

Arts

dealers no big deal

by Mark Dillon

Dealers
Skouras Pictures
directed by Colin Bucksey

Just call the new film *Dealers* the British Wall Street.

Released in England last summer, *Dealers* has just made its way overseas after being carefully geared for American appeal. Concerning the fast life of the stock trading world, the film is about the very American dream of landing "the big deal," the risky venture that, if successful, would yield a return of millions of dollars.

That dream is personified in Daniel Pascoe (Paul McGann), the boywonder of London trade "dealers." And to further ensure the film's Stateside success, cast in the role of Anna Schuman, the newly appointed head trader at the firm, is American actress Rebecca de Mornay. With a boss like that, no wonder Pascoe has a stars and stripes flag on his desk!

The film contains all the situations we would expect in a melodrama of this sort: a dealer who runs up a \$100,000,000 trading

loss shoots himself; the manager of the Whitney Paine firm sniffs cocaine in the bathroom and Pascoe's girlfriend leaves him because he has become too obsessed with his work. But at least the cliches are executed convincingly with style for the first hour of the film.

When Whitney Paine finds itself faced with a huge deficit, it must find someone to pull it out of the fire. Bypassing Pascoe, who is successful but considered a risk for his reckless moves, the bank directors bring in an outsider — Schuman. Pascoe, his curiosity piqued, hires a private eye to investigate Schuman's personal life. It turns out she is sleeping with Frank Mallory, one of the bank directors. But de Mornay is not in the film just as something to look at. Rather, the film shows the role that sex appeal plays in the business world.

The film is most effective at its onset, with its cold and scheming characters. However, things disintegrate. The potentially fascinating aspects of the dealing game

are glossed over in favour of the growing romance between Pascoe and Schuman. The film's suspense is only fairly gripping.

On a hunch, Pascoe makes a huge investment in Treasury Bonds behind Schuman's back. If it pays off, Whitney Paine's future is secure. If not, both Pascoe and Schuman will be washed up. Gee, I wonder how it's going to end?

There are definite problems with the inconsistencies of the characters, especially in the ending. Although the characters are portrayed as cold and uncaring (there is ONE hot sex scene but the act is more a manifestation of their power struggle at the office), at the film's conclusion, Schuman shows up at Pascoe's private seaplane and they fly off into the sunset. The softening of Schuman's nature doesn't make much sense, having been thrown in in the interest of a happy ending. It comes off as just plain corny.

Although *Dealers* has its merits, most notably a mostly solid cast, it never achieves the sting it's looking for.



Daniel Pascoe (Paul McGann) and Anna Schuman (Rebecca de Mornay) in *dealers*.

hopper flashes back

by Mikel Koven

Flashback
Paramount Pictures
directed by Franco Amurri

If the most enthusiastic response Dennis Hopper can give about his new movie, *Flashback*, is that "it's fun," be sceptical. Hopper is known for both acting and directing in outlandish films; but is he becoming conservative about his work? The thought crossed my mind half-way through *Flashback*. By the end of the screening, I realized Hopper is right — the movie is fun and not much more.

Initially, I thought this movie might rank up there with *Repo-man* as a cult classic. It is fast and fun and more of an attack on '80s consumerism than the drugged-out '60s.

The first half of the film is almost perfect, Hopper chews up the scenery and delivers some great oneliners. Canadian Kieffer Sutherland plays straight-man with great success. With the

pressure off Sutherland to be a star, he demonstrates an ability before the camera that his *Brat Pack* films missed. Sutherland allows Hopper to be the star, and a formidable one at that.

The halfway point in films seems to be a magic threshold for American Cinema: a twilight zone where screenwriters find themselves lost in the woods (ironically, in *Flashback*, the turning point takes place in a forest). This movie unravels before our eyes. It quickly becomes a maudlin, quasi-serious look at the mythological '60s. We've seen this before. Although I was born at the tail end of that era, I feel like I've lived through it, via recent nostalgic cinema. Let sleeping decades lie.

The most compelling material in *Flashback* is Hopper's '60s perspective views on the '80s. The "stranger in a strange land" motif works, now that we're past those years and can laugh at them. But the film gets bogged down with communes, Viet Nam, Carole Kane and tie-dye. The two halves of the movie, the pre- and

post-forest scenes, seem like two different films. It is inconsistent and annoying.

A further inconsistency, but one that is pleasing, is the music. Rather than yet another Greatest Hits of the '60s soundtrack, the oldies are presented alongside newer material. Steppenwolf's "Born to Be Wild" is beside R.E.M.'s "End of the World." It is not a revolutionary soundtrack, but a gentle duplicity is created.

Flashback is not a great movie. In general, it is a good rule of thumb to avoid any movie released between Christmas and March. This is the studio's dumping ground for movies not good enough to compete for Academy Awards; the ones that are held over until the new year.

Flashback is one of these movies. Hopper is wonderful, Sutherland is not bad and Michael McKeon and Richard Masur give excellent cameo performances as renaissance radicals. But, unfortunately, the movie loses its gas and stalls. The lower your expectations are, the more fun you'll have.



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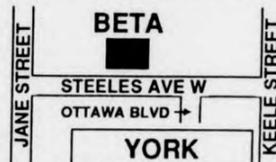
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