

The Bluebird Project Inc.
presents

Eating **Buccaneers**

written and directed by

Bill Keenan

NOMINATED FOR FIVE CANADIAN COMEDY AWARDS



88 mins / HD / 16:9

A **trailer**, synopsis, cast/crew bios and high-res photos are available at:
www.eatingbuccaneers.com

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**Nominated for five
Canadian Comedy Awards**

Best Writer – Bill Keenan
Best Actor – Peter Keleghan, Jeff White
Best Actress – Leah Pinsent, Shannon Beckner

Table of Contents

Review Quotes	Page 3
Cast/Crew	Page 4
Short Synopsis	Page 5
Mid Synopsis	Page 6
Long Synopsis	Page 7
Cast Bios	Page 8
Director's Bio	Page 14
Crew Bios	Page 15
Production Notes	Page 21

Reviews for *Eating Buccaneers*

"The film is funny, ferocious and full of bitter wit...a sharp slice of absurdity."
Chris Alexander, *Metro News*

"*Eating Buccaneers* is laugh-out-loud funny!"
Terry O'Reilly, *CBC Radio*

"Sharply written...3 cheers for *Buccaneers*!"
Jim Slotek, *The Toronto Sun*

"Think *Lost* but funny."
Simon Houpt, *Globe and Mail*

"The old plane-crash-in-the-wilderness genre gets a very funny reworking."
Just For Laughs Film Festival, Chicago

"This absurdist dark comedy is one of the most relentlessly funny Canadian films of this or any year...*Eating Buccaneers* is a confidently constructed debut feature film."
Victoria Film Festival

"*Eating Buccaneers* is one of the funniest movies I've seen in a long time."
Cinefest Sudbury International Film Festival

Cast

Peter Keleghan (*The Red Green Show*) is *Jerry*, the A-type VP of Account Services with a secret agenda

Leah Pinsent (*Made In Canada*) is *Vanessa*, the new-age art director with a knack for picking the wrong men

Shannon Beckner (*Billable Hours*) is *Andrea*, the perky junior account executive with wilderness survival training

Steven McCarthy (*Dead Mary*) is *Stewart*, the brand manager who can't make a decision without a focus group

Jeff White (*Little Mosque on the Prairies*) is *Doug*, the irreverent, hot-shot copywriter with writer's block

Neil Crone (*Little Mosque on the Prairies*) is the mortally wounded *Pilot*

Gordon Pinsent (*Away From Her*) in a cameo as *The Hermit Trapper*

Filmmakers

Writer/Director	Bill Keenan
Executive Producers	Bill Keenan
	Tracy Keenan
Producers	Mark Montefiore
	Jennifer Mesich
Casting	Stephanie Gorin, CSA, CDC
Director of Photography	Wes Legge
Editor	Andy Ames
Music Composer	Ari Posner

Short Synopsis

Eating Buccaneers is a feature film comedy about four self-absorbed advertising executives and one officious client who crash-land their charter plane into the northern Ontario woods. They survive the crash, but can they survive each other? With nothing more than a box of Buccaneer chocolate bars, the group sets out to rescue themselves with dubious survival skills and even worse team-building abilities. Unknowingly, each person has embarked on a third-class journey through hell that will help them to discover what's really important in their lives. That is, if they don't kill each other first.

Mid Synopsis

Eating Buccaneers could be described as *The Office* meets *Lord Of The Flies*. It's a feature film comedy about four self-absorbed advertising executives and one officious client who crash-land their charter plane into the north woods. They survive the crash, but can they survive each other?

There's Doug, the irreverent, hot-shot copywriter with writer's block; Vanessa, the new-age art director with a knack for picking the wrong men; Jerry, the A-type VP of Account Services with a secret agenda; Andrea, his perky junior account executive with wilderness survival training; Stewart, the brand manager who can't make a decision without a focus group; and the mortally wounded Pilot who refuses to die.

With nothing more than a box of Buccaneer chocolate bars, the group sets out to rescue themselves with dubious survival skills and even worse team-building abilities. As days pass, surprising revelations begin to mount as the Buccaneer bars begin to disappear. Unknowingly, each person has embarked on a third-class journey through hell that will help them to discover what's really important in their lives—that is, if they don't kill each other first.

Long Synopsis

Four self-absorbed advertising executives and one officious client crash land their small charter plane into the northern Ontario woods. There's Doug, the hot-shot copywriter; Vanessa, the new-age art director; Jerry, the A-type VP of Account Services; Andrea, his eager junior account executive; Stewart, the client brand manager with a secret, and the mortally wounded Pilot, who refuses to die. They all survived the crash, but can they survive each other?

After the Pilot dies (the second time), the group sets out to rescue themselves with a limited amount of Buccaneer bars and an even smaller amount of team-building abilities. As days pass with no rescue, curious behaviour reveals hidden agendas; surprising admissions begin to mount as the Buccaneer bars begin to disappear. Unknowingly, each person has embarked on a third-class journey through hell that will help them to discover what's really important in their lives.

When the bars finally run out, so does their patience in a comic hockey-style donnybrook of pent-up anger and petty frustrations. They've hit rock bottom—the slick, urbane advertising professionals have become physically beaten, emotionally exhausted lunatics. Stewart's secret is revealed and agendas are laid bare. Into this chaos miraculously walks the Pilot who brings a whole new meaning to Monty Python's famous line "I'm not dead yet." The Pilot offers insight to them all, especially Doug. Something about the Blue Bird of Happiness, which is also the name of the crashed plane.

As the Pilot dies (again), the story concludes with a final, surprising comic chase through the woods. They've all learned that, no matter how lost you may be, with the right outlook, life can be as sweet as a Buccaneer bar—that is, if you don't kill each other first.



Peter Keleghan as Jerry

Peter is one of Canada's best-known comic actors and has an impressive array of film, television and theatre credits in Canada and U.S. They include film industry CEO Alan Roy on Rick Mercer's *Made in Canada*, news anchor Jim Walcott on *The Newsroom*, and Ranger Gord on *The Red Green Show*. Peter has also made many U.S. TV appearances including *Murphy Brown*, *Cheers*, and *Seinfeld*, in which he played George Costanza's archnemesis, Lloyd Braun. A Second City alumnus, Peter will be starring in the new CBC/ABC sitcom "Eighteen To Life" and recently played alongside Pierce Brosnan in the movie thriller *Butterfly On A Wheel*. In *Eating Buccaneers*, Peter plays Jerry, the driving A-type EVP of Account Services at the ad agency.



Leah Pinsent as Vanessa

Leah Pinsent is a multi-Gemini award winner and Genie nominee. An actress and writer, Leah lived in the US (NYC and LA) for half her life, but after surviving the two largest earthquakes in LA's history, decided to move back to her real home. Her TV credits include *ReGenesis*, *Made in Canada* and *This Is Wonderland*. Film credits include *The Bay Boy* with Liv Ullmann and Kiefer Sutherland, *Waking the Dead* with Jennifer Connelly and the upcoming *The Bend*. Leah's daily life is filled with her love of cooking, spirituality (she's been meditating since age 11), ballroom dancing, volunteering and her three guys: her father, Gordon Pinsent; her actor husband, Peter Keleghan; and her cocker spaniel, Higgins. In *Eating Buccaneers*, Leah plays the role of *Vanessa*, the new-age art director with a knack for picking the wrong men.



Shannon Beckner as Andrea

A rising star, Shannon is currently finishing post work on her first action movie, *Hybrid*, from the producers of *Terminator 3*. This year she won her first National Canadian Comedy Award for her work with the sketch comedy troupe *The Sketchersons*. Previous credits include *American Pie—Beta House*, *The Jane Show*, and *Charms For the Easy Life* with Gena Rowlands and Mimi Rogers. She's currently on air as a series lead on the satiric mockumentary-based sitcom, *Punched Up* on The Comedy Network and has just completed her second season playing Daphne on the hit comedy, *Billable Hours*. In *Eating Buccaneers*, Shannon plays *Andrea*, the perky junior account executive with wilderness survival training.



Steven McCarthy as Stewart

After graduating from Montreal's renowned National Theatre School, Steven landed plum movie roles in *Eye Of The Beholder* with Ashley Judd and Ewan MacGregor, *Soldier of Fortune* directed by Jerry Bruckheimer, and *Dear America* on HBO. Steven is also a celebrated theatre actor having performed with the Necessary Angel Theatre company and at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. *Revisited*, a play Steven co-wrote and performed was recently awarded one of the Top Five Plays of the Year by Toronto's *Now Magazine*. Other recent credits include *The Murdoch Mysteries*, *This Is Wonderland* and *Dead Mary*. In *Eating Buccaneers*, Steven plays *Stewart*, the client brand manager who can't make a decision without a focus group.



Jeff White as Doug

A relative new comer to comedy, Jeff's natural comic abilities have landed him a reoccurring role in CBC's hit comedy *Little Mosque on the Prairie*. He is a graduate of the Birmingham Conservatory for Classical Theatre in Stratford, Ontario and was a Stratford company member for the 2001 Festival season appearing in *The Merchant of Venice*, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Inherit The Wind*. His film and television credits include *Our Fathers* with Ted Danson and Christopher Plummer, *Resident Evil*, *Queer as Folk*, *Mayday*, and *The Session*. Jeff lives and performs in both Vancouver and Toronto. In *Eating Buccaneers*, Jeff plays *Doug*, the irreverent, hot-shot copywriter with writer's block.



Neil Crone as *The Pilot*

Neil currently stars in CBC's hit sitcom *Little Mosque on the Prairie* as Fred, the right wing radio host. A *Second City* alumnus, Neil has appeared in dozens of TV shows and feature films including *Hairspray* with John Travolta, *Hollywoodland* with Adrian Brody and Ben Affleck, *Against The Ropes* with Meg Ryan, and *The Recruit* with Al Pacino and Colin Farrell. A talented voice actor, Neil voices a number of characters in YTV's hit series *Erky/Perky* and the upcoming *Adventures of Bob & Doug Mckenzie* and *Pearlie*. He is also an award winning syndicated humour columnist for Metroland papers. In *Eating Buccaneers*, Neil plays *The Pilot*, the foul-mouthed flier who actually has more wisdom than the rest of the bunch.



Bill Keenan – Writer/Director

Bill studied film and television at Ryerson University in Toronto, winning Best Final Year Production for *The Janitors*, a satirical look at the rough and tumble men who risk their lives to clean a big city university. Bill also co-wrote and performed a comedy show for radio station Q-107 and appeared at Yuk-Yuks Comedy Club. After graduating, Bill performed improvisational comedy at Theatresports before joining The Second City Touring Company, where he performed and improvised comedy sketches throughout Ontario. Bill has also written comedy commercials—winning many international awards for his work—and had one of his TV campaigns directed by David Cronenberg.

Bill co-wrote, directed and produced an 18-minute short comedy called *The Homework Bureau* that premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival (“a dead-on satire of television cop shows”). *The Homework Bureau* screened at film festivals around North America including Vancouver, Atlantic Canada, Boston, and Palm Springs (“a wonderful film”). *The Homework Bureau* was broadcast on The Comedy Network and Global Television (“hilarious”) in Canada, and won Best Original Story in a recent comedy shorts festival in Toronto.

Bill makes his feature debut with *Eating Buccaneers*.

Mark Montefiore – Producer

Mark is a young producer/creator, recently graduated from the Canadian Film Centre's Producer Lab. He was nominated for the Ontario Premier's Award for Most Successful Recent Graduate and a recipient of the Corus Entertainment Young Filmmakers Initiative. He's made several award-winning short films, *Back in '93* and *Career Day* (both Bravo!FACTs). He has also created a live-action sitcom *Ella* and a prime-time drama *Byron Bay*, both in development with Decode Entertainment, and a late-night animated series in development with marblemedia called *Ditch Pirates*.

Mark is also in development as a producer on several feature films including a hockey bio-pic directed by Bruce McDonald, a family adventure/comedy, *Little Red Turnbuckle*, and a documentary with CTV, *Sammy*, about a former classmate of Mark's now serving a life-sentence in the USA for his role as a high level Al-Qaeda operative.

Mark remains involved in the non-profit sector as well, line-producing a long format commercial for the child sponsorship organization Children International which took him to the slums of Colombia and Zambia in 2008.

Jennifer Mesich – Producer

Jennifer has been fascinated with movies ever since her first membership at her hometown video store.

Now a graduate of the Canadian Film Centre Producer's Lab, and having produced the short film *Night* which has played at numerous film festivals, Jennifer is proud to have her first feature film *Eating Buccaneers* coming to theatres this fall.

Jennifer studied filmmaking at Niagara College then moved to Toronto to work as the International Sales Coordinator at Cinemavault Releasing. While there, she traveled around the world to international film festivals and markets such as the Berlin Film Festival, American Film Market and the Cannes Film Festival.

Now having recently completed her position on *Casino Jack*, starring Kevin Spacey and Barry Pepper, Jennifer is now in development on her next two feature films *Tillsonburg* and *Grease My Spokes*.

Stephanie Gorin – Casting Director

Stephanie is a two-time Emmy nominated casting director (*The Tudors*) and two-time Gemini nominee (*The Border* and *Being Erica*). With her exhaustive knowledge of actors, both experienced and up-and-coming, Stephanie has: cast many high-profile film and TV projects including *Moby Dick* with William Hurt, *Camp Rock* with the Jonas Brothers, *Saw II - VI*, and *Degrassi*; co-cast *Hairspray* with John Travolta and *Take The Lead* with Antonio Banderas; and dance cast for *Chicago* with Catherine Zeta-Jones and Richard Gere. Stephanie has also cast many of the top shows in Toronto's theatre district including *We Will Rock You*, *The Sound of Music*, *Boys in the Photograph*, *Mamma Mia*, and *Beauty and the Beast*.

Wes Legge – Director of Photography

Wes is a talented young DOP who has photographed a wide range of projects. He started shooting 2nd unit work on TV series like *The Wilkinsons* and *Crystal: Living the Dream* before progressing to full DOP status on a series of Canadian Film Centre and BravoFACT shorts. Recently, Wes has been busy shooting *The Tara Diaries*, a TV documentary series and *Three Chords from the Truth*, a Movie Central 10 part comedy series.

Eating Buccaneers is his first feature film.

Andy Ames – Editor

Andy is one of the top TV commercial editors in Canada and co-founder of Panic and Bob, the country's foremost post-production company. He specializes in comedic storytelling spots and has won many international awards for his work.

Over the past 20 years, Andy has edited TV spots with some of the top commercial and feature film directors in Canada and the U.S., including Bryan Singer (*The Usual Suspects, X-Men*), Vadim Perelman (*The House of Sand and Fog*) and Simon West (*The General's Daughter, Lara Croft—Tomb Raider*).

Advertising agency DDB Chicago and client Anheuser-Busch have entrusted Andy Ames to deliver the highest levels of editing excellence for Budweiser and Bud Light during the Super Bowl broadcasts—widely regarded as the crème de la crème for the television commercial industry.

Eating Buccaneers is Andy's first feature film.

Ari Posner – Music Composer

Ari completed an Honours Fine Arts degree in Music at York University in Toronto. With a strong background in classical and popular piano, his studies at York focused on jazz performance, composition and music for film and television under the direction of renowned composer Paul Hoffert. Posner now composes an eclectic variety of music for series television, feature and documentary films, as well as radio and TV commercials through Pirate Toronto, Canada's premier audio post house for commercials.

Ari is one half of a composing duo that has been nominated for a prime time Emmy for outstanding Main Title Music on Disney's animated series *Get Ed* (2006). They won a Gemini for their underscore on Decode's animated series *King* (2005), and currently share composing duties on CTV/CBS's hit drama, *Flashpoint*.

Ari is also a celebrated music producer, having produced the Juno award winning children's album *Music Soup* (2008).

Production Notes

The Idea

"The real germ of this movie," says writer/director Bill Keenan, "started with the question: How well do we really know the people we work with every day?" What resulted was *Eating Buccaneers*, a comedy about four self-absorbed advertising executives and one officious client who crash-land their charter plane into the northern Ontario woods. They survive the crash, but can they survive each other? "It's *The Office* meets *Lord Of The Flies*," says Bill.

Raising The Money

With the script honed to a fine comic edge, Bill and his co-executive producer wife, Tracy, began to raise the financing. "We did what the Cohen brothers did for their first movie, *Blood Simple*. We divided our budget into equal units and sold them to family, friends and friends of friends." How was the experience of pitching would-be investors on the concept of buying into a movie by a first time feature filmmaker? "It was actually quite fun. I have a fair amount of experience pitching from my ad days. One of our investors even organized a party for me to pitch their friends and work associates. It was like a movie business version of a Tupperware party." And what was it like when people said no? "I developed a pretty thick skin in advertising. Although I did egg a few people's houses—you're not going to put that in, are you?"

Casting

With money raised and producers Mark Montefiore and Jennifer Mesich (both alums of the Canadian Film Centre) on board, casting for the movie began. Neil Crone from *Little Mosque on the Prairie* was the first on board. He and Bill have been friends since high school—Bill wrote the role of the *Pilot*

especially for Neil. Serendipity led Bill to Peter Keleghan (*The Newsroom*) who plays *Jerry*, the A-type VP of Account Services with a secret agenda. As drafts of the screenplay progressed, Bill began to see the talented actor as the only *Jerry* that would do. "I was using Peter for a voice-over for one of my radio spots," Bill said. "After the recording was finished, I pitched him on the role of *Jerry*. After reading the script, not only did Peter say yes, but he thought his partner, Leah Pinsent (*Made in Canada*), would make a great *Vanessa*." The irony here is that, as *Vanessa*—the new age art director with a habit of picking the wrong men—Leah would play a character who has just broken up with a character played by Peter. With these roles cast, suddenly Bill found himself with three of Canada's top comic actors in his movie.

With the help of veteran casting director Stephanie Gorin (*Hairspray*, *Chicago*), Bill completed the rest of his talented cast: Jeff White (*Little Mosque on the Prairie*) plays *Doug*, the irreverent, hot-shot copywriter with writer's block; Shannon Beckner (*Billable Hours*) plays *Andrea*, the perky junior account executive with wilderness survival training; and Steven McCarthy (*The Murdoch Mysteries*) plays *Stewart*, the client brand manager who can't make a decision without a focus group.

The Weather

As the first shooting day drew nearer, thoughts turned to the weather. "We shot for 18 days which really isn't very much time to make a feature film," says Mark Montefiore. "The beauty of this script is that, if it rains, we keep shooting because that's exactly what these characters would encounter in the wilds. On the other hand, who really wants to shoot in the rain? So during the whole shoot we weren't allowed to use the "r" word around Bill."

"Months ago," Bill says, "I put my order in for good weather." During the entire shoot, over a span of four weeks, it only rained twice. The first time was only for an hour, which didn't impact the production. "The second time,

the rain was kind enough to pour during a dinner break but, unsure if it was going to stop when shooting resumed, Bill rewrote the next scene during dinner to make it work in the rain just in case," Leah Pinsent remembers. "The funny thing is, it actually worked better as a rain scene!" Ironically, just as dinner finished, so did the rain. The rain was supplied later with sound effects.

Gordon Pinsent

After the first week of shooting the production broke for two days. The first day of the next week would be shot at Algonquin Park. During the break, Peter Keleghan called Bill with an idea. "I asked Bill if he'd like Leah's father, Gordon Pinsent, to do a cameo in our scene at Algonquin," says Peter. Bill loved the idea and immediately rewrote the scene to accommodate him. What was it like having film royalty in your first feature film? "I think Gordon really needed a challenge after *Away From Her*. Ya know, something to really stretch his acting ability." Gordon plays a Hermit Trapper, with one line of dialogue. He happens upon the desolate ad people but leaves without them ever seeing him. "During the lunch break, Gordon rubbed chicken all over himself to add to his dirty appearance. By the time we were ready to start shooting, he couldn't figure out why there were wasps all around him." But the scene got shot without any glitches or bites. "After we shot the scene, I said to Gordon that he might have a future in this business. He was great. A real gentleman," says Bill, who loved seeing crowds of hikers gather to watch the film legend perform at the peak of Lookout Trail.

The DOP

Bill and the crew were constantly inspired by director of photography Wes Legge. "Not only did he shoot beautiful stuff," says Bill, "but he was an animal out there. He'd take the camera off the tripod, throw it on his shoulder and dive into the densest bush imaginable if it meant getting the

best shot." There are many hand-held shots where Wes was lying on the ground under the camera or holding it in the air above actors. "During one of the break days," Bill says, "Wes and I went to a different forest to grab some shots for cutaways. Somehow these wasps got into his shirt and up his pant leg. They stung him a bunch of times but he never dropped the camera!"

What Was It Like Shooting In A Forest?

"Was it only four weeks?" Shannon Beckner says. "I still have mosquito bites! It was like camping—in a tight nylon dress and dress shoes! I'll never go into the bush without a gold purse again!"

"Being an outdoorsy type, the forest was a blast and a blessing to be in every day," Peter Keleghan says.

Leah Pinsent remembers, "It was kinda fun to find out how much clothing I was going to lose as we went along. I'll leave that up to your imagination. Oh yeah, and trying to do yoga on the forest floor—that was a challenge!

Bill remembers what good sports the ladies were throughout the physical hardships of stinging burrs, bleeding blisters and being a very long way from the washroom—all in the name of comedy.

Steven McCarthy recalls, "Because it was an ensemble piece, there was never really any time to go back to your dressing room. So we all just stayed on set in the forest and made ourselves as comfortable as we could. It made for a strong team spirit because, as an actor, I got to see so much more of what the crew were doing to get the movie done. Each department was much less isolated in the way they would be on a larger film. We were able to see and appreciate what each other team did in a more meaningful way."

"Looking at the pictures on the Web site," says Jeff White, "makes me wish

we could do it all over again. I had such a great time. I felt so supported as an actor on set.”

What Drew You To This Project?

“I turned down other work for *Eating Buccaneers* because of the quality of the project,” says Peter Keleghan. “When I was first approached I loved the script and, most importantly for an actor, I knew that I could be a lead in a feature that would normally be cast with either Josh Brolin or Colm Feore. The downside was that we were paid with Canadian Tire money and ju jubes. The upside was the thrill of watching the dedication of people who really care about what they created. There is nothing more satisfying than seeing the person who owns the words and who is directing and renting the cast, crew and equipment and seeing their project shoot from beginning to end with such goodwill, humour and integrity.”

Shannon Beckner says, “As an actor, there is nothing better than getting to work with people whose work and careers you really respect and aspire to, and that was definitely the case here, having scenes alongside Peter Keleghan and Leah Pinsent. The script was extremely smart and funny and the character of Andrea was really appealing because she was very easy to relate to. Who hasn't been in a job where you are trying to impress your superiors? Who hasn't had a little crush on their boss? Who hasn't survived a plane crash with their co-workers and a box of tasty snack bars? Wait a minute...”

“Peter brought me on because he thought I'd be right for Vanessa,” says Leah Pinsent. “When I read the script I was very excited to be a part of the project. It's funny while poignant and sounded like it would be a lot of fun, which it definitely was.”

Post Production

With his many past TV commercials, Bill has worked with the top commercial postproduction houses in Toronto. He turned to them for help to finish *Eating Buccaneers*. "I was extremely fortunate to have Andy Ames from Panic and Bob Editing to cut the movie," says Bill. "Panic and Bob is probably Canada's top post-production house. When you see the great commercials on the Super Bowl, that's Andy's work. He really understands storytelling and comic timing. He's the master of 30 and 60 seconds and was really itching to tackle 90 minutes."

Bill was also very grateful to have Terry O'Reilly on board to supervise the audio. Terry is co-owner of Pirate Toronto, the premier radio production house in Canada.

"The incredibly talented Ari Posner wrote our music score. He's now composing music for CTV's new hit show *Flashpoint*," says Bill. They met when Ari wrote "some achingly beautiful" music for one of Bill's TV commercials.

"It's kind of ironic to have all these commercial houses working on a movie that makes fun of advertising," says Bill. "Talk about biting the hand that feeds!"

The Spine

Each character in *Eating Buccaneers* wants to be rescued. But each one also has a subconscious goal—something more they unconsciously want from life. Which leads to the spine of the movie: five people experiencing a desperate situation that helps them realize who they really are and what's important in their lives. This happens over the course of the film through a process of revealment—in other words, the characters' desperate situation in the woods peels away the façade they have maintained at work and reveals their truer

natures. Doug realizes he has been a workaholic. Andrea isn't quite the hotshot Outward Bound graduate she thought she was. Stewart is semi-suicidal over his failed marriage. Jerry doesn't want to save his co-workers, he wants to save his stock options. And Vanessa, the new-age flake, is literally revealed as a beautiful, sexy, wise woman. "This is really a fish-out-of-water story," Bill says. "And as we laugh at the spectacle of these five urbane professionals dressed for downtown Toronto, struggling through the forest in an attempt to save themselves physically, we come to realize—as the characters do—that they are really on a more figurative journey to save themselves."