

SDolo? NY Daily News
LOOK OUT FOR...

Billy Bob Thornton in 'Mr. Woodcock'

Has it really only been 11 years since Billy Bob Thornton burst onto the scene, after years as a bit player, in "Sling Blade," which won him an Oscar for screenwriting? Has it really only been four

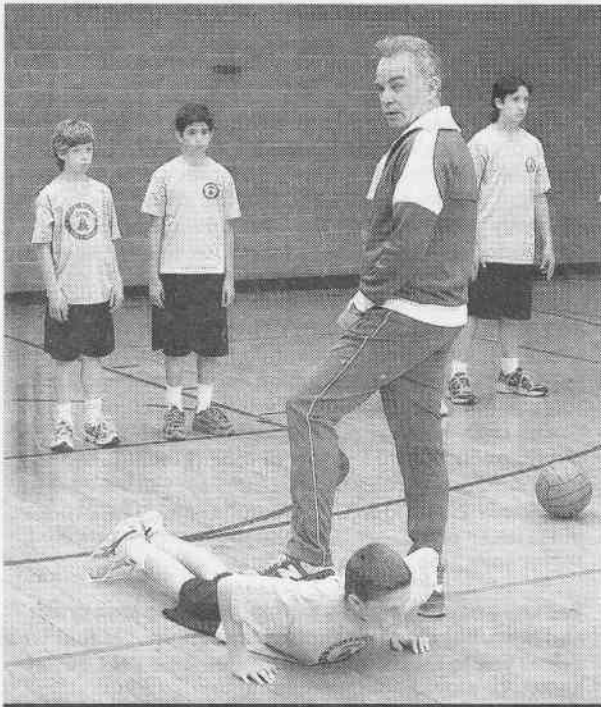
years since he divorced Angelina Jolie after wearing vials of each other's blood, getting tattoos and generally giving the gossip industry their easiest target until Lindsay Lohan imploded?

Since getting his big break, the 52-year-old Thornton has tackled everything from serious drama ("Monster's Ball") to black comedy (the cult hit "Bad

Santa"). But recently the Arkansas traveler specialized in sports movies, with the 2004 football gem "Friday Night Lights," featuring an inspirational speech that's become a fan favorite in ballparks around the country, and 2005's "Bad News Bears," charmingly reviving the grumpy grouch played by Walter Matthau in the original.

So Thornton is perfect for "Mr. Woodcock," a comedy opening Sept. 14 about

a motivational speaker (Seann William Scott) whose mom (Susan Sarandon) starts dating the high school P.E. teacher (Thornton) who made his life a living hell as a kid. The cast indicates it won't be a just a dumb spin on "Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story." And Thornton might just have been born to play the part: his late father was a basketball coach in high school as well as a history teacher. *Michael Giltz*



Billy Bob Thornton is on a coach trip in "Mr. Woodcock."