

'United 93' fearsome but compelling



Left, Real-life Federal Aviation Administration operations manager Ben Sliney talks on the phone, surrounded by air traffic controllers. He plays himself in the new film "United 93," which was released in theaters Friday. **Above**, Actors Becky London and Tom O'Rourke as Jean and Donald Peterson comfort one another aboard United Airlines Flight 93 in the drama "United 93."



Associated Press/Universal Pictures

Hijacked Sept. 11 flight provides dialogue for tragedy

By Emily Watson
Daily Texan Staff

Goosebumps cover the arms of everyone in the theater, but the cold multiplex air doesn't seem to be the cause. Around the frigid room, everyone is watching as the horrifying and all-too-realistic scenes of "United 93" appear on-screen. I think it quietly to myself, and the look in everyone's eyes seems to mirror my thoughts: "Are we ready for this?"

This September will mark the fifth anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Paul Greengrass' controversial new film, formerly titled "Flight

93," explores the events from the perspective of the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania.

In a release from Universal Pictures, Greengrass said, "There are lots of ways to find meaning in the events of 9/11. Sometimes, if you look clearly and unflinchingly at a single event, you can find in its shape something much larger than the event itself — the DNA of our times ... hence, a film about United 93."

What sets "United 93" apart from previous pieces about tragedy is the way it resonates with modern audiences in its ability to inspire empathy for its characters. Seeing the events unfold makes us feel more deeply than watching the Titanic sink or the Apollo 13 astronauts struggle in space.

One thing gripped the back of my mind as I watched the film: It could have happened to me.

I remember vividly the morning of Sept. 11. My father was on one of his typical business flights to Indianapolis. When I heard that two planes had hit the World Trade Center, my thoughts immediately turned to my dad, who could be anywhere in the air. For several hours, all I could think about was how one of the people on the hijacked planes could be a member of my family.

It was this heart-wrenching panic that I felt again in the cold movie theater while watching "United 93." The everyday conversations of the passengers — a young girl flying alone calls her parents to assure them she will be OK — renewed the sense in me that the people on the planes could have been anybody. And that is what makes the film so terrifying. This fear shouldn't drive American moviegoers

away from "United 93"; instead it should draw them near and help us to resolve the uncertainties of that fateful day.

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In the preproduction phase of "United 93," Greengrass interviewed more than 100 friends and family members of the 40 passengers and crew members on the flight to ensure that they

approved of the movie's coverage. The film begins by giving audiences a close look at each character as they arrive at the airport. Actors in the film spent time with friends and family of United Airlines Flight 93's passengers and crew, and Greengrass' association with each character leads viewers to empathize with them more fully.

"United 93" also looks at conversations amongst the hijackers of the planes and attempts to explain their plan to crash the plane into the White House. On the plane, the conspirators assemble handmade bombs with horrific accuracy and use knives to control the passengers and crew. In the midst of the hijacking, the FAA and military work frantically to obtain information. The struggle on Flight 93 culminates with the teamwork of its

passengers and heroically divert the plane into a field.

Supporters of "United 93" see the film as a way to seek answers to the questions of Sept. 11. Opponents say it is too soon for a movie to be made about such a recent tragedy. Through Greengrass' interpretation of events, people will hopefully be able to better understand what happened. Above all, the film can make the country stronger by letting us know that we need to be prepared mentally and emotionally for something like this, were it to happen again in the future.

"United 93" premiered Friday to audiences nationwide. Weekend box office reports estimated the movie to be No. 2, making approximately \$11.6 million during its opening weekend.

Daytime dissin': 50 Cent squares off Oprah

By Erin Carlson

The Associated Press
NEW YORK — He usually saves his beefs for other rappers; this time, 50 Cent is going after Oprah Winfrey.

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In an interview with The Associated Press, 50 complained that Winfrey rarely invites rappers on her talk show: "I think she caters to older white women."

"Oprah's audience is my audience's parents," the 29-year-old rapper said. "So, I could care less about Oprah or her show."

He's not alone in his resentment toward the talk show host cum media mogul.

Rapper-actor Ludacris, aka Chris Bridges, said in the May issue of GQ magazine that Winfrey was "unfair" during a show he appeared on last October with co-stars from best-picture Oscar winner "Crash."

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50 Cent,
rap artist

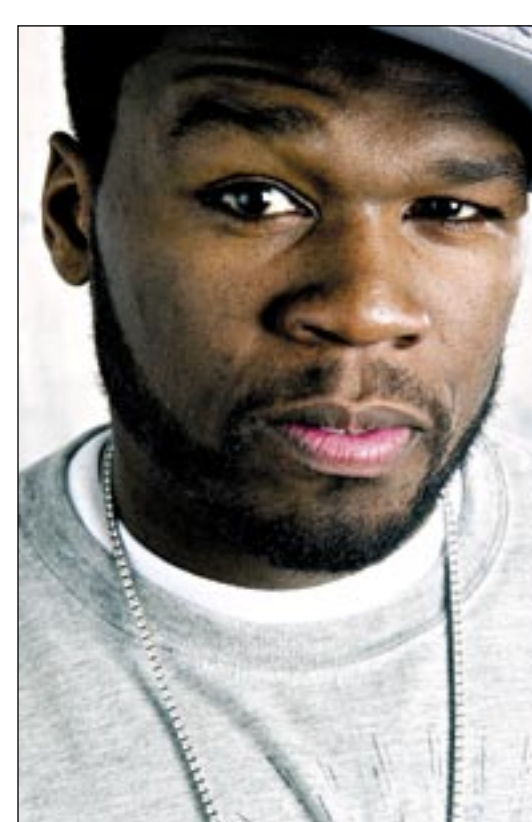
"She edited out a lot of my comments while keeping her own in," he said. "Of course, it's her show, but we were doing a show on racial discrimination, and she gave me a hard time as a rapper, when I came on there as an actor."

Winfrey's representative at her production company, Harpo, told the AP that Winfrey was unavailable for comment.

But, as 50 Cent said, Winfrey's purported disapproval might enhance a rapper's street cred.

"I'm actually better off having friction with her," he said.

The crack-dealer-turned-rapper has sold millions of records gleefully flaunting his



Rapper 50 Cent says he's proud of his street cred as a rapper, record label and clothing/sneaker line owner, and he believes hip-hop does not promote aggressive behavior or violence.

Jim Cooper
Associated Press

gangsta image, explicit lyrics and bulletproof vest (he was famously shot nine times). He has his own record label, G-Unit, the G-Unit clothing line, his own sneaker line with Reebok and a videogame, "Bulletproof."

And he wears his rough-and-tumble reputation proudly: "I don't mind it. I've actually accepted it."

The rapper, who's signed to close pal Eminem's Shady/Aftermath label under Interscope Records, said he recently attended Proof's wake with Eminem. Proof, a friend of Eminem's, was shot and killed earlier this month during a dispute in a Detroit nightclub.

"He's coming along," he said of Eminem. "He's gonna be all right. I mean, it was definitely a big loss for him. Proof was actually his best friend in the

world from forever."

On the heels of Proof's death, a study released last week by the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation — a nonprofit public health research group — suggested that young people who listen to rap music are more prone to alcohol and drug use and aggressive behavior.

But 50's not buying it.

He points a finger at parents, who he thinks should explain to their children that his music is a form of entertainment, not a license to break the law.

"I think that the violence that happened to Proof and the violence that's happening across America right now has nothing to do with hip-hop," he said. "It has something to do with the people — the state of them — and the music doesn't alter that."

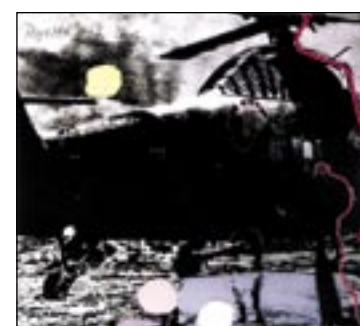
SOUNDBITES



Artist: Elevator Action
Album: *Society, Secret*
Record: Morisen Records

Society, Secret is the second album from another Morisen find, Elevator Action. The album isn't bad, but it's not great, either. It definitely captures the indie-rock sound that has become all too familiar (soft rock meets punk lyrics with elements of '80s techno and '70s style), but that's as far as it goes. For the most part, it sounds just like the next underground group. But to their credit, Elevator Action's high-voltage sound probably makes for an electrifying live performance.

—Robert Brown



Artist: Psychic Ills
Album: *Dins*
Label: The Social Registry

A first listen at *Dins*, the album by the four-member band Psychic Ills from New York band Psychically sounds like the Congo. A unique

blend of drums reigns steady throughout the intro track "East." But after that one minute and 39 seconds, *Dins* heads south, for the absolute worst.

Tracks such as "Electric Life" and "Inauguration" sound like nothing more than instruments being thrown against the wall.

Psychic Ills has been cited as a group that incorporates space rock and psychedelic sounds by critics of their tours with groups such as The Double. An even better description would be dark and spooky.

A thorough listen to *Dins* is sure to have listeners walk away saying, "That was weird."

—Ariawna Talton



Artist: The Sammies
Album: *The Sammies*
Record: Morisen Records

Morisen Records has something on its hands with Charlotte, North Carolina-based band The Sammies. In their self-titled debut album, they proved to be a nice blend of indie rock and pseudo-punk, quick and to the point with their tracks, but they never sacrificed the melody for style and raw emotion. The homegrown group also succeeded as songwriters, with several infectious catchy tunes, particularly the opening tracks "Coming Out Wild" and "For John."

—R.B.

Former Blanton to become art studios



An art history student works outside the old Blanton Museum in the Art Building on Thursday afternoon.

Jessica Talley
Daily Texan Staff

Art Building location to be converted, serve as space for students

By Peyton Coker
Daily Texan Staff

The old Blanton Art Museum in the Art Building will house graduate studio space and become a place for art students to display their work. The space is scheduled to undergo renovations beginning August 31. The Blanton closed last May

to prepare for its move to the Michener Gallery Building on MLK Boulevard. The old Blanton will now be converted to a creative research laboratory, said Carolyn Porter, assistant director of development with the Department of Art and Art History.

The creative research laboratory is a place for students and faculty from the art department to display and create their work.

"The lab will feature spaces for exhibitions, research, scholarship, outreach and many symposiums," Porter said.

Once the old Blanton moves into the new building, Porter said, the office spaces will be turned into "much needed graduate studio space."

But since its close, the museum has had to use other facilities for storage.

Most of the Blanton collection was stored in off-campus storage facilities in Austin and in a facility outside Fort Worth, said Brady Dyer, a Blanton spokeswoman. Art from the old collection that is not used in the new museum will be stored in the new building's storage facilities, she said.

Storage space was "built in the plan so we wouldn't have to use facilities in other places," Dyer said.

The collection ranges from newly purchased artifacts to items that have been on display at the University for years.

Along with off-campus facilities, art was previously stored on the fourth floor of the Flawn Academic Center, Porter said.

John L. Rishling, associate vice president for campus planning and capital projects, said the storage space on the fourth floor of the FAC has been used

as an outdoor courtyard and a meeting space, among other things.

Rishling said the fourth floor "is like a big doughnut. The hole was the outdoor courtyard. It [has since] been converted. That's where the Blanton artifacts were stored."

Rishling said that since the FAC began remodeling, removing books and increasing study carrels, building planners are looking at long-term uses for the empty space, but the FAC won't be used as a storage facility for Blanton art any longer.

UT BRIEFLY

UT System awarded for disaster response plans

The University of Texas System Office of Risk Management received an award from the National Safety Council in April for its disaster response plan, which was used during Hurricane Rita.

The "Disaster Response and Recovery Mutual Aid Plan" is a way for UT System schools to work together in an emergency situation. Resources from one school could be used at another school in an effort to respond effectively to a possible catastrophe. The plan is used as a back-up for other measures used in disaster situations.

"This is a second line of defense, a very innovative and unique way to address catastrophic events," said Paul Pousson, associate director of the Office of Risk Management.

Pousson said the plan was an initiative introduced by System administration in 2003. Before Hurricane Rita, annual "tabletop exercises" were conducted to test scenarios, and team members discussed possible solutions, he said.

Pousson said that during Rita a team was assembled to act if needed. If the UT Medical Branch at Galveston needed power generators, other UT schools could provide them, along with technicians, he said as an example. The affected institution would contact the Office of Risk Management, which would then contact UT schools in four regions to determine where resources can be obtained.

The UT System's plan won the award from the National Safety Council in the category of Unique or Innovative, and the ceremony will occur on July 17 in the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, Calif.

—Mark Yeh

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