

# FLAWED FELLAS



**From neurotic legend Cameron Frye in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* to porn-lover Stuart Bondek on ABC's *Spin City*, Alan Ruck's portrayals keep us laughing.**

**by Stephen Pitalo**

“My view here is of Eleventh Avenue,” Alan Ruck said, leaning on the window sill of his dressing room at the Chelsea Piers complex that houses ABC’s *Spin City* studio. “And if you look down that way, you can see the women’s correctional facility, which I’ve had many fantasies about, let me tell you.”

Sounds more like Stuart Bondek, the mayor’s Chief of Staff on the Michael J. Fox sitcom and resident medium-level deviant. An example of a Stuartism: What’s the mayor’s stance on elderly people? “In Greenwich Village, there’s a corner you can go to and pay five dollars to have old people stand on you.”

Stuart’s sick streak marks a departure for Ruck, whose nice-guy roles ran their course.

“I used to get that a lot,” said Alan Ruck, speaking from his dressing room at Chelsea Piers, “it was always ‘the nice guy,’ or ‘the guy with a problem,’ or ‘the well-intentioned fuck-up.’ You can get tired of playing these soft guys, because everyone wants to play the guy who comes in and shoots everybody. That’s one of the reasons I like this role.”

Ruck smiles. “Stuart’s truly ill. He’s sick. He has this dark side. His Thanksgiving dinner was three hungry-man dinners and a box of wine. It’s a great role because I get to be quicker and smarter than I really am.”

Ruck’s acting experience pre-dates filmhood: he worked in Chicago and then landed a role in the original Broadway cast of *Biloxi Blues* with Matthew Broderick. His chemistry with Broderick paid off at the auditions for

*Ferris Bueller’s Day Off*, the John Hughes film that is to playing hooky what *Rocky* is to boxing. After the initial exposure, many lackluster roles followed until a Sandra Bullock movie about a runaway bus pulled him back into the limelight.

“*Speed* marked the first step on my climb back up. I started getting guest spots and pilots after that,” Ruck remembers. “Then *Star Trek: Generations*, then back on this Dudley Moore show that didn’t work, then *Muscle* on the WB (also starring *Spin City*’s Michael Boatman). I had high hopes for *Muscle*—it almost felt like a British comedy in its tone. And then came *Twister*, and then *Mad About You*. So I started to feel like this really successful whore.”

Moviegoers can look forward to a reunited Ruck and Broderick in the film *Walking to the Waterline*, about an actor who can’t get work in New York.

At 41, married for thirteen years, and with two kids under ten, Ruck has started to feel his age, and it’s about time. He played Ferris Bueller’s 18-year-old Cameron when he was really 29.

“Matthew was 24 or 25, and Mia Sara was 18, and then there was me,” he laughed. “I’m sure Paramount publicity was worried about how they were going to get me in *Tiger Beat*!”

Of the movies that I’ve been in, *Ferris* is my favorite because it was so great, and it stands up. *Chinatown* might be the best American movie ever made. How about this for a sequel: *Ferris Bueller in Chinatown*?”