

1/8/06  
Film

IN DA HOOD: New CGI-animated film "Hoodwinked" was made for a song.



Weinstein Co.

# Fractured fairy tale

## Little Red Riding Hood sees green

By MICHAEL GILTZ

**A**T FIRST BLUSH, the new cartoon flick out Friday looks like your typical post-"Shrek" movie. Its producers, the new Weinstein Co., took the classic tale of Little Red Riding Hood, mixed in big-name stars like Glenn Close, Anne Hathaway and David Ogden Stiers, added lots of knowing pop-cultural references and are sitting back waiting for the money to roll in.

But "Hoodwinked" may be the most revolutionary film of the year — it brings CGI (computer-generated imagery) animation to the indie-film world. Director Cory Edwards knows one of the most stunning facts about the movie is its budget. And not because it's a wallet-buster like the \$200 million "King Kong."

"Hoodwinked" cost \$15 million to \$20 million, and that's exaggerating just a little bit because people wouldn't really believe the real dollar figure," says Edwards, who created and co-directed the film with his brother Todd Edwards and friend Tony Leech. "I don't think anyone has ever made a CGI movie this cheap."

It's not as visually stunning as "Shrek." "We already know that," Edwards says, laughing about some of the comments he's seen online. But with a trailer that gets huge laughs out of a savvy, karate-chopping Red (a droll Hathaway), an extreme-sports-loving Granny (Close)

and a dapper P.I. (Stiers), "Hoodwinked" doesn't need flash: It's got funny.

Many animated films have cost \$100 million and more. But 2002's \$60 million "Ice Age" caused a stir when it grossed \$375 million. Other hits, the crudely drawn "South Park" and "Beavis and Butthead," proved you don't need lavish animation to score laughs. But "Hoodwinked" significantly raises — or, rather, lowers — the bar. Five years ago, it couldn't have been made so cheaply. Five years from now, it'll be harder to tell movies like it apart from Pixar's.

Edwards thinks his movie could mark the start of a trend, like "Reservoir Dogs."

"I believe we're the first independent CGI film to make it to theaters, he says. "But a lot of them are right on our heels. I think we're going to see an explosion of that, the same way we saw an explosion of indie live-action films in the '90s. I don't think it means that just anybody can make an animated film now. But it will level the playing field; good stories can find an audience — not just who's got \$100 million."

Want further proof? A "Hoodwinked" sequel is already in the works.



FAMILY TIES: The cartoon cast cools their heels.



**SO OGRE IT:** The "Shrek" vibe inspired "Hoodwinked."