



Monday 04 March at 6:30 pm

AFS Fundraiser

Special extra screening open to the public – all tickets \$20

## His Girl Friday

USA 1940

Director: Howard Hawks  
Producer: Jed Harris  
Production co: Columbia Pictures  
Screenplay: Charles Lederer, based on the play *The Front Page* by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur  
Photography: Joseph Walker  
Editor: Gene Havlick  
Music: MW Stoloff

With: Cary Grant (Walter Burns), Rosalind Russell (Hildy Johnson), Ralph Bellamy (Bruce Baldwin), Gene Lockhart (Sheriff Hartwell), Porter Hall (Murphy), Ernest Truex (Bensinger)

92 mins, Blu-ray. PG

Howard Hawks was attracted to the purity of succinctness. The filmmaker had no patience for handwringing, self-pity, artless exposition, or for any formal element that could be interpreted as self-consciousness... The saps in Hawks's world... believe in proffering clichéd, obligatory romantic sentiment, failing to understand that the camaraderie found working alongside your fellow human is deeper: more inherent, truthful, and matter-of-fact...

The editing in Hawks's films is quietly brilliant, working in tandem with the more overtly amazing in-camera editing of his framing. Characters move in a manner so as to seemingly naturally form the through lines of the images, physically complementing the verbal action of the stylized dialogue. Hawks's films carry you through their plots on a river of carefully subsumed craftsmanship.

*His Girl Friday* is one of Hawks's most perfect realizations of this aesthetic. The protagonists are reporters for a Chicago newspaper, intelligent, über-competent professionals who know how to wage social warfare while appearing to shoot the breeze. At the beginning of the film, Hildy (Rosalind Russell) is about to leave her editor, Walter (Cary Grant), who's also her ex-husband, because she wants to live as an actual "human being." ... Hildy is falling prey to sentimentality, and Walter must remind her of her destiny, calling on their intricate, instinctual private language as a couple forever in simpatico.

So the film is driven by Walter asserting to Hildy that she stay with the paper as well as him by extension, though Hawks has pointedly little interest in their romance as a separate endeavor from their writing. In this film's world, only a schmuck would require the sort of pitifully unoriginal affirmation that Hildy's new suitor, Bruce (Ralph Bellamy), is all too willing to provide... As these characters make their respective cases, volleying legendary dialogue back and forth at a bewildering clip, Hawks arranges them in tableaux of subtly shifting geometry that indicates power, or illusions thereof...

Hawks has refreshingly little patience for preaching, and he doesn't express an opinion on the legitimacy of the news story that occupies Hildy and Walter, which involves their efforts to opportunistically free a white man who lost his job and killed a black cop... The contrast of two men's deaths – and a woman's suicide attempt – with a comedy of remarriage is gleefully, debauchedly callous: Hawks's blitheness, about a black victim as nothing more than an inciting incident for a white press to manipulate political protocol, has a tart edge, particularly when seen through the prism of our bleak contemporary political spectrum. *His Girl Friday* isn't a dusty old classic; it's alive and electric, ready to bite... Chuck Bowen, *Slant Magazine*



Monday 11 March at 6:30 pm

AFS thanks Time Out Bookstore

## In a World...

USA 2013

Director/Screenplay: Lake Bell  
Producers: Lake Bell, Mark Roberts, Jett Steiger, Eddie Vaisman  
Production co: 3311Productions, In A World, Team G  
Photography: Seamus Tierney  
Editor: Tom McArdle  
Music: Ryan Miller

With: Lake Bell (Carol), Fred Melamed (Sam), Rob Corddry (Moe), Alexandra Holden (Jamie), Demetri Martin (Louis), Eva Longoria (as herself), Ken Marino (Gustav), Tig Notaro (Cher), Nick Offerman (Heners), Michaela Watkins (Dani), Geena Davis (as herself)

93 mins, Blu-ray. R16 sexual references & offensive language

What's in a voice? Power, for one thing. The power to tell people things – anything from an update on a global crisis to the general gist of a young adult movie franchise. This idea is at the center of Lake Bell's hilarious, sincere and boldly feminist comedy *In A World...*, which she wrote, directed and stars in.

Carol (Bell) is a vocal coach eking out a living in Los Angeles. She's in the shadow of her father, Sam Soto (Fred Melamed), one of the bigwigs in the field of movie-trailer voiceovers, a profession Carol would love to break into if it weren't so male-dominated and if Dad weren't so offhandedly unresponsive of her ambitions. But when she wins a gig voicing the preview for a "children's romantic comedy" (ha!), and then another and another, Carol starts to think she might have some traction in a world where those very words – "In a World" – are always intoned by men.

Bell is a warm and winning presence in the film, and supported by a well-cast array of funny actors and professional comedians alike. *In a World...* sticks to the beats of many romantic comedies, but it importantly places the feminist drive for self-fulfillment above any of the film's romantic scenarios. It also tackles feminism from a unique angle, the significance of voice – a facet of self-presentation – for women. There's a reason that the movie-trailer voiceover is a male domain, and it's not just limited to trailers, nor as Sam densely states is it about people not yearning for "a female sound." It has to do with authority. Beth Hanna, *IndieWire*

Bell has made a lively, modern screwball comedy with a terrible title; the dialogue moves fast and sometimes takes nutty, unexpected loops, like puppies scrambling over one another in a basket. The title, mentioned perhaps too many times in the course of the movie, refers to the opening words of 1,001 cheesy trailers, a phrase that became a trademark of sorts for real-life voiceover king Don LaFontaine, who recorded uncountable trailers, commercials, and promos in a career that spanned more than 40 years. (He died in 2008.) In Hollywood, being dead doesn't stop anyone from competing with you.

Bell captures the insularity of certain professional pockets of Hollywood, with all their petty rivalries and backstabbing. But she's sharpest in her exploration of what makes women desire success, and what prevents them from getting it. Carol, for all her awkwardness, is extremely competitive – there's no stopping her once she gets a shot at a prestigious gig. But her success also makes her instantly unattractive to a certain kind of man.

*In a World...* is a movie about ambition that is itself quietly ambitious. In a world where remarkably few women either get or create the opportunity to make movies, Bell has already figured one thing out: You don't have to shout to be heard. – Stephanie Zacharek, *Village Voice*