

A sensational Emma Thompson and Johnny English strikes again

 By [Daniel Dercksen](#)

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This week on the big screen: Emma Thompson is sensational as a high court judge who becomes emotionally involved in an ethically complex case in superb *The Children Act*; gets entangled in the hilarious antics of Rowan Atkinson, who returns for more hilarious antics as the much loved accidental secret agent in *Johnny English Strikes Again*; John Travolta plays the 'Teflon Don' of the Gambino crime family in New York City in *Gotti*; and a father and daughter set off on a harrowing journey back to their wild homeland in *Leave No Trace*.

The Children Act

Fiona Maye (Emma Thompson) is an eminent high court judge in London presiding with wisdom and compassion over ethically complex cases of family law. But she has paid a heavy personal price for her workload, and her marriage to American professor Jack (Stanley Tucci) is at a breaking point. In this moment of personal crisis, Fiona is asked to rule on the case of Adam (Fionn Whitehead), a brilliant boy who is refusing the blood transfusion that will save his life. Adam is three months from his 18th birthday and still legally a child. Should Fiona force him to live? Fiona visits Adam in the hospital and their meeting has a profound emotional impact on them both, stirring strong new emotions in the boy and long-buried feelings in her.

Some months before the novel *The Children Act* was published in 2014, Ian McEwan was discussing it with director and long-time friend Richard Eyre, and he mooted the idea of Eyre directing a screen adaptation. Having worked together on their first film *The Imitation Game* in the late '70s and then again on *The Ploughman's Lunch* in 1981, the pair had hoped to work together again, and happily reunited for the big screen adaptation of *The Children Act*, with McEwan writing the screenplay.

Johnny English Strikes Again

In *Johnny English Strikes Again*, the UK is in peril. Five days before the PM is to host her first G12 summit, MI7's security is breached and every agent in the field identified and exposed. The only hope of finding the perpetrator is to bring an agent out of retirement, but with most of them either dead or close to it, the head of MI7 is left with only one choice, and his

name is English... Johnny English.

Casting aside his job as a teacher, Johnny English (Rowan Atkinson) accepts his mission, but things have changed since he was last in the field; guns and gadgets have been replaced by digital phones, sports cars by electric hatchbacks. English is aghast but quickly finds a way around this new protocol, reasoning that it takes an analogue approach to catch a digital mastermind.

It was directed by David Kerr from a screenplay written by William Davies.

Gotti

This crime-drama follows infamous crime boss John Gotti's (John Travolta) rise to become the 'Teflon Don' of the Gambino crime family in New York City. Spanning three decades and recounted by his son John Jr. (Spencer Rocco Lofranco), *Gotti* examines Gotti's tumultuous life as he and his wife (Kelly Preston) attempt to hold the family together amongst tragedy and multiple prison sentences. Raised on the streets of New York, young John Gotti found his way into the Gambino crime family, eventually having the boss removed and becoming head of the powerful family. His wife asked only one thing from John: to never expose their children to his profession. But he broke the vow, and John Jr. took his place as his father's Capo.

Directed by Kevin Connolly and written by Lem Dobbs and Leo Rossi.

Leave No Trace

A teenage girl, Tom (Thomasin Harcourt McKenzie), and her veteran father Will (Ben Foster) have lived undetected for years in Forest Park, a vast woods on the edge of Portland, Oregon. A chance encounter leads to their discovery and removal from the park and into the charge of a social services agency. They try to adapt to their new surroundings until a sudden decision sets them on a perilous journey into the wilderness seeking complete independence and forcing them to confront their conflicting desire to be part of a community and fierce need to live apart.

From her Sundance Award-winning first feature *Down to the Bone* to her Oscar-nominated feature *Winter's Bone* and her documentary *Stray Dog*, writer and director Debra Granik has examined the lives of outsiders struggling to maintain their independence. Granik's third narrative feature, *Leave No Trace*, set in the Pacific Northwest's hidden byways and forgotten encampments, is based on Peter Rock's novel *My Abandonment*, which is inspired by a true story.

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