

Women's International Film Series

Agenda makes 'Chaos' an unbearable mess

review by Daniel J. Stasiewski
managing editor

"Chaos" was almost over when I realized the film was supposed to be a comedy, and that revelation explained a lot about the ridiculous crime fighting techniques and ludicrous overacting. Thinking of the film as a comedy also lightens up mean-spirited male bashing that is rather heavy-handed when juxtaposed with three pimps beating up a prostitute.

That's where the film begins, with H el ene (Catherine Frot) and her husband, Paul (Vincent Lindon), witnessing a brutal attack on a prostitute in a Paris street. The attackers smash the prostitute's (Rachida Brakni) head on the couple's windshield, while techno music plays over the scene. Paul's reaction is to ignore the incident and get the car washed, leaving the sensitive H el ene without the chance to help the woman.

The beating literally haunts H el ene in her sleep, so she leaves her job, her chauvinist husband and her womanizing son in order to ensure the prostitute's safety.

She foils a number of attempts on the young woman's life, until the prostitute is finally strong enough to run away. They bail to the house of Paul's mother, where the lonely old woman spends her time gardening and thinking about her ungrateful son.

We learn a lot about the prostitute once she's able to talk. Her name is No emie. She ran away from home when she was 16 to avoid being sold into indentured servitude to a husband in Algiers. She didn't intend to become a prostitute, but a man kidnapped her, got her hooked on heroine and forced her onto the streets. No emie's father is a traditional Muslim who believes that his runaway daughter shamed the family and Islam. Unable to go home, No emie is forced to come up with a convoluted plot to save her sister from the same fate.

On the back cover of the DVD, the film is described in part as a "pulse-pounding melodrama" combined with a "loopy battle-of-the-sexes comedy," but the film is neither sincere enough to be a drama nor is it funny enough to be a com-

edy. The film combines the farthest reaches of both, the gritty urban tragedy of "Midnight Cowboy" and the slapstick humor of "Some Like it Hot," making the film hard to digest either way.

Beyond the disastrous combination of hefty melodrama and campy comedy, the film has a dark side. "Chaos" insulted me. As a male and self-described feminist, it's hard for me to digest director Coline Serreau portraying every man as heartless monsters and a sexual predators. The idea that insensitivity is a universal male characteristic is as ludicrous as saying all women are true feminists (Ann Coulter, anyone?).

No emie's male family members need to be portrayed as insensitive brutes; there's a valid critique of Islam in her story. Paul and the pimps, of course, are also sketched as misogynists to move the narrative along. When minor characters, like the bartender who ignores H el ene when she asks for a phone, are portrayed as apathetic towards a women's plight, the cogent arguments become diluted and the film, pointless.

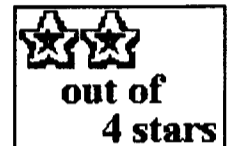


Rachida Brakni and Vincent Lindon in "Chaos."

NEW YORKER FILMS

In the end, the cultural critique isn't well thought out enough to be taken seriously and the film plays out like a second-rate Hollywood thriller. H el ene's story of an unloved married woman looking to find something to hold on to is the main source of the film's most interesting moments. Of course, those moments have to occur outside the presence of a male character to forget the

film's blatant agenda and maintain a minor level of intrigue.



"Chaos," directed by Coline Serreau, will be shown as part of the Women's International Film Series on Tuesday at 7 p.m. in Reed 117.

'Chaos' isn't all bad: a second opinion

review by Olivia Page

"Chaos" delivers strong action pace along with the sentimental feelings of a drama. It can attract three different types of moviegoers: action, drama and comedy. This film presents commentary that only a woman could have told about the shocking events of a defenseless woman being beaten by thugs. Imagine your in a car, and there's a woman limping down the street, with a group of thugs beating her, she gets slashed over your cars window, your husband wants to leave the scene, but you want to help her. The woman in the car (Malika), visit's the woman in the hospital, who makes it through, but unfortunately is in a coma. The films title, "Chaos" was a perfect fit, since this film is full of it. She befriends the victim and is put into a challenge of confronting one of the assaulters who may put the patient in more danger. The patient has a world of controversy and brings Malika into it, by abandoning her husband and son, to help the patient, who was a prostitute. Malika takes the woman to a hideout once she felt better, moving from France to Algeria, fearing danger. The commentary speaks on issues evolving from sexist and racism. It teaches a great deal of values, morals and about different cultures. It is different from American films, by bringing more culture to viewers. As the plot unfolds, the suspense darkly deepens but settles in time for comedy.

'The Ladykillers' barely slays



Tom Hanks leads a gang of nitwits in "The Ladykillers."

TOUCHSTONE PICTURES

review by Brad Stewart
staff writer

Not your normal heist movie, "The Ladykillers" falls somewhere between an "Ocean's Eleven" and "Home Alone" type flick. Directed by the Coen brothers, who were the masterminds behind "Fargo" and "The Big Lebowski," the film offers the classic Coen humor with a side of greed and magical realism.

Like "Ocean's Eleven," "The Ladykillers" is the remake of an older film. The original was a 1955 comedy in which a gang of criminals rents a house in London thinking they can easily kill the innocent landlady—this time the setting is New Orleans, but much of the initial story remains the same.

Tom Hanks leads the 2004 version as Goldthwait Higginson Dorr III, Ph.D., a professor turned criminal who assembles a crack team of unlikely confederates to relieve a riverboat casino of its money. His delinquent crew is comprised of four members: Gawain MacSam (Marlon Wayans), the inside man; Garth Pancake (J.K. Simmons), demolitions; The General (Tzi Ma), tunneling expert; and Lump Hudson (Ryan Hurst), blunt tool.

The professor establishes his base of operations in

the home of Marva Munson (Irma P. Hall), presenting himself as a homeless musician. The extremely religious Marva rents him the room under the impression that he is the leader of a band that performs "church music." From the root cellar of Ms. Munson's home, Dorr's crew tunnels to steal the casino's loot and encounters a variety of unforeseen difficulties.

"The Ladykillers" is an amusing film—littered with typical Coen dialogue and quirky characters that keep the viewer entertained. But don't get too excited before seeing this film, because it will not exceed your expectations.

The development of the story is slow and lacking in tension. The interesting characters relieve some of the viewer anxiety—as always, Tom Hanks brings a certain quality to the screen, but he alone could not save this movie.

The action increases towards the end, and the main conflict (from which the title of the movie originates) arises into full view. The ending is a mystical twist of fate, or luck, which leaves the viewer questioning whether it was a satisfying ending or not.

"The Ladykillers," directed by the Coen brothers and starring Tom Hanks, is now showing at Tinseltown.

The Center for Service Leadership Recognizes and Thanks

Multi-Cultural Council

For outstanding community service

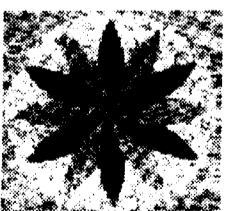
MCC members hosted a campus tour

for 45 students from the Perseus Charter School.

They met with an admissions counselor to see an admissions presentation, then attended an ice cream social.

Thank You

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Behrend
Pride!



A&E
Event
Spotlight

The LED presents
Comedian

Eric Nieves

Saturday at 9 p.m.
In Bruno's.

Arts & Entertainment Highlights

Top 40 Singles

1. "Yeah!"--Usher
2. "This Love"--Maroon 5
3. "My Immortal"--Evanescence
4. "Toxic"--Britney Spears
5. "One Call Away"--Chingy
6. "Topsy"--J-Kwon
7. "With You"--Jessica Simpson
8. "My Band"--D12
9. "Someday"--Nickelback
10. "The Way You Move"--Outkast

According to Billboard.com

Album Releases on April 6

- Johnny Cash, "My Mother's Hymn Book"
- Various Artists, "The Passion of the Christ"
- Tamia, "More"

New Movie Releases

- Hellboy
- Home on the Range
- Walking Tall
- The Prince and Me

DVD Releases on April 6

- The Matrix Revolutions
- Cheaper by the Dozen
- The Grapes of Wrath