

## Payback brings audiences back to theaters with best box office opening this year

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The end of football season brought guys back to the movies, helping Mel Gibson's *Payback* knock the teen romance *She's All That* from atop the box-office heap.

*Payback* had the best opening so far this year with a strong \$21.4 million in ticket sales, while *She's All That* had \$12 million, according to industry estimates Sunday.

*Simply Irresistible*, starring Sarah Michelle Gellar of TV's "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," debuted with a disappointing \$2.4 million for fifth place. The film was stung by bad reviews and fierce competition in the youth market from *She's All That* and *Varsity Blues*, which was fourth with \$4 million.

After a couple of weeks dominated by teen films, *Payback* had the older-male audience mostly to itself. The film stars Gibson as a criminal who goes on a rampage after being robbed and shot in the back by his double-crossing wife and a friend.

Like Gibson's *Lethal Weapon* movies, the audience for *Payback* was about 55 percent male and mostly over age 25, according to Rob Friedman, vice chairman of the Paramount Motion Picture Group.

"February was a good time (for the film) because it's after football, after the Super Bowl, and adults start to come back to the movies in a big way again," Friedman said.

Also finding older audiences was *Saving Private Ryan*, which DreamWorks re-released to cash in on its Golden Globe wins and the buzz surrounding Tuesday's scheduled announcement of Oscar nominations.

*Ryan*, the No. 2 movie of 1998 after *Armageddon*, collected \$3.6 million for a fifth-place tie with another film with Oscar potential, *Shakespeare in Love*.

The quirky Bill Murray film *Rushmore* also did strong older-audience business in limited release, grossing \$1.9 million on 103 screens for a healthy per-theater average of just un-

der \$18,000. Meanwhile, Robin Williams' *Patch Adams* remained strong, collecting \$4.5 million for third place.

For another weekend, the overall box office was down — this time by 7.6 percent — from the same time last year, when *Titanic* was shattering records and *Good Will Hunting* was charming audiences.

The following are estimated grosses at North American theaters for Friday through Sunday. Final figures were expected Monday:

1. *Payback*, \$21.4 million.
2. *She's All That*, \$12 million.
3. *Patch Adams*, \$4.5 million.
4. *Varsity Blues*, \$4 million.
5. *Saving Private Ryan*, \$3.6 million.
6. *Shakespeare in Love*, \$3.6 million.
7. *A Civil Action*, \$3.2 million.
8. *Stepmom*, \$2.6 million.
9. *Simply Irresistible*, \$2.4 million.
10. *You've Got Mail*, \$2.3 million.

### PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

#### Goldberg defends new 'Squares'



NEW YORK (AP) — Whoopi Goldberg doesn't want to hear trash talk from people who think her doing "Hollywood Squares" is a comedown for the Academy Award-winning actress.

"I don't need to have three films coming out and watch my hair fall out worrying about the opening weekend gross," Goldberg says in the Feb. 13-19 TV Guide. "I like this schedule and the money is good."

Through her clout, the "Hollywood Squares" center square and executive producer has been able to get such guests as Robin Williams, Billy Crystal, Danny Glover, Melanie Griffith, Rosie O'Donnell,

Trisha Yearwood and Garth Brooks. "Some of them are doing this as a favor to me. Some figure it can't hurt their careers," Goldberg said. "I cherish all the people who have said yes because they don't care what the perception is."

#### Trump promotes Missouri pageant

BRANSON, Mo. (AP) — Promoting his Miss USA Pageant, Donald Trump enjoyed being a big fish in a small pond, dazzling the Ozarks locals with the same kind of banter that draws yawns in his hometown of New York.

"I was a great genius in the '80s. Then I was a great moron in the early '90s," Trump said. "That's probably why I bought this pageant — so I could get a date. Now they call me a genius again. It's great."

The beauty pageant is not Trump's only interest in Missouri. He recently made an offer to buy

Kansas City's troubled Flamingo Hilton Casino. Still, the New York real estate developer said leaving the Big Apple to visit Branson was more pleasure than business.

"Usually, I build buildings. I have to deal with the unions, the Mob, some of the roughest men you've ever seen in your life," he said. "I come here and see these incredible beauties. It's a lot of fun."

#### King tones down stories for TV

NEW YORK (AP) — Writer Stephen King does not mind toning down his horror stories for TV. He thinks it is good for the imagination.

"A little footbinding can be good for you," King writes in the Feb. 13-19 TV Guide. "When you know your story is going under the gaze of people who are watching for dead folks with open eyes (a no-no on network TV), children who utter bad words (another no-no) or large amounts of

spilled blood (a gigantic no-no), you begin to think of alternative ways of getting your point across."

His latest miniseries, "Stephen King's Storm of the Century," airs on ABC this month.

Feature films require less editing, but King said he likes TV because it reaches the largest possible audience.

#### Newton-John wins award

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Olivia Newton-John will receive the American Red Cross' Humanitarian Award for her dedication to community education and to helping people in need.

Newton-John, a breast cancer survivor who underwent a mastectomy in 1992, was chosen by 10 local chapters of the American Red Cross.

"The awards recognize people who elevate the public consciousness on critical issues and help people in need," said Jenny Cooney, who is chairing the March 6 awards ceremony in Santa Monica.

### ABSTINENCE

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"Sex is the physical representation of that."

Finally, many students devote themselves to abstinence because of religious convictions.

"In our religious ministry and many others, it is seen as wrong to have sex before marriage," Sis said. "Many students abstain from sex because of this religious commitment."

Traditionally, by having sex, students have felt that they are proving their love to a significant other.

However, more and more students prove their love and respect for one another by not having sex.

"It's a very freeing decision," Griffith said. "You can concentrate on other things and show your love and affection in other ways."

Sis said couples also have a better respect for the institution of marriage.

"Couples who choose to abstain tend to have a higher respect for the institution of marriage and therefore, in marriage, work harder to maintain the commitment," Sis said.

Aggies are not just talking about abstinence, they are showing it by wearing a ring on the left-ring finger, where an engagement ring would usually be worn, to symbolize their choice of abstinence.

"I started wearing my ring when I was 15," Hartline said. "I chose to wear it because I believe very strongly in saving yourself for marriage."

Hartline said wearing the ring is an opportunity to share her view on abstinence, and many students are beginning to agree.

"I've seen that a lot more people have started wearing them, both guys and girls," she said.

College Station is not the only place this trend is sweeping through.

A program called True Love Waits is also advocating abstinence as a healthy and moral decision in high schools and colleges around the nation.

# Loose Diamonds

#### Round Cut

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
1.39	J	SI2	\$4955 <sup>00</sup>
1.03	J	SI2	\$3670 <sup>00</sup>
.78	F	SI2	\$2900 <sup>00</sup>
.71	F	SI1	\$2675 <sup>00</sup>
.71	E	SI1	\$2530 <sup>00</sup>
.70	E	SI1	\$2650 <sup>00</sup>
.70	E	SI2	\$2490 <sup>00</sup>
.34	G	VVS1	\$850 <sup>00</sup>
.33	H	VVS2	\$790 <sup>00</sup>
.31	H	VVS2	\$790 <sup>00</sup>

#### Marquise Cut

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
1.21	K	SI3	\$4150 <sup>00</sup>
.94	K	SI1	\$2915 <sup>00</sup>
.49	F	SI1	\$1736 <sup>00</sup>
.49	J	SI2	\$1155 <sup>00</sup>

#### Emerald Cut

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
1.53	I	SI1	\$7175 <sup>00</sup>
1.12	H	VS1	\$4900 <sup>00</sup>
.71	F	SI2	\$2200 <sup>00</sup>

#### Pear Shape

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
.92	K	VS2	\$2550 <sup>00</sup>
.79	K	SI1	\$1850 <sup>00</sup>
.72	D	SI3	\$2200 <sup>00</sup>

#### Oval

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
.66	K	VVS2	\$1439 <sup>00</sup>
.54	H	SI2	\$1050 <sup>00</sup>
.32	H	SI1	\$ 550 <sup>00</sup>

#### Princess Cut

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
1.48	F	SI2	\$7900 <sup>00</sup>
1.08	F	VS2	\$6200 <sup>00</sup> EGL Cert
.72	E	VS2	\$3700 <sup>00</sup> EGL Cert
.52	G	VS1	\$1638 <sup>00</sup> EGL Cert
.51	H	SI2	\$1050 <sup>00</sup>
.49	J	VS2	\$1075 <sup>00</sup>

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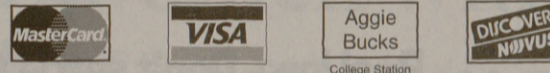
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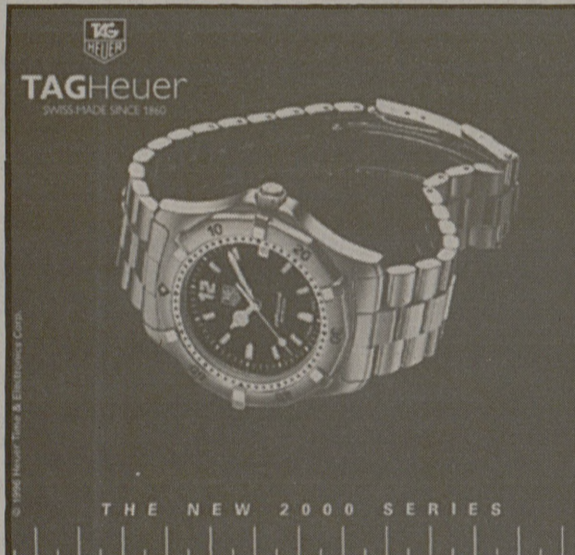
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