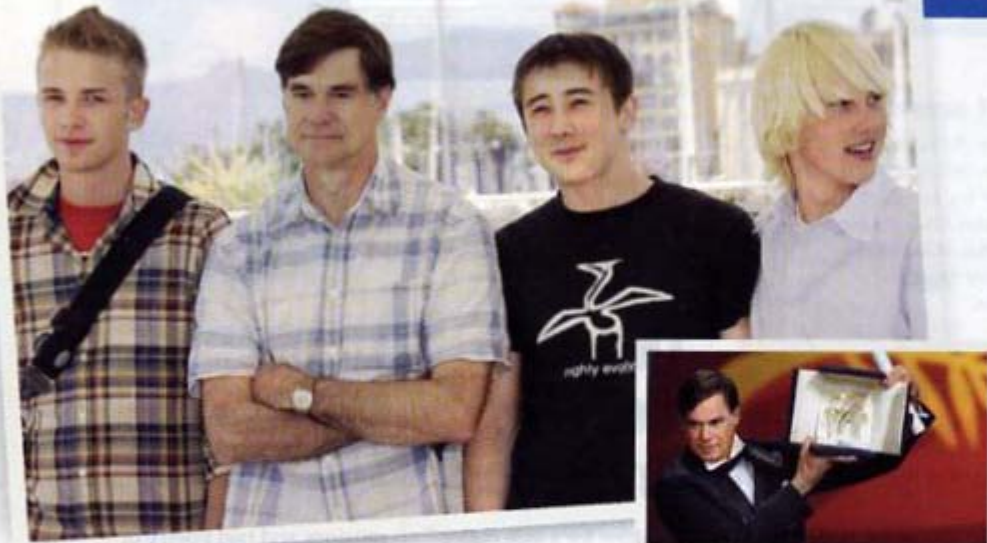


the Buzz



Elephant's Elias McConnell, Van Sant, Alex Frost, and John Robinson in Cannes; the director (inset) wins the Palme d'Or

the risk that the killers might be labeled "Nazi faggots." "It's hard to take things out of a movie because you're afraid of simpler observations," Van Sant said, dismissing condemnation by the PC police. "Because then you're just dumbing it down."

Though the cast of unknowns were all nonactors, the film also endured criticism for featuring uniformly attractive teenagers.

"I guess I do bend the rules because I'm picking people who are alluring," Van Sant admitted, laughing. "I am casting people that I'm connecting to, thinking that they're sort of amazing and beautiful characters. So it's true. I'm playing into that convention, which I don't like. But I'm human, I guess."

—Michael Giltz

Kissing for Columbine

OUT DIRECTOR Gus Van Sant scored a major upset at the Cannes Film Festival, winning the top prize—the Palme d'Or—as well as the directing nod for his Columbine-inspired drama *Elephant*. He also garnered a press windfall by upset-

ting viewers with a scene in which the two young killers make out in a shower before heading off for the massacre.

The 50-year-old director (*Good Will Hunting*) told *The Advocate* that the idea for the two killers to kiss "just came to me" while he

was writing. "I wrote it as, they're going to die within an hour. The kiss is coming out of a sort of last-minute 'It doesn't matter what we do; I've never kissed anybody' thing. I know that it's a very buzzy scene."

Friends encouraged him to keep the kiss despite