

# PASSENGER 57

**W**esley Snipes still dangles a clothespin from his motorcycle to jog his memory of growing up in the South Bronx, hanging up his clothes to dry from the window of the apartment he shared with his mother and sisters.

Snipes has come a long way from the old 'hood. He's now one of the busiest actors in Hollywood, with upcoming roles in Philip Kaufman's suspenser *Rising Sun* and James B. Harris's *Money Men*.

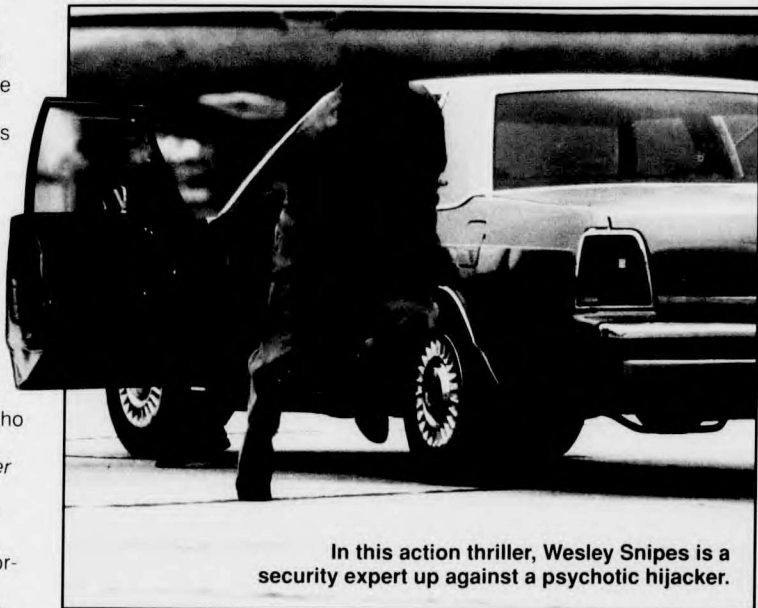
Ironically, his mother scooped him out of the Bronx — and his gig at New York's prestigious High School for the Performing Arts — and moved the family to Orlando, Fla., where Snipes wound up back on location for his current release, *Passenger 57*.

The taut action thriller features Snipes as John Cutter, a security expert on board a Los Angeles-bound jet with a psychotic terrorist (Bruce Payne) who's been apprehended for an airplane hijacking. Payne plans to be the solo depar-

ture from the plane, but Snipes employs his savvy antiterrorist skills to waylay the prisoner and keep the airliner safe. To prepare for his role as the "ex-soldier, Special Forces-type guy," Snipes hung around with real SWAT teams.

Snipes's intense centeredness in his characters can be found in most of his roles. These include a high-school football player in Goldie Hawn's *Wildcats*, baseball player Willie Mays Hayes in *Major League*, the street-smart basketball scam artist in *White Men Can't Jump*, the architect who embarks on an interracial love affair in Spike Lee's *Jungle Fever* and Denzel Washington's saxophone-playing rival in Lee's *Mo' Better Blues*.

He gave another forceful performance as a wheelchair-bound paraplegic in Neil Jimenez's *The Waterdance*. The diligent actor visited rehab centres, spending time with patients to investigate the physical challenges they faced so that he could be more prepared



In this action thriller, Wesley Snipes is a security expert up against a psychotic hijacker.

for his role.

Snipes's on-the-spot research with SWAT teams for *Passenger 57*, however, was a little scarier. He wasn't keen on overstepping his

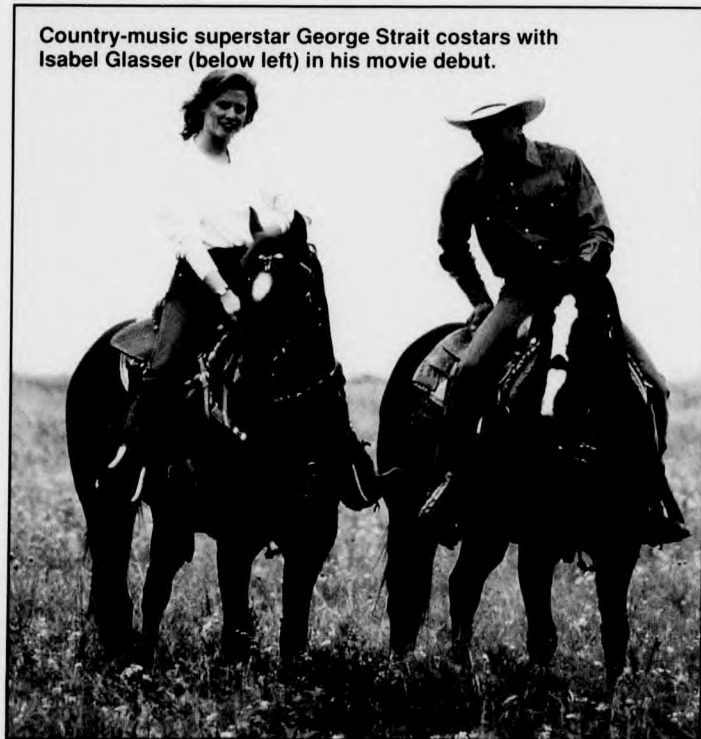
welcome with these guys. "You don't want to become a target. You just want to practice."

—Susan Devins



# PURE COUNTRY

Country-music superstar George Strait costars with Isabel Glasser (below left) in his movie debut.



**A**lready a hero in Nashville music circles, George Strait will make his movie debut this fall in *Pure Country*, produced by Jerry Weintraub, directed by *Young Guns*' Chris Cain, and costarring Lesley Ann Warren.

Strait is cast as Dusty Chandler, playing to type as a country-music legend who grows tired of glitz and glamour and opts to seek refuge in a simpler life closer to his roots instead.

Filmed in Texas, the film is written by Rex McGee. For Strait, the locale is simply a return to his own roots. Born in 1952 in Pearsall, Tex., he taught himself to play guitar by studying a Hank Williams songbook and was soon playing leads in a military country band during a stint in the U.S. Army.

But success didn't come easily, and by 1979, he was juggling a dual career, during the day managing a ranch that ran 1,000 head of cattle and, by night, performing with the band Ace in the Hole in

dance halls all over Texas.

He was on the verge of throwing it all over to join a company that designed cattle pens, when an MCA Records executive tapped him for a move to Nashville and subsequent fame.

On April 23, 1981, Strait released his first single, titled *Unwound*. Since then he's had 33 hit records. And along the way, he's collected a few honors. He was named the Country Music Association's and the Academy of Country Music's entertainer of the year in 1989 and, to prove he wasn't an overnight sensation, he took the same honor again in 1990 from the CMA.

"Sometimes, I wonder what I'd be doing today if I hadn't had the opportunity to sign with MCA," he reflects. "I might have been doing something in agriculture. Hopefully, it would have been, because I love to work with horses and cattle and be outside."

In other words, a pure country life.

— John Coulbourn

