

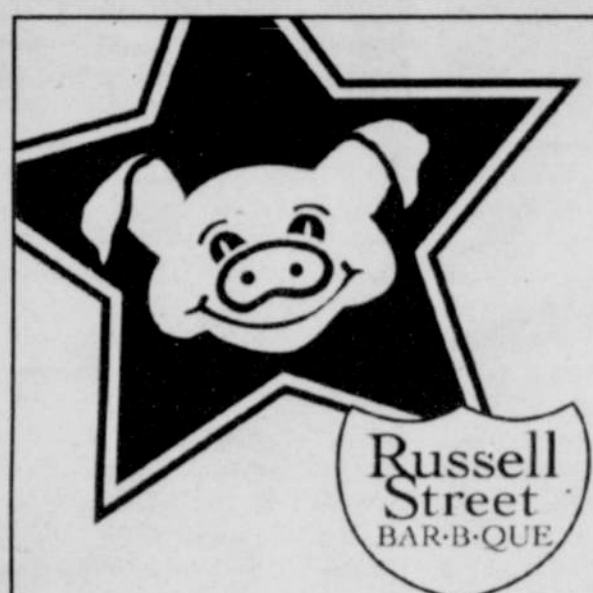
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film

Children of Men

Theodore Faron (Clive Owen) is a down-and-out former idealist in near-future dystopian England, where immigrant refugees are rounded up and caged like cattle. The world's birthrate has mysteriously dwindled to nothing; Orwellian-compulsory fertility tests are administered out of desperation for humanity's future. When a former flame and political comrade (Julianne Moore) emerges from his past, Faron is drawn into the nearly impossible mission of protecting the secret last hope of the human race and is trapped between an oppressive, militaristic government and the "terrorist" rebels out to bring it down. Director Alfonso Cuarón employs the same hand-held, digressive camera he used in *Y Tu Mamá También*, and though it's not quite as perfectly effortless a stylistic match, it does render *Children of Men* one hell of a visceral action film, albeit one that also offers a high degree of intelligence, compassion and political engagement. **A-**

—Christopher McQuain

Eating Out 2: Sloppy Seconds

2004's *Eating Out* was cheered and reviled in about equal measure. Some complained it was poorly written and acted, filled with stereotypes and ultimately just another empty-handed gay indie. Others appreciated the film's sharp one-liners, gorgeous boyz and sexy, upbeat approach to the homo love wars. The sequel is exponentially better, a hilariously rude comedy that should satisfy both the critics and fans of the earlier film.

In the first film, Jim Verraros of *American Idol* (the show's famous first casualty) played Kyle, a gay boy who convinces his straight roommate to pretend to be gay to attract his girlfriend. Kyle reappears in the sequel trying to figure out whether the new guy in town, knockout farm boy Troy (Marco Dapper), is gay or straight and, of course, how to get him in bed.

As in the earlier film, the characters go to any lengths to have their sexy fun: This time, thanks to a scheme hatched by consummate fag hag Gwen (Emily Brooke Hands), Kyle pretends to be the boyfriend of slutty Tiffani (Rebekah Kochan). The trio engineer another test of Troy's orientation when Kyle pretends to be an "ex-gay," with the two attending meetings of "Coming In" run by an obvious closet case who drools over every description of the members' attempts at hetero sex.

Opening Jan. 5 at Cinema 21, *Eating Out 2* packs a surprising punch as the plot to uncover Troy's sexuality spins out of control. The eye

candy here is tasty indeed, with porn-pretty Troy and indecently handsome Marc (Brett Chukerman), Kyle's ex, being especially alluring in jockstraps and towels. (For penis-spotter, Troy bares all.) There's a serious message in here about honesty and acceptance, but it doesn't get in the way of the fun. The film's satire of the ex-gay movement is dead-on, and indie goddess Mink Stole registers nicely as Kyle's sympathetic mom.

But the real attraction in this satisfying campfest are the amusingly lowbrow sexuality and the irresistibly dishy dialogue. The fag hags have many of the best lines, which come at warp speed. Gwen: "What is it with straight guys and their aversion to sucking dick?" Tiffani: "I just want to hear 'I love you' instead of 'Take it, you tight little snatch!'" To Marc's pompous "I don't treat people like pieces of meat," Tiffani replies with a smile: "Well, you should. It's fun!" **A**

—Gary Morris

Empire in Africa

In his documentary about the '90s civil war in Sierra Leone, Phillipe Diaz was able to use footage that was given to him by a government official, and through interviews, commentary and visual events captured on camera, he effectively shows a different picture from what we see in the international news media about the country, which is famous for its blood diamonds. As expected, the film contains a lot of gory images, so it might not be suitable for everyone. Screens Jan. 6 and 7 and Jan. 13 and 14 at Hollywood Theatre as the premiere installment of a weekend documentary series. **A-**

—Yvonne P. Behrens

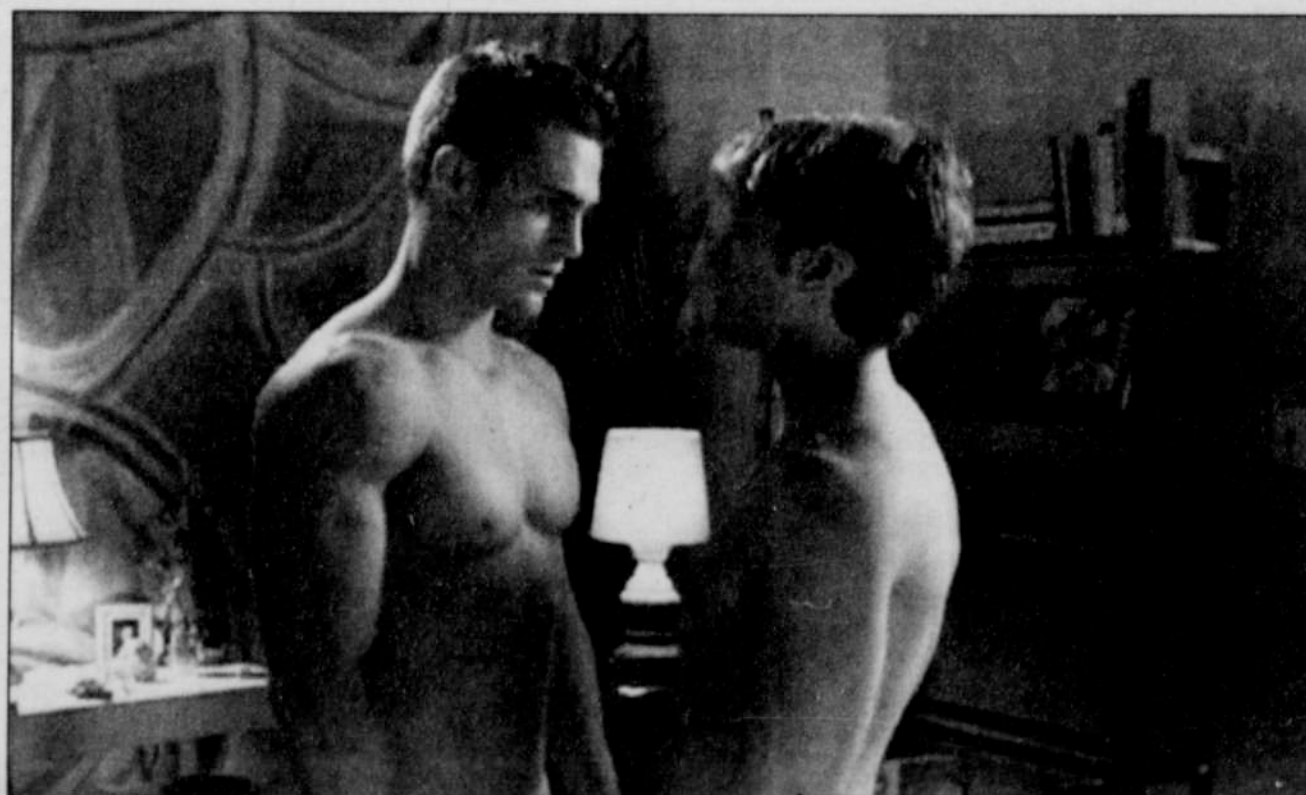
Freedom Writers

Richard LaGravenese (*Living Out Loud*) directed this really touching true story about a young woman (wonderfully portrayed by Hilary Swank) who teaches a class of disadvantaged teens in Long Beach, Calif. Using *The Diary of Anne Frank* and implementing many different activities, she tries to bring her students together to learn about tolerance and realize that a good education can open the door for everybody. **A**

—YPB

The Good Shepherd

Ever wondered how the CIA got started? Edward Wilson (Matt Damon), a fictional character partially based on CIA founder James "Jesus" Angelton, is recruited from his secret Ivy League



Marco Dapper (left) and Brett Chukerman serve up some tasty eye candy in *Eating Out 2*.