



The Main Feature

Season 38 - Issue 17

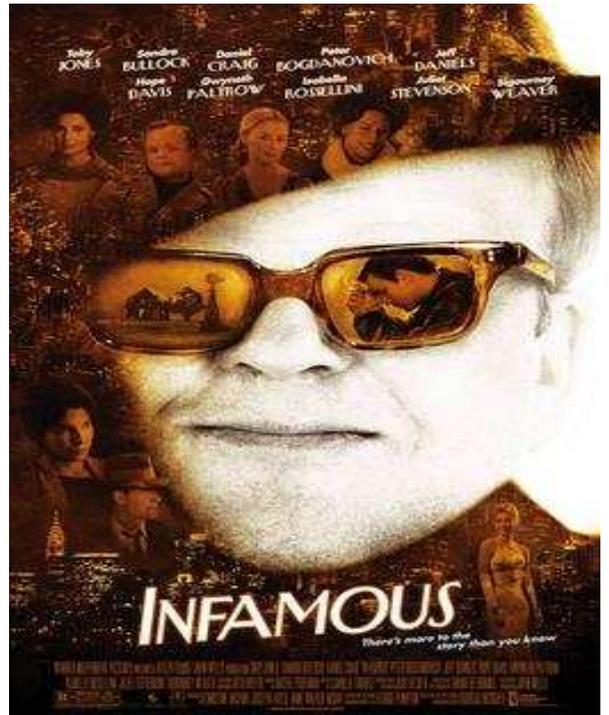
screening 24.5.18

USA 2006 1 hour 53 minutes Cert 15

Director and writer Douglas McGrath
Music by Rachel Portman
Cinematography Bruno Delbonnel
Editor Camilla Toniolo

Cast:

Toby Jones as Truman Capote
Sandra Bullock as Harper Lee
Daniel Craig as Perry Smith
Lee Pace as Richard Hickock
Jeff Daniels as Alvin Dewey
Peter Bogdanovich as Bennett Cerf
Hope Davis as Slim Keith
Isabella Rossellini as Marella Agnelli
Juliet Stevenson as Diana Vreeland
Sigourney Weaver as Babe Paley
Michael Panes as Gore Vidal
John Benjamin Hickey as Jack Dunphy
Gwyneth Paltrow as Kitty Dean



Director McGrath commented "*The script is based on George Plimpton's book (Truman Capote: In Which Various Friends, Enemies, Acquaintances, and Detractors Recall His Turbulent Career), which is an oral history. It's just a series of interviews, people talking about Truman. It seems the perfect way to make a movie about him and a book about him, because his life was so much about people talking about other people. I thought it made sense thematically.*

It also did a couple things that I thought made it helpful for the film. It allows you to get direct information to the audience without breaking the structure of your movie – by which I mean I wanted to keep the movie set '59-'65. I didn't want to have flashbacks to early parts; I wanted to keep that momentum. Because they're interviews, you don't actually feel you're leaving the time. What they can tell you – like in Sandy's quite amazing first testimonial when she talks about the Christmas pageant – I felt that was important information to get to the audience. Because it makes Truman sympathetic and it tells a lot about their friendship. It also changes how the audience feels about him at that point. Up to that point in the movie he seems, if you don't know him, a little odd. It would be very hard to get that information in a normal scene without quite a lot of work and it would have been poor Sandy having to say, "Remember that time your parents abandoned you?"

With this ambitious film, McGrath has done a passionate job of fleshing out not only Capote but his entire milieu. It moves constantly between New York high life and the bleak Kansas plains where Capote writes *In Cold Blood*. The shifts in tone are jarring at first, but the editing has all kinds of strange pleasures and echoes, connections between people, thoughts, and places. The cutting is often fast, which is why the scenes played in long takes land as hard as they do.

Sandra Bullock gives one of her best performances, playing Capote's friend Harper Lee. We've always been presented with a picture of Lee as a sweet woman who had one book in her, delivered it, then retired

into maidenly seclusion. In *Infamous*, Lee is boldly depicted as a blocked writer who's very angry about not being able to continue her work, and Bullock really captures her awkward kindness. With her hair cropped, looking older, and asked to carry single-take monologues that would tax the most resourceful actress, Bullock is quietly heartbreaking. She would dominate the movie if it weren't so stuffed with other talented people doing some of their best work.

However the star of the film is undoubtedly Toby Jones.

Rex Reed of *The New York Observer* opined, "In *Infamous* . . . a diminutive actor with a titanic talent named Toby Jones literally becomes the man himself. This is no lisping impersonation learned from watching old Johnny Carson shows: Mr. Jones moves into Truman's skin, heart and brains. *Infamous* shows you the man's soul. It is a monumental achievement of great artistry and depth. In some ways, the movie is better, too . . . [it] is infinitely fascinating, cinematically breathtaking and largely impeccable. It proves that there's more than one way to tell a story and view a life. It is one hell of a beautiful movie to see and savor."

Toby Jones commented on his development of his role: "*The first thing I remember... I'm shamefully ignorant of Truman Capote. I knew the name. The name is a romantic name that we don't sort of get in the UK. We don't get people called Truman. So, I remember him being sort of an exotic figure. I remember footage of him at Studio 54 in his sort of later, bloated years. I remember reading the script thinking, ah this is just great. It's a fantastic script, sort of a memento of a thriller. And I didn't know anything about In Cold Blood or anything. Then I remember they sent me the Maysles brothers. There's a little half-hour Maysles brothers' documentary (called A Visit with Truman Capote a/k/a With Love from Truman – 1966) which follows Truman on a promotional tour for In Cold Blood. It's virtually exactly the right period. It's about the only bit of footage that I've seen where you see him walking further than the wings to the chat show chair. You see him walking in the Hamptons. You see him drinking too much in the Hamptons. You see him pulling out of a bag letters from Perry, which seems a foolhardy thing to do in an interview. Suddenly, as an actor, you can project chinks in the Truman mask through his response to these letters. I found this documentary really the most fascinating document. I sort of had it on a continual loop in the trailer because the panic of playing someone so remote in a way, it needs constant sort of gardening. That was the thing I relied on more than anything else.*

I was sent loads of tapes. He was on American TV all the time, on chat shows. I watched him constantly, and with my dialogue coach we froze the frames to look at his teeth and mouth and tongue. That's how I got the voice, and the rest - the body, the mincing movements - all came after. I was neurotic about that voice though."

Jason Solomon of *The Guardian* asked him the following question (hopefully with a smile on his face, as otherwise it could be taken as rather rude): The cast includes Sandra Bullock, Juliet Stevenson, Daniel Craig, Jeff Daniels, Sigourney Weaver, Hope Davis, Peter Bogdanovich. How on earth did they pick you?

TJ: *I often wondered that! I think it was the Broadway run of The Play What I Wrote. Lots of stars came to see it. But still, this is one giant leap. I heard about the project over a year before we began. My American agent said, 'Oh, you might want to read In Cold Blood because they're talking about you for Capote, but the script's with Johnny Depp and Sean Penn at the moment.' So, these things take their time to dribble down the food chain.*

Capote died in Bel Air on 25 August 1984 aged 59. According to the coroner's report the cause of death was "liver disease complicated by phlebitis and multiple drug intoxication". He died at the home of his old friend, Joanne Carson, ex-wife of late night tv host Johnny Carson, on whose programme Capote had been a frequent guest. Gore Vidal, with whom he'd had a long running feud, responded to the news of Capote's death by calling it "a wise career move".

Iain McGlashan



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Dame Helen Mirren says streaming is 'devastating' for cinema

Dame Helen Mirren has said the rise of watching films on streaming services at home is "devastating" for people who want to make films for the big screen.

"It's devastating for people like my husband, film directors, because they want their movies to be watched in a cinema with a group of people," the actress told Total Film magazine.

Dame Helen, 72, is married to Taylor Hackford, director of 2004 biopic Ray.

She said the "communal" experience of cinema is in danger of dying out. "An audience, a movie, and you're all in it together," she said. "You're frightened, you laugh, you cry all together. So it's a communal thing. And that's beginning to disappear."

The Oscar winner's comments continue a debate about services like Netflix, which has bought films like Annihilation and Mudbound for its own subscribers.

Its business model generally bypasses cinemas - a fact that has unsettled many in the film industry. Netflix films have been banned from this year's Cannes Film Festival, which has introduced a rule saying all films in competition must have a cinema release.

Streaming services may be able to offer fans advantages in terms of price, selection and home comforts - but the attraction of the cinema doesn't seem to be waning.

Last year, UK cinemagoers spent a record £1.38bn on tickets, up 6.1% on the previous year.

13 April 2018 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-43754598>

Steven Spielberg has waded in on the debate surrounding whether films released on Netflix should receive equal treatment to those granted theatrical runs.

In the past year, Netflix films have sparked the ire of Dunkirk director Christopher Nolan as well as been banned from competition at Cannes Film Festival. Directing maestro Spielberg, whose new film Ready Player One is in cinemas now, agrees with these sentiments.

"I don't believe that films that are just given token qualifications, in a couple of theatres for less than a week, should qualify for the Academy Award nominations," he told ITV News expressing his concern that smaller independent titles are bypassing cinema releases after being snapped up by streaming services including Amazon and Hulu.

The three-time Academy Award-winning director continued: "Fewer and fewer filmmakers are going to struggle to raise money or to compete at Sundance and possibly get one of the specialty labels to release their films theatrically.

"More of them are going to let the SVOD [Streaming Video On-Demand] businesses finance their films, maybe with the promise of a slight, one-week theatrical window to qualify for awards. But, in fact, once you commit to a television format, you're a TV movie."

He added that television is stronger today than it's ever been but stated he wouldn't be joining the likes of Martin Scorsese and the Coen Brothers by making material specifically for Netflix.

27 March 2018 Independent newspaper website

<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/steven-spielberg-netflix-films-oscars-barred-tv-movies-ready-player-one-a8275811.html>

Comments and reactions to: **Hunt for the Wilderpeople**

A really enjoyable film - great story & acting.

Oh dear!!

Refreshing film without cant and explosions!

It was magistical

Good choice for the club - enjoyably quirky.

Best film this year!

Very good film - Excellent sense of humour

Loved the photography

A most unusual very enjoyable film.

Unbelievable - literally.

A happy sad kind of "road" film.

Very enjoyable. Good soundtrack.

Haven't had so much fun for ages. Real feel good.

A comedy with drama, whimsy and anarchy - loved it!

Quirky, endearing film, excellent scenery and acting.

Lovely film, a breath of fresh air, wonderful scenery.

A good evening's entertainment. Two principles excellent

Brilliant. A touching and funny film. Best film this season.

Delightful nonsense - I haven't smiled at a film for months!

Terrible! Bad acting from most actors and an implausible plot.

Serious, sad, comical that whole "army" chasing them, anyway common sense won.

A bit of a strange mixture of farce and more serious elements. Showed the New Zealand people generally in a rather strange light!

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	~	~	~	2	~	~	3	4	20	9	2

Number of reaction slips received = 40

Average Score = 7.83

Position	Film	Average Score
1 st	Lion	8.46
2 nd	Hidden Figures	8.40
3 rd	A United Kingdom	8.28
4 th	Hunt for the Wilderpeople	7.83
5 th	I, Daniel Blake	7.78
6 th	La Famille Belier	7.70
7 th	Coming Home	7.31
8 th	Romeo and Juliet	7.24
9 th	Fuglene Over Sundet (<i>Across the Waters</i>)	7.19
10 th	Casque D'Or	7.10
11 th	Torch Song Trilogy	6.08
12 th	Hell's Angels	6.03
13 th	Moonlight	5.97
14 th	Nora Inu (<i>Stray Dog</i>)	5.74
15 th	La La Land	5.61
16 th	Mediterraneo	5.47

Our next film on 13 September 2018:

Subject to confirmation Our new season starts with

