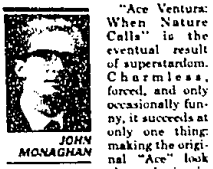


MOVIES

'Ace' loses animal magnetism in sequel



JOHN MONAGHAN

"Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls" is the eventual result of superstardom. Cha m l e s a forced, and only occasionally funny, it succeeds at only one thing: making the original "Ace" look almost brainy in comparison.

It was only last year that Carrey went from "In Living Color" ensemble player to one of the nation's hottest box office draws. Not nearly as bad as the critics said, "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" was an intentionally dopey device for Carrey's obvious talents at mimicry, bad taste, and crazy facial expressions.

Since then, Carrey has turned into a primary energy source with high profile roles in "The Mask," "Batman Forever," and "Dumb and Dumber." His toothy goofball with the trademark "Allrighty then" has been the most distinct comic personality since Pee Wee Herman, and infinitely more popular.

So where does the new "Ace" movie go so wrong? Probably with Carrey's much publicized ego. Creative differences with the original director led to installment of Steve Oedekerk, the film's writer and a longtime Carrey friend.

The resulting story, such as it is, finds Ace traveling to Africa to locate a missing white bat, the sacred symbol of the Wachati tribe. If it is not returned by a certain time and date, the Wachati will hold their neighbors responsible and start a major tribal war.

All too predictably, Simon Cal-



Detective: Jim Carrey returns as pet detective Ace Ventura in "Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls," now playing at metro Detroit movie theaters.

low's stuffy Brit is the actual bannpper. He will control the lucrative bat dropping industry if the tribes wipe each other out.

Since Carrey's mega-salary accounts for most of the reported \$44 million budget, the producers use him in virtually every frame. Oedekerk's direction is so flat and uninspired that even diehard fans will overdose on the actor's million-dollar "metamorpho-face."

Granted, there are funny bits in the movie, like the parody from "Cliffhanger" where the moun-

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tain-climbing Ace allows a raccoon to slip from his grasp. Leaving the ashram in Tibet where he has worked through his grief, Ace can't resist sending a Slinky down an impossibly long flight of stairs.

Most of the scenes, however, are just retreads from the first "Ace" movie, but with the gross-out level amplified. The African

locales and wide screen should hold some surprises, but they don't.

With this latest venture, Carrey's comedy goes from dumb to dumber.

To leave a message for John Monaghan, dial 853-2047, mail-box number 1806, on a touch-tone phone, fax him a note at 691-7279, or write him in care of Entertainment, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

'Copycat' has some interesting moments

BY DAVID GOODMAN

"It's a sick world, isn't it?" the serial killer says to his victim in "Copycat." And if you see this movie, you'll probably agree.

This suspense-thriller about two women who track an ingenious murderer has some interesting moments, but ultimately is done in by its tired, overused formula.

As the movie makes clear in its opening scene, serial killers tend to be intelligent and methodical as they go about their hideous business all the while keeping up an innocent exterior. The idea that such people can and do walk among us without suspicion gets your spine tingling right there.

It's surely not Sigourney Weaver's fault that "Copycat" is not as compelling as it should be and leaves you feeling stale. She turns in her usual top-notch acting job playing Helen Hudson, a forensic psychiatrist who has specialized in the psychology of serial killers and who has made quite a bundle judging from her sumptuous San Francisco apartment from book royalties and lecture fees.

It's fitting she has such a great apartment, because now she can't leave it. At one of her lectures, she was stalked by a crazed, sllobbering psychopath Darryl Lee Cullum (Harry Connick Jr.), who, in a truly creepy scene, traps Helen in a bathroom stall, hangs her up like a piece of meat and almost kills her.

Although Cullum is caught and safely imprisoned, the near-death experience has left Helen totally agoraphobic, unable even to go outside to pick up the newspaper near her apartment door without having a panic attack.

When several young San Francisco women are murdered, however, her dormant tracking in-



Thriller: Sigourney Weaver (left) portrays criminal psychologist Helen Hudson, and Holly Hunter is police detective M.J. Monahan, in Warner Bros.' suspense-thriller "Copycat."

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stincts start to tingle. So she teams up with perky, no-nonsense police detective M.J. Monahan (Holly Hunter) and her good-looking young deputy, Ruben Goetz (Dermot Mulroney), who enlist her in the chase.

Instead of one messy murder, the movie goes to draw on the ghouliah legacy of famous U.S. serial killers like Ted Bundy and Jeffrey Dahmer by creating a character who studies, imitates and pays homage to the "great" killers of the past.

Director Jon Amiel ("Somersby") works with wonderful ingredients: two likable actresses in the lead roles, the dramatic vistas of San Francisco and a clever idea from screenwriters Ann Biderman and David Madson.

As the movie unfolds, we quickly sense that by becoming an expert on serial killing, Helen has unwittingly made herself into a perfect audience. Only someone like her — an expert, a maven — will appreciate the references, the little touches of a killer like this copycat.

The problem is that, as usual, Hollywood is trying to have it

both ways. The formulaic movie teeters on the border of exploitation with one too many a shot of a ravaged co-ed in her underwear. And there's one lingering image that's so disturbing, you know a movie called "Copycat" is going to bring it around a second time.

Putting a couple of smart, tough women in key roles doesn't fully inoculate the movie against charges of pandering.

American movies and television shows seem to be practically overflowing at the moment with images of sadistic killers and their victims. How about giving us a break for a few weeks?

COMING ATTRACTIONS

OPENING FRIDAY, NOV. 17

"BOLDLY GOING" Pharcyde Brown takes over the role of OGT, James Bond in this latest in the successful spy series.

"THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT" Michael Douglas stars as the president who falls in love with Annette Bening, Martin Sheen, Richard Dreyfuss and Michael J. Fox also star in this Rob Reiner film.

"IT TAKES TWO" Formerly titled "Me and My Shadow," a romantic comedy about two young girls who conspire to do some misadventure to provide themselves with a complete family. Stars Kirstie Alley, Steve Guttenberg.

"THE CHAMPAGNE SOCIETY" The exciting and powerful story of two men who share a love affair. Stars Jack Nicholson, David Morse, Robin Wright and Anjelica Huston.

OPENING WEDS., NOV. 22

"KICK OF TIME" Thriller about a father racing against time to save his 7-year-old daughter from kidnappers who have ordered him to assassinate a public official.

"TOY STORY" Computer-generated animated fantasy about an eclectic assortment of toys who take on lives of their own and many comical misadventures when their owner is not around.

"CASINO" Drama set in the 1970s explores the graying, decadent world of Las Vegas and the "real" of a gambler overcome by his personal desires. Stars Robert DeNiro, Joe Pesci, Sharon Stone, Kevin Pollak. Directed by Martin Scorsese.



Drama: Michael Douglas and Annette Bening star in "The American President" in which the Chief Executive falls for an environmental lobbyist.

"A TERRIFIC ADVENTURE."

Great family fun with action and suspense!
"A THRILLING AND HEART-WARMING ADVENTURE!"
— Anne Devlin, BAYVIEW KIDZ ADVENTURE



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"ABSOLUTELY DELICIOUS!"

The Olsen twins are natural charmers with irresistible appeal. A winning blend of humor and romance.

— Mike Maltby, SNEAK PREVIEW, PISCATAWAY

KIRSTIE ALLEY STEVE GUTTENBERG MARY-KATE ASHLEY OLSEN



IT TAKES TWO

AMC AMERICA WEST	STARTS FRIDAY, NOV. 17	AMC AMERICA WEST
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"A RAMBUNCTIOUS COMEDY!"

A spirited cast! Foster keeps the party hopping.

— Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE

"Jodie Foster's direction is skillful. She lets her holiday pageant unfold with humor, heart, savvy and a solid sense of place. Ensemble acting of the very highest order."

— Michael Medved, THE NEW YORK POST

"Dive in and discover the fun for yourself!"

— Rex Reed, THE NEW YORK OBSERVER

"A lastingly enjoyable comedy. Filled with juicy performances."

— Jay Carr, THE BOSTON GLOBE

"Foster directs the film with a sure eye."

— Roger Ebert, UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

"Hooray for 'Holidays!'"

— Guy Fildes, COSMOPOLITAN



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