

At the movies

'Hollywood Shuffle' offers hilarious comedy

Entrance into the gilded halls of Hollywood still requires eating crow, and the recent Robert Townsend release, "Hollywood Shuffle," spells out the system's foibles in definitive detail.

Review by
Jackie Barry

A hilarious comedy, it's the story of an aspiring black actor, Bobby Taylor (played by Robert Townsend), and his struggle against stereotyped roles.

Townsend acted most recently in "Ratboy," and also played in "A Soldier's Story." He produced, directed and helped write the screenplay for "Hollywood Shuffle," his first official effort in these areas.

In "Hollywood Shuffle," Taylor auditions for the leading role in an upcoming production from Tinsel Town Pictures called "Jiveman Jimmy's Revenge." If he gets the role, he'll play a street pimp: "jive, tough...Murphonic," the producers tell him.

Taylor vacillates in his resolve to get this role as he runs interference with his boss at the Winky Dinky Dog hot-dog stand (where he wears a white cap adorned with hornlike hot dog halves) and fields advice from co-workers, family and fellow actors.

One co-worker criticizes Taylor for what he thinks are pipe dreams. "You got an opportunity here," he tells Taylor of his job at Winky Dinky Dog. "After five years, they let me lock up the place!"

Peopled by a talented group

called the Hollywood Shuffle Players, performances by Taylor's boss (John Witherspoon) and his co-workers (Ludie Washington and Damon Wayans) were particularly great, but most other supporting players were excellent also.

The script, by Townsend and Keenan Wayans, stacked up episodes from Taylor's real life and his day dreams, blending cliches and caricatures in a riotous fashion.

One daydream depicted a commercial for the first black acting school where black ac-

tors and actresses can learn how to jive walk and talk from talented token whites.

Another daydream shows Townsend and another player as hosts of "Sneakin' In the Movies," on which they rate any movies they've been able to sneak into during the week.

Townsend's crew blended a variety of film stocks and fast-paced editing into visually dynamic entertainment. The editing also adds a few comic touches of its own, as in a dream sequence depicted the two-faced white producers of "Jiveman Jimmy's Revenge."

'Assault' unconventional, unflinching

"The Assault" showing at the Bijou is just that; an unflinching assault on convention, morals, betrayal, sacrifice and human motivation, all put to the acid test in this poignant tale of World War II.

Review by
Mary Courtis

Anton or "Tonny" is a 12-year-old Dutch boy waiting out the war and winter with his parents and brother Peter. Food is scarce, fuel scant and morale low. But the family clings together and to the hope that by remaining non-committal and avoiding the Germans, they can survive this time of conflict.

Then fate throws them a cruel curve. Fake Pleug, a German collaborator and suspected cut-throat, is shot on their street and their next door neighbors move the body in front of Tonny's house.

Tonny and the rest of his family are arrested, their house torched and more than 20 prisoners brutally shot on the site.

The next day he learns his parents have been executed and the Germans bundle the boy off to Amsterdam where he has an uncle. Shortly afterwards the war ends and the rest of the movie focuses on the next 40 years of Tonny's life as he attempts to exorcise his psychological demons and make sense of what happened to

himself and his family on that fateful night.

In this regard, Tonny's pilgrimage is a sad and often surprising one. Through his eyes and later experiences we come to see that observations, which seemed obvious at first, are really ambiguous, and true motivations not so easy to pin down.

Why do people act the way they act in war? This thoughtful movie suggests the answer to this question is complex and only half understood — even in retrospect. "The Assault" proves it is an important film by showing the line between victim and villain is a thin one and blame as relative as morality.

"The Assault" shows nightly at the Bijou through Thursday.

Eddie Murphy's back

After receiving little critical acclaim for his role in the movie "Golden Child," Eddie Murphy has humorously danced his way back on top in the newly released action-comedy, "Beverly Hills Cop II."

Murphy, who has been on a rollercoaster career ride since his first film success, "48 Hours," in 1983, is again riding high as he is joined by favorite members of the original cast from "Beverly Hills Cop I."

This time around, like last time, Murphy's shenanigans are supported by a seasoned group of co-actors. Some of the movie's finest moments again include the hilarious antics of

Rosewood (Judge Rinehold) and Taggart (John Ashton). These two, much like Laurel and Hardy, never seem to quite know what's going on as they struggle to find the answers behind the attempted murder of their boss, Lieutenant Bogomil.

Rosewood is still Taggart's naive second-man but a new twist finds him obsessed with heavy weaponry which accentuates his shy character just enough to grab laughs.

Rosewood attempts ill-advised counseling which sounds more like slap-stick comedy. Together the two are as helpless as Siamese twins doing the backstroke. Then Axel Foley (Murphy) shows up!

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