

Thriller: Halle Berry stars as Josie Potenza and Peter Greene stars as Cole, a stranger to whom she confides a wish that comes back to haunt her.

Stylish look can't save 'Rich Man's Wife'

BY DOLORES BARCLAY AP ARTS EDITOR

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Worthy contenders in the
Worst Movie of the Year sweepstakes, and Hollywood Pictures'
"The Rich Man's Wife" rates as a
2-1 entry.
Supposedly a sexy excursion
in murder and double-cross, the
movie amounts to little more
than a laughable flop, replete
with cliche-challenged dialogue
and plot elements that borrow
from every film-noir movie as
well as all thrillers involving
spousal murder and life among
the rich.
"The Rich Man's Wife" was
written by Amy Holden Jones,
who wrote the wonderful "Mystie
Pizza." Then again, she also
made her directorial debut with
"Slumber Party Massacre" and
wrote the unbelievable screenplay for "Indecent Proposal."
(How many women would at'
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How many women would at'
and rich Robert Redford for loser
Woody Harrelson?)
The movie opens as a flashback. Beautiful Jossie Potensy
istin in a police station, waives all her rights to
silence and having an attorney
(get real) and announces she
wants "to tell the truth." How
cute. So she tells us the story of
how her wealthy, alcoholic, beerbelly husband Tony gets murdered.

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to lead a wonderful life. She lives
in a gorgeous home in the Pucific
Palisades, is surrounded by
beautiful art, wears expensive
jewelry and clothes, and can
have anything she wants
except her husband's attention.
Tony (Christopher McDonald) is
a slave to his work at a TV studio_and he's a womanizer.
Josie, meanwhile, is having an
affair with a British restaurateur, Jake (Clive Owen), in
whose business Tony has invested. But Josie wort leave him
because she signed a prenuptial
agreement in which she gets
nothing if she leaves Tony.
But Josie is a plucky gal. She
deciden to forgive Tony, try to
make things better, and stick it
out. 'I love my husband," she
repeats often in the movie.
Tony, in his own sloppy way,
also loves Josie. She persundes
him to go away to the mountains
with her for an intimate vacation. It all falls apart when Tony
decides to rush back to his office.
Josie, forlorn and angry, heads
for the nearest bar where she
meets a psycho named Cole
(Peter Greene).
Against all good judgment, she
agrees to have dinner with him
and winds up telling him about
her husband. Cole suggests that
she hire him to kill Tony, Josie
panica and demands that he
drive her home. The ricke is a trip
through hell as Cole turns off his

headlights and speeds along a curvy mountain road. Once home, he tries to rape Josie and she pulls a gun on him, nicking him in the cheek.

Bad move. Cole murders Tony. He then visits Josie demanding \$30,000 or else he'll go to the police and tell them that she had bired him. Josie goes along with the demand and takes Jake into her confidence. Another bad move.

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With a series of dumb decisions, predictable plots twists and totally unrealistic police procedure, "The Rich Man's Wife" tumbles to its logical conclusion. There's an ending that's supposed to be a surprise. But you can smell it a mile away.

"The Rich Man's Wife" has a stylish look and Berry is a beautiful adornment. But neither can save the movie.

A positive note to the filmmakers: It is good to see race isn't an issue in this movie. Josic is a role that could be filled by a white actress or black actress, as Berry is. Josie also could be European, Asian, Latin, Arab or African. Doesn't matter. And that's good.

"The Rich Man Wife" was recommended.

"The Rich Man Wife" was produced by Roger Birnbaum and Julie Bergman Sender, with Jennifer Ogden as executive producer. The film is now playing at metro Detroit movie theaters.



GUIDE TO THE MOVIES

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