

**FERRELL:** It's not by design. It really has happened only by chance. And the common question is, [in a syrupy Mary Hart-type voice]: "Is there anything you won't do?" I don't fear a lot of things. I've always felt like that at least is one strength I have—commitment to a character. I think the common misconception is, "He'll do it! He'll do anything!" But I have said no to stuff that I didn't feel worked in the context of the character. And when I read the ["Old School"] script, I was thinking, "Oh, wow, I actually have to streak!" But then as I read it, it made sense that this guy would get to that place. And it's completely organic into where he was at that point in time.

**BOXOFFICE:** You're saying you do nudity for artistic reasons.

**FERRELL:** Exactly. Thank you.

**BOXOFFICE:** Have you ever had a Coco moment?

**FERRELL:** What's a Coco moment?

**BOXOFFICE:** You don't remember Coco from "Fame" being tricked into stripping and crying?

**FERRELL:** Oh! [laughs] Not yet, no. If anything, it was kind of an anti-Coco moment, where [on "Old School"] they wouldn't let me do [the streaking scene] until I signed the fact that I was waiving my nudity clause. So right before shooting, there was all this, "Don't let him run until he signs!"

**BOXOFFICE:** How is it different to be toplining a film?

**FERRELL:** I didn't necessarily put a bunch of brand-new pressure on myself, only because I consistently put on the same amount, whether it's a big role or a small role. But there's just an awareness of, "Okay, gosh, this is going to be Will Ferrell in 'Elf.'" [laughs] And it's kind of your baby. **BOXOFFICE:** What was the most surreal aspect—and I'm sure there were many—of shooting "Elf"?

**FERRELL:** Probably being on location in New York, just walking around in an elf suit. Which was initially surreal. And then it became surreal that I got used to it. [laughs]

**BOXOFFICE:** I noticed that all the New Yorkers in the film ignored you.

**FERRELL:** Pretty much. It's so funny. There's stuff that I don't think is in the movie, but we grabbed a lot of footage of me walking, trying to come up to people and talk to people. If they could see the camera close by, they knew something was up. But if we were shooting across the street on a long lens, they would just give me a look like, "Get away from me." They just thought I was some holiday person. And a very few

would recognize me from "Saturday Night Live" or something like that, and they'd go, "What are you doin'?" But for the most part, people were just like, [squints skeptically].

**BOXOFFICE:** Do you remember when you found out Santa wasn't real?

**FERRELL:** [Gravely] Yes. I remember the exact moment. I [went into my dad's] closet looking for something and, as I looked up on a top shelf, I could hear Dad's voice going, "Don't go in there!" And I saw a couple of our gifts. And we kind of had this unspoken moment where he went [sighs]: "Ohhhhl," and I went, [inhales]: "It's okay. I won't tell [younger brother] Pat."

**BOXOFFICE:** Awww!

**FERRELL:** It wasn't too shocking, because I had an inkling that Santa maybe wasn't for real. But that was the definitive moment. And then I—I still didn't tell Pat [who is now in his 30s].

**BOXOFFICE:** So he still doesn't know?

**FERRELL:** Pat still doesn't know. I think he does. I think he's not letting me know that he knows—he's playing along because he thinks I still don't know.

**BOXOFFICE:** What does Christmas mean to you?

**FERRELL:** Christmas means gift certificates from the Gap. No, Christmas probably means glögg. Now it means glögg to me. Which is this spiced mulled wine. And playing Swedish Santa. My wife's Swedish, and they have a big Swedish family, and every other year they do this big Swedish Christmas party for 70 or 80 people. And part of the night is that Tomten, which is Swedish Santa Claus, shows up. One of the years I was there, the person who normally plays Tomten couldn't make it. So would Will mind doing it.

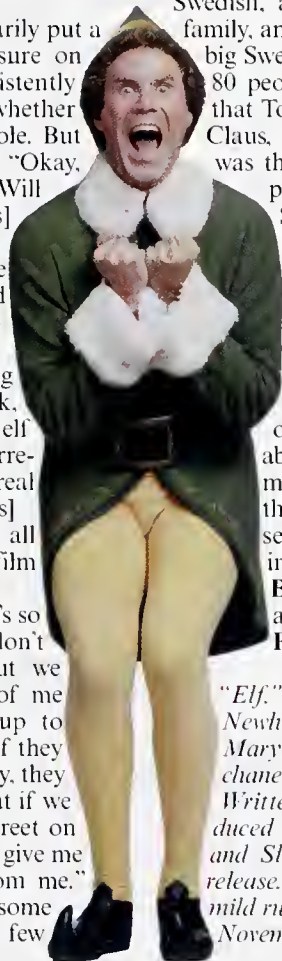
**BOXOFFICE:** If, as he says in the movie, smiling is Buddy's favorite, what's your favorite?

**FERRELL:** It's gonna sound cliché, but laughing. For sure. There are so many laughs that we had on "Elf." I can't think of anything better than to be able to do a job where you get to make people laugh. And along the way you get to laugh at yourself, or the circumstance you're in, or "Gosh, I can't believe..."

**BOXOFFICE:** "...I'm naked again!"

**FERRELL:** Yeah, exactly! ■■■

*"Elf." Starring Will Ferrell, Bob Newhart, Ed Asner, James Caan, Mary Steenburgen and Zooey Deschanel. Directed by Jon Favreau. Written by David Berenbaum. Produced by Jon Berg, Todd Komarnicki and Shanna Weinberg. A New Line release. Comedy. Rated PG for some mild rude humor and language. Opens November 7.*



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