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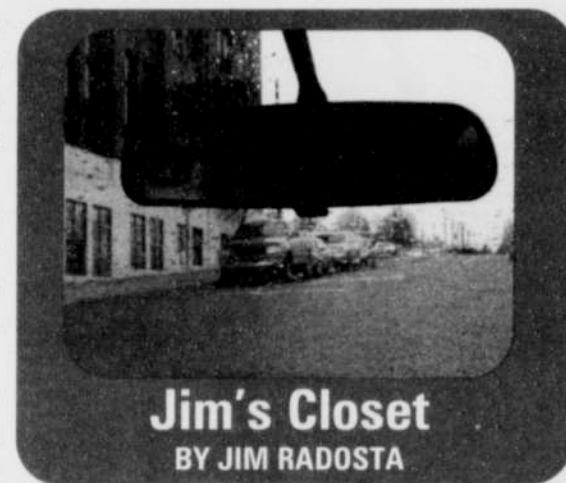
Amy Sedaris draws a Blank for hungry fans

Six years after Comedy Central gave it the ax, the cult television series *Strangers with Candy* makes a long-awaited return to the big screen July 7 at Cinema 21. (Check out the review on Page 48.)

The multitasking Amy Sedaris, 45, not only commands the film, which she wrote with *Candy* co-stars Paul Dinello and Stephen Colbert, but she's also a playwright (she penned *The Book of Liz* with brother David), author (her cookbook, *I Like You: Hospitality Under the Influence*, comes out in October) and entrepreneur (she runs a cupcake and cheeseball business out of her Greenwich Village apartment in between acting gigs). Miraculously, she found a few spare moments to shoot the breeze with me.

Jim Radosta: What took so long for the film to be released after premiering at Sundance in January 2005?

Amy Sedaris: Believe it or not, nothing that's too interesting. Warner was going to do it, and then they fell through just because we had to clear a lot of stuff. They were recently sued for \$17 million with *Dukes of Hazzard*, so they were just being persnickety about some things. It took longer and longer with the lawyers and all that stuff, and time was running out, so they just decided not to do it. It worked out for us, because ThinkFilms is so much better. They're the right people for *Strangers with Candy*. I don't think Warner was really—it'd be like maybe a network saying they wanted to release the movie, you know what I mean? ThinkFilms is more like cable. So I think it's in better hands now.



we thought was funny, and we pulled from [*The Trip Back*] a documentary on Florrie Fisher, who's this woman who had a past, so we borrowed from that to help create Jerri Blank.

JR: How did you end up scoring all those cameos?

AS: Some of them we asked. We got a lot of requests from people. A lot of people we couldn't put in the movie; we just didn't have the parts for them. But I asked Phil [Seymour Hoffman], and I asked Sarah [Jessica Parker] and Matthew [Broderick], and we sent Allison Janney a script. Sir Ian Holm's son told him to do the movie. We wrote Dan Hedaya; I'm a big fan of his. Justin Theroux is a friend of mine. I was like, "You owe me!" [His character] teaches drivers ed, and all I told him was, "Just pretend you have a huge dick and you don't know what to do with it!"

JR: Now that it's been so long, how does it feel to sort of let your baby go out there and see how people respond to it?

AS: To me, what is so great about *Strangers with Candy* is I really like the audience for it. They're misfits and outcasts, and those people are the ones that discovered the show. How often is a movie for people like that? They're always for pretty people and straight people, and it's just so tiring. It's refreshing that there's a film out there for

a different kind of audience, so I'm really proud of that. It's not for everybody. I just think those people that'll like it are the people I want to like it, and I'm glad they like it.

JR: My friends and I want to launch an Oscar campaign on your behalf. If the academy bites, what would you say in your acceptance speech?

AS: I'd say, "Pee on me!" and watch them drag me off.

JR: Do you think Jerri will be back for more, or is this the last we've heard from her?

AS: I want to do a Christmas movie or Christmas special. I think that would be fun. I don't know. Paul says she's like a rash and you never know when she's going to reappear. ☺

Arts and Culture Editor JIM RADOSTA needs your feedback. Write to jim@justout.com.



Amy Sedaris goes back to school in *Strangers with Candy*.

JR: How hard was it for you to get back into character?

AS: I had stitches in my mouth when I did the movie, so it was hard when I made the face. And it was in the summer and it was really hot and I had the wig and the fatty suit and the boots and the stitches, so I felt I had a lot working against me. It was really hard for me to concentrate, and just nothing would come to my head. So that made it difficult, but that's really about it. The character—she's pretty easy to jump into.

JR: Did you go through any boozier/user/loser phases yourself?

AS: No, I didn't. I don't really remember much from high school. But that's the funny thing about the three of us working on the movie—we didn't really draw from our own high school experiences, and we certainly aren't hip enough to know what the kids are doing nowadays. We just wrote what

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