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CINEMA

Film of Jim Carroll's life doesn't work

KALY SOTO

Oregon Daily Emerald

The buzz emanating from Hollywood about *The Basketball Diaries* was almost deafening — and that was before the movie even came out.

Now that the movie is out, Hollywood is silent. After driving to Portland to see this movie opening weekend (because none of the movie theaters in Eugene were dumb enough to believe the hype), I don't wonder why.

It had all the right ingredients for a great movie — a great story, a rising star, a great soundtrack and an up-and-coming director. But Jim Carroll's story of sex, drugs and hoops didn't work when it was set in the 1990s. Even Leonardo DiCaprio is not this good.

The music was forgettable and Scott Kalvert should have worked a little harder making this a coherent movie as opposed to making a really long rock video.

The Basketball Diaries is the story of poet-sometimes-rock star Jim Carroll's life. Carroll grew up on the mean streets of New York. He became addicted to drugs and hustled to support his habit, all the while keeping a diary of his misadventures.

Perhaps the biggest flaw in this film, in my opinion, is the fact that it is set in the 1990s. The book was published in 1978, but it was about growing up in the '60s. That time period was much different than this one; it is very hard to believe that a young man of Jim Carroll's obvious intellect would allow himself to be vanquished by drugs if he were growing up now around the anti-drug mentality that pervades this society.

Actually maybe there is a justification for Carroll's drug abuse in the movie — his mother. Lorraine Bracco is so miscast as Carroll's mother it led me to wonder at times why he didn't start using sooner. If I had to live with that whiny woman I would have been on heroin a lot sooner.

The smartest thing Kalvert did was to cast DiCaprio. Even



Mickey (Mark Wahlberg) and Jim (Leonardo DiCaprio) hang out on Manhattan's Lower East Side in the movie *The Basketball Diaries*.

The Basketball Diaries

Leonardo DiCaprio, Mark
Wahlberg, Lorraine Bracco
Director: Scott Kalvert

though his performance was not strong enough to save the entire movie, he did do a convincing job especially when he had to portray drug withdrawal.

Though DiCaprio, who was more than able to hold his own with Robert De Niro and Ellen Barkin in *This Boy's Life*, was kind of out of his league in this film it is obvious he gave it his

best shot.

This film was also the second film for Mark Wahlberg, formerly known as Marky Mark. I just have one thing to say about him: He wasn't giving anyone any good vibrations on this movie.

Ten years from now seventh graders will be watching this movie in health class, as an example of how drugs can ravish your life. You remember those movies, don't you? And you wouldn't pay to see them, would you?

Just wait, I can almost guarantee your kids will see this one. So just wait and see it with them then. If you absolutely have to see this disaster for yourself, go on bargain night.

Pitch in!



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