

Movie Previews • Woody Harrelson Says Cheers to Cheers Lee on Lee – Martial Arts Guru Honored • Video Releases

By JIM RADOSTA
The Graphic, Pepperdine U.

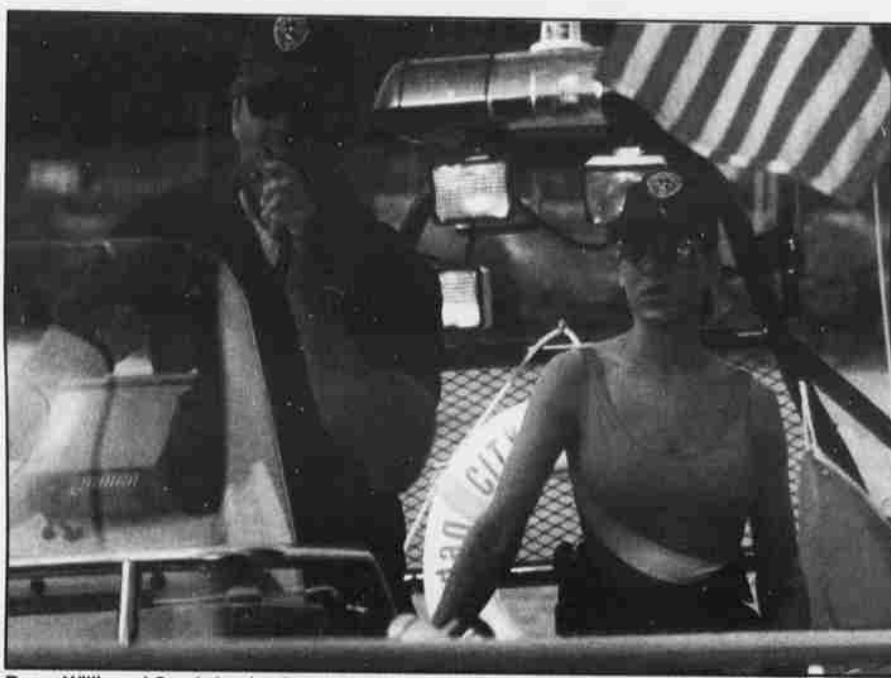
We've sailed past the Christmas frenzy to release movies in time for Oscar consideration (*A Few Good Men*). We're well past the winter slump of video fodder (*Aspen Extreme*). And we're past the post-Oscar hype (*Unforgiven*). So what does that leave? If the studios play their cards right, it will be a summer full of surprises and superstars.

The Firm (Paramount)
After a year of zero Oscar nominations, Paramount is putting all its eggs into the basket of this powerhouse vehicle, based on John Grisham's best-selling novel of the same name. Once again Tom Cruise gets to play one of those characters who gets himself into a situation he can't get out of (see: *Risky Business*). This time he plays an honors law student who takes a great job offer at a small partnership in Memphis, only to find the firm is not what it appears to be and his life is at risk. It stars Gene Hackman, Jeanne Tripplehorn and Willford Brimley.

Sliver (Paramount)
Billed as an erotic thriller with Sharon Stone, this one has everyone talking about just how much of William Baldwin's "sliver" will be shown. Reports have indicated that *Sliver* may include unprecedented amounts of frontal male nudity – a brave move for the producers if they hope to escape an NC-17 rating. The people at Paramount seem to be trying to create a new genre here – they call it a "psychosexual mystery" – also known as *Basic Instinct Part II*. If Madonna couldn't do it with *Body of Evidence*, will Stone be able to?

Three of Hearts (New Line Cinema)
William Baldwin can chalk this one up under "formula romantic comedy." Baldwin portrays Joe Cassella, the typical down-on-his-luck bachelor who finds love in the most unexpected places when he meets the typical provocative leading lady, Ellen (Kelly Lynch). Baldwin in *Basic Instinct II* or Baldwin in *Pretty Woman II*: So many choices.

Sleepless in Seattle (TriStar)
As they would say in *The Player*, "It's like *Pretty Woman* meets *The Deal of the Century*." Meg Ryan stars as a woman recruited by the



Bruce Willis and Sarah Jessica Parker star in the upcoming cop thriller *Striking Distance*.

son of a widower (Tom Hanks) to fall in love with his father. The only problem: They've never met, and she's across the country. Catch Ross Malinger, Bill Pullman and Rosie O'Donnell in the rest of the cast.

Jurassic Park (Universal)
After bombing in Neverneverland with *Hook*, Steven Spielberg has decided to take a U-turn to the dinosaur days. Based on Michael Crichton's novel, *Jurassic Park* is a theme park full of genetically recreated dinosaurs who wreak havoc on their first visitors, a group of scientists and two children. The movie already is said to be running into problems meeting its opening date. Here's hoping Spielberg hasn't bitten off more than he can chew this time, so to speak.

Striking Distance (Columbia)
It's a cop who goes above and beyond the call of duty by seeking to capture a serial killer who he believes murdered his father. Mel Gibson, right? Wrong – Bruce Willis. His new partner goes at loggerheads with him when he works out of their jurisdiction. Jodie Foster? No – Sarah Jessica Parker. Dennis Farina costars as Willis' uncle, the chief of homicide. Lots of cliché roles here.

The Last Action Hero (Columbia)
Thousands of dollars were spent on the trailers that ran late last year alone. Holy waste of money, Batman. Actually, *The Last Action Hero* wants to be this summer's Batman. Arnold Schwarzenegger stars as a movie hero (big stretch) and serves double duty as executive producer. The story revolves around a boy who steps out of the real world and into the celluloid world to join his favorite movie hero. Supporting players include Anthony Quinn and Mercedes Ruelil (*The Fisher King*).

Even Cowgirls Get the Blues (Fine Line Features)
Gus Van Sant has done it again. His first film since *My Own Private Idaho*, *Cowgirls* is the tale of Sissy Hankshaw (Uma Thurman), a girl who is born with enormous thumbs and grows up to be a hitchhiking fiend. But wait. She then becomes the model for a line of feminine care products. It gets better. She ends up falling in love with the residents of an all-girl dude ranch. Van Sant directed and adapted the screenplay from Tom Robbins' novel. If the film stays true to form, this is sure to be a tender story. □

in the BEST of S

on the set

Dying young, at age 32, probably contributed to Bruce Lee's mythical status. His extraordinary martial arts talents didn't hurt either.



Jason Scott Lee

Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story, a Universal Studios release this month, tells the tale of a man born in San Francisco who was raised in Hong Kong and returned to the United States eventually rising to stardom as a martial arts expert.

Director Rob Cohen says *Dragon* will influence audiences in many ways: "First, as a kung fu film, with what I hope are spectacular fighting sequences. Second, as an interracial love story about the beauty and struggle of two cultures, embodied in two people who love each other deeply. And on a third level, as a mystical tale of fate, focusing on a man who struggled his whole life to embrace his destiny and overcome his demons."

The film is based on the book *Bruce Lee: The Man Only I Knew*, written by Lee's widow, Linda. Shooting began in Hong Kong in May 1992 and continued there and on the island of Macao for six weeks. Filming was completed in August in Valencia, Calif.

Those shoots include spectacular fight scenes starring Jason Scott Lee, no relation, as the martial arts legend. "I'd seen his films as a kid and was fascinated," he says. "I only hope I've done him some degree of justice." □

video calendar

A brief look at May/June releases

Trespass, MCA/Universal, 5/5; **Distinguished Gentleman**, Hollywood, 5/5; **Citizen Cohn**, HBO, 5/5; **Zentropa**, Touchstone, 5/5; **The Gun in Betty Lou's Handbag**, Touchstone, 5/5; **Shootfighter: Fight to the Death**, Columbia, 5/5; **Get Smart Again: The Movie**, World Vision, 5/5; **Ted & Venus**, Columbia, 5/5; **Fatal Charm**, Academy, 5/5; **A River Runs Through It**, Columbia, 5/19; **Glengarry Glen Ross**, Live, 5/19; **Blade Runner: The Director's Cut**, Warner, 5/19; **Hoffa**, Fox Video, 5/26; **Toys**, Fox Video, 5/26; **Used People**, Fox Video, 5/26; **Howard's End**, Columbia, 6/2; **Witchcraft 5**, Academy, 6/9; **Body of Evidence**, MGM/UA, 6/16; **Knight Moves**, Republic, 6/16; **Miss Rose White**, Republic, 6/16; **A Fine Romance**, Academy, 6/23; **Bram Stoker's Dracula**, Columbia, 6/23. Note: All dates are tentative and subject to change.

quotable

"It used to be the only Disney on ice was Walt."

—Billy Crystal on Disney's creation of the NHL franchise, *The Mighty Ducks*