

In *Crazy, Stupid Love* Steve Carrel discovers his wife Julianne Moore is having an affair and wants a divorce. He then meets Ryan Gosling's ladies man who coaches him on the art of pulling women. Suddenly Carrel's cuckold becomes Casanova.

Directors Glenn Ficarra and John Requa's film subverts genre staples by taking the viewpoint of the cheated-on husband, when usually it's the deserted wife who finds lipstick on her husband's collar. Then, by the time he's seen the error of his ways and his mistress without any make-up first thing in the morning, she's risen victorious from the ashes of the decree absolute and doesn't think twice about ditching her dead weight ex. The best example of this is *The First Wives Club*, where Goldie Hawn, Diane Keaton and Bette Midler let loose a clarion call for all wives who have been left for younger models to stop wailing and get even with hilarious results.

Female solidarity provides the backbone of recovery from the pain of adultery in cinema, until it decides to teach the love rat a lesson. Henri-Georges Clouzot's 1955 classic thriller *Les Diaboliques* takes revenge to its limit when a deceived wife joins murderous forces with her husband's mistress, and in *Volver*, Pedro Almodóvar allows Penelope Cruz to dispose of her abusive spouse's body in a deep freeze and then continue to hang out with the girls.

The best way to piss off your ex is to play him at his own game, though. It's become fashionable for hoodwinked wives in Hollywood to run off into the sunset with much younger men, and who can blame

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them when they come in the shape of Keanu Reeves. In *The Private Lives Of Pippa*, Lee Robin Wright Penn has "a very quiet nervous breakdown" thanks in part to her best friend having an affair with her husband, before she succumbs to her feelings for toy-boy Keanu. In Nancy Meyers' delightful romantic comedy *Something's Gotta Give*, again we have Diane Keaton trying to decide between Jack Nicholson's playboy (who knew?) and sincere doctor Keanu. If Keanu's busy, which he probably will be, there's always *The Hangover's* Justin Bartha to fall back on, as Catherine Zeta-Jones had little difficulty in doing after dumping her unfaithful hubby in *The Rebound*.

Betrayed wives on the small screen are more accomplished at ditching the dead weight than their feature-length sisters. Ex-better halves in soap operas employ a kick-ass attitude that makes Clouzot's heroines appear positively carefree, especially if that unfaithful spouse is *Eastenders'* Ian Beale. Owner of the local »

Ditching the Dead Weight

When Enough Really Is Enough...

WORDS BY RACHAEL SCOTT

café, the fruit and veg stall and the fish and chip shop, Walford's answer to Alan Sugar saw his first wife hire an assassin to kill him and his second leave him at the altar; but he got his sausage well and truly battered by ex-wife Jane when she sold the chippie to his nemesis Phil Mitchell, after learning he'd played away with scheming granny Glenda.

Television is littered with no-nonsense leading ladies freeing themselves from an adulterous ball and chain – just look at Kate Winslet in *Mildred Pierce*. Todd Haynes' critically acclaimed remake of the 1945 Oscar-winner sees single mother Mildred ditching her dead weight after discovering his affair and opening a successful chain of restaurants during the 1930s depression – a time when women going out to work at all was heavily frowned upon. In *The Good Wife*, Alicia Florrick, the regal titular heroine played by Julianna Margulies, resurrects her career as a lawyer to support two children, after her State's Attorney husband Peter (*Sex & The City*'s Chris Noth) is sent to jail for his role in a sex and corruption scandal. Alicia grows stronger professionally and emotionally, conducting herself with the grace of a Terrence Malick demigoddess when confronted with a braying media, the temptation of a love affair with her '16th Most Eligible Bachelor' boss Will Gardner, and a busy body mother-in-law.

It's unfathomable to the outsider why the two-timing love rat feels the need to scurry from his often

beautiful and successful wife to a less attractive bit on the side in the first place, but it happens time and time again. The nation's eyebrows skyrocketed into its collective hairline at the news that the Nation's Sweetheart Cheryl Cole had reunited with her five-timing footballer ex-husband Ashley. Reportedly one of the best left-backs in the world, he scored a blinder defending his past crimes and unbelievably wooed her back. Unlike other love rat WAG victims (Coleen Rooney, Abbey Clancy), Cheryl is famous in her own right and financially independent, so we can only conclude that true love is to blame. Time will tell if she should have gone to Specsavers.

2010 was a stellar year for America's Sweetheart Sandra Bullock. She earned \$56 million, making her the highest paid actress in Hollywood, and won the Best Actress Oscar for *The Blind Side*. However, her private life hit rock bottom when, literally days after picking up her gong, revelations hit the press that her biker husband Jesse James had been cheating on her for years with all sorts of unsavoury-looking tattooed women. A divorce was finalised months later and since then Sandra has kept a dignified silence,



LOOK WHO'S LAUGHING NOW: SANDRA BULLOCK MINUS MR WRONG



KATHRYN BIGELOW PROVES SHE'S BACK ON TRACK

bought a new mansion in New Orleans, and is working on numerous projects opposite George Clooney, Ryan Reynolds and Tom Hanks, while her ex is permanently in the tabloids attempting to justify why he's a loser. "She always saw the good in me, but all the love in the world wouldn't be enough to make me feel comfortable on the red carpet." That explains it then.

One man with no qualms about being in the spotlight is the five times married James Cameron. But Kathryn Bigelow, ex-wife number three, dethroned the self-proclaimed "King of the World" at the 2010 Academy Awards when her micro-budget Iraq war flick *The Hurt Locker*, trumped his \$200+ million 3D monster *Avatar* and won the Best Picture Oscar. She also became the first woman to win the Academy Award for Best Director. Billed by the media as 'the battle of the exes', there's little evidence of animosity from Kathryn, proving that the best way to ditch the dead weight is success and serenity. **S**