

# A funny spin on modern romance and the dating scene

Producer Paul J. Alessi talks about *Knuckle Draggers*, part of T.O.'s ReelHeART Film Festival

**K**nuckle Draggers is a humorous but very real look at the state of modern male-female relationships. Written and directed by Alex Ranarivelo, produced by Paul J. Alessi, and co-produced by Amie Barsky and Baptiste DeRivel, the film is a relationship movie from a male perspective. The story follows Ethan, an all around nice guy who gets dumped because he wasn't able to provide his fiancée with the plush, stable life her friends were living. Desperate to get her back, he seeks help from his older brother Kyle, a tough talking sexist who seems to have a way with the ladies. Kyle gives Ethan a crash course on women and dating much to the disgust of some of Ethan's female friends. Just when it seems Kyle's misogynistic theories are about to prove themselves true, things take an unexpected turn and force Ethan, Kyle, and their friends to reassess their views on relationships.

*Knuckle Draggers* will have its Canadian premiere at the ReelHeART International Film Festival (which runs in Toronto from June 22-26) on Saturday, June 27 at 7:15 p.m. after a sold-out World Premiere in Newport Beach California, and two "Rising Star" awards: Outstanding Feature by a New Filmmaker/ Producer & Best Close-Up in a feature film at the DelRay Beach Film Festival.

*Knuckle Draggers* is a film about friends, provokes questions about what modern couples want versus what they need, and how their needs may not have evolved much from those of our caveman ancestors.

Scottish actor Ross McCall heads a dynamic ensemble cast in the lead role of Ethan. His credits include the HBO mini-series *Band of Brothers* and most recently *Crash*, the Starz TV series.

Omar Gooding plays Ethan's best friend Russell. Gooding's credits include *Baby Boy*, the HBO series *Deadwood*,



Above and below at right: Actor/producer Alex J. Alessi in scenes from *Knuckle Draggers*.

and he's just joined the cast of the upcoming Jerry Bruckheimer TV series *Miami Trauma*.

Amie Barsky plays Patricia, Ethan's strong-minded female best friend.

Paul J. Alessi, plays Kyle, Ethan's sexist, outspoken brother. His credits include the *Ten til Noon* and the TV series *Desire*.

While the Hollywood producer was born in the U.S., Alessi has Italian roots – his grandparents were originally from Sicily (specifically from Linguaglossa, which is in the province of Catania), but eventually emigrated to the U.S. in search of a new life.

**Alex Ranarivelo (the director) is your associate in the film company Partners in Crime Films. Why did the two of you decide to make a comedy?**

"I tend to make the "bad boy" projects



and I wanted to do a film that was more mainstream that could touch a wider audience. I felt *Knuckle Draggers* had a strong script with many extremely relatable story

lines. Ranarivelo and I have made shorts films, commercials and music videos, and we wanted to tackle a feature film together."

**I have read that it was sheer fate that you began your career as an actor. Is this true?**

"I guess you could say that it was fate. While I was living in New York I was working on a construction site finishing up a job for a clothing line. One of the models didn't show up for an event, so they asked me if I would take his place. At first I was not interested but after they told me how much they would pay I jumped on board and I haven't looked back."

**You have been in 11 movies where you have played parts like a psychopath, a rapist, a serial killer, and a marine in Iraq. Which one of these "bad boy" roles do you most identify with?**

"Wow, I'd have to say that when I am breaking down a character I always find something to identify with in each role, but honestly as a "bad boy" role I identify the best with a "gangster."

**Your movie *Knuckle Draggers* will be presented at Toronto's ReelHeART Film Festival. What are your expectations?**

"We are very honoured and excited to be chosen as the closing night film. I expect to have a great time and that *Knuckle Draggers* will be well received. If by some chance we win an award I will do my very bad interpretation of an Irish jig!" ♦

— P. Be.

*Knuckle Draggers* will be presented as the official closing night film at ReelHeART International Film Festival on Saturday June 27 at 7:15 p.m. at Innis Town Hall, Innis College, 2 Sussex Street, University of Toronto campus (1 block south of St. George subway station).

## BOX OFFICE

### Top 10 films in Canada



- 1. The Hangover**  
\$2,705,441
- 2. Up**  
\$2,421,954
- 3. The Taking of Pelham 123**  
\$1,543,864
- 4. Land of the Lost**  
\$550,939
- 5. Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian**  
\$549,307
- 6. Angels and Demons**  
\$507,039
- 7. Terminator Salvation**  
\$498,345
- 8. Star Trek**  
\$489,540
- 9. Imagine That**  
\$260,893
- 10. Drag Me to Hell**  
\$210,301

## HAPPENINGS

### Father's Day Archery Workshop

Casa Loma puts on a three-hour workshop specially aimed at children and their dads for an unforgettable Father's Day afternoon. Resident archery coach Shawn Adams teaches the history of this ancient sport and demonstrates techniques. Takes place June 20-21 at Casa Loma, 1 Austin Terrace. For more information call 416-923-1171 ext. 205 or 215 or visit [www.casaloma.org](http://www.casaloma.org).

### Father's Day at the Toronto Zoo

Father's Day isn't just for humans. This year, visitors to the Toronto Zoo can also toast famous Zoo dads like Rowdy, Stripes and Charles. Takes place June 21 at the Toronto Zoo, 361A Old Finch Ave. For more information call 416-392-

5929 or visit [www.torontozoo.com](http://www.torontozoo.com).

### Father's Day Royal Brunch

Casa Loma's Father's Day Royal Brunch Buffet includes admission to the castle and gardens. There are four sittings with a wide array of choices, as well as a complimentary cup of apple and beer cider for every guest. Takes place June 21 at Casa Loma 1 Austin Terrace. For more information call 416-923-1171, ask for catering office.

### Because You Are Worth It Father's Day Brunch

The Gourmet Connection, the catering company, is hosting its first Father's Day Brunch. Besides food, there is also live entertainment by Silhouettes Steelband Combo featuring Mark Mosca, Dick Lochan, The JuiceMan, a DJ and more. Takes place June

21, Malvern Recreation Centre, 30 Sewells Road, Scarborough. For more information visit [www.gourmetconnectioncatering.com](http://www.gourmetconnectioncatering.com).

### Father's Day Brunch Cruise

Take dad on the Mariposa Belle for a Father's Day Brunch Cruise. Offered is a buffet-style brunch on the water while guests can take in Toronto's skyline. Reservations for this event are required. Takes place June 21 at Mariposa Cruises, 207 Queens Quay W. For more information visit [www.mariposacruises.com](http://www.mariposacruises.com).

### 2009 Safeway Father's Day Run for Prostate Cancer

Guests are invited to join the annual Safeway Father's Day Walk/Run. Walkers and runners come together from Halifax to Victoria. This year the national effort is to raise \$1,000,000 to aid in the prevention and cure of prostate cancer. Takes place on

June 21 at the Distillery District, 55 Mill St. For more information visit [www.fathersdayrun.ca](http://www.fathersdayrun.ca).

### Toronto Jazz Festival

Everyone from the casual listener to hardcore jazz aficionados will find a show that satisfies at the Toronto Jazz Festival. Takes place June 26 - July 5 at various locations in Toronto and the GTA. For more information visit [www.tojazz.com](http://www.tojazz.com).

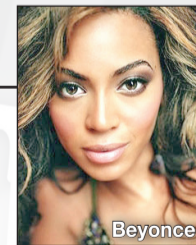
### Global Grooves

Toronto hosts a free concert series downtown. Global Grooves is evening entertainment every Friday during most of the summer months. The sounds provided are from all over the globe. Takes place June 26 - Sept. 4 at Yonge-Dundas Square, 40 Dundas St. W. For more information visit [www.ydsquare.ca](http://www.ydsquare.ca).

## CONCERT LISTINGS

### June

- 21- New Kids on the Block, Molson Amphitheatre
- 22 - The Fray, Molson Amphitheatre
- 24- Theory of a Deadman, Hamilton Convention Centre
- 26- Air Supply, Fallsview Casino Resort
- 26- Herbie Hancock, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts
- 30- Sonic Youth, Massey Hall
- 30- Wilco, Massey Hall



### July

- 2- The Offspring, Molson Amphitheatre
- 4- Def Leppard with Poison & Cheap Trick, Molson Amphitheatre
- 5- Tony Bennett, Canon Theatre
- 6- John Butler, Phoenix Concert Theatre
- 9- Judas Priest, Molson Amphitheatre
- 10- Stone Temple Pilots, Casino Rama
- 16- Green Day, Copps Coliseum
- 20- Beyoncé, Molson Amphitheatre
- 20- KISS, Casino Rama
- 22- The Doobie Brothers, Fallsview Casino Resort
- 26- Katy Perry, Molson Amphitheatre