

ON SCREEN

Oscars prompt hot star to chilly month



BY ROY GREEN
STAFF WRITER

John Travolta plays a lawyer with questionable ethics in *A Civil Action*.

The first quarter is no longer the worst time of the year for new movies, thanks to Hollywood's increasing penchant for Oscar-dipping.

The studios now release certain films for a limited run at only one or two locations before the end of the year — thus making them eligible for Oscar nominations. Then they are yanked from circulation until January or February of the new year.

That's why such highly-touted titles as *The Thin Red Line*, *A Civil Action*, *Hurlyburly* and *Affliction* are only now being widely released and coming to a theatre near you this month.

The Thin Red Line, the Tinseltown buzz says, is a likely candidate for best picture, as well as possible acting nominations for its cast.

John Travolta, Nick Nolte, Sean Penn and John Cusack.

And three members of that cast — Travolta, Nolte and Penn — could also be nominated for other films.

Travolta is favoured, along with co-star Robert Duvall, for *A Civil Action*, based on a true story, where they play sleazy lawyers involved in an environmental lawsuit.

Nolte stars as a small-town cop in *Affliction*, based on the Russell Banks novel of the same name. And Sean Penn is getting raves for his work in *Hurlyburly*.

Also notable about the latter film, based on David Rabe's 1984 Broadway play, is

perennial good girl Meg Ryan playing a stripper.

But it isn't only Oscar hangovers that are causing a definite movie buzz in the first quarter of 1999.

Some of the more promising movies being released prior to April Fool's are:

- *Hilary and Jackie*: Emily Watson as brilliant cellist Jacqueline de Pre, who died of multiple sclerosis at the height of her career.

- *Another Day in Paradise*: James Woods could be Oscar-bound in this story about drug addicts and a professional thief.

- *Message In a Bottle*: Paul Newman and Kevin Costner in a story about a reporter who finds romantic messages from a sailor to his dead wife.

- *Still Crazy*: Billy Connolly and Stephen Rea in a comedy about the reunion of a '70s rock band.

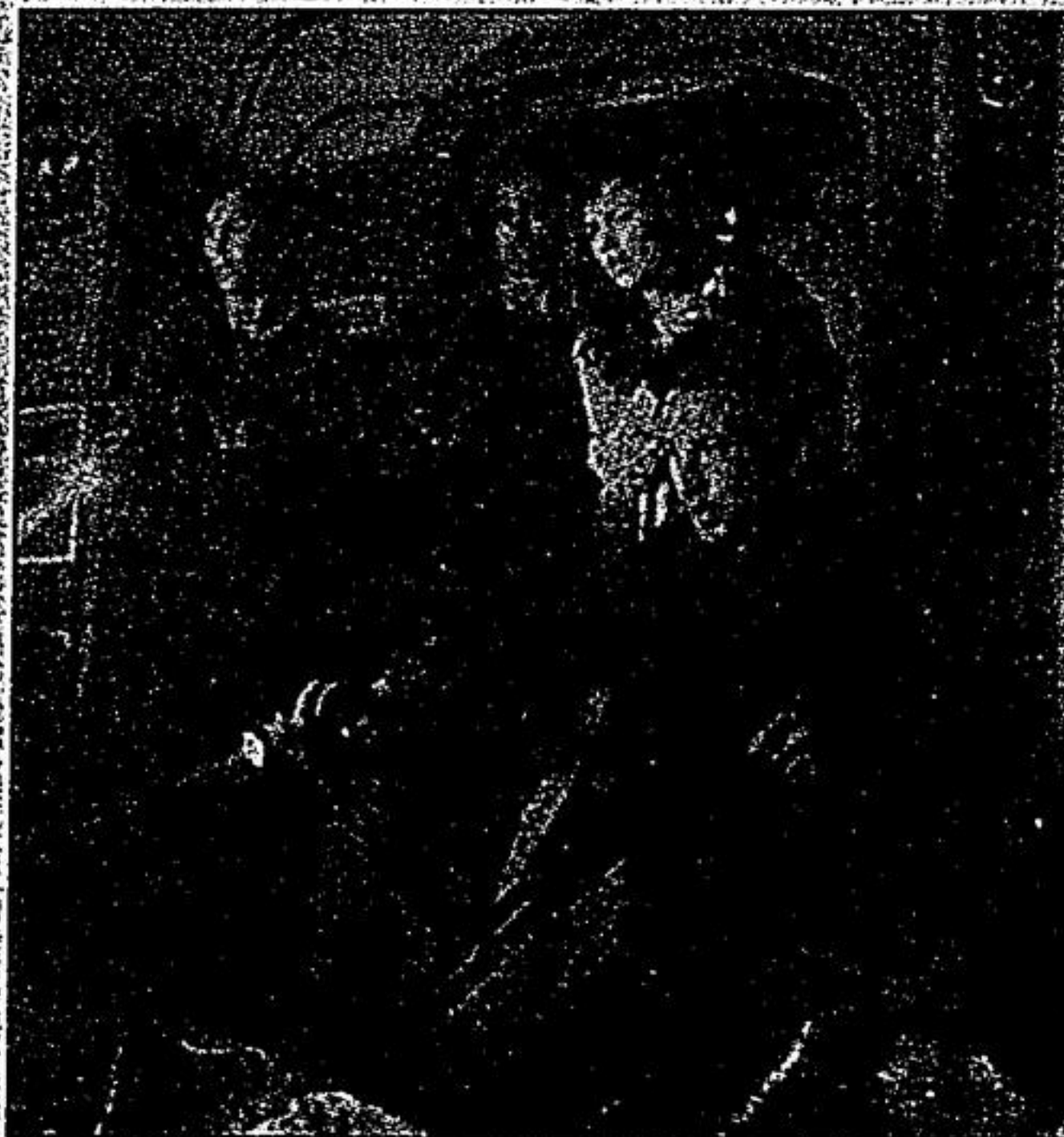
- *My Name Is Joe*: Peter Mullan won best-acting honours at Cannes for this story of a recovering alcoholic.

- *Rushmore*: A comedy that could bring another Oscar nominee — this one for, believe it or not, Bill Murray.

- *Pushing Tin*: John Cusack and Billy Bob Thornton as battling air-traffic controllers.

- *The Green Mile*: Stephen King story stars Tom Hanks as a prison guard on death row.

- *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*: British comedy about young gangsters.



Jamie Lee Curtis (left) stars in the sci-fi action film *Virus*.

- *The Other Sister*: Diane Keaton and Juliet Lewis are sisters, one of whom is mentally handicapped.

- *Ravenous*: Robert Carlisle, fresh from his Full Monty success, goes very dramatic in this story about trapped soldiers in the Mexican

VIDEO RELEASES: January films feature performances of Oscar-winning calibre

Carrey's performance earns Globe nomination

BY ROY GREEN
STAFF WRITER

Jim Carrey an Oscar nominee?

It's not impossible. After all, the rubber-faced comic already has the nomination for a Golden Globe Award — in a dramatic role, no less.

The picture is one of 1998's most-hyped Hollywood flicks, *The Truman Show*, which arrives on the video shelves — with humongous copies, no doubt — Jan. 12.

The pop-fantasy/satire was easily one of the best Hollywood products in what was an otherwise unimaginative cinema year. It sees Carrey as the unknowing star of a 'real-life' TV series and is nominated in six Golden Globe categories, including best picture.

Although the Oscar nominees won't be announced until early February, speculation has it that Carrey will be there with Tom Hanks (*Saving Private Ryan*), John Travolta (*A Civil Action*), Nick Nolte (*Affliction*) and maybe Robin Williams (*Patch Adams*) for the best actor award.

And speaking of Oscars, one of the best performances of the year isn't eligible for an Academy Award because *Lolita* (Jan. 26) is a made-for-TV film.

Jeremy Irons turns in a sterling performance as the man who has an affair with his stepdaughter. But be warned, his performance is about the only redeeming thing in an otherwise flat rendition of the classic Nabokov novel.

When it comes to novels translated to the big screen, it's hard to beat anything written by Elmore Leonard. And the latest of these, *Out of Sight* (Jan. 5), is a worthy successor to *Get Shorty* and *Jackie Brown*.

The story of a sexy U.S. Marshall (Jennifer Lopez) chasing a bank robber who breaks out of prison is an intelligent action movie. Even the presence of the uninspiring George Clooney as

See ACTION, page 18.

See ENJOY, page 18.

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