

The Electric Life of Louis Wain suffers from identity crisis

Review



BY T.J. REID
For the Keizertimes

Every family has at least one crazy cat person, and if you think otherwise I have some bad news for you: That crazy cat person is probably you. Thanks to the internet, the goofy beasts are everywhere today. But in Louis Wain's day, appreciating cats as anything other than rat and mice catchers was a bit of an oddity — if the bizarre film I just watched is to be believed.

The Electrical Life of Louis Wain, a shiny new Amazon original movie, chronicles the life and trials of the world's first feline meme creator and does so in a way that is occasionally sweet, occasionally tragic, and almost always weird, if not always in a good way.

The Electrical Life, like its main character, exudes some really weird energy right off the bat and doesn't stop doing so throughout thanks to some truly schizophrenic filmmaking (which is not always a bad thing).

There are some funny bits that underscore the eccentricity of the Louis Wain character (portrayed by Benedict Cumberbatch), but heartbreaking circumstances in his life often bring the film crashing back to reality. The former sequences are usually done with some real creative flair, with interesting camera angles, color palettes, and music (which uses the otherworldly sounding theremin and musical saw to

great effect), the latter with much more traditional shots and score.

This chaotic combination of weird and melancholy often works in the movie's favor, but also keeps it from having a concrete identity of its own. The same can be said of its main character, who is still a bit of a mystery to me even after spending two hours with him. But I suppose it's also annoying to me when biopics reduce a real historical figure down to three or four easily identifiable character traits, so I don't know what I would have had them do that was different than what they actually did.

Ultimately I feel like *The Electrical Life* should have gone all-out with the weird instead of only utilizing it half of the time. Weird and sad are not exclusive, after all, but you wouldn't know it from watching this with the shifts in tone and visuals. As it stands, I ended up asking myself questions like "What exactly is this movie?" and "What are the themes they're trying to explore?" and "Wait, did the subtitles just translate that cat?" pulling me out of the story as a result (and this confusion only gets progressively worse as the character slowly loses touch with reality).

But there is no arguing with the fact that *The Electrical Life* is a competently made film, from the directing to the scriptwriting to the acting (especially Felix Wilde, Windsor Wilde, and

Norbury Ackland, who all play Peter the cat at various stages in his life and should be given a good amount of treats for their good work if they haven't already). I just wish it had more of a concrete idea of what it was.

The Electrical Life of Louis Wain is

a harmless watch that won't change your life but does a pretty good job of celebrating the lives of those that not only put up with cats but also, against all reason, enjoy doing so. Check it out.

The Electrical Life of Louis Wain is now available on Amazon Prime.

POLICE Scanner

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14

5 a.m. - Theft from motor vehicle in the 1000 block of Wiessner Drive NE.

10:22 a.m. - Theft from motor vehicle in the 1000 block of Alliance Court NE.

12:59 p.m. - Sudden death in the 5000 block of Robindale Drive N.

10:05 p.m. - Reckless endangering at the intersection of Lockhaven Drive NE and Klicitat Drive NE.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15

10:58 a.m. - Shoplifting in the 6000 block of Ulali Drive NE.

12:45 p.m. - Burglary in the 3000 block of Chicago Street NE.

3:40 p.m. - Vandalism in the 7000 block of Kayla Shae Circle NE.

4:55 p.m. - Unlawful possession of methamphetamine at the intersection of

Lockhaven Drive NE and Kalmia Drive NE.

9:42 p.m. - Theft in the 6000 block of Keizer Station Boulevard NE.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16

1:31 a.m. - Physical harassment in the 600 block of Rose Park Lane NE.

8:50 a.m. - Vandalism in the 7000 block of Kayla Shae Circle NE.

4 p.m. - Theft in the 6000 block of Keizer Station Boulevard NE.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17

3:22 a.m. - Public indecency in the 1000 block of Chemawa Road N.

7 a.m. - Burglary in the 5000 block of Autumn Leaf Court N.

8:21 a.m. - Arrest for shoplifting in the 6000 block of Keizer Station Boulevard