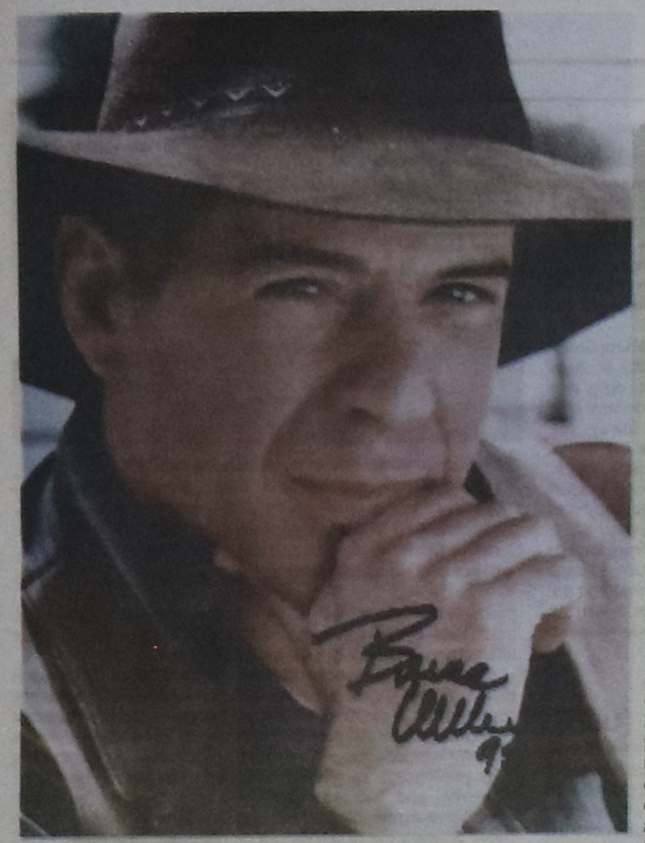

BRUCE RULES

There's basically four stories they can write about you. One: You hit the scene. Two: You peak. Three: You bomb. And four: You come back.
-Bruce Willis

THOUGH he's never exactly fit the Ah-nuld-and-Sly action hero paradigm muscle-bound, monosyllabic, minimally emotive explosions and man-on-the-run heroics have been the stock in trade of actor Bruce Willis ever since he roared to the top of the Hollywood A-list as John McClane, the reluctant Everyman protagonist of 1988's *Die Hard*. Several seasons of sleuthing with Cybil Shepherd on ABC's *Moonlighting* made the blue-collar Jersey native a celebrity, but his testosterone-supercharged cinematic oeuvre and his 11-year marriage to onetime Brat Packer Demi Moore made him an honest-to-Pete superstar. His willingness to dodge bullets and crack wise in the face of sneering super-villains has revived his career more than once, but the stage-trained Willis has also bounced back on occasion with powerful performances in more high-minded fare, demonstrating a versatility that sets him apart from his pyrotechnic peers.

An Army brat and the eldest of four children, Willis was born on a military base in Idar-Oberstein, Germany. His father was discharged in 1957, and he took the family back to the States, where they settled in Carneys Point, N.J., so dad could take work at the Camden Shipyard. Rambunctious and cheerfully extroverted throughout his teenage years, Willis attended high school in nearby Penns Grove, where he was elected student council president and was active in various drama clubs. He ended up expelled for three months midway through his senior year as a result of his involvement in what he later characterised as "the annual riot, the black-white anti-human-relations fest." Plagued by a severe stutter since childhood, the ever-antic youth eventually tamed his tongue through acting, after discovering that he could enunciate clearly and calmly whenever he was playing to an audience.

Instead of doing the university thing straight out of high school, Willis found full-time work transporting work crews at the Du Pont factory down the road in Deepwaters. An industrial accident that claimed the life of a fellow driver prompted him to rethink his commitment to the blue-collar life, and he quit his job shortly thereafter. Directionless and not particularly driven, the former factory worker spent several months hanging out in bars and fostered his love of the blues by playing harmonica for a local R&B outfit called Loose Goose. He eventually took work as a security guard at the construction site for a large nuclear plant. Willis' long-dormant interest in theatre eventually led him to Montclair State College, where he immersed himself in the locally reputed drama program. While at Montclair, he made a splash as Brick in a school production of the Tennessee Williams classic *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, and frequently skipped his classes to jaunt to New York for off-Broadway auditions. Confident in his abilities and anxious to further the pursuit of his newly chosen avocation, Willis left school in the middle of his junior year and rented a tiny apartment in Manhattan's Hell's Kitchen neighbourhood.

For Willis, the requisite pay-the-bills job was a gig tending bar at the trendy Cafe Central, which at the time was a hip networking spot for many of the celebrities involved in the New York acting scene. When not mixing drinks, he fearlessly pursued acting jobs, frequently answering appointment-only casting calls without an appointment and then demanding he be allowed to audition anyway. He made his off-Broadway debut in a production of *Heaven and Earth*, and got his big break in 1984, when he was picked to replace Will Patton in Sam Shepard's *Fool for Love*. While thus engaged, he caught the eye of a *Miami Vice* casting director, who tapped him for a guest appearance as a villainous, CIA-connected gunrunner; he gained further national exposure in a series of commercials for Levis 501 jeans.

Willis' cinematic résumé consisted of a paltry pair of uncredited cameos (in *The Verdict* and *The First Deadly Sin*) when he flew to Los Angeles in 1985 to read for a part in Madonna's *Desperately Seeking Susan*. That audition turned out to be a dead-end, and Willis was about to return to New York when he got wind of a casting call for a new ABC series to be titled *Moonlighting*. Willis ended up among the last of the 3,000 hopefuls to read for the part of David Addison, wisecracking foil to Cybil Shepherd's Maddie Hayes. Producer Glenn Gordon Caron immediately warmed to the relatively unknown off-Broadway actor, and in direct opposition to the voluble objections of his ABC bosses, who didn't want to squander the plum part on a New York nobody, Caron gave Willis the part. As history notes, *Moonlighting* became a monstrous ratings winner.

Bruce Willis
Date of Birth: March 19, 1955, Idar-Oberstein, West Germany
Relations: Father: David (welder, factory worker); mother: Marlene; brother: David (producer); wife (separated): Demi Moore; kids: Rumer, Scout, Tallulah (all with Moore)
Fan Mail: C/O William Morris Agency
151 El Camino Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90212, USA

Though Shepherd and Willis crackled with chemistry on-screen, they couldn't stand each other away from it, and their numerous high-volume off-camera squabbles gained Willis a reputation for temperament. The tabloids ate it up, and soon Willis was a popular checkstand whipping boy, as he lived large, endured a number of run-ins with the L.A. police, cut a pair of celebrity records for Motown, and made a high-profile bomb of a feature film debut in Blake Edwards' *Blind Date*. His Vegas wedding to Moore, whom he'd met at a 1987 screening of *Stakeout*, which starred the actress' then-boyfriend Emilio Estevez, further heightened his public profile. Derided as yet another TV-star with a wannabe-Hollywood jones, Willis persevered and silenced his critics for good with the astounding critical and commercial success of *Die Hard*, his first cinematic starring vehicle. Though he voiced a cynical baby in the surprise 1989 hit *Look Who's Talking*, Willis' movie career stalled out until he duplicated the success of his breakthrough characterisation with *Die Hard 2*.

Over the next couple of years while Moore was in the process of becoming the most sought-after actress in Hollywood Willis made a number of attempts to break out of the John McClane mold. After punchless adaptations of *Bonfire of the Vanities* and *Billy Bathgate* and the atrocious singing-jewel-thief vanity project *Hudson Hawk* (which was based on Willis' own story) bombed in rapid succession, Willis briefly replenished his box-office drawing power by blasting bad guys and running from explosions in the *The Last Boy Scout*.

He stumbled again with poorly received starring roles in *Death Becomes Her*, *Striking Distance* (his first action dud), and *North*, but revived both his critical and commercial reputations in late 1994 with high-profile supporting turns in *Pulp Fiction* and *Nobody's Fool*. His drawing power was firmly re-established by the financial success of the 1995 films *Twelve Monkeys* and *Die Hard With a Vengeance*, and of 1997's *The Fifth Element*. Despite the fact that his 1998 summer actioner *Armageddon* was one of the most hyped and anticipated movies of the year, critic Roger Ebert pretty much summed up its paucity of entertainment value when he wrote, "No matter what they're charging to get in, it's worth more to get [illegible]."

In June 1998, just one year after successfully (and ironically) suing both an American and an Australian tabloid for reporting that their marriage was on the rocks, Willis and Moore parted ways, ending a decade-long union of which Willis once reported, "Our marriage is like anybody's marriage. It goes through ups and down. It's a little garden that you have to tend all the time. When we're home it's not like we walk around all dolled up going, 'We are celebrities! We are famous!' I change diapers. I clean up dog doo." Newly single, Willis continued to loom large at the box office: the well-received paranormal thriller *The Sixth Sense*, in which he starred as a psychologist trying to help a haunted child, joined James Cameron's *Titanic* as the only film in history to score five $20 million weekends; he headed up the star-studded cast of Alan Rudolph's adaptation of Kurt Vonnegut's *Breakfast of Champions*; and he co-starred opposite Michelle Pfeiffer in the middling romantic dramedy *The Story of Us*. The trio of roles for which he waived his normal big money fee represented for Willis a welcome and longed-for departure from his action-fare rut, yet fans of his popular *Die Hard* franchise can likely expect to see their bashed and bloodied hero fighting the good fight in a fourth instalment, which reportedly could net its star a pay-day in excess of $25 million.

Metallica Goes Classical

Drummer Lars Ulrich Shares Experience

A night at the opera or, in this case, the symphony got a whole new meaning last April when Metallica teamed up with composer Michael Kamen and the San Francisco Symphony for two performances at the Berkeley Community Theatre, yielding the Bay Area heavy metal group's latest effort, S&M. On those nights, tuxedos and gowns gave way to denim and leather as the already Mahler-esque and Wagnerian arrangements of 18 Metallica favourites plus two new songs by singer-guitarist James Hetfield and drummer Lars Ulrich were given a full fleshing out with 79 additional instruments, which gave heft and body to songs that weren't necessarily wanting for them in the first place. Of course, taking an old-school approach to their music certainly doesn't mean Metallica is behind the times prior to hitting stores Nov. 23, the entire album will be previewed, in its entirety, on the Internet. A video collection of the shows, as well as a documentary, also reached stores on Nov. 23. And going classical hasn't mellowed the band, either. *S&M* clearly affirms that the band is in as fierce a form as ever, and its fans make the same kind of noise they'd make at a more "typical" Metallica show. Drummer Lars Ulrich took some time recently, and explained how Metallica decided to roll over Beethoven, and tell Tchaikovsky to say "Oi!"

Wall Of Sound: How did the idea of Metallica playing with an orchestra happen in the first place?

Ulrich: It wasn't so much that we had this burning desire to record with an orchestra. It was this thing where, "Do you guys want to play some shows and undertake this process? I'm Michael Kamen; I think your music is really suited for this type of interpretation. I think getting you and a symphony together and me conducting and arranging the symphonic parts around your music would be a very interesting creative project." When somebody comes and tells you that, then where our head space has been you jump at the chance to do that as quick as you can.

WOS: So what was the allure of playing Metallica music with an orchestra?

Ulrich: We did it because we have been on a path for the last few years of wanting to challenge and push the creative envelope as much as possible. This seemed like one more step.

WOS: What were the new creative aspects of this project for you?

Ulrich: Well, you've got to understand this is a project that's gone on for nearly two years. And in that two years, we did two shows in April. What I remember most about the shows is I was just trying to concentrate on what I was doing, holding up my end of it, being the best team player possible. To me, the more interesting revelations have come from making the record and mixing the record and putting the movie together. That's been very cool, learning about other worlds, musically, learning how things can sort of go together and how things can be weaved together, seeing other points of view.

WOS: What did the project require you to do differently as a player?

Ulrich: I guess I was probably more focused, a little more on top of what I was doing instead of sitting and looking at the lighting rig or wondering what the girl out in the third row was wearing under her Metallica shirt. It was just taking a step back and seeing it as one thing, rather than being limited to what my musical role in it was hearing the symphony parts, understanding the play and counterplay and the melodies and the countermelodies. Listening back to it, there are some places where I was wish I had been more aware of what was going on around me and had played to that, and so on.

WOS: So it was illuminating to go back through the tapes and film and dissect what happened?

Ulrich: Yeah. Really, I didn't understand the scale of this, the massiveness of it, until the last few weeks, which is good. The best thing you can do is shield yourself from those types of things when you're in the middle of it, anyway. It's always good when those things don't come to you until after the live, physical event.

WOS: Did you and James [Hetfield] approach the two new songs differently, knowing that they'd be recorded with an orchestra?

Ulrich: No. I mean, look, is it impossible to separate the two? Probably. We tried not to. We tried not to write them any differently, but of course it's in the back of your mind. But there wasn't any conscious decision to sit down and write something that would purposely be sort of intertwined with the [orchestral] stuff.

WOS: You're did symphonic shows in Berlin (Nov. 19) and New York (Nov. 23), and you have some shows scheduled for December. Will those have orchestral elements too?

Ulrich: Nah. The Metallica tour we'll be doing is a little millennium cash-in tour. Those shows will have no symphonic aspect to them whatsoever.

WOS: In addition to S&M, you're also represented on the Woodstock '99 album. It was Metallica's second Woodstock; how was it for you?

Ulrich: It was fun, man. We came, played, left, survived. It was cool. No worries.

About Ulrich

Instrument: Drums
Birthday: December 26, 1963, Gentofte, Denmark
Vitals: 5'7" & 130 lbs (1.7 meters & 58.97 kilos); blond/brown hair & green eyes
Marital status: Married (Jan. 27, 1997)
Drives: Porsche, Chevy Blazer, Range Rover, Saab
Drinks: Dry white wine, Evian, tea
Eats: French food, tuna, sushi, frozen yogurt
Before Metallica: None
Pre-Metallica career: Paper boy, gas station attendant
Likes: Hanging with my wife, running, scuba diving, skiing, movies, fashion, art
Listens to: Oasis, AIC, Black Grape, my wife
Heroes: Guillermo Vilas (Argentinian tennis player), Ritchie Blackmore, Ace Frehley
First concert: Deep Purple, 1973, Copenhagen
Describes self as: Anticipating, stubborn, spontaneous, sarcastic, talkative, silly, squeaky

Latino singer Jennifer Lopez's video for "If You Had My Love" won Pop Clip Of The Year at the Billboard Music Video 1999 Awards!

Useful tools for creating attractive Webpages

By Monzur Morshed

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Review: Quake 3: Arena

By RA

Quake III Arena has so much potential. It has what I believe to be the best 3D engine on the market and the best graphics I've ever seen in a first-person shooter. It's come a long way since the days of Quake 2.

But is it fun? Do I ache to play it every stinking minute of my life—the way I did when I first installed Doom? Has it made me fall out of my chair laughing, the way I did whenever I'd shrink one of my buddies in Duke Nukem 3D? Has it changed my life?

number

Q3A's storyline is simple. Xaero, the grand champion of The Arena, has yet to be beaten. You must fight your way through The Arena and do so.

The breakthrough here is a game engine that provides incredible graphics and Internet play. The graphical engine supports curved surfaces, which allows landscape elements like the giant demonic tongues to appear life-like. Internet play is remarkably lag-free even over a 56.6k modem. Some ghost images crop up, but, overall, Q3A is a major improvement.

In single-player mode, you'll progress through the game's 26 levels—each more challenging than the last—in an attempt to be crowned grand champion of The Arena. In your way are Q3A's 32 AI-controlled gladiators—human marines, undead skeletal warriors, and hovering rocket-troopers.

The AI is sharp. Enemies dodge your rockets and lead you with their own fire.

But I couldn't shake the feeling that, on the medium to hardest difficulty settings, I was fighting bots. They rarely missed. Later in the game, circle-strafing gunfights became an almost no-win-situation and I was forced to fight dirty.

By comparison, Unreal: Tournament's bots have so much more attitude that they feel closer to the real thing.

In multiplayer mode, you'll choose from Free for all, Team Deathmatch, and Capture the Flag (CTF). Yawn. With passe fare like CTF, who cares if Q3A screams over the Net?

And, save Q3A's graphics and Internet play, Q3A's single- and multiplayer offer nothing groundbreaking. At least not until fans design Q3A mods that improve the lackluster fun factor of this store-bought deathmatch utility.

Until then, you'll find me playing Unreal: Tournament. Quake is no longer numero uno in my book.

Tips:

* Circle Strafing will beat most bots, but against tougher opponents you'll need to snipe, camp power-ups, or lead them from around corners with rockets.

* Always keep an eye on the Quad damage power-up. You will not win if your opponent has a 4x damage advantage over you.

* Gradually increase your mouse sensitivity. True masters of the first-person shooter use a very high setting. And this allows them to turn faster . . . literally.

Needs at least a P266 w/8MB of VRAM. A PIII450 is recommended!