



INNERSPACE



JOE DANTE'S NEW FILM WITH MARTIN SHORT AND DENNIS QUAID

Let's hear it for the little guy. The very little guy. The very, very little guy. We're talking small, here...as in

submicroscopic.

As Lilliput was to Gulliver, as the Munchkins were to their beloved Dorothy, as *The Incredible Shrinking Man* was to *The Amazing Colossal Woman*, so is fearless Flyboy Tuck Pendleton (Dennis Quaid) to cowering supermarket clerk Jack Putter (Martin Short). Only more so.

Welcome to **Innerspace**, the new final frontier. Captain Kirk and Luke Skywalker can have the vast, empty reaches of outer space — **Innerspace** is where it's at, particularly since it became both the title and the setting of the newest fantasy film from the producing/directing/moneymaking team of Steven Spielberg and Joe Dante.

We've all been to **Innerspace** before...actually, we sort-of are **Innerspace** existing as it does inside the human body. But we've been there before, here at the movies, in the classic 1966 science-fiction adventure *Fantastic Voyage*. You remember — Raquel Welch, Stephen Boyd and traitorous Donald Pleasence crammed into that teeny-weensy submarine, shrunk to the size of a pimple and injected into the bloodstream of a comatose scientist.

Needless to say, the voyage, fantastic as it was, did not go smoothly. And the miniaturization technology doesn't seem to be anymore reliable now than it was 20 years ago.

In **Innerspace** we have a team of scientists who intend merely to

inject the incredible shrinking "pod" containing test-pilot Tuck Pendleton into an experimental rabbit. However, due to the insidious intervention of industrial spies, something goes awry. Tuck and his pod end up not inside the rabbit, but inside of poor, frazzled Jack Putter.

Neither of them is too pleased with this turn of events, especially Putter, since his tiny unwanted "passenger" — and the even tinier, top-secret microchip that was accidentally shrunk and injected with him — have suddenly made him a walking target, avidly pursued by the villainous Victor Scrimshaw (Kevin McCarthy), the evil scientist Dr. Margaret Canker (Fiona Lewis) and her hulking, semi-mechanical brute of an assistant, Igoe (Vernon Wells).

A decidedly strange situation, but then Hamilton-born actor Martin Short is no stranger to strange situations. His traumatic onscreen experiences as Jack Putter — his second feature film role, following *Three Amigos* (and to be followed by Lawrence Kasdan's *American Date*) — are no more bizarre than those of some of his most beloved SCTV and *Saturday Night Live* characters, including the cowlicked ultra-nerd Ed Grimley and the albino lounge singer, Jackie Rodgers Jr.

By the same token, Dennis Quaid logged a fair amount of serious flying time before landing the somewhat comedic role of gung-ho test pilot Tuck Pendleton, from a real-life astronaut in *The Right Stuff* to a make-believe one in *Enemy Mine*. And **Innerspace** isn't the first weird place he's found himself stranded in, either. In the

surreal adventure movie *Dreamscape*, he played a young telepath with the power to enter and influence other people's dreams. Yet another kind of "innerspace."

And then, of course, there's Steven Spielberg — anyone not familiar with his many contributions to the fantasy film genre just hasn't been to the movies lately. And his directing credits — such all-time box-office champs as *Jaws*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* — are easily matched by the hits he executive-produced, among them *Poltergeist*, *Back to the Future* and *Twilight Zone: The Movie*.

The director Spielberg hired for the "It's a Good Life" segment of his *Twilight Zone* movie was Joe

Dante, who had previously directed a tongue-in-cheek *Jaws* rip-off, *Piranha* and the blackly funny 1981 werewolf movie, *The Howling*.

After *Twilight Zone*, Spielberg and Dante teamed up again, this time on a somewhat twisted Christmas movie *Gremlins* which also became a runaway hit.

Since then, Spielberg made *The Color Purple* and Dante made *Explorers*. But now that they're back together again, lost in the dark recesses of **Innerspace** anything could happen. And knowing them, it probably will.

— Rob Salem



(l to r) Martin Short, Meg Ryan and Dennis Quaid

