

TIME PICKS

BOOKS
Ally Hughes Has Sex Sometimes (Aug. 25) may sound frothy—a woman’s former fling dates her daughter—but Jules Moulin’s novel thoughtfully considers how women juggle ambition, sex and motherhood.



TELEVISION
Show Me a Hero, *The Wire* creator David Simon’s HBO miniseries (out Aug. 16), stars Oscar Isaac in a true story of racial tensions in Yonkers, N.Y., in the 1980s.

MUSIC
 Dirty Projectors musician **Angel Deradoorian** gets experimental in her ethereal solo debut, *The Expanding Flower Planet*, in stores Aug. 21.

MOVIES
 Noah Baumbach reunites with Frances Ha star Greta Gerwig in **Mistress America** (Aug. 14), which traces the friendship of two soon-to-be stepsisters.



Cavill (left) and Hammer embody the stripped-down '60s chic Ritchie sought in *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*

FILM STUDIES
Guy Ritchie’s rules for reimagining spy flicks

EVER SINCE 1998’s *LOCK, STOCK AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS*, the GRF (Guy Ritchie Film) has stood for rapid-fire banter, slick suits, a vinyl collector’s soundtrack and action sequences that are as winking as they are heart-pounding. Ask the director what defines a GRF and you get a blunt answer: “It’s impossible.” But *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* unquestionably is one. Having reinvented the British crime caper, Ritchie now applies his idiosyncratic eye to the spy genre. He told TIME how:

Set your heroes apart. While the *Bond* and *Bourne* franchises celebrate tortured antiheroes, Ritchie focused on the “tone and charm” of CIA agent Napoleon Solo (Henry Cavill), a lovable rogue, and KGB operative Illya Kuryakin (Armie Hammer), a stoic with a heart of gold.

Go glam. In updating the TV drama, Ritchie kept the plot rooted in the “golden age of the spy thriller genre”—the height of the Cold War. He filled the screen with sleek cars and gorgeous backdrops, “getting rid of as much of the chaff of the ’60s without losing any of the character.”

Have a swinging soundtrack. “The ’60s is when music started becoming very exciting,” Ritchie says of the sultry Italian numbers and smash hits that amp up the film’s energy.

Be cheeky. Ritchie’s most distinctive trademark? Wisecracks. *U.N.C.L.E.* is rife with them, some improvised by the actors with the director’s encouragement. Solo’s boss (Hugh Grant) takes note of a bumbled plan thusly: “For a special agent, you aren’t having a very special day, are you?”

—MEGAN GIBSON

QUICK TALK
Ice Cube

The rapper, actor and former N.W.A member produced the hip-hop biopic *Straight Outta Compton*, starring his son O’Shea Jackson Jr. as Cube.

—NOLAN FEENEY

How did you help your son prepare for the role? I really wanted to see if he was serious and focused. Sometimes you ask your kid for something and when it’s time to really go and do it, they start to back out. Other than that, I would just tell him my perspective on the situation—how I was feeling about other people. I just wanted him to have enough ammunition.

The film depicts the abuses of power by cops that inspired N.W.A’s “F-ck tha Police.” What was it like working on this film as the conversation around police violence reignited? I knew that whenever we dropped this movie it would be timely because problems persist, which is really a shame. We haven’t held enough of officers accountable for misconduct, abuse and—in some cases—flat-out murder.

The movie shows how predatory the music industry can be. Is that still the case? There’s a long line of snakes out there. You have black guys taking advantage of black guys, white guys taking advantage of white guys and everything in between. Money really only has the color green.



THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.: WARNER BROS.; STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON: UNIVERSAL PICTURES; ICE CUBE: DAVID JOHNSON FOR TIME; MISTRESS AMERICA: FOX