Last American hero

DESPITE constantly labelling himself “lazy,” Jeff Bridges seems to work an awful lot. And not just in films, though his filmography over the past few years is proof that the 60-year-old is anything but lazy.

In the last three years alone, Bridges has tackled a variety of diverse film roles. He’s played a hippy-ish, monk-ish oddball soldier and a shrewd magazine editor; a legendary former ballplayer and a legendary, albeit animated, former champion surfer penguin and then there was that turn as Iron Man’s power-hungry nemesis Obadiah Stane. Yet, one role in particular stands out, that of alcoholic country music has been Bad Blake in Crazy Heart.

After being pipped to the post on four previous occasions, Crazy Heart earned Bridges his first Oscar. Fans and peers have always felt that the statuette would come his way eventually. Nevertheless, what’s surprising is that it took the Academy close to four decades – from Bridges’ first Best Supporting Actor nomination for Peter Bogdanovich’s The Last Picture Show (1971) – to finally give him the due.

Later this month, Bridges will be seen in another mammoth role, that of US Marshal Rooster Cogburn in Joel and Ethan Coen’s remake of True Grit. The part of the tough-as-nails Arkansas lawman “who never knew a day in his life” has been played by three actors to date: filmmaker Sam Peckinpah’s go-to guy, Warren Oates, and most famously, John “The Duke” Wayne, of course, who won his only Oscar in his first time-out as Cogburn.

For sure, it’s early days yet. However, if the trailers and early buzz are anything to go by, we wouldn’t bet against Bridges contending for another Academy Award come February.

Bridges – who sports a grey beard these days that reminds one not so much of Bad Blake or Obadiah Stane but rather an older version of The Dude (the slacker-nerd of the Coens’ The Big Lebowski) – admits his initial apprehension about taking on such an iconic role.

He explains: “When the brokers came to me, I was curious. (I said) ‘Why do you want to make that movie?’ I couldn’t figure it out. It seemed like such an odd choice. And they said, ‘Well, we’re not really remaking that movie, we’re referring to the book by Charles Portis.’ So I read it and I saw what they were talking about. The book is very Coen-esque.

“Having said that, there was a lot of concern about filling The Duke’s boots. But I’m not too worried. I did the best I could for the part.”

When asked about how the recognition and slew of awards received in the wake of Crazy Heart have impacted his life, Bridges shifts the focus away from movies.

He talks about how the music in Crazy Heart resonated his passion for his own music (Bridges’ debut LP, 2000’s Be Here Soon, despite not flying off store shelves upon its release, was well-received by critics) and how he’s currently working with Grammy-winning producer T-Bone Burnett on a new album of original material.

“I guess it’s made me more famous,” Bridges. “Fame is a double-edged sword like probably everything else. But the upside of that is you’re able to align yourself with things you’re concerned about. I was just in Washington DC where I presented the No Kid Hungry campaign.”

Bridges was recently appointed the national spokesperson of No Kid Hungry, an organisation dedicated to raising awareness about childhood hunger in America. The No Kid Hungry campaign is merely an extension of what Bridges and EHN have been fighting for over a quarter of a century.

As Bridges fields more questions about No Kid Hungry’s plans and his involvement in True Grit, a book of pictures is being passed around. Pictures taken on the set of Tron: Legacy, completed in 1982. – AP

Father-son drama

with the programme as quickly as I could and not spend too much energy worrying about it.”

But cutting-edge technology aside, what Kosinski, his producers, Legacy’s writers and even the design and VFX team stressed over and over was that Tron: Legacy would be nothing without its emotional core.

Says the director: “What we tried to do was approach this thing from the context of a father-son relationship. I didn’t want (Tron: Legacy) to be a movie about the internet or technology specifically. I wanted to approach it from the angle of a father’s relationship with his two sons; his digital son and his biological son.”

Galaxy quest

Tron: Legacy opens in 1989 with Jeff Bridges’ Kevin Flynn telling his six-year-old son, Sam, about the world of the Game Grid, a world that had been under the control of the MCP until Tron, Flynn and Chi (Flynn’s digital “avatar”) set things right. It’s the last conversation father and son have as Kevin leaves the family home for his office only to disappear off the face of the earth.

It’s believed that Kevin, appointed Encom CEO after the events of the original movie, had committed suicide. But as no body is found, no one can tell for certain.

Fast forward 21 years and we see Bodoheimer’s Alan Bradley talking to Sam Flynn, now a rebellious 27-year-old (played by Garrett Hedlund in his first lead role) who has snuffed his empire his father built for the life of a free-spirited troublemaker. He
cornered by the suits who now sit in the company’s boardroom.

Alan tells Sam about a mysterious pager message he received from Kevin’s now board-ed-up Flynn’s Arcade. Bradley suggests that such a message could only have come from Kevin and urges Sam to find out more.

Hedlund explains his character’s motivations: “You’ve got to get that his father left 20 years ago. And he goes to live with his grand-parents and then the grandparents pass away. There’s a lot of abandonment issues. It’s a tierer-tierer between forgiving and forgetting. And (this news) comes right at the brink, where there is still that little bit of hope.”

And so begins the quest that will see Sam absorbed into the digital world of the Game Grid and come face-to-face with Chi (also Bridges), the program created by the older Flynn in his own image, who veered from his path cycles ago to take control of The Grid and reign terror upon it in a manner that makes the MCP of the original Tron seem like a schoolyard bully.

Only a handful of The Grid’s citizens, such as the fearless warrior Quorra (Olivia Wilde from TV’s House), dare oppose Chi and so it is up to Sam to align himself with the right programs if he is to succeed in finding out the truth about his father’s disappearance.

“Tron: Legacy” opens nationwide on Thursday.

In Tron: Legacy, Bridges will play himself, at his natural age, and a computerised avatar called Chi, who hasn’t aged since the time he first created for the first Tron movie in 1982. – AP

In Tron: Legacy, Bridges will play himself, at his natural age, and a computerised avatar called Chi, who hasn’t aged since the time he first created for the first Tron movie in 1982. – AP

The prolific and Oscar-winning Jeff Bridges has bravely tackled a range of roles. – AP

Father-son drama

with the programme as quickly as I could and not spend too much energy worrying about it.”

But cutting-edge technology aside, what Kosinski, his producers, Legacy’s writers and even the design and VFX team stressed over and over was that Tron: Legacy would be nothing without its emotional core.

Says the director: “What we tried to do was approach this thing from the context of a father-son relationship. I didn’t want (Tron: Legacy) to be a movie about the internet or technology specifically. I wanted to approach it from the angle of a father’s relationship with his two sons; his digital son and his biological son.”

Galaxy quest

Tron: Legacy opens in 1989 with Jeff Bridges’ Kevin Flynn telling his six-year-old son, Sam, about the world of the Game Grid; a world that had been under the control of the MCP until Tron, Flynn and Chi (Flynn’s digital “avatar”) set things right. It’s the last conversation father and son have as Kevin leaves the family home for his office only to disappear off the face of the earth.

It’s believed that Kevin, appointed Encom CEO after the events of the original movie, had committed suicide. But as no body is found, no one can tell for certain.

Fast forward 21 years and we see Bodoheimer’s Alan Bradley talking to Sam Flynn, now a rebellious 27-year-old (played by Garrett Hedlund in his first lead role) who has snuffed his empire his father built for the life of a free-spirited troublemaker. He
The Last American Hero (also known as Hard Driver) is a 1973 sports drama film based on the true story of American NASCAR driver Junior Johnson. Directed by Lamont Johnson, it stars Jeff Bridges as Junior Jackson, the character based on Johnson. The film is based on Tom Wolfe's essay "The Last American Hero Is Junior Johnson. Yes!", which was first published in Esquire magazine in March 1965[3] and included in his debut collection of essays, The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby, later that year. The last american hero. by Tom Wolfe. Ten o'clock Sunday morning in the hills of North Carolina.Â Junior Johnson is a modern hero, all involved with car culture and car symbolism in the South. A wild new thing-. Wild-gone wild, Fireball Roberts' Ford spins out on the first turn at the North Wilkesboro Speedway, spinning, spinning, the spin seems almost like slow motion-and then it smashes into the wooden guard- rail. The Last American Hero is a 1973 sports drama film based on the true story of American NASCAR driver Junior Johnson. Directed by Lamont Johnson, it stars Jeff Bridges as Junior Jackson, the character based on Johnson.Â For faster navigation, this Iframe is preloading the Wikiwand page for The Last American Hero. Home. News.