

Reel

BY MELISSA GREGO

SPRING HAS SPRUNG, AND SOMETHING'S fishy about the reawakening of Hollywood. Check out this month's movies. People — not birds — are singing. A fresh-legged deer leaps and lands in front of an oncoming, exploding car. Soil faithfully thaws, but volcanoes have the earth trembling. That's because this is the season of renewal, when music saves, love pours from the grave and natural disasters continue to flow into the movie market.



Roseanna's Grave

Fine Line

Roseanna (Mercedes Ruehl, *The Fisher King*) is dying, but her hubby Marcello (Jean Reno, *Mission: Impossible*) is worrying about everyone else. She wants to be buried in the local cemetery, but only a handful of plots remain — and reservations aren't accepted. So Marcello blazes around town putting out cigarettes, getting medicine to the sick and hiding bodies in order to keep would-be plot occupants out of Roseanna's grave.

Volcano

20th Century Fox

Tommy Lee Jones has been to heaven and earth chasing fugitives, avoiding natural born killers and being blown away. But can he go with the flow? If not, lava will flood Los Angeles. Jones stars as the L.A. emergency chief in charge when a volcano erupts beneath the La Brea Tar Pits. Can he save the City of Angels from yet another disaster? Anne Heche (*Walking and Talking*) co-stars in this natural born thriller.

Paradise Road

Fox Searchlight

Glenn Close, Frances McDormand (*Fargo*), Julianna Margulies (TV's *ER*) and Pauline Collins (*Shirley Valentine*) star as prisoners who can't take the oppression at a World War II Japanese concentration camp. So they do what any strong woman would do: They voice their opinions in the form of a vocal orchestra. Believe it or not, this note-toting drama is based on the true story of women captured in the Far East.

Ripe

Trimark

When the family car hits a deer and explodes, twin sisters are relieved of a sadistic, abusive father. They flee the accident scene and find a place to crash amidst young rowdies at a run-down army base. That's when one of the sisters begins to follow in her father's footsteps. Can they break the cycle in this coming-of-age film?



Keys to Tulsa

Gramercy

Eric Stoltz and James Spader had a two-day thrill together in the valley, and now they're headed to Oklahoma. Stoltz, as the shunned son of a well-to-do Tulsa family, is lured home by blackmail, courtesy of his high school sweetheart's hubby (Spader).

That Old Feeling

Universal

Reunited and it feels so ... wrong. Paula Marshall (*A Family Thing*) plays a bride who's crying at her own wedding, and it's not because of cold feet. Her parents have been gladly divorced for years ... until they're caught heating it up at the ceremony. The divorcees, Bette Midler and Dennis Farina (*Get Shorty*), bicker with — and bed — each other to the dismay of their daughter, friends and spouses.

Anaconda

Columbia

An anthropologist (Eric Stoltz), a documentarian (Jennifer Lopez, *Selena*) and their cameraman (Ice Cube, *Friday*), are in for the boat ride of their lives. They not only brave the Amazon on their quest for the monstrous Anaconda, but also must thwart a villainous opportunist (Jon Voight, *Mission: Impossible*). It's a jungle out there.



Breakdown

Paramount

Losing an hour of drive time when the car breaks down is one thing. But losing your wife? When a yuppie couple (Kurt Russell, *Escape from L.A.* and Kathleen Quinlan, *Apollo 13*) make a cross-country trek for a new job, they break down on a deserted road. A so-called rescuer nabs the wife and hubby's high-action pursuit ensues.

Murder at 1600

Warner Bros.

Snipes, camera, action! When a staffer at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. is killed, D.C.'s investigating homicide detective (Wesley Snipes) discovers — gasp! — official White House documents are missing and Secret Service agents don't always play by the book.

Kissed

Goldwyn Entertainment Company

The undertaker, the medical student and the corpse did it in the morgue with the body cloth. According to one necrophiliac undertaker's fantasies, love knows no boundaries. When a love triangle forms between her, a medical student and her "associates," she exposes the extent to which she loves to take work into her own hands.



Doubleteam

Columbia/Mandulay

Dennis Rodman's not just a free spirit — he plays one in the movies. As a makeup- and sequin-wearing CIA weapons specialist, he teams up with Jean-Claude Van Damme, who plays a world-class CIA terrorist assassin. They break every rule and explode every building, car, truck and van in their path.

B.A.P.S.

New Line

Halle Berry (*Losing Isaiah*) makes an executive decision to be a rich man's house guest — not wife. Berry and newcomer Natalie Deselle play Georgia glam girls who find their way to Beverly Hills and into the heart of a dying millionaire (Martin Landau, *Ed Wood*). When an unworthy heiress plots against their host, the divas hair-weave a counterplan of their own.



You'll find everything but the Raisinets on U's movie page: <http://www.umagazine.com>

Screen Saver

Nothing Personal

Warring factions bloody the streets of 1975 Belfast in this chillingly intense movie from Irish director Thaddeus O'Sullivan.

Nothing Personal takes place during a single night, as a gang of Protestant street soldiers sets out to avenge a gruesome IRA bombing. An inevitable tit-for-tat cycle of violence ensues.

O'Sullivan says he chose to focus less on the politics of who's right and who's wrong in order to show the effects of war on a community.

"I wanted to give a visceral sense of what it's like when you're on the front line," O'Sullivan says. "Living in mayhem must be horrific."

To capture the reality, O'Sullivan spared none of the carnage. But the film doesn't intend to glorify or bring sentiment to the struggle. "In 1975, things were at their worst. There was more sectarian violence, more IRA violence — it was a darker period."

Although the film focuses on the Loyalists, O'Sullivan comes from a Catholic background. *Nothing Personal* has done well in Northern Ireland, but the director was recently berated for the film by a pastor who was once involved in the paramilitary.

"I was so flabbergasted, I didn't tell him, 'The film's about you!'"

By Amy Helmes,
Assistant Editor

The Reel Deal

Chasing Amy

When writer/director Kevin Smith's no-budget debut, *Clerks*, became a surprise hit at the 1994 Sundance Film Festival, he told everyone it was the first installment in his "New Jersey trilogy."

"It was bullshit," he confesses. "We just said it so people would give us money to do more films."

And it worked. Now he's delivered on his once-empty promise by releasing the third movie in the series. *Chasing Amy* is the story of Holden (Ben Affleck, *Dazed and Confused*), a New Jersey comic book writer who falls in love with a lesbian (Joey Lauren Adams, *Mallrats*). The couple's unusual relationship alienates their friends and troubles Holden, who has difficulty coming to terms with his girlfriend's wild past. "We always knew this movie would offend the lesbian community," Smith says. "There's no way around it."

Being put on the defensive is nothing new to Smith, who was trounced by critics for his last film, *Mallrats*. "I was last year's whipping boy," he says. "But to this day, I still think *Mallrats* is a fine movie."

Obviously trying to avoid future controversy, Smith played it safe with his next film, *Dogma*, a road movie about the Catholic Church.

By James Hibberd, Assistant Editor

