

Video

WOLF

Director: Mike Nichols

If you are driving and you hit a wolf, don't get out of your car to ponder its condition. Someone might make a movie about what happens when it bites you, and it might be really dull. You might feel the urge to bite off people's fingers with your newly extended teeth. You'll grow an abundance of facial hair. Horses won't like you. You might get to sleep with Michelle Pfeiffer. Your senses will become more acute. You'll be able to stay out late without feeling like shit the morning.

Werewolf pointers aside, the plot sees Nicholson's character get possessed, demoted, double crossed by his best friend and cheated on by his wife. He then falls in love with his boss' daughter (Pfeiffer). Their love conquers all, but comes with a fairly hefty price tag. It's as predictable as buggery and leaves the more interesting ends untied.

Wolf's been topping video charts all over the place, but don't lose any sleep if this means it's all booked out when you go to rent it. You won't lose any sleep if you do rent it either. Nicholson's pretty scary looking without fangs and fur these days, so the freak show make-up serves as more of an improvement than a shock tactic.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

MANHATTAN MURDER MYSTERY

Director: Woody Allen

Marital matters can spin a complicated enough web without the addition of a murder mystery thrown into the mix, but this is the combination of predicaments in Woody Allen's latest work. Larry (Allen) and his wife Carol (Diane Keaton) pick the wrong night to meet the elderly couple next door. They come home the next night to find the wife has died of a heart attack — at least, that's what the paramedics believe. Carol is not so sure. She and her newly single friend Ted (Alan Alda) embark on a murder investigation that turns into a crazy, last ditch quest freedom.

Larry (a guy who gets drunk on rum

cake) is extremely perturbed by his wife's newfound obsession. However, when he verifies Carol has sighted the dead woman in the New York City transit system, his adrenalin starts leaking out his ears and he joins the case. So does one of his extremely sexy clients (Anjelica Huston), adding to the friendly sexual tension which fringes the film.

The sum of these parts is a genuinely surprising, laugh out loud comedy, with enough couple japes to fuel an entire season of *Mad About You*.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

INCIDENT AT ROSWELL

Director: Arthur Kopit

Kyle McLachlan stars as military intelligence officer Jessie Marcell, in this 'true' story of an alien encounter. If you can ignore the oxymoron of his job description, you'll find he is a good man, a family man, a man whose vacuous wife should be shot, and whose son is so apple pie I kept expecting him to spit pips. Their squeaky clean family competes with the main event as one of the film's most bizarre components.

Marcell was the second person at the

scene of one of America's most famous alleged UFO crashes. At the time, the discovery was publicly proclaimed a hoax by the American government. Evidence of the reputedly amazing space craft material was replaced with a weather balloon. Marcell was framed as the star of an extraordinary fiasco.

The story is told through recollection and research, 30 years later, as Marcell attempts to clear his name before he dies. You have to hang out for the brief alien encounter scenes, but they are worth it. This isn't a great movie, but it is a wild story. Those interested should read the book the film is based on: *UFO Crash at Roswell*, by Kevin D Randle and Donald R Schmitt.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

THE HOUSE OF THE SPIRITS

Director: Bille August

Based on Isabel Allende's novel of the same name, *The House of the Spirits* has perfection as its yardstick. The narrative unfolds over four generations of an enchanting string of women — whose actors include Vanessa Redgrave, Meryl Streep and Winona Ryder. Jeremy Irons plays Esteban Trueba, the vengeful male centrepiece of the tale. Glenn Close plays his tragic sister, the martyr figure Ferula. Antonio Banderas plays the revolutionary Pedro Segundo. The weighty cast lend promise to the film, but, sadly, it goes largely unfulfilled.

The core elements of prophecy and the relationship between events are retained in the narrative, but much of the magic is removed. The most sloppy change to the narrative sees Alba (Winona Ryder) refusing to marry the Count, thus removing the opportunity for the bizarre scene which causes her to flee him in the original narrative. Her love nest with Pedro Segundo is also absent, despite being such a vivid part of the book. This is but one example of passion being swept under the carpet.

As the epic film it needs to be, *The House of the Spirits* fails to excite. It is more of an interesting companion piece to the book than a stand alone work of art. Hence, it does a disservice to a true modern masterpiece.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

THE LAST SEDUCTION

Director: John Dahl

Bridget Gregory (Linda Fiorentino) is, as her lawyer puts it early in this deliciously venomous little film, "a self serving bitch," period. Her husband Clay (Bill Pullman) likes to call her 'Bitchit', and with good reason. She's nabbed his illegal fortune, and is going to great lengths to keep it. I guess he shouldn't have slapped her, but you just know she's been too big for this patsy from the get-go. Anyway, she's the criminal mastermind.

Hiding out in cow country, Bridget meets her "designated fuck", Mike (Peter Berg). He sees Bridget as the set of balls he failed to grow last time he ventured into the big wide world. Unfortunately for him, Bridget's balls are too big for him to handle. Things get sticky when she asks him for a relationship of equals — meaning she kills one person for an insurance scam, and he has to do likewise. Having mistaken Bridget's considerable banana bending skills for the real thing, he eventually succumbs to her demands.

Mike and Clay are the perfect slow moving targets for the malice that flies. Even when they manage to solve Bridget's puzzle, they end up dropping all the pieces — spectacularly. Bridget is an inspiration. Now, if only I could find a man with enough money worth bothering to relieve him of.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

REEL NEWS

The independent ensemble director film *Four Rooms* wrapped recently. The plot contains four different stories set in a Los Angeles hotel on New Year's eve, and linked by an English bell-boy played by **Tim Roth**. Other names in the everyone who's anyone cast include: **Amanda de Cadenet**, **Bruce Willis**, **Antonio Banderas**, **Madonna**, **Jennifer Beals**, **Ione Skye** and **Marissa Tomei**. The directors are **Alison Anders**, **Alexandre Rockwell**, **Robert Rodriguez** and **Quentin Tarantino** ... **Costas Mandaylor** (Deputy Kenny Lacos of *Picket Fences*) plays the thinly disguised Henry Miller character in the upcoming film version of Anais Nin's book *Delta of Venus*. With **Zalman King** in the director's chair, the forecast is more steamy than cerebral ... **Linda Fiorentino** is about to be reunited with *The Last Seduction* director **John Dahl** as the star of his new film *Unforgettable*. She plays a researcher whose new invention allows people to experience other people's memories; **Ray Liotta** co-stars ... **Gwyneth Paltrow** (who's been breaking hearts as Brad Pitt's girlfriend in real life) has landed the title role in the big screen adaptation of Jane Austen's *Emma* ... **Samuel L Jackson** has his dance card well filled for the time being. He appears in the upcoming films *Losing Isaiah* and *Die Hard III*, and follows these with a part in the gambling parable *Sydney* (co-starring **Gwyneth Paltrow**), the lead role in boxing comedy *The Great White Hype*, and a part alongside **Marlon Brando** in a remake of *The Island of Doctor Moreau* ... *The Madness of King George* director **Nicholas Hytner**'s next project will be *The Crucible*, based on Arthur Miller's play. **Daniel Day-Lewis** will star ... **Kenneth Branagh** is directing the low budget ensemble comedy *In the Bleak Midwinter*. The cast playing the theatrical troupe at the core of the tale includes **Joan Collins**, **Richard Briers** and **Jennifer Saunders** ... **Michelle Pfeiffer** will appear with her sister Deedee for the first time on the big screen, in the newsroom drama *Up Close and Personal*. The film also stars **Robert Redford**, **Stockard Channing**, **Kate Nelligan** and **Joe Mantegna** ... **Paul Newman** is to take the lead role in the Merchant-Ivory production *Diary of a Mad Old Man*, based on the novel by Junichiro Tanizaki ... **Jim Carrey**'s Ace Ventura character returns in the upcoming *Ace Ventura II: When Nature Calls* ... **Sylvester Stallone** will star alongside **Antonio Banderas** in *Assassins*, which began filming last month.

THINK
FAST.
LOOK
ALIVE.

BRUCE WILLIS
DIE HARD
WITH A VENGEANCE
JEREMY IRONS SAMUEL L. JACKSON

CONTAINS VIOLENCE AND
OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE



ANDREW G. VAJNA Presents A CINERGI Production A JOHN McTIERNAN Film
BRUCE WILLIS JEREMY IRONS SAMUEL L. JACKSON "DIE HARD WITH A VENGEANCE" GRAHAM GREENE COLLEEN CAMP
LARRY BRYGGMAN SAM PHILLIPS Music by MICHAEL KAMEN Edited by JOHN WRIGHT A.C.E. Production Designer JACKSON DE GOVIA Director of Photography PETER MENZIES
Co-Producer CARMINE ZOZZORA Executive Producer ANDREW G. VAJNA BUZZ FEITSHANS ROBERT LAWRENCE Written by JONATHAN HENSLEIGH
Produced by MICHAEL TADROSS Produced and Directed by JOHN McTIERNAN
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