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PROVIDING INFORMATION ON RESOURCES AND EVENTS THAT IMPROVE THE LIFESTYLE OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES IN OUR COMMUNITY

Michael Scott, Sr. Native Son Community Mourns/Outraged At Suicide Ruling



Pastor Charles Robinson of Holy Starlight Church (at podium) hosted a press conference at his church to address the tragic death of Michael Scott, (insert photo) a North Lawndale native son and Chicago Public Schools Board President. Flanked by a host of ministers and community activists.

Community Activists Kublai Toure (grey suit), Harold Davis (black shirt at podium), and Melvin Bailey (blue shirt) spoke to media and audience about outrage of determination of suicide in death of Michael Scott, Sr.

Pastor Charles Robinson of Holy Starlight Church located at 3506 W Cermak Rd. hosted a press conference at the church to address the tragic death of Michael Scott, a North Lawndale native son and Chicago Public Schools Board President. Flanked by ministers and community activists emotional outrage and concern was expressed. The outrage and concern is based on the medical examiners ruling that Mr. Scott's death was an apparent suicide.

The press conference, and meeting after, was first coordinated by community activists. "Derrick Washington and Kenny Shannon came to my house and we talked and from there we met with Kublai Toure and Robinson Harold Davis," said Pastor Robinson when asked how the gathering was formed. Pastor Robinson officiated the press conference by first speaking on accomplishments, positions and his relationship with Michael Scott. "He's one of my best friends, said

Robinson. He then announced the funeral arrangements laid out by the family and then introduced three westside ministers. The first, Ira Acree, pastor of Greater St. John Bible Church expressed, "Many of us are distraught and traumatized by the untimely death of this great leader Michael Scott.... We are not so sure at as to these results that have been turned in about Michael Scott taking his own life." Pastor Henderson, Pastor

Johnny Miller of Mt. Vernon Baptist Church and others also spoke. (website for more details). Activists Harold Davis, Kublai Toure, and Melvin Bailey spoke as after the selected ministers. Harold Davis cited typical behaviors of people that are suicidal and how Michael Scott did not have this type of behavior. We send our prayers out to the family of Michael Scott and mourn the loss of one of our great ones..

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**SISTA TO SISTER:
HEAR MY
STORY:
ALLOWING OUR
YOUTH TO
TRAVEL OUR
WORLD FOR
ACADEMIC
SUCCESS PART 1
PAGE - 4**



**AT THE FLICKS
PAGE - 5**

LANE CHANGE: WITHDRAWN FROM THE RACE, DAVIS STILL IN COUNTY PRESIDENTIAL GAME

A Commentary BY TRAVLES R. LANE - the1tlane@yahoo.com

After sitting in on the recent press conference where he announced his decision not to run for Cook County Board President next year, I came away convinced of one thing: I would not play poker for real money with Danny K. Davis.

"Do you think I am actually a damn fool?" the U.S. Representative bristled when asked about this past summer of indecision that led to his eventual announcement at his 3333 W. Arthington headquarters on Nov. 10 that he has decided to forego the risk of running for Todd Stroger's job and will instead campaign to return to Washington for a seventh term representing Illinois' 7th Congressional District.

The 68-year-old Democrat was responding to a reporter who asked what he had say to those 50,000 people who petitioned to support his run for the presidency "... just for you to pull out? They're just going to assume that you were playing some political game"

Now, the question clearly rankled Davis, who began the political theater in July by announcing he was exploring a run for the county presidency, declaring he was in the race three months later only to formally withdraw when neither Stroger nor any of the other declared candidates choose to quit despite polls that Davis said gave him the best chance of winning the looming free-for-all that would have pitted four black candidates against Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Director Terrence O'Brien, the lone white campaigner in the Democratic primary.

Cook County Clerk of Court Dorothy Brown and Chicago Ald. Toni Preckwinkle (D-4th) are also vying against Stroger on the 2010 ballot.



Danny K. Davis during the press conference

Still, Davis, who would have relinquished the power of his seat on the Congressional House Ways and Means Committee, and his national influence as a recognized expert on a range of such issues as ex-offender support services to health care, had he chosen to stay in the race was clearly ready for the question of whether he had been serious about running, if asked.

And he pounced on the question like a wily, old fox making off with an Arkansas chicken.

"Do you think I would have spent all the money... that I would've worked all day, every day, from early in the morning to late at night trying to forge together a concept of unity, that that would be some kind of game?" Davis lectured in his trademark style of a former educator.

"That would be beyond foolish.

"Politics is no game. It's about people's lives, their hopes and aspirations, their dreams. It's about what has been and about what has the possibility of being.

"It's not a game for those of us who take it seriously."

Before concluding the press conference with that bit of enlightenment, Davis said he was stepping away from the local presidential fray to return to Washington to help "make Barack Obama the most successful president this country has ever known."

Still, the six-term representative said although he loves his job and is good at it, the primary reason for his withdrawal is that "I have always pushed the concept of unity and have always recognized that it would be politically dangerous for

See Davis page 4

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# NLCN

## 2009 FOCUS

### HEALTH & THE ECONOMY

One of the major issues of the recent presidential campaign was health care. Health care costs have become an escalating burden for employers and consumers alike. Research has shown that total health spending is reduced when consumers bear more responsibility for their health and the expenses related to it. One of the best ways to increase life expectancy while reducing disability is to encourage a culture of self-care practices.

Self care is personal health maintenance. It is the care taken by individuals towards their own health and well being. Self care includes the actions individuals take in their role as care givers for their children, their families, and others to stay fit and to maintain good physical, mental, and spiritual health.

Extreme self care means making choices and decisions that honor our soul in everyday living. It means feeding ourselves whole foods, moving our bodies every day, balancing silence with activity, and surrounding ourselves with supportive, like-minded people who are committed to improving or restoring health and uplifting the quality of their lives as well.

More than 75% of people surveyed in the United Kingdom said if they had guidance or support from a professional or peer they would feel far more confident about taking care of their own health. Research shows that supporting self care can improve health outcomes and increase patient satisfaction. Our intention is to support individuals, families, institutions, and communities in their efforts to practice extreme self care. During 2009, the North Lawndale Community News focuses on cost-effective ways you can improve your health by practicing self care.

The Economy has made itself the number one issue with gas prices reaching almost \$5.00 per gallon and having a domino effect on everything else sold, except housing stock which experienced a terrible decline with the high rate of foreclosures. The Chicago metropolitan area reported 5,821 new foreclosure filings in December, a foreclosure rate of one new foreclosure filing for every 499 households — more than twice the national average. That brought the area's fourth quarter foreclosure total to 16,949 and its 2006 foreclosure total to 57,706, according to Realty Trac.

Even transportation on the CTA went on the rise with one day passes increasing by seventy-five cents and monthly passes increased by \$10.00 from \$75.00 to \$85.00. Those are just a few of the increases.

The North Lawndale Community News this year is expanding on last years financial focus to give attention to its broader parent the economy. Saving and making smarter shopping decisions will help stop us losing through wasteful choices. Finding new ways to increase our income is a necessity for many in an area where gentrification is not going to stop.

One of the hardest things to change is behavior. Modifying behavior seems to be easy when it comes to pain. Social pain lack of money has to be extreme for many to change. 2009 should be different for many and of course many will continue toward economic mistakes and financial ruin.

But in today's information society there is no excuse for not making smart choices. Financial literacy alone is not enough. Look what happened to Lehman Brothers and what's happening to many other financial institutions let alone individuals, families, and small businesses.

Solutions come to the internet, books, economic experts, financial counselors and experts, the media and your economical neighbors.

The North Lawndale Community News will tap into resources and share them with you, our reader. So to help you improve your health and your economy keep reading The North Lawndale News. We say yours because some may not modify their behavior, except when the pain comes and still some won't change.. Your input is also welcome If you have some information that is beneficial please submit it. Let's make smarter health and economic moves for life in 2009.

# THE NORTH LAWDALE COMMUNITY NEWS

The North Lawndale Community News is now published weekly by Strategic Human Services. Our purpose is to help inform our community on resources, events, and issues relevant to them and our neighboring communities. Our community includes those who live, work, worship in, and/or care about North Lawndale. Our focus is on positive, productive solutions, that will improve the lifestyle of our community members.

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Yalonda Neff at 773-638-1820







# FROM SISTA TO SISTER: Hear My Story: Allowing Our Youth To Travel Our World For Academic Success (Part I)

Tali Bakhit

Hello, my name is Peter Bul Magai, and I am a Lost Boy." Many of you right now may be asking yourselves "What is a Lost Boy, and what does this have to do with the academic success of the youth?" Once you read the story you will understand the relevance of this story as it pertains to the academic success of the youth. Let's begin with some real life statistics given to me by Sergeant Ursitti at the police district media department here in Chicago.

Between the months of January 2009 thru October of 2009 there were 75 murder victims between the ages of 5 to 19 years of age also within those months there were 680 aggravated batter with fire-arm victims, with in the same age group.

These numbers represent the example of a war zone, a civil war zone amongst the youth. This is where Peter Bul Magai's story stands relevant. Peter's very life tells the story of a war zone, a civil war zone to be exact. As a young man who was forced out of his own country at the age of 6 years old due to the 40 year war between the North and The South of Sudan. Due to these circumstances Peter has been identified as a Lost Boy for the last 22 years of his life. (see <http://www.lostboyschicago.com/>) His tormented childhood and experiences has lead him to do great things in his leadership role as

President of the Aycda Community Development Association for those in need of an education not only here in the United States but over in Sudan as well. (see <http://www.aycda.org/home.html>) As a Lost Boy of Sudan, Peter was without a formal education for many years and in many cases had to learn from the elders (which were other young men from his village.) Inescape for his life, much of what Peter learned was definitely from the school of hard knocks as he traveled over seas and countries from destination to destination.

From Ethiopia to Kenya, and Kenya to the United States of America, right here in Chicago where he currently resides. In an interview with Peter, I asked him about the difference between the youth here in the USA and the youth in Sudan and the education system. Peter's reply was "The children here in the USA have much and they are distracted by much, which causes them to go astray opposed to the children in Sudan who don't even have a chair or desk to sit at in order to do their work, they must sit on the floor but are still very eager to learn."

Some of the other necessities that the kids of Sudan are without are lights, computers, shoes to wear, lunch, clean water to drink, dictionaries, etc.

But according to Peter still the children and the adults find ways to learn and teach each other. This is why Peter has had the school Pongborong built, in an effort to educate the children about the mis-education of war, and to allow them to understand the diversities of life. Pongborong was named after the village in which Peter was born in South Sudan. (see <http://www.pongborong.org/>) Peter also mentions that school is most important to him, and finds that education in general is the key to

stopping the war in any war-torn situation. As we see young men and women die on the streets of Chicago everyday for something that is senseless. These very issues could be solved by getting young men and women off of the streets and educating them, and allowing them to understand the importance of diversity. In the month of December 2009 Peter will be traveling to Sudan with members of Hope for Sudan Alliance to build more class rooms for the Pongborong school.

Currently the school has 1000 students between the ages of 4 and 20. (see <http://www.hopeofsudan.org/who-we-are.php>) Manute Bol, former NBA player and founder of Sundan Sunrise, John Dau, star actor in the documentary "God grew tired of us, the story of The Lost Boys" who is currently building clinics in his home town in Sudan and Salva Dut, founder of Water Fall Sudan which is an organization that is digging wells for clean water in Sudan, are amongst the few who will be traveling to Sudan in December to help educate the youth and contribute to their country. Peter says, that he would like to make this a yearly trip and welcome all who are willing to participate in order to help build Sudan.

Each year that Peter visits, he makes it an effort to have students from the United States write letters to the students over in Sudan to grasp a hold of the diversity. He also has the students in Sudan to write back to the students in the United States in order to experience the same with gratitude. Not many schools here in the United States have given their students the ability to travel as an assignment of diversity, and to understand different cultures.

As a matter of fact, much of what the youth know about different countries is that in which they have learned on the news because their history books, and sociology classes don't give them a clear understanding of what is really out

there for them.

In an interview with Alpha Manaray who is from Sierra Leone a country in West Africa, Alpha states that it is so important for the youth to be able to travel and see a different life than what they are being exposed to in the inner city of Chicago because their is so much to learn. Alpha says "In my country the children have the up most respect for their elders, the family fundamentals come first" If the children here in Chicago would travel and see the difference they would learn alot." Alpha also adds that "The children in my country are not able to have guns because the stores don't sell them."

Which raises a very important concern regarding the children of the inner cities nation wide, and guns. Although the murder rate amongst children between the ages of 5 and 19 has dropped 25.7% and the aggravated battery with fire arm rate has dropped 5.9% children should never have to be victims of such malicious crimes, slain dead in the streets.

The cry is loud, and education is free, but perhaps not knowing and understanding the struggles that many go through in other countries in order to get an education the possibility of not wanting one will stand firm with many of the youth in inner cities nation wide. But how do we get them to understand the significance of travel when Anthropophobia lies within? See Part II of this story

Tali Bakhit is a visionary journalist, writer, entrepreneur, and owner of her own company Bon-chic Productions. Born and raised in the inner city of Philadelphia, she knows the struggles that young African American sisters go through on the everyday basis. As a writer for the the North Lawndale Community Newspaper, Tali has made a loyal commitment to give back to the Sisters and prove yes we can all get along and create a since of loyalty. Peace & Light My sisters.

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**Davis from front page**

four candidates all from the same community and from the same political base to run for the same office, at the same time, with one conservative candidate in the race.

"Therefore, one could say that I am withdrawing... for the sake of unity."

With Davis out, the speculation quickly turned to the question of who will he endorse for the presidency. And yet again, he remained coy, saying he is considering each of the remaining candidates (even O'Brien), has and will meet with each and will make a decision before the election based on "the candidate who, in my mind, comes closest to understanding the issues and the problems (of the county) as I understand them, ...and would come closest to doing what I think I would have done in that situation. Then that's the person I am going to support."

With that the old war horse proved he could indeed pursue two seats at one time. For one reasonably could assume that each of those remaining candidates has at least 50,000 reasons to pay attention to Davis if they want to win in February.

And Davis—the old, former Arkansas cotton picker—conceded as much in closing with "for whoever those people are who would like to believe there's a game being played, please share with them that this ain't checkers; it ain't chess and it sure enough ain't bid whist."

No, it's more like cutthroat poker. And Davis has proved to be a master at it. Because despite leaving the table where the Cook County presidency is at stake, he still has a lot to say about who takes home the final pot.

**'SAVE OUR CHILDREN'**

The Chicago Area Veterans Forum is hosting committee meetings for the Million Veterans March/Movement (MVM/M) Location, Date, and Time are as follows:

Vet. Resource Center Located at:  
7731 S. Halsted in Chicago on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Mondays at 2:00 PM  
2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays at 6:00 PM

The Million Veterans March in Washington D.C. will be held on Saturday May 22, 2010. The Slogan for the March is "Veterans Helping Citizens Stop the Violence Save the Children".

The Platform for this March is "Veteran Organizations providing and or/Working with Children's Programs to Remove Children off the Streets and Out of Harms Way".

We are requesting each Organization to bring their Written Platform and their Issues concerning Veterans to the meeting to be included in documents that will be presented to Persons in Washington who are able to implement these Issues. Your input in helping to organize this great event will be appreciated. If you are personally unable to attend this meeting a representative from your Organization is welcomed. Thank You.

Julie Rudison, Corresponding Secretary  
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| Chicago Public Schools             | Muslim American Veterans Association   |
| Coalition of Veterans Organization | National Women Veterans United         |
| Easter Seals Disabilities Services | Rhythm Blues & Funk Foundation         |
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| Leave No Veteran Behind            | The Catholic Charities                 |
| LRD Corporation                    |                                        |

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**We are in the process of organizing an Advisory Council to meet the needs of our Park and Community. If you would like to play a vital part in improving our community, please attend the next meeting schedule:**

Date: Saturday, November 21, 2009  
Time: 2:00 pm  
Location: **Franklin Park**  
4320 w. 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
Chicago, IL 60623

Thanks you in advance for all of your love and support.

Ms. Mattie B. Smith



# AT THE FLICKS

David H. Schultz, film critic



Jae Head, Sandra Bullock, and Quinton Aaron in *The Blind Side*

**THE BLIND SIDE** (\*\*1/2) "The Blind Side" is another movie about hope over adversity that is more of a Hollywood treatment without the inner city grim and grit. Clearly, this movie is different yet familiar with its football backdrop. It is not as raw and dark as "Precious". But

both films have black lead characters of the opposite sex that start out similar by their mute-like demeanor to the world around them, while living and haunted by past tragedies and urban blight.

Based on Michael Lewis' book, this inspired

true story centers around a hulking, poor, overweight and under educated Afro-American teenage man-child, Michael "Big Mike" Oher, well played by newcomer Quinton Aaron. Mostly, a homeless teen that wanders the streets and is considered a "runner" for how he avoids the drugs and violence in his inner city neighborhood policed by the drug dealers. And where the youth can always find to his crack addicted mother who keeps being evicted.

One day, "Big Mike" happens to be observed playing basketball with a small kid on the grounds of Wingate Christian School by Coach Cotton (Ray McKinnon) who sees potential for his football team and negotiates for his admission to the school with the principal.

Soon after, Michael who sticks out for his size and color over the student body is befriended by one of the smallest kids, S.J (Jae Head) who later points him out to his mother, Leigh Anne Tuohy (Sandra Bullock with a Southern fired twang in her voice), part of a well-to do married couple to husband, Sean (a clean shaven Tim McGraw) who owns a slew of fast food restaurant franchises.

Anna sees Mike as a lost and lonely soul with no one and no where to go or become that she later spots in her car with her family; wandering on the street in the rain. Even though she invites him into

their home for food and shelter, sleeping down stairs on her \$10,000 couch. Anna still goes to bed wondering if what she's trying to do will lead to their possessions being stolen overnight.

This and other racial references have to be expected and confronted. No matter how slight, I doubt I'll ever see the day that such references will stop being incorporated throughout such movies

The next morning, not only is everything intact, but the blankets are neatly folded on the couch. And thus, what started out as a charity case of this affluent white family adopting a poor black teen soon becomes a beneficial situation that helps Michael have the family life he never knew existed.

While Michael's growth and presence increases Anna's self awareness and improvement that give her a different perspective on life and relationships. Of course, this means Anna Lee stands up for Michael as familiar encounters occur in this film

Still, there are problems from the outset for Michael in his readjustment and growth. In his classes, teachers realize Michael is listening to everything but doesn't know how to learn. On

See Flicks page 6

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### 2009 Microsoft Office Training Schedule

| Date  | Class                               |
|-------|-------------------------------------|
| 11/21 | Word 2007 Basic To Advance          |
| 12/5  | Excel 2007 Basic To Advance         |
| 12/12 | PowerPoint 2007 Basic To Advance    |
| 12/19 | Access 2007 Basic to Advance        |
| 1/9   | Computer Fundamentals Windows Vista |
| 1/16  | Word 2007 Basic To Advance          |
| 1/23  | Excel 2007 Basic To Advance         |
| 1/30  | PowerPoint 2007 Basic To Advance    |
| 2/6   | Access 2007 Basic to Advance        |
| 2/13  | Computer Fundamentals Windows Vista |
| 2/20  | Word 2003 Basic To Advance          |
| 2/27  | Excel 2003 Basic To Advance         |
| 3/6   | PowerPoint 2003 Basic To Advance    |
| 3/13  | Access 2003 Basic To Advance        |

Class Hours 10AM - 2:30PM

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\*\*All WIA approved classes are tuition based and payment arrangements must be made before starting classes.

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**Flicks from page 5**

the field, Michael may have the appearance of all the physical attributes to become the guard player that protects the team's quarterback.

A fact that pro player Lawrence Taylor is given the credit for revolutionizes the game. Hence this film's title. But Michael is soft and clumsy on the field and doesn't fully understand what Coach Cotton by his description.

But almost at every turn, there's surrogate mother Anna out coaching Coach Cotton by using Michael's "protective instincts" for his athleticism. Also Anna brings in a live-in tutor Miss Sue (Kathy Bates) to help Michael improve academically.

Sandra Bullock delivers a spunky performance that is a clear indicator that her true talents belong in more challenging roles.

While Anna's young son C.J trains and conditions Michael for football. It all makes for some entertaining moments and one predictable and near tragedy when Mike gets a driver's license and a new truck on his birthday.

But the dramatic climax comes from Michael who realizes he might have been manipulated in his decision to play football at Ole Miss over Tennessee. Through an interrogation session with a stern social worker. Investigator Granger (Sharon Morris whose screen presence makes her someone to watch) who's investigating, the possibility of a NCAA violation since Michael's adoptive parents are boosters and former attendees at Ole Miss

However, what is troubling at times in this film by how sanitized situations and confrontations are made to feel throughout the film. This is what makes the film too Hollywood with obvious book omissions. As if this movie is trying to protect us from the dark side of "The Blind Side".

I'm not saying we needed the "warts and all" approach. It just seems that this autobiography on Michael Oher who rose from despair to becoming the NFL's No. 1 draft pick for the Baltimore Ravens earlier this year; could have



Eva Mendes and Nicolas Cage in *BAD LIEUTENANT Port of Call: New Orleans*.

detailed more than just its premise. "The Blind Side" is an uplifting film that comes off a little too neat and clean, Oher is just as much an introvert traumatized by his ghetto nightmare experiences as Clareece in "Precious". The difference is how the help comes from either "the haves" and the "have nots".

Don't get me wrong, Writer-director John Lee Hancock who last tackled a sports themed underdog true story with 2001's "The Rookie" had honorable intentions here, but he's more about the story than breaking a cycle that needs to be broken against black youth facing the odds against them.

Instead, "The Blind Side" is another example of a black being helped out a circumstance not of his own doing, to find his success in sports. We have that message before to know that in this age of Obama; There should be more and a wider diversity in obtaining success in life than the usual avenues of sports and entertainment. PG; 126min.

A Warner Bros. Pictures Release – Presented at selected theaters

**BAD LIEUTENANT Port of Call: New Orleans (\*\*1/2)** In a departure from blockbuster movie roles, Nicolas Cage steps back to his early quirky character driven roles that made him watchably notorious for his method acting eccentrics in such films as "Wild at Heart" and his Oscar turn in "Leaving Las Vegas"

Cage plays the title role, Terrence McDonough a crooked cop who's not as intensely driven as "The Shield's "Vic Mackey" but is just as resourceful in his work that happens to be only second to his "crack" habit.

Recently promoted to lieutenant from rescuing an inmate in a flooded prison following the Hurricane Katrina aftermath. Where Terrence developed a back problem that led to his addiction to drugs Terrence is assigned to the investigation of a mob style execution on an African family for local drug territory infringement.

A workaholic as much as a drug addict, Terrence will not only take drug evidence at a crime scene, but he's trying to cover up drug inventory held in the police property room. Where sometimes he can be found sleeping. When he's not over the swank hi-rise apartment of druggo girlfriend (Eva Mendes) sharing their addiction in bed.

But during his multiple murder investigation, the clues mount up as much as his drug supply. While in between Terrence makes a heavy bet with his bookie after catching a pro-ball bound college football star with an ounces of "weed" who becomes conflicted when told to throw the game or go to jail.

Then when his investigation leads him to local drug lord, Big Fate (Alvin "Xzibit" Joiner), Terrence offers protection for drugs and money. Later, Terrence is tailed by a rival drug dealer and his two henchmen who converge on Big Fate's joint.

While this film has its sagging moments, this is still the kind of movie that challenges Cage to be in a character mold that often would lead to off beat moments. Such as the aftermath following the shootout at Big Fate's joint. Where under the influence, Cage's character hallucinates one of the rival dead henchmen are alive and break dancing.

Here we get a glimpse at the old Nicolas Cage that we loved when he went over-the-top in a

role. Who can forget Cage as a modern-day Renfield who ate a live cockroach in 1989's "Vampire's Kiss". Here, a wired Cage as Terrence keeps telling Big Fate to "shoot 'em again". The energy and expression shows a functional yet effective cop on the edge through his addiction.

But eventually, things start to turn for the better with some coincidence that offers Terrence a second chance to better his life from what occurs around him. When Mendes' character goes into rehab and later becomes pregnant. Terrence's gambling bets and debts pay off, his favors for others works out alright.

And soon after, Terrence leads a police raid on Big Fate that his former partner, Stevie (Val Kilmer) wants Terrence to pop but won't. Yet, Stevie confronts both by saying "He (Terrence) acts like he likes you, because he likes getting high"

Still the police apprehension of the drug lord lands Terrence another promotion to captain. But it turns out not to be enough to realize the "true" opportunity he has. This only leads to him to do more of the same while he still carries that torch for his habit. An interesting film made so by Cage's presence and the acting capabilities that still exist. When the story and character matter more than the special effects and thunderous music score. R; 122min, A First Look Studios Picture Release – Presented at selected theaters

**RED CLIFF (\*\*1/2)** "Red Cliff" is a monumental achievement that fulfills a life long cinematic quest for its filmmaker, the revered Asian action director John Woo, best known stateside for such films as "Face Off" and "Mission Impossible 2".

This film represented a serious challenge and Woo's most personal film after a long absence between film projects that details the historical events and principals involved leading up to the spectacular naval Battle of Red Cliff during the final days of the Han Dynasty.

Set in the year 208 A.D.; the land of Wu is invaded by the shrewd and calculating warlord Cao Cao who soon after convinces a fickle Emperor Han (Zhang Fengyi) to add his troops to Cao Cao's million soldiers.

Cao Cao has embarks on a quest to unify China by declaring war on two southern warlords, Sun Quan (Chang Chen), the ruler of East Wu and Liu Bei (You Yong), the ruler of Xu in the west who are forced to join in opposition but even united they are still badly outnumbered. Still an unlikely alliance is formed out of necessity and survival.

Soon after the battle of Changban is ignited, Where Cao Cao's massive army starts attacking civilians who are on an exodus led by Liu Bei. During this battle, Liu Bei's followers and his sworn brothers, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei manage to hold off the enemies through their combative skills, While the young warrior Zhou Yun makes a valiant attempt to save Liu Bei's family, but only manage to save his infant son. Still, Liu Bei is appreciative and brings the young warrior into his inner circle.

Meanwhile Cao Cao receives more military support while the alliance is formed between Liu Bei and Sun Quan to deal with Cao Cao's invasion. Liu Bei's chief advisor Zhange Liang persuades Sun Quan not to surrender and following a tiger hunt with Wu strategist and Grand Viceroy, Zhou Yu (Tony Leung) and his sister Sun Shangxiang who also become key players in Cao Cao's down fall.

When Shangxiang proves herself to be equal in battle skills and espionage when she manages to infiltrate Cao Cao's camp While Zhou Yu would formulate a plot from realizing Cao Cao's army was untested on the sea that led to subsequent battles until the eventual showdown in the battle of Red Cliff. Where over two thousand ships were burned on the water and the course of Chinese history was changed forever.

Not only does this film capture the scope and pageantry of war. This movie is about the strategy of war, in which the smaller army was able to overcome the enormous troops combined

See page 7

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## Flicks from page 6

against them by Prime Minister Cao Cao trying to unite China. by eliminating the kingdom of Xu in the west and East Wu in the south that led to each side into military campaign to increase their manpower and plot against their weaknesses.

John Woo's "Red Cliff" reportedly is one of China's most expensive movies ever made. Regardless if you don't have much interest in Chinese history When you witness to its scope and depth of this movie; It hard to imagine any other director capable to make this epic. And make it coherent Especially considering this is a condense version on two longer

films Pt. 1 & 2 shown successfully overseas,

Even though this edited edition combines both films is under director John Woo's supervision and supported by off screen narration for clarity and background. This condense adaptation doesn't feel abbreviated.

But the film occasionally makes me feel this version is John Woo's version is like director Sergio Leone's 1984 gangster homage "Once Upon a Time in America". In that like Leone's film; hopefully Woo's original uncut vision might be release stateside from the glimpses we get that indicates a better film is yet to be seen in its entirety

R; 148min. A Magnet Picture release - Presented at selected theaters



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