



## the movies

**Louise  
Snider**

## Satire loses bite in 'Trading Places'

"Trading Places" (R) has been around for several weeks, but I just recently saw it.

I had heard some good things about the movie. People said it was a bright comedy, that Dan Aykroyd and Eddie Murphy counted each other perfectly, and that the presence of Ralph Bellamy and Don Ameche was an inspired piece of casting.

All true. But the movie is not without some notable faults. More about these later.

Aykroyd plays a pompous Philadelphia executive, Lewis Winthrop III. Winthrop directs the commodities brokerage firm of millionaire brothers Duke and Duke (Bellamy and Ameche).

THE DUKE BROTHERS are always arguing nature versus nurture. Randolph (Bellamy) argues that, given the right environment, anyone could become a successful and productive member of society. Specifically, he believes anyone could manage the business as Winthrop does. Mortimer (Ameche) argues that a person's heredity determines his behavior.

They decide to test their theories. Now the movie becomes a story of "how the lowly have risen and how the mighty do fall." The Dukes frame Winthrop as a drug dealer. He is jailed, beaten, fired from his job, disgraced before his peers and tossed out on the street without any money. His assets have been frozen and his credit cards taken away.

Continuing their experiment, the Dukes replace Winthrop with Billie Ray Valentine (Eddie Murphy), a street-wise black hustler who scrounges money by pretending to be a blind and legless veteran.

Of course, it is these extremes that heighten the humor as the situations are reversed. In this case, there are not only the extremes of wealth and poverty but the social extremes of the executive of the WASP establishment and the black panhandler from the ghetto.

Billy Ray quickly catches on to being a commodities broker. It's like being "a bookie," he says. Winthrop never does get the hang of poverty, even with the help of an attractive hooker (Jamie Lee Curtis).

WINTHORPE'S DOWNFALL and degradation are so great, you can't help but feel some pity for the man. This is no mean achievement on Aykroyd's part, when you consider how completely detestable he has been.

Where "Trading Places" begins to lose points is when Billy Ray and Winthrop realize they are pawns in a game the Dukes are playing. Everything is very predictable from then on.

However, it is not just the predictability of this last third of the movie that makes it inferior to the rest of the film. The comedy becomes coarser, the social satire is diminished, and extraneous scenes and characters are introduced for no reason other than to pull off an overworked joke with a man in a gorilla costume.

John Landis, who directed "Trading Places," appears to have lost faith in the story idea two-thirds of the way through the film. This is unfortunate, because the movie is funny and the actors are terrific, including Denholm Elliott as an unflappable butler.

As if these merits aren't enough, Eddie Murphy has so much talent and charisma he only has to stare into the camera, and the result is hilarious.

Too bad Landis caved in to silly jokes and a lot of unnecessary scenes of bare-breasted women. He should have had more faith in the premise of the movie, the actors and, above all, the audience.

## what's at the movies

**ATOR (PG).** Epic adventure of myth, legend and magic starring Miles O'Keefe in the title role, with Sabrina Siani and Rita Brown.

**CLASS (R).** Romantic comedy about a young man who has an affair with an older woman who turns out to be his best friend's mother. Jacqueline Bisset, Cliff Robertson and Rob Lowe star.

**COUP DE TORCHON (A CLEAN SLATE).** Academy-Award nominee for best foreign-language film. Bertrand Tavernier directed comedy starring Philippe Noiret and Isabell Huppert.

**FLASHDANCE (R).** A determined young woman works as a welder by day and a dancer by night. Movie doesn't make too much sense but the dancing makes a terrific impact.

**OCTOPUSSY (PG).** Roger Moore is again the dapper Agent 007 as he goes to India to crack an international jewel-smuggling operation in this 13th James Bond adventure. Also with Maud Adams.

**PORKY'S -- THE NEXT DAY (R).** Raucous gang members from Angel Beach High School tangle with school administrators, corrupt officials and their own active libidos.

**PSYCHO II (R).** After 22 years in a mental hospital, Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins) returns to re-open the Bates Motel. Vera Miles, of the original cast, also returns in this sequel to Hitchcock's chiller.

**RETURN OF THE JEDI (PG).** Third chapter in the middle section of George Lucas' "Star Wars" trilogy. With Luke Skywalker, Hans Solo, Princess Leia and other characters from the previous films as the Rebel Alliance battles Darth Vader and the forces of the Empire.

**SNOW WHITE (G).** Disney's classic animated feature about a princess, a magic mirror, seven dwarfs, a witch and a prince. The 1938 film still ranks as one of the best, perhaps the best, animated features ever made. Every child deserves to see this and adults should treat themselves to a repeat viewing.

**STAYING ALIVE (PG).** John Travolta recreates the role of Tony Manero, now struggling in the competitive world of Broadway dancers. In this sequel to "Saturday Night Fever."

**STROKER ACE (PG).** Burt Reynolds wears a chicken suit and races stock cars sponsored by Chicken Pit restaurants in a movie which is truly the pits.

**SUPERMAN III (PG).** Action, comedy and romance as on tap as Superman (Christopher Reeve) and Lois Lane (Margot Kidder) battle an evil entrepreneur and a computer genius. Cast also includes Richard Pryor, Robert Vaughn and Annette O'Toole.

**THE SURVIVORS (R).** Contemporary urban comedy with Robin Williams and Walter Matthau on unemployment, and even a hit man, Jerry Reed, looking for a job.

**TENDER MERCIES (PG).** Robert Duvall is a washed-out country music star trying to forge a new life, in a superbly crafted film that could become an American classic.

### MOVIE RATING GUIDE

- G General audiences admitted.  
PG Parental guidance suggested. All ages admitted.  
R Restricted. Adult must accompany person under 18.  
X No one under 18 admitted.

## Theater group wants scripts

The Fourth Street Playhouse in Royal Oak is seeking previously unproduced scripts for possible readings and/or production.

Michigan playwrights are emphasized, but all playwrights are being encouraged to submit scripts. Both full-length and one-act plays will be considered.

A spokesperson said the playhouse is comfortable with nearly any subject matter but that plays by, about and for

women will receive special attention. Also, the playhouse is interested only in plays with small casts, simple sets and a basic avoidance of scenic gimmickry and technical effects.

Scripts may be submitted anytime to: Darrell Zink, artistic director, the Fourth Street Playhouse, 301 W. Fourth, Royal Oak 48067. For more information, call the playhouse at 545-3666.

## Tours, events accent Detroit

A program of summer activities, including a peek behind the scenes in the Detroit area, is being offered by Wayne State University Alumni.

A walking tour of Greektown and Bricktown, with lunch in a historic building, is planned for Saturday, "WSU Day on Boats," including boat ride, picnic and tickets for all rides and shows, is slated for July 30.

Other activities include a Tiger baseball game, with indoor picnic, charter bus and reserved seats for the night game against New York, Aug. 12; a black history tour, visiting the underground railway and significant sites on both sides of the Detroit River, Aug. 13; and an early-bird tour of Eastern Market, with breakfast at Butcher's Inn, Aug. 25.

For further information call WSU Alumni at 577-2166.



## Appearing at Silverdome

Art Garfunkel and Paul Simon will appear in concert Friday, July 22, at the Pontiac Silverdome. A large-screen video projection has been added as an enhancement of the live performance. Tickets are available at the Silverdome box office, Hudson's and all CTC outlets. For charge-card tickets, call 4156-1835.

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\$250 cost includes: round trip transportation, lodging in state campgrounds, meals, dune rides, Mackinaw Island ferry, canoes.

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	Includes choice of soup, salad and bread basket	
	VEAL PARMIGIANA DINNER	3.50
	Includes choice of soup, salad and bread basket	
THURSDAY	SALISBURY STEAK DINNER	3.50
	Includes choice of soup, salad and bread basket	
	LIVER & ONIONS	3.50
	BATTER DIPPED FISH & CHIPS	3.50
	BATTER DIPPED FROG LEGS & CHIPS	3.50
	GROUND SIRLOIN DINNER	3.75
	Includes choice of soup, salad and bread basket	
FRIDAY	SALISBURY STEAK DINNER	3.50
	Includes choice of soup, salad and bread basket	
	HONEY DIPPED FRIED CHICKEN	3.50
	BATTER DIPPED FROG LEGS & CHIPS	3.50
	GROUND SIRLOIN DINNER	3.75
	Includes choice of soup, salad and bread basket	
SATURDAY	SALISBURY STEAK DINNER	3.50
	Includes choice of soup, salad and bread basket	
	HONEY DIPPED FRIED CHICKEN	3.50
	BATTER DIPPED FROG LEGS & CHIPS	3.50
	GROUND SIRLOIN DINNER	3.75
	Includes choice of soup, salad and bread basket	
SUNDAY	SALISBURY STEAK DINNER	3.50
	Includes choice of soup, salad and bread basket	
	HONEY DIPPED FRIED CHICKEN	3.50
	BATTER DIPPED FROG LEGS & CHIPS	3.50
	GROUND SIRLOIN DINNER	3.75
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**PIC 'A POCKET**

Assorted with tomato slices & ranch dressing  
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TUNA CHICKEN POCKET  
Egg salad pocket  
TURKEY POCKET  
With Jack cheese  
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**34410 FORD RD. - WESTLAND**  
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Open 24 hours Pk. & Bar. 726-1303

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