

'Rich & Famous' works...

Every so often a film comes along that's done so well that you decide to drop everything and become a film director. *Rich and Famous* is such a film.

This is a good time for films that look at relationships. *Only When I Laugh* and *Mommie Dearest* look at the mother-daughter relationship. *True Confessions* attempts to look at the relationship of two brothers. *Rich and Famous* also falls into this category, as it examines the relationship of two friends as they go through 20 years of life together.

The story begins as Liz Hamilton (Jacqueline Bisset) sneaks southern belle Merry Noel (Candice Bergen) out of their dorm room so she can become Mrs. Merry Noel Blake. The next time we see them, Liz is a literate, down-to-earth novelist who's run into a crippling writer's block after her first successful novel, and Merry is a charming, self-centered housewife in Malibu who writes a trashy book out of jealousy, which somehow becomes a best-seller.

The plot thickens as Merry's dislikable husband Doug (David Selby) grows tired of the marriage, and makes an extended pass for Liz. When he leaves, Merry turns to her first three loves: herself, fame, and her books.

Incredible as it may seem, there are no weak points to this movie (with the possible exception of Bergen's southern accent, which gets a little too sickly sweet). Director George Cukor, who has turned out such masterpieces as *The*

Philadelphia Story, *Little Women*, and *My Fair Lady*, celebrates his 50th year in the director's seat, and his experience shows. The photography is stunning throughout, providing many beautiful images which will stay with the viewer long after the last credits have left the screen. The pacing of the story is perfect, taking enough time to develop the action perfectly, without dwelling on any scene too long. He has a way with Bisset and Bergen which gives the film a touch of brilliance.

Bisset is radiant. Whether mourning the end of a romance or burning a chicken, she is graceful, witty, attractive and believable. As the central character of the film, the film's success or failure is dependent on her performance, and she carries it off superbly. This performance is definitely Oscar-caliber. (Remember, you heard it here first.)

Bergen's character comes straight out of "Gone With The Wind". A delicate, wily creature, she shows an inner drive that makes Scarlett O'Hara look like Olive Oyl. Although her character becomes a little plastic when she becomes rich and successful, she shines when she and Bisset are just two girlfriends alone together. Bergen and Bisset compliment each other extremely well, and bring an impressive humanity to the story.

Beside the two leads, the best performance is from Hart Bochner, who plays a 22-year-old reporter for *Rolling*



Jacqueline Bisset (right) and Candice Bergen shine in George Cukor's "Rich and Famous", the story of 20 years of friendship.

Stone. He eventually falls in love with Liz, and matches her perfectly with his soft-spoken eloquence.

Like other great films, it'll make you split your seams laughing and break your heart crying. In one scene, Bisset and a fellow plane traveler are making love in the restroom as the jet lands in New York. Over the couple's impassioned breathing we hear the stewardess saying, "The sound you are now hearing is the landing

gear coming down. This is a normal part of the landing process..." At the end of their encounter, we hear the stewardess say, "Welcome to New York. I hope your trip has been a pleasant one."

Rich and Famous is rated R, mostly because Bisset's character makes love to almost every male she meets. The film is currently showing at Cinema World.

by matt meyer

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... 'True Confessions' doesn't

The ad for *True Confessions* includes a quote from Fred Yager of the Associated Press: "You couldn't ask for more."

Yager's wrong — you could.

True Confessions is the story of two brothers, one a detective, one a priest. It takes a deep look at their relationship, and the pressures stemming from a brutal murder which threaten to push the brothers apart.

The main problem with *True Confessions* is that director Ulu Grosbard doesn't seem quite sure if the movie's focus lies on the brothers or on the murder. In trying to develop each aspect to its full extent, the movie becomes disjointed and fragmented. In the long run, Grosbard fails in his examination of the brothers' relationship. We don't see anything special happening between them.

Although the main thrust of the film doesn't work, other aspects do. The story line, although a little thin in places, is compelling. A prostitute is found cut in half, and Tom Spellacy (Robert Duvall) is assigned to investigate the case. In pursuing leads, the chief of which is a rose tattoo on the corpse's hip, he finds a number of connections to a totally obnoxious fellow, Jack Amsterdam (Charles Durning), who is a friend and important business connection of Monsignor Desmond Spellacy's (Robert DeNiro).

This story is told through use of a flashback, sandwiched between two ridiculous scenes of reconciliation between the two brothers, in which we learn that Father Spellacy is about to die. The short prologue and epilogue seem to

be a desperate attempt to bring the focus of the film back to the brothers, but it doesn't work.

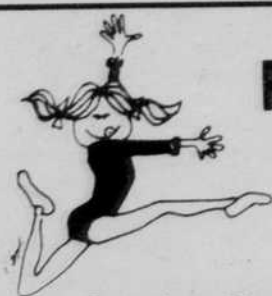
Although the film is by no means a comedy, there are some thoroughly hysterical scenes which help pass the time. In one, Tom finds a priest dead of a heart attack in a cheap hooker's lair. He goes to Des so the church can avoid a scandal. "Maybe he was just making a house call," says Des. "Do you hang your pants over the back of a chair on a housecall?" asks Tom. "Well," admits Des, "that's not the way they taught it in seminary."

Only these light touches and the fine acting of the two veteran stars manages to keep the film alive. Robert DeNiro is superb as Monsignor Desmond Spellacy. He manages to place a thin mask of gentleness over the violence he projected in earlier films such as "Taxi Driver" and "The Godfather Part II". The combination works very well, for DeNiro's character is heavily involved in power plays.

DeNiro's performance is eclipsed only by Robert Duvall's portrayal of Detective Tom Spellacy, who looks just seedy and sinister enough to revive our memories of 40's detectives. It's surprising that, with two actors who project so much violence and raw power, more violence isn't seen in the film.

The film is rated R because of some seedy porno films the cops show, a healthy sprinkling of four-letter words, and lots of bloody mess. It is currently showing at the Valley River Twin Cinema.

by matt meyer



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