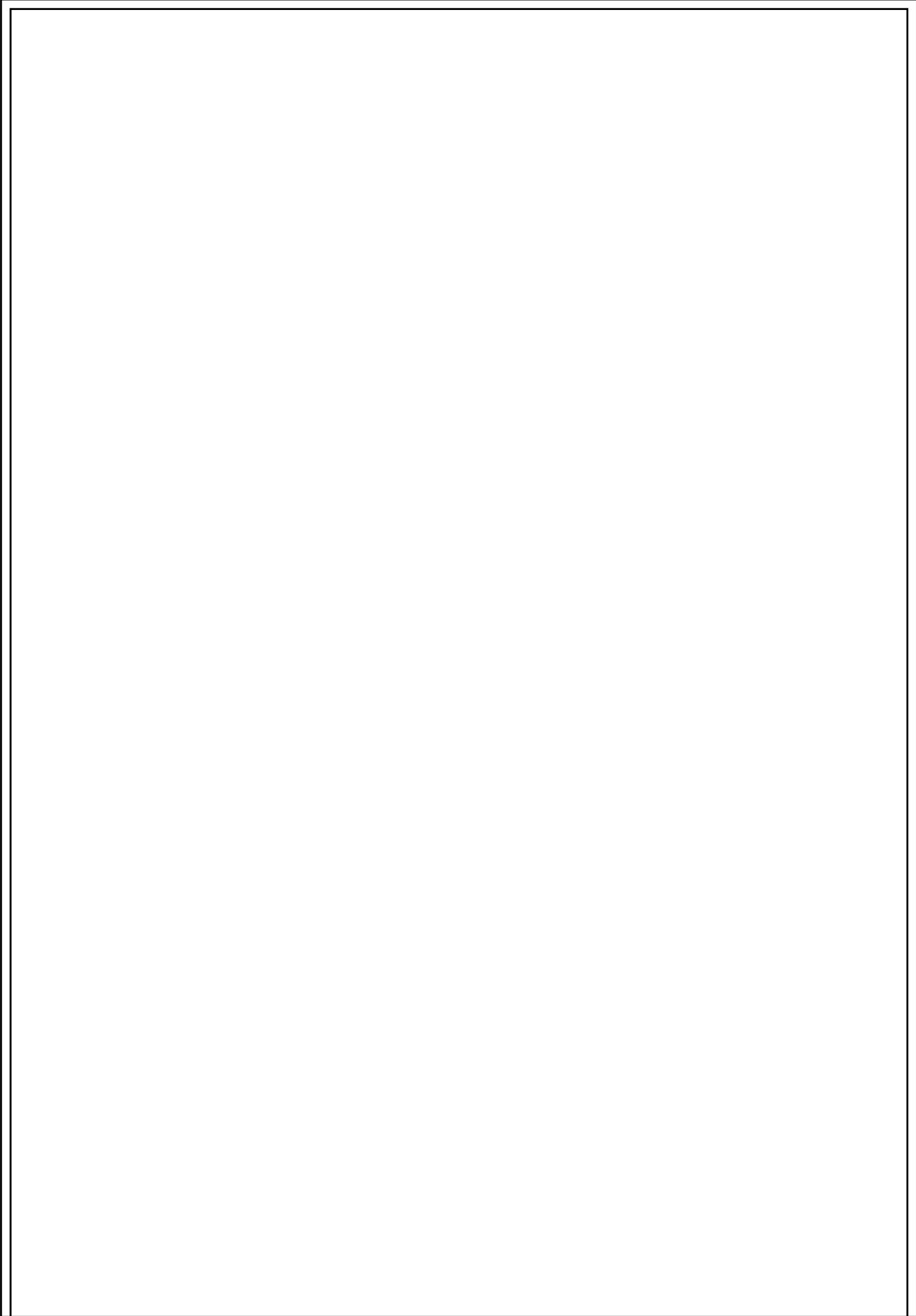


Interview: Helen Hunt Red Carpet for ‘The Sessions’ at Chicago International Film Festival

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on October 23, 2012 - 1:29pm

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CHICAGO – Oscar winning actress Helen Hunt has emerged recently with the lead role in “The Sessions,” in which she portrays a sex therapist counseling a handicapped man played by John Hawkes. The Junior Board of the Chicago International Film Festival screened “The Sessions” and honored Helen Hunt with a Red Carpet appearance on October 20th, 2012.





Helen Hunt at the Chicago International Film Festival, Oct. 20th, 2012, for her new film ‘The Sessions’
Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

Hunt grew up in California, and was born into the show business industry, as her father Gordon was a prominent Hollywood sound director. She began her career as a child actress, and had prominent roles on “The Mary Tyler Moore Show” and “The Bionic Woman” in the 1970s. She graduated into more adult fare by portraying Clancy Williams – the girlfriend then wife of Dr. Jack Morrison (David Morse) – on the iconic TV drama “St. Elsewhere.” After bouncing from TV to films, she landed the role of Jamie Buchman on the long running sitcom “Mad About You” (1992-99). While in that run, she portrayed Carol Connelly in the film, “As Good as it Gets” (1997) and took home the Oscar for Best Actress.

HollywoodChicago.com was on the red carpet right before Helen Hunt presented her new film “The Sessions” at the Chicago International Film Festival, and interviewed her there. The following Q&A also includes the background to the questions, as the Red Carpet only yielded three inquiries. Photographer Joe Arce captured the portrait.

BACKGROUND: “The Sessions” is an amazing role for Helen Hunt at this point in her career. She portrays sex therapist Cheryl Cohen-Greene, who becomes a surrogate teacher and friend to her client Mark O’Brien (John Hawkes), who is handicapped due to polio. Hunt is unafraid to expose herself physically – she does more nudity than is usually shown in an American film – and also handles the conflicting emotional element of her relationship with O’Brien...

HollywoodChicago.com: To prepare for a role like ‘The Sessions,’ what was more difficult – the physical exposure or the emotional expression – and why?

Helen Hunt: It was all one thing, it was a beautiful story, and I used the tools that I have. In this film, I use everything I have, in every way, and I’m very proud of it and very grateful that a festival like this will bring attention to a smaller film when it started?

BACKGROUND: Hunt’s portrayal of a sex therapist is subtle, appropriate and without any exploitation. It is obvious that the film relied on real advice from this profession, and Hunt added her own sensitivity and manner to the character...

HollywoodChicago.com: What was the best advice a real sex therapist gave you, that you applied to the character the most in the film?

Hunt: Of all the sex therapists I’ve seen, you mean? [laughs] I met one, and I did everything she said. It wasn’t so much her advice as her positive attitude, I just loved the idea that sex could be looked at in that way.

BACKGROUND: One of the most unusual and audacious drama series in TV history was the hospital opera “St. Elsewhere” (1982-88). The iconic cast included Oscar winners Hunt and Denzel Washington, and longtime TV and film actors Mark Harmon, David Morse, Howie Mandel and Bruce Greenwood. It was a bit of a proving ground for the young cast, and Hunt had a crucial role at a very early time in her child-to-adult acting career. Is it possible that it premiered 30 years ago?

HollywoodChicago.com: Since you had a prominent role on the legendary TV drama ‘St. Elsewhere,’ was there any indication to you at the time that the ensemble cast would later become so influential in TV and film?

Hunt: I was too young to even think about it, but that was a group of great actors in that hospital and I was proud to be among them.

The 48th Chicago International Film Festival is October 11th-25th, 2012. For more information and to purchase tickets, click on ChicagoFilmFestival.com [16]



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