

# ENTERTAINMENT

## Shocker leaves viewers disturbed

**Extremities**  
by William Mastrosimone  
Phoenix Theatre, February 3 to 19

review by Gilbert Bouchard

My first reaction to *Extremities* wasn't a positive one. The poster advertising the play is a strange depiction - a jungle cat with cutout human eyes pasted over its face and some sort of twentyish flapper holding a claw hammer. And the ad copy describing the play as a "Drama of rape and revenge" didn't reassure me in the least.

I honestly expected some pseudo-leftist artsy-fartsy copout; you know, some vague intellectual harping on a hot topical issue like rape and violence against women.

I was wrong.

*Extremities* is good theatre. A strong, well-paced script, no bullshit, just honest emotions in a real setting with believable characters.

*Extremities* is the story of Marjorie (Jude Beny), a young unemployed woman sharing a house with her two friends Terry (Shelly Irvine), and Patricia (Jane Heather). Marjorie is attacked by a local low-life, Raul (Tom McCamus). Raul has been casing the girls for several weeks, stealing their mail, and learning all their moves and routines. During the assault, Marg manages to subdue Raul with a can of aerosol bug spray, and ties him up with her stereo headphones and her bathrobe belt.

Her problem is that she doesn't know what to do with him. Turn him over to the police? Maybe, but since she has no bruises and Raul didn't actually penetrate her, there is no physical proof of the attack. So it's her word against his.

Marg realizes that she has no case, and Raul exploits this weakness and threatens to come back after he's released to murder Marg and her friends.

Marg panics at the thought of Raul hounding her indefinitely, and decides to kill him and bury him "in the garden,



photo Angela Wheelock

Marjorie (Jude Beny) guards tamed assailant Raul (Tom McCamus).

between the tomatoes and the flower bed, the ground's softer there."

The play is so logical, and so smooth that you don't notice the plot shifts, as the story turns from a relatively normal 'slice-of-life' play to a rather ludicrous reversal of roles, where three normal, career-oriented women consider murdering a rapist that they have locked up in their fire place.

I could have used this review to comment on rape and violence, and even added my own pretentious interpretation on what I thought the playwright wanted to say, but I decided against it. This play is much more elegant on the subject than I

could ever be.

*Extremities* presents the audience with an issue and let's us make up our own little warped minds. There's no dogma, and no frills - no pompous trills.

In fact, by the end of the play I was more than a little shaken up, and I wasn't alone. The crowd trudged out more than a little drained and more than a little silent. The play succeeds on an emotional level as well as intellectually.

The production values of the Phoenix Theatre match the vitality of the script. The set was detailed and accurate, without being overpowering and gawdy (a represen-

tation of the women's bungalow complete with flaking paint, dirty wallpaper and family snapshots on the fireplace). You get the feeling that this could very well be the real living room-kitchen of an actual group of working women.

Come to think of it, there's nothing I didn't really like about this production. The acting was above reproach. The actors meshed well together with good cast interaction and no scene stealing or grandstanding by any one individual. Stage direction, lighting, costumes and make up were as unobtrusive and natural as you could ask for.

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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR GENEVIÈVE SALBAING



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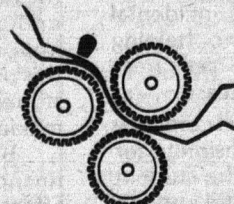
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