

## Profile

### Actress Laura Linney conquers *Fear*.

by Michael Giltz

"Normally, when you screen test for a film, you do one or two scenes, says Laura Linney, readily admitting she landed the role of a tough prosecutor opposite Richard Gere in the upcoming *Primal Fear* after other actresses turned it down. "But the director had me read the *entire* movie."

It isn't the first time the 32-year-old actress has faced major hurdles. Just keeping her sense of humor while making last summer's *Congo* was challenging enough. "When I was on the set and running from the exploding volcano, I did think of Jessica Lange a few times," she says. (Lange, of course, had a career-threatening debut in the 1976 remake of *King Kong*.) "I thought, 'Well, even if it's dreadful, I'm in good company.'"

One questionable—but highly profitable—ape flick aside, she's kept it. The Juilliard graduate gave an acclaimed performance off-Broadway in *Sight Unseen*, starred in a well-received revival of *Holiday*, and played the central role of sweet and naive Mary Ann in *Tales of the City*, perhaps the most critically and commercially successful miniseries in PBS history.

Now she's watched Paramount confidently move *Primal Fear* from a perfunctory early-year release to a higher-profile April launch. Seems that *Fear*, and fear, have proven quite useful.

