

Movie Previews • Winona Ryder Sinks Her Fangs into Dracula • Demi Moore Sans Body Paint • Video Releases

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Daily Cougar, U. of Houston

Hollywood finally is releasing the good movies that were "not quite ready 'til now." Yeah right. We all know the only reason the studios are getting these heavy-hitting films out is to squeeze them in under the Oscar deadline. Too bad they all won't meet Academy standards.

Here is a peek at what Hollywood thinks will amuse the mall brats this holiday season.

The Distinguished Gentleman (Hollywood Pictures)

Eddie Murphy guarantees a laugh attack for audiences, returning to his con man character. Thomas Jefferson Johnson runs the gamut on accents and stereotypes, as he works the ultimate scam. But Johnson doesn't have to worry about getting caught because he's at the one place in the United States where taking money from innocent people is legal—Congress. Murphy's straight man is Grant Shaud, better known as Miles from *Murphy Brown*. Shaud has been typecast blatantly; he is the know-it-all neurotic who gets verbally abused by Murphy (Eddie, not Brown).

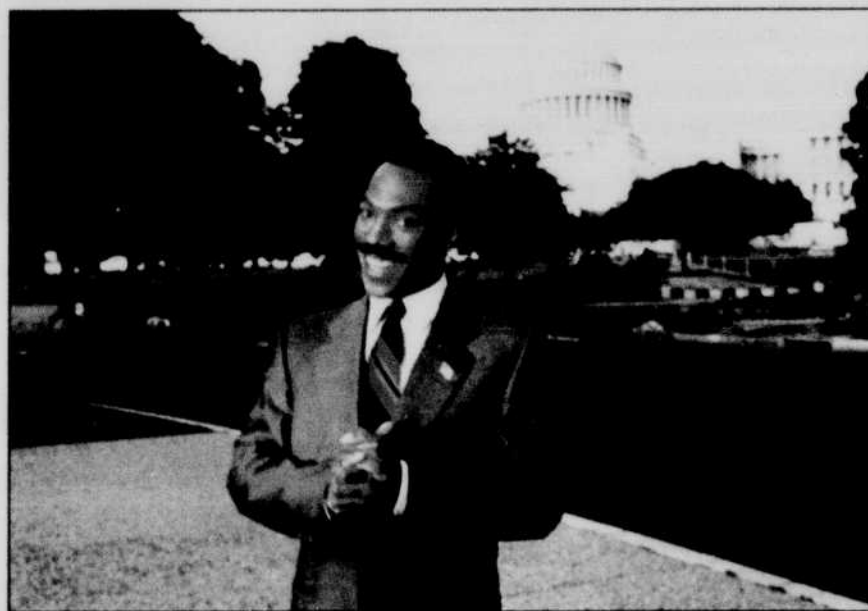
Scent of a Woman (Universal Pictures)

A young guy learns how to experience the most out of life from an older guy during a weekend jaunt in New York City. There'll be tons of that male bonding stuff, tons of sympathy for the characters, and if you make the young guy look good, you'll get tons of ticket sales from the women. The older man is Al Pacino; the younger guy is Chris O'Donnell. It is supposed to be a drama, so somebody is going to die, or get seriously injured or have to choose between two equally depressing options.

Trespass (Universal Pictures)

Ice-T, Bill Paxton, William Sadler and Ice Cube star in this flick about two firemen who get into trouble while looking for stolen goods in an abandoned building. After they find more than just the goods, they end up on the wrong side of the local bad guys.

This movie was called *Looters* and was supposed to come out sometime last summer. Wonder why it didn't? It seems Universal thought the release might bring trouble and



Eddie Murphy hopes *The Distinguished Gentleman* will keep him smiling all the way to the bank.

violence. So the studio will open it two days before Christmas. No, there won't be any problems with that. December is the last month of the year and supposedly has fewer violent crimes. Let's hope things are a lot better than the tumultuous opening of *New Jack City*.

Forever Young (Warner Bros.)

Mel Gibson puts his hot bod on ice in this lost love movie. Gibson plays a 1939 daredevil test pilot who is in love, but his lady is plowed down by a car and ends up in a coma before he can mumble the magic words, "Will you marry me?" Gibson's character can't stand the thought of living without her so he asks George Wendt (Norm from *Cheers*) to freeze him for a year. Fifty years later some kids thaw out the well-preserved Gibson, bringing him into the modern world. The kid who opens the freezer just happens to be the son of the nurse who cares for Gibson's living lost love. What a stroke of luck. Somehow the Feds get involved, and there are some chase scenes. Shocking for a Gibson film, huh? This should be a tolerable movie, if you're into kissing, hugging and Mel Gibson's bare chest.

Hoffa (Twentieth Century Fox)

Jack Nicholson stars as Jimmy Hoffa in this Danny DeVito film about the powerful Teamsters boss who probably ended up as fill dirt under Giants Stadium. The Joker and The Penguin team up to chronicle the life of the top trucking dog from his inception as boss until his mysterious demise. DeVito carries two umbrellas in this film, one as director, the other as actor. DeVito plays the guy who looks at the Feds and says, "You want me to give up Hoffa?" Yeah, like the director of this sure-to-make-tens-of-money movie is going to give it up.

Leap of Faith (Paramount Pictures)

Here is a story about a touring revivalist ministry that performs pseudo-miracles and takes donations. Sound familiar? Can you say PTL? No, this is not a rerun of Jim and Tammy from the runny mascara days; this is a flick with Steve Martin behind the pulpit—rightin' the wrongs of life. Kansas may be the downfall of Rev. Martin's ministries, though. The town he has chosen to victimize is practically dead. (It's probably the trailer home vs. tornado thing.) Kansas might be OK for Dorothy, but Steve is gonna have trouble there. ■

in the theater this month

on the set

The Robert Downey Jr. audiences knew from *Less Than Zero* and *Chances Are* is history. Downey hasn't retired; he's just been waddling around like a duck on the set of the film *Chaplin*, a picture where he portrays the great silent comic. And the transition from teen brat to serious actor hasn't been an easy one.



"I feel like the first 10 years all led up to me having just enough experience to be able to take it on and try to make it work," says the 27-year-old actor. Making it work sapped his energy and required all his creative and artistic efforts.

"Just even the body language, it's not American. It's about a British person. It's real different," he says.

Downey says his talent came a long way to do the part. "[There were] so [many] technical improvements to be made on Robert Downey Jr. so that he could be Charlie Chaplin and it's kind of like new and improved Robert just so he could foot the bill," he says.

And after portraying one of those great artists, he says his acting never will be the same. "I can't ever really do another film without preparing for it in the fashion that I prepared for Charlie, which was doing a lot of preparation so that I was free to enjoy it when I was doing it as opposed to going in and winging it." ■ By Greg Srisavasdi, Daily Bruin, U. of California, Los Angeles

video calendar

A brief look at December releases

Patriot Games, Paramount, 11/24; **Midnight Clear**, Columbia, 12/2; **Lethal Weapon 3**, Warner, 12/2; **Beautiful Dreamers**, Hemdale, 12/2; **Fire Within**, New York Video, 12/2; **Universal Soldier**, Live, 12/9; **Housesitter**, MCA, 12/9; **Until They Sail**, MGM, 12/9; **Operation Crossbow**, MGM, 12/9; **Adventures in Spying**, Columbia, 12/16; **Class Act**, Warner, 12/16; **Poison Ivy**, Columbia, 12/16; **Prelude to a Kiss**, Fox, 12/16; **Hellmaster**, A.I.P. Home Video, 12/16; **Boomerang**, Paramount, 12/22; **Hansel & Gretel**, Paramount, 12/22; **Big Girls Don't Cry**, Columbia, 12/23; **Buffy the Vampire Slayer**, Fox, 12/23; **Sex Crimes**, Atlas, 12/23; **Talons of the Eagle**, MCA, 12/23; **Out on a Limb**, MCA, 12/23; **Oh What a Night**, Columbia, 12/30; **Death Dreams**, Columbia, 12/30

quotable

"I wasn't out to make any kind of particular feminist statement; it was just how I felt as a woman."
—Demi Moore on her exposure in *Vanity Fair*