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October 16, 2008

## LAist Movie Review: Able Danger



Nowhere to run. Noir to hide. Photo courtesy Brian Geldin.

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“Dude.

Have you seen the internet? Seriously, it is BLOWING UP right now. Word is, 9/11 was a conspiracy.

Yeah, dude. I know. Inside job. Watch that Spare Coins documentary. Your brain will thank me, dude.”

If you’ve ever had this conversation (and you probably have), or if you’ve ever stopped at one of roughly a billion stop signs in America, you’ve probably heard the bumper-sticker truth: 9/11 was an inside job. And that’s exactly what the makers of indie-flick *Able Danger* want you to think about as you walk into, sit through, and walk out of their film. The truth, like always, is much more pedestrian: this exceptional film doesn’t need the hyped up backstory to succeed. But it sure does anyway.

*Able Danger* gets its name from an actual data-mining program undertaken by the U.S. Government that sought to identify and classify any information related to the September 11th attacks, including the assertion that at least one government agency had failed to act in response to credible information on the background of eventual hijacker Mohammed Atta. Much of this information was subsequently destroyed by the government, leading to widespread media speculation and the ultimate catalyst for the film

*Able Danger* kick-starts the action in modern day Brooklyn, where Thomas Flynn (played superbly by [Adam Nee](#)) runs a left-wing coffee shop and bookstore at ground level, and prints 9/11 conspiracy theories in the basement. It is clear from the outset that this has garnered him some unwanted attention from generally unseen secret government agents. But when the most fatal of femmes enters his life with the promise of irrefutable evidence to confirm his conspiratorial beliefs, he begins down a path that quickly turns treacherous. Following the murder of his best friend (and his subsequent implication in the act), Thomas has to trust the elusive and deceptive Kasia as she dangles a hope of ultimate redemption in his frantic face. As forces converge against him, Thomas must determine once and for all what is real, and what is worth fighting - and dying - for.

Without question, *Able Danger* is an incredible film that mind-bendingly combines dark comedy, drama, and intrigue into a neo-noir pastiche that is all it’s own. Shown almost entirely in black and white (but in an unpretentious way), the moments of stark color give the scenes a healthy dose of intensity and concentration on relevant items that may otherwise be lost. And while the story itself is engaging in it’s ability to interweave contemporary plot lines with factual data and tried-and-true moments of chicanery, *Able Danger* is so well shot that all that good stuff has to take a back seat. Produced on an indie film budget, writer/director/editor Paul Krik seamlessly blends palettes between panoramic vistas of New York City, claustrophobic moments of up-close intensity, and heart-beating bike vs. Suburban chases that would make any one of your hipster conspiracy-theorist friends proud.

If only the street marketing team for *Able Danger* were as good as those for the 9/11 conspiracy theorists. After watching the film once, you would gladly have it emblazoned on every bus stop or yield sign you drive by on your daily commute to serve the corporate agenda. Then again, maybe not. After all, mother always said you can’t believe everything you see taped to a street sign.

*Able Danger debuts at the Laemmle Grande 4-Plex in downtown LA on October 31st.*

By [Farley Elliott](#) in [Arts & Events](#) | [Link](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [Recommend this!](#) (1) 

9/11

## Able Danger: An Interview with Writer and Director Paul Krik

November 2, 2008

by Jeremy R. Hammond

[http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/articles/2008/11/02/able\\_danger\\_interview\\_with\\_paul\\_krik.htm](http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/articles/2008/11/02/able_danger_interview_with_paul_krik.htm)

*Writer and Director Paul Krik answered a few questions about his film Able Danger in an e-mail interview with Foreign Policy Journal.*

### **What are some of your influences as a filmmaker and how does Able Danger reflect those influences?**

Clearly *Able Danger* is an homage to *The Maltese Falcon*, so I'd have to say John Huston is a hero. But I'm more of a fan of Dashiell Hammet [creator of Sam Spade, the hero in *The Maltese Falcon*] in that sense. [Stanley] Kubrick is the all time greatest, and *Dr. Strangelove* embodies the perfect film; one that makes you laugh at the absurdity of our "leaders" and shit your pants in fear of real Armageddon. *Pi* by [Darren] Aronofsky is the film that really cracked through into my frontal lobes in a way that I wanted to emulate. But the quirky we-know-more-than-you-comedy of films like *Repo Man* and *Pulp Fiction* and their glowing McGuffins are the things cult movies are made of.

### **How did you come to decide to do this story in the style of film noir?**

Noir film is the product of an acknowledgement of the depraved nature of the human condition. It is a staring at the abyss of hapless moral relativism and spinning a good yarn about an imperfect character who at least still has a backbone to rise out of the muck and defy, despite his flaws, the inevitable demise of the world around him. Just as noir was originally inspired by the wars that exposed the moral depths [to which] a civilized world could descend, today we face a new paradigm of Machiavellian evil in the form of the puppet president of the United States who serves an agenda most epitomized by the think-tank The Project for a New American Century, who, a year before the World Trade towers went down, called for a need for a "new Pearl Harbor" to motivate the American public to get behind the war machine to enter into a Middle East battleground to protect American interests into the future. So far everything has gone according to plan. All these things have come to pass. Reality is more noir than noir, but we're in denial.

### **The main character in the film is clearly based on Sander Hicks, the owner of the real Vox Pop and author of the book [The Big Wedding] attributed to Thomas Flynn in the movie. He receives a special thanks in the credits. How did this aspect of the script come about, and to what extent was Sander involved?**

Sander served as an inspiration for the film. I live two blocks away from where he opened his first cafe, Vox Pop, and immediately fell in love with the place where my community in Brooklyn could go and share ideas and community and books that are hard to find in mainstream locales. If there were Vox Pops everywhere there was a Starbucks, the world would be a decidedly more enlightened, and if you believe in the power of the human mind, better place. I wanted to make this character, this "truther", this committed and moralistic businessman -- a hero. In this age of media oligarchy, I think Sander is a true and quixotic

hero. And the odds against him just make him more heroic. Sander was not involved in the creative process of making the film. The main character owns the cafe and wrote the book that Sander wrote, but he's not trying to "be" Sander Hicks. Sander doesn't ride a bike, I do.

**To what further extent was the character of Thomas Flynn based upon yourself; or, to put it another way, in what other ways do you relate yourself to the character?**

Hmm. Okay, I didn't really mean to say that the character is more based on me by any means. It's not. I do ride my bike a lot and find it an important personality trait -- because that is what it becomes, a way of life. I also think bike riders happen to be among the the great clandestine heroes in the American landscape. We don't pollute and we're in training, ready for the collapse of the military industrial complex with no addiction to oil (except to heat our homes and cook our food and recharge our batteries of course). My main character, Thomas Flynn, is really based on Sam Spade -- but Sam Spade the conspiracy theorist. The point was to conflate a detective personality and rigor of evidentiary judgment to a conspiracy theorist. I think conspiracy theorists -- "truthers" -- are more honest about the conclusions that should be drawn from the evidence than mainstream sources. Occam's Razor favors conspiracy theory and Sam Spade favors Occam's Razor.

**There is an undercurrent of religion throughout the film. Religious icons appear in numerous scenes. At one point, Thomas Flynn tells his interviewer when asked if he's religious, "I have faith". But his faith is something he struggles with throughout the film. In another humorous moment in the film, he says "I'm a good Catholic boy" just before taking a swig of Jose Cuervo from the bottle. What is the message with regard to religion, be it Christianity or Islam, that you intended to communicate to viewers by means of Flynn's struggle with his own faith?**

Is it up to me to reduce the religious message of the film to a sentence? I'll leave the message of the film to critics and audiences to interpret as they see fit. If I were watching this movie, I think I would say that our hero wrestles with the inherent contradiction of being a Catholic, or a person of any faith; of trying to be rational in the context of a decidedly irrational belief system. By definition, the greater the faith, the greater the irrationality of an individual. If I were watching the film, I would say that our hero, Tom Flynn has read a bit of Marx and understands what he means when he says that "religion is the opiate of the masses." He's read enough Machiavelli to understand that "The Prince" in human form is our current president, whose only appeal to the masses is his hypocritical "religion." Tom Flynn probably believes Luther when he explains to him that he has pierced the veil of the great American propaganda -- that 9/11 was designed to create, or rejuvenate, an enemy in the minds of the American public so that we could be motivated to kill Muslims. Americans are now okay with it. We're on a Crusade. I would say that Tom Flynn has finally decided he wants nothing to do with it; his rational side wins out -- that perhaps it's the irrational belief system itself that is the problem. It's time for the second enlightenment. Obama time.

**Do you think the U.S. under an Obama administration will take a new direction in its foreign policy, away from that which has been implemented by Bush after 9/11?**

Yes, of course. Obama is a multicultural person. He gets the world and I think the world gets him, or will. I write this days before the election and as much as I'd like to believe the polls and the statistics that it's a lock for Obama, I know that New York is a total bubble in this country and have spent plenty of time in the Midwest and south to know that between the profound ignorance in this country that leads to racism and with voter fraud issues in the last

two elections that anything is possible. But nonetheless I have great hope for Obama and believe he stands in a perfect position to lead America and the world on the next great wave of rational multi-culturalistic capitalism. America leads the world in nothing other than a rational hope and a dream for the future. And the last eight years we've let the world down and brought America to the edge of the abyss.

**The film is based on a real military operation. To what extent, if any, is the film intended to introduce viewers to the real Able Danger who may not have ever heard of it, and to what extent was Able Danger just an intriguing aspect of 9/11 that you thought could make an interesting fiction film -- with the drive containing the data from the operation serving as the "McGuffin"?**

Yes, exactly.

**You mean that the film was also intended to make people aware of certain aspects of 9/11 like Able Danger, while also having it serve as inspiration for an interesting McGuffin?**

Precisely. I've blogged a bit about my McGuffin thoughts here: <http://www.abledangerthemovie.com/blog/?p=120>.

**Who is your intended audience for this film?**

People who like to go out on a date to the movie. I think you're very likely to get lucky after this movie if you go with a date.

**There are three basic schools of thought on 9/11. There's the official version of what happened that everyone is familiar with. Then there's the theory that the government knew an attack was coming and allowed it to happen. And finally there's the theory that elements of the government actually orchestrated and facilitated the attacks. What are your own thoughts on 9/11?**

My thoughts are the the truth is assuredly not available to us but that there has very clearly been great efforts by our intelligence agencies to dispose of the "truth."

**We've already discussed Sander. I also noticed when Flynn is typing up his story on Atta's friend who claimed to be working for the CIA, the name "Hopsicker" appears. Is this Daniel Hopsicker? What other individuals have influenced your thoughts on the matter or had some influence on the film's script? Who else would you recommend to people that they listen to or check out their writing in an effort to seek out that hidden truth?**

On the matter of 9/11 truth? Daniel Hopsicker, yes. A lot of Webster Tarpley in there. Anthony Sutton. Jake from *Chinatown*. I'm a big fan of conspiracy movies. *Parallax View*. *The Conversation*. *Original Manchurian Candidate*, *Dr. Strangelove*, etc.

**How do you think your film will be/has been received by the "9/11 truth" movement?**

Most "truthers" get it. I had the 9/11 ballot initiative ([www.nyc911initiative.org](http://www.nyc911initiative.org)) out collecting signatures all day before the film opened the Brooklyn International Film Festival. I'm not a priority for them to promote because they are industriously producing and promoting their own documentarian agenda. But they get that if this film can break into the mainstream a bit, then many more people will have to face issues that are important to them.

**A number of fiction films have included factual pieces of information concerning 9/11. Two that come instantly to mind are in *Casino Royale* when "M" tells 007 about the insider trading that occurred just before the attacks and *A Mighty Heart* about the murder of journalist Daniel Pearl starring Angelina Jolie, which mentions the head of Pakistan's ISI spy agency authorizing the transfer of \$100,000 to Mohammed Atta in Florida. There are of course any number of educational documentary films and videos on the subject. A lot of people might not be so interested in sitting down to watch a documentary on the topic, but would certainly watch an entertaining movie. So it certainly helps expose people to things they might not have ever heard of before. But there is also the risk that those same people might walk away not knowing that certain elements of the movie were actually based on fact. How many people walked out of *Casino Royale* or *A Mighty Heart* thinking the bit about the insider trading or the ISI chief was just another fictional plot element? If the purpose is not only to entertain, but also to educate, how does a filmmaker handle the subject matter in a way that lessens the risk that the audience doesn't walk away thinking that such information was just part of the fiction? What did you do in making this film to help ensure that people walk away knowing that certain pieces of information are not only elements of a fictional story, but are based on fact?**

There is never a guarantee that people will take the things that I put into a fictional narrative for the truth. But there is no guarantee when a "truther" tells facts via a documentary or book or whatever that anyone will take his facts for [being] true, either. With regard to 9/11 truth, there are few facts that seem indisputable. With 9/11, we are dealing in the realm of myth -- where facts actually count for very little. It's about creating a *weltanschauung* -- a worldview that makes sense. We live in a post 9/11 world, as the neocons are so fond of saying, and that's like saying it's A.D. vs. B.C. In the film I tried to create a window into a universe where alternative explanations for 9/11 are accepted as potentially valid -- where the cracks in the myth can be seen. Where the audience can see and therefore visualize themselves in a world where part of being a hipster is *not* accepting the mainstream myth. Where being a bit of a truther comes into the realm of being a hipster -- which basically just means taking every mainstream media story with a grain of salt. Where hopefully we can see and identify with a person's struggle to acquire and disseminate the truth for no other reason than to serve the truth in itself. I see Thomas Flynn as a modern day Don Quixote taking on the windmills of "truth" of the media oligarchy. But the film is first and foremost meant to be a good date movie that will keep you entertained and titillated, and when it's over I hope there will be a somewhat more enlightened discourse -- and that will then then lead to seduction!

*Jeremy R. Hammond is the editor of [Foreign Policy Journal](#), a website dedicated to providing news, critical analysis, and opinion commentary on U.S. foreign policy from outside of the standard framework offered by government officials and the mainstream corporate media, particularly with regard to the "war on terrorism" and events in the Middle East. He has also written for numerous other online publications. You can contact him by clicking [here](#).*

# SPECIAL TO THE OBSERVER: AFI FESTIVAL 2008 MUST SEE FESTIVAL FILMS

by debbie lynn elias

Movies. They have served many a purpose over the past century, affecting each of us in a different way; drawing us to the celluloid images with individualized magic. During WWI and WWII, movies promoted the sale of bonds, gave a glimpse to those at home of their loved ones and the news abroad. Movies served and still do serve as a tether between families, friends and strangers, instant "Crazy Glue" if you will, bringing people together that wouldn't normally gravitate towards each other. During the Great Depression, at the direction of the President of the United States, movies were to be upbeat and happy, serving as a respite for the American people during harsh economic times. It was during that time period that a little girl named Shirley sang and danced her way into the hearts of millions, bringing smiles to the faces of everyone's heart she touched. They say history has a way of repeating itself. Take a look at the world today. Many believe we are in as dire a strait as we were in 1929. But what's interesting, is that no matter how tough the times, how tight the wallet, we all still manage to scrape together that \$10.00 to escape to the movies, just like that nickel in the 20's and 30's. Just look at today's box office.

Many of those that have entertained, informed or educated us, made us laugh or cry are long gone. But Hollywood and moviemaking goes on and thanks to organizations like AFI, not only is the magic of our movie history preserved, through its education, filmmaking workshops and yes, The AFI Film Festival, fresh new faces and talent are promoted and encouraged to continue - and even surpass - those of days gone by. And one of the first places to look for those that will continue in the traditions and excellence that came before them is at the AFI Film Festival.

Marking its 22nd year, on October 30, 2008, AFI Film Festival lifts the curtain on a spectacular, diverse and eclectic array of films spanning the globe. In addition to competitions of features, documentaries and shorts from emerging filmmakers, AFI plans to wow us this year starting with an opening night gala debut of DOUBT, directed and adapted by John Patrick Shanley from his Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning play starring Meryl Streep and Philip Seymour Hoffman and ending on November 9, with Edward Zwick's epic DEFIANCE starring Daniel Craig and Liev Schreiber. Chock-full of goodies in between, you'll find 151 films from 38 countries with everything from a tribute to one of my all time favorite directors (and a heckuva nice guy), Danny Boyle, and the world premiere of his latest work SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE, as well as a tribute to Oscar winner Tilda Swinton, to Mickey Rourke's re-emergence in THE WRESTLER, a film that stopped the festival cold at Cannes, to Stephen Soderbergh's 4hour epic CHE (Intermission has returned to the theatre, folks. Get ready for the dancing popcorn "Let's all go to the lobby" songs again!)

As the curtain gets ready to rise, let's take a look at what has become a tradition for myself and all of you, some of my AFI

## 2008 MUST SEE FESTIVAL FILMS.

One of the early frontrunners to make its mark is NOT QUITE HOLLYWOOD: THE WILD, UNTOLD STORY OF 'OZPLOITATION.' A blast from the past with uproarious and irreverent thunder from down under - thunderous laughter that is - NOT QUITE HOLLYWOOD celebrates the genesis of Australian film from the 50's and 60's right up to the 90's but with heavy concentration the Australian film genre of the 70's and 80's complete with nudity, free love, lots of sex and slasher-hacker blood soaked terror. And that's AFTER the introduction of the R-certificate, Australia's brand of censorship in 1971. "Narrated" by Quentin Tarantino (who let's face it, is an annoying but knowledgeable distraction to the film), director Mark Hartley has put together one of the most entertaining historical chronologies I've ever seen and exposes the world to such classics as "Picnic At Hanging Rock", "My Brilliant Career", "The Man From Hong Kong" and of course, the quintessential film of this era that gave the world a man named Mel, "Mad Max."

Outrageous and riotously funny, Hartley infuses interest and education through anecdotal commentary opening discussion on High Art versus Low Brow 70's Culture Wars, Nudity in the Australian Cinema (Down boys, down! Wait for the film!), Stunt and Special Effects work (which gives new meaning to death wish) and Car Culture and Drive-Ins. Jam packed with interviews of the filmmakers and actors of the genre including Dennis Hopper, Jamie Lee Curtis, Stacy Keach, Russell Boyd, writer Everett de Roche, director Richard Franklin, George Lazenby, cinematographer John Seale and renowned stuntman Grant Page, Hartley weaves a web of fascinating filmmaking full of factoids, fun and oh yes, naked breasts.

The editing of Jamie Blanks, Sara Edwards and Mark Hartley is reason enough to see NOT QUITE HOLLYWOOD. It is killer!!!! Just wait until you see those Aussie slasher hacker montages. An absolute riot. That work called for the precision of a Ginzu knife! Pacing, but for a brief segment on the 90's, is right on the money. But the real star of this film is the soundtrack. Absolutely fantastic. Some real tongue in cheek musical selections paired with film footage are better than food and wine in the finest 5 star restaurant. The real key, however, is the fact the soundtrack is continual, non-stop, propelling the film and keeping the energy level as revved up as Grant Page during an outrageous high speed chase.

And speaking of non-stop, hold on to your hats as Eugene Hutz and the gypsy punk band Gogol Bordello explode onto the screen in the documentary GOGOL BORDELLO: NON-STOP. Talk about living the American Dream!! Hutz certainly has. The heart and soul of Gogol Bordello, this is essentially his story, chronicled by director Margarita Jimeno who picks up his tale in 2001 when she discovers the band bringing down the

house at the Bulgarian Bar Mehanata in Chinatown, New York. An eclectic blend of concert footage, rare home movies of teenage Hutz in Kiev and interviews with band members, friends, fans and Hutz himself, are interwoven into a high octane tapestried and textured presentation that will have you dancing in the aisles!

Poignant and heartfelt, we are privy to a 1988 family New Year's Eve gathering where his uncle's fondest wish for Eugene is that he leave Kiev and join the U.S. Army. Little did his uncle know, the Army was the furthest thing from Eugene's mind. One of the last 100 people left in Russia with refugee status, Eugene and his family ultimately made it out of Kiev. Allowed only \$400.00 dollars per family and limited personal items, Eugene brought 20 records with him, 2 guitars and bag a Russian watches as he thought tourists would want to buy them. Unequipped for life outside Russia, the family was stripped of all documents, having to give up citizenship in order to get refugee status. Initially taken to Austria, life was tough for Hutz and his family. With no holds barred honesty, he talks about facing one disappointment after another "until there are no more expectations." Yet, despite all that he has lost, there is no bitterness. There is only joy, celebration, peace and freedom. Freedom to make music; to embrace life and all to has to offer. Freedom to belt out lyrics laden with blatant socio-political and religious commentary such as "Immigrant Punk" and "Legalize Me." All is exquisitely captured on film by Jimeno in G o g o l Bordello's mind blowing concerts - both big and small.

Eventually making his way to the US, what started as a birthday party for Hutz at a Bulgarian bar turned into a weekly gig for a what would soon become an international phenomenon - Gogol Bordello. Hand picking his band members, Hutz' expounds on his criteria - character first, followed by a musician's willingness to be an ensemble and his core belief of "playing for the joy of playing music." As time passed, Hutz put together a motley crew of some extremely talented fellow immigrants including Yuri Lemeshev on accordion, Sergey

Ryabtsev on violin, Oren Kaplan on guitar, and Eliot Ferguson on drums, as well as dancer-percussionists Pamela Racine and Elizabeth Sun. The interviews with these individuals showcase the true love and admiration each has for Hutz and his frenetic, kineticism and creativity.

Known for his outrageous storming of the stage, individualized hand sewn costumes that reflect the lyrics of each song, and thanks to superlative editing by Jenny Golden and Jimeno that pulsates to the beat of Gogol Bordello, the gypsy punk experience is captured in its most glorious as we see Hutz' go full throttle with his "possibly perverse" non-stop on stage dynamic presence (often performing in clubs for 6 hours at a stretch). As much as the clubbers and concertgoers come to be a part of the live show and embrace an atmosphere of enjoyment that "throws away the hierarchy of society" so will you with this kaleidoscopic, heart-pounding, introspective into one of the hottest groups on the international music scene. GOGOL BORDELLO: NON-STOP is non-stop entertainment and one of my top two MUST SEE FESTIVAL FILMS of the entire Festival. (And the fact that Hutz stars in and the band is featured in Madonna's directorial debut "Filtr & Wisdom" opening on October 31st, is an added reason to check out this film).

Hankering for another


weaves an intricate tale of intrigue in this fictionalized tale of Tom Flynn, a left-leaning bookstore owner who just happened to have published an expose on 9/11. Enter the sultry and mysterious femme fatale, Kasia, herself on the run from a 9/11 cover-up as she allegedly has ties to Mohamed Atta thanks to Able Danger, a hard drive that contains the identities and plots of the real architects of 9/11. Crossing paths in true film noir stylings reminiscent of "The Maltese Falcon", it doesn't take long after meeting this Eastern European beauty for Flynn to become implicated in the murder of a friend, be on the run from every government agency known to mankind and be forced to look beneath the surface at who and what Kasia really is.

Krik goes for the jugular and pushes the panic button in each of us with this too-close-for-comfort telling of a tragedy that changed the world as we know it forever. The title itself, ABLE DANGER, is derived from the actual top-secret classified intelligence project allegedly initiated by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1999 as a means to combat terrorism in general and particularly, al-Qaeda. The project was allegedly disbanded in 2005 after the public learned of its existence.


Rumored among conspiracy theorists, Able Danger contained every bit of data on the true 9/11 architects. The stark

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taste of Eastern Europe, how about the thriller ABLE DANGER? Writer-director Paul Krik

reality and truth of Krik's story hits you right between the eyes, particularly with the jerky "Blair Witch Project" hand held lensing of cinematographer Charles Libin together with Krik. After seeing Libin's camera work in "Rachel Getting Married" and "Be Kind Rewind" and now ABLE DANGER, his styling is patented, taking on defined traits which may be annoying to some and captivating to others. With ABLE DANGER, the stark jerkiness works exceedingly well with the film noir thematic and leads to some heart pounding moments of true white knuckle terror.

Not to dampen your spirits, Adam Nee is unfortunately less than believable as Thomas Flynn. On the other hand, Elina Lowensohn's Kasia is effortlessly riveting. She draws you into the intrigue and dangles her hidden secrets in front of you like a dangling carrot to a horse.

Despite its budgetary constraints, ABLE DANGER is a smart, well conceived cat-and-mouse conspiracy theory thriller that draws on the strength of the story and the public's fear of the known and unknown, building tension at every turn, with every shadow, with every bat of an eye from a darkened corner. Whatever you do - don't make this the last film of your night!

Now for some real terror, how about sibling rivalry, family dysfunction, death and familial destruction at the holidays! Yep, now we're talkin' turkey as AFI favorite Catherine Deneuve presides over her family at the holidays in A CHRISTMAS TALE. Shot in Cinemascope (an early holiday treat for all you moviegoers), this is the holiday story of Vuillards.

Family matriarch Junon has gathered the family together for a joyous celebration at the holidays - well, joyous in her mind. She has cancer and needs a bone marrow transplant from one of her children. Of course, what better time to instill motherly guilt than at the holidays. But getting the clan together is a bit of a chore. Seems that snobby eldest daughter Elizabeth banished her brother Henri from her life and the family four years ago because of, well, in her mind, fraud, but actually it's more like, just because. The baby boy of the family, Ivan, is in for the surprise of his life jeopardizing his marriage to the lovely Sylvia while Junon's grandson Paul is recovering from his unsuccessful suicide. Abel, Junon's husband, like any good husband and parent with a strong willed wife, takes a back seat to his wife's wishes. And just for good measure, let's bring Henri's Jewish girlfriend Faunia home for the holidays.

Set in the Vuillards home, the film is contained and focused, concentrating on the eccentricities and egos of each family member. Written and directed by Arnaud Desplechin, A CHRISTMAS TALE is an interesting character study, with each character unfolding at a comfortable pace, exposing their underlying stories, giving real depth to the family and film as a whole, particularly as to the development of Elizabeth.

Seems that the two best donors for Junon are her brother Henri and her son Paul which causes her great consternation and angst. Do I make my son suffer to save my mother? Or, do I gleefully make my brother suffer and risk poisoning my mother with his bad blood? Decisions, decisions! Desplechin is a master at subtext and subplots and doesn't disappoint here as he keeps all the balls in the air drawing you ever closer into the "warmth" of the familial bosom.

Highly stylized, Desplechin showcases a variety of music, albeit some seemingly out of place but identifiable to particular familial generations. Using multiple camera techniques, he includes animation, freeze frame, first person narration, third person narration, all lending themselves quite well to the quiriness of the family. The work of Production Designer Dan Bevan is sumptuous and rich. It is impeccable and beautiful, telling much about the family and each of its principals.

Laden with one of the finest ensemble casts of any film at AFI this year it comes as no surprise Catherine Deneuve is simply regal as Junon, lording over the minions she calls her children. Deneuve is also very deft with her comedic skills here. Mathieu Amalric just wowed me last year in "The Diving Bell and the Butterfly" and does so again here with all body parts functioning as an animated, disgruntled, alcoholic sibling and son, stealing every scene from every one. He has a self-deprecating nature that commands attention and is enjoyable. His chemistry with Anne Consigny's Elizabeth, is pitch perfect sibling rivalry. Always a treat when generations of a family get to work together, Deneuve's real-life daughter Chiarra Mastroianni is enchanting (and sneaky) - even when Junon accidentally forgets to bring her home from shopping.

Have yourself an early Christmas and spend some time with the Vuillards. A CHRISTMAS TALE will welcome you with open arms and lots of comfortable dysfunction.

If you really want some sneaky dysfunction, look no further than A QUIET LITTLE MARRIAGE. My first thoughts after screening this film were that it is connectable, touchable and human as Cy Carter and Mary Elizabeth Ellis, as husband and wife Dax and Olive, draw you into their web of married disappointment, disillusion and, deceit. After screening it yet a second time, those are still my thoughts.

Dax and Olive appear to have it all. Good friends, a happy marriage, a screwed up brother, father with Alzheimer's. They go along with their day-to-day routine nary saying a word to each other, going through the motions of domestic bliss. But that's only on the surface because unspoken thoughts and desires loom large, particularly when Olive tells Dax that she wants a baby. Big mistake. The product of a rocky

childhood, that's the last thing he wants. And he was sure he told her that. Or maybe he just thought it. Likewise, Olive was certain she told Dax she wanted a family. Or maybe she just thought she did.

At a silent stalemate, we watch them continue to go through the motions of marriage but with new layers of tacit response. Then one night, thanks to a little too much alcohol, Olive gets inspired into tricking Dax by poking holes in her diaphragm hoping for one of those "oops" pregnancies. But in conversation she makes a remark one day about someone getting pregnant even when using a diaphragm. Striking fear in Dax, on the QT he starts snooping around and discovers what Olive has done. But, keeping it to himself, he says nothing and instead starts slipping birth control pills into her coffee every morning. With each feeling secure and confident in their own subterfuge, confidence takes hold, their sex life explodes through the roof and then Olive goes to see her ob-gyn.

More than an exquisite acting ensemble, this is an exquisitely charming tacitly textured little gem of a film. Written and directed by Mo Perkins, she calls on her own life experiences and that of her parents and grandparents to bring very real, very human elements to the story. Through a technique blending writing and improvisation, Perkins and her leads eventually achieved a perfect little marital blend.

As for the acting, if there are any cast members not working in "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia" please raise your hands. Already comfortable with each other in a small screen ensemble setting, the transition of Mary Elizabeth Ellis, Cy Carter, Jimmi Simpson, Charlie Day and Lucy DeVito to the big screen is a no-brainer. The well established chemistry of each, particularly that of Carter and Ellis, is refreshing and necessary to a story of this nature. For me, the icing on the cake to this little gathering is one of my favorite character actresses, Melanie Lynskey as Olive's best friend Monique. Pivotal to the storyline, Lynskey's role is small but perfectly positioned.

Very much guerrilla filmmaking, the film was shot in and around Los Angeles, with everyone calling on friends and friends or friends for use of their apartments, streets, garages, furniture - not to mention help in the production. Notable is the work of Eric Zimmerman, Director of Photography. Crisp, clean, vivid, time lapse imagery is balanced against the day-in-day-out routine of Dax and Olive with visually compelling result serving in a dichotomous nature that helps carry the story.

There is nothing quiet about A QUIET LITTLE MARRIAGE. Speaking volumes, the loudest message is what will Mo Perkins delight us with next.

Betcha thought I wouldn't get there - my top pick as the single MUST SEE FESTIVAL FILM of

the entire Fest. Well, here it is - SKIN.

SKIN is superb filmmaking and storytelling. I was well familiar with the story of Sandra Laing thanks to its landmark international legal implications some years back and always found it quite interesting and compelling from a human standpoint. To see it so exquisitely told on screen, however, is a privilege.

SKIN is based on the true story of Sandra Laing, a South African girl with White parents born with black skin, something of a horror in the 1950's. On her birth certificate she was identified as being White yet, as still applies in the world today, a piece of paper can mean nothing when a child is being taunted, parents are whispering behind a family's back in a bigoted, racist world with laws of inequality rampant in society.

By age 10, Sandra was drummed out of an all White school. Her father Abraham, was a proud, stubborn, defiant man. Always wondering if Sandra really was his child, it was of the utmost importance to him that everyone know and believe that Sandra was White. So staunch in his beliefs that he took the matter all the way to the high courts in South Africa, calling in genetic experts to explain the phenomena of Sandra. Ultimately prevailing, a new genetic anomaly was unveiled and discussed the world over but more importantly, Sandra was declared White and law was enacted. White parents. White child.

But despite a ruling from the courts, that little piece of paper still didn't mean anything to neighbors, classmates and boys. Turned away by White boys, Sandra fell in love with Petrus, a local farmer who was Black. And as you can imagine, her father was less than pleased and even more so when she was found to be pregnant. Turning his own daughter into the authorities to rot in jail while she "thought about" what she had done, the family fell apart. Sides were taken. Hostilities grew and Sandra was obliterated from all family records by Abraham. Although now living in Swaziland with Patrus, Sandra was essentially a woman without a country, without a self. With a birth certificate that stated she was White, she was unable to marry the father of her children and was committing a crime by living with him and fathering his children, thus risking losing her own children. Now, Sandra needed to reverse the law her father fought so hard to create.

Written by Helen Crowley, Jessie Keyt and Helena Kriel, Sandra Laing's story is so eloquently and beautifully told it will bring you to tears before the credits roll. But as impeccable the storytelling, the acting will blow you out of the water. Get his film a distribution deal now as Sophie Okonedo should be one of the first in line for an Oscar. Okonedo's portrayal of Sandra is not just heartfelt, but proud and dignified. The dignity and strength with which she portrays

Sandra through her adulthood brings one word to mind - courageous. She draws you into this woman's life, rips your heart apart with what she endures to stand tall and strong. She is like a flowering unfolding showing more and more color as she blooms into a mighty rose. But then take a look at Ella Ramangwane who plays the young Sandra. She is the next Dakota Fanning. Those eyes and that expressive innocent face. Captivating! She is the one that starts the ball rolling, reeling you into Sandra's story.

One of the best performances of his illustrious career, as Abraham Laing Sam Neill is riveting as the hypocritical ass of a father. And while it was clear to see through Neill's emotions that as Abraham that he was fighting to prove Sandra's "whiteness" more to exonerate himself and give himself a rationalization of having a dark skinned child while not accusing his wife of cheating on him, it was his own stubborn hypocritical conduct that cost him his daughter, his wife's love and left him to die under a specter of guilt for the selfishness of his conduct. Neill's portrayal is absolutely brilliant. Alice Krige was most convincing as Sandra's mother Sannie Laing, although I note that even in expressing a mother's love and embracing her own child, it was always done with a standoffish tendency, almost forced at times, that fueled the dichotomy of the characters and their true feelings towards Sandra. A gifted performance.

Shot in and around Johannesburg from September to November 2007, director Anthony Fabian faced numerous challenges inherent with the region not the least of which was lightening strikes as this particular area has a micro-climate that attracts the greatest number of electrical storms in the world given the amount of metal in the earth in that region. With as much determination to succeed as Sandra Laing has demonstrated throughout her life, Fabian faced 50 locations in 42 days, making the project daunting at best. But then toss in a few mudslides into what we see on screen as the Laing, 77 speaking roles, hundreds of extras and on one occasion close to 1000, plus wrangling hundreds of goats, dogs, chickens, bulldozers and a collapsible set all in one scene, and one has to wonder how Fabian pulled it off. Exquisite lensing showcasing the region is due to not only the bravery of cameramen Dewald Aukema and George Loxton amidst horrific weather conditions, but also due to their ingenuity. Thanks to Loxton one of the film's most poignant and precious scenes made it onto film. During a windstorm, Loxton saw the beauty of a sunset behind the mountains but given the weather, standing there with a camera to capture it was out of the question. So he put the camera on high sticks or tripod, wrapped himself in plastic that was held down by an assistant and captured a massive lightening strike

against a blood red sky. That may be "the money shot" of the film.

And for those of you who may be wondering, the film carries an epilogue with home movies, photos and postscripts about the Laing family. Without a doubt, SKIN is my pick for the MUST SEE FESTIVAL FILM of AFI 2009. But be warned - take tissues, lots and lots of tissues.

Now, I've still got my own "films I still must see" list going and at the top of that list are POUND-CAKE and ADAM RESURRECTED, both of which are more than worth a gander.

ADAM RESURRECTED stars Jeff Goldblum and Willem Defoe. Based on one of the most acclaimed books in Israeli history, this is the story of Adam Stein, a once celebrated German cabaret performer now living in an experimental insane asylum. Rebellious, outlandish and philandering, Stein takes the asylum by storm, that is until he meets a young boy who thinks he's a dog. Unlocking horrific memories in Stein's mind involving a Nazi officer, the story takes a turn and explores the human capacity for renewal and rebirth. Goldblum tackles the role of Stein while Defoe is the Nazi nightmare that haunts him. Directed by Paul Schrader and written by Noah Stollman, ADAM RESURRECTED is not to be missed.

As for POUND-CAKE, if there was ever a recipe for a good comedy, this is it. With Kathleen Quinlan as its star, one is pretty assured of strong performances. Set in Buffalo, New York in the late 1980's, we take a comedic look at another dysfunctional family - the Morgans - Cliff, Carol and their three grown children, Robby, a late night radio DJ, his hypochondriac younger brother Charlie and their adopted sister Brooke. Heading off to their favorite Chinese restaurant on Thanksgiving, Cliff and Carol drop a bombshell on the kids - after 30 years of marriage they are getting a divorce. Can a family survive its "last" Thanksgiving with civility and decorum or will all hell break loose? With a great comedic premise, great cast and a killer 80's soundtrack, POUNDCAKE is a film with all the right ingredients.

So, there you have it, just a sampling of what you can expect at AFI FILM FESTIVAL 2008! Based this year at the historic Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel on Hollywood Boulevard with screenings taking place at the Arclight and the legendary Graumann's Chinese Theatre, don't let the curtain close on November 9th without taking part in AFI Fest and sampling some of these excellent examples of filmmaking.

Don't forget to check back with me at [www.moviesharkdeblore.com](http://www.moviesharkdeblore.com) throughout the Festival as I'll have more reviews and interviews as the days go by!! And in the meantime, I'll see you at the movies.



## Films opening this weekend

October 30, 2008

**"Able Danger"** Conspiracy thriller about a man from Brooklyn who meets a beautiful, mysterious woman with irrefutable proof of American secret intelligence involvement in the planning and execution of 9/11.

**"Fear(s) of the Dark Nightmares"** come to life through several intertwined stories told through black-and-white animation.

**"Filth and Wisdom"** A Ukrainian immigrant dreams of superstardom with his friends in his Gypsy punk band in London.

**"The Haunting of Molly Hartley"** On the eve of her 18th birthday, a girl discovers the evil lurking beneath the lush surfaces of her private girls school.

**"Just Buried"** A geeky young man inherits a funeral home in a small town where nobody is dying, so he and his embalmer girlfriend start bumping off townsfolk to drum up business. With Jay Baruchel, Rose Byrne and Graham Greene.

### **"Little Big Top"**

An aging, out-of-work clown returns to his small hometown, resigned to spend the rest of his days in a drunken stupor, but his calling for clowning is reawakened by the local amateur circus. Featuring Sid Haig and Richard Riehle. Written and directed by Ward Roberts.

**"Splinter"** A young couple is held hostage by an ex-convict on the run in an isolated gas station that has been invaded by an insatiable parasite that first kills and then absorbs its victims.

**"The Universe of Keith Haring"** A documentary exploring the life of New York artist Keith Haring.

### **"Zack and Miri Make a Porno"**

Deep in debt, lifelong friends enlist the help of other friends to make a porno movie for some quick cash.

# Los Angeles Times

CAPSULE REVIEWS

'Able Danger,' 'Fear(s) of the Dark,' 'Just Buried,' 'Little Big Top' and 'Splinter'



Oracle Film Group

'ABLE DANGER': Elina Löwensohn plays Kasia, a mysterious European woman drawn to a man who believes there's a CIA conspiracy behind Sept. 11 in this film that mimics noir.

October 31, 2008

Since film noir's shadowy dread reflected a genuine post-World War II existential unease, it makes some sense that a movie about post-9/11 conspiracy theorists would boast a faux-noir style, as if the term had quotation marks around it.

But "Able Danger" -- a convoluted "Maltese Falcon" redux about a paranoid coffee shop owner named Thomas (Adam Nee) whose radical writings attract a European femme fatale (Elina Löwensohn), a body pileup and a rash of hokey German-accented characters -- wants to be both a filmic put-on and a politically aware put-off, and winds up neither.

What everyone's after in screenwriter Paul Krik's scenario is an encrypted hard drive pertaining to the titular program, a real-life Pentagon data-mining project that fervid dot-connectors believe links the CIA to 9/11. Whether Krik believes as Thomas does that Mohammed Atta was a government patsy feels beside the point, yet there's little oomph in turning a Holy Grail of conspiracy mongers into just another movie MacGuffin.

Löwensohn's deadpan retro allure brings chiaroscuro authenticity to this exercise in monochrome digital video, but "Able Danger" is too removed from either parodic flair or activist intensity to be the stuff of which nightmares are made.

-- Robert Abele "Able Danger." MPAA rating: Unrated. Running time: 1 hour, 22 minutes. Exclusively at the Laemmle's Grande 4-plex, 345 S. Figueroa St., (213) 617-0268.

DEFAMER ATTRACTIONS, SETH ROGEN, ZACK AND MIRI MAKE A PORNO...

## 'Porno' Livens Up Weak Halloween Party at the Multiplex



Happy Halloween, and welcome to another edition of Defamer Attractions, your weekly guide to everything new, noteworthy and potentially stillborn at the movies.

Today we survey a wasteland of R-rated comedies, Disney leftovers and Oscar-season prestige offerings, all battling the holiday for audience dollars. Among them we'll spot this week's likeliest underachiever and its most worthy underdog, with a few worthwhile DVD releases bringing up the rear. As always, our opinions are our own, but they will be the envy of all your friends when sorting through your candy later tonight.

**WHAT'S NEW:** The Pepto-Bismol is on ice at Weinstein Co. headquarters, where Harvey awaits the numbers for Kevin Smith's hopeful studio-savior *Zack and Miri Make a Porno*. But anyone who has followed our own [prophetic Zack and Miri coverage](#) since last summer is at least a couple steps ahead: Our predicted \$14 million opening is right about where the raunchy Seth Rogen/Elizabeth Banks comedy is tracking, faced with heavy competition from holdover *Saw V* and other holiday hellraising outside the 'plex. Still, it's not a terrible showing; it will fall about \$4 million shy of *High School Musical 3*'s number-one spot, but should have relatively strong legs in weeks two and three, which is about the most Harvey can hope for with a movie he can't even market accurately.

Clint Eastwood and Angelina Jolie's *Changeling* killed last week in limited release (\$33,000 per screen) on its way to an 1,800-screen expansion today. Jolie portrays Christine Collins, whose son's kidnapping in 1928 led to one of the most damning police-corruption scandals in Los Angeles history. [Plenty of critics](#) are down on the star as some hysterical dervish chewing up Eastwood's period scenery, but we don't see the point in criticizing an unapologetic melodrama for being successful at what it does. Eastwood cranks out lugubrious movies for adults, emphasizing presence and technique; Jolie matches him step-for-step. What's the problem? It's a likely top-three finisher at \$10.7 million and probably the best thing going wide today, and either way it's preferable to dealing with costumed punks at your doorstep for three hours.

Also opening: The animated suspense anthology *Fear(s) of the Dark*; the midnight-movie horror-comedy-romance *Just Buried*; the indie gorefest *Splinter*; and the bleak circus dramedy *Little Big Top*.

**THE BIG LOSER:** The teen-possession *The Haunting of Molly Hartley* has little but a brow-furrowed turn from Chace Crawford and a laugh-out-loud trailer voiceover from the late Don LaFontaine to recommend it. If this breaks \$4 million this weekend en route to Flopz, we will personally finance the sequel ourselves.



**THE UNDERDOG:** Paul Krik's 9/11-noir *Able Danger* is a nifty, paranoid piece of work, a kind of *Maltese Falcon* meets *JFK* rendered in startling monochrome that defies the far more complicated scenario faced by its protagonist: Adam Nee plays a Brooklyn bookshop staffer and renowned conspiracy theorist chipping away at the German connection to the 9/11 terrorists.

A mysterious femme fatale (Elina Löwensohn) drops in from nowhere, exposing the writer and his colleagues to secret agents, counteragents and all the deadly cloak-and-dagger mischief they imply. Krik's deft chemistry of density, humor and style are all the more admirable for the microbudget that enabled them; even if you don't understand a lick of it (and we can't say we've quite caught up ourselves), we think you'll appreciate the opportunity to give it a try.

**FOR SHUT-INS:** New DVD release include the Halloween must-see *Zombie Strippers* and a surplus of diverse, essential TV collections: *NewsRadio: The Complete Series*, *Good Times: The Complete Series*, *Sanford and Son: The Complete Series* and *The Flintstones: The Complete Series*. It must be the holidays.

So are you into *Porno*? Is it your time to catch up with *HSM3*? More importantly, have you seen *Synecdoche, New York* yet? Get on it, already; this week's crop seems to be making it easy for you.

8:42 AM on Fri Oct 31 2008

By STV

4,089 views

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Film Reviews

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## Movie Reviews: Filth and Wisdom, The Haunting of Molly Hartley, Splinter

*Also, Fear(s) of the Dark, The Other End of the Line and more*

By **L.A. Weekly Film Critics**

Published on October 29, 2008 at 8:21pm

**ABLE DANGER** Though it knocks along with the steady heartbeat pace of a thriller and is painted in the languid, low-contrast shadows of a noir, Paul Krik's feature debut is neither and both. Mixing genres, stereotypes and bug-eyed conspiracy theories, *Able Danger* satisfies its own aesthetic demands but has trouble with its bigger concern: tying the noir look to its attendant narrative traditions in the service of some artistic (rather than merely referential) effect. Thomas Flynn (Adam Nee) runs the Vox Pop café in deepest hipster Brooklyn, and either too much coffee or too few customers have led him to pen a book claiming that Mohamed Atta was a government patsy. The publicity for his book draws in a mysterious Eurobabe (Elina Löwensohn), who claims she has proof of CIA involvement in 9/11. Bodies begin dropping around her almost immediately — the first being that of Thomas' friend — and a torrent of G-men, Germans, Arabs, Tasers, text messages, tech nerds and messenger bags is unleashed. *Able Danger's* various generic elements and ambitions, while successful on their own, resist melding into a successful pastiche; perhaps the invocation of September 11 for the vaguely satirical purpose of tweaking conspiracy crap proves too preoccupying for such a winking, albeit well-made, film. (*Grande 4-Plex*) (Michelle Orange)



Fear(s) of the Dark

**GO FEAR(S) OF THE DARK** While some may snicker at "graphic novel" as a term for comic books that take themselves too seriously, the French analogue — *bande dessinée* (or "drawn strip") — denotes a medium sophisticated enough to be hailed the ninth art. Embracing the cult spirit of 1981's sci-fantasy omnibus *Heavy Metal* (coincidentally adapted from a magazine with French roots), this animated Franco-horror anthology is hardly child's play but a classy

interpretation of the eerie dreads hiding in the minds of 10 international graphic artists.

• **The All-About-Me Mayor: Antonio Villaraigosa's Frenetic Self-Promotion**

Hours of travel, fund-raising and PR leave little time for his job

• **You'll Never Be Vice President: A Letter to My Daughter, the Community Organizer**

Why didn't I nip all this in the bud and buy you a well-oiled Remington 12-gauge?

• **Storm Over Palin Blows McCain on the Bridge to Nowhere**

Hurricane Sarah

• **How Mayor Villaraigosa Spends His 16-Hour Days**

• **Confessions of a Promo-CD Junkie: Who Will Stop the Music Industry Gravy Train?**

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## Indie Spotlight: New Releases for Oct. 31

by Eric D. Snider Oct 31st 2008 // 8:02AM

Filed under: **Comedy, Documentary, Drama, Horror, Independent, New Releases, Noir, Mystery & Suspense, Columns, Indie Spotlight**



Boo! And I mean "boo" in the Halloween sense, not in the "opposite-of-hooray" sense. The multiplexes have plenty of films geared toward this sacred holiday season, but so do the art houses! The **Indie Spotlight** is here to tell you what's opening in limited release this weekend, and there are a couple of frightfests in the mix. Just because it's not on 3,000 screens doesn't mean it can't scare the skittles out of you.

Here's the lineup today: *Able Danger*, *Dear Zachary: A Letter to a Son About His Father*, *Eden Lake*, *The First Basket*, *The Matador*, *The Other End of the Line*, and *Splinter*. And here's the lowdown on each of them, in my own highly subjective order of preference.

### ***Dear Zachary: A Letter to a Son About His Father***

**What it is:** An emotionally devastating documentary made by a man after his best friend was murdered.

**What they're saying:** We've been **raving** about this film ever since Erik Davis saw it at Slamdance back in January. It's one of the most powerful films I've ever seen, and I know about a dozen people who've seen it who would say the same thing. A few of them are at **Rotten Tomatoes**, where the film currently stands at 100%. *See this movie.*

**Where it's playing:** New York City (Cinema Village).

**More info:** The **official site** lists upcoming release dates in other cities

### ***Splinter***

**What it is:** A grisly horror flick about four young people who are terrorized by a parasitic creature.

**What they're saying:** Ten out of twelve critics at **Rotten Tomatoes** give it a thumbs-up, saying it's an efficient, creative B-movie -- exactly what it's supposed to be.

**Where it's playing:** New York City (City Cinemas Village East), Austin (Dobie Theatre), Los Angeles (Mann Chinese), Dallas (Studio Movie Grill), Oklahoma City (Museum of Art).

**More info:** The **official site** has upcoming release dates, plus info on how you can watch the film through some cable systems' on-demand service.

### ***Eden Lake***

**What it is:** A brutal British horror film about a young couple terrorized by bad guys while on vacation.

**What they're saying:** It's 81% positive over at **Rotten Tomatoes**. Sounds like it delivers the goods on the terror, the mayhem, and the violence.

**Where it's playing:** Los Angeles (Regency Fairfax), New York (Cinemart Cinemas in Forest Hills), Chicago (Muvico Rosemont), Houston (Santikos Silverado in Tomball), Atlanta (Plaza Theatre), Seattle (Landmark Varsity), San Francisco (Lumiere).

**More info:** The **official site** is British, with no info on the U.S. release.

### ***The Other End of the Line***

**What it is:** Romantic comedy about an Indian call-center employee who goes to San Francisco to meet a man she fell in love with over the phone. Starring Jesse Metcalfe and Bollywood star **Shriya**.

**What they're saying:** It hasn't been reviewed much yet, but the one notice at **Rotten Tomatoes** says it's a pleasantly old-fashioned rom-com. I suspect you know what you're in for when you choose a film with that plot description.

**Where it's playing:** A few dozen theaters in most of your biggest cities, including NYC, LA, Chicago, Houston, Seattle, San Diego, San Francisco, Atlanta, Dallas, Phoenix, etc.

**More info:** The **official site** has the trailer and not much else.

### ***Able Danger***

**What it is:** A black-and-white, film-noir-style thriller about 9/11 conspiracy theorists.

**What they're saying:** Mixed notices so far at **Rotten Tomatoes**, though the film certainly sounds ambitious. The director, Paul Krik, will be on hand for a Q&A after the screening on Election Night.

**Where it's playing:** Los Angeles (Laemmle Grande 4).

**More info:** Here's the **official site**.

### ***The Matador***

**What it is:** Not to be confused with the 2005 Pierce Brosnan comedy of the same name, this Matador is a documentary about David Fandila's quest to become the world's greatest bullfighter.

**What they're saying:** At **Rotten Tomatoes**, it's four in favor and two against (and one of those against seems more concerned about the film's attitude toward bulls than the film's actual quality). The film apparently reserves judgment about the cruelty of bullfighting and might make you see the "sport" in a different light.

**Where it's playing:** New York City (Angelika Film Center).

**More info:** The **official site** has info on upcoming release dates.

### ***The First Basket***

**What it is:** A documentary about the impact of professional basketball on Jewish culture. Wait, what?

**What they're saying:** It's two-to-one against at **Rotten Tomatoes**; the film evidently has a very narrow target audience. But if you're part of that audience, hey!

**Where it's playing:** New York City (CC Village East).

**More info:** The **official site** has a little more info on other screenings.

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