The Arts

'Police Academy 2' signals seasonal fluff

By D. Dietrich
Of The Print

Once again that time of year is upon the movie-goers of America. The arrival of spring is customarily accompanied by adolescent skin-flicks and creative-hatcheting horror spoofs that will soon saturate the market. At the top of the money-making lists will be what promoters would call "sure bets." That's what the producers of "Police Academy 2: Their First Assignment" are hoping to call their latest jaunt with America's more vulgar side of humor.

With a suggested 'R' rating, "Academy 2" is being promoted locally with a "PG-13" stamp of approval and stands as a sign of the times that 13-year-olds are not the innocents they used to be. The main reason for the making of "Academy 2" is from the notion that if the public liked it once, and they did, why not a little more of the same, which is what they get. With the expotentially-rising production costs, there is little room for creative filmmaking from the major studios. To be sure, "Academy 2" will make millions. Why? For the simple fact that "Police Academy" managed to gross over $156 million.

Joining seven of the original cast members are a few more partners in cinema crime, topping the list with the talented but ever misdirected Howard Hesseman. In this episode (there's sure to be more), he plays the desperate police chief who has requested six of the most promising recruits in the academy from his brother, the head of the academy. The chief needs help enforcing law with a roving band of wayward youth and psychopaths who are continually threathing the city and with it, his job.

Officer Larvelle Jones (Michael Winslow) adds disquieting sound effects to a nearby couple's lunch.

Photo courtesy of Warner Bros. Inc.

It takes little imagination to realize these recruits are going to look and work something along the lines of a circus act. Not to be forgotten are the opposing forces within the system. In this case a promotion-greedy lieutenant named Mauser (Art Metrano) is determined to make the chief look more inept than is already obvious by using the rookie cops. Of course, his tricks are met with a few of the same and revenge becomes the theme of the day.

Steve Guttenberg as Carey Mahoney is the main avenger of the academy rookies. He's the brightest of the bunch who never wanted to be a cop and it shows.

Bubba Smith as Hightower used to be a florist but is now the brawn behind the lack of brains. And where would a cops and robbers show be without the local weapons freak, here played by David Graf as Tackelberry. He's a 28-year-old virgin and the audience gets a chance to share the magic moment with him when he finally meets the gun-toting girl of his dreams.

Michael Winslow adds a little refreshment to the incredibly tired humor of the rest of the film with his enviable sound-effects ability. Bruce Mahler is Fackler, who seems to be terminally stuck in the "awkward age" with no end in sight.

To finish the list is the token female cop, played by Marion Ramsey as Hooks, who makes a timid entrance but ends up with more gusto than seemed capable. That's about the extent of any character development.

"Adacemy 2" manages to be more of the same used humor with little creative flair to be seen. Even for its genre, there is little to set it apart from all the other fluff films coming out.

Because this film is directed by the same mind that was responsible for the charming hit television series "The Dick Van Dyke Show" and seasons of "Happy Days," one would expect a little better. Assisted by former Saturday Night Live writers, "Academy 2" is a comprehensive mix of all the skits that should never have been allowed out of the editing room. But rest assured, the film will make millions.

'Films of Crime' series offered for credit and fun

"Films of Crime: Detectives, Gangsters and Spies," is the descriptive title of the history elective class offered at Clackamas Community College spring term.

Through films dating back to 1934, Fred DeWolfe and Rick Ramsperger offer a look at the history of crime in the U.S. as well as the social attitudes and changes as reflected through the film industry.

Subjects of the films during the ten week course range from the "crime doesn't pay" production code of the 1930's to the emergence of bizarre homicides and psychopaths in the 70's and 80's.

Class times are at noon and 6:30 p.m. Tuesdays. The class is offered as a three credit elective but the movies are open to all students and interested community members.

DeWolfe said the intentions for the class are twofold in that it is to be educational for students but also for plain entertainment.

The schedule of films for the term is as follows: April 2, "The Godfather" (1972); April 9, "Asphalt Jungle"(1950); April 16, "Dirty Harry" (1972); April 23, "Touch of Evil"(1958); April 30, "In Cold Blood"(1968); May 7, "To Catch a Thief" (1955); May 14, "The Thin Man" (1934); May 21, "The Counterfeit Traitor" (1962); May 28, "North by Northwest" (1959); June 4, "The Spy Who Came In From the Cold" (1965).

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