\*(PG-13) In a world of hype, earthshaking and globe-threatening crises, and annoying celebrity excess, what a contrast, what a respite, what a blessing it is to seek refuge weekly in *A Prairie Home Companion*! (JG)

The Grove, AMC Century City 14, Arclight, Pacific Culver Stadium 12, Los Feliz 3, Laemmle Grande 4 Plex, Pacific Galleria Stadium 16, AMC Burbank 16, Pacific Manhattan Village, Laemmle Playhouse 7

**Proposition** \*\*\*\*\*(R) The story is very, very masculine and classic. There's a new Sheriff in town. Captain Stanley (Ray Winstone) has been employed to take down the Burns gang: three brothers, Arthur, Charlie, and Mike. Arthur is the oldest and its physical and emotional leader. But when we meet Charlie, he has chosen to leave Arthur taking the simpleton Mike away from the evil influences of their older sibling. But when Charlie and Mike are captured by the conniving Captain Stanley, Charlie is offered a deal, call it a "proposition." In nine days Stanley will hang Mike unless Charlie brings in his brother "dead or alive," dead being preferred. (JH)

Laemmle Fairfax Cinemas, Academy 6

**Road to Guantanamo** \*\*\*\*1/2 (R) Based on a very true story, should anger everyone who sees it. If you embrace this film's political stance, you will be appalled by the injustice suffered by the movie's protagonists and more ready than ever to criticize the current "war on terror." If your politics fall on the other side of the dividing line, you'll be moved

to feel something. (WC)  
Laemmle Sunset 5, Laemmle Royal, Laemmle Town Center 5, Laemmle Playhouse 7

**Superman Returns** \*\*\*\*\*(PG-13) Full length review, p 12. AMC Loews Universal City 18, The Grove, Grauman's Chinese, AMC Century City 14, Mann Chinese 6, Pacific Culver Stadium 12, Mann Village Theatre 1, Vista, University Village 3, Pacific Sherman Oaks 5, The Bridge, Laemmle Grande 4 Plex, UA Marina Del Rey 6, Pacific Galleria Stadium 16, AMC Santa Monica 7, Century 8, AMC Burbank 8, AMC Media Center 8, AMC Media Center North 6, Mann Glendale Marketplace 4, Mann Glendale Exchange 10, Highland 3 Theatre, Plant 16, Rialto Theatre, Laemmle's One Colorado Cinemas, Pacific Paseo Stadium 14

**Thank You For Smoking** \*\*\* (R) This is the star-making vehicle Aaron Eckhart's abundant talents have screamed for since *In the Company of Men*. Although a stellar supporting cast surrounds him, this film belongs to Eckhart, who, in the showy role of tobacco lobbyist Nick Naylor displays his brash, confident and often borderline sleazy charm. (WC) Landmark NuWilshire Theatre, Academy 6 Theater

**Waist Deep** \*\*1/2 (R) How do you recycle old clichés without anyone noticing? Change the location of course. (EL)

AMC Loews Universal City 18, & IMAX, Arclight, Mann Culver Plaza 6 Theatres, Pacific Sherman Oaks 5, The Bridge: Cinema de Lux, Mann criterion 6 Theatres, AMC Burbank 16, AMC Media Center 8, Mann Glendale Exchange 10, Plant 16, Pacific Paseo Stadium 14, UA Marina Del Rey 6

**Wassup Rockers** \*\*\* An affectionate portrait of seven nonconformist Latino punk rock skaters who square off on their home turf in South Central against hip-hop gangstas and skinhead cholos, and then take crosstown buses to Beverly Hills to devastate the rich White pseudos. Part documentary, part narrative reconstruction, and part ridiculous fantasy. Not Larry Clark's best, nor his most polished, but certainly his sweetest. (MG) Landmark NuArt Theatre

**Water** (PG-13) \*\*\*\*1/2 An unflinching look at the life of a widow in 1930's India. A window, is left at a home for cast out widows where she is expected to spend the rest of her life. (JH) Laemmle Music Hall

**Who Killed the Electric Car?** (PG) \*\*\*\*1/2 Full length review, p. 20. Landmark NuWilshire Theatre, Arclight

**X-Men: The Last Stand** \*\*1/2 (PG) The third, and supposedly final installment hints at "X4." (SM) AMC Loews Universal City 18 & IMAX, The Grove, AMC Century City 14, Mann Chinese 6, Pacific Culver Stadium 12, AMC Avco Cinema, The Bridge: Cinema de Lux, Pacific Galleria Stadium 16, AMC Burbank 16, Mann Glendale Exchange 10, Pacific Paseo Stadium 14

# Strangers With Candy hard to take



Amy Sedaris goes back to school in the Comedy Central spin-off, *Strangers With Candy*

## STRANGERS WITH CANDY

★☆☆☆  
(1 out of 4 stars)

DIRECTED BY PAUL DINELLO

STARRING: AMY SEDARIS,  
STEPHEN COLBERT, PAUL DINELLO,  
CARLO ALBAN, MARIA THAYER,  
SARAH JESSICA PARKER,  
MATHEW BRODERICK  
85 MINUTES, RATED R

by Peter Sobczynski

Seen on cable television in 22-minute bursts, *Strangers With Candy*, the Comedy Central cult hit that spoofed all those sappily sincere After-School Specials we barely remember watching back in the 1970's, was an occasionally amusing bit of weirdness that usually contained one or two hilarious bits per episode. Now *Strangers With Candy* has made it to the big screen in a film that is roughly four times the length of a normal episode, but it unfortunately does not contain a similar multiple of laughs. The film is a smug and dreary slog through largely unfunny material that will completely bewilder newcomers while testing the patience of loyal fans of the show.

Conceived as a prequel to the series, the film opens with 46-year-old Jerri Blank (Amy Sedaris) returning home after 30-odd years of sordid living to discover that her mother is dead (ha-ha!), a heretofore unknown stepmother (Deborah Rush) is running the household while carrying on with the local meat man, and her father (Dan Hedaya) has been in a coma since the day his beloved daughter took off. When Dr. Putney (Ian Holm), the longtime family physician ("I delivered you. I still have the scars") suggests that she do something impressive in order to jolt him out of his sleep, Jerri decides to pick up her life from the exact place where she strayed and re-enrolls in her old high school. This might seem a bit odd, but since the school is little more than a loony bin run by the thoroughly corrupt Principal Blackmon (Greg Hollimon), and watched over by a group of nutty teachers, Jerri winds up fitting right in.

What passes for a plot is inspired by the announcement from a pair of Board of Education goons (Philip Seymour Hoffman and Allison Janney) that if someone from the school doesn't win the upcoming

science fair, Principal Blackmon will have to return all state money that he received and already pissed away. Since science teacher Chuck Noblet (Stephen Colbert) is a barely closeted religious freak who uses the Bible as a textbook ("Evolution is a farce!"), Blackmon decides to ensure victory by bringing in star science teacher Dr. Roger Beekman (Matthew Broderick) to crank out a presentation that is short on actual substance but long on flash and sizzle.

Noblet decides to put together his own competing project with the school's few smart kids—Megawatti Sucarnaputri (Carlo Alban), Tammi Littlenut (Maria Thayer) and a few Asians not deemed worthy of funny names. Jerri winds up getting thrown into the group as well. Against all odds, they hit upon a brilliant project and the popular kids in Beekman's group scheme to get a hold of their plans by getting the campus stud to pretend to like Jerri and steal the blueprints that have been entrusted to her. Inevitably, Jerri lets her friends down, learns a valuable lesson or two, and somehow figures out a way to provide everyone with a happy ending.

While the above description may seem rather tiresome, it is nothing compared to the experience of watching it play out for 97 agonizing minutes. The idea of a prequel to *Strangers With Candy* sounds like a promising way to fill in the blanks of the Jerri Blank story—perhaps an expansion of what sent her astray in the first place or some of the weirder moments of her 30-year walk on the wild side. Instead, co-writers Sedaris, Colbert and Paul Dinello, the creators of the original show, have taken the cheap way out by not expanding on the premise in any significant way. They simply provide a rehash of old material that just never catches fire this time around. Their big inspiration seems to have been the idea of getting a bunch of their famous friends (besides the aforementioned Broderick, Holm, Janney and Hoffman, it also finds room for Sarah Jessica Parker and Justin Theroux) to make cameo appearances in an effort to increase the hipster quotient. A nice idea, but one that goes awry because of the simple fact that none of these famous people have been given anything funny to do—apparently the mere presence of Sarah Jessica Parker as a burned-out guidance counselor is supposed to be so intrinsically hilarious that we aren't supposed to notice the dud lines that she is delivering.

Amy Sedaris is one of the funnier women around these days but watching her flail around for laughs here is one of the more depressing sights you will encounter on a movie screen this summer. The problem, I think, is that the character of Jerri Blank is best appreciated in small doses.

Every once in a while, she gets off a good off-handed line ("What's your IQ, Pisces?") and her terrifyingly trashy visage (imagine Tammy Faye Baker without the flair) is good for a couple of laughs early on but she quickly wears out her welcome. Stephen Colbert is one of the funnier men around these days but he doesn't even earn the meager laughs that Sedaris gets—how is it possible that the guy behind the usually hilarious *The Colbert Report* can spend as much time on screen as he does here without inspiring even a mild giggle?

In recent years, many have attempted to transfer a talent for television sketch comedy to the big screen—the comedy troupes *The Kids in the Hall* and *The State* successfully pulled this trick off, respectively, with *Brain Candy* and *Wet Hot American Summer*. In those films, it should be noted, the people involved decided to create new characters instead of attempting to stretch an old premise beyond its breaking point. *Strangers With Candy*, on the other hand, is more along the lines of one of those hideous *Saturday Night Live* spin-off movies that consist of little more than one joke repeated ad nauseam.

However, in all fairness, I will admit that the film does contain one bit that actually made me laugh as hard as anything else that I have seen this year: a gym class sequence featuring an activity more hazardous than even dodgeball. This bit is so weird and unexpectedly hilarious that it makes you wonder who the people were that came up with it and where they were when the rest of the script was being written. ☺

Peter Sobczynski writes for the Liberty Suburban Chicago Newspapers chain and on-line at [www.efilmcritic.com](http://www.efilmcritic.com). He can also be heard on the nationally syndicated Mancow's Morning Madhouse radio program. Comments, complaints, questions, threats and Milla Jovovich's phone number can be sent to him at [petersob@netzero.net](mailto:petersob@netzero.net).

**LC:** Kico was very young when I met him and he was shy, but in the year and a half that I knew him he grew up a lot. It took a while for him to really open up to me. One day he'd hurt himself, he'd twisted his ankle or something, and he wasn't skating that day and his mother was out and his brothers were out, and I'm in the house with Kico. We have this intimate, personal conversation where he's telling me about his life and his feelings and about the gangs and how it's all happening. It was a very special afternoon and I wanted those stories to be in the film, but I didn't quite know how to do it.

In the screenplay, I wrote, "Kico and Nikki sit on the bed and talk." I knew what I wanted them to talk about. And so on the day that we shot, I told Kico what I wanted. He didn't know Jessica. I took her aside and I asked her to ask him certain questions. I made them lock eyes so they couldn't look away and they really got into it. He's really, from the heart, telling her about his life in South Central with this honesty that's astounding and she's really amazed because she's from a different environment entirely. She's saying, "What? He got shot?!" She's really into it, but she's acting at the same time and she's asking the questions and it's just a magical scene and it really was happening that way.

**MG:** It did come across magically. Last night at the Q&A,

a young woman expressed her concern about what she felt were overly-sexualized portraits of female characters. Yet Jessica, as Nikki, came across not only beautiful but complex. Maybe her blonde friend was broadly— if not brassily— drawn, but Nikki was complex and real.

**LC:** She was basically saying that if you do something, there can be ramifications. I don't think she was saying, "Well, don't do anything" but it's kind of like that. You're always taking chances, taking risks, and these kids are opening up and being honest. At some point as they get older, they may look at that and say, "My God, I was so open and honest, it's a little embarrassing and stuff," but they're not doing that, they're inviting you into their life, into what happens. It was interesting. Do you know what I mean?

**MG:** Oh yes. It intrigued me because I often say I was never more honest than when I was 17. Somehow along the way culture gets to you, commodification gets to you, peer pressure and family pressure start to hit and you start to lose your initial authenticity. That's why I've never understood why you were being criticized for capturing that because it's such a fleeting grace really and you have— in a way— almost devoted yourself to making sure that voice gets out, where so many other filmmakers don't bother.

**LC:** It's true. It's startling,

the honesty. And that's what I'm trying to do.

**MG:** In another interview you're quoted as saying you have to celebrate the darkness along with the light. You show sex among teenagers, you show their drug use. You can't block things out because they happen.

**LC:** Right.

**MG:** With *Wassup Rockers* what I've noticed is that reviewers keep talking about its sweetness. Here is a film where there isn't any drug use, where there's little sex. You aren't so much showing the darkness as you are showing the light in these kids and somehow *that* ends up being radical. Did that happen consciously?

**LC:** It's just the way kids were. It's as simple as that. These kids had this amazing energy and zest for life, living in this dangerous environment, and they weren't negative. I mean I was so much more negative than these kids were— they'd say, "Snap out of it, Larry!" You know? These kids were seeing the up side of everything. Ways to get around the negativity. Ways to survive, and ways to be a kid, and ways to have fun. These kids are just happy, good kids. ☺

For more interviews and writing by Michael Guillén, go to: [www.TheEveningClass.blogspot.com](http://www.TheEveningClass.blogspot.com)



Kico (Francisco Pedrasa) and Rosalia (Ashley Maldonado) in the bedroom.

Sandler's Click Controls the box office with 40 million

Box office

U.S. movie revenues for June 23-25. All dollar figures in millions.

Rank	Film	Weekend gross
1.	Click	\$40.0
		\$40.0 • One week • 3,749
2.	Cars	\$23.3
		\$156.7 • Three weeks • 3,949
3.	Nacho Libre	\$12.7
		\$53.2 • Two weeks • 3,083
4.	The Fast and the Furious	\$9.8
		\$43.1 • Two weeks • 3,030
5.	Waist Deep	\$9.4
		\$9.4 • One week • 1,004
6.	The Lake House	\$8.8
		\$29.8 • Two weeks • 2,645
7.	The Break Up	\$6.6
		\$104.2 • Four weeks • 2,906
8.	Garfield: Tail of Two Kitties	\$5.2
		\$16.5 • Two weeks • 2,981
9.	X-Men: The Last Stand	\$4.8
		\$224.5 • Five weeks • 2,408
10.	The Da Vinci Code	\$4.1
		\$205.6 • Six weeks • 1,911

Television's top 10

Here are the ratings for the top 10 prime-time television shows for June 19 to June 25.

Network • Share • Millions of people

1.	NBA Finals Game 6 (S)	15.7
2.	America's Got Talent (P)	12.4
3.	CSI (R)	11.9
4.	CSI: Miami (R)	11.3
5.	Without a Trace (R)	10.2
6.	Law and Order: SVU (R)	9.7
7.	CSI: NY (R)	9.4
8.	60 Minutes (R)	9.4
9.	So You Think You Can Dance-Thur	9.3
10.	So You Think You Can Dance-Wed	9.1

One rating point represents 1,102,000 TV households. The share is the percentage of in-use televisions tuned to a given show.

Adam Sandler pushed moviegoers' buttons with his remote-control fantasy "Click," which debuted as the No. 1 weekend flick with \$40 million. The top 20 movies at U.S. and Canadian theaters Friday through Sunday, followed by distribution studio, gross, number of theater locations, average receipts per location, total gross and number of weeks in release, as compiled Monday by Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc. are:

1.	"Click," Sony, 3,749 locations	\$10,673 average	\$40,011,365	\$40,011,365 1 week
2.	"Cars," Disney, 3,949 locations	\$5,897 average	\$23,285,367	\$156,664,916 3 weeks
3.	"Nacho Libre," Paramount, 3,083 locations,	\$4,119 average,	\$12,699,864	\$53,221,306 2 weeks
4.	"The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift," Universal, 3,030 locations,	\$3,235 average,	\$9,801,835	\$43,144,240 2 weeks
5.	"Waist Deep," Focus, 1,004 locations,	\$9,367 average,	\$9,404,180	\$9,404,180 1 week
6.	"The Lake House," Warner Bros., 2,645 locations,	\$3,339 average,	\$8,832,259	\$29,774,472 1 weeks
7.	"The Break-Up," Universal, 2,906 locations,	\$2,270 average,	\$6,596,625	\$104,235,420 4 weeks
8.	"Garfield: A Tail of Two Kitties," Fox 2,981 locations	\$1,748 average	\$5,209,818	\$16,483,101 2 weeks
9.	"X-Men: The Last Stand," Fox 2,408 locations	\$2,011 average	\$4,841,950	\$224,506,162 5 weeks
10.	"The Da Vinci Code," Sony 1,911 locations	\$2,120 average	\$4,050,844	\$205,589,742 6 weeks
11.	"Over the Hedge," DreamWorks 2,007 locations	\$1,440 average	\$2,889,574	\$144,651,903 6 weeks
12.	"A Prairie Home Companion," Picturehouse 752 locations,	\$3,059 average	\$2,300,426	\$12,575,667 3 weeks
13.	"The Omen," Fox 2,107 locations	\$1,071 average	\$2,256,627	\$52,137,199 3 weeks
14.	"An Inconvenient Truth," Paramount Classics 514 locations	\$3,923 average	\$2,016,408	\$9,630,014 5 weeks
15.	"Mission: Impossible III," Paramount, 552 locations	\$1,303 average	\$719,349	\$131,525,369 8 weeks
16.	"Poseidon," Warner Bros. 337 locations	\$1,268 average	\$427,467	\$57,325,847 7 weeks
17.	"RV," Sony 385 locations	\$989 average	\$380,777	\$67,233,597 9 weeks
18.	"Ice Age: The Meltdown," Fox 342 locations	\$1,075 average	\$367,496	\$193,418,469 13 weeks
19.	"Scary Movie 4," Weinstein Co. 555 locations	\$635 average	\$352,632	\$89,628,856 11 weeks
20.	"Wordplay," IFC Films, 45 locations	\$7,228 average	\$325,245	\$376,725 2 weeks

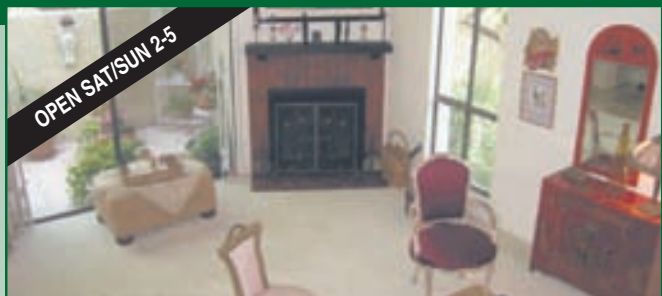
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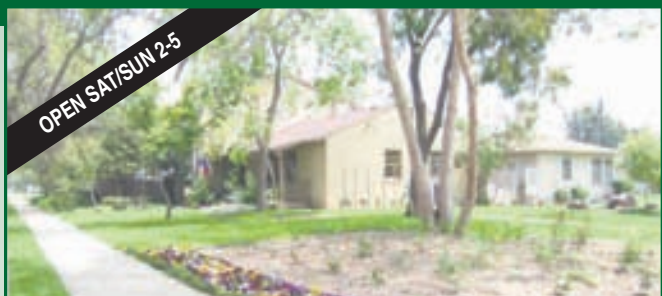


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**ENTERTAINMENT**  
TODAY

Friday, June 30, 2006

## FILM REVIEW

# Electric car builds on *Truth*



### WHO KILLED THE ELECTRIC CAR



(3.5 out of 4 stars)

DIRECTED BY CHRIS PAINE

DOCUMENTARY FEATURING:  
MEL GIBSON, ED BEGLEY JR.

90 MINUTES, RATED PG

by Steven Snyder

Almost everyone, other than perhaps our President, knows that global warming is occurring, that it's caused by us, and that it's long past time we did something to change our habits when it comes to fuel, energy and pollution. Gore's film was a way of crystallizing what any socially or environmentally-aware person already knows. It was an affirmation, not a revelation. It's in Chris Paine's *Who Killed the Electric Car?* that we finally focus our attention, not on the problem, but on the obstacles to a solution. If you were depressed by *Inconvenient Truth*, you'll be horrified by *Electric Car*.

In captivating fashion, Paine chronicles the short-lived success that was General Motors' electric car program. Twenty years before Kyoto, a great many people knew of the problems facing the world, and in a refreshing moment of environmental awareness, some officials actually started to go about solving them. The panic of the fuel shortage in

the late '70s shocked them into action, and some ten years later, the answer was the EV1—a viable, user-friendly, electric car.

At the outset, electric cars were supposed to become the preferred vehicle for urban dwellers who drive shorter distances. These cars could be plugged in while the car was parked in the garage, and they would meet the zero-emission requirement that California established for the industry. By 1998, any company that wanted to sell cars in California had to show that at least two percent of its sales were derived from zero-emission cars. GM developed the EV1, and, much to their surprise, they found a rabid fan base that leapt at the chance to buy one.

There's a tragic sense of irony to *Electric Car*, a sad realization that an American auto-maker was once at the front of the pack in developing cars for the fuel-strapped 21st century. But with the death of the EV1, they and we were left with massive layoffs and restructuring at American automobile companies, while foreign companies zoom ahead, selling the majority of the hybrid cars now being bought in record numbers.

The downfall began in the early '90s, when GM started down a paradoxical path, pro-

moting the electric car with one hand while working determinedly to get the California regulations rescinded with the other. In one interview, a car executive recalls a conversation he had with one of his colleagues. Hired to develop the EV1 market, he learned that another executive officer at the company was doing everything he could to show that there is no demand for the EV1, criticizing the California zero-emission standard as excessive.

Car buyers in America—even celebrities like Mel Gibson—were given the run-around when they tried to purchase the model. In a humorous anecdote, Gibson remembers having to fill out a personality profile to even put down an offer on the car.

And, as an insurance measure, GM made sure to lease the cars, rather than sell them outright. When our government inevitably failed us, and maximized corporate profits by eliminating the two-percent rule, GM raced to pull the cars off the streets, refusing to extend leases with its owners. Owners were infuriated when they learned the car company was crushing and burying an entire fleet of cars—erasing all traces of the zero-emission campaign.

Presented as a crime caper, working through the suspected murderers one by one—

from politicians to misguided corporations to confused consumers—what struck me most about *Who Killed the Electric Car?* was my realization that I had not thought about electric cars in years. Solar, wind, hybrids, yes. But not electric cars. The killers of the electric car were so good—so efficient—most of us forgot it existed. ☞

Steven Snyder writes for RottenTomatoes.com, Zertinet.com, Collider.com, *SOMA Magazine*, and *TIME Magazine Online*. He welcomes feedback at SnyderReviews@hotmail.com.

Megan wants to be like every other little girl.



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<p>SATURDAY JULY 15 <b>TRAINWRECK</b> FEAT. KYLE GASS OF TENACIOUS D VAN STONE THE EVANGENITALS</p>	<p>SATURDAY JULY 22 <b>IMPERIAL TEEN</b> DONITA SPARKS / LOVERLEE</p>	<p>SUNDAY JULY 23 A SPECIAL EARLY SHOW WITH... <b>MR. LIF &amp; CAGE</b> (OF THE PERCEPTIONISTS) WITH YAK BALLZ &amp; DJ CRAZY GLUE INSIGHT / CAMU TAO</p>

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THURSDAY JUNE 29 - 8PM - SPRINT BATTLE OF THE BANDS PRESENTS...  
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FRIDAY JUNE 30TH - 7:30PM FRONT ROOM - SPECIAL EARLY SHOW  
**Gus Company / The Motives**

FRIDAY JUNE 30TH - 10PM FRONT ROOM - WAGATAI'S POST PANIC WEEKEND  
**PBS** (Porter/ Batiste/ Stoltz of The Funky Meters) / **Seismic**

SATURDAY JULY 1ST - 10PM FRONT ROOM - WAGATAI'S POST PANIC WEEKEND  
**Jerry Joseph (Electric) / Underground Orchestra**

SUNDAY JULY 2ND - 10PM ALL CLUB - EVERY SUNDAY - EVIL CLUB EMPIRE PRESENTS... 18+  
**Dungeon**

MONDAY JULY 3RD - 7PM MAIN ROOM - M PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS...  
**Sworn Enemy / On Broken Wings / Black My Heart Nights Like These**

TUESDAY JULY 4TH - 7:30PM FRONT ROOM - TN PANDA PRESENTS...  
**The Pacific / Highlines**

TUESDAY JULY 4TH - 8PM ALTERKNIT - 18+ THE WAR OF THE WORDS \$10,000 ULTIMATE ARTIST SHOWCASE / EMCEE BATTLE PRELIMINARIES WITH PERFORMANCES BY:  
**Otherwise / Silent Lambs Project / Alpha P Brother Jitu Brown & Lord Cashus Di Macklemore / Clockwerk**

THURSDAY JULY 6TH - 8PM FRONT ROOM  
**Bluehouse / Simon Bruce**

THURSDAY JULY 6TH - 8PM ALTERKNIT - AN EVENING WITH...  
**Lee Ving / Adam Bones**

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SATURDAY JULY 1 - BLUEBEAT LOUNGE PRESENTS SUMMER SKA FEST 2006 FEATURING...  
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BACKED BY CHRIS MURRAY COMBO & FRIENDS  
THE DEBONAIRE / RASKAHUELE  
DJ DAVID ORLANDO (OF DUB CLUB)

TUESDAY JULY 4 - INDIE 103.1FM'S COMPLETE CONTROL PRESENTS...  
**YOUTH BRIGADE THE BRIEFS**  
PISTOL GRIP  
DREADFUL CHILDREN

WEDNESDAY JULY 5 - NOAH K. & RELEASE THE BATS PRESENTS...  
**KOMMUNITY FK**  
THE LAST DANCE / DJ DAVE BATS OF RELEASE THE BATS  
DJ NOAH OF BATS DAY IN THE FUN PARK

SATURDAY JULY 8 - INDIE 103.1FM'S COMPLETE CONTROL PRESENTS...  
**ANGRY SAMOANS**  
DR. KNOW / SMOGTOWN  
BLACK FLAG (BLACK FLAG TRIBUTE)  
THE HOLOGRAMS

TUESDAY JULY 11  
**P.O.S.**  
BEN YOMEN  
AKUMA (OF THE SHAPESHIFTERS)  
AVATAR & DJ OBI

WEDNESDAY JULY 26  
**MICHAEL SHOWALTER EUGENE MIRMAN LEO ALLEN**

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- 7.28 THE COUP
- 7.29 CLUB VODKA
- 8.8 SISU YANTRA
- 8.9 LIQUID SOUL
- 8.9 LIQUITS
- 8.14 THE BLACKHEART PROCESSION
- 8.15 R.A. RUGGEDMAN / KILLAH PRIEST
- 8.19 THE CLIENTELE
- 8.25 PHIX

**ALTERKNIT LOUNGE**

6.29 EARLY SHOW: **Pretty In Stereo, The Jennifer Project**  
LATE SHOW: **HOTEL ROOM**

6.30 **Everything Now!, Bullet Train to Vegas, So Many Dynamos, This Evening**

7.1 CHURCH OF THE 8TH DAY PRESENTS... THE MELTING POT  
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7.2 MATINEE SHOW: **Lia-Fail, Mass Nostalgia, Mosquito, The Pristines, Hencforth**

7.3 CHURCH OF THE 8TH DAY PRESENTS...  
**Lokyata / Before The Downfall / 357 Facelift / This Age Dies**

7.5 ASIAN MAN RECORDS TOUR FEATURING:  
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# Closing weekend: Los Angeles Film Festival



Jesse Garcia as Carlos and Emily Rios as Magdalena star in the award-winning *Quinceanera*. Set in Echo Park, it screens June 30th at LAFF.

by Kim Voynar

If you haven't checked out the Los Angeles Film Festival yet, you still have a few days. There are still lots of good films playing this weekend, so go support the fest and check out some great independent films, to boot. Here are my picks among films playing this weekend:

## Friday, June 30th

***Right At Your Door*** – What happens when a dirty bomb hits Los Angeles and a man must make a series of decisions that conflict with his moral values— including whether to let his wife back into the house? A taut take on the disaster film, focusing on one man and the decisions he is forced to make.  
**Mann Festival Theater, Fri., 4:30 PM**

***The Lather Effect*** Ever wish you could relive the wild days of youth? This dirty-something Valinda throws an '80s

rager", reuniting all her old friends, and in the aftermath of the party, old loves and quarrels flare.

**Laemmle Sunset 5, Fri., 5**

***I Want Someone to Eat Cheese With*** – James only wants three things in life: to lose weight, to get a great part, and to find his soul mate—and he's 0 for 3. Written by, directed by, and starring Jeff Garlin, *Cheese* co-stars Sarah Silverman, Amy Sedaris, and Bonnie Hunt.

**Majestic Crest, Fri., 7 PM**

***Quinceanera*** – Helmers Richard Glatzer and Wash Westmoreland offer a slice of life in their Echo Park neighborhood in this fictional tale of 14-year-old Magdalena, daughter of a conservative preacher, who finds herself mysteriously pregnant shortly before her Quinceanera (15<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration). Her takes refuge with her loving granduncle, and her troubled cousin, who beginning to explore his sexuality as a gay man. This is lovely and poignant film won both

the jury and audience awards at Sundance this year.

**Mann Festival, Fri. 7 PM**

***Sisters In Law*** – Documentary about a court in the tiny town of Kumba, Cameroon that hears cases of divorce and child support, and Judge Beatrice Ntuba and Prosecutor Vera Ngassa, who crusade for justice for women and children.

**Italian Cultural Institute, Fri., 7:30 PM**

***Man Push Cart*** – This film, which debuted at the Sundance Film Festival, tells the tale of Ahmad, a Pakistani former pop star who now scratches out a living selling coffee out of a pushcart in New York City. Lead actor Ahmad Razvi gives a luminous performance as a man bereft of hope who nonetheless refuses to give up.

**Mann Festival, Fri. 9:30 PM**

***13 (Tzameti)*** – This debut film by director Gela Babluani is a striking film noir shot in

stark black-and-white. Sebastien, (George Babluani, the director's brother), is working for a mysterious man with a morphine habit. When his employer dies, Sebastien finds a train ticket and hotel reservation and decides to take the man's place.

**Landmark's Regent, Fri., 9:45 PM**

## Saturday, July 1st

***Weapon of Choice: The Music Videos of Fatboy Slim*** – Hey, it's not all about films! 75 minutes of music videos from the iconic DJ/Musician. Music fans won't want to miss this.

**Italian Cultural Institute, Sat. 2:15 PM**

***Rwanda, the Hills Speak*** – Doc about the attempt to bring accountability and justice to the Rwanda genocides, and the wounds that are often too deep to heal.

**Italian Cultural Institute, Sat. 4:15 PM**

***In Between Days*** – Korean director So Yong Kim tells the tale of Aimie, a recent Korean immigrant to North America, and her coming-of-age relationship with another immigrant, Tran— who falls for another girl just as Aimie is falling for him.

**Landmark's Regent, Sat., 7 PM**

***Conversations With Other Women*** – This intriguing film is built around a dialogue between Man (Aaron Eckhart) and Woman (Helena Bonham-Carter), two erstwhile lovers who are reunited at a wedding after almost a decade apart. Witty writing and stellar acting keep the film moving along, and the visual gimmick around which the film is framed pays off in the end.

**Mann Festival Theater, Sat., 7:30 PM**

***Brothers of the Head*** – Mock-udrama about cojoined twins who form a punk rock band had great buzz at South by Southwest and the Seattle International Film Festival.

**Mann Festival Theater, Sat., 10 PM**

## Sunday, July 2nd

***Voice*** – Korean ghost tale about two best friends torn by murder— and by the jealousy of the one no longer living.

**Landmark's Regent, Sun., 1 PM**

***Troubled Water*** – Israeli film about a Jewish settlement on the Gaza Strip, from idyllic beginning in 1990 as a fishing village, to its end with the evacuation of Gaza.

**Italian Cultural Institute, Sun., 5 PM**

***Little Miss Sunshine*** – Road picture about a hilariously dysfunctional family as they attempt to get eight-year-old Olive to the Little Miss Sunshine pageant.

**Wadsworth Theater, Sun., 7 PM**

# Astrological forecasts for women ONLY

by Lady Katsura and Suki Yaki



## Capricorn (December 22 – January 20)

Your earth sign is telling you to stick to your usual M.O. this month, even if that hot crush asks you out, say “No” stay in your apartment! Get your pleasures from a hot bubble bath and a Cosmopolitan instead.

## Aquarius (January 21 – February 18)

Throw your mama’s cautions to the wind and say, “Yes, Yes and YES!” to everyone, even to that talent agent with the oh-so-obvious hair transplant. You just might be passing up a diamond in the ruff.

## Pisces (February 19– March 19)

We know you ate at that C-rated diner around the corner, but that’s not why you are nauseous this morning. Stop with the denial, it’s not what you ate; it’s what you did in that Winnebago on Tuesday night!

## Aries (March 20 – April 19)

Everyone needs a new start. Dump your Debbie Downer roommate and find a new place. But don’t rush to decide. Keep looking until you find the one that’s right– you’ll know it by the mirrors on the ceiling.

## Taurus (April 20– May 20)

Stop searching for Mister Right. Just envision your usual crush but add 10 years of 60-hour workweeks and dinners in front of the TV. You’ll bypass all the commitment-phobic pretty boys, and out-of-work moochers. You deserve a 40-something, tubby, but devoted husband NOW, so why wait?

## Gemini (May 21 – June 20)

Dating a new person is scary—especially when he wears Quiet Riot boxers that say, “Cum on Feel the Noise” across the bum. But spend Independence Day with him and enjoy the fireworks. Oh, and that doubt in your head is at its infant stage– so squash it before it becomes a toddler! This is the one.

## Cancer (June 21 – July 20)

Your birthday is tempting you to think outside the cubicle. You’ve always known more than your boss anyway, why not write him an e-mail and tell him to get his own bleepin’ coffee?

## Leo (July 21 – August 20)

Those voices in your head are real. Listen to Sabatino, he has your best interest at heart. But you must block out Gretchen and Hildegard. Not only do they resent you for last Friday’s triumph at water aerobics, they also have a bet going as to when you’ll lose your drivers license again.

## Virgo (August 21 – September 20)

We know you are shaking in your Jimmy Choo’s with that new challenge you’ve just undertaken. Ignore the critics and your own butterflies, and clean your bathroom for God’s sake! You deserve to know what color your sink was, and throw away those shampoo bottles! Half of them are empty anyway.

## Libra (September 21 – October 22)

If you want this Saturday’s date to stick around for a while, stay out of the bedroom as long as you can! We know you get nervous easily, and it’s not your fault. But he simply won’t be able to overlook your inadequacies unless he gets to know you first.

## Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)

So what if you missed Father’s day, it’s never too late. Go buy your Dad that subscription to Barely Legal and while you’re at it, pay back one of the “loans” he made you when he was afraid you’d end up a loser.

## Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)

Anyone who says male escorts aren’t cut out for long-term relationships has obviously never met your favorite Rent-a-Date. Stop telling yourself it’s only physical, and even if it is, tell him how you feel!

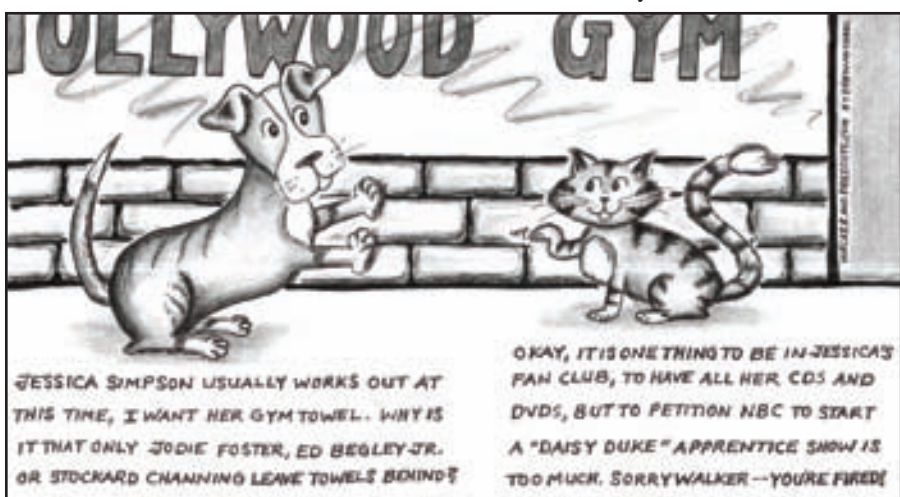
# The Hot Zone by Mark Darcourt



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## SUDOKU

The ultimate logic puzzle

The object of the game is to fill in the blank cells with numbers the 1 to 9 such that:

- 1) Every row should have the numbers 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 (in any order).
- 2) Every column should have the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, (in any order).
- 3) Every 3x3 bolded square should have 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 (in any order).

Remember you should NEVER have to guess. There will always be a logical answer.

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6		8		2			1	
1		7	5					
					4	8	3	
								9
		4					6	
	5			7	9	3		
	2			3			9	1
	8		9		1	2		
7				5				



# FLIX FACTORY

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www.Flixfactory.com

## ONE STOP SHOP FOR INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS!



### SERVICES

#### PRE PRODUCTION

- Consultation
- Coordination



#### PRODUCTION

- DVX-100A w/ Tripod (\$200/day)
- Lights with light stand (\$20/day ~)



#### POST PRODUCTION

- Editing (\$35/hr)
- DVD Authoring (\$50/Tape)
- Digibeta On-line edit
- Compositing

#### SOUND SERVICES

- Location Sound (\$275/day)
- Sound Editing (\$35/hr)
- Dialogue Editing (\$35/hr)
- Sound Design (\$50/hr)
- Foley (\$75/hr)
- ADR Studio (\$150/hr)
- Sound Mixing (\$50/hr)



### FACILITIES/EQUIPMENT

#### CAMERA

- Panasonic DVX-100a
- Tripod
- 2 XL Batteries

#### LIGHTS

- 1000w Lights
- 650w Lights
- 300w Lights

#### LOCATION SOUND

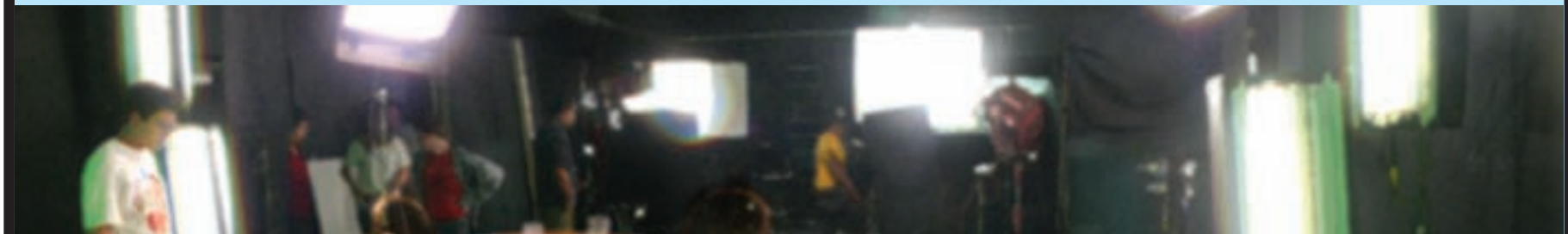
- (2) Shotgun mics
- FOSTEX Memory Recorder
- (2) Wireless Lav Mic Kit
- 8ch Mixer
- 300 ft. XLR Cables
- Portable Sound Cart

#### POST PRODUCTION

- Apple Final Cut Studio
- Apple DVD Studio Pro
- Adobe Premiere Pro
- Adobe AfterEffects
- Eyeon Digital Fusion
- Photoshop/Illustrator
- DV, DVCAM, Digibeta

#### POST SOUND

- ProTools
- ADR Studio
- Waves Gold Bundle



### OUR LATEST PROJECT



## ASIAN STORIES (BOOK 3)

Asian Stories (Book 3) is Flix Factory's first feature film, shot on super 16mm film. We started from pre-production, production and completed post-production in our in-house facility.

www.AsianStoriesMovie.com

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