



Time Out

GULF TIMES FEATURES

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A life of quiet struggle

For nearly 20 years, the Calimlins, well-to-do family in Wisconsin, hid Erma Martinez, an illegal immigrant from the Philippines, in their home as a maid. Now the family have been found guilty in America's first forced labour conviction not involving the use of violence. VIKKI ORTIZ reports

ELNORA Calimlin fixed her gaze on the younger woman stepping onto the witness stand.

For nearly 20 years, the two had shared an almost unbreakable secret. Calimlin, a successful Wisconsin doctor, hid Erma Martinez, an illegal immigrant, in her home as a maid.

During her two decades of servitude, Martinez surrendered the things that most people take for granted: the freedom to talk on the phone, to learn to drive, to date, to fall in love.

Now their secret was forced into the open, and the women were about to trade positions. At 40, Martinez would finally start her life.

And at 60, Calimlin was about to lose everything. Yet she believed things could turn around at this pivotal moment during her trial in May 2006.

She'd told her lawyers she believed in her heart that Martinez would spare the family, that she would take the witness stand and testify that her living arrangement was based on mutual respect and understanding of Filipino culture.

Not slavery.

Prosecutors saw Martinez as a victim, plucked as an innocent 19-year-old from an impoverished life in her native Philippines in 1985, only to spend the next 19 years hidden and exploited in the US.

But the ordeal was not always so clear-cut – even from Martinez's perspective.

For someone who lost nearly half of her life, Martinez was surprisingly stoic in court. There were no tearful tirades or angry confrontations.

Her emotional letters home over the years, however, portray a woman who was conflicted and confused, torn between a desire for freedom and loyalty to captors who paid her paltry wages, yet bought her Christmas presents and took her along on family vacations to Florida and Michigan.

The letters between Martinez and her mother in Camarines Sur, a rural province in the Philippines, also show she was just as manipulated by her own family back home.

Martinez, the dutiful eldest daughter of uneducated farmers, became the sole provider for her parents and siblings. She paid for the bulk of their school tuition, medical procedures and even their weddings. Over the years, her family grew more and more dependent on her in their struggle to emerge from poverty.

Her story speaks to the vast cultural differences that have divided the Filipino community in the Milwaukee area.

The jury found the Calimlins' crimes so severe that their case became America's first forced labour conviction not involving use of violence. The couple reported to federal prison last week.

It is hard to imagine the Calimlins' lives without Google searches, eBay auctions, online shopping and Skype – but in reality, it is only a matter of a few years since we somehow managed to struggle from one day to the next without ever logging on.

Charles Mok, head of the Hong Kong Internet Society,

Yet even as the Calimlins begin their four-year sentences, some in the Filipino community still believe that Martinez is the villain.

She owes her freedom to one young Filipino-American who felt differently.

Elnora Calimlin needed help. In 1985, she and her husband were juggling the demands of adjusting to a new country while raising three young kids. When Calimlin's mother visited from the Philippines, she saw how exhausted her daughter was and made a suggestion: Why not bring one of the maids from their home in the Philippines to Wisconsin?

Elnora Calimlin's father took care of the arrangements. He accompanied Martinez on a flight to Chicago, and posed as her doctor bringing the 19-year-old abroad for treatment.

The day Martinez arrived at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago, the entire Calimlin family waited outside the gate. "It was sort of like welcoming somebody who's going to be a member of the family," Elnora Calimlin would testify.

Martinez agreed to work for an initial period of five years. Calimlin's father handed Martinez's passport to his daughter.

In the months that followed, Martinez adjusted to her surroundings. She learned to use cookbooks. To make grocery lists. To save money by cutting her own hair.

Martinez also learned that her new employers wanted to keep her hidden from even their closest friends. Sometimes they introduced her as a distant relative. During parties she hid in her basement bedroom with the door closed as guests dined on meals she helped prepare.

At home, she led the phone ring. She could pick up only after 10 rings – code that one of the Calimlins was calling.

Even her letters were handled in a clandestine way. Her parents wrote to a post office box registered to the Calimlins. Martinez sent her letters in a double envelope, addressed with her name on the inside, without a name on the outside.

The Calimlins kept her in line with threats of deportation. They told her if she found out she was an illegal immigrant she would be sent back to the Philippines. The Calimlin family would be in trouble as well, they told her.

Yet despite the restrictions, Martinez remained upbeat. She accepted her place in the world and, in heartfelt letters to her family, repeated one line again and again: "If you're wondering about me, I'm fine. Even if I'm lonely."

Martinez earned \$150 a month for the first 10 years and \$400 a month thereafter. She believed most of that money was sent to the Philippines, but no one can be sure.

It was a complicated process. First, the Calimlins told Elnora's



Above: Erma Martinez ... freedom at last.

Left: Jefferson N Calimlin (right) his wife, Elnora Calimlin (center), and daughter, Tina Calimlin (left), arrive at the federal court house in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on November 16, 2006.

parents in the Philippines – the Mendozas – how much Martinez earned.

The Mendozas would front the money for the Calimlins, and someone from the Martinez family would travel 10 hours to pick up the earnings.

If someone from the extended Calimlin family travelled from the US to the Philippines, they could also deliver some of Martinez's earnings. But the system was irregular, and not every transaction was documented, investigators later found.

Money did make it to Martinez's family. And for the next decade, her earnings gave her parents and siblings a lifestyle they could never have had otherwise.

Her salary paid for the education of all her younger siblings, from costumes in the Christmas pageants to college computer programmes.

The dutiful daughter paid for her father's blood pressure medicine and her mother's tumour operation and for plots of land.

With the needs of her family in the Philippines, there was little left to fund Martinez's dream: a house in her hometown of Sampaloc. That's where she wanted to raise her own

kids someday, near the town's basilica.

Still, she continued her work, year after year, missing milestone after milestone.

Just before Christmas 1992, seven years into her stay with the Calimlins, Martinez received a letter from her mother with news almost too painful to bear.

Jesson, the youngest of her siblings, died after a sudden case of bronchitis. He was 2 years old, and she had never seen him.

Over the next decade, the three young children Martinez cared for in the US grew into adults. They got drivers' licences, went to college and landed full-time jobs.

Martinez lived in the Calimlins' six-bedroom, \$1.2m home, where her duties stayed the same. The specifics of those duties vary.

By Calimlin's account, each morning Martinez toasted bagels or set out cereal for breakfast. She cooked dinner and weekend brunches of bacon, rice and eggs. Once a week, Martinez vacuumed the \$600 square-foot house. She did laundry every Saturday.

Martinez testified about several additional jobs, from waxing the car and changing its oil to painting the

house and polishing medical equipment at Jefferson Calimlin Sr's medical practice.

After the Calimlin children grew, they helped to keep Martinez hidden.

When Martinez made a grocery list, one of the children went to the store. The Calimlin children followed their parents' rules when it came to Martinez. They called her "Tita" – "Auntie" in the Filipino language of Tagalog. They never told anyone, not even their best friends, that their family had a maid.

By the late 1990s the Calimlins' younger son, Jack, had a serious girlfriend, Sherry Bantug was a beautiful Filipino-American girl.

In time, Jack Calimlin brought Bantug home to meet the family. And Martinez.

At first he told Bantug that the woman in the kitchen was a relative from Chicago. But after a while, the explanation didn't make sense, Bantug testified.

She questioned why "Tita" seemed to be visiting all the time. She didn't understand why Martinez didn't sit with the family during dinner.

Bantug again confronted her fiancé about the mysterious woman at his parents' home. This time he told the truth.

After Jack Calimlin and Bantug became engaged, Bantug reached out to Martinez and was saddened by what she found.

Martinez told Bantug she had a boyfriend in the Philippines but hadn't seen him since she left. She said she longed for her own children but feared she'd miss her chance.

The marriage between Jack Calimlin and Bantug lasted seven months.

Three years after Bantug first met Martinez in the Calimlin home, the couple filed for divorce. And Bantug made an anonymous call to the US Department of Immigration and Naturalization Services.

While hundreds of thousands of

foreign domestic workers toil in American homes, illegal or abusive arrangements are still largely unreported. Cases are rare. Between 2001 and 2003, 110 people have been prosecuted for human trafficking around the US.

Since 1974, domestic workers in the US have been protected under federal law. But foreign workers are often unfamiliar with these rights.

Even when domestic workers are mistreated or abused, some still won't report the offences because of the enormous sense of responsibility they feel to provide for their families back home.

Such was the case with Martinez, who, even after 17 years in the Calimlin home, felt obligated to stay. Federal agents arrived with a search warrant at the Calimlins' home in September 2004 after a lengthy investigation. As they raided the house, they confronted Jefferson Jr in the bathroom and asked if he had seen Martinez.

Not in about a year, the eldest of the Calimlin children replied. In truth, Martinez was in the basement.

The FBI and Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents entered a room just past a dining room table with four chairs.

The box was hastily made. Boxes were piled in the corner. Perfume bottles, beauty products and a blow dryer cluttered the top of a dresser. Clothes hung along the rail of a StairMaster machine.

There was a door next to the StairMaster. The agents discovered Martinez just beyond that door. She was hiding in her own closet, terrified of the people sent to rescue her.

The Calimlin case has been difficult for the local Filipino-American community to understand.

Even people who had never met the Calimlins wanted to defend the family and explain Filipino maid culture to the larger Milwaukee community.

"Americans, they probably think it's slavery, but back in the Philippines, you're doing (the maid) a big favour," said Raymond Ballecer of Milwaukee, whose family had two live-in maids in the Philippines but does not have maids in the US.

Elnora and Jefferson Calimlin leaned back in the leather defendant's chairs of Judge Randa's

courtroom. It was November 16, 2006, six months after a federal jury found them guilty of harbouring an illegal immigrant for financial gain, conspiracy to harbour an illegal immigrant, forced labour and attempted forced labour.

Prosecutors had recommended just over six years in prison. Because they were not US citizens, the Calimlins also faced deportation.

Randa entered the courtroom and took his seat next to the American flag. Moments later, the heavy door to the courtroom opened.

Martinez walked in sporting a new look. The stiff, pink knit blazer and pinstripe trousers of her last court appearance were replaced by khaki pants, a white blouse and a black leather jacket. She carried a Louis Vuitton handbag and wore black sunglasses on top of her head.

She held the hand of a woman hired by the prosecution to comfort her.

Martinez trembled as she told the courtroom that the case "broke her heart into a million pieces" that she "didn't know how to put back together."

She said she trusted the Calimlins and didn't know they were lying to her from the start.

Martinez, who has been granted a rare visa for victims of severe trafficking cases, will be eligible to apply for a green card in three years. She said she had a new job in Chicago, at a cosmetics store.

At her new job, Martinez said, she worked more than 40 hours, she earned overtime. After a day's work, she still had time for herself.

Martinez said she still loved the Calimlins. She never wished for prison, deportation or the stress the case had caused her. She wanted more than what she had.

"I was waiting for that freedom," she said.

After Martinez spoke, Randa sentenced the couple to four years in prison each. (Jefferson Jr later received three years' probation). The judge has not made a decision on restitution. Prosecutors have recommended back wages of \$704,635.

Martinez didn't stay long enough to hear the outcome. Midway through the sentencing, she stood up, walked down the hall, onto the elevator and outside into the cold, open air.

– Milwaukee Journal Sentinel/MCT



The Calimlins' Brookfield house – an 8,600sq ft spread valued at \$1.2m – is where Erma worked as a live-in maid for 19 years.

Seven ways to survive without Internet

By Hazel Parry

THE devastation caused to Internet lines by the Taiwan earthquake shortly before the New Year left millions of people across Asia cut off from e-mail and connections for days. Even now, connections across the region are sluggish.

In a world where high-speed connections have been taken for granted, the event has forced us to face up to the reality of what life without the Internet would be like and in many cases exposed people's inability to cope.

It is hard to imagine we ever lived without Google searches, eBay auctions, online shopping and Skype – but in reality, it is only a matter of a few years since we somehow managed to struggle from one day to the next without ever logging on.

Charles Mok, head of the Hong Kong Internet Society,

said the Internet disruption caused the earthquake should serve as a "wake-up call."

"There are people who should think about whether they can plan their life in a different way," he said.

"If for some reason they can't use the Internet for a period of time and they just sit there complaining, maybe there are other things they should think about doing."

So to help prepare for the next time Asia is cut off from the outside world by a natural disaster that severs our Internet connections, here are seven things you can do to remain sane when the computers are down.

1. Pick up a phone. Put a voice to the names of business contacts you have known for years but never met or spoken to by phoning instead of e-mailing. Alternatively arrange a meeting over coffee. Hearing a voice or seeing a face is far better than trying to build confidence and trust.

2. Use your legs. The world of instant messaging and e-mail has created workplaces in which no-one speaks to each other where orders, reports, requests are sent via the Internet.

The consequences can also be bad for your health. Try instead using your legs, get up from your chair, take a walk around the office and talk to your colleagues.

3. Go to the library. An online search may be fast and effortless, but there is nothing like a reference library to make you really appreciate the world of knowledge. Surround yourself in books and get a taste of what it was like to engross yourself in research before the Internet.

4. Write a letter. If you want to say something and can't do it in person, there is no better way than a letter.

Psychologist Dr Lisa Matthews, of the University of Westminster in the UK, says

many people find it easier to express their emotions on paper.

"It is a very warm gesture and women in particular appreciate them," she said.

5. Rediscover the art of conversation. Use the Internet-free time and time away from chat rooms and game sites to talk and play with your children, or even just to have a family meal together. Resurrect old board games, go to the movie, and enjoy some quality time with your family.

6. Go shopping. With Internet shopping becoming more popular there may come a time when it's not the done thing to go to the mall.

Make the most of window shopping rather than browsing, handle real cash or simply wander around one of the wet markets and take in the sights, sounds and smells.

7. Enjoy the freedom. It

is a well known fact most of us are slaves to the Internet.

A survey last year commissioned by Hewlett Packard claimed office workers spent more time – an average of 4 hours a day – talking to friends online and messaging than they did actually working.

Researchers found workers showed a complete lack of discipline in handling e-mails, unable to resist the temptation to answer immediately.

Health writer Jane Alexander, author of *The Overload Solution* says the consequence is a constant state of readiness to react to e-mails causing what she terms "overload" – something which happens when you have too many demands pressing on you at the same time.

It also means work pressures can continue even at home. So use the current Internet slowdown as an excuse to free yourself from the computer and enjoy the extra time on your hands. – DPA



An alternative to email? Old-fashioned letter writing with a fountain pen.

People and panthers collide in rural Florida

Southwest Florida has seen 58 panther roadkills since 2000, a record toll on the state's most endangered species, writes CURTIS MORGAN

TO growing populations — people and panthers — collide with increasing frequency every year in Florida. It's not hard to guess which is losing.

Eleven of the endangered cats were flattened by drivers last year. It was a record toll on one of the state's rarest animals and a serious bite out of a species numbering perhaps 100 adults in the wild.

Panthers were struck from Card Sound Road in South Miami-Dade County to Interstate 4 southwest of Orlando. But the prime kill zone proved to be in the heart of panther country — booming Southwest Florida, centered around a handful of once rural roads in eastern Collier County.

That area accounts for close to half the state's 58 panther roadkills since 2000, according to a study by University of Central Florida biologists that urges new wildlife crossings and other projects to protect not only panthers but other wildlife.

Nancy Payton, Southwest Florida field representative for the Florida Wildlife Federation, hopes the study, completed last month, will reverse panther death trends in eastern Collier County — rising from eight kills in the entire 1990s to 24 in the past six years.

"I don't think we'll get down to zero, but we can certainly safeguard roads that panthers consistently use," she said.

She said the county and two developers already have agreed to speed construction of at least five wildlife crossings — a combination of roadside fencing and strategically located underpasses for animals — and activists are pushing for more. But how much they'll help the panther population expand remains to be seen, said Darrell Land, panther team leader for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Near extinction a decade ago



Left: Two wildlife crossings are now under construction in a stretch of State Road 29 in Collier County, Florida. Above: A female cougar from Texas snarls at newsmen allowed to photograph the cat that was going to be released into the wilds to help save the species of the Everglades Panthers in the Fakahatchee Swamp in Florida.



Left: Two wildlife crossings are now under construction in a stretch of State Road 29 in Collier County, Florida. Above: A female cougar from Texas snarls at newsmen allowed to photograph the cat that was going to be released into the wilds to help save the species of the Everglades Panthers in the Fakahatchee Swamp in Florida.

with as few as 30 adults weakened by in-breeding, the panther population has rebounded thanks largely to a cross-breed program with Texas cougars. They've slowly but steadily multiplied to an estimated 80 to 100.

Land and Chris Belden, panther recovery coordinator for the US Fish and Wildlife Service, agree the rising toll represents evidence of not just more cars but more cats.

"There is a kind of positive," Land said. "The fact they're able to sustain these kinds of losses tells me there is a lot of potential for the population to increase in size. They just don't have the space to do it."

The squeeze comes between the cat's insatiable demand for vast space — males typically prowl 350sq km territories — and development. State and federal agencies contend they lack power to control habitat loss, the cat's biggest threat.

"They're not going to get any more land than there is right now and that land is being con-

verted for other purposes," Belden said.

A new federal recovery pins the panther's best hope on establishing cats far from the core population in Southwest Florida — either by creating protected natural corridors to ease movements or by "translocation," meaning trucking cats to other promising locales in the state and Southeast.

Reed Noss, a University of Central Florida biology professor who directed the roadkill study with colleague Daniel Smith, believes the Florida panther can't continue to sustain the hit it's taking on Southwest Florida's roads.

"If traffic volumes keep increasing, we're going to have a much greater potential for roadkill," he said. "We're going to lose the panther if it's confined to its present range. It's just a matter of time."

While every cat carcass probably isn't found, vehicles are the leading cause of documented panther deaths over the past six years, claiming roughly

10% or the adult population annually. By comparison, last year some 86 manatees were killed by boats, the second highest number ever, but that represents less than 3% of the estimated population.

For Payton, the promise of more crossings is a breakthrough in a 10-year campaign. The \$100,000 study was funded by the National Wildlife Federation and supported by two major developers, the Barron Collier Co and Citigate Development, under a county program that provides builders incentives to preserve rural lands.

Collier is a partner in Ave Maria, a university and town of 25,000 planned near Immokalee. Citigate is building an industrial park.

Payton said the program should speed construction of crossings and fencing in the next few years and cut costs of each to perhaps \$1m.

existing roads typically takes a lot longer and costs a lot more. The state, for example, is now building two crossings along State Road 29 that were called for a part of the four-lane of Alligator Alley, a project completed in 1992.

A crossing planned for the Tamiami Trail near the Turner River, site of seven panther deaths, could take a decade, said Elizabeth Fleming, state representative for the Defenders of Wildlife.

"We're very glad we're in their work plan," Fleming said, but "transportation projects are planned far, far in advance. It's frustrating for members concerned about the panther."

Noss is concerned some crossings could be built too quickly — potentially not in the best locations to protect panther pathways.

"There is still more work that should be done," he said, "but they are in such a damn hurry to get these developments done."

While the study was a good start, Noss said, researchers collected only eight months of data

Escapes from Norway's fish farms threaten stocks of wild salmon

By Wilfred Vuillaume

HUNDREDS of thousands of salmon escape from Norwegian fish farms each year carrying parasites that pose a serious threat to wild salmon, a growing phenomenon that has fish farmers, environmentalists and authorities worried.

Some 790,000 salmon and trout slipped through the nets last year, compared to 722,000 the previous year. This despite the fact that the salmon are continuously monitored. Underwater cameras and divers are constantly on the lookout for small holes in the nets of the aluminum cages that lie 35m under the surface.

The escapes are "a crime against the environment", Peter Gullesstad, the head of the Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries, told AFP, adding: "Norway is facing its biggest ecological challenge."

The fish that escape from Norway's 1,000 fish farms, located in fjords and rivers along the 21,347km of coastline, threaten the maritime ecosystem. "Salmon lice is the biggest threat" to stocks of wild salmon in the long term, explained Espen Farstad, a spokesman for the Norwegian hunting and fishing association NFF.

The lice, which live in salt water and are known by the Latin name *Lepeophtheirus salmonis*, bite the salmon until they bleed, feeding off of the fish's mucus and causing the least resistant fish to die.

Most susceptible are young wild salmon swimming in the fjords and rivers before they head off to the open sea, as their immune systems are not yet fully developed.

"The lice is a problem at all salmon farms around the world. In Norway, it poses a particular problem since fish is the country's second-largest natural resource export after oil and gas. Also, as farmed salmon increasingly mix with wild salmon, the genetic composition of the latter changes."

"In the future, the entire genetic system of the wild fauna could be modified," Farstad warned. "We are doing everything we can to prevent salmon from escaping from their cages and infecting the nearby rivers," insisted Bert Victor Haugen, a fish farmer in the Finnmark region in Norway's far north.

The industry is using frogmen, anti-lice baths, antibiotics, vaccines, and any other methods available to help fish farms and commercial fishing co-exist in harmony.

"But for environmental organisations, not enough is being done. The fish farmers are not taking the problem seriously enough. The farms at fault should be punished," said Maren Esmark of the Norwegian branch of WWF.

She wants authorities to introduce severe sanctions on the fish farms. The complaints filed to the police are seldom followed up, according to Gullesstad.

The fisheries ministry meanwhile says that the fish farm escapes are a top priority, as Norway has a reputation as a world leader to defend.

In 2006, fish farm exports totalled 18.7bn kroner (\$2.9bn), up 24% from a year earlier, according to the Norwegian fisheries export committee EFF. The increase is due primarily to rising demand for salmon and the arrival of cod and halibut farms.

Norway is Europe's main supplier of fish, both farmed and wild, with a market share of 62% in 2006.

And last year, fish farm exports for the first time exceeded exports from the traditional fishing sector, reaching 1.7bn kroner.

In July, a special committee was set up by the fisheries ministry to improve security at the fish farms. "Now all fish farm equipment has to be certified by the committee. A very strict inspection takes place once a year," said Rune Bildeng, an advisor to the fisheries ministry.

In order to meet the new demands, Norway's fish farms are slowly being turned into ultra-modern fortresses, resembling less and less the traditional fish farms. "But a well-monitored salmon will always be better on the plate," insisted fish farmer Bert Victor Haugen. — AFP

1 A venomous Amazon Milk Frog and its offspring on its back in Frankfurt Zoo, Germany. The Amazon Milk Frog is a large species of arboreal frog native to South America. It was first discovered along the Maracana River in Brazil.

2 Two albino alligator babies (yacare caiman) during their first public appearance in the Sao Paulo Aquarium, Brazil. They were born nine months ago — they are 44cm long and had been put in quarantine before being shown. The two pictured are the only albinos from a total of 34 babies.

3 Image of a specimen of Hermann Tortoise in which the characteristic black marks can be easily distinguished. A total of 94 Hermann Tortoises, an endangered species, have been stolen by strangers from Animal Recovery Center in Les Palmes eastern Spain, in the past years.

4 Newborn Borneo orangutan Banggi is held by his mother at Fuengirola's zoo in

6 A seagull wolfs down a thrown away bread roll part in Travemuende, Germany.

7 Owls prepare to fly towards freedom assisted by the veterinarian personnel of the Hellenic Wildlife Hospital in Athens. The hospital staff released several wild birds this month after completing treatment for injuries they suffered during the hunting season.

8 A dog owner hair-dresses her pet during the international Dog Fair in Matosinhos, Portugal, last week.

Gallery ...

Spain. Banggi is the first orangutan to be born in captivity in the southern region of Andalusia.

5 Sabrina Fairchild, a 5-year-old female Labrador Retriever, is photographed by members of the media in New York after the breed was named the most popular dog by the American Kennel Club in New York this year. The Labrador has been the American Kennel Club's most popular purebred dog since 1991.



Quake predictors win fans but face fines in Taiwan

By David Chang

LAST month's earthquake off Taiwan that killed two people and injured 42 has revived a debate on earthquake prediction as several residents of the island claimed they had predicted it because they heard strange sounds or had chest pains.

The most popular among these earthquake predictors is Li Chen-chi, 38, an insurance company manager who claims he can hear sounds before an earthquake occurs.

Chen said that several days before the December 26 quake struck off Hengchuan, he had heard sounds like a ship's horn and radio jamming and he e-mailed his predictions to friends and Professor Chu Tzu-hau, a geologist at National Taiwan University. The quake, measuring 6.7 on the Richter scale, destroyed 15 houses and damaged undersea cables, disrupting telecommunications across Asia.

Lee said he realised he could predict earthquakes after a magnitude-7.3 quake on September 21, 1999, which left 2,415 dead, 11,305 injured and 400,000 homeless in Taichung and Nantou counties in central Taiwan. After that quake, Lee realised that whenever he heard muffled sounds, an earthquake would occur in the next few days, so he began to e-mail his predictions to the Seismological Observation Centre (SOC). Lee told DPA.

After several correct predictions, Lee became a national celebrity with reporters following him every day, asking him if he had heard strange sounds and when a big quake might hit. Three dozen other earthquake predictors soon emerged, claiming they too could hear strange sounds or vibrations before a quake, in line up with their predictions, banned unofficial earthquake prediction in 2005. Violators of the ban face a 1mn-Taiwan-dollar (US\$30,000) fine.

Hsiao Nai-chi, an SOC section chief, said most of the unofficial predictions were unreliable and inconsistent, "so we must rely on scientific data from our equipments," he said.

Taiwan lies on the circum-Pacific seismic belt, where 68% of the world's earthquakes strike, and sits on 52 fault lines. About 200 quakes of at least magnitude 4 jolt Taiwan each year with a dozen of them above magnitude 5. Currently, SOC, relying on 70 monitoring stations, can report an earthquake five to 10 minutes after it has struck Taiwan or off Taiwan's coast.

But many Taiwanese, like Chu, a geologist at National Taiwan University, said they believe that animals, human beings and scientific equipment can all predict earthquakes. "A month and a half before the September 21, 1999, earthquake hit Taiwan, Chinese space scientists had predicted it, but they did not notify Taiwan until after the quake due to strained Beijing-Taipei ties," Chu said.

Chu added that among the three dozen earthquake predictors in Taiwan, five to six are accurate. They include Lee and Chiu Tsai-yuan, 66, a dry-cleaning store owner in Panchiao near Taipei. Chiu claimed that he developed the ability to predict earthquakes while meditating in 1984. "My body went through a transformation," he said, referring to the Chinese belief in an energy that flows through everything that exists, added, "All the channels of the chi opened, and my body became a cosmos. When one part aches, I can tell an earthquake will happen in the coming days, and I can tell you the location."

"My head is south, my nose is north, my right side is east and my left side is west, so if I have a pain near my head, it indicates a quake will hit southern Taiwan, and a pain toward my feet means a quake will hit Japan," he said.

On January 3, Chiu told DPA office saying he had received signals indicating an earthquake was going to hit eastern Taiwan in about three days, "but it'll be a small one." A magnitude-4.3 quake hit eastern Taiwan two days later.

On January 4 and 5, Chiu said he was "receiving signals" again and knew a large quake was going to occur north of Taiwan, possibly in Japan. It would be an undersea quake because it was a dull pain, he said. On January 6, a magnitude-8.2 undersea earthquake occurred near Japan's northern islands, triggering two tidal waves but not the metre-high tsunami as Japan Meteorological Agency and the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre had warned. — DPA

Peru's mountaintop farmers on climate change frontline

Farmers living in the mountaintops of Peru, more than 4,000m above sea level, face devastation from climate change but one charity is helping them to adapt, writes RORY CARROLL

A HUGE slate-grey cloud laden with hail looms slowly over the ridge, seemingly close enough to touch, and to the farmers on this Andean peak it is like a Zeppelin on a bombing raid. If the cloud empties itself here, the freezing pellets will devastate their potato crop.

One farmer races to the corners of the field to light piles of dried manure, sending up plumes of dark smoke. Another loads gunpowder into what resembles a catapult and blasts fireworks skywards. The heat and smoke, they hope, will soften hail into rain and save the crop. So begins another battle in the struggle for survival on the roof of Latin America.

This scene happens almost daily on the mountaintops of Peru, more than 4,000m above sea level, and it is not new. For centuries nature has inflicted extreme weather conditions on the herders and farmers who inhabit the eerie and starkly beautiful landscape. There are no trees, few shrubs and the air is so thin visitors must gulp to breathe.

These farmers are one of only two groups in the world to live so high (the other is in the Himalayas). Surviving here is a fight against the elements using ancient tactics, such as blowing smoke at menacing clouds. What is new, however, is the abruptness, frequency and ferocity of the hail.

"It comes with virtually no warning. And not just at certain times of the year, like when I was a boy, but year round," says 48-year-old Sergio Mamani, wrapped in a brown poncho and sporting the traditional coloured pointy hat typical of his people.

"You have a flourishing crop and then suddenly the hail destroys the leaves. You lose everything." It is not just the hail that has changed. There is less rain so the earth is drier and browner.

Days are warmer and nights colder, to the extent that herds of alpacas, indigenous domesticated animals which resemble big sheep with long necks, are freezing to death.

warmer temperatures bring disease-carrying insects which were once confined to the valleys. "It's not the way it was," says Mamani. Scientists agree. A growing stack of statistics and academic studies say that Andean farmers face the front line of climate change.

Rising temperatures have melted a fifth of Peru's glaciers in the past 20 years, a retreat visible in photographs used in Al Gore's documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*. El Niño-related events have grown more extreme, flooding some areas with rain, causing drought and conflicts over water in others.

Toads and foxes have dwindled while rats and mosquitoes have thrived. Peru contributes just 0.4% of global carbon emissions but reaps disproportionate consequences because of geography — its deserts, mountains and tropical forests are especially sensitive to change and its poverty.

Communities such as those in the highlands are near-deserted on the borderline of survival. "We have fewer options than a developed country, we're more vulnerable," said Valentin Bartra Abersu, a climate change expert in the capital, Lima.

For Sergio Mamani and his family, part of a 150-strong Quechua community at Chantapata Yanacoccha, a wilderness lost in the clouds above the city of Cusco, it means an age-old fight is increasingly tilted against them.

Smoke and fireworks do not assist either hail. And even if the alpacas may live. These quizzical, fluffy white creatures provide not only milk, cheese and meat but also fibre for clothing, insulation and bedding. Virtually the only livestock that can live on such thin scrub alpacas are vital to Peru's 1.5mn Quechua and Aymara highland dwellers.

Periods of intense cold, known as 'frías', driven by south pole winds, have become more frequent andicier, turning pasture into wastelands. In 2003, temperatures plunged to -35°C and more than half the



An aerial view of the cloud-filled highlands in Peru.

herds died. An even graver threat is disease. Instead of rain-fed streams, alpacas now drink from pockets of muddy, melted hail which can cause an infection that attacks the nervous system.

Others succumb to parasitic flatworm. It was unknown in the highlands until warmer temperatures attracted snails which host the parasites.

"We spend almost all our income on medicine for the animals," says Isabel Roa, tiny, agile and looking older than her

39 years. The battle is far from lost.

Adaptation is a word which does not exist in the Quechua language but that is exactly what the farmers are doing with the help of charity group Practical Action.

Families have built mud and stone shelters with tin roofs, called *cobertos*, into which up to 50 alpacas are herded when temperatures drop. Along with basic veterinary kits, lowland male alpacas with greater resistance to disease are being

introduced in the hope their offspring will inherit that resilience.

Practical Action instructs the farmers at a whitewashed building with a green tin roof a short ride down the valley from Chantapata Yanacoccha. In

batches of up to 18, evenly split between men and women, the classes learn how to get more out of fertiliser and how to produce harder crops and herds.

"We don't have much but we're receiving training and we can share that with our neigh-

Sweden to shift entire iron ore township 4km away

MOVING house is a complicated ordeal that involves huge expenses and many weeks to organise. Try moving half a town.

The Arctic town of Kiruna, Sweden's northernmost municipality, is under threat as cracks caused by decades of iron ore mining slowly erode its foundations.

So two years ago the municipal council decided to move more than half of the town from the shadow of Kirunaavaara mountain, site of the world's largest underground mine.

This month it chose the new site for Kiruna's centre, at the base of Luossavaara mountain, about 4km away.

The town's deputy mayor puts the cost of moving the buildings at about 30bn Swedish crowns (\$4,28bn), not including rerouting the railway and roads.

The council also hopes to win government approval for a 2bn-crown tunnel to keep the railway from dividing the new town.

LKAB, the state-run firm that owns the mine, said the move was essential if it was to access the estimated 800mn tonnes of crude ore still in the ground.

"If a decision would have been made not to move the town, that would already have been a decision to close the mine," said Goran Olvesson, who oversees mining legal issues at LKAB Kiruna.

Since it was founded more than a century ago, Kiruna's fate has been bound to Kirunaavaara, the ore-rich peak that looms above it, strung with white lights like a vast cruise ship.

Underground blasting in the early morning, the safest time as few workers are around, can rattle dishes in Kiruna's houses.

The mine has until recently been the town's largest employer. Because of this, its residents have greeted the idea of moving with little



A visitor to LKAB poses in front of the giant scoop used for mining operations.

more than a shrug. "The people in Kiruna have known since 100 years ago they were living on iron ore," said Vice Mayor Hans Swedell. "They knew that sometime they would have to move."

Olvesson said surging iron ore prices from new industrial powerhouses such as China had not played into the decision to shift Kiruna, which is cloaked in polar dark for much of December and where temperatures can hit -40°C.

"The prices on the world market have not influenced the production rate," Olvesson said.

Kiruna produces pelletised iron ore, and pellet prices are at an all-time high, although the company says it has not estimated what the total potential value of the ore reserves will be.

Now comes the hard part. Some buildings will be torn down and rebuilt, others — including an historic wooden church once voted Sweden's most beautiful building — will be taken down piece by piece

and reassembled in their new locale. The move will happen gradually over 40 to 50 years and poses many challenges, its planners say.

Thomas Nylund, the municipality's head architect, wants much more extensive investigation of the chosen site before the council's decision can be deemed correct.

"It's a political decision and it doesn't take notice of the many difficulties that we may face."

"It's not even certain that it's possible to build on some local, he said.

The base of Luossavaara is covered with waste rock — the parts of the mountain discarded during mining — and Nylund and fellow planners will hire consultants to ensure it is stable enough to support the ski slope would be possible to build," said Olvesson.

"Malmerberg is just a tragedy and no one wants the same thing to happen here. It has become spooky, and it's very unpleasant environment," he said of the emptied part of the town.

Nylund also worries that a glossy brochure issued by LKAB that suggests the new town can boast a complex with such wonders as an indoor ski hill and tropical rainforest will lead politicians and residents to expect the impossible.

LKAB said its vision of the complex was never meant to amount to a promise.

"The LKAB vision is exactly that, a vision. The ideas presented in it are therefore not thoroughly examined, but the indications we have said that for example the ski slope would be possible to build," said Olvesson.

What is not clear is who will pay for the move, although Swedell thinks it will be a joint effort by LKAB, the Swedish state and Kiruna itself. — Reuters

After the war, Lebanon battles with black sludge

By Joelle Bassou

SIX months after thousands of tonnes of fuel oil spilled into the Mediterranean when Israel bombed a Lebanese power plant, the waters are still spitting out black poison despite efforts to clean up the mess.

"The rain and the low tide have created new pollution zones," Ahmed Kojok of the Sea of Lebanon association told AFP.

On Beirut's sun-splashed Ramlet al-Bayda beach, a human chain passed buckets filled with large black chunks — mixtures of fuel oil, sand and debris — which were emptied by a volunteer into large white watertight bags.

"It's sad," muttered a fisherman who works for the association, running his fingers over dozens of seashells mucked together in a sticky glop.

The coast was polluted by around 15,000 tonnes of fuel oil after the Israeli military bombed Lebanon's southern Jiyeh power plant in mid-July during its 34-day offensive against the Shia militia Hezbollah.

Since then, local and international civic groups and the Lebanese environment ministry have been waging a long battle against the black sludge that seeped into the sea.

A recent report by the Environment Ministry Monitoring and Information Centre said "virtually all free oil at sea or in the harbours and marinas had been recovered by the end of September (2006)".

And the historic port of Byblos north of the capital has filled anew with fisherman.

But many beaches like Jiyeh and Ramlet al-Bayda continue to flag the pollution.

Greenpeace has described the spill, which polluted about



A diver from the Sea of Lebanon organisation carries a block of oil waste underwater in Beirut. (Top right) A chunk of sludge that got mixed with sea corals.

150km of the Lebanese coast, as an "underwater nightmare" and a "timebomb" because oil had sunk to the seabed. The environmental group has estimated it will take at least a year to clean.

Over the course of six days, the Sea of Lebanon association filled 18 bags with around two tonnes of pestilent sludge. "And we still have another week of work here," association member Mohamed al-Sarji said.

The team recently spent three weeks in Jiyeh, where it gathered 122 bags of oil waste. "In some places the dried fuel sludge was 40 to 60cm thick. We were slicing it like cheese," said Kojok.

Ghada Mitri, spokesperson for the environment ministry, said that so far 1,100cu m of

liquid fuel and 5,440cu m of debris, sand and muck had been extracted, Mitri said.

She said she hoped the cleaning will be finished "before summer" but declined to commit to a more precise timeframe.

Several obstacles could hamper the cleaning progress. Among them is the resignation of Environment Minister Yacoub Sarraf, who left the Western-backed cabinet in November 2006 along with five pro-Syrian allies.

In addition to struggling through the political crisis paralysing the country, Lebanon is still having to tackle the environmental disaster and has launched an appeal for international aid to help cover the cost.

Although \$150mn has been pledged, only about half of these funds have been made available, Mitri said.

There is also the nagging question of what to do with the dozens of sludge-filled sacks that are lined up along the beaches.

"We put them as far away from the water as we can to avoid any leaking," Sarraf said. Lebanon has neither the technology nor the means to treat or recycle the material although the environment ministry has vowed to move the bags from the shoreline "as soon as possible" and store them in special depots, Mitri said.

"Then we will try to figure out which ones can be treated in Lebanon and which will have to be sent abroad," she added. — AFP

	SUPER MOVIES	STAR MOVIES	ESPN SPORTS	FOX SPORTS	HOLLYWOOD CH.	ZEE TV	DISCOVERY CH.	STAR PLUS
5am to 1pm	0520 Missing In America (3) 0700 New York Minute (2) 0900 How To Deal (2) 1000 Charlie's Angels 2 (3) 1300 Company Man	0515 Dark Harvest 0640 Anywhere But Here 0635 Cyborg 2 1015 Ravenous 1200 Freaky Friday	0500 College Basketball Big Ten Conf. Michigan St At Ohio St Live 0700 Sportscenter Live 0800 College Basketball Big 12 Conference Oklahoma/Texas A&M 1000 College Basketball Big East Conf. Villanova/Notre Dam 1200 Timbersports Series 1230 NFL Matchup 1300 Sportscenter	0700 Gillette World Sports Commonwealth Bank Series 8th ODI Australia vs New Zealand, Session 2, Perth 1130 Pakistan Tour Of South Africa, 3rd Test, Day 3, Session 2 Joined In Progress	0500 Fashion Television Special 0600 Loud 0630 Rapcity 0700 The Word This Week 0730 Originals In Art 0800 Arts & Minds 0830 Muchmusic Video Flow 0900 Start Daily 0930 Mmmprofile 1000 The Art Of Architecture 1100 One Hit Wonders 1200 Speakeasy 1300 Best Movies! Ever!	0500 Answers with Bayless Conley 0525 Jhalak 0530 Jai Jai Jai Tridev 0630 Mahabharat 0730 Ravan 0830 Making Of Salaam-E-Ihsq 0900 Jeena Isi Ka Naam Hai 0930 Antakshari 0855 Exposure: Jhalak 1000 Khana Khazana 1030 Best Of SRGMP	0510 Trailblazers 0605 Killer Crocs of Costa Rica 0700 How Do They Do It? 0755 Jungle Hooks: India 0825 Land Escapes 0850 Battle of the Beasts 0945 Massive Machines 1010 Massive Speed 1040 Ultimate Biker Challenge 1105 Wheeler Dealers 1200 Motorcycle Mania 1255 Flying Heavy Metal	0500 The Great Indian Laughter Champions SSSHHHH Koi Hai 0700 Bharat Thoda Jaadu Thodi Nazaakat 0730 Tedhe Medhe Sapny 0800 Sea Hawks 0900 Musafir Hoon Yaaron 0930 Kyon Hota Hai Pyarr 1000 Kehta Hai Dil 1100 Mirch Masala 1130 Star Geetmala UK 1230 Ninaad
	<p>MOVIE RATINGS</p> <p>1 All Viewers, 2 Caution 3 Parental Discretion, V Violence S Adult Content, L Strong Language</p>							
1pm to 7pm	1500 36 Quai Des Orfevres (2) 1700 Chasing Papi (2) 1900 Starship Troopers 2 (3)	1340 The War At Home 1545 Soul Assassin 1725 Running With The Hitman 1900 The Long Weekend	1400 College Basketball Big 12 Conference Baylor vs Texas 1600 Dutch League 1900 Winter X-Games	1330 Fox Sports World Report 1430 European Tour 2007 The Commercialbank Qatar Masters Final Round Doha, Qatar 1730 Golf Club 1800 2007 PGA Tour Buick Invitational Final Rd San Diego, Ca	1330 TV Frames 1400 Born To Be India 1430 Muchmusic Video Flow 1500 Start Daily 1530 Big Hollywood Countdown 1600 Making It 1630 I Heart 1700 Muchmusic VJ Search The Series 1800 The It List 1830 The Punk Show 1900 Mmmprofile	1500 India's Best 1700 Best of Shabbash Born 1730 Sunday Blockbuster: Baadshah	1320 Massive Engines A Racing Car Is Born 1445 Wrecks To Riches USA 1540 Brainiac 1635 Massive Machines 1700 The Greatest Ever 1800 How It's Made 1900 Mythbusters	1330 Pritviraj Chauhan 1400 Baa Bahoo Aur Lucky 1430 Sea Hawks 1530 Nach Balye 2 1730 Musafir Hoon Yaaron 1800 TBC
7pm to 5am	2100 Double Whammy (New) 2300 The Prodigy (3) 0100 Blue Car (3) 0300 Starship Troopers 2 (3)	2030 The Three Musketeers 2220 Legally Blonde 2 0000 Gilmore Girls 0000 Ravenous 0145 Vizontele 0340 The War At Home	1930 Sunday NFL Countdown 2030 College Basketball Mid American Conf. Wildcard Game 2230 College Basketball Big East Conf. Syracuse/Louisville 0300 College Basketball Big Ten Conf. Michigan St At Ohio St 0230 Miss Bikini Calendar 0300 Women's College Basketball North Carolina/Maryland Live	2130 Asian Tour Weekly 2200 ACC Sunday Night Hoops Virginia Tech @ Georgia Tech 0000 Golf Club 0030 To Be Announced 0330 Asian Tour Weekly 0400 Fox Sports World Report	1930 The Newsmusic 2000 Video On Trial 2030 Muchmusic Video Flow 2100 Start Daily 2130 Start At The Movies 2200 In Fashion 2230 Fashion Television 2300 Everything 0000 Muchlive 0100 The Word This Week 0130 Originals In Art 0200 Arts & Minds 0230 Muchmusic Video Flow 0300 Start Daily 0330 Mmmprofile	2125 Exposure Ek Nazar 2130 Bidwin 2200 Pandey Aur Pandey 2230 Sales Slot 2300 Banoo Mein Teri Dulhan 2330 Sindoor ... Tere Naam Ka 0000 Kasamh Se 0100 Saath Phere 0130 Jab Love Hua 0200 Urja 0230 Narseva Narayan Seva 0300 Meditation 0330 Bhagwat Katha 0400 Bhakti Geet	2000 American Chopper 2100 Men In White 2200 The World's Strangest UFO Stories 2300 A Haunting 0000 More Industrial Revelations Europe 0100 Zero Hour 0200 True Crime Scene 0350 American Chopper 0445 Massive Machines	2100 Kehta Hai Dil Thodi Si Zameen Thoda Sa Aasman 2300 Lucky 0000 Baa Bahoo Aur Baby 0030 Ek Chabi Pados Mein 0130 Sai Baba 0230 Pritviraj Chauhan 0300 Baa Bahoo Aur Baby Thodi Si Zameen Thoda Sa Aasman 0330 Ek Chabi Pados Mein
5am to 1pm	GEO TV 0530 Fun Club 0630 Advance Booking 0705 Dhoom Machadey 0805 Fun Club (2) 1005 Tharparker 1030 Aalim Online 1105 Applause	AMERICA PLUS 0500 ER 0600 GMA Recorded 0700 Inside The Actors Studio 0800 Gilmore Girls 0900 All My Children 1000 Inside The Actors Studio 1100 Gilmore Girls 1200 All My Children 1300 Stingers	FUN CHANNEL 0500 Skate 0530 The Tribe 0600 The Adventures Of The Bush Patrol 0630 High Flyers 0700 Sleepover Club 0730 Explorations 0800 The Week 0825 Little Mouse On The Prairie 0850 Journey To The Heart Of The World 0915 Gulliver's Travels 0940 Inspector Gadget 1000 The Littles 1025 Princess Tenko 1045 Little Mermaid 1110 Princess Sissi 1155 The Littles 1220 Little Mouse On The Prairie 1245 Journey To The Heart Of The World	BBC WORLD 0500 BBC News 0510 The World Debate Davos 0600 BBC News, Weather 0630 The Best Of Top Gear 4/8 0700 BBC News, Weather 0730 The Week 0800 BBC News, Weather 0830 Peschard's People 0900 BBC News, Weather 0930 Nurses On The Frontline 4/4 1000 BBC News, Weather 1030 Fast Track 1100 BBC News 1110 The World Debate Davos 1200 BBC News, Weather 1230 Reporters 1300 BBC News, Weather	ORBIT NEWS 0500 NBC Nightly News 0530 ABC World News 0600 MSNBC Countdown W/K 0700 NBC Nightly News 0730 ABC World News 0800 MSNBC Investigates 1100 ABC World News 1130 NBC Nightly News 1200 ABC 20/20 1300 BBC Programme	CNN INTERNATIONAL 0500 Larry King Weekend 0600 This Week At War 0700 World News 0730 World Sport 0800 World News 0830 World Report 0900 World News 0930 International Correspondents 1000 Quest 1100 World News 1130 Art Of Life 1200 World News 1230 World Sport 1300 Larry King	DISNEY CHANNEL 0510 Brandy And Mr Whiskers 0535 Goof Troop 0600 Quack Pack 0625 House Of Mouse 0650 Tarzan 0715 Lilo And Stitch 0740 Brandy And Mr Whiskers 0800 Emperor's New School 0825 Fairly Odd Parents 0850 Kim Possible 0915 American Dragon 0935 Hannah Montana 1000 DC Games 1030 The Rescuers 1200 Recess 1225 House Of Mouse 1250 Goof Troop	CHANNEL IV INT. 0500 For The Record Rivermaya 0515 Double Shot 0600 Parental Control #7 0630 The Ticket 0700 America's Next Top Model S7 #2 0800 One-Tastic 0900 Arcade 0930 Cactus Garden #17 1000 Remote Control 1100 The Ticket 1130 Soundtracks 1200 V Special 1300 V Rated Weekend
1pm to 7pm	1405 Dr Love 1430 Khajoor 1505 Terry Ishq Mein 1605 Fun Club 1730 Pyaar Kahani 1805 Jaye Kahan Ye Dil	1400 Third Watch 1500 Inside The Actors Studio 1600 GMA Live 1700 Stingers 1800 Law And Order 1900 West Wing	1305 Gulliver's Travels 1330 Inspector Gadget 1355 Jin Jin And The Panda Patrol 1420 Lady Lovely Locks 1450 The Littles 1555 The Week 1620 Little Mouse On The Prairie 1645 Journey To The Heart Of The World 1710 Gulliver's Travels 1735 Inspector Gadget 1800 Camp Candy 1825 The Adventures Of Pinoschio 1850 Peter Pan And The Pirates	1330 Peschard's People 1400 BBC News, Weather 1430 Survivor's Guide Against All Odds 1500 BBC News 1510 The New Al-Qaeda 1600 BBC News 1615 Sport Today 1630 The Best Of Top Gear 4/8 1700 BBC News 1705 Have Your Say 1800 BBC News, Weather 1830 Dateline London 1900 BBC News, Weather	1400 NBC Dateline 1430 MSNBC Tucker Weekend 1500 MSNBC Your Business 1600 NBC Weekend 1630 World Sport 1700 NBC Meet The Press Live 1800 MSNBC Live 1905 ABC This Week	1400 World News 1430 Global Challenges 1500 World News 1530 Global Challenges 1600 World News 1630 World Sport 1700 Inside Africa 1730 Art Of Life 1800 World News 1830 The Daily Show 1900 Late Edition	1315 Quack Pack 1340 Tarzan 1400 Recess 1425 The Buzz On Maggie 1445 Brandy And Mr Whiskers 1510 Goof Troop 1535 House Of Mouse 1600 Pocahontas 2 1735 Lloyd In Space 1800 Kim Possible 1820 Recess 1900 Classic Cartoons 1900 The Love Bug	1500 Double Shot 1530 Fashion TV 1600 Parental Control #7 1630 Double Shot 1700 America's Next Top Model S7 #2 1800 One-Tastic 1900 Arcade 0930 Cactus Garden #17 1000 Remote Control 1100 The Ticket 1130 Soundtracks 1200 V Special 1300 V Rated Weekend
7pm to 5am	1905 Dhoom Machadey 2005 Applause 2100 Advance Booking 2230 Pyaar Kahani 2305 Advance Booking 2330 Songs 0005 Khajoor 0130 Kahuab 0155 Songs 0130 Salfad Posh 0230 Applause	2000 Without A Trace 2100 Related 2200 Supernatural 0000 Six Feet Under 0100 Related 0200 Supernatural 0400 Six Feet Under	1915 Dennis 2000 The New Tomorrow 2030 Foreign Exchange 2100 Skate 2130 The Tribe 2200 The Adventures Of The Bush Patrol 230 High Flyers 2330 Explorations 0000 The New Tomorrow 0030 Foreign Exchange 0100 Skate 0130 The Tribe 0200 The Adventures Of The Bush Patrol 0230 High Flyers 0300 Sleepover Club 0330 Explorations 0400 The New Tomorrow 0430 Foreign Exchange	1930 Extra Time 2000 BBC News 2010 The World Debate Davos 2100 BBC News, Weather 2130 Peschard's People 2200 BBC News 2215 Sport Today 2230 Have Your Say 2300 BBC News 2310 The New Al-Qaeda 2330 BBC News, Weather 0000 The Best Of Top Gear 4/8 0100 BBC News, Weather 0130 Asia Today 0145 Asia Business Report 0200 BBC News, Weather 0230 Asia Today	2000 NBC Meet The Press 2100 MSNBC Hardball 2200 ABC This Week 2300 NBC Meet The Press 0000 MSNBC Countdown W/K 0100 ABC This Week 0200 ABC World News 0230 NBC Nightly News 0300 NBC Meet The Press 0400 ABC This Week	2100 World News 2130 Global Challenges 2200 World News 2230 Art Of Life 2300 Quest 0000 World News 0030 World Sport 0100 World News 0130 The Daily Show 0200 CNN Today	2045 That's So Raven 2105 Phil Of The Future 2125 Boy Meets World 2150 Classic Cartoons 2200 Quack Pack 2225 House Of Mouse 2250 Tarzan 2315 Lilo And Stitch 2340 Brandy And Mr Whiskers 0000 Emperor's New School 0025 Fairly Odd Parents 0050 Kim Possible 0115 American Dragon 0135 Hannah Montana 0200 DC Games 0225 Recess 0250 House Of Mouse 0315 Goof Troop 0340 Quack Pack 0405 Tarzan	1930 Soundtracks 2000 Kung Faux #8 2030 Flava 2100 V Special 2200 Poparazzi 2230 Double Shot Shop 2300 Double Shot 0030 Rock Show 0100 For The Record Rivermaya 0115 Double Shot 0200 America's Next Top Model S7 #2 0300 For The Record Rivermaya 0315 Double Shot 0330 Fashion File 0400 Double Shot: 90's 0430 Double Shot: Pop

RADIO STATIONS	QBS ENGLISH SERVICE	Radio Asia MALAYALAM SERVICE	ASIANET RADIO 657AM MALAYALAM SERVICE	BBC WORLD SERVICE	World News	
0600 The Holy Qur'an and its Translation 0615 The Breakfast Show (News Summary 7.00) 0845 Arabic/Islamic Programme 0900 London Line 1000 Midday Show 1100 News Summary 1105 Midday Show (cont) 1300 The News 1315 French Transmission 1600 Hooked On Classic 1700 Evening Show 1800 The News 1815 Evening Show Contd 2000 News Summary 2005 World Chart Show 2200 Music In Stereo	1330 News; Qatari press review; Number 1 French Top 40 1345 Destination Paris 1415 French/English musical Programme 1530 News Flash 1535 Music and mythm of the world 1600 Back to English Service 1000 Comedy Serial 1858 Opening Music 1900 Opening & Holy Qur'an 1910 Hamd or Na'at 1915 Islamic Heritage 1930 News 1945 Sports Roundup Obaid Tahir 2000 Sada Bahaar Nisaar Ansaar 2100 Aissa Kaloon Dr Fozia Shafeeq	2200 National Anthem RADIO ASIA MALAYALAM SERVICE 0500 Manjukurum Pular Kalam 0530 Life Magazine 0605 Kereyayam 0700 Sarasakeralam 0800 Hello Rainbow 0900 GMC 1000 Comedy Serial 1030 Alukas 1100 Daily Diary 1305 Sneha Veedu 1330 Aardrabhavgangal 0900 Nam Engottu 1420 Atlas Daily Si 1500 Viva Dhaparavam 1530 Quiz Time 1600 Kerala Link 1605 Suvarna Nakshtram 1702 Snehithare Ithile 1800 Hotlines 1900 Sneha Sandeshan 2000 Nenchil Ninte Rangam	2100 Isai Malai 2130 Uragam Padalum 2215 Ravaruntham 2300 Songs ASIANET RADIO 657AM MALAYALAM SERVICE 0600 Opening, Viswasa 0615 Today's Programmes 0620 Asianet Varthakal 0630 Udayavangal 0730 Sreekandan Nair Show 0800 Suprabhatam 0855 Aarthirathil Innu 0900 Tele Quiz 0930 Daily Serial 1000 News Headline 1002 Navageetham 1100 News Headline 1102 Antakshari 1130 K M Trading Couples 1200 Asianet Varthakal	0500 World News 0505 From Our Own Correspondent 0530 Reporting Religion 0600 World News 0605 The World Today 0630 The Interview	0700 World News 0705 World Briefing 0720 Sports Roundup 0730 Heart And Soul 0800 World News 0805 World Briefing 0830 Reporting Religion 0900 World News 0905 The World Today 0930 Politics UK 1000 World News 1005 The World Today 1010 The Instant Guide 1040 Over To You 1100 World News 1105 Documentary: Hunting US 1130 World News 1200 From Our Own Correspondent 1205 World News 1230 Reporting Religion 1300 World News 1300 BBC World Drama: Saglia 1400 World News 1405 Living 1430 Heart And Soul 1500 World News 1505 Newshour 1600 World News	1605 The BBC Debate 1700 World News 1705 Have Your Say 1800 World News 1805 Global Business 1830 The Instant Guide 1840 Over To You 1900 World News 1905 World Briefing 1930 The Interview 2000 World News 2005 Sunday Sportsworld 2100 World News 2105 World Briefing 2130 Reporting Religion 2200 World News 2205 The BBC Debate 2300 World News 2305 The World 2355 Close Up: The Noisy Ape 0000 World News 0005 Newshour 0100 World News 0105 World News Report 0130 Charlie Gillette's World Of Music 0200 World News 0205 The World Today

Television Listings

	BBC PRIME	NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC	STAR WORLD	GRANADA UK	MOVIE CHANNEL	MGM	TV LAND	SUN TV
5am to 1pm	0600 Wildlife Specials 0645 Radical Highs 0700 Garden Challenge 0730 Balmory 0750 Tweenies 0810 Fimbles 0830 The Shiny Show 0850 Little Robots 0900 Teletubbies 0925 Andy Pandy 0930 Balmory 0950 Tweenies 1010 Fimbles 1030 Homes Under The Hammer 1130 Get A New Life 1230 Garden Challenge	0500 Frontlines Of Construction 0600 Naked Science 0700 Built For Destruction 0800 The Living Edens 0900 Mad Labs 0930 I Didn't Know That 1000 Megastructures 1100 Hollywood Science 1200 Is It Real?	0530 8 Simple Rule 0600 Scrubs 0630 Hollywood Shootout 0700 Enterprise 0800 The Simple Life 0830 Scrubs 0900 Hogans Heroes 0930 Get Smart 1000 Beauty & Geek 1100 Miss Match 1200 Kevin Hill	0600 Night And Day 0630 City Cabs 0700 Emmerdale Week-end Omnibus 0930 Mary Me (Series 2) 1000 Robbery Under Arms 1100 My Teen's A Nightmare I'm Moving Out! 1200 Saturday TV Movie: A Second Moon	0500 Shall We Dance? 0700 102 Dalmatians 0900 Back To Gaya 1100 The Great Raid	0520 Resurrected Shatterbrain 0705 In The Arms Of A Killer 0840 The Eliminators, The 1986 1020 Solomon & Sheba Kolygram 1150 Koyaanisqatsi	0600 Homicide Life On The Street 0700 Stargate Atlantis 0800 Beauty And The Beast 0900 Navy Ncis 1000 Survivor Panama (XII) 1100 NYPD Blue 1200 Bones	0630 Meendum Meendum Sripu 0700 Top 10 Movies 0730 Pudiya Raagangal 0800 Ungal Unga 0830 Arattai Arangam 0900 Movie 1100 Afternoon Bulletin 1115 Movie contd... 1200 Comedy Time 1230 Sunday Samaiyal
1pm to 7pm	1300 Eastenders 1330 Eastenders 1400 Wildlife Specials 1445 Radical Highs 1500 Wildlife Specials 1600 Gorillas On The Trail 1700 Two Thousand Acres Of Sky 1700 The Buccaneers 1800 What Not To Wear	1300 Mad Labs 1330 I Didn't Know That 1400 Megastructures 1500 Fight Science 1600 Showreal Asia S3 1700 Air Crash Investigation S3 1800 Is It Real?	1300 Price Of Fame 0 1330 8 Simple Rule 1400 Vanity Insanity 1500 Falcon Beach 1700 Business Week Asia 1730 Travel Asia 1800 Beauty And The Geek	1400 Night And Day 1430 City Cabs 1500 Coronation Street 1730 Home To Roost (Series 4) 1800 Harry's Game	1330 The Adventures Of Brer Rabbit 1500 The Dale Earnhart Story 1700 Back To Gaya	1315 Christmas Eve 1450 The Passage 1635 Limit Up 1800 The Blue Lighting 1986	1300 The Unit 1400 Law And Order Criminal Intent 1500 Beauty And The Beast 1600 Navy Ncis 1700 Homicide Life On The Street 1800 Stargate Atlantis	1300 Thrivi Vimsaranam 1330 Movie 1600 Evening News Headlines 1603 Movie contd... 1630 Sindabad 1700 Vepillakkari 1730 Evening News 1800 Super 10
7pm to 5am	1900 Antiques Roadshow 2000 Eastenders 2030 Eastenders 2100 Nap Attack 2200 Days That Shook The World 2300 Living Without A Memory 0000 SAS Survival Secrets 0100 Secrets Of Lost Empires 0200 Eastenders 0230 Eastenders	1900 Megastructures 2000 Showreal Asia S3 2100 Air Crash Investigation S3 2200 Is It Real? 2300 Megastructures 0000 Mad Labs 0030 I Didn't Know That 0100 Megastructures 0200 Fight Science 0300 The Living Edens	1900 The Simple Life 1930 The Simple Life 2000 Oprah Prime Time 2100 Table For 3 R 2200 Beauty And The Geek 2300 The Simple Life 2330 The Simple Life 0000 Oprah Prime Time 0100 Table For 3 R 0200 NGC Feed 0230 NGC Feed 0300 Beauty And The Geek	1900 Thief Takers (Series 2) 2000 Sunday TV Movie 2200 For One Night Only 2300 Coronation Street 2330 Weekend Omnibus 0100 Home To Roost (Series 4) 0200 Harry's Game 0300 Thief Takers (Series 2)	1900 The Great Raid 2130 He Got Game 0000 Hotel Rwanda 0215 The Ballad Of Jack And Rose 0415 Tempo	1930 My American Cousin 2100 Harley Davidson And The Marlboro Man 1991 2235 Valentino 0040 Code Of Silence 0220 The Last Farewell 0400 The House Of God	1900 The 400 2000 WWE Smackdown 2200 24 0000 Navy Ncis 0100 Bones 0200 The 400 0300 Wwe Smackdown	1900 Suriya Natchathiram 1930 Maha Thanga Vettai 2030 Vanthamm Varuvathum 2100 News In Tamil 2200 Thrila Masala 0300 News In Tamil 0400 Putham Puthu Paadal
5am to 1pm	0700 Today's Business 0800 Europe 1100 Worldwide Exchange	0600 Sky News On The Hour 0630 CBS News 0700 Sky News On The Hour 1130 CBS News 1200 Sunrise	NO TRANSMISSION	0630 Paribhavam Parvathi 0635 Music Live 0730 Bombay Masala 0800 Housefull 0830 Movie 1030 Asianet Varthaka 1100 Movie contd... 1200 Cinema Diary 1230 Your Choice	0730 The Mummy Returns 1025 V Trailers 1030 Chup Chup Ke 1100 Taxi No 9211	0700 Dora The Explorer 0730 Thomas & Friends 0745 Postman Pat 0830 Blues Clues 0830 Barney 0900 Pocoyo 0930 A House That's Just Like Yours 1000 Connie The Cow 1015 Pingu 1030 Bottle Top Bill 1045 Lunar Jim 1100 Dora The Explorer 1130 Yakkity Yak 1200 Rugrats 1230 Wild Thornberrys	0700 Puthumai Pengal 0730 Idu Enna Galatta 0800 Sirikalam Vaanga 0830 Movie: Titanic 1000 Song Sequence 1030 Movie: Ponnur Veetukaran	0530 Rasi Chakra 0600 Vasthavam 0630 Thalli 0700 Putham Puthukal 0730 Hridayaaporvam 0800 Film Express 0830 Movie: Sharjah to Sharjah 1100 News 1115 Movie contd... 1130 Sensations 1200 Thankika 1230 Nungalude Choice
1pm to 7pm	1300 Power Lunch 1400 US CNBC Squawk Box 1600 Squawk On The Street 1700 US Morning Call 1800 European Closing Bell	1600 Sunday Live With Adam Boulton 1800 Sky News On The Hour	1500 Holy Qur'an 1530 Garfield 1600 Marsipilami 1630 Play with me Sesame 1700 Pit Pony 1730 Technology Today 1845 Natural World 14 Eps	1300 Movie 1555 Munshi 1600 Newstime 1630 Idea Star Singer 1730 Saregama Padhanisa 1800 Jagadeesh Show	1425 V Trailers 1300 Hulchul 1800 Krishna...Aayo Nathkhat Nandilal	1300 All Grown Up 1330 Hey Arnold 1400 Yakkity Yak 1430 Rugrats 1500 Wild Thornberrys 1530 Basil Brush Show 1600 My Parents Are Aliens 1630 Unfabulous 1700 Darcy's Wild Life 1730 Fraggle Rock 1800 Dora The Explorer 1830 Thomas & Friends 1845 Postman Pat	1330 Velicham 1400 Movie: Aran-manikkili 1630 Comedy Countdown 1700 Hollywood Times 1730 Movie	1300 Movie: Karumadi Kuttan 1530 News 1600 Movie contd... 1630 Spl Programme 1700 Melody 1730 Life Is Guluma! 1800 Surya Nakshtram
7pm to 5am	2000 US Power Lunch 2100 Europe Tonight 2130 Street Signs 2200 US Closing Bell 0000 The Tonight Show With Jay Leno 0045 Late Night With Conan O'Brien 0130 NBC Nightly News 0200 Pokerheaven.Com Online Series Of Poker	2300 Live At Five 0100 Sky News On The Hour 0400 Sky News At Ten 0430 Sportsline 0500 Sky News On The Hour	1945 Empty Nest 2030 Trans World Sports 2130 The District 2200 English News 2215 Feature Film 0000 Natural World of Al-Jazeera Channel	1900 Cinemala 1830 Kannadi 2000 Asianet Varthaka 2030 Munshi 2035 Kazhchakkappuram 2200 Gulf Varthaka 2230 Movie 2330 Newshour 0120 Mail Box 0150 Sona Khazana 0215 Saregama Padhanisa 0240 Housefull 0305 Life Is Beautiful	2030 Jajantaram Mamanthram 0000 King of Comedy 0030 V Trailers 0035 3 Deewarein 0200 V Trailers	1900 Blues Clues 2000 A House That's Just Like Yours 2030 Connie The Cow 2045 Pingu 2100 All Grown Up 2130 Yakkity Yak 2200 Basil Brush Show 2230 My Parents Are Aliens 2300 Unfabulous 2330 Darcy's Wild Life 0000 Fraggle Rock	2000 Sripu Vedigal 2030 Movie: Ival Oru Pournami 2300 Song Sequence 0200 News 0230 Song Sequence 0430 Movie	1800 Vellithira 1830 Krishnapaksham 2000 News 2030 Star Talk 2100 Manoyanam 2230 Movie 2330 Surya Music 0330 Life in the Word 0400 Miracles in Rosary

All programmes are subject to change.

INFORMATION

<p>PRAYER TIME Fajr: 5.00am, Shorooq (sunrise) 6.19am, Zuhr (noon) 11.47am, Asr (afternoon) 2.53pm, Maghreb (sunset) 5.16pm, Isha (night) 6.46pm.</p> <p>DOHA ZOO Open from 8am to 12 noon and 2.30pm to 7pm daily. Tuesdays are reserved for women. Friday for general public in the afternoon only.</p> <p>CONSUMER COMPLAINTS Tel: 4408555</p> <p>HOSPITALS Visiting Hours: Hamad General Hospital, Women's Hospital and Rumailah Hospital: 6am to 7.30am, 4pm to 9pm.</p> <p>HELP LINE Is drinking a problem for you or someone you love? Call Alcoholics Anonymous: 5605901</p> <p>LATEST DVD, VIDEO RELEASES ENGLISH: <i>Find Me Guilty</i> (Vin Diesel); <i>Akeelah & The Bee</i> (Keke Palmer, Laurence Fishburne); <i>Black Hole</i> (Judd Nelson, Kristy Swanson); <i>Slither</i> (Nathan Fillion, Michael Rooker); <i>Bailey's Billion</i> (Jackie Burroughs); <i>Seven Swords</i>; <i>Basic Instinct 2</i> (Sharon Stone); <i>Tamara</i> (Jeena Dewan, Katie Stuart); <i>Twins Effect II</i> (Gillian Chung, Charlene Choi); <i>Countdown</i>; <i>Wolf Creek</i>; <i>Superman Returns</i> (Brandon Routh).</p> <p>HINDI: <i>Babul</i> (Rani Mukherji); <i>Dil Diya Hai</i> (Emraan Hashmi, Geeta Basra); <i>Vivah</i> (Shahid Kapoor, Amrita Rao); <i>Umrao Jaan</i> (Aishwarya Rai, Abhishek Bachchan); <i>Apna Sapna Money Money</i> (Jackie Shroff, Sunil Shetty); <i>Unns</i> (Sanjay Kapoor); <i>Rehgar</i> (Jimmy Shergill, Salloni); <i>Don</i> (Sharukh Khan); <i>Jaan-e-Mann</i> (Salman Khan, Akshay Kumar, Preity Zinta); <i>Zindaggi Rocks</i> (Sushmita Sen, Shiney Ahuja); <i>Rocky</i> (Zayed Khan, Isha Shrivastava).</p> <p>ARABIC: <i>Emarat Yacoubian</i>; <i>Almamel Hob</i>; <i>Oreid Kholaan</i>; <i>Dars Khsouy</i>; <i>Zarf Tarek</i>; <i>Ghaway Hob</i>; <i>Malesh Anna Bentabad</i>. (Information courtesy: Q-Mart Audio Video at The Mall).</p>	<p>USEFUL NUMBERS Police, Fire, Ambulance: 999 HMC: 4392222 Women's (Rumailah): 4393333 HMC (Emergency): 4395507 Veterinary: 653093 Water & Electricity: 91 Flight Inquiries: 4622999 Doha Seaport: 4457457 Museum: 4442191 Cinema: 4671811 Mumtaz Post (24-hr Service): 4415566 4432211 (Car): 4483555 Ship Phone Service: 4864444 Ministry of Interior main switchboard: 4330000 Public Department for passports, nationality and residence: 4862882 Capital Security Department: 4444420 Criminal Information Department: 4477477 Boundaries and Coasts Security: 4414488 Civil Defence Department: 4413666 Public Relations Department: 4448720 Rescue Service: 4682888</p>
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YOUR STARS

<p>ARIES (Mar 21-April 20): Someone you work with may be withholding valuable information. Travel opportunities look positive, but be cautious while driving. A change is as good as a rest. Don't go looking for change.</p> <p>+++</p> <p>TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Be aware of deception when it comes to your position, and be sure not to jump to conclusions. Your interest in religion and philosophy may lead you to specific destinations. Don't overspend on friends or children.</p> <p>+++</p> <p>GEMINI (May 22-June 21): You may want to have a heart-to-heart talk with a close and trusted friend. You will be able to contribute a great deal to organisations that you join. You should avoid getting involved in the personal problems of colleagues.</p> <p>+++</p> <p>CANCER (June 22-July 22): This is a great day to get out and enjoy an entertaining evening with friends. Conflicts over joint finances are likely. You can get into self-awareness groups or look into enhancement programmes to widen your views.</p> <p>+++</p>	<p>LEO (July 23-August 22): You can increase the value of your dwelling. Look into residential moves that will give you more space. Take a trip or just spend some quality time with your mate. You will have problems with co-workers if you are too extreme about doing things perfectly.</p> <p>+++</p> <p>VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Try not to attempt to do something unless you are fully intent on following through with the plans. You can make progress professionally. Don't even bother trying to get their approval on the things you want to do.</p> <p>+++</p> <p>LIBRA (September 24-October 23): You should get out and do something. Use your charm, but don't be phoney. There's lots to be done and if you meet your deadline you'll be in your boss's good books.</p> <p>+++</p> <p>SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): You should get out and meet some of those clients that you only speak on the phone. Now is the time to concentrate on building a strong financial future for your family. Don't tell others of your plans.</p> <p>+++</p>	<p>SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Acknowledge your lover's needs. Stomach problems could prevail if you haven't been watching your diet. You may not be happy if members of your family are not pulling their weight.</p> <p>+++</p> <p>CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): You will have to be careful not to fall into traps set by jealous colleagues. Don't let criticism upset you. Hassles will delay your plans. Take time to talk things over. Travel for business or pleasure.</p> <p>+++</p> <p>AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): This will not be the day to lend money to friends or family. Creative educational pursuits will pay off. Visitors are likely to drop by and chances are, they may even stay a little longer than you want them to.</p> <p>+++</p> <p>PISCES (February 20-March 20): Travel, business or pleasure will be enlightening. Your attitudes at work will open new avenues for you. Risks will not be profitable.</p>
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Talented actor aces his big break

By Bruce Daniels

FOR actor Jeremy Piven, in a career in which auditioning "for the abrasive best friend for the 116th time" was all that was usually available to him, this was the role of his dreams.

For writer/director Joe Carnahan, Piven was an actor "who would always shine, even in movies that may have been uneven." When they finally met over lunch to discuss Carnahan's planned movie, "I thought, 'This is the guy.'"

The movie is *Smokin' Aces*, and Piven's character, Buddy "Aces" Israel, is about to get smoked by any of a large number of potential hit men and hit women.

That's because Buddy, a top-notch Las Vegas performer with mob connections, decided to become a mobster himself.

In the process, he angered his old mob friends, in particular one Primo Sparazza, who's put a \$1mn bounty on his head, and has gotten the attention

of the FBI, which wants to protect him so that he can testify against the mob.

Piven and Carnahan are sitting together at a table in a San Francisco hotel room, relaxed and trading jokes, compliments and insights as they discuss their new movie, which opens this week in the US.

Neither looks much like we've seen them lately. Piven is scruffy, unshaven and wearing a hat, presenting a much looser and softer image than the slick, sharklike Hollywood agent he plays on HBO's hit comedy *Entourage*, a role that last year won him an Emmy Award for best supporting actor.

Carnahan, despite his usual black T-shirt and jeans, now has hair covering his formerly shaved head and a full beard instead of a goatee.

In *Smokin' Aces*, Piven heads a large ensemble cast that includes Andy Garcia, Ray Liotta and Ryan Reynolds as FBI agents, the latter two trying to protect Buddy from the assorted hired guns trying to collect the \$1mn, who include Ben Affleck, Martin Henderson, Frank Sinatra, particularly the singer-actor's relationship with the mob.

Taraji Henson, Nestor Carbonell and Tommy Flanagan.

Carnahan's movie came at a particularly fortuitous time for the director, who had previously made the minuscule-budget, locally produced *Blood, Guts, Bullets and Octane* (1998) and the low-budget *Narc* (2002), starring Liotta and Jason Patric.

Carnahan, now 37, had just stepped aside as director of *Mission: Impossible III* after he and star/producer Tom Cruise could not agree on the type of movie they would make.

Carnahan says he wanted a film that was "raw" and "grungy," while Cruise wanted what he ultimately got — a \$190mn megamovie.

Free from making what he calls "a big Hollywood film I probably had no business even entertaining," Carnahan returned to finish a script he had sold to Working Title Films at the time he took *Narc* to the 2002 Sundance Film Festival.

His story was based on his fascination with Frank Sinatra, particularly the singer-actor's relationship with the mob.

"What if a guy like Sinatra decided one day," Carnahan says, "I don't want to be in league with Sam Giancana; I want to be Sam Giancana." How would he parlay his considerable success as an entertainer into a criminal venue? That was the basis for Buddy Israel's character.

Carnahan also decided that he didn't want to tell the "ascent story" of Buddy's character, since that had been done. "I was more fascinated with the end of something, when somebody has reached that apex, and then the decay as they begin that slide down the slope."

As a result, Carnahan quickly tells the story of Buddy's rise through a bravura montage sequence that shows Piven performing before a packed Vegas showroom (he's a magician who also tells jokes and plays the drums), hanging out with mobsters and becoming a crime boss himself, ingesting inordinate amounts of cocaine, getting busted, crashing and finally hiding out in a South Lake Tahoe hotel suite.

Then, when the movie gets down to business, we see Buddy strung out, acting paranoid and looking like he hasn't slept for days.

For Piven, 41, this was the kind of role "you work for your whole life," he says.

It's been an acting life that has found Piven appearing frequently in character roles on television (*The Larry Sanders Show*, *Ellen*, *Cupid*) and in movies that are funny (*PCU*, *Old School*, *Keeping Up With the Steins*), dramatic (*Blackhawk Down*, *Runaway Jury*, *Two for the Money*) and both (*Grosse Pointe Blank*).

Buddy "Aces" Israel represents his first starring dramatic role.

"The wonderful, enticing and really juicy challenge of this role," Piven says, "is to give the guy a heart ... a character who is tragic and has dimension and is accessible, even though you're catching him at the last part of his life while he's slipping down. ..."

"He's so unbelievably tragic and kind of Shakespearean in a way." — *The Sacramento Bee* MCT



Jeremy Piven in a scene from *Smokin' Aces*.

