

# 'Boyz N the Hood' painfully real

★★★ 1/2

Boyz N the Hood. Playing at area theaters.

● "Don't bother." ● "I'll be here." ● "Worth the time." ● "A must see."

**ADMIT ONE**

For most of cinematic history, the true stories of black Americans have been totally neglected. Now, in an accident due to typical Hollywood self-servicing, African-American movies are being made.

I say it's an accident because movies don't get made unless similar movies that came before make money. Films by black directors have been profitable recently, turning them into the "flavor-of-the-month," so to speak.

Obviously, there's a lot of ground to make up in relating the black experience in America.

The stories have ranged from showing the events leading to a racially motivated riot (*Do the Right Thing*), to the effects of drugs and the mafia in ghetto communities (*New Jack City*), to how blacks are treated in the movie business (*Hollywood Shuffle*). Now comes a film perhaps more effective in bringing its message across than any of the others.

The enormous power of *Boyz N the Hood* comes from the fact that it is a simple story derived from a complex set of sociological conditions. It is those conditions which shape the world the lead characters are forced to function in. The world is South



Tre (Cuba Gooding Jr.) clings to his girlfriend, Brandi (Nia Long) in despair over the seemingly endless violence in South Central L.A. in *Boyz N the Hood*, a movie written and directed by 23-year-old filmmaker John Singleton.

Central Los Angeles. Twenty-three-year-old novice writer/director John Singleton knows from where he speaks. He grew up in the mean streets he writes about. The deep-root-

ed knowledge he has about the people, their station in life, their desires and the things he believes are necessary to sur-

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# 'Henry' sentimental but flawed

★★★ 1/2

Regarding Henry. Playing at area theaters. Rated PG-13

● "Don't bother." ● "I'll be here." ● "Worth the time." ● "A must see."

**ADMIT ONE**

*Regarding Henry* is a new film written by 24-year-old Jeffrey Abrams and veteran director Mike Nichols (*Catch-22*, *The Graduate*, *Postcards From the Edge*, among others).

The film depicts the life of top lawyer, Henry Turner, (Harrison Ford) and his downfall after he suffers from a bullet wound to his head. In the style of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, the film focuses on the change in a person as he or she goes from bad to good, with a negative message about a diligent work ethic as well.

A highly stylized court sequence sets up Henry as a victoriously successful lawyer used to having things go his way.

At home, he whines to his wife, Sarah (Annette Benning), about their new dining room table. "It looks like a God-damned turtle!"

His harshness is made more apparent when he encounters his daughter. "Hi. I was angry ... but with a reason. My piano is very important to me ... the fact is if you can't be responsible, don't take food out of the kitchen. We finished a real big case today, honey. Daddy won."

His daughter sits emotionless on the bed during this conversation, unable to relate to her father's admiration for cold-



Harrison Ford plays attorney Henry Turner, who changes his attitude after a near-fatal shooting in *Regarding Henry*. He is pictured here with Mikki Allen, who plays his daughter Rachel.

hearted success and perfection.

But Henry's obnoxious behavior proves fatal for him. After demanding cigarettes at the local corner store during a hold-up, he is shot in the head.

A doctor explains to Sarah that Henry suffers from anoxia to the brain, which causes a loss of memory and minor brain damage, but reassures her that he will recover.

"If you're gonna get shot in the head, that's the way to do it," he says to a teary-eyed Sarah. This is one of the many sarcastic lines inherent in the script.

Unfortunately, sarcasm has become an overworked convention in some movies, and, in most cases, it is inappropriate in this one.

Henry is sent to a rehabilitation center for therapy. A typical montage of recovery shots recounts Henry's metamorpho-

sis from someone in a vegetative state to a walking, talking

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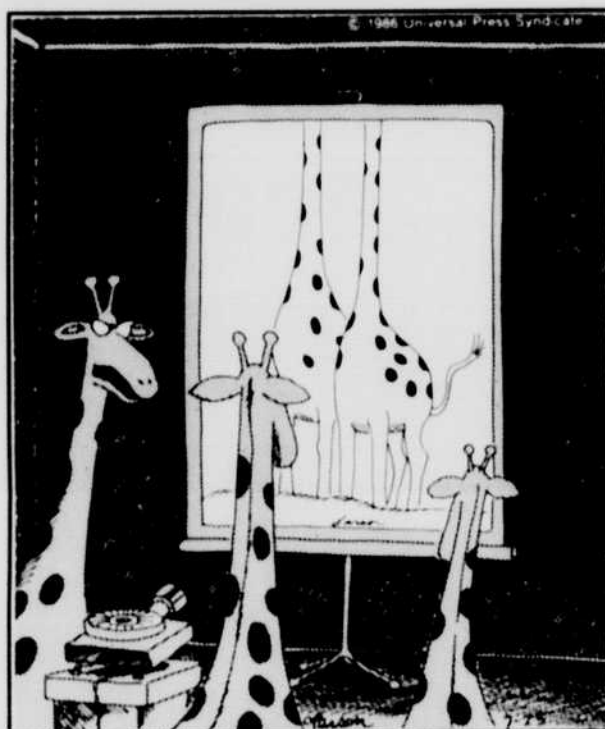
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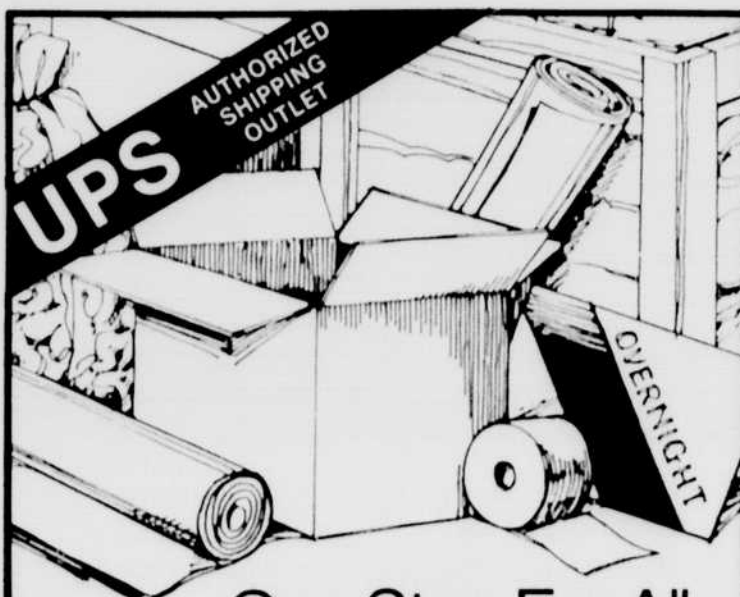
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**THE FAR SIDE**

By GARY LARSON



"Oh, lovely — just the hundredth time you've managed to cut everyone's head off."



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