



## the new age of greed

April 22, 2005

By Josh Rottenberg

Voracious hunger for the trappings of wealth and privilege is usually associated with the me-me-me '80s, when Gordon Gekko proclaimed "Greed is good" and Van Halen demanded all brown M&M's be removed from their dressing-room candy dish. But by all accounts, Hollywood's current case of perk fever really began in the 1990s. As the film biz got caught up in an ever more Ahab-like pursuit of blockbuster glory, studios began to lavish unheard-of sums of money on the handful of actors who could theoretically guarantee a mass audience. "When opening weekends became the big thing," says one studio chief, "it tipped the balance so far in favor of the stars that it created all these crazy costs."

With salaries for male stars topping out at a dizzying \$20 million per picture, perks became, for many stars, an increasingly important way of keeping score. According to one **entertainment lawyer** who has negotiated perk packages, it's a matter of psychology:

Celebrities themselves would tell you, not without some justification, that their own expenses continue to balloon. Round-the-clock security to fend off the paparazzi, personal chefs to maintain their meticulously calibrated diets, stratospherically pricey real estate, \$20,000-a-year private-school tuitions for the kids. And then there's the entourage. One movie star had two kitchens built, side by side, in his Beverly Hills home — one for the family, one for the posse. "There are actors who have such incredible entourages, it's like a little moving city," scoffs one top studio executive. "When they made *The Godfather*, do you think Al Pacino had these giant entourages?"

**"There's a lot of anger that comes from working your way up, being rejected and looked at as a piece of meat, and ultimately, perks may be some sort of sweet revenge. Sometimes the stars don't give a s--- who they piss off. They want what they want, and screw anyone else."**

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