

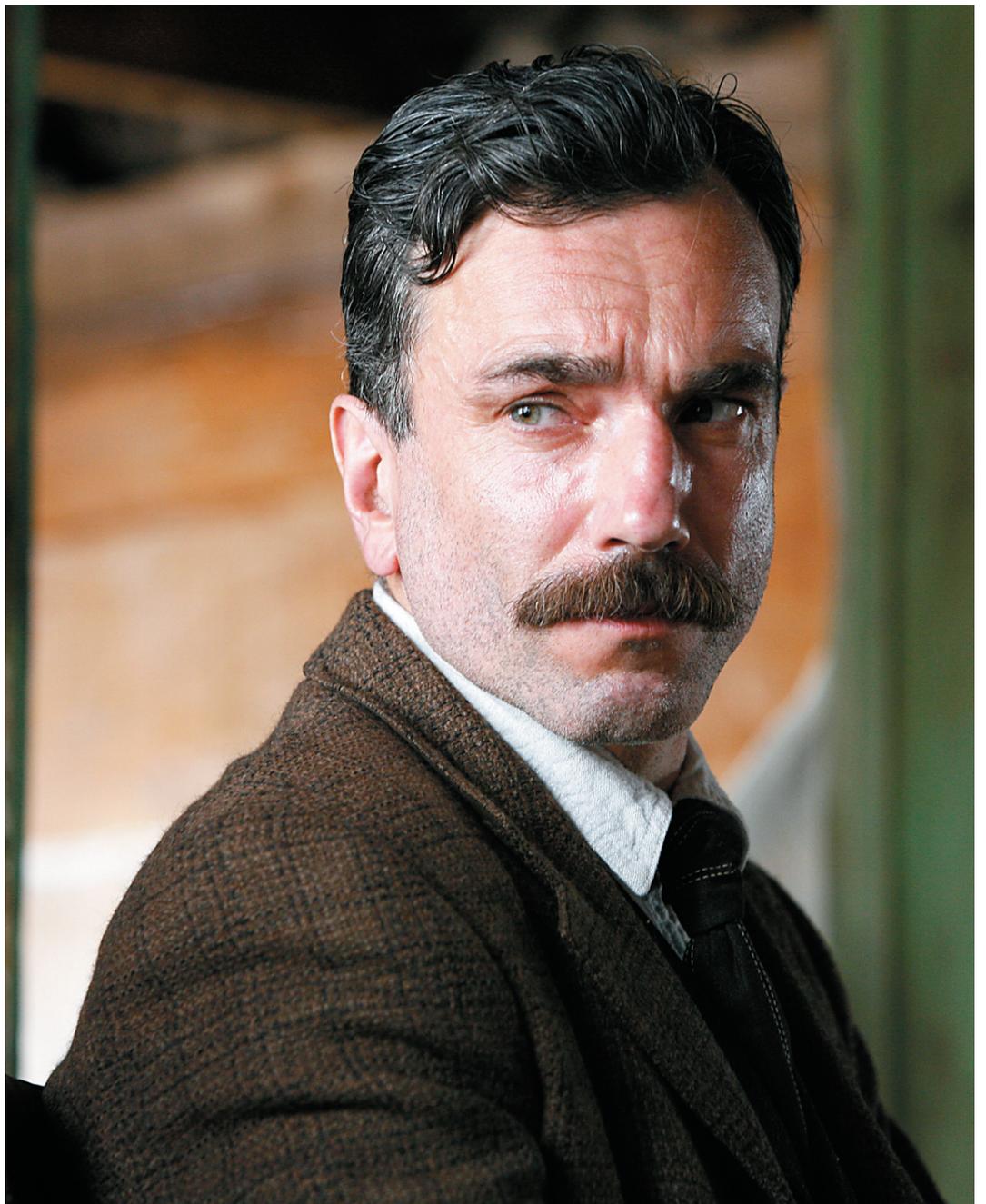
The Bigger The Hit The Harder They Fall.



MEET THE SPARTANS

REGENCY SUBJECT TO CLASSIFICATION www.meetthespartans.com

JANUARY 25 ONLY IN THEATRES



There will (probably) be Oscars for *Blood*

Anderson's gritty epic paints America in the oily-black shades of greed

filmreview

There Will Be Blood

Now Playing
Directed by Paul Thomas Anderson
Starring Daniel Day-Lewis, Paul Dano,
Kevin J O'Connor, and Dillon Freasier

MATT HUBERT
Arts & Entertainment Staff

As if audiences needed more incentive to go see Paul Thomas Anderson's *There Will Be Blood*, his brash and brilliant juggernaut of a movie has just been nominated for eight Academy Awards. And deservedly so: no film this year (save for maybe the Coen brothers' near-perfect *No Country For Old Men*) resounds a louder or more timely death knell of an America steeped in violence and stilted by its own greed.

It's certainly not a pretty picture, and I'm not suggesting that it's the one every American filmmaker set out to paint in 2007, but the two biggest films of the year also happened to be the ones that depicted Lady Liberty at her most cold, aggressive, and unfeeling—and you can't help but feel that it's on the minds of her maturing filmmaking talent.

Indeed, what audiences will find in Anderson's adaptation of Upton Sinclair's *Oil!* is a portrait of American expansion neither flattering nor the least bit unfamiliar. The film's opening sequence is a chilling preamble to Daniel Plainview's (Daniel-Day Lewis) success as an early-20th-century oil specula-

tor: every frame is replete with pick-in-hand grit and sprawling panoramic views, tempered with an eerie screech of Radiohead guitarist Johnny Greenwood's dystopic soundtrack.

When Plainview finally strikes black gold, the self-satisfied glint in his eye prevails something quite menacing—a quality that fleshes itself out far into his days as a self-proclaimed “oil-man.”

and Plainview's uncompromising avarice—hits its bloody and beautiful stride.

As Plainview sways the townspeople into developing their land with one part voracious charisma and one part stone-faced lies, he perfects the very essence of underhanded wheeling and dealing, with a “cute face” (his adopted son, played by Dillon Freasier) to close the deal. He meets his match, however, in Eli Sunday (brilliantly portrayed by *Little Miss Sunshine*'s Paul Dano), the town's prodigal son and preacher who hurls particularly sinister tests of faith Daniel's way. Put simply, Plainview pushes back—and the results are harrowing.

There's been a great deal of grumbling over the ending, both Plainview's Howard Hughes-inspired reclusivity and his violent altercation with Eli have been dismissed by some critics as over-the-top and arbitrarily violent. In my mind, it's a nice, black cherry on top: a delightfully bleak ornament to an unwavering form of cruelty (should we expect less from Plainview?).

Anderson spends the better part of three hours asking how far his unsympathetic hero can go, and when he finally goes there, he blows it wide open with an ending monumental enough to rival Marky-Mark's massive “unveiling” in *Boogie Nights*.

Easily the best film of his young career (and that's saying a lot—the guy introduced us to Dirk Diggler), *There Will Be Blood* is a landmark of a film.



THINKING OF A CAREER IN FILM?

Capital Opportunity. Global Community. Higher Degree.

Carleton offers among the largest and most respected Master of Arts programs in Film Studies in Canada. Located in the Nation's Capital, our students have access to unparalleled research facilities, film festivals, archives and embassy-sponsored screenings.

While exploring the relationships between cinema, society, culture and industry, you'll gain a rich understanding of conceptual and theoretical issues in the field, including:

- new media;
- gender;
- genre;
- authorship;
- modernism and post-modernism; and
- national cinemas.

The deadline for applications is **February 15, 2008**.

Visit our website for more information or to apply online today.

www.carleton.ca/artandculture/filmstudies

