

## Encore!

# 'Prancer' is worst film of season

## Bad dialogue, art direction add to silliness

By Gerry White  
Emerald Contributor

So few genuinely bad films are made today that it's almost a relief to see one that pulsates with badness. Almost.

John Hancock's new film *Prancer* is quite possibly the worst film in recent memory. It pretends to tread a fine line between humorous and realistic situations and ends up being silly, exploitive and just plain dumb.

Although I must confess that the film did leave me with some questions. *Do the Right Thing* left me with questions too. Let me just make it as clear as possible that these were questions of a different kind.

First and foremost, how in the heck did this piece of garbage ever even get conceptualized, let alone made? There were several moments in this film where that question just seemed to jump out of the screen and yell at me.

The basic story revolves around a little girl named Jessica (the first and hopefully last performance of a most nauseating Rebecca Harrell) whose mother has died and who is neglected by her tough but loving father (Sam Elliot).

Jessica sees a wooden reindeer fall from a Christmas display and darn near kill someone, which turns out to be *Prancer* (we know this because it's the third reindeer in the line). She then goes on to see an actual reindeer in the woods, it gets hurt, her dad wants to kill it, she wants to love it, etc., etc.

*Prancer's* dialogue is so incredibly poorly written that I found myself praying that we would see some more sick emotional scenes, just because they typically were done silently (you know, they're more powerful that way). The kids in this movie don't talk like any 9-year-olds I've ever met. Quite frankly, I hope I never meet any 9-year-olds that talk like that as long as I live.

The characterization is of

equally high quality, which is to say that the characters are as three-dimensional as this newspaper and as realistic as Santa himself. The only development that the writer, Greg Taylor, manages to accomplish is that everyone becomes a very nice person in the end (awwww, isn't that touching).

Indeed, the ending of this film is probably the most revolting part of it, because it is a blatant, sick rip off of Walt Dis-

**Prancer is a film that someone found on a trash heap.**

ney's 1959 film *Pollyanna* (another children's film I hated). No attempt whatsoever is made to hide the fact that this ending is stolen.

The photography in *Prancer* relies on stupid camera tricks that I have seen several million times before. There is a shot where Jessica and her dad are driving along and the various lights hit his headlights and create little lines of color all along the screen.

This shot evoked special memories for me, because a friend and I did the exact same thing with his Sony video recorder. It's just not that tough to do. In fact, the entire movie looks pretty much like stuff we used to do with that old recorder.

Not only is *Prancer* horrid from a mechanical point of view, I found its content abhorrent as well. I remember one scene where, in an attempt to stop her brother and his friends from teasing *Prancer*, Jessica threatens them with her dad's sickle. This seems a bit violent to me.

I continue to ask myself how this film got made. Didn't the makers of the film have story conferences or something? Didn't someone stand up and say "Greg, you're a nice guy, but something really has be-

done about this script?" How does this sort of thing happen?

Now, I know what many of you out there are thinking. True, I am a college student and many may be of the impression that college students don't generally like children's films. I must say that I do like children's films and television, when it's well done.

I used to sit at home and watch *Sesame Street* with my

little sister all the time. I love the Muppets. I have yet to see a Walt Disney cartoon that I don't like. Let there be no mistake made.

*Prancer* is a film that someone found on a trash heap. If a single parent reads this review and decides not to take their child to see *Prancer*, then I will know that the two hours that I suffered through to see this movie were not in vain.

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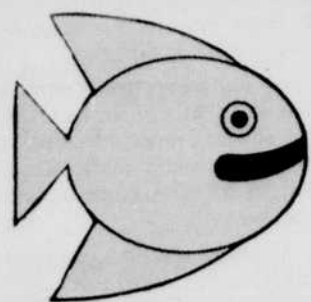
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