

Divergent Lives

On a collision course

COLLATERAL: Directed by Michael Mann. Written by Stuart Beattie. Produced by Michael Mann, Julie Richardson. Executive producers, Frank Darabont, Rob Fried, Chuck Russell, Peter Giuliano. Cinematography, Dion Beebe, Paul Cameron. Production design, David Wasco. Editors, Jim Miller, Paul Rubell. Costumes, Jeffrey Kurland. Music, James Newton-Howard. Starring Tom Cruise and Jamie Foxx, with Jada Pinkett Smith, Mark Ruffalo and Peter Berg. Also, Bruce McGill, Irma P. Hall, Barry Shabaka Henley. DreamWorks Pictures and Paramount Pictures, 2004. R. 115 minutes.

Like most thrillers, Michael Mann’s new film assumes a frenetic tempo toward the end, times of scarce breath and clenched jaws, a berserk bulldozer effect. Accompanied by escalating music, I keep moving out of the way of a relentless, machine-like menace threatening to engulf and crush me. But fortunately, *Collateral* isn’t all fast-paced intimidation and danger.

In the early scenes, the picture has a somewhat leisurely, low-key feel. Twelve-year veteran L.A. cabbie, Max (Jamie Foxx), lets go of his best catch of the night, an attractive U.S. prosecutor named Annie (Jada Pinkett Smith). He sits in the cab outside her building, wool-gathering.

Graced with the gift of seeing through walls, the viewer watches a brisk businessman toss down a card with his keys on an identification scanner. The machine into lets him exit, after-hours, a courthouse office. The scene goes by fast, and so does the next, as Annie, going upstairs on the escalator, passes Vincent (Tom Cruise) going down.

Dressed in a nicely tailored suit, white shirt and carrying a briefcase, Vincent approaches Max’s cab. At first glance, Vincent’s just a stranger in town for the night with a few clients to check on. Despite his elegant, silver fox look, Vince is rough trade, of the sort made infamous in *Sexy Beast* by Ben Kingsley.

The rhythm of the interactions and the casual, naturalistic rapport between Max and Vincent allows time to observe the characters. Made possible in part by the enclosed setting of the cab, the relationship is a friendly agreement between naturally wary individuals. Max uses his precise mental map of the city to get Vincent to his appointment in seven minutes and becomes complicit until their ethics prove incompatible. Moments still come when the viewer almost forgets the merciless killing machine in the back seat.

We witness the last time Max actually thinks Vincent may be an OK guy. He’s with him in a jazz club swapping stories with owner (Barry Shabaka Henley). When Max snaps, his actions open him to serious repercussions. The film becomes about how Max and Vincent come to depend on each other in ways neither could have imagined.

Foxx brings Max through a dizzying transformation from a guy who gets along to a stand-up man of action. He gives a great performance. And Cruise mixes his easy charm with a sinister sociopathy that brings

chills. Together, they’re like fire and ice, feeling and nothingness.

Other characters include the police who find a number of bodies arriving at the morgue on an otherwise quiet night. Undercover narcotics Detective Fanning (Mark Ruffalo) and Detective Richard Weidner (Peter Berg) have different ideas about who’s behind the crimes. Ruffalo is simply excellent in every film he makes (*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, In the Cut*), and I’ve liked Berg since his old days on television’s “Chicago Hope.” Irma P. Hall plays Max’s hospitalized mother with her usual flair, bringing humor to family matters and briefly anchoring the film in ordinary reality. Javier Bardem (*Before Night Falls, The Dancer Upstairs*) is the notorious drug lord, Felix.

Every actor adds to the film’s believability, while Los Angeles, Mann’s city, cements the film’s sense of specific place. The film spans one night and was shot only at night. It contains breathtaking images. Mann (*Heat, Ali, The Insider*) said he wanted to evoke the city’s “wildness that lurks just one layer



The inevitable moment arrives between Max (Jamie Foxx) and Vincent (Tom Cruise).

FRANK CONNOR. DREAMWORKS PICTURES. 2004.

below the surface” and fleshed out the metaphor in a midnight encounter with wildlife at an isolated urban intersection. Brilliant!

A strong contender for my best films of 2004 list after one viewing, *Collateral* is now playing at Cinemark and Cinema World. Very highest recommendations. **EW**

movie clips

OPENING OR RETURNING:

Alien vs Predator: The scary monsters you know and love from earlier film franchises duke it out on Earth for the first time on film. Wow! PG-13. Cinema World. Cinemark.

Before Sunset: Richard Linklater takes *Before Sunrise*’s Celine (Julie Delpy) and Jesse (Ethan Hawke) on a walking tour of Paris nine years later. They’ve grown but have not forgotten their time together. Special love stays in your heart. A satisfying sequel, the film rates my very highest recommendations. R. Bijou. **See review this issue.**

Every Mother’s Son: Tami Gold and Kelly Anderson’s award-winning film chronicles three New York mothers whose sons died as a result of police brutality. The mothers of Amadou Diallo, Anthony Baez and Gary (Gidone) Busch address the militarization of law enforcement and erosions of constitutional protections while advocating for police reforms such as better training, more citizen oversight and independent prosecutors for police brutality cases. On “POV” at 11 pm on 8/17 on OPB, but check listings. **Princess Diaries 2 Royal Engagement:** Anne Hathaway is being groomed to be queen of Genovia, but she has to land a husband before she can be crowned. Garry Marshall directs.Julie Andrews costars. G. Cinemark. Cinema World. Opens 8/11.

Stepford Wives, The: Frank Oz directs Nicole Kidman, Matthew Broderick, Bette Midler, Christopher Walken, Faith Hill and Glenn Close in this updated comedy-thriller about a perfect, 1950s-era community.Recommended for its entertainment value. PG-13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

Umatilla (2003): Residents of the Eastern Oregon town of Umatilla are unprepared for a chemical disaster at the U.S. Army’s Chemical Weapons Depot located there. Bend filmmaker RJ McHatton brings a personal angle to his portrait of a quiet town with an unwelcome resident. McHatton will be present at the 8 pm screening on 8/13 at DIVA, Broadway and Olive in downtown Eugene. Donation: \$2-\$5 at the door.

Without a Paddle: High-speed comedy adventure stars Seth Green, Matthew Lillard and Dax Shepard as clueless adventurers who go into the Oregon wilderness in search of lost treasure. PG-13. Opens Wed. 8/18.

Yu-Gi-Oh: Japanese, animation for the kiddies. Yugi and friends play a new game called Dual Monsters. PG. Cinemark.

Films open the Friday following EW publication date unless otherwise noted. See archived reviews at www.eugeneweekly.com

CONTINUING:

Anchorman: Subtitled “The Legend of Ron Burgundy,” this comedy stars Will Ferrell as an unctuous, untalented newscaster who’s a legend only in his own mind. Funny moments. Recommended. PG-13. Cinemark.

Online archives.

Around the World in 80 Days: Jackie Chan and Steve Coogan star in this remake.PG. Movies 12.

Bourne Supremacy, The: Paul Greengrass (writer, director of *Bloody Sunday*) directs Matt Damon as assassin Jason Bourne in the second installment of Robert Ludlum’s espionage thrillers Also stars Joan Allen, Brian Cox, Julia Stiles, Kurt Urban and Franka Potente. One of the summer’s best films. Highly recommended. PG-13. Cinema World. Cinemark. **Online archives.**

Cinderella Story, A: Teen romance comedy stars Hilary Duff, Jennifer Coolidge, Chad Michael Murray and Regina King. Mark Rosman directs. PG. Cinemark.

Clifford’s Really Big Movie: While adults may find it “an oppressively innocuous animated feature,” as did A.O. Scott of *The New York Times*, young children may take comfort in the adventures of the big red dog they know from television. G. Movies 12.

Coffee and Cigarettes: Jim Jarmusch (*Stranger Than Paradise, Mystery Train, Dead Man*) returns with vignettes of famous folks swapping stories, who include Bill Murray, Cate Blanchett, Steve Buscemi, Alfred Molina, Tom Waits and Iggy Pop. Not

the best Jarmusch ever, but as Matt Zoller Seitz of the *New York Press* says, “even less-than-great Jarmusch is still fascinating.” NR. Bijou.

Collateral: Michael Mann’s thriller stars Tom Cruise as an LA hitman and Jamie Foxx as his taxi driver, who’s surprised to discover he’s a hostage. Together, they’re like fire and ice, feeling and nothingness. A character study in action, the film is one of the best movies of the year. Very highest recommendations. Don’t miss. R. Cinema World. Cinemark. **See review this issue.**

Day After Tomorrow, The: Roland Emmerich directs Dennis Quaid, Jake Gyllenhaal, Emmy Rossum, Sela Ward. Climatologist tries to save the world from abrupt global warming as New York is being overtaken by a new ice age. PG-13. Movies 12.

De-Lovely: Songsmith Cole Porter’s (Kevin Kline) life in song and dance centers on his long marriage (Ashley Judd) and relegates his homosexuality to bad-boy behavior. Elvis Costello, Alanis Morissette and Sheryl Crow sing. PG-13. Cinema World. **Online archives.**

Dodgeball: Can social rejects save their local gym from gentrification? Only director Rawson Thurber and his stars, Ben Stiller, Vince Vaughn, Christine Taylor and Rip Torn, know for sure. Still packing the house, the film’s highly recommended by otherwise clearly normal people. PG-13. Movies 12.

Fahrenheit 9/11: Winner of the Palme d’Or at Cannes 2004, Michael Moore’s nonfiction film is more restrained than his later films and better for it. The film is respectful, moving and informative, as well as opinionated and occasionally heavy handed. Don’t miss. Highest recommendations. R. Bijou.

Online archives.

Garfield, The Movie: Garfield, the smarty pants kitty, makes his film debut. PG. Movies 12.

Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle: A comedy about room mates who get stoned and go out for a few burgers but end up on a long, strange trip. Stars John Cho (*American Pie*) and Kal Penn (*Van Wilder*). R. Cinemark.

Harry Potter & the Prisoner of Azkaban:

Alfonso Cuarón directs the third film based on the series by J.K. Rowling. Harry (Daniel Radcliffe), Ron (Rupert Grint) and Hermione (Emma Watson), now teenagers, return to Hogwarts, where they face their darkest fears. The very best so far. Highly recommended. PG. Cinemark. **Online archives.**

I, Robot: Alex Proyas (*Dark City, The Crow*) directs Will Smith as a police detective investigating a crime thought to be perpetrated by a robot. Also stars Bruce Greenwood, James Cromwell, Chi McBride and Bridget Moynahan. Based on Isaac Asimov’s classic sci-fi stories. Recommended for its strange ambiance. PG-13. Cinemark. **Online archives.**

Little Black Book: Offbeat romantic comedy directed by Nick Hurran stars Brittany Murphy as a wannabe newswoman who decides to check up on her boyfriend (Ron Livingston) at the instigation of her co-workers Holly Hunter and Kathy Bates. PG-13. Cinemark. Cinema World.

Manchurian Candidate, The: Psychological thriller stars Denzel Washington as an ex-career officer disturbed by his experiences in Desert Storm. Liev Schreiber plays a former squad sergeant, now a vice-presiden-

tial candidate and son of a powerful senator (Meryl Streep). An especially fine performance from Jeffrey Wright (Belize in *Angels in America*), as a damaged vet suffering hallucinations. Very highest recommendations. R. Cinema World. Cinemark. **Online archives.**

Mean Girls: Lindsay Lohan plays a high-school student raised by zoologist parents in the African bush, who falls for a popular girl’s ex-boyfriend. PG-13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

Notebook, The: Nick Cassavetes directs Gena Rowlands, James Garner, Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams. Depicts real first love, with a great performance by McAdams. Recommended. PG-13. Movies 12.

Online archives.

Raising Helen: Garry Marshall directs Kate Hudson, John Corbett, Joan Cusack. Hudson becomes the guardian of her sister’s three children. Recommended. PG-13. Movies 12.

Online archives.

Spider Man 2: Peter Parker aka Spidey (Tobey Maguire) returns as a college student by day who still loves Kirsten Dunst and a superhero when needed against his new nemesis, Otto Octavius (Alfred Molina). Sam Raimi directs. Excellent film! See it. PG-13. Cinemark. **Online archives.**

Thirteen Going On 30: Jennifer Garner goes to bed 13, wishing she were older. Wakes up 17 years later, and she is. Directed by Gary Winnick, also stars the always excellent Mark Ruffalo, with Andy Serkis and Kathy Baker. High recommendations. PG-13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

Thunderbirds: Top-secret International Rescue run by former astronaut (Bill Paxton) and his five sons go for Ben Kingsley, master criminal. PG. Movies 12.

Troy: Wolfgang Petersen directs ancient Greek tale of war between Troy and Sparta. Stars Brad Pitt. R. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

Two Brothers: Jean-Jacques Annaud (*The Bear*) directs this adventure story about the power of friendship between twin tiger cubs. Stars Guy Pearce, Jean-Claude Dreyfus and Philippine Leroy-Beaulieu. PG. Movies 12.

Village, The: M. Night Shyamalan’s new suspenseful film stars Joaquin Phoenix, Bryce Dallas Howard, Adrien Brody, William Hurt and Sigourney Weaver. PG-13. Cinema World. Cinemark.

Bijou Art Cinemas (686-2458)
Cinema World 8 (342-6536)
Cinemark 17 (746-5202)c
Movies 12 (741-1231)

video clips

New Releases on Video

Releases subject to change. Available the Tuesday *following* date of *EW* publication, sometimes sooner. See archived movie reviews at www.eugeneweekly.com

Babylon 5: Five “Babylon 5” movies: “The Gathering,” “In the Beginning,” “Thirdspace,” “River of Souls” and “A Call to Arms.” DVD extras include commentary by creator J. Michael Straczynski.

Bon Voyage: Jean-Paul Rappeneau directs great ensemble cast including Isabelle Adjani, Gerard Depardieu, Virginie Ledoyen and Gregori Derangere in satire set on the eve of WWII. Highly recommended. PG-13. **Online archives.**

Martin Scorsese Collection: Six-disc set (sold separately as well) includes **After Hours** (1985), **Alice Doesn’t Live Here Anymore** (1974), **Goodfellas** Two-Disc Special Edition (1990), **Mean Streets** (1973) and **Who’s That**

Knocking at My Door (1969). Lots of extras.

Mayor of Sunset Strip: George Hickenlooper’s profile of Rodney Bingenheimer, formerly an LA nightclub owner, influential deejay and self-made social icon. NR.

Past Midnight (1992) Natasha Richardson plays a social worker who thinks good looking Rutger Hauer was wrongly convicted. R.

Taking Lives: All-star cast includes Angelina Jolie, Ethan Hawke, Keifer Sutherland, Olivier Martinez and Jean-Hughes Anglade. Directed by D.J. Caruso. Thriller about a serial killer who steals his victims’ identities. R.

Next Week: Dogville, Ella Enchanted, Futurama, I Vitelloni (1953), Laws of Attraction, Purple Rain, Raising Victor Vargas, A Small Circle of Friends, Tom Dowd and the Language of Music and Zatoich The Blind Swordsman.