



ENTERTAINMENT

'Less Than Zero' reduces social problem to melodrama

By Sean Axmaker
Emerald Contributor

Andrew McCarthy is the all-American kid Clay Easton who goes off the East Coast for college while his best friends Blair (Jami Gertz) and Julian (Robert Downey, Jr.) stay in sunny California to do their "own thing." Their own thing turns out to be the perpetual party scene, where Clay, appropriately enough, first

Review

★

meets his old cronies during his Christmas break.

Clay is like a ghost wandering through the decadent display of wealth, material possessions, drugs, sex and high decibel music. It's obvious he was once at home at these California rich-kid rituals, but now he's uncomfortable — judgmental in a way. This isn't his scene anymore. He knows the dangers. And for the next 100-some minutes director Marek Kaniévka and screenwriter Harley Peyton hammer these dangers into our heads in the most elaborate "just say no" campaign to hit the media yet in "Less Than Zero."

Yes, it turns out Julian is hooked on cocaine, spending his nights coked-up on crack and his days strung out, trying to fly his next scheme and scam his next score.

In typical Hollywood fashion "Less Than Zero" treats the symptom without touching the disease. Kids spend aimless nights in mindless smalltalk, filling their bodies with drugs and alcohol, dancing their booties off in throbbing nightclubs and waking up God knows where. What went wrong? Not the parents, God forbid; they may have trouble communicating sometimes, but they care, they come through when needed. Not the schools. The kids seem fine stepping out in caps and gown for some innocent partying, a champagne bottle in each hand (no irony intended, I'm sure). Society? Pshaw! Kids like Clay seem to get along fine. So what is it that makes kids turn to this lifestyle?

Kaniévka and Peyton haven't a clue.

The film isn't a total washout. Some of the best moments show how natural drugs are to this sub-culture.

But Kaniévka gives too much credit to some of his characters. It would have been a more interesting exploration if Clay himself was involved in that scene; it would provide more insight and



Courtesy Photo

From left, Jamie Gertz, Robert Downey and Andrew McCarthy play three over-privileged pals searching for the ultimate high in "Less Than Zero."

maybe some background (come on, don't tell me they never touched the stuff until Clay left for college). The parents, too, need a harder look; the worst coke problems lie not with kids but with adults, yet these rich, decadent people are clean, rich, decadent types.

Hollywood, in the great tradition, has reduced a serious social problem to a simplistic melodrama with good guys, bad guys and weak-willed losers. Social realism at its best.

Maybe I should have read the book instead.

'Made in Heaven' is a poor pastiche of fantasy film genre

By D. M. Holiman
Emerald Contributor

"Made in Heaven" is surprisingly bad. Alan Rudolph, the director, has a knack for making interesting, off-beat films that borrow story-lines and conventions of older Hollywood films, while adding modern twists. But in "Made in Heaven" Rudolph fails to add anything

original or clever to the fantasy genre.

The film starts off with Timothy Hutton, a youthful WWII vet, leaving home in search of employment. On his way to California, he rescues a woman and her children from drowning. But his heroic effort, alas, costs him his life.

Hutton regains consciousness in heaven where he first encounters his no-nonsense

deceased aunt (Maureen Stapleton), then later a lovely young woman (Kelly McGillis) who isn't a woman at all — but

Review

★ 1/2

a new spirit, someone who has yet to be sent to earth to live out her life.

As McGillis shows Hutton

around heaven, they fall in love. But McGillis is soon assigned to earth and is sent there as a baby. Hutton manages to convince the heavenly powers to send him to earth too. He's soon "reborn" and when he grows up he starts his search for his true love.

A number of things weaken "Made in Heaven." First of all, the film is woefully predictable. Secondly, the film's premise is

not fresh. Several entertaining fantasy films have already been made, among them "Here Comes Mr. Jordan," and, more recently, "Heaven Can Wait." "Made in Heaven" suffers in comparison. It hasn't either the charm or the invention of those two films. In fact, "Made in Heaven" is a rather witless, meandering pastiche that, as a result, has little identity or life of its own.

AMERICAN FAMILY VIDEO

YOU
Asked For It!

99¢

NEW LOWER PRICES

199

• MONDAY
• TUESDAY
• WEDNESDAY
• THURSDAY

• FRIDAY
• SATURDAY
• SUNDAY
• HOLIDAY PERIODS

NEW RELEASES & M.T.'s - \$2.99 Seven Days a Week

North Eugene 362-7499 Santa Clara 688-1165 South Eugene 485-4608

FREE MEMBERSHIP!

AMERICAN FAMILY video
The Most Popular Photo Video Store in Town!

...YOUR "MARK" OF REAL VALUE!

mark-n-save

CLIP THIS COUPON

\$1.00 OFF
with a \$10.00
grocery purchase
Excluding beer, wine & cigarettes

CLIP THIS COUPON

\$1.00 OFF
with a \$5.00
meat purchase

#2 POTATOES
15 lb. bag
68¢

RED DELICIOUS APPLES
23¢ / lb.

Prices good through November 18, 1987

mark-n-save ... your "mark" of real value!
WE MAKE SAVING SIMPLE!

REMEMBER: YOU DON'T HAVE TO MARK YOUR OWN PRICES ANYMORE!

IT'S THE TAPE TOTAL THAT COUNTS

FOOD STAMPS
All ad items subject to stock on hand. No dealer sales.

EUGENE
2279 W. 11th Ave.
EUGENE
3861 N. 1st