

# The Bone Collector overshadowed by Ashes

IN any normal week, the mystery thriller *The Bone Collector*, with Denzel Washington and Angelina Jolie would have enjoyed top billing.

Instead, it has to live in the shadow of *Angela's Ashes*.

Not too unlike *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Seven*, *The Bone Collector* has its moments, but still falls short of the mark

established by those films. Lincoln Rhyme (Washington), a noted investigator, now paralysed, spends all his time bedridden, from where he issues a series of instructions to Amelia Donaghy (Jolie), a New York beat rookie.

When she does the preliminary crime-scene work on a body she discovers (even stopping a train in its tracks to preserve the site), Rhyme

decides that she's a natural with a gift for forensic work. Meanwhile, the killer is obsessed with delivering "messages" to the authorities. The bodies of randomly selected victims start turning up surrounded by "clues" (old newspapers, carved bones, etc) literally left in plain view around the corpse.

Rhyme insists on sending her headfirst and alone into

dangerous bloodbath situations—putting her life on the line allows him to "see" the crime scene through her eyes, via all of the usual state-of-the-art gadgetry.

Due on Friday is *Bicentennial Man*, starring Robin Williams.

Directed by Chris Columbus, this one follows the life and times of the title character, an android (Williams) who is purchased as a

household robot programmed to perform menial tasks.

The Martin family quickly learn that they don't have an ordinary robot when Andrew begins to experience emotions and creative thought. In a story that spans two centuries, Andrew learns the intricacies of humanity, life and love.

Also schedule for the

same date is *Music of the Heart*, directed by W. Craven, and starring Meryl Streep, Aidan Quinn, Gloria Estefan and Angela Bassett.

This is the inspiration of true story of a woman who, once she's learned to believe in herself, was able to give countless children a beautiful gift, proving to them that they could accomplish anything.

## Ashes to run and run

JOHN O'SHAUGHNESSY goes behind the scenes at *Angela's Ashes*

LIMERICK audiences have reacted positively to *Angela's Ashes* and it is a safe bet that Alan Parker's film adaptation of Frank McCourt's book will run and run at both the Omniplex and Savoy.

Much has been written about the content, so let us take a look behind the scenes into the making of the movie.

*Angela's Ashes* had the advantage of being financed by two studios, Paramount and Universal.

The shoot started with the various scenes in Leamy's National School, actually filmed in the empty St Kevin's School in Dublin.

Parker decided to shoot some of the more harrowing scenes early on, to prepare all for what was to follow and to familiarise the younger members of the cast with the more serious, bleaker parts of the story.

Geoffrey Kirkland, production designer, and Jennifer Williams, set decorator, converted another derelict Dublin school into the St Vincent de Paul charitable society, where Angela suffers the humiliation and indignity of begging from the assembled "V de P" officials.

The next week's filming saw them pitching headlong into some of the sadder, more serious, scenes at the graveyard as Angela and Malachy bury, first Oliver and then his twin, Eugene.

Followed two weeks of interior work at Ardmore Studios. The tiny sets all had floating walls to open up this confined, cramped world to the camera, lights and the dozens of attendant crew.

From Ardmore, they



Pic *Angela's Ashes*, now in Limerick

moved to Cork, where the cobbled alleyways and steps added to the mosaic of Frank's world. With the help of the local gardai, they were able to close down some of the longer runs of the city and re-

dress each and every shop window and doorway.

Above them the rain machines poured down.

Although they were building Roden Lane in Dublin, they had also found streets in Cork

which had good period detail which would be their "Windmill Street", and the narrow archways that in the "joined together" story, would appear to be adjacent to Roden Lane.

As each street would

have resonance in all three acts of the story, each scene had to be repeated with the three different Franks and Malachys.

From Cork, they moved to Limerick, after one day's filming at Cobh Harbour.

The crew took over the centre of the city for three days. Each evening, they retreated to South's pub to down a Guinness and rub shoulders with the ghost of Malachy.

Their other priority was to capture shots of the River Shannon. At first light each morning, they positioned a camera at one of the few spots that afforded a view uncluttered by modern architecture.

They used small boats carrying machines to drift smoke into the backgrounds to soften any contemporary embarrassment. Similarly, each evening as the light fell, they repeated the process until all the shots needed for the film were in the can.

Back in Ardmore Studios, they began work on the interior scenes for the "Italy" sequence (stairs at Roden Lane). The Christmas scene where Malachy Sr takes his leave of the family, presented a particular dramatic challenge.

Both Emily Watson and Robert Carlyle wanted to play this scene down because it so easily could have slipped into melodrama.

The next week of location took them to the vast mental hospital of St Ita's in Portrane. Here they filmed the City Home Hospital interiors as Frank recovers from typhoid. The wide corridors also gave them the Henry Street Post Office set, where the older Frank verbally duels with the officious Miss Barry.

Leamy's School playground, Dr Troy's eye dispensary and the Irish dancing class interiors,

were filmed in Inchicore and Kilmainham.

The interiors of Mr. Finucane's house were filmed in a small house in Ranelagh, Dublin.

Back at the studios once more, they completed their interiors for the Windmill Street section of the story. The walls were removable, which was fortunate when filming Malachy, Frank, Malachy, Oliver and Eugene, all in the same bed, battling with fleas.

For the interiors of the Franciscan Church, permission was given to use the Holy Name Church in Ranelagh. Since the story took place in a period before Vatican II, it entailed moving the front altar.

The cobbled streets outside Dublin's Guinness Brewery were used to film Middle Frank "driving" Mr Hannon's coal cart. The actor who plays Mr Hannon, Shay Gormley, sadly died soon after the film was completed.

Denied the Redeemerist Church in Limerick, the church scenes were shot at the Church of the Oblate Fathers, Inchicore, Dublin, where the priest harangues the boys in the congregation.

Theresa's house, both exterior and interior, was filmed in Greystones.

The interiors of Grandma's house were built at Ardmore, as were the New York tenements in the opening scenes.

For Limerick Railway Station, Pearse Street in Dublin was substituted, borrowing the period steam trains from the Irish Railway Preservation Society.

The final two weeks were spent filming on a purpose-built set in the centre of Dublin.

Filming wrapped up on December 22, 1998, having taken 75 shooting days to complete.

The final cut was done in London.

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