

movie

review

Jennifer Lopez gives ‘Hustlers’
its real hustle

BY JAY BOBBIN

“Hustlers” boasts an impressive female cast, but there’s little doubt who you’ll remember the most from it. Also a producer of the fact-based drama – which Freeform shows Monday, April 25, and Tuesday, April 26 – Jennifer Lopez has given herself a terrific role as the ringleader of a group of strippers who come up with a scheme to profit quite beautifully from practicing their profession. It has to do with bilking the wealthy men they coerce, but there’s a lot more to the tale than that.

“Hustlers” also is a story of true sisterhood and of surviving tough financial times, especially when you’re a single parent who also has to fend for your child. Constance Wu plays a newcomer to the group, and you almost can understand why she was so upset about having to return to TV’s “Fresh Off the Boat” if it meant having to turn down projects like this. The characters are well-defined and generally well-played, giving this a boost above a typical con-artist saga while also furnishing the means for good work by a number of actresses.

Lili Reinhart of “Riverdale” also is on board, as is Keke Palmer, who around the same time became a daytime



talk-show co-host on the now-defunct “GMA3: Strahan & Sara & Keke.” Julia Stiles appears as the reporter who wrote the actual story that inspired the movie, which was written and directed by actress turned filmmaker Lorene Scafaria (“The Meddler,” “Seeking a Friend for the End of the World”).

However, it’s Lopez who really sells “Hustlers.” Her acting career generally has coasted since her early high marks in “Selena” and “Out of Sight,” with rom-coms on the order of “The Wedding Planner,” “Second Act” and the recent “Marry Me” becoming her norm. While those have shown off her appeal, they haven’t been particularly demanding in acting terms ... but here, Lopez displays a wise and natural expertise that really is a thrill to watch. It’s a matter of seeing a star also being a skilled performer in the truest sense, and it’s not surprising to see her being discussed for a possible Oscar nomination. Her work stands out that much.

“Hustlers” might be compelling enough without her, but it’s a real bonus for the movie – and for viewers – that J. Lo takes it higher.

JENNIFER LOPEZ’S
TOP 10 MOVIES

BY JAY BOBBIN

“Hustlers” (2019): Lopez clearly is the star attraction in this better-than-might-be-expected drama about the sisterhood among several dancers.

“The Back-up Plan” (2010): It’s not the easiest thing to pull off being charming in a comedy about artificial insemination, but Lopez manages.

“Monster-in-Law” (2005): Lopez and Jane Fonda are a fun match as the fiancée and the mom struggling over the same man (Michael Vartan).

“Shall We Dance?” (2004): This respectable remake of the Japanese drama uses Lopez nicely as the dance instructor who inspires a married attorney (Richard Gere) in several ways.

“Maid in Manhattan” (2002): Lopez plays a contemporary Cinderella in this romantic comedy about a hotel maid’s case of mistaken identity.

“Enough” (2002): A cable mainstay, this drama gives Lopez a great chance to show her serious side as an abused wife and mother who finally decides to battle back.

“The Wedding Planner” (2001): A charming Lopez fills the title occupation in this love story, with Matthew McConaughey as the would-be groom she falls for while planning his nuptials.

“Out of Sight” (1998): Lopez’s teamwork with George Clooney on this adaptation of an Elmore Leonard crime novel often is cited as evidence of how combustibly good a pairing of stars can be.

“Selena” (1997): Her top triumph as a solo star to date, this biography of the slain singer allows Lopez to shine both dramatically and musically.

“Money Train” (1995): The emphasis is on Wesley Snipes and Woody Harrelson as transit cops, but Lopez adds allure as another officer working with them.

WORD SEARCH

Solution on page 18

In the grid below, twenty answers can be found that fit the category for today. Circle each answer that you find and list it in the space provided at the right of the grid. Answers can be found in all directions—forward, backward, horizontally, vertically and diagonally. An example is given to get you started. Can you find the twenty answers in today’s puzzle?

Today’s Category: U.S. Presidents

G	R	M	H	M	O	N	R	O	E	N	J
R	E	S	D	A	O	G	S	C	H	O	G
A	L	D	H	S	Y	M	Y	X	H	X	C
N	Y	M	K	G	A	E	G	N	O	I	B
T	T	C	X	D	G	K	S	X	O	N	X
R	A	G	A	K	L	O	K	D	V	G	E
J	E	H	C	H	N	E	N	R	E	B	C
S	T	A	Y	L	O	R	I	O	R	U	R
D	D	P	G	T	F	A	T	F	D	S	E
F	G	O	D	A	R	T	H	U	R	H	I
W	I	L	S	O	N	H	B	G	S	A	P
X	P	K	Q	D	R	E	T	R	A	C	G

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