

# BIZBUZZ

## ENTERTAINMENT NEWS

### Boys No Longer

That sound you hear is teeny-boppers everywhere crying into their root beers. Kevin Richardson and Brian Littrell, better known as members of the Backstreet Boys, have each announced plans to wed their respective girlfriends. Richardson's intended is one of Cher's dancers, and Littrell's fiance is six years his senior. Be assured that the details of each wedding's location will be kept a secret for fear of mobs of spurned adolescents. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.

### Idol for Sale

MTV and the Elektra Entertainment Group have put up the "For Sale" sign on legendary AC/DC guitarist Angus Young, offering a personal guitar lesson from the colorful rocker to the highest bidder.

Fans have until Feb. 29 to bid in the once-in-a-lifetime sale. The winner will be announced on the final day of bidding, the same day AC/DC will release its new album, *Stiff Upper Lip*. The money raised will benefit the Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy Foundation. Hopefully, the organization will find a cure for stiff upper lips.

### The Day the Music Died

As part of the soundtrack to her newest movie, "The Next Best Thing,"

Madonna has performed an updated version of Don McLean's "American Pie." Madonna has added her distinct techno touch and cut numerous verses from the 8-minute classic. Like old movies badly remade, maybe the original is best left alone.

### And the Summons Goes to ...

In the week since Oscar nominations were announced, various scandals have already popped up. More than 24 hours before the announcement last Tuesday, a preliminary list of the nominees was posted on the Web site "Ain't It Cool News." Even though the list had eight categories instead of five and wasn't entirely accurate, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences is considering legal action against the site's owners.

### Cartoon 'Clerks'

Kevin Smith fans can look forward to the premiere of an animated version of "Clerks" on ABC coming up in May. Who would have thought pot dealing and sex with dead people could translate to network television?

### Sony Says

Until May 16, Sony Online Entertainment is hosting an online jeopardy competition at [www.collegejeopardy.com](http://www.collegejeopardy.com). It is a chance for all you Alex Trebek fans to prove your genius and win cash.

If enough UNC students play, College JEOPARDY! will hold on-campus auditions. Last year UVA. won the grand prize. Here's your chance to vent your anger about last year's college rankings.

Compiled by Allison Rost

# Oscar Nominations Both Hit and Miss the Mark

Now that 2000 Oscar nominations are out, I decided to put this week's exciting focus on film.

I might as well begin by revealing all those movies nominated for best picture of the new millennium by the highly accredited Academy.

Who are these guys? Probably a bunch of old guys in suits with some sort of leverage in the film industry, who dictate what's hot and what's not in cinema, and everyone buys it. But I won't.

"American Beauty" nabbed a nomination for best picture and leads the pack with nominations in seven other categories (what?!). They include one for Kevin Spacey, who probably deserves it, for best actor, and for Annette Bening, who probably does not, for best actress.

The movie's title originates from the actual rose called the "American Beauty." Hence the abundant rose imagery throughout the film.

The movie is an overrated, very subdued version of 1997's "Happiness," directed by Todd Solondz. If you really like messed up, dysfunctional-family movies, then I recommend this one, as well as Neil Jordan's 1998 Irish black comedy, "The Butcher Boy."

Others nominated for best feature are "The Sixth Sense," a surprisingly spooky, emotional movie in which nothing really happens; "The Green Mile," another white man saves the black man epic; "The Insider," about the dark side of the tobacco industry and "The Cider House Rules," a movie I don't know anything about but want to see because of Tobey Maguire.

This young, fresh-faced actor endeared himself to me in Ang Lee's 1997 film "The Ice Storm," which was so unnoticed it wasn't even funny. Check it out, but beware: It's another dysfunctional-family movie.

1999's "A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries," however, portrays the most functional American family ever. It is another movie overlooked by the Academy, with a stellar role for Leelee Sobieski.

This year's Oscars hosts a competitive best film batch, but what's really interesting to me was the exclusion of acclaimed director Anthony Minghella



SHINDY CHEN  
MY ESPN TOLD ME SO

and his "The Talented Mr. Ripley." Minghella was responsible for "The English Patient" Oscar sweep in 1996.

Despite the mixed review, "Mr. Ripley" was an extraordinary art-house flick, with elements of male love and archetypal, symbolic colors, as well as themes of reality vs. illusion.

Though I don't always agree with the films the academy considers deserving of the Oscar, I always respect its decisions.

If it were my awards, I'd add "Being John Malkovich" to the best film list because it was just amazing. And Spike Jonze should rightfully be awarded the nomination for best director.

Concerning other famous Spikes, I'd just like to say that Spike Lee is the most underrated filmmaker in the industry.

Anyone who saw "Summer of Sam" and liked it should agree that the movie's cinematography was excellent, as well as John Leguizamo's acting.

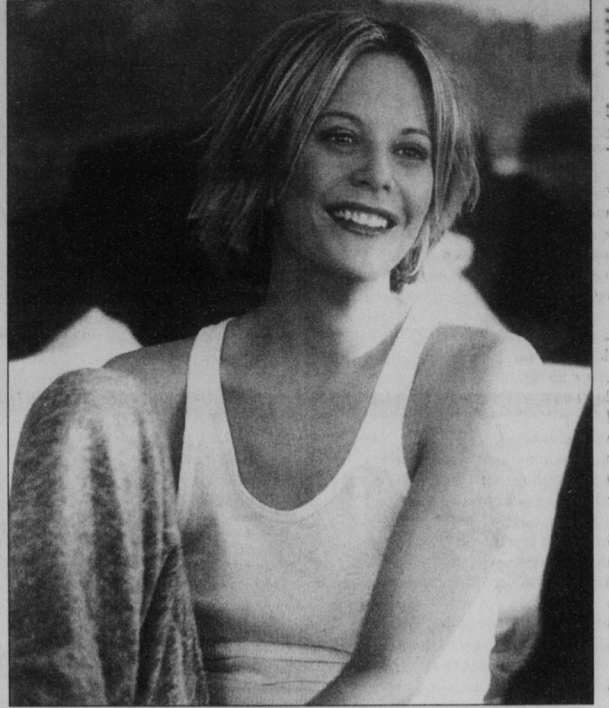
True fans meet his films with expectations of profundity, unique and cutting-edge camera work, thought-provoking themes and recognition of his favorite recycled actors.

That said, I urge everyone to explore films beyond the bigger box office.

Watch David Lynch's "The Straight Story," Pedro Almodovar's "All About My Mother" and Kimberly Peirce's "Boys Don't Cry," and you'll see about the majority of the other films nominated for the Oscars.

Then, like me, all the self-proclaimed film connoisseurs of the world can fuss like its a matter of life or death who's deserving or not come Oscar time.

Shindy Chen can be reached at [shindy@email.unc.edu](mailto:shindy@email.unc.edu).



Meg Ryan stars as the middle sister Eve Marks, who finds herself caretaker to her ailing father, in the female-targeted "Hanging Up."

# Chick Flick Exudes Humor While Charming Viewers

By DAVE POVILL  
Staff Writer

Meg Ryan's addictive smile and Walter Matthau's belligerent charm make "Hanging Up" one of the most palatable (dare I say entertaining?) chick flicks ever.

Diane Keaton is both in front of and behind the camera, co-starring in and directing this light-hearted tale of three sisters (Meg Ryan, Lisa Kudrow and Diane Keaton) and their tumultuous relationship with

their aging screenwriter father (Walter Matthau).

Written by Nora and Delia Ephron ("Sleepless in Seattle" and "You've Got Mail"), the movie is an adaptation of Delia's novel of the same name about her life with her showbiz writer/father Harry Ephron. The elder Ephron once quipped, "I live half my life in the real world and half my life on the phone."

And, indeed, the phone plays an important role in this movie, as the three sisters are constantly connected through the telephone lines.

These same phones, by the way, are also habitually tied up by Matthau's character, Lou Mozell. Continually calling in his favorite method of torture for the middle daughter, Eve (Ryan), who has doted on her father ever since her mother left him some 10 years earlier.

The phone motif, painfully reiterated with the subtlety of a hammer to the crotch, pops up again and again through the movie, as just about every scene begins and ends with a phone ringing, with a few thousand more rings in the middle, just for good measure.

Apparently the phone is supposed to symbolize relationships with crazy families, and the title refers to the need to sometimes "Stop the Insanity!" to quote infomercial guru Susan Power.

The simple phone metaphor is characteristic of the movie. It's heart-warming but not too deep. It doesn't try to make any serious social commentary. It doesn't overextend itself.

It's a cute chick flick with a superb cast (although be warned: It's pretty much "The Meg Ryan Show," despite what the ads and trailers would have "Friends" fans believe).

Kudrow and Keaton play off each other well, and both complement Ryan's natural glow.

Matthau's schtick serves as the perfect comic relief, offsetting the sometimes-overpowering estrogen on-screen with some good old geriatric womanizing.

It's got three women (none of whom get naked) and an old man (who also, thankfully, remains clothed), but somehow "Hanging Up" manages to entertain. Girls will enjoy this movie. And guys, if you get dragged to it, you might not hate it.

The Arts & Entertainment Editor can be reached at [artsdesk@unc.edu](mailto:artsdesk@unc.edu).

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