

New York City Shuffle

Taking us for a good ride.

LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN: Directed by Paul McGuigan. Written by Jason Smilovic. Producers, Chris Roberts, Christopher Eberts, Kia Jam, Anthony Rhulen, Robert Kravis, Tyler Mitchell. Cinematography, Peter Sova. Editor, Andrew Hulme. Production design, Francois Seguin. Music, J. Ralph. Starring Josh Hartnett, Sir Ben Kingsley, Morgan Freeman, Bruce Willis, Lucy Liu and Stanley Tucci. Weinstein Company/Ascendant Pictures, 2006. R. 110 minutes.

It's funny what the right trailer will do for a movie. In the case of *Lucky Number Slevin*, the dapper, zingy trailer might lead you to believe the film is nothing but snappy comebacks and gunfire spun together with playful editing and a large dose of Tarantino-ism. *Slevin* has these elements, but it's a surprise when you find you're actually in for a leisurely paced crime caper, a who's-screwing-who tale of misdirection and revenge.

Slevin's familiar pieces — the crime boss(es), the hapless young man, the killer for hire, the dame — are wrapped in a very stylish package. Interiors are done up like pretty gifts, all lush wallpapers or gray walls for the apartment in which Slevin (Josh Hartnett) is staying, and polished wood, mirrors and glass for the penthouses of the crime lords, the Boss (Morgan Freeman) and the Rabbi (Sir Ben Kingsley). Director Paul McGuigan (whose 2004 *Wicker Park* also starred Hartnett) has

a clear feel for his film's downtown Manhattan setting. The neighboring penthouses stare balefully down at cluttered, crowded NYC streets. Slevin's borrowed pad is on a Lower East Side street where a twentysomething really might live — no absurd Central Park homes here.

The apartment belongs to Nick Fisher, who, were he in residence, would be having a very bad day. Instead it's Slevin's bad day, as a pair of thugs haul him off to see the Boss, to whom Fisher owes a pile of cash. The Boss's son has just been cut down, and the Boss blames the Rabbi. Slevin is offered a deal: Kill the Rabbi's son, and the debt is erased. "But I'm not Nick Fisher!" isn't getting Slevin anywhere, so he agrees. Fisher, it turns out, owes the Rabbi some dough as well, and the Rabbi has him hauled in to the opposite penthouse.

With both bosses on his ass, Slevin's in a bit of a pickle. Meanwhile, Fisher's neighbor Lindsey (Lucy Liu), a cheery chatterbox, is fascinated by Slevin's tale, which also includes a cheating girlfriend and a mugger (whose lifting of Slevin's wallet leaves him no way to prove he's not the missing Fisher). She's also a coroner, which seems a little odd, but no matter. Liu, so imposing in *Kill Bill Vol. 1*, is a tiny

Lucy Liu is mesmerized by Josh Hartnett's profile.



thing next to Hartnett, and she's unexpectedly endearing as a wannabe Nancy Drew who actually stops by, in the first place, to borrow a cup of sugar.

And speaking of the unexpected, Hartnett puts on a funny, charming, performance as Slevin (we'll not dwell on the number of minutes he spends clad in only a towel). His character claims to have a condition that renders him free from worry, which explains his tendency to speak without thinking. But he doesn't so much quip as stand in for the observational, skeptical audience, quizzing the Boss and the Rabbi and anyone else he comes across about what's going on and why and what do they want with him, anyway?

Style and cleverness aside, *Slevin* fails its audience on one key point: It tells us what to look for. Bruce Willis' smirking assassin, Mr. Goodkat, starts the film with a string of murders and a suggestive story about a Kansas City shuffle: "Everyone looks right. You go left." So we watch, we formulate theories, and when the revelation comes, it's less a twist than a jaunt around a corner we were just waiting to turn. But that's OK. McGuigan doesn't seem to have any big statements to make — we're maybe supposed to ponder what makes a good guy or a bad guy, and whether revenge is ever justifiable, but only if we really want to. With a movie like this, it's better to just go along for the ride. **EW**

movie clips

OPENING OR RETURNING:

Blue Vinyl: Curious about the PVC (polyvinyl chloride) her parents were putting on their house, filmmaker Judith Helfand, with Daniel B. Gold, decided to take a look at the PVC industry, starting with its Louisiana heart. Plays at 7 pm April 18 in 100 Willamette, UO.

Casanova: In Lasse Hallstrom's screen version, the Italian lover Casanova is played by Heath Ledger (*Brokeback Mountain*). Sienna Miller plays the woman he wants to want him. Ledger is an athletic lover, Miller a Venetian feminist who writes popular books. Also stars Lena Olin, Oliver Platt and Jeremy Irons. Like Shakespeare in Love in its devotion to period details and comic conventions of mistaken identities and other plot twists. Greatly entertaining. R. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

Doogal: Animated family fare features voices by Jimmy Fallon, Jon Stewart. G. Movies 12.

Firewall: As creator of a state-of-the-art security system for a Seattle-area bank, Jack Stanfield (Harrison Ford) has cemented his reputation as a man who's thought of everything. But when a criminal (Paul Bettany) finds a way into Jack's personal life by targeting his family, everything Jack holds dear is suddenly at stake. PG-13. Movies 12.

Godsmack ... Changes: An intimate portrayal of life on tour with Godsmack. Not rated. Bijou LateNite.

Greatest Story Ever Told, The: Director George Stevens' cinematic version of the life of Jesus Christ, as played by Max von Sydow. Plays at 7 pm April 13 at Unity of the Valley, with discussion to follow.

Hippies: Local filmmaker S. Michael Phillips premieres his comedic road trip, which follows five friends from Berkeley as they travel to Eugene for Preservation Week. Hijinks — of the hippie sort

— ensue. Shot and edited in Eugene with local actors and crew. Plays at 8 pm April 20 at the McDonald Theatre.

Hoodwinked: Animated comedy gives Little Red Riding Hood's adventures at Grandmother's house a real kick in the seat. Stars Xzibit, Anthony Anderson, Glenn Close, Anne Hathaway, Patrick Warburton and Jim Belushi. PG. Movies 12.

Independent Little Cuss: A documentary about the life of arts and disability rights advocate Carole Patterson, aka Carolezoom, who lives in Eugene but is nationally known. The film, made by her cousin Jeff Patterson, explores Carole's life and traces the days leading up to her wedding to a non-disabled man against his family's wishes. Plays at 6:30 pm April 13 at DIVA, followed by a farewell reception for Carolezoom.

Operation Y, or, Shurik's Other Adventures: Leonid Gaidai's 1965 comedy is a set of three adventures of Shurik, a nerdy student. Plays at 7 pm April 19 in 111 Pacific, UO.

Power of the People Don't Stop: A program of short political documentaries curated by Marc Moscato. Selections were chosen from more than 600 submissions to Peripheral Produce's upcoming Portland Documentary and eXperimental Film Festival. Plays at 8 pm April 18 at DIVA.

Scary Movie 4: Director David Zucker (*Airplane!*) takes on the fourth entry in the seemingly endless series, which sends up *War of the Worlds*, *The Grudge*, *The Village*, *Saw* and more. Stars Anna Faris and Regina Hall with an outlandish array of celebrity cameos, including Shaq, Dr. Phil and Lil' John. PG-13. CinemaMark. Cinema World.

Thank You for Smoking: Jason Reitman (the son of director Ivan Reitman) directs Aaron Eckhart and a strong supporting cast in this sharp-eyed, satirical look at the tobacco industry. R. Bijou. **See**

review this issue.

Wild, The: Apparently, 'tis the season for animated comedies about animals from the New York Zoo heading off for adventures in the wild. Between this and last year's *Madagascar*, it's like the kids' version of the *Armageddon/Deep Impact* double-header. Keifer Sutherland and Janeane Garofalo are among the actors voicing critters on a quest to rescue one of their own, who somehow got accidentally shipped off to the jungle. (William Shatner appears as a wicked wildebeest.) G. CinemaMark. Cinema World.

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

CONTINUING:

Aquamarine: Mermaid Aquamarine washes ashore and into the lives of two teenaged girls. Based on Alice Hoffman's popular book and directed by Elizabeth Allen, movie stars Emma Roberts, Joanna Levesque, Sarah Paxton and Jake McDorman. PG. Movies 12.

Benchwarmers, The: Got picked last for kickball? So did these guys. David Space, Jon Heder (aka Napoleon Dynamite) and Rob Schneider play grown-up geeks who start a baseball tournament to get revenge on nasty Little League teams. CinemaMark. Cinema World.

Brigade, The: Aleksei Sidorov's 2002 critical and popular tale of the Russian "Mafia." The story follows four best friends as they choose a life of crime. Episode 13 shows at 9 pm April 19 in 111 Pacific, UO.

Caché: Writer-director Michael Haneke's creepy and fascinating film mixes the personal and the political as it follows a family that's been receiving mysterious, unlabeled videotapes of their own lives. R. Bijou. **Online archives.**

Chronicles of Narnia, The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe:

Four siblings walk into a magic land and meet astonishing creatures who change their lives forever. Based on C.S. Lewis' timeless stories, the film is directed by New Zealander Andrew Adamson. It stars Tilda Swinton, Rupert Everett, Jim Broadbent, Ray Winstone and children: Anna Popplewell, Skandar Keynes, Georgie Henley and William Moseley. **2005 Academy Award for makeup.** PG. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

Curious George: The Man in the Yellow Hat (Will Ferrell) tries his best to tame Curious George in this animated version of the beloved children's series. The inquisitive chimp passes the time by sipping lattes, ruining a woman's bubble bath and getting carried away by a bunch of balloons. Other voices include Drew Barrymore, Eugene Levy, Joan Plowright and Dick Van Dyke. G. Movies 12.

Date Movie: This spoof of the prolific romantic comedy genre that stars Alyson Hannigan, Jennifer Coolidge and Fred Willard is rated PG-13 for "continuous crude and sexual humor." Continuous. How can you go wrong? It's bound to be another laugh-until-you-pee movie from the writers of *Scary Movie*, Jason Friedberg and Aaron Seltzer. PG-13. Movies 12.

Failure to Launch: Sarah Jessica Parker is a professional who aims to move Matthew McConaughey out of his parent's home. Also stars Zoëy Deschanel, Terry Bradshaw and Kathy Bates. PG-13. Cinema World. CinemaMark.

Fun With Dick and Jane: Jim Carrey and Tea Leoni star as middle-class thieves in Dean Parisot's remake of the limp 1977 comedy starring Jane Fonda and George Segal. Also stars Alec Baldwin and Angie Harmon. PG-13. Movies 12.

Glory Road: Directed by James Gartner and based on a true story, the film follows Coach Dan Haskins (Josh Lucas) lead his

1966 Texas Western all-black starting line-up college basketball team to the NCAA national championship title. PG. Movies 12.

Ice Age 2: The Meltdown: Manny (Ray Romano), Sid (John Leguizamo) and Diego (Denis Leary) are back for another adventure. The animals are excited that the ice is melting — it's a paradise of water parks! But where is all that new water going to go? PG. CinemaMark. Cinema World.

Inside Man: Spike Lee's new film is a hostage drama in which a tough cop (Denzel Washington) matches wits with a bank robber (Clive Owen), with Jodie Foster the situation's wild card. R. Cinema World. CinemaMark.

Lucky Number Slevin Josh Hartnett comes between two dapper crime lords (Morgan Freeman and Ben Kingsley) in a case of mistaken identity. Or is it? Lucy Liu also stars as the girl next door. R. CinemaMark. Cinema World. **See review this issue.**

Memoirs of a Geisha: Rob Marshall (*Chicago*) directs the screen version of the 1997 Arthur Golden novel, which is about a poor girl who becomes the most celebrated geisha of her time. The film stars the beautiful and talented Ziyi Zhang, Gong Li and Michelle Yeoh, with Ken Watanabe as the leading man. **2005 Academy Awards: art direction, set decoration; cinematography, Doion Beebe; costume design, Colleen Atwood.** PG-13. Movies 12.

Nanny McPhee: Emma Thompson plays a frightful looking nanny with magical powers who enters the household of a recently widowed Mr. Brown (Colin Firth) to help control his seven ill-behaved children. Directed by Kirk Jones, film also stars Celia Imrie, Thomas Sangster, Angela Lansbury, Derek Jacobi, Imelda Staunton. PG. Movies 12.

New World, The: Terrence Malick's new adventure drama re-

imagines the first meeting between explorer John Smith (Colin Farrell) and his shipmates with the Native Americans who inhabited the land they intended to claim. The Algonquian Chief's favorite daughter (Q'orianka Kilcher) saves Smith's life. Ecstatic and beautiful, it's a great film, not to be missed. One of 2005's very best films. PG-13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

She's the Man: Start with Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night," add in adolescent love and soccermania and you get this romantic comedy starring Amanda Bynes (*What a Girl Wants*) in which mistaken identities and cross-gender relationships abound. PG-13. CinemaMark.

Take the Lead: Stars Antonio Banderas as Pierre Dulane, a New York City ballroom dance teacher who taught inner-city kids to move their feet. PG-13. CinemaMark. Cinema World.

V for Vendetta: From the pages of David Lloyd & Alan Moore's graphic novel springs "V" (Hugo Weaving), a masked freedom fighter who's taken up arms against the totalitarian government in a futuristic Britain. Finding an unlikely ally in a young woman, Evey (Natalie Portman), V urges the citizenry to fight the oppression of the state. Andy & Larry Wachowski (*The Matrix*) wrote the screenplay. R. CinemaMark. **Online archives.**

World's Fastest Indian: The life story of New Zealander Burt Munro (Anthony Hopkins), who spent years building a 1920 Indian motorcycle—a bike which helped him set the land-speed world record in 1967. Sweet movie is very strongly recommended. PG-13. Cinema World. **Online archives.**

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