

ANDY LEA & MIKE WARD'S BIG STREAM

Winnie's a big hit in thriller

THE BIG UGLY (15)
(In cinemas and on digital from today)

★★★

THIS old-fashioned thriller is named after a creek in Tennessee.

Although football fans of a certain age may see a reference to its leading man.

But while 80s footie bad-boy Vinnie Jones delivered some big and very ugly performances on the pitch, he is surprisingly soulful as the film's tortured anti-hero.

Writer-director Scott Wiper worked with him on *The Condemned* and wrote the role of cockney mob enforcer Neelyn for him - with encouragement from Vinnie's late wife Tanya.

And it seems that they both saw something in the actor that casting directors had overlooked.

The action begins with a culture clash as geezers from a cockney gangster movie land in the steaming heat of a Southern noir.

Snappily attired London crime boss Harris (Malcolm McDowell) has jetted into Tennessee to



FOUL PLAY: Winnie is on the ball as Neelyn in *The Big Ugly*

STAR'S SOULFUL TURN

launder his ill-gotten gains by investing in dodgy US oilman Preston's (Ron Perlman) venture in the Appalachian mountains.

He has brought along his loyal enforcer Neelyn, just to make sure none of the rednecks steps out of line. But after a booze-sodden party to celebrate the signing of

the contracts, Neelyn discovers that his girlfriend has disappeared.

An early inquiry places her at the bar with Preston's psycho son Junior (Brandon Sklenar), who hit the road suspiciously early that morning. Neelyn has done Harris's dirty work for years but this is

personal. The film is missing a stand-out action scene and you can feel the budgetary restraints in the finale.

But the performances are excellent. The ex-footballer shares plenty of scenes with veterans McDowell and Perlman but he never feels out of place. - *AL*



COSTUME DRAMA: Club reverses fortunes

DRAGGED DOWN BY ENDING

STAGE MOTHER (15)
(In cinemas from today)

★★

IF you've seen *Calendar Girls* or *Kinky Boots*, you'll know how this feelgood weepy plays out.

Jacki Weaver is Maybelline, a church choir director from Texas, who inherits her estranged gay son's failing San Francisco drag club. As

she disowned him for being gay 10 years before he died, she's doesn't get a very warm reception.

But after transforming into a big-hearted liberal, she turns the fortunes of the club around.

The musical bits are well staged, but the ending feels unearned. Turns out it's impossible to cry and roll your eyes at the same time. - *AL*

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INSIDE THE WORLD'S TOUGHEST PRISONS: SEASON FOUR (18)
(Netflix from Wednesday)

★★★★

Investigative reporter and ex-prisoner Raphael Rowe (he spent 12 years wrongly banged up for murder) is voluntarily back behind bars again, spending a week at another four jails. Lucky him. The first, Tacumbu Prison in Paraguay, is arguably the worst: an overcrowded, drug-infested, brutally violent hellhole. The most ambitious is a place in Germany where they reckon their radical therapeutic approach

can turn murderers and rapists into decent human beings.

SAINT FRANCES (15)
(In cinemas from today)

★★★★

In this sharply written and authentically messy drama, screenwriter Kelly O'Sullivan plays Bridget - an aimless 34-year-old waitress who manages to land a job as a nanny, despite admitting in the interview that she doesn't like kids.

She's hired by a lesbian couple, Maya (Charin Alvarez) and Annie (Lily Mojekwu), who need help caring for their livewire six-year-old Frances (Ramona

Edith-Williams) while Maya looks after their new baby.

You can probably guess that Bridget and Maya's relationship will become the focus of the drama. But this beautifully performed indie is still full of little surprises.

HOW TO BUILD A GIRL (15)
(Amazon Prime from today)

★★

AFTER penning Channel 4 sitcom *Raised By Wolves*, Times columnist Caitlin Moran returns to her home city for

an off-key adaptation of her 2014 novel.

Jonah Hill's sister Beanie Feldstein struggles gamely with a Wolverhampton accent to play Johanna, a 16-year-old literary genius who lands a job on a 1990s music magazine.

Paddy Considine is excellent as her wannabe rock star dad but Moran's skittish script swerves the family drama for broad comedy and the bright lights of Britpop London.

+ WIN ++ WIN ++ WIN +



PRIZE GUY: Ben Mendelsohn in *The Outsider*

A Stephen King DVD bundle

OUR competition prize this week is a huge treat for Stephen King fans. Season two of *Castle Rock*, the psychological horror featuring some of his most infamous characters, is on DVD from Monday - and we have six to give away.

Not only that but each winner will also receive season one, plus the first season of King's HBO horror crime drama *The Outsider*, starring Ben Mendelsohn (also out Monday).

For a chance to win all three, worth more than £50, just tell us the name of Stephen King's first published novel. Was it: (A) Larry, (B) Carrie or (C) Barry?

Email your answer (subject: "King"), plus your name, address and mobile number, to starcompetitions@dailystar.co.uk.

Entries close at midnight this Sunday, July 26.

Normal Daily Star rules apply. The Editor's decision is final.



LIFE IN ANOTHER DAY

YOUTUBE are putting together another *Life In A Day* film, 10 years on from the groundbreaking original.

As before, the idea is we shoot a bit of film from a single day in our lives - in this case it has to be tomorrow, July 25 - and submit it by August 2 for possible inclusion.

The final work, to premiere at next year's Sundance Film Festival, will weave together the best bits sent in from all over the world. Full details at lifeinaday.youtube.

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AN app that hosts our favourite streaming channels in one place launches today.

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CAPTIVE AUDIENCE: Raphael Rowe visits the world's toughest jails