

# Tomb Raider 2: Almost too insulting to sit through

By Kam Williams  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

You ought to know not to expect much of a sequel based on a movie which was already a watered down version of a computer game. But Tomb Raider 2 is a failure even when measured against these lowered expectations. For this derivative disappointment is a mindless indulgence in stunt and spectacle. Much like the average, action-oriented video game, the point appears to be nothing deeper than having heroine Lara Croft negotiate her way past a seemingly never-ending series of enemies and obstacles placed in her path, slaying away while looking sexy and displaying super-human strength and abilities.

Oscar-winner Angelina Jolie (Girl, Interrupted) reprises the title role as the peripatetic, British archaeologist who devotes more time to kicking butt and form-fitting fashion than to digging for treasures.

In this episode, ostensibly out to find Pandora's Box. As you remember from Greek mythology, the gods gave Pandora a box with strict instructions to deliver it as a gift to Epimetheus without looking inside. But the curious girl peeked and set loose a swarm of



Djimon Hounsou, left, shares the screen with Angelina Jolie in the "Tomb Raider" sequel.

ills upon humanity. In Tomb Raider 2, Pandora's Box is also said to contain the most unspeakable evil ever known, but it is hidden on the continent of

Africa in an area referred to as the Cradle of Life. It falls to Lara to find the box before Dr. Jonathan Reiss (Ciaran Hinds), a mad scientist intent on using it for his own sick ends,

namely, world domination.

The by the numbers storyline smells suspiciously similar to Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981) where archaeologist Indiana Jones had to hunt for the Ark of the Covenant before it fell into the hands of a Nazi ne'er-do-well. And it's equally evocative of that franchise's other installments, Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom (1984) where Jones tracks down the sacred Shankara Stone, and Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (1989) where his quest was for the Holy Grail.

Besides a lack of originality, there are problems with this production in profusion. For example: sloppy editing. In a fight sequence, Lara is slashed and bleeding profusely on the chin, only to have the cut disappear entirely seconds later. In another scene, she is attacked by a menacing shark, but reacts inappropriately, barely flinching, as if only a playful guppy has approached her.

Insulting the audience with such slapdash cinematography renders Tomb Raiders 2 a classic "take the money and run" sequel. No further consideration warranted.

Poor (0 stars). Rated PG-13 for action violence and some sensuality.

## Book Review

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had managed to disenfranchise its African-American population. After all, every exit poll indicated Gore would win easily which explains why every TV network awarded the state to Bush early on election night. Fortunately, Greg Palast, a dogged, indefatigable, investigative journalist, didn't just let the issue go away once the Supreme Court awarded the White House to Bush.

And his meticulous research has resulted in The Best Democracy Money Can Buy: The Truth about Corporate Cons, Globalization, and High-Finance Fraudsters. This provocative expose, which spent four months on the New York Times best-

seller list, also examines other suspicious irregularities, such as "How Bush killed the FBI's investigation of the bin Laden family prior to 9-11" and "How Enron cheated, lied and swindled its way into an energy monopoly."

Meticulously researched, the author starts by showing how the Bush family stole the Florida election. Ironically, he makes his case by relying on public documents provided by Katherine Harris, the then Secretary of State who oversaw the recount. Before the election, we learn, Florida knowingly eliminated thousands of legitimate black voters by using last name and race as the search criterion to purge the rolls of convicted felons. It touted the comput-

erized process as "99.9% accurate, knowing full well that the method had led to innumerable false positives."

For instance, one Randall Higginbotham, age 41, was unable to vote merely because he was black and shared the same last name with a 30 year-old con.

And, in another case, because the computer indicated that an African-American named David Butler had been found guilty of a crime in Ohio, this spelled trouble for only the blacks among the 36 David Butlers in Florida. And so forth. In the end, less than 1% of whites were screwed, while over one-third of black males were denied an opportunity to vote.

Besides being informa-

tive, this page-turner was written in a fiery style which fits the bold allegations being made by its fearless author. Palast is to be commended for blowing the lids clear off the election debacle, off the cozy relationship between the Bush and bin Laden families and off so many other ethical situations where the otherwise complacent media have failed to look for answers to some rather obvious questions.

## Ice Cube

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"This is an unfortunate and hurtful situation for Ice Cube," Labov said. "That his good name ever came up in association with the events currently taking place in Chicago's Wicker Park area is damaging to Ice Cube as a father, husband and artist." Both the police department and the TV station have since apologized, Labov said.

Elizabeth Shapiro, communications director for Channel 2, acknowledged that the station used the video.

"Chicago police had issued a community alert saying a suspect in a string of crimes in Wicker Park resembled rap artist Ice Cube," she said. "So our information was taken directly from the Chicago Police Department community alert."

## Ja Rule says 50 Cent feud for real

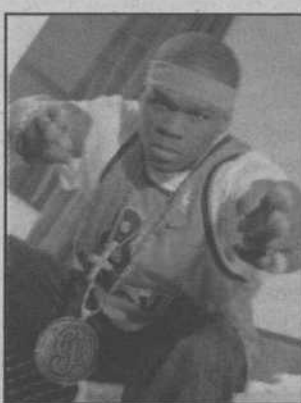
JOHANNESBURG, South Africa - Ja Rule says his feud with fellow New York rapper 50 Cent isn't a publicity stunt.

"We just don't like each other," he told AP Radio. "You have a lot of artists (who think) a good beef will help their record sales. I think that's fickle."

Ja Rule says rappers like 50 Cent are just pretending to live a certain lifestyle. "I'm here, and I'm 'in the club popping the bub,'" he said. "That's what I do."

Ja Rule discussed the feud during a trip to South Africa. He says he can't understand why other black performers haven't paid a visit to the country.

"How can you not go to the Motherland and represent

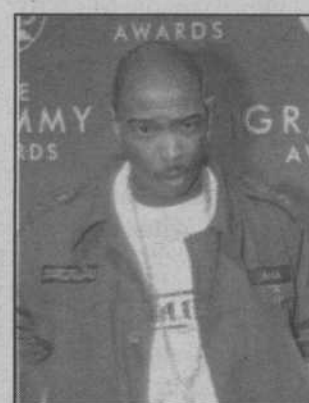


Battle of the platinum-selling artists: Rapper 50 Cent, left, and rival Ja Rule claim their on-wax enmity is actually real.

where you came from, where your roots are from?" he rhetorically asked.

He says the trip was personal for him — a chance to see part of the Dark Continent for himself, and not misrepresented images in the media.

"In America, we're looked



upon as not being 100 percent Black. For me to be able to come over here and represent for my Black people, it's an (honor)," he said. "I know a lot of rappers who don't care to come over this way ... but, for me, it's important."

Ja Rule's latest album is "The Last Temptation."

## Fan Club

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CD. He is currently working on a compilation CD titled "Family Ties," featuring Wyclef from Boyz to Men, Jamie Foxx and Brian McKnight.

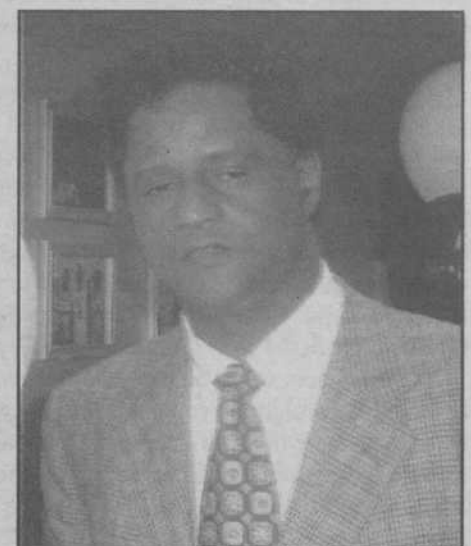
The final touches on "Family Ties" are being tweaked at Zomba Recordings in Los Angeles.

Urban promoter Rubie Duckworth and consultant Stan Washington were on the set providing support and marketing their upcoming September events that include Bobby Womack, Rolls Royce and Frankie Beverly. All will be part of the first Las Vegas Football Classic, pitting the Jaguars of Southern University (Baton Rouge, La.) vs. the Aggies of North Carolina A&T State University (Greensboro, N.C.).

At the reception, there were the signed and the unsigned. Enjoying the set was signed comedian Scott Fig and gospel comedian Brandon Severs, who is not yet signed.

Surrounded by the photos of Sweet Lou and the many celebrities he networks with such as Ashanti, Back Street Boys, Cisco, Angie Stone, Floyd Mayweather, Erika Badu, among others, must have made Severs feel great about the possibility of becoming a client of Fan Club Entertainment.

Severs' comedic character is "Mother Cleothe Earline Willie Idell Richardson." Collins, a nationally known comedian,



Sentinel-Voice photo by Dianna Saffold

Music producer Arden Lo plans on working with Fan Club Entertainment.

stood back and watched as his dreams continue to manifest. When it appeared the event was already another Fan Club success, like history in the making and time standing still, Las Vegas City Councilman Lawrence Weekly presented Fan Club Entertainment with a key to the city. The honor has only been bestowed upon a few.

The gap will continue to become smaller now when compared with other downtown areas in other great cities because Fan Club Entertainment has the key. In fact, it has many keys.