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## **John Cusack drama, "Grace Is Gone," among top video rentals**

(LOUISVILLE, Ky.) -- "Grace Is Gone," a real-to-life drama in which John Cusack ("1408", "Say Anything") plays the husband of a soldier killed in Iraq, may have suffered from poor box office timing -- released in just seven theaters before the December holidays amidst a glut of other Iraq-themed movies -- but it seems to have found its audience in home entertainment. [IMDb](http://www.imdb.com), a leading online movie database, reports that as of June 1, 2008 (the most recent numbers available), only five days after the movie's home video release, "Grace" had already earned \$3.4 million and was ranked #7 in all U.S. DVD rentals.

The film, now available both in stores and online with services such as Netflix, was produced by Manhattan-based Plum Pictures in association with Hart/Lunsford Pictures, an independent film production company based in Louisville, Kentucky.

"Although the whole theatrical experience will never go out of style, we think more and more busy Americans are supplementing their entertainment with DVD rentals and convenient 'movies-on-demand' at home," said Ed Hart, one of the principals of Hart-Lunsford Pictures. "The more choices, the better, for consumers *and* the industry."

The Weinstein Company, which purchased “Grace Is Gone” at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival, teamed with Genius Products, one of the fastest growing distributors of home entertainment, to market and sell the movie on DVD.

Unlike a slew of other recent movies that deal with America’s presence in Iraq, “Grace” doesn’t focus on the conflict itself, but on the human cost of war in terms of the collateral damage back home. “Grace,” which was a *New York Times* Critics’ Pick, received the audience award and screenwriting award at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival, where it had its world premiere. It also earned the International Critics Prize from a jury of five journalists at last year’s Deauville American Film Festival.

Watch “Grace Is Gone” trailers here, [Trailers from Hart-Lunsford Pictures](#), and read what critics have said about “Grace.”

*Associated Press* [David Germain]

“It’s stirring, even gut-wrenching, on the strength of John Cusack’s terrifically restrained performance as a husband in denial over the death of his wife in Iraq.”

*USA Today* [Claudia Puig]

“A moving and tender family drama, built on the foundation of a serious contemporary issue.”

*Ebert & Roeper* [Richard Roeper]

“This is a very strong and very moving film.”

*Chicago Sun-Times* [Roger Ebert]

“Cusack gives a great performance.”

*New York Times* [Stephen Holden]

“*Grace Is Gone*, a small, tender film about contemporary parenthood in wartime, carries off a delicate balancing act.”

*Rolling Stone* [Peter Travers]

“No politics, no pleading. No artifice.”

*Newsday* [Jan Stuart]

“Cusack has never been better; he disappears into his character's repressed skin so utterly, we can barely recognize in him the perky teen heartthrob of *Say Anything*.”

*Variety* [Todd McCarthy]

“Although clearly coming from an antiwar perspective, the story's emotional effectiveness and family grounding give the film a real shot at connecting with general audiences across the political spectrum.”

*Los Angeles Times* [Kevin Crust]

“In a year that has seen wave after wave of films addressing the war in Iraq with varying degrees of anger and frustration, *Grace* serves as a gently thoughtful coda and reminder of what continues.”

RottenTomatoes.com

”It's a deeply affecting drama that never resorts to manipulation in achieving its aims. Instead, it relies on the strong script...as well as a trio of fantastic performances...The role is a complete departure for [John Cusack], and the change is a welcome one that should win him both critical praise and awards. The film's tone is sweet and sad, though never overwhelmingly so, and it's helped by excellent cinematography from Jean-Louis Bompont and a quietly moving score from Clint Eastwood.”

*San Francisco Chronicle* [Mick LaSalle]

“Someday, the war will be over, and this film will be a respectable cultural artifact, a movie that tried to tell a sad story without taking political sides.”

*Seattle Post-Intelligencer* [William Arnold]

“It makes its points and is more cultural evidence of just how harshly history is likely to judge our ill-fated adventure in the Middle East.”

*Cinematical* [James Rocchi]

“The film is as affecting -- and as ultimately human -- as one might hope, and it still brings home the ugly real fact that for too many Americans, the evening news isn't just background noise.”

FilmCritic.com [Chris Barsanti]

“There's an undeniable integrity here...with the powerfully sympathetic Cusack leading a clutch of standout performances through an honest and fair appreciation of death and the gaping holes of its aftermath.”

*The Onion AV Club*

“*Grace Is Gone* attempts to address grief frankly, gently, and without didacticism, and it largely succeeds.”

*Maxim* [Pete Hammond]

“Incredibly, John Cusack has never been nominated for an Academy Award, but this movie may change that. He's simply terrific in a fine and moving film.”

The 85-minute film is rated PG-13 for thematic material and brief strong language.

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#### **About Hart/Lunsford Pictures**

Hart/Lunsford Pictures is a fully financed production company based in Louisville, Kentucky, which has partnered with Plum Pictures of New York City to produce seven feature films, with one more now in development. Established in 2004, the company is financed by Louisville entrepreneurs Ed Hart and Bruce Lunsford, both of whom have extensive backgrounds in the entertainment industry (Mr. Hart in the theme park business and Mr. Lunsford in thoroughbred racing) and both of whom are among Louisville's foremost businesspersons. Visit [www.hlpictures.com](http://www.hlpictures.com).

#### **About Plum Pictures**

Plum Pictures was founded in 2003 by Galt Niederhoffer, Celine Rattray, and Daniela Taplin Lundberg to produce intelligent and heartfelt feature films. Based in downtown Manhattan, the company produces two to three films a year, with a focus on both studio and independent films. The company also finances up to two films a year. Visit [www.plumpic.com](http://www.plumpic.com).