

Return to Sender

A widower gets a message from the grave

TELL NO ONE: Directed by Guillaume Canet. Written by Guillaume Canet and Philippe Lefebvre, based on the book by Harlan Coben. Cinematography, Christophe Offenstien. Music, Mathieu Chadid. Starring Francois Cluzet, Marie-Josée Croze and Kristin Scott Thomas. Europa, 2008. Unrated. 125 minutes. ★★☆☆☆

A man and a woman lie nestled on a dock in the moonlight, alone in the center of a lake. They quarrel. She swims to shore. Out of sight, she screams his name. Frantically he leaps into the water to save her, only to be clubbed, as he climbs the other dock, by what appears to be a baseball bat. Fade to black.

Now *that's* the way to build a thriller. Morbid, yes, but full of possibilities, *Tell No One* is a layered and complex creation, a ripe fruit just when summer looked barren of anything to savor.

Eight years after his wife's death, Alex (Francois Cluzet) still longs for Margot (*The Diving Bell and the Butterfly's* Marie-Josée Croze). When an email arrives claiming to be from Margot, his devotion makes him the perfect victim

— at whose hands we aren't exactly sure — or the perfect husband who never gave up on true love. As Alex sorts through the possibilities, two bodies are found in the vicinity of the lake, at which point the police, who have suspected Alex all along, reopen the case with a vengeance. Part of the success of *Tell No One* is that it manages to present every possibility convincingly, much in the same way great novels do, and to such a degree that you can't help wondering if perhaps the cops have it right. After all, how did Alex emerge from the water on the night of his wife's murder? Who made the 911 call that alerted police to the crime? These and other mysteries raise suspicions that, once they begin to compete and collide, lift tensions to an almost unbearable level.

Even with its myriad subplots — there are more twists than the road to Sainte Agnes in *Tell No One* — the film never forgets to thrill and entertain. Working from the American crime novel by Harlan Coben, young actor/director Guillaume



Tell No One

Canet (the French traveler Étienne from *The Beach*) manages, despite his relative inexperience, to create the impression of French high society types coming to grips with their secrets and lies. He maximizes the paranoia by keeping the look clean and tidy; he lets his characters, not his cameras, jump to conclusions in *Tell No One*. The actors perform brilliantly for Canet, in particular Kristin Scott Thomas as Hélène, the shifty lover to Alex's sister, Anne (Marina Hands), and Francois Berleands as a crusty cop with a soft spot for his mother.

Tell No One is *The Fugitive* with twice the IQ — and every bit of muscle. In fact, the only flab on *Tell No One's* lean physique is, of all things, the backwards-glancing love

story between Alex and Margot, which dates back to their childhood. There's a syrupy montage contrasting their wedding against Margot's funeral, a treacly passage set to Jeff Buckley's "Lilac Wine." (Otherwise, *Tell No One* uses music superbly, including obscure gems by Otis Redding and Richie Havens.) Soon after, Alex attacks a grove of giant trees with what appears to be an oversized twig. In other words, *Tell No One* can be excessive and silly in places, the equivalent of using a shovel when a spade would suffice. If it's not a classic film, it's a first-rate thriller, demanding that we pay attention throughout. *Tell No One* is easily one of the best films of 2008. See it, then tell everyone. **EW**

Tell No One opens Friday, Aug. 22, at the Bijou.

movie clips

OPENING OR RETURNING:

Bottle Shock: Alan Rickman stars as the owner of a Parisian wine shop who finds all kinds of surprises (not least that the wine isn't *that* bad) when he heads to California to pick a few wines to use in a tasting contest. With Bill Pullman (as a perfectionist winery owner), Chris Pine and Rachael Taylor. PG14. 108 min. Cinemark.

CSNY Déjà Vu: Neil Young directs this film of CSNY's Freedom of Speech Tour, documenting the band, having a *Nightline* reporter interview Iraq war vets met along the way, and drawing parallels between the Vietnam and Iraq wars. An "unflinching, well-constructed picture," said the *Los Angeles Times*. R. 96 min. Bijou.

Death Race: Jason Statham (*The Transporter*) is a falsely convicted criminal (and racing champ) forced to take part in an evil prison warden (Joan Allen)'s brutal race, in which convicts compete ... for their lives! With Ian McShane. R. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.

Hamlet 2: High school drama teacher Dana Marschz (the reliably funny Steve Coogan) decides to produce a musical sequel to *Hamlet* that pushes the envelope in countless ways. Amy Poehler is the ACLU attorney who helps him fight the power; Elisabeth Shue plays, um, herself. The main song? "Rock Me Sexy Jesus." Sold. R. 92 min. VRC Stadium 15.

House Bunny, The: Playboy bunny Shelley Darlington (Anna Faris) gets booted from the mansion and finds herself helping the members of a sorority that's in danger of losing its house. She teaches them about makeup! They teach her about individuality! Please, Hollywood. Stop that. PG13. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.

Kung Fu Panda: Jack Black — or at least his voice — stars as Po the Panda, a waiter whose love for kung fu serves him well when it turns out there's a prophecy about him saving the world from some powerful enemies. With the voices of Dustin Hoffman, Angelina Jolie and Jackie Chan. PG. 88 min. Movies 12.

Longshots, The: Inspirational sports movie, ahoy! Ice Cube stars as the high school football coach who rallies his team (and town) around the school's first female quarterback (Keke Palmer). I suspect victory lies ahead. PG13. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.

Rocker, The: You know it's August when you get a movie about a former hair metal drummer whose nephew just so happens to, like, really need a drummer, man! Rainn Wilson is the ex-metal dude; sassy Emma Stone (*Superbad*) is in this and *The House Bunny*, the poor thing. PG13. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.

Tell No One: Incredibly well-reviewed French thriller about Alex (Francois Cluzet), a man who's believed his wife dead for eight years — until he receives an email that appears to be from her. Bodies are found near where she died, and Alex is a suspect; he takes off in search of the truth. "Here is how a thriller should be made," said Roger Ebert. NR. 125 min. Bijou. **See review this issue.**

X-Files: I Want to Believe: Oh, Chris Carter. You

gave me a title like that and then ... you failed. I *wanted* to believe that this X-film, coming years after the last and apparently requiring no previous knowledge of the X-Files mythology, would be as good as possible, but you stuffed it full of stupidity. And some offensiveness, too. Fie. PG13. Movies 12. ★☆☆☆☆ (7/31)

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

CONTINUING:

Brideshead Revisited: Julian Jarrold (*Becoming Jane, Kinky Boots*) directs this adaptation of the Evelyn Waugh novel about a young, middle-class Englishman caught up with the wealthy, religious, upper-class Flyte family, especially son Sebastian (Ben Whishaw) and daughter Julia (Hayley Atwell). The result is pretty love triangle, and a film that gives short shrift to the themes and tensions beneath the surface. PG13. 120 min. Bijou. ★★☆☆☆ (8/14)

Chronicles of Narnia, The: Prince Caspian: When the Pevensie children find themselves back in Narnia, it's just a year later for them — and 1300 years later for the magical land, now under the control of an evil foreigner. Lucy, Susan, Peter and Edmund (with help, of course) must help get the true king back on Narnia's throne. PG. 144 min. Movies 12. ★★☆☆☆ (5/22)

Dark Knight, The: Christopher Nolan's second take on the alter ego of Bruce Wayne (Christian Bale), who has a new nemesis in the Joker (Heath Ledger, earning whispers of a posthumous Oscar nod), is both an enthrallingly entertaining summer action movie and a complicated moral tangle. With Maggie Gyllenhaal, Michael Caine and Aaron Eckhart. PG13. 152 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15. ★★☆☆☆ (7/24)

Hancock: Grumpy, drunken, superpowered Hancock (Will Smith, aka Mr. July) has a habit of wreaking considerable destruction when saving lives. But a PR guy (Jason Bateman) somehow shows Hancock that he does have a softer side. He can be better! At least I think that's what he says in the ads. PG13. 92 min. Cinemark.

Hellboy II: The Golden Army: "The world's toughest kitten-loving hero from Hell!" (Ron Perlman) — with sidekick Abe (Doug Jones, last seen as the Faun in director Guillermo del Toro's *Pan's Labyrinth*) and love interest Liz (Selma Blair) — finds himself standing between an army of fantastic creatures and the world as we know it when an ancient truce is broken. PG13. Movies 12. ★★☆☆☆ (7/17)

Iron Man: The first major summer flick stars Robert Downy Jr. as Tony Stark, a wealthy industrialist who devises a suit that gives him the superheroic ability to take down baddies who misuse his destructive technology. Awesome. With Jeff Bridges, Terrence Howard and Gwyneth Paltrow. PG13. Movies 12. ★★☆☆☆ (5/8)

Journey to the Center of the Earth: Brendan Fraser stars as a less-than-traditional scientist who finds himself leading his nephew and a friend into the center of the earth, where there's ... another world! In 3D, which makes all those falling rocks and underground dinosaurs even more exciting. PG. 89 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.

Love Guru, The: Mike Myers pulls another wacky character out of his bag of tricks; this one's an American, raised overseas by, um, gurus, who returns to his native land to make it big in the self-help business. With Jessica Alba, Justin Timberlake and Ben Kingsley. PG13. Movies 12.

Mamma Mia! Get the song outta my head! Oh, too late. Anyway, the giant hit Broadway musical becomes a giant film starring Meryl Streep as the mother whose daughter (Amanda Seyfried of *Veronica Mars*) wants to find out who her father is: Colin Firth, Pierce Brosnan or Stellan Skarsgard. Oh, and there's some Abba. PG13. 108 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.

Mirrors: You know that mirror gag in horror films? When someone swings their medicine cabinet into place and — gasp! — there's someone in the room? This pretty much looks like an entire movie of the mirror gag. With a lot of screaming. And Kiefer Sutherland. R. 110 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.

Mummy, The: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor: Brendan Fraser goes on his second summer adventure and his third as "explorer" Rick O'Connell. Rick's got to take down a long-dead emperor (Jet Li) who, one assumes, wants to take over the world (isn't that what evil emperors do?). Maria Bello takes over from Rachel Weisz as wife Evelyn; newbie Luke Ford is son Alex; John Hannah returns as Rick's wisecracking brother; Michelle Yeoh livens things up as a "double-crossing sorceress." PG13. 112 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.

Pineapple Express: I've been waiting for this one since I first saw the redband (R-rated) trailer, which is full of lines too crassly fantastic to be successfully quoted out of context. Generally, the film (written by the same folks as *Superbad*) is about a pot dealer, one of his customers and some folks who want to kill them. Directed by David Gordon Green, whose usual fare (*All the Real Girls*) is a little different. R. 111 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15. ★★☆☆☆ (8/14)

Sex and the City: High heels and ugly dresses (c'mon, you know Carrie wears some truly dreadful stuff) take it to the big screen in what *New York* magazine calls "a joyful wallow." Plot? You want plot? I'm thinking some boy trouble, some mild strife, maybe a happy ending or two for Carrie (Sarah Jessica Parker), Charlotte (Kristin Davis), Samantha (Kim Cattrall) and Miranda (Cynthia Nixon). R. 148 min. Movies 12.

Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2: The sequel to the sweet and light 2005 film jumps ahead three years (and, I gather, a few books in the series) to the foursome's departure for different colleges. Stars America Ferrera, Blake Lively (now a bigger name thanks to *Gossip Girl*), Amber Tamblyn and Alexis

Bledel. PG13. 117 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.

Space Chimps: Animated flick involving, um, space chimps. They're sent into space to visit an inhabited planet, only to find themselves stuck there with the planet's tyrannical leader. I just can't seem to muster much enthusiasm for this one. G. 81 min. Movies 12.

Star Wars: The Clone Wars: Animated film sits between *Attack of the Clones* and, um... oh yeah: *Revenge of the Sith*. (I really had to think about that.) Anakin, Obi-Wan, Yoda and other familiar faces — and a young Padawan named Ahsoka — face off against the Sith while the Separatists and Galactic Empire battle for the fate of the galaxy. Or something. It's got lightsabers; what else do you need to know? PG. 90 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.

Step Brothers: Just what the world doesn't need: another Will Ferrell/John C. Reilly comedy. This time, the two are immature fellows whose parents get married. They hate each other, and then they love each other, and then they have to save the family. And every single joke in the trailer falls flat. R. VRC Stadium 15.

Tropic Thunder: Ben Stiller directs this wildly funny if somewhat meandery send-up of actors and war movies; he also stars (with Jack Black and Robert Downey Jr.) as one of the prima donna actors whose director (Steve Coogan) decides to impart a bit of realism to his Vietnam film — by dropping his stars into the jungle and filming their reactions. R. 107 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15. **See review this issue.**

Vicky Cristina Barcelona: Woody Allen's latest involves a man (Javier Bardem), his crazy ex-wife (Penelope Cruz) and two young American women (Scarlett Johansson and Rebecca Hall) with whom the former couple becomes "amorously entangled." Is anyone else having a hard time taking this summary seriously? PG13. 96 min. VRC Stadium 15.

WALL-E: The latest from the geniuses at Pixar is about a lonely trash-cleaning robot on what's left of Earth. A sleek robot named EVE discovers, when she visits the deserted planet, that WALL-E's figured out something important, so off to the stars (and the humans) she races, a besotted WALL-E in pursuit. "One of the best movies of the year," said Richard Roeper. G. 97 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15. ★★☆☆☆ (7/3)

Wanted: This disastrously bad Angelina Jolie-starring assassin flick is directed by Timur Bekmanbetov, who was behind the underseen *Night Watch*. Jolie and Morgan Freeman are part of the Fraternity, a secret society of assassins; the usually delightful James McAvoy is the whiny former office drone who gets recruited after his father is killed. R. 110 min. Movies 12.

You Don't Mess With the Zohan: Adam Sandler plays an Israeli commando who really wants to be a hairstylist in this gently mocking and fun comedy from the minds of Sandler, Judd Apatow (*Knocked Up*) and Robert Smigel (*Triumph the Insult Comic Dog*). PG13. Movies 12. ★★☆☆☆ (6/12)