

Rachel Getting Married

Jonathan Demme's new film is his best work in many years. A powerfully affecting, beautifully acted and emotionally devastating combination of dysfunctional family drama and cinéma vérité home movie, *Rachel Getting Married* plunges the viewer into the core of a wedding weekend maelstrom leaving us as drained, exhilarated and exhausted as if we were an actual guest at the nuptials. This is familiar material—we have seen it from Greek tragedy through Robert Altman up to its debasement as endless retreads on reality TV—but Demme (and his peerless ensemble cast) make it as fresh and visceral as our own memories of shared experience.

There is seemingly no line separating these actors from their roles. It's unfair to single out individual performances, but unforgettable work is given by Anne Hathaway (a hyped performance that actually lives up to the hype) as the scarred, cynical catalyst; newcomer Rosemarie DeWitt in a remarkably multilayered portrayal of the complex title character; Bill Irwin's heartbreaking, sensitive work as a loving father; and, in a true diva return to films, Debra Winger as the Mom of the Year.

The film has its longueurs (just like every wedding you've ever attended) and is perhaps just a shade much in its depiction of the most diverse, multicultural, open-spirited wedding in history—but as Demme's magical camera seemingly catches each and every fleeting moment in minute, flashing/slashing detail, one is caught up in having a truly *real* experience that is unique, uncomfortable and ultimately shattering. Opens Oct. 24. **A**

—Jon Kretzu

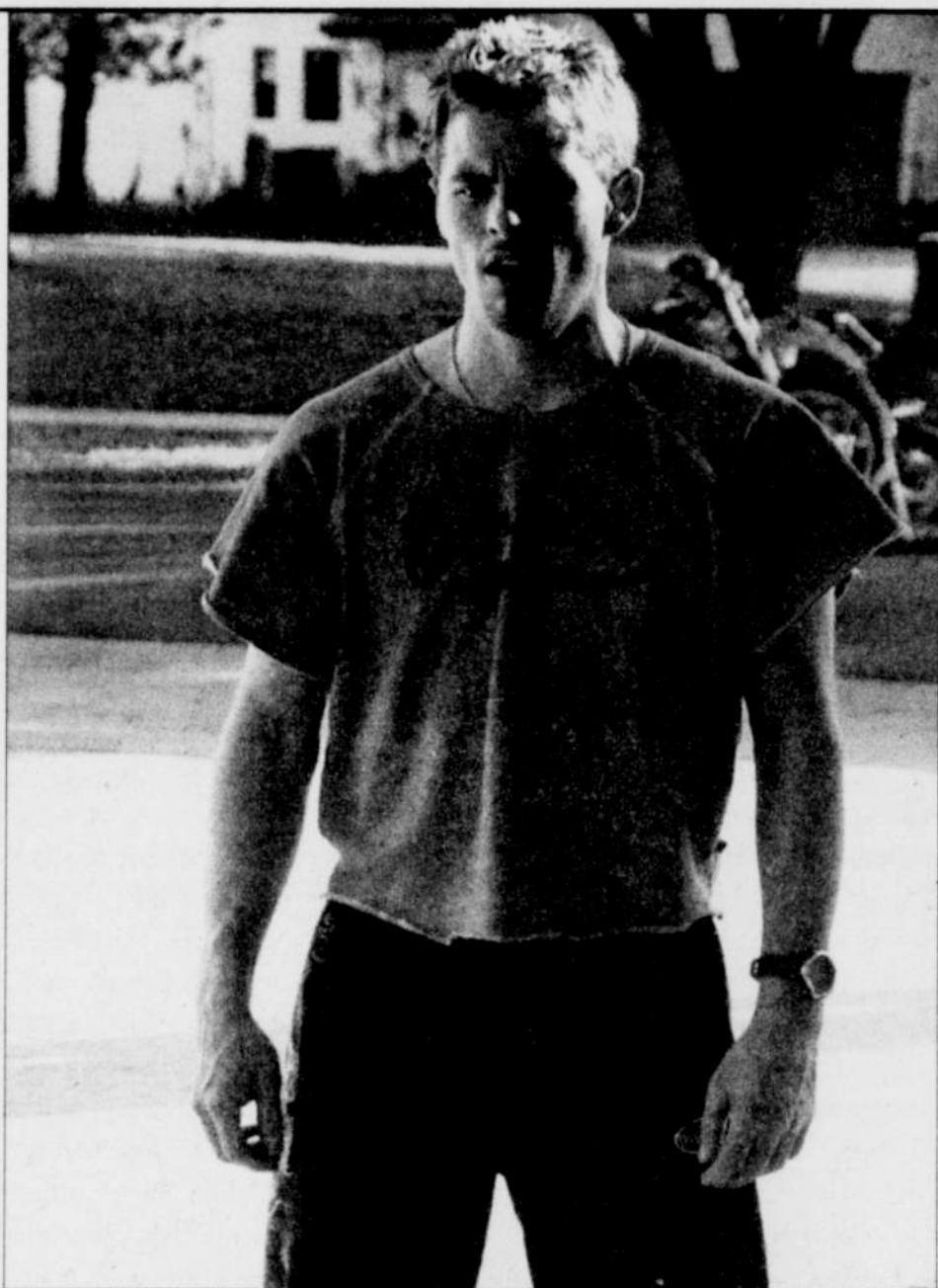
Sex Drive

If you liked *Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist*, then you'll love this: Another indie director, Sean Anders (*Never Been Thawed*), has taken the I.Q.-challenged genre of "sex-starved teen comedy" and given it a hilarious brain transplant. Josh Zuckerman, who has the instant adorable-geek appeal of Zach Braff, stars as a virgin who goes on a road trip with his ladies-man buddy and his let's-just-stay-friends gal pal. You already know where this *Sex Drive* is headed, but along the way we meet Amish hipsters, insane hitchhikers and a rabidly homophobic brother (James Marsden) who's obviously hiding something. **A-**

—Jim Radosta

Trouble the Water

Produced by Michael Moore protégés Tia Lessin and Carl Deal, *Trouble the Water* puts a compelling human face on the multiple disaster



James Marsden doth protest too much in *Sex Drive*.

that was Hurricane Katrina. The documentary, which won the Grand Jury Prize (and a standing ovation) at Sundance 2008, introduces us to Kimberly Roberts (aka Black Kold Madina), who used a video camera purchased for \$20 to document the storm's effects and aftermath on New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward, one of the areas most devastated by Katrina. Lessin and Deal combine Roberts' raw footage with their own slicker work and archival news clips to paint a noble portrait of the irrepressible human spirit that is, however, a little too long and occasionally unfocused. Opens Oct. 17 at Cinema 21. **B+**

—TL

What Just Happened?

What Just Happened? is an apt name for a movie by a talented director (Barry Levinson) who one expects better from. Robert De Niro stars as a successful Hollywood producer with business and personal problems. But the problems are inconsequential—his ex-wife is sleeping with a married man, his star won't shave his beard—and while this is perhaps a realistic account of Hollywood life, it's hard to be sympathetic. At least there are terrific performances by Catherine Keener as a tough studio executive and John Turturro as an agent who's afraid of confronting his big-name client. Opens Oct. 31. **C**

—Floyd Sklaver

Zack and Miri Make a Porno

Director Kevin Smith (*Clerks*) continues his string of films about lovable losers. This time, lifelong platonic friends Zack (Seth Rogen) and Miri (Elizabeth Banks) try to make money by shooting a porn film together. But while filming a sex scene, the childhood friends discover their intense attraction. It's typical romantic comedy territory spiced up, but Rogen and Banks are terrific and the film is chock-full of jokes, sight gags and touching moments—plus a pickle shot (or two) of Jason Mewes. A thoroughly enjoyable time. Opens Oct. 31. **A**

—FS jo

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