

= Who 's That Girl ( 1987 film ) =

Who 's That Girl is a 1987 American screwball comedy film written by Andrew Smith and Ken Finkleman , and directed by James Foley . It stars Madonna and Griffin Dunne , and depicts the story of a street @-@ smart girl who is falsely accused of murdering her boyfriend and is sent to jail . After getting released , she meets a man , who is supposed to make sure she gets on her bus back to Philadelphia , and convinces him to help her catch those responsible for her confinement . While searching for the embezzler , they fall in love with each other .

After the failure of her 1986 film Shanghai Surprise , Madonna decided to sign another comedy film titled Slamner , which was later renamed to Who 's That Girl . However , she had to convince both Warner Bros. and the producers of the film that she was ready for the project . Madonna enlisted her friend James Foley to direct the film . Shooting began in New York in October 1986 , and continued until March 1987 . Production was halted during December due to snowfall in New York . Madonna utilized the time to work on her next tour and the soundtrack of the film .

The film was released on August 7 , 1987 , and was a box office bomb , grossing only \$ 2 @. @ 5 million in its first week , with its final domestic total being about \$ 7 @. @ 3 million . Critics were highly disappointed with the film , and Foley 's direction . Some went on to call it one of the worst films to be released , while others found Madonna 's comic timing to be one of the highlights .

However , the Who 's That Girl World Tour went on to be a critical and commercial success , grossing a total of US \$ 25 million , and playing in front of audiences totaling 1 @. @ 5 million people . And the soundtrack of the film , though not acclaimed by the critics , enjoyed commercial success . Three of Madonna 's songs , the title track , " Causing a Commotion " and " The Look of Love " , were released as singles with the title track becoming Madonna 's sixth number one single on the US Billboard Hot 100 . The soundtrack album went on to sell six million copies worldwide .

= = Plot = =

Nikki Finn is a carefree young woman , who is always dressed in a leather jacket and skirt , with fire @-@ red lips , platinum bob hair and speaking in a high @-@ pitched voice . One day , her boyfriend Johnny uncovers two men stealing money out of a trust fund and takes pictures of the theft . Johnny puts the pictures in a safety deposit box and gives Nikki the key for safekeeping . The thieves catch Johnny and murder him , then frame Nikki by putting his body into the trunk of her car . Nikki is sentenced to seven years in prison . This is seen during the animated opening credits of the movie .

After four years , the story presents tax attorney Loudon Trott ( Griffin Dunne ) on a busy day . He is getting married to the daughter of one of the richest men in New York , Simon Worthington . Loudon 's bride Wendy Worthington ( Haviland Morris ) is a selfish woman who is more consumed in her wedding plans than in the well @-@ being of her fiancé . Loudon , on the other hand , has a number of duties entrusted to him by his boss ( and future father @-@ in @-@ law ) , Mr. Worthington ( John McMartin ) . First he has to pick up a cougar for an exotic animal activist named Montgomery Bell ( John Mills ) , then to pick up Nikki , and lastly he has to make sure that Nikki catches the next bus to her hometown of Philadelphia .

Nikki , meanwhile , is determined to catch the actual thieves and bring forth the truth . After meeting Loudon , Nikki cons him into taking her shopping . After taking a Rolls Royce into Harlem to buy a gun ? and nearly being arrested during a police raid ? she explains her story to Loudon who believes that she is innocent , and decides to help her . She 's also on the run from a pimp named Raoul ( Coati Mundi ) and his lackey Benny ( Dennis Burkley ) , the people who killed Johnny . Only after dangling off a car smashed through the top floor of a parking garage , does he tell her the bank and the box number of Nikki 's slain boyfriend .

Afterward Nikki vanishes with the cougar ( whom she names " Murray " ) . Loudon visits Mr. Bell to apologize for losing the animal , to find Nikki had delivered Murray and was waiting for him at Mr. Bell 's home . He has created a Brazilian rainforest filled with animals on top of his roof . There Nikki and Loudon ? who had become close with each other on their journey ? express their love for each

other , and Murray finds a partner . Loudon delivers Nikki to the bus station the next morning , but Nikki becomes broken @-@ hearted , realizing that she has to go back to Philadelphia , leaving Loudon , who is about to get married . While on the bus , she opens an envelope in the security box and finds the photographs that prove that Mr. Worthington is an embezzler and he was the mastermind behind the theft . Nikki gate @-@ crashes the wedding , gets Mr. Worthington arrested and proclaims her love for Loudon . The film ends with Nikki and Loudon riding off into the sunset on a bus to Philadelphia , with Murray and his partner chasing after them .

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

Madonna 's 1986 studio album True Blue was a critical and commercial success , spawning five top @-@ five singles , and selling over eight million copies worldwide , by the year @-@ end . However , her film career was not as successful as she had hoped it would be . Following the commercially successful Desperately Seeking Susan , her 1986 film Shanghai Surprise ? where she starred with her then husband Sean Penn ? was a critical and box @-@ office failure , prompting Madonna to comment that she " struggled to come to terms with her character in Shanghai Surprise , because the innocence and repressed personality I was required to portray was so at variance with my own character . " Continuing to struggle with her film career , Madonna was unsure about of her ability to choose a good script , and film producers were less sure about backing her up .

Madonna felt that comedy was more of her repertoire , and proceeded to sign a comedy film titled Slammer , written by Andrew Smith and Ken Finkleman . She wanted to play the part of a street smart girl called Nikki Finn , who was jailed for a crime she did not commit . However , in light of the bad publicity surrounding her and Penn , and also of the very public failure of Shanghai Surprise , Madonna had to persuade producers Rosilyn Heller and Bernard Williams , as well as Warner Brothers , that she was up for the part . In addition , she wanted an old friend , James Foley to direct the film . Foley had previously been Penn 's best man at his marriage to Madonna , and had also directed the music videos of Madonna 's singles " Live to Tell " ( 1986 ) and " Papa Don 't Preach " ( 1986 ) . He was ecstatic at having the opportunity to make a major feature film , as previously he had only directed the small @-@ budgeted film At Close Range , starring Penn . As author Andrew Morton pointed out in his biography on Madonna , " the combination of a dubiously talented movie star and a first @-@ time movie director hardly guaranteed a box @-@ office hit , but the film received the go @-@ ahead from Warner , who wanted to encache more on Madonna 's success . " Madonna plowed gamely on , saying : " All Warner 's executives were real positive about the project . It was a process ? with the writers ? of honing the script , making it better . "

= = = Casting = = =

Casting for the film began as soon as Madonna had signed up for it . Griffin Dunne was signed to play the part of Loudon Trott , a lawyer whose job was to help Nikki get on a bus , after she was released . Initially Madonna had thought of asking Penn to play the part of Detective Bellson , but Penn was serving a 60 @-@ day jail term , having violated the probation he received in 1986 , for assaulting a friend of Madonna and attacking an extra on the set of At Close Range . The part went to Robert Swan , followed by the signing of John McMartin , Haviland Morris and Bibi Besch as Trott 's father @-@ in @-@ law , fiancée , and mother @-@ in @-@ law respectively . Madonna herself commented that she had a lot in common with the character Nikki . " She 's courageous and sweet and funny and misunderstood . But she clears her name in the last , and that 's always good to do . I 'm continuously doing that with the public . I liked Nikki 's tough side and her sweet side . The toughness is only a mask for the vulnerability she feels inside . " Madonna was also offered the lead role in the Blake Edwards comedy film Blind Date opposite to Bruce Willis , but she refused it in favor of Slammer . She said , " The thing I had planned to do after Shanghai Surprise was Blind

Date at Tri @-@ Star . I was supposed to have the approval of the director and the leading man , but they didn 't tell me they 'd already hired Bruce Willis . That ... just didn 't work out . But I was really excited about doing a real physical , screwball comedy , so when Jamie brought this up , it was like my reward . " Coati Mundi , member of Kid Creole and the Coconuts , and Madonna 's long @-@ time friend joined the cast to play the role of Raoul , Nikki 's enemy . Costume designer Deborah Scott was signed to create the wardrobe for the film . Madonna , who visualized the character of Nikki as a dizzy screwball blond , started watching the screwball comedies of the sixties , especially the work of actors like Cary Grant , Clark Gable , Carole Lombard and Judy Holiday . She asked Scott to create comical rah @-@ rah and ballet tutu skirts for the character , with fishnet tights and loud make @-@ up . Scott also designed a glamorous Monroe @-@ esque dress for the love scene between her and Dunne .

= = = Filming = = =

Filming began in New York in October 1986 . There was a huge crowd around the shooting location trying to get closer to her , whenever she stepped on the set . But Madonna was approachable , signing autographs for the children of the crew , joining in with the wisecracking and when not busy , she used to dance around a boom box with Mundi . When shooting commenced , Madonna would ask for five minutes to study the script and the scene they were shooting ; her idea of preparing for the part was not studied . For example , before a scene in which she needed to appear out of breath , she did a series of push @-@ ups before going on set . Always punctual and professional on the set , Madonna felt that her first takes were perfect and refused to appear for second or third takes . Dunne observed that " [ Madonna ] likes her first take best . I think my best is around fourth . She always says , ' You got it , you got it , ' and she was driving me crazy just like her character would . We had to make a compromise as to which take is the best . " Once Foley got down on one knee and kissed Madonna 's feet in order to encourage her to do a re @-@ take . Afterwards he noted , " She 's very instinctual , what comes out is unencumbered by analysis . "

Madonna was ready to take direction for her part , relying on Foley to give her all the cues . He , on the other hand , felt that in person , Madonna seemed to morph into a whole different body and self . He believed the process to be oddly elusive and commented that her persona morphing seemed to work most dramatically in Madonna 's music videos . " You 'd think that that would be the perfect attribute to have for screen acting . But although she ' acts ' very well sometimes , she doesn 't push the right buttons at the right times over the course of the film . The failure of Shanghai Surprise had left its mark " , said Foley . Regarding her acting abilities , Foley stressed on the fact that Madonna was very uptight and into every detail , determined to have the correct portrayal . " That 's probably why it wasn 't so good . In Desperately Seeking Susan , when she didn 't know what she was doing , she was being natural and at her best . "

As December arrived , production was halted for a few days due to snowfall in New York City . Madonna decided to utilize the time by working on the soundtrack of the film and also started to note ideas for her next concert tour . While recording the title track , Madonna decided to change the film 's name from Slammer to Who 's That Girl as she felt it to be a better title . Filming commenced in January 1987 , with a scene involving a cougar . But during the second take , the cougar accidentally escaped from the cage , resulting in shooting being paused for a few hours . Madonna remained calm , later noting the incident as " extremely frightening , but I did my best to have my composure . That freaked the others more . " Mundi felt that " she 's got a bit of that perfectionist thing in her . She doesn 't rest . She 's got the movie , and the soundtrack album , and also planning her Who 's That Girl Tour , doing all these stuff at the same time ! " By February 1987 , Madonna 's scenes were already shot although she proceeded to linger on the set to watch Foley and his team work . Foley commented , that having Madonna around the set and not acting was a " pain @-@ in @-@ the @-@ ass " as she " wont skimp especially on cost and she should know that Warner had a tight schedule and constraints on the budget . They still did not trust Madonna when it came to acting . Hell they even gave a greater percentage of the budget to the soundtrack . " Filming ended in March 1987 , with post @-@ production continuing till July 1987 . During the development of the

starting credits , Madonna asked Foley if they could have a cartoon figure of her character introducing the film credits . Foley liked the idea , and Warner enlisted cartoonist April March to create the cartoon .

= = Release and promotion = =

The film was released on August 7 , 1987 , in United States to 944 theatres . Warner Bros. did not arrange for an advance screening , as they believed that Madonna 's appeal would draw moviegoers to come to the film . A pre @-@ release celebration was held on August 6 , 1987 , at Times Square in New York , where Madonna arrived to promote the film . A crowd of almost 10 @,@ 000 people assembled to watch Madonna . As an introduction to the day , the radio jockeys from New York 's WHTZ radio station played Madonna 's popular songs in the Square , atop a platform created for the event . The police closed off 43rd and 44th streets , but allowing the traffic to pass through Broadway and Seventh Avenue of Manhattan . Around 6 PM , limousines started to arrive at the Square , with celebrities and the actors of the film entering the fanfare . Madonna arrived in a low @-@ cut , low @-@ backed sequined evening gown and the short hair she had adopted for the film . Although she was late by about an hour , the crowd number continued increasing . Asking her fans good @-@ naturedly to " Shut up , so I can talk " , Madonna thanked everybody for coming to the opening of Who 's That Girl . She talked about her experience of arriving in Times Square eight years before , and said , " I was completely awestruck . Ten years later , I see all of you who have come to see me , and I 'm completely awestruck . Thank you , and I hope you like the movie . " Saying this Madonna departed from the platform , and walked to the National Theatre . Joseph A. Cincotti from The New York Times noted that most of the crowd were in their late teenage years and early 20 's . Some held up signs and photographs but he noticed the Madonna wannabes were absent , the adolescent girls who had imitated Madonna 's early lace @-@ and @-@ leather look . This was a result of Madonna 's more mature image from True Blue .

To further promote the film , Madonna embarked on the 1987 Who 's That Girl World Tour . It was Madonna 's first world tour , reaching Asia , North America and Europe . Musically and technically superior to her previous Virgin Tour , the Who 's That Girl tour incorporated multimedia components to make the show more appealing . Madonna trained herself physically with aerobics , jogging and weight @-@ lifting , to cope with the choreography and the dance routines . The stage was bigger than her previous tour , flanked with four video screens , multimedia projectors and a flight of stairs in the middle . Leonard became the music director and encouraged Madonna to go with the idea of rearranging her older songs and presenting them in a new format . Madonna named the tour as Who 's That Girl , when during rehearsals one @-@ day she looked at a gigantic image of herself , projected on a screen on the stage and mused about how much she has changed and " who was that girl on the screen ? " . The show consisted of seven costume changes , with song @-@ and @-@ dance routines , theatrics , addressing social causes ? during " Papa Don 't Preach " ? as well as an encore , consisting of the title song " Who 's That Girl " and " Holiday " . The tour was critically appreciated , who commented on the extravagant nature of the concert and complimented Madonna for her dancing , costume changes and dynamic pacing . Who 's That Girl was a commercial success , grossing in total of US \$ 25 million by playing in front of 1 @.@ 5 million audience members . According to Pollstar , it was the second top selling female concert tour of 1987 , behind Tina Turner 's Break Every Rule Tour .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical response = = =

The film received negative reviews from critics , and has a rating of 23 % on review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes . Vincent Canby from The New York Times noted that Madonna , left to her own devices and her own canny pace , is a very engaging comedian . " When Madonna 's no

@-@ nonsense pragmatism isn't being twisted into poses of lovable eccentricity, the actress is sexy and funny and never for a minute sentimental. At times she looks amazingly like Marilyn Monroe, but the personality is her own, more resilient and more knowing. As the WASP @-@ y sleeping prince, Mr. Dunne gives the most stylishly comic performance of a career that's been largely underrated by the public. Though he seems to be Madonna's foil, he provides the movie with its backbone, even in its most ludicrous moments. He may well be one of the most truly sophisticated straight men in the business today. However, he ended the review by saying that the film was short on outright guffaws. Hal Hinson of The Washington Post gave to the film a mixed review, commenting that "you may not feel as if you've seen a movie. You may not quite know what you've seen" and that although he laughed too much, the film "is outrageously inept, but not in a routine manner". Hinson also criticized the work of Foley, noting that he "doesn't have the skill to sustain a cartoon style". Philip Wuntch from The Dallas Morning News commented that the film is a deft and daffy comedy performance; Madonna is great with the one @-@ liners. [...] As a movie star, Madonna may be an acquired taste. But one thing is certain: acquiring this particular taste is going to be an enjoyable experience. Jay Boyar from Orlando Sentinel gave a negative review saying, "Luckily for her, Madonna can sing, and use it to save herself from this disgrace of a movie."

Jamie Waylett from The Advocate was more critical, saying "Madonna delivers the worst performance in recent memory as the heroine of an attempt at screwball comedy. Watching her try to look like Marilyn Monroe and sound like Betty Boop, though, is a sure sign that this film was a disaster in the making. At the same time, it seems inconceivable that anyone would sit down and plan something so dreadful." Carole Kass from Richmond Times @-@ Dispatch felt that since "Madonna is the idol of teen @-@ agers. If they imitate her hair and her makeup, these 'wanna @-@ bes' who want to be like Madonna and dress like Madonna may be cute. But, as a popular personality, Madonna has a responsibility to her fans. And shoplifting is something not to promote. Nor is smoking." Dan Dinicola from The Schenectady Gazette felt that "Who's That Girl is not simply an awful film, it is positively unbearable. It's a movie without a head or a brain, a picture of such crass stupidity that it can't even make you angry. Instead it numbs you to death with its moronic platitudes, its pretensions to comedy. [...] It's a vanity project which is so amateurly produced and conceived that it makes you want to cringe in shame. [...] Madonna is no more than a novelty item." Johanna Steinmetz from Chicago Tribune complimented Dunne's acting and said: "Fortunately the film has Griffin Dunne. Dunne, working in a domain once ruled by Cary Grant, manages to be stuffy, naive and vulnerable but never undignified as Loudon Trott, the New York lawyer." Jean Rosenbluth from Rolling Stone was harsh about the film, saying "The question posed by the film's title was Who's that girl? The answer provided by the box @-@ office receipts was, alas, 'The same one who appeared in Shanghai Surprise and bored us to death'."

The picture was the recipient of five Razzie Award nominations, including Worst Director (James Foley), Worst Original Song ("El Coco Loco"), Worst Screenplay and Worst Picture, with Madonna winning Worst Actress.

== Box office ==

The film was released to a total of 944 theatres, with an extra 66 being added later. In its opening weekend, the film grossed \$2 @. @ 5 million (\$5 @, @ 207 @, @ 235 in 2016 dollars), becoming the tenth highest grossing film of that week. The next week it had a 60% decline in sales. The film grossed a total of \$7 @. @ 3 million (\$15 @, @ 205 @, @ 126 in 2016 dollars) worldwide, and was a box office bomb. It was placed at 97 on the top 100 movies of 1987 list. Morton noted that although "Madonna's comic talent was acknowledged, cinemagoers in the United States stayed away in droves." The film was better accepted in the foreign released territories, prompting Madonna to defend herself, rather weakly, that her ideas were better accepted in Europe and Japan, rather than her home country. She added, "I think the movie did badly in America because I upstaged it with my tour. People were confused about the connection between the record, the tour and the movie because they all had the same title. I also think there are people who don't want

me to do well in both fields . I had to really fight to get any respect from the music business and now I guess there are some people who feel that I ought to be grateful for that respect and stick to music . " Nevertheless , Warner Bros. decided to release the film in home media in VHS on November 11 , 1987 , a decision not approved by Madonna .

Foley accepted the failure of the film saying , " I knew it was doomed before even filming started . The day before the first shoot , I sat in my hotel and looked to the script thinking , ' Damn , wish I could re @-@ write this whole thing . ' After the film released , my dad called me up saying ' you know The New York Times are calling it the worst film of the year . ' " He recalled that both he and Madonna chose to overlook the failure of the film , and remembered one incident when he met Madonna at a hotel lobby . " She just looked to me once and said , ' So it 's a flop right ? ' That 's the only time she ever mentioned the film . Even Sean also never mentioned it in front of her . " In another article in The New York Times , Vincent Canby noted that Madonna 's real personality is of a " knowing , shrewd , pragmatic young woman , a performer of invigorating energy who still looks a lot like Marilyn Monroe , even with short hair , but who has much more in common with the enthusiastic , unembarrassed , comic tartness of Jean Harlow , somehow let loose on the streets of New York in the 80 's . " However , he felt that Who 's That Girl failed to portray that image , leading to its failure . The first half of the film showed a different personality of Madonna , trying to be comical , which was not accepted by the public .

= = Soundtrack = =

The soundtrack from the film was released on July 21 , 1987 , by Sire Records , and contains four songs by Madonna , and others by her label mates Scritti Politti , Duncan Faure , Club Nouveau , Coati Mundi and Michael Davidson . It is considered a Madonna album by Warner Bros. Records since the majority of the songs are sung by her . Madonna began working on the soundtrack in December 1986 , and contacted Patrick Leonard and Stephen Bray , both producers of her third studio album True Blue ( 1986 ) . She needed uptempo and downtempo songs for the soundtrack . The uptempo song , composed by Leonard , ended up being the title track for the film ; together , Madonna and Leonard also developed the downtempo ballad " The Look of Love " . Two more songs were composed for the film with Bray , the first being the dance @-@ y tune " Causing a Commotion " , and the other being " Can 't Stop " , a track inspired by Sixties Motown and the group Martha and the Vandellas .

After its release , Who 's That Girl soundtrack received mostly negative reviews from critics , who called it plain and incomplete , although citing the title track and " The Look of Love " as its highlights . The soundtrack was a commercial success , reaching the top ten of the album charts of the United States , Austria , Canada , France , Italy , New Zealand , Sweden and the United Kingdom , while topping the charts of Germany , and Billboard 's European Album chart . Worldwide , the album went on to sell six million copies . Three of the Madonna tracks were released as singles . The title track became her sixth number one single on the Billboard Hot 100 , making her the first artist to accumulate six number @-@ one singles in the 1980s , and the first female performer to get that many number @-@ ones as a solo act . " Causing a Commotion " was the second single , and it reached number two on the Hot 100 , and the top ten of the charts of other nations . " The Look of Love " was a European market @-@ only release , reaching the top ten in United Kingdom . Another track , " Turn It Up " was a promotional release in United States , reaching the number 15 on the dance charts .