

Screen Scene Winter 2010

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Movies coming your way

### Inception

Heist movie with a difference. Christopher Nolan (The Dark Knight) has been incubating this baby for an eon and it may take you that long to work out what it's all about. Think Matrix and Memento... yep it's a mind !@#\$ ...literally as Leonardo DiCaprio and Ellen Page enter the 'vaults' of information stored in people's dreams. It's a time-space-globe hopping boundary-pushing epic of a personal movie explained Nolan to the LA Times which makes it that much clearer.

### Repo Men

Critics have not minced their words at the sight of a buffed Jude Law who with buddy, Forest Whitaker, is up to his pectorals in sliced meat reclaiming artificial organs from the saps who fall behind in their inflated payments. Somewhere in here is a muse on corporate greed and or the healthcare /mortgage crisis but it sinks beneath the viscera. UK's News of the World calls it a 'day ruining movie' and wonders whether the script could have been penned by a gibbon. Other critics are less kind. Check out [rottentomatoes.com](http://rottentomatoes.com) for some entertainingly scathing reviews.

### The Expendables

Honestly does the story even matter? When Sly, Arnie, Jet Li, Mickey Rourke, Bruce Willis, Dolph Lundgren and Steve Austin are brought together on a mission in South America – you know you're not getting a moody thinkpiece. Written, directed by and starring Sly Stallone who broke his neck during filming of a particularly deep dialogue scene...no wait, it was a kick-ass action scene with guns, knives and professional wrestling stars. In a press conference Jean-Claude Van Damme said he turned down a role because Sly could not explain his characters motivation. Luvvie!

### Cemetery Junction

Empire Mag gives it 4 stars but the reception to Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant's latest collaboration - a slightly rosy- hued nod to 60s Brit 'kitchen sink' dramas like Billy Liar and

Saturday Night, Sunday Morning is a warm pat on the back rather than rousing applause. Gervais admits to gilding the lily of his 1970s set coming-of-age drama with cool looking actors and flattering lighting – less grit and more gloss than would normally be found in a UK small town. Why? Because he can.

### Scott Pilgrim Vs. The World

A Universal Pictures test screening of Edgar Wright's (Hot Fuzz) adaptation of Bryan Lee O'Malley's comic book series in which gormless geek poster boy Michael Cera portrays the titled man-on-a mission reportedly yielded the one word twitter – 'nerdgasm.' Say no more.

### On Location

#### Feature Film: Blame

Actor Damian de Montemas's character (Bernard) is feeling the heat. Bernard has wedged his foot against the door of the tiny bathroom which is all that stands between him and a number of assailants who periodically threaten him. He is attuned to every muffled whisper, every thump as if at any second he will be called upon to fight for his life. Bernard is in deep doo doo.

It is the second last day of filming on the psychological thriller Blame and AFI award winning actor Damian (best supporting – Underbelly) is emoting under duress. Never-mind the script, It's 42 degrees in the shade in a ramshackle off-kilter largely unairconditioned house in the middle of the sun scorched bush in Roleystone. The bathroom is being broiled by film lights and the hot breath of the film crew who are squashed into every available centimetre not actually appearing on screen (If Damian is feeling isolated, as the script calls for - it is a triumph of acting).

Periodically Damian's authentic sweat is sponged off and replaced by Hollywood issue sweat. Genial director Michael Henry (Hank) surprisingly manages to keep his cool when a Teutonic continuity person appears to tell him how to direct. At this point it is not hard to imagine homicidal goings on on-set as well as in the script but that would be to discount the nerves of steel and suspension of disbelief required to get a project to this point. Hank worked on the script for eight years and the eventual alignment of the stars required to get

him into the director's chair of his first feature is a high not easily extinguished although I am personally hoping that continuity makes no further 'suggestions.'

The holy grail of a good script is what brought WA producing partners Ryan Hodgson and Melissa Kelly to the table and secured funding from ScreenWest, Screen Australia, The Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) and private investors. It attracted an impressive ensemble cast of young guns including It girl Sophie Lowe (AFI best actress – Beautiful Kate), theatre maestro Simon Stone (named by The Australian as one of the top ten emerging cultural leaders) and backpacker in holiday from hell Kestie Morassi (Wolf Creek).

Shot primarily in one claustrophobic location, it's an actors piece which will sink or swim on whether the heightened emotions and spiralling psychodrama feels real and if the filmmaking skills can create the nerve tightening intensity of an impending car crash. Michael Henry name checks Straw Dogs and Deliverance as touchstones for the film: "where people get into foreign or strange situations that they just can't get out of it and you as the audience end up feeling sick to your stomach and saying 'just leave.' "

Michael has honed his skills with a number of widely screened short films and won a Melbourne Underground Film Festival award for a DV feature, The Cruel World. He has come to this production with the mantra – 'strong story with great performances.' The aim, he says, is to meld the energy and action of American films with the depth of European fare. The story involves a group of young vigilantes seeking revenge for a sexual betrayal but 'can you read between the lies?'

Certainly there is edgy biff and angst involved; Damian de Montemas says he has the bruises and scratches to prove it, Kestie Morassi says she has never played anyone who has cried this much and Simon Stone (Jindabyne, Kokoda) says his character's irrational behaviour - 'his pure rage' has at times been difficult to maintain. Spoiler Alert: Mary Poppins this ain't.

Ashley Zuckerman (Rush, The Pacific) good-naturedly concludes that the restrictions of the shoot have imposed a level of intensity which made it feel like "we were really amongst it, fighting to get this thing together which has been appropriate for the film."

At under 2 million dollars, Ryan Hodgson says though the budget is tight, the crew (all west Aussies) have risen to it and the rushes are exciting. “It will be a visceral little film but it does ask some broader questions about truth and retribution.”

Blame premiere’s at the Melbourne International Film Festival in July/ August 2010 and will screen in Perth in September.

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