

Pacino, Farrell save 'The Recruit'

Review by Daniel J. Stasiewski A & E Editor

If there is any actor out there today whose career is sky-rocketing faster than Colin Farrell's, you'd be hard pressed to find him.

This CIA thriller puts Farrell's name next to another veteran star, Al Pacino, but it is nothing incredible. The ending is predictable, even for someone who didn't see it given away in the trailer, and the story is only exciting for a few short moments.

Upon graduating from MIT, James Clayton (Farrell) begins looking for a career in computers. Clayton gets an interview with Dell Labs, but changes course when CIA recruiter Walter Burke (Pacino) pays him a visit at his bartending job.

The training camp, known as "The Farm," is full of prospective agents. As their training intensifies, fellow trainee Layla (Bridget Moynahan) catches Clayton's eye. The two are constantly pitted against each other, but it's not until Clayton is kicked out of the camp that he finds out the reason.

Burke tells Clayton his dismissal was faked. The reason: Clayton has to appear as the normal Farm drop-out when he tries to expose Layla as a mole. Reluctant at first, Burke again pulls the father card on Clayton and he agrees. As the chase becomes more and more dangerous, it also becomes more confusing.

"The Recruit" has three stages: dull, somewhat exciting, and intolerably over-the-top. This film starts with tedious jokes about the Big Brother aspects of the CIA, hinting along the way that something is up. Once the action gets to "The Farm," nothing much changes.

Once the story leaves the training facility, there seems to be hope. Colin Farrell's character is faced with the decision of sacrificing his love of Layla for his love of country. This is where Farrell shines.

His performance is strong enough to keep the story moving, with subtle twists to make it interesting. Farrell has the charisma and



Pacino and Farrell are on a mission in 'The Recruit.'

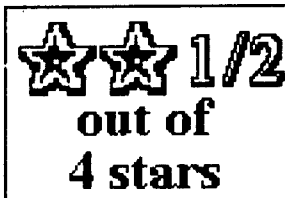
PHOTO COURTESY OF ZAP2IT.COM

depth of his former co-star, Tom Cruise. It is just amazing to watch Farrell work his way through this average film and still manage to appear top-notch.

Of course, the ending stops the film's pace almost entirely. Like most Hollywood thrillers, "The Recruit" ends with a twist that is so big, it's predictable. Pacino tries his best to make the hackneyed ending a little more subtle, but this is definitely nothing like his last thriller "Insomnia."

At least Pacino and Farrell make this film watchable. I could only imagine how terrible this could have been with Ben Affleck as one of the stars. The dynamic actors make this film better than it

should be. Should I still hold the timid story and tedious twists against the film? Sure, but I won't say it was torture. "The Recruit" could have been worse, and that's the bigger compliment than most films should receive.



'The Recruit,' directed by Roger Donaldson, starring Colin Farrell, Al Pacino, and Bridget Moynahan is currently showing at Tinsletown.

'Miracles' poses many questions

Review by Roger Gorny Staff Writer

The new television series "Miracles," which premiered Jan. 28 on ABC, may not survive the mid-season jinx. There could be many reasons for this, but first, a basic overall recap of the first episode.

The cast featured Skeet Ulrich and Marisa Ramirez, and the setting for the show was a remote desert area. There, a sick 10 year-old boy named Tommy is able to perform miraculous cures on other people.

First, he cured his grandmother in the hospital, and later in the show, he cured a young woman's infant. At this point, he collapsed and people rushed to his aid. The pressure grew on Tommy as the show wore on, but he was still able to save a man trapped underneath a car after the vehicle was struck by an oncoming train.

The prevailing theme to the show is that anyone, even one who can't cure himself, is able to cure others, or at least believe that they can be saved. The words "God Is Here" appear very frequently in the show, attempting to instill the belief in the show's viewers that God can really be present even when you are not looking or do not believe.

"Miracles" was very ironic in the sense that little Tommy could not cure himself, but he could cure others. The drama was high throughout, with many sudden twists and turns to maintain the viewer's interest.

The show can also be described through the use of big words such as psychological, supernatural, surrealistic, and spiritual. These elements may have been pushed too far, especially in the spiritual sense.

"Miracles" showed many dream, which were hard to separate from reality. The show was overly dramatic at times and perhaps a little too intense, especially when you see the flush-red eyes of those

who are saved. Blood raining down near the end of the show was certainly overdramatic and contained too many religious overtones.

One may be, "The people in the show want to help each other, but how could they help reach the audience better?" It



PHOTO COURTESY OF ABC.COM Skeet Ulrich looks for a miracle.

does not appear that there is a magic answer for this question, but it would probably include mixing a few less tension-producing settings to build up better to the climax. Also, how easy is it really to get people to believe that God Is Here when they get hurt severely in a car crash? There aren't any Tommys around to induce belief in situations like this.

The show may need a lot of people to believe in "Miracles" for it to last. There aren't any themes that haven't been seen in other shows already. They need to re-vamp their formula for success if they want to yield positive results and appeal to the general audience.

'Miracles,' starring Skeet Ulrich, Marisa Ramirez, and Agnus Macfadyen airs every Monday at 10 p.m. on ABC.

Behrend predicts Soul Train Awards

by Olivia Page staff writer

The 17th annual Soul Train Music Awards will air on Mar. 1. The show is one of the music/television industry's most prestigious events. With that in mind, 10 Behrend students were polled to see who they predict will win in each category.

For the Best Female R&B/Soul Single, the predicted winner is between Ashanti and Erykah Badu. Erykah Badu's single "Love of my life" features Common. Ashanti's "Foolish" single is nominated. In August, Ashanti won Soul Train's Lady of Soul Award.

Ashanti also won two honors at the American Music Awards. She is currently nominated for five Grammys. Ashanti is also the predicted winner in the Female Best R&B/Soul Album and Best R&B Soul or Rap Album of the Year. The other nominees in these categories are Amerie, India Arie, Mary J. Blige, Angie Stone, LL Cool J, Nas, and Nelly.

For Male Best R&B/Soul Single, students predict Justin Timberlake will win with "Like I Love You." Timberlake is also the predicted winner for the Male Best R&B/Soul Album. After only 12 weeks, Timberlake's album "Justified" has sold approximately two million copies. Other nominees in these categories include Maxwell, Musiq, Usher, Gerald Levert, and Jaheim.

In the Best R&B/Soul Single, Group, Band or Duo category, the predicted winner is B2K with "Bump,Bump,Bump." B2K has "Pandemonium," they're second album out now. The other following nomi-



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROLLINGSTONE.COM Ashanti could sweep the Soul Train Awards.

nations in this category are Dru Hill, Floetry, and TLC.

The Best R&B/Soul Album, Group, Band or Duo looks to go to R. Kelly/Jay-Z's "Best of both Worlds." Record sales haven't done well because of R. Kelly's recent court situation of pending rape charges. Despite the media attention, Kelly has released the "Chocolate Factory" album. Jay-Z has "The Blueprint II" in stores now. The other following nominees in this category are Boyz II Men, Floetry and B2K.

Nappy Roots is the predicted winner in the Best R&B/Soul or Rap New Artist category. Nappy Roots is also nominated for

a Grammy. "Aw Naw" and "Po Folks" are their singles. The other following nominees in this category are Heather Headley and Amerie.

For R&B/Soul or Rap Music Video, 50 Cent is the predicted winner with "Wanksta." 50 cent's "Get Rich or Die Trying" is due out Tuesday. The album features the two hit singles, "Wanksta" and "In Da Club."

The other nominees in this category are Busta Rhymes featuring P.Diddy and Pharrell with "Pass the Courvoisier Pt. 2;" Missy Elliot with "Work It;" and Nelly featuring Kelly Rowland with "Dilemma."

For the Best Gospel Album, Kirk Franklin is the predicted winner. Franklin has already won five awards at the Stellar Gospel Awards this year. The other following nominations in this category are The Canton Spirituals and Donald Lawrence and the Tri City Singers.

Soul Train Music Awards honor artists in R&B, hip-hop, rap and gospel music. Soul Train also hosts the Soul Train Lady of Soul Annual Awards Special and the Soul Train Christmas Starfest.

For more than 30 years the Soul Train music/dance show has been nationally televised. Soul Train is the longest running television program of any genre in history of nationally syndicated programming. Fpimder Don Cornelius hosted the shows until 1997. Cornelius still carries the executive producer role. He handed the hosting down to Mystro Clark, who held the position for two years. Soul Trains current host is Shamar Moore.

LEB Movie of the Week: 'Punch-Drunk Love'



PHOTO COURTESY OF ZAP2IT.COM

Adam Sandler stars (and don't let that stop you) in Paul Thomas Anderson's strange and beguiling romantic comedy, a tale of a manic-depressive lonely boy who winds up the target of an extortion racket and falls in love with Emily Watson. An achingly sweet love story mixed with dark, nutty humor and out-of-the-blue surprises. R (language, violence, adult themes) - Steven Rea, Knight Ridder Newspapers.

'Punch-Drunk Love' will be showing in Reed 117 on Feb. 13 at 9:30 p.m. and Feb. 14-15 at 10 p.m.

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