



ABOUT A BOY

Chris and Paul Weitz (*American Pie*) directed this adaptation of a novel by Nick Hornby (*High Fidelity*) about a spoiled man (Hugh Grant) who tries to pick up chicks by posing as a single dad. Sounds like an episode of *Three's Company*, but things get serious when he meets a troubled kid (Nicholas Hoult) who turns his life around.

—Jim Radosta



About a Boy: It's not as cheesy as it looks

DOGTOWN AND Z-BOYS

So, what becomes of all those cute skater dudes when they grow up? You'll wish you never asked. This documentary about the creators of extreme skateboarding would have you believe they were revolutionary pioneers (hyperbole is in annoying abun-

dance here), but instead they come off as a bunch of arrogant bullies, squatters and showoffs who are fixated on their glory days.

—JR

HOLLYWOOD ENDING

No surprises here; it's vintage Woody Allen. He's a neurotic New York hypochondriac whose filmmaking career is essentially over. His producer ex-wife (the ravishing Téa Leoni) wants to help him make a comeback with a new script, but, alas and alack, her new fiancée (Treat Williams) runs the studio and can't stand him. The question is, who could? Tired is the notion that beautiful young women would continue to fall for this annoying old man. Still, he's hilarious and so is the film.

—Lisa Bradshaw

HUMAN NATURE

What could've been a profound statement on the human condition ends up being a trite satire on rigid gender roles—men are horny, women are needy. Yawn. At least Rhys Ifans (*Notting Hill*) entertains as a wild child forced to return to civilized society. Ambitious yet ultimately unsatisfying.

—JR

PANIC ROOM

In the "for what it is" category: For what it is—an action suspense thriller, basically—*Panic Room* is a success. Director David Fincher (*Seven*, *Fight Club*) offers the usual showy, technophilic camera tricks, and it's filmed in

his patented slick, dark Dank 'n' Damp-ovision (which actually does befit the story). We also get to see Jodie Foster display the fiercest maternal instincts this side of Linda Hamilton in *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*.

—Christopher McQuain

SPIDER-MAN

After he's bitten by a mutated spider, Peter Parker (Tobey Maguire) develops superpowers. He learns the hard way that with great power comes great responsibility, and he uses his abilities to save lives and battle the evil Green Goblin. Well acted, spectacular special effects, a fun plot that stays true to its comic book roots—what more could movie audiences want in a summer film?

—Andy Mangels

STAR WARS: EPISODE II—ATTACK OF THE CLONES

While its title might sound like San Francisco circa 1980, the latest George Lucas film is anything but gay. Alternating between dark and depressing scenes and endless chases, you can almost count off the video game opportunities. Thankfully, the

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- ☹ dud, bottom of the bag
- ☹☹ only if you're really hungry
- ☹☹☹ good effort, pass the salt
- ☹☹☹☹ mmmm, tasty!
- ☹☹☹☹☹ get the big tub o' corn

dark scenes work, and a brooding Hayden Christensen plays the man who will be Darth Vader with barely subdued anger. Plus, less Jar-Jar Binks, and Yoda kicks ass with his light saber!

—AM

Y TU MAMA TAMBEN

Using storytelling quirks similar to those in *Amélie*, director/co-writer Alfonso Cuarón somehow achieves the impossible: A teen sex comedy that actually shows sex. A buddy movie in which one friendship's limits truly are put to the test. A coming-of-age road trip where the characters arrive in a much different place by the end of their journey. Don't miss it.

—JR



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