

A REAL MAN FINALLY GETS THE WOMEN

BY BOB STRAUSS

Comedian-Character Actor
Jim Belushi
Moves Up to Leading-Man Status



Real men aren't afraid to show their sensitive sides. Just ask Jim Belushi, an actor who specializes in portraying understanding, supportive individuals, such as *About Last Night's* bull-in-a-singles-bar Bernie Litko (whose immortal lines like, "You don't want to get come on to, go enroll in a convent," always fail to melt a woman's heart), and Dr. Rock, *Salvador's* vacation-in-hell disc jockey, whose political awareness is on the level of a tequila-bottle worm.

In the new film *Real Men*, Belushi gets to play his most sensitive character yet. He's Nick Pirandello, the greatest CIA agent ever. "I don't use gadgets. I don't have one of those lighters that turns into an Uzi or a nuclear-powered car," the brawny comic actor says. "I do everything with my hands. For some reason, though, my partners always get killed."

Thanks to the death of his last partner, Pirandello is ordered to accompany a civilian (played by John Ritter) on a cross-country mission. Since this average Joe doesn't come within miles of the CIA's definition of real men, Pirandello is told to "extend" himself and get "in touch" with the new guy's feelings.

"It's real absurdist comedy," Belushi explains. "We're encountering gunfights and Russians and exploding cars, and here's this rough, tough superagent who's acting phony, trying to be considerate and sensitive."

Belushi loved the script by director Dennis Feldman (who last wrote Eddie Murphy's *Golden Child*) so much that he pulled out of another project to appear in *Real Men*. It's the first co-starring role for one of the most adept character actors to hit Hollywood in years. Becoming a leading man was no easy task for such a sensitive guy, though.

"For one thing, I had more lines in this movie than in all the other things I've ever done put together," he says. "I'm more of a