

Cowboy yarn triggers a wave of parodies

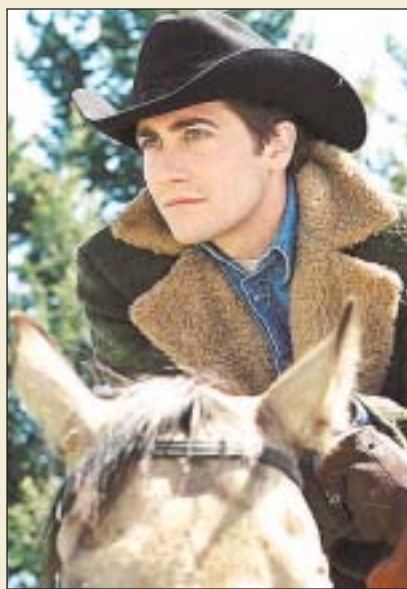
Whether or not *Brokeback Mountain* sweeps the board at tonight's Oscars, the story of two homosexual ranch hands has triggered a wave of spoof trailers on the web, such as *Brokeback to the Future*, *The Empire Breaks Back* and *Brokeback Goodfellas*. Some have been viewed hundreds of thousands of times and have sparked a debate about whether they are harmless fun or insulting and homophobic.

All the mash-ups assume the same form. Gustavo Santaolalla's sexy theme music plays mournfully as portentous title cards from Ang Lee's tearjerker – 'It was a friendship that become a secret', 'A

truth they couldn't deny' and the now-famous 'I wish I could quit you' reframe clips from other films to suggest vastly different plot lines. It seems to work every time, with films such as *Heat*, *City Slickers*, *Titanic* and *Fight Club* throwing up plenty of evocative lines for use by the satirists. In *The Empire Breaks Back*, for example, Luke Skywalker says: 'Something's happening. I want more and I know I shouldn't.'

The parodies have sparked both anger and praise in America. Most gay groups say they welcome the publicity – but Matt Foreman of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force said: 'It's gotten way over the top. It's a very sad movie. And yet it's spawned this entire industry of essentially anti-gay humour.'

www.dailysixer.com
Lorna Martin



Star Wars' Luke Skywalker is used in one of the net spoofs of *Brokeback Mountain*.

WEAPONS BUILD-UP

Argentina is menacing Falklands, say Tories

Argentina was accused last night of staging 'worrying' manoeuvres around the Falklands. The accusation was made by the Tories who questioned whether overstretched British forces could repulse a new assault on the islands.

Shadow defence secretary Liam Fox accused the Argentines of 'increasing the tension' with submarine incursions as they doubled the size of their air force and fitted new missiles.

'Their air force has been testing the response times of our Tornados after an Argentine plane shows up on the Falklands radar. All these developments have been very worrying. Under this Labour government, could we respond to a renewed attack from Argentina?' he told a Conservative party conference in Scotland yesterday.

A Foreign Office spokesman said a fishing vessel had been boarded recently in international waters off the Falklands but there was no record of any serious security concerns.

Gaby Hinsliff

WORLD CUP

Emergency passports ready for England fans

England fans who lose their passports at the World Cup in Germany this summer will still be able to travel back to Britain on temporary papers.

Hundreds of one-off emergency passports are being held in reserve in Germany for supporters who mislay them or have them stolen.

An estimated 100,000 England followers are expected to travel for first-round games in Cologne, Frankfurt and Nuremberg.

Andy Battson, the World Cup attaché at the British embassy in Berlin, said: 'Depending on the circumstances, and subject to security checks, we will issue an emergency document.'

Henry McDonald

EDUCATION

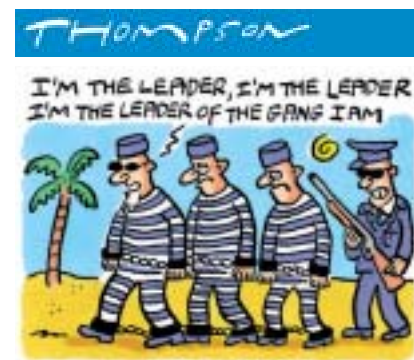
Teenagers' school costs hitting poorer parents

Many parents are struggling to pay for their teenagers' basic needs, says a Learning and Skills Council study.

Couples living on £30,000 a year with children aged from 16 to 19 spend £12 a week on essentials such as clothes, travel and school equipment. Yet the average spent on a teenager for these items is £34, according to the study of more than 2,000 parents.

Forty-three per cent of the poorer couples found it hard to buy everything their children needed and struggled to provide pocket money, mobile phones and cash for school trips.

Anushka Asthana



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1 in 3 households will be affected by inheritance tax in the next 20 years.* Which one are you, 1, 2 or 3?

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SCOTTISH WIDOWS
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*Source: The Observer, January 2005. <http://observer.guardian.co.uk> **This is the current inheritance tax threshold set by the government (2005/06), tax rules can change. Scottish Widows plc is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority (FSA Reg No. 191517). Contact us at www.scottishwidows.co.uk