

Murphy film great for holidays

MOVIE REVIEW

'Trading Places'

Starring: Denholm Elliott and Dan Aykroyd

★★★★☆

By Serena Markstrom
Oregon Daily Emerald

If you're looking for a healthy heap of holiday clichés, I recommend steering clear of 34th street and kissing a wonderful life goodbye. For holiday cheer without the "I'd like to puke all over this movie" feeling, watch the 1980s classic "Trading Places."

My first best friend, Megan, and I used to watch it all the time. It was one of the few movies we had on tape, and we loved seeing how close we could come to memorizing the whole thing.

Our favorite line is still the one when the large jail inmate walks toward Eddie Murphy, after he brags about having a limousine. Thick arms hanging over his love handles and a tough "yes man" at his side, he says, "It ain't too cool being no jive turkey so close to Thanksgiving."

That's funny, you have to admit. And as an added tickler, his yes man always says "yeah" in a low Barry White voice after everything the fat one says.

The plot is simple. Murphy plays a disadvantaged-but-bright street person called Billy Ray Valentine. Dan Aykroyd plays a Harvard-bred snob born with a silver spoon up his, er, in his mouth. Winthrop Louis III is his snobby name.

Louis III leads a delightful life. He's successful in his job managing

a commodity brokerage firm, he has a prissy fiancé with shiny hair and he is a member of the all-white "heritage club."

We don't know if Murphy is homeless, but we first meet him rolling around Philadelphia on a makeshift wheelchair, pretending he was wounded in Vietnam and asking for donations or a slice of ham.

The two literally bump into each other, and then the fun begins. Louis III thinks Valentine is trying to rob him, and when Valentine tries to give his briefcase back, confusion is in the air and cops are closing in on him. So he escapes into the Duke and Duke building.

The Dukes are rich white guys who like to mess with people's lives. After the scene, Mortimir bets Randolphe that the homeless Murphy could run the company just as well as the snob if given the right circumstances, and that Louis III would resort to crime if all his cushy privileges were removed.

They trade places. It's an experiment of heredity versus environment. Randolphe wants to believe that success is in the blood.

He says some classically racist lines, such as: "He's a Negro. He's probably been stealing since he could crawl."

Mortimir wins the bet when Valentine loses his scheming ways and Louis III resorts to crime — but he really is just trying to kill Valentine because in his mind the "terrible Negro" is responsible for all his woes.

The Dukes' experiment backfires when Valentine (with a joint burning the inside of his mouth) gets hip to their bet.

He finds Louis III, and they conspire along with the butler and the

hooker who have been housing Louis III until he can get back into his wing-tips and his previous life of luxury.

"It occurs to me that the best way to hurt rich people is to turn them into poor people," Valentine astutely points out before they hatch a plan.

The plan works, the Dukes lose all their money, and the team of "low-class" people takes a vacation on a nice island and has that little guy who used to say "da plane" serve them lobster.

For Valentine it's a rags-to-riches, in a matter of weeks, tale.

The Dukes didn't really prove anything because Valentine was never a thief and the crime Louis III resorted to was for revenge and not survival.

Obtusely, it's a defense for affirmative action. Valentine ended up in a higher economic class and was better able to capitalize on his natural abilities because he wasn't wasting his wiles trying to stay alive.

Louis III ends up in a romance with a pre-Julia Roberts noble hooker who doesn't do drugs or see many opportunities other than selling her body. He's still wealthy at the end of the film, but he will most likely never return to the preppie, soulless fakes he previously hung around. He gets to learn about loyalty when "señorita shiny hair" dumps him at the first sign of adversity.

The movie gives us wealth versus poverty, good triumphing against mischievousness, and it's all in front of a backdrop of a holiday season in Philadelphia.

"Trading Places" is a photo-manipulated snapshot of American society with classic Eddie Murphy lines such as, "Jacuzzi? Man, when I was a kid and we wanted Jacuzzi, we had to fart in the tub."



6 0 0 0

By TAG Heuer

© 1998 TAG Heuer USA



Since 1922 • Member American Gem Society

1027 Willamette St. • 345-0354
Valley River Center • 342-4496

An authorized TAG Heuer dealer.

WE SHIP EVERYTHING



Pak Mail can pack everything you own, insure it, and ship it to and from school—whether your campus is across the state or across the ocean. Even bicycles, stereos and computers are not a problem.

Pak Mail Student Saver

10% off total Shipping Cost

Pak Mail • 1292 High St. • Eugene, OR • 343-1313
One coupon per customer. Not valid with any other offer. Expires 1/1/01

1292 High St.
Eugene, OR 97401

PAKMAIL
CENTERS OF AMERICA
We Ship Anything, Anywhere.®

343-1313