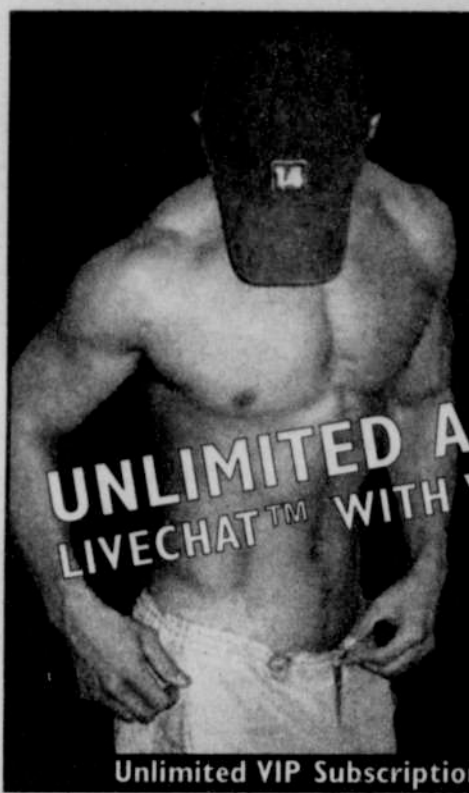




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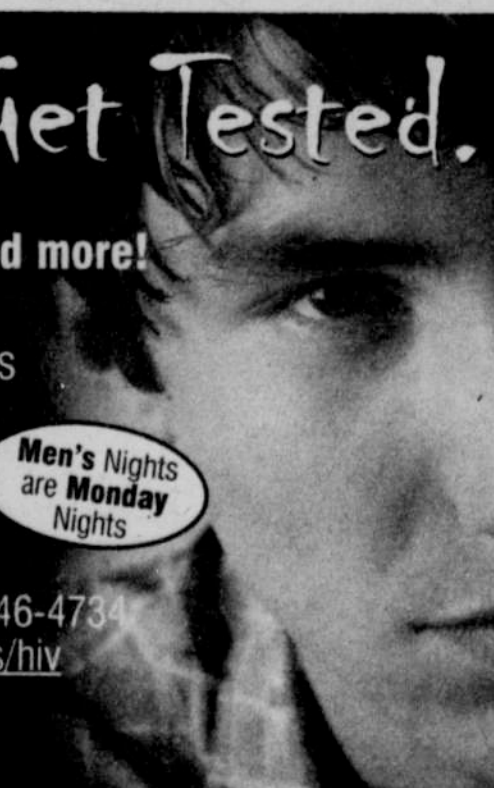
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film

88 Minutes

Set in Seattle, this thriller has all the right ingredients to keep you guessing nearly till the end. Al Pacino plays forensic psychiatrist and college professor Jack Gramm, who is haunted by his past and receives a death threat via telephone that he has only 88 minutes to live. Director Jon Avnet (*Red Corner*) keeps us on the edge of our seat as Jack goes through all the cliché scenarios: car bombs; a suspicious, beautiful woman; and, unfortunately, a lot of phone calls. The movie is geared to showcase Pacino, and he does a good job. The great supporting cast includes Amy Brenneman as a lesbian—yes! **B-**

—Yvonne P. Behrens

Forbidden Kingdom

Directed by Rob Minkoff (*The Lion King*) and based on the Chinese epic *Journey to the West*, this ultimate martial arts fantasy brings together Jet Li and Jackie Chan for the first time. An American teenager (Michael Angarano) finds a relic that enables him to travel back in time to ancient China to free the legendary Monkey King, a master of gong-fu, magic and wisdom. Although the masterfully choreographed fight sequences frequently disobey the laws of physics and some of the villains (such as The White Haired Demoness) are over the top, the effects are just incredible, and it's all in the name of fun. **B+**

—YPB

Forgetting Sarah Marshall

In December 2007, *Knocked Up* director Judd Apatow went on a mission: to put penises in every movie he makes. So even though *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* is directed by newcomer Nicholas Stoller, producer Apatow got his wish with three full-frontal shots of Jason Segel. If that's not enough to make you run to the multiplex, there's also Segel's raucous script and fine performances by Mila Kunis, Russell Brand and the übercute Paul Rudd. A brief warning: Although a tad too long, this "romantic comedy" is more like *There's Something About Mary* than *When Harry Met Sally*. **B+**

—Floyd Sklover

Hear and Now

Written and directed by Portland filmmaker Irene Taylor Brodsky, *Hear and Now* is a compli-

cated 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, *Hear and Now* surpasses expectations 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, *Hear and Now* is an accessible narrative that won the 2007 Sundance audience choice award for best documentary. Opens April 19 at Hollywood Theatre. **A-**

—Jedidiah Chavez

Looking for Langston

Isaac Julien's 1989 film *Looking for Langston* isn't really so much about Langston Hughes as it is about the intersection of African-American and gay male culture in the United States. (Curiously, Julien is a British filmmaker probably best known for his U.K.-centric 1991 feature *Young Soul Rebels*.) The film is subtitled *A Meditation on Langston Hughes and the Harlem Renaissance*, and it is, indeed, a strictly non-narrative, poetic film, mixing archival footage and photos with Julien's composed "meditations"—often black-and-white, near-static compositions of actors representing Hughes and his male lovers.

Julien does a remarkable job of creating an artificial space—it appears to be a re-creation of Hughes' funeral on an indoor balcony, below which an old-fashioned gay nightclub is having a busy evening—in which to play out these meditations. Time goes in both directions here, rendering the film as much about its late-'80s period as the '20s and '30s; the décor is in the style of old Harlem hotspot The Cotton Club, but the music can switch from jazz to house in an instant, and the same men who waltz together in one scene are voguing in the next. We are as likely to hear on the soundtrack a poem by gay black writer Essex Hemphill about the effects of AIDS on his sex life as we are to be treated to Toni Morrison's mellifluous rendering of a text by James Baldwin. Throughout, Julien conjures up Hughes' sexuality (which he kept an "open secret" during his lifetime) in erotic tableaux after the style of Robert Mapplethorpe. In the midst of it all, Jimmy Somerville makes a brief appearance as an angel.



Looking for Langston is a poetic film about the intersection of African-American and gay male culture in the United States.