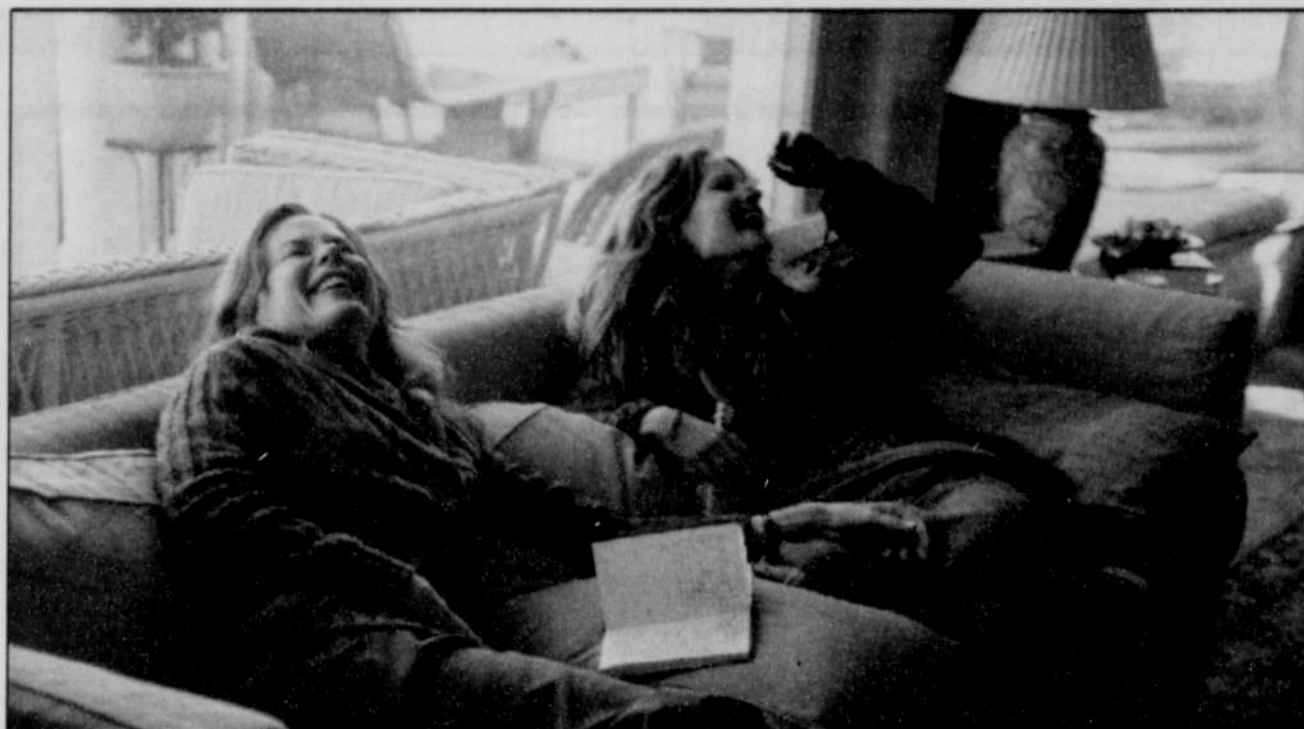




Nicole Kidman (left) and Jennifer Jason Leigh play dysfunctional sisters in *Margot at the Wedding*.

parents meet a child's coming out with denial, confusion, coldness—rarely love. In one especially tragic case, lesbian Anna hangs herself a few months after her mother, Mary Lou Wallner, says, "I will never accept that in you."

Fortunately, people can change, and the film shows this, tracing the journey of rejecting parents as they do the hard work of learning about homosexuality—which is shown as a process of de-programming themselves from their religion's homophobia. Wallner's self-education after her daughter's suicide leads her to PFLAG and uncompromising activism. The parents of gay teen Jake Reitman get arrested as they protest outside Focus on the Family. Tonia Poteat's mom and dad continue to grapple, but there's clear progress.

The film samples footage of a number of Christian crazies—James Dobson, Jimmy Swaggart, Jerry Falwell—but uses actual scholars to set the biblical record straight. "Abomination," we learn, meant "a ritual wrong" in ancient times, not a "moral sin," while Leviticus' supposed prohibition of homosexuality is better understood as an argument for procreation by a nation desperate to grow. In an entertaining, Michael Moore-like sequence, cartoon characters give a brisk summary of theories of why homosexuality exists.

Now playing at Hollywood Theatre, *For the Bible Tells Me So* builds in power as we get to know the five families intimately. That it also expertly debunks the church's cynical anti-gay viewpoints adds dimension to this brilliant documentary. **A**

—GM

The Golden Compass

This beautifully filmed, well-acted adaptation of Philip Pullman's speculative fantasy novel is another victim of the difficulty of adapting a subtle, complex novel to cinema—namely, the thoughtful nuance of that anti-authoritarian young-adult sci-fi adventure is set aside in favor of showy visuals and simple, straightforward characterizations. Our adolescent heroine Lyra is plucky and fearless; Mrs. Coulter (skillfully, inevitably portrayed by Nicole Kidman) is elegantly terrifying; there are flying witches, pirates and animal companions; and the Kingdom of the Bears is full of serious ass-kicking. In that—and the visuals and story remain brilliant—it's flashy, breathless fun. **B**

—Jemiah Jefferson

Hear and Now

Written and directed by Portland filmmaker Irene Taylor Brodsky, *Hear and Now* is a complicated yet intimate memoir of her deaf parents' decision to receive cochlear implants—an innovative surgery to restore hearing. Spliced with Super 8 family film footage, *Here and Now* surpasses expect-

tations of a sterile portrayal of the controversial medical procedure. Instead, Brodsky surprisingly offers a chronicle of her parents' experience with the implant and a testament to their love and lives. Filled with humor and countless poetic devices, *Here and Now* is an accessible narrative that won the 2007 Sundance audience choice award for best documentary. Opens Dec. 7 at Cinema 21. **A-**

—Jedidiah Chavez

The Last Winter

It takes its time establishing itself, but once it does, this film grows into a fine example of intense, compelling psychological horror. A small, tight-knit research team at the Arctic Circle is disrupted by the presence of a new environmental scientist, studying the effects of global warming on the ancient permafrost, and as the temperature rises, the uncanny raises its hideous head. Ron Perlman and James LeGros head up an excellent cast in this low-budget, independent horror gem. It doesn't rely on gore for its terrors; imagination and the characters' jealousy and secret resentments paint a more gruesome picture. Opens Dec. 14 at Hollywood Theatre. **A**

—JJ

Margot at the Wedding

Noah Baumbach (*The Squid and the Whale*) wrote and directed this film about two sisters, Margot (Nicole Kidman) and Pauline (Baumbach's wife, Jennifer Jason Leigh). Family relationships and history begin unfolding when Margot and her son, Claude, arrive for Pauline's wedding to the unemployed Malcolm (Jack Black). I thought the film was more dark than funny. While dysfunctional relationships can sometimes make great character studies, I really did not like most of these people. Wait for the DVD to come out. **C**

—YPB

The Mist

I haven't read the 1980 horror novella by Stephen King on which this atrocious film was based, but let's hope it's a case of "the book was better." Then again, people who enjoy this sort of drek probably don't care much about character development, verisimilitude or convincing dialogue. The plot concerns a group of stereotypical small-town folks trapped in a grocery store by a mysterious and murderous fog that has enveloped the town. *The Mist* is certainly quotable, but for all the wrong reasons. "The next time I need a friend like you, I'll squat and shit one out," hisses one of the two-dimensional characters, a religious nutjob played by Marcia Gay Harden. Unfortunately, the same could be said of this film. **D**

—Tony LeTigre **10**

NIGHTLIFE NIGHTLIFE NIGHTLIFE NIGHTLIFE NIGHTLIFE

Get a FREE TEST for HIV, syphilis, or hepatitis C!

Fri Dec. 14 **Scandals**
1125 SW Stark St.

Thurs Jan. 3 **CC Slaughters**
NW 3rd Ave & Davis St.

9-11:30pm

Come and get it!

Multnomah County Health Department

Happy Holidays

Hobo's
Restaurant & Lounge

120 N.W. Third Avenue Portland, Oregon 97209 503-224-3285 • www.hobospdx.com • Gift Certificates Available

SCANDALS

PORTLAND'S PREMIER GAY MEN'S CLUB

FRIENDS
DRINKS
DJS
FUN

NO COVER!

Party with DJ Duane
Friday and Saturday nights,
then cure your hangover at our
Bloody Mary bar Sunday!

Seven Days a Week
Noon-2:00 am
1125 SW Stark St.