

# STUDENT LIFE

## Weekend Box Office Statistics Sept. 21-23, 2007

1. Resident Evil: Extinction	\$23,678,580
2. Good Luck Chuck	\$13,652,001
3. The Brave One	\$7,313,437
4. 3:10 to Yuma	\$6,157,624
5. Eastern Promises	\$5,659,133
6. Sydney White	\$5,196,380
7. Mr. Woodcock	\$4,923,896
8. Superbad	\$3,110,322
9. The Bourne Ultimatum	\$2,872,565
10. Dragon Wars	\$2,596,278
11. Rush Hour 3	\$2,203,545
12. Halloween (2007)	\$2,189,266
13. Across the Universe	\$1,950,871
14. Mr. Bean's Holiday	\$1,778,595
15. Balls of Fury	\$1,703,394
16. Transformers	\$1,436,280
17. In the Valley of Elah	\$1,266,869
18. Shoot 'Em Up	\$784,491
19. The Nanny Diaries	\$783,302
20. Hairspray	\$712,875

\*Statistics courtesy of [BoxOfficeMojo.com](http://BoxOfficeMojo.com)

## Penn moves audiences with *Into the Wild*



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Emile Hirsch plays Chris McCandless in Sean Penn's latest film.

By **Matt Schwabenbauer**  
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Death is one of the scariest things people have to deal with. Everyone likes to think that they will live a long, fulfilling life. Possibly having kids, holding onto a steady job which develops into a nice career, and leaving a name for themselves. No one thinks that they are going to die at the age of 24 from poisoning and starvation on the outskirts of Denali National Park in Alaska. This is exactly what happened to Chris McCandless (Emile Hirsch) in Sean Penn's new film *Into the Wild*.

This film is Penn's fourth major feature as director. It was released on Sept. 21, and is based on the novel by Jon Krakauer. *Into the Wild* tells the story of McCandless. Having lived under tough pressure from his parents for most of his life, McCandless graduated from Emory University in Atlanta with high honors in 1992. All those parental burdens came to their tipping point, when it is revealed that McCandless had given his life savings of \$24,000 away to charity, and planned to set out for Alaska.

McCandless's narrative is told in the form of journal entries scrolling across the screen, narrated by McCandless himself, and his sister Carine (Jena Malone). It is through these journal entries and flashbacks, that details about McCandless' past are revealed.

At the beginning of his journey, McCandless

renames himself Alexander Supertramp (in reference to his romantic life). He sets out on his adventure, which will take him up and down the continent, meeting various people and performing multiple jobs. Wherever his journey takes him, he leaves a mark on the people he meets. He affects everyone he meets positively, often enriching those he deals with. McCandless's journey ends at Denali National Park, where he finds an abandoned bus and claims it as his home. At first, he is content with his location. Living off the local wildlife, McCandless made the most of his situation until the weather conditions harshened and food supplies diminished. Consulting a guide book on what vegetation to eat, McCandless mistakes a poisonous plant for a healthy one, bringing about his demise.

Penn takes a tragic story and turns it into an epic film. Whether it be scenes of McCandless unstable parents, or the harsh Alaskan wilderness, Penn weaves the drastically different landscapes together perfectly to create a single cohesive story. Penn will show scenes of the McCandless parents bickering, portraying them as selfish and having no regard for their children, then later showing them weeping over their son's departure. As McCandless drives himself further and further into the Alaskan wilderness, Penn manages to manipulate the overall feel of the film to reflect this isolation. Filling the scene with a shot of an isolated bus in the middle of the Alaskan forest really makes you relate to McCandless's desolation.

## Iron & Wine reinvents with *The Shepherd's Dog*



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sam Beam incorporates political confusion into his latest work.

By **Scott R. Muska**  
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Sam Beam has come a long way since his days as a film and cinematography professor when he would write and record his own songs at a makeshift studio in his own home in Miami. What started out as a hobby eventually fell into the hands of the record label, Sub Pop, who signed Beam after hearing one of his demos. He released his first album, *The Creek Drank the Cradle*, in Sept. of 2002 under the band name Iron & Wine, and began to gather a cult following.

Beam didn't garner mainstream attention until the release of the movie, *Garden State*, a movie that is widely known for its soundtrack that included his mellow acoustic cover of the widely popular song by The Postal Service, "Such Great Heights."

Following the popularization of "Such Great Heights," Beam made a career move that was uncharacteristic among most artists after they are discovered by mainstream music listeners. He didn't cater to the majority of music listeners by adding a pop sound to his music or lyrics. He stuck with his trademark soft-voiced singing with acoustic guitar (which is often compared to the music of Nick Drake, one of his main artistic influences), and chose to reinvent himself in other ways, namely through a collaboration with the group Calexico. The two joined forces and released the *In the Reins EP* in 2005.

In his latest solo effort, *The Shepherd's Dog*, Beam attempts to continue his reinvention while still staying true to the type of folk music that he is known for. He implements the use of bongos in a few songs, and most of the record had a speedier tempo that Beam and his band had never experimented with in released recordings.

When asked in an interview with [splendidzine.com](http://splendidzine.com) if he feared losing some of the hushed and intimate nature of his music by broadening his songs instrumentally, Beam responded, "No, not really. I think that I put most of the work in the writing process and as long as the instrumentation fits the song, whether it sounds clean or whether it sounds like shit, I don't really think it makes a huge difference -- otherwise the live shows wouldn't work. Honestly, it's just a way to keep doing something new for myself. It's a way to move beyond putting the same record out over and over again, which I think would be really boring."

The lyrics in *The Shepherd's Dog* also vary from his previous works, while somehow staying parallel to what one would expect from Beam's work. He still subtly uses biblical reference (though he maintains that he is an agnostic that is merely interested in religion) and his lyrics are still deeply poetic and all but impossible to understand through the first listening. A big change on this record, however, is Beam's subtle philosophical and political references, often giving the notion that he is bewildered and unable to understand certain aspects of the world and the people that inhabit it. When asked to describe his new record, he said, "It's not a political propaganda record, but it's definitely inspired by political confusion, because I was really taken aback when Bush got reelected."

This album is everything that a fan of Iron & Wine is used to, while also surprising them with experimentation that fits smoothly into the comfort zone and mold of his usual brand of music. It may be the best record he has put out to date, and he hopes that it won't be the last. "Well as long as people are interested, for sure, I'll do it as long as people want me to," says Beam.



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