

Growing up a child rebel in a political family

Morgan Stewart's *Coming Home*
Alliance Releases
Plaza

review by Moreen Murray

According to the producers of this film's press kit, this film is a first of its genre — a screwball youth comedy. But whether it is a screwball comedy or a comedy which has youth appeal is difficult to gauge from sparsely populated matinee showing.

The formula for this film is a time-honoured one: child versus parents, rebel versus authority, etcetera. Morgan Stewart in this formula is the child/rebel. He is a nice young man, clean-cut, stays out of trouble, has the usual morbid fascination for horror movies and gross-out memorabilia, and his own chainsaw (autographed). He is also the lonely product of several prep schools.

He has a major problem — or shall I say two — his parents. Indeed, Morgan barely knows these people — in his words "I'm an orphan with parents". His parents are busy advancing his father's political career in the Senate, so much so that they cancel his Thanksgiving vacation for a choice appearance on *Donahue*. All is not lost, however, as Morgan is summoned home — Morgan is needed at home for his father's political campaign — which centres, ironically, on the American Family. This scheme dreamed up by his father's aide, has Morgan in the place of the token child, in a hokey family portrait.

Morgan's mother Nancy (a particularly nasty name innuendo on the writer's part), decides to take further control of her son's life. She wants him to look, act and breathe the part of the senator's respectable son. She even controls who can associate with him — and who is suitable for him to date. Morgan attempts to cope by reading "The American Family In Crisis", watching numerous re-runs of "The Brady Bunch" and waxing the floors — all without much success of changing his family situation.

Then, on a shopping trip, Morgan meets Emily, a non-conformist, independent teen-



A screwball comedy of rebel kid vs mean parents

ager who, most importantly, communicates with her family. Morgan, for once in his life, is happy. His mother thinks his strange behaviour can be attributed to drugs, and forbids him to leave the house.

A new plot complication arises: his father's aide has been setting them up, so that his father will have to resign in disgrace or the embezzlement of campaign funds will be revealed. It is up to Morgan and Emily to save the day — and hopefully Morgan's chance to have a real family.

I caution that this film is not Oscar material. At times, it falls flat and is rather stale in its humour, but for the most part it is entertaining. John Cryer in the role of Morgan is likeable and adept at the part of the affection-

starved teenager. His performance is rather charming, even though he is, at times, seemingly trying too hard to be Matthew Broderick, rather than just be himself.

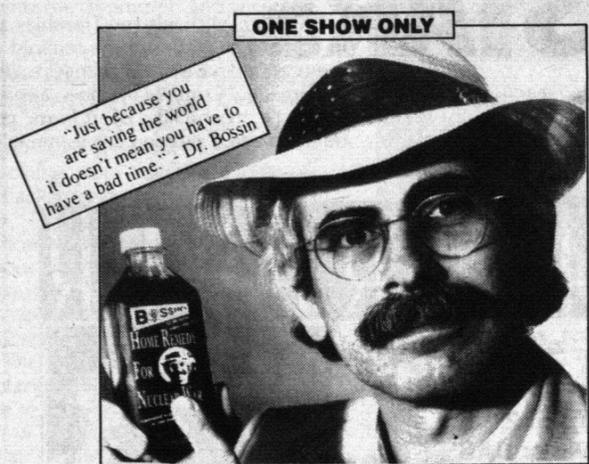
The supporting roles are also well handled. Nicholas Pryor is good as Tom Stewart, the hen-pecked Senator who makes feeble attempts to understand his son. Viveka Davis is also good in the supporting role of the high-spirited Emily, Morgan's first girlfriend, and his sole emotional support. Special mention should be given to Savely Kramorov as the Russian butler who wants to be a wheeler-dealer in real estate; his brief appearances are well placed.

The juiciest parts in this film belong to the villains. Lynn Redgrave is positively nasty as

the upwardly mobile and coldly ambitious political wife. Paul Gleason compliments her well as the servile and seedy political aide, who has plans of his own.

Several scenes in this film are quite funny — particularly a take-off on *Psycho* with Nancy filling in for Norman Bates, and a song-and-dance routine performed by John Cryer. The soundtrack to this film is also rather catchy.

This is a charming and entertaining film, true to the tradition of screwball comedy of the '30's. If for nothing else, it is a relaxing break for those frazzled nerves of final exams. Oh, and the scenery of the east coast in the fall will remind you that, yes, there is grass and greenery under all that snow.



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