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## free stuff!



Find the illustrious A&E editor (yes, illustrious) as pictured in the horribly false news staff ad on page 4 and you can win a double-guest pass to the new Jack Black flick. HINT: she'll be walking between HUB and SUB at 1:50pm today (Tuesday).

If you don't catch her then, come up to 3-04 SUB, do a little dance and if she likes your moves, you'll get a pass.

### GO!

The movie screens Thursday, 23 November at 7:00pm,  
at South Edmonton Common.

# New Bond a *Royale* flush

People thought he wouldn't fit the role, but Daniel Craig plays his cards right

## Casino Royale

Directed by Martin Campbell  
Starring Daniel Craig, Eva Green,  
Mads Mikkelsen and Judi Dench  
Empire Theatres  
Now Playing

RENATO PAGNANI  
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Daniel Craig has saved the Bond franchise. Not single-handedly, of course. The blonde-haired, blue-eyed Brit has help from Paul Haggis, who wrote the Oscar-winning screenplay for *Crash*, and the aid of a remarkable supporting cast. Forget the over-the-top anti-realism of the last few films: *Casino Royale* takes a back-to-basics approach and pumps fresh blood into a series that felt anemic after 20 installments.

*Casino Royale* takes us back to the beginning, when James is promoted to a double-aught agent and is granted his licence to kill. We meet Bond as he completes his requisite first two professional kills in a retro, black-and-white introduction. The film then cuts to a wild chase between Bond and a bomber throughout the streets of Madagascar. This magnificent sequence immediately establishes the new direction of the franchise; there are no sci-fi-esque special effects. The scene relies on athleticism and choreography worthy of a Hong Kong action flick.

On the trail of the bomber's terrorist syndicate, Bond is eventually led to a European financier named Le Chiffre (Mads Mikkelsen), who bleeds tears of blood and needs an inhaler. Le Chiffre isn't concerned with taking over the world—he just wants money. Bond's mission is to bankrupt Le Chiffre, which involves playing in a hundred-million-dollar poker game in Montenegro.

There, Bond even finds time to fall in love. Eva Green plays Vesper Lynd, the intelligent and quick-witted accountant of the British government which funds Bond's seat at the poker tournament. The love story between James and Vesper isn't of your standard Bond-falls-for-gorgeous-but-helpless-babe fare either; their romance is poignant and integral, ultimately adding to



Bond's character development.

Craig's Bond is brash and brooding, and his charisma is understated, but undeniable. He's an arrogant pain in the ass, and at one point, M (Dame Judi Dench, in her best portrayal of the hard-ass MI6 boss yet) lectures James about his ego. Where Daniel Craig differs from most, if not all, of the actors who've played the debonair secret agent in the past is in pure acting muscle.

Wisely, Craig doesn't base his performance off of any of the previous Bonds—he takes inspiration from the Ian Fleming novels rather than Sean Connery or Roger Moore, injecting raw intensity to a character that's somewhat of a loose cannon. When asked whether he wants his martini shaken or stirred, Craig answers, "Does it look like I give a damn?" This is a portrait of a man clearly still

finding his style.

Paul Haggis and his co-writers deliver a tight, gritty screenplay devoid of the cheesy one-liners of their past Bond movies. Bond bleeds, makes mistakes and even exhibits a sadistic streak. The quips are verbally piquant, with Bond and his support cast often sparring with words to great result. There's one humorous—and brutal—scene in particular that reveals a lot about Bond's psychological profile, but it would be a shame to spoil it here.

Feel free to exhale; Daniel Craig was the right choice to succeed Pierce Brosnan. In fact, Craig makes a strong case as the definitive Bond. It might sound sacrilegious—especially to Bond purists—but after seeing *Casino Royale* you might just be convinced. There's life left yet in the Fleming's series.



AMANDA ASH

RAW JOY AA Sound System opened for the Skydiggers Sunday night at the Powerplant, kicking out some great tunes.