

Middle Age Crazy 'should be buried'

by Frank McGinn

A movie has no business being based on a song, look what became of *Ode to Billy Joe*, and *Middle Age Crazy*, which claims as its inspiration a sentimental ballad of that name by the immortal Sonny Throckmorton, carries the proof of this axiom to the universal power of n. A pedestrian combination of sex comedy, sex commentary and juke box romance, it arrives on the screen stillborn and should be buried quickly, in unhallowed ground.

Structurally, *Middle Age Crazy* owes much to Blake Edwards' successful wisp, "10", and to James Thurber's "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty". Like "10", and probably like a thousand other movies headed our way, given Hollywood's uncanny ability to recognize a good thing after 20 million people have seen it, its theme is the agony of male menopause, or how to have fun after forty. And like the perennial Thurber short story, its tech-

nique is to contrast the hero's vivid fantasies with his humdrum, actual life.

Bruce Dern stars as the man who appears to have everything, if health, wealth and a lusty wife who looks very much like Ann-Margaret are anything to go by, and yet is

the daddy", or shoulder responsibility. He counters it mainly by dreaming of tooling down the road in a Porsche 298, although telling people where to go also figures prominently. And, of course, there is the tantalizing young lovely for whom he yearns, a vibrant

So eventually he grows as tired of his noisy, trite family and gormless business partner as we in the audience have become, chucks it all and pursues his secret life openly. He gets the car, gets the girl, has some laughs, gets depressed because it's too open and free and goes back to old life and wife. Virtue prevails, love conquers all and work is better than fun. End of story.

Part of the reason all this is such a non-event is that Bruce Dern and Ann-Margaret together generate about as much electricity as an apple wired to an orange. Neither of them is a conventionally bad or awkward actor, but their plodding sincerity is dull and heavy. Ann-Margaret's role is negligible at best, a hearty, good ole girl who is either orgasming or arguing, and she plays it so straight that you tend to forget she is there. And in the pivotal role of the comically perturbed husband, Bruce Dern is, well, miscast. He is simply not a likeable enough presence to hold together a romantic comedy.

He acts too much, instead of just breezing along. He can cry, rage and frighten small children with the best of them but he hasn't the centre to create a leading role and I suggest, for the common good, that he stick to peripheral characters in the future. He makes a great secondary character, but a poor star.

Mainly, however, *Middle Age Crazy* is just a lousy script (although I'm sure it was a lovely song, Sonny Throckmorton can do no wrong in my books), one which Tracy and Hepburn couldn't have redeemed. The characters are nothing more than a composite of their cliched problems, the satire is banal and obvious and the fantasy sequences seem to have been based on Coke commercials, only they are not as catchy. The movie tries to create a broad base of appeal by having Lisa Del Bello sing Burt Bacharach originals but it only half makes it: the product is as middle aged as twin beds but about as wild and crazy as doing your homework on time.



sorely disturbed. His anxiety seems to be rooted in the large fuss that everyone is making over his turning forty, and in his reluctance to "be

symbol of spiritual freedom and, on closer examination, a Dallas Cowgirl even. (What more can a man require of a woman?)

A Little Crazy But Entertaining

by Michael McCarthy

Middle Age Crazy (Scotia Square, Penhorn 2) provides a forum for the generally unevincing rebelliousness of an oppressed minority. Their spokesman is Bobby Lee Burnett (Bruce Dern)—dissatisfied with the work he has to do, the clothes he's expected to wear, the role he's pushed into in his family. Ergo, he junks it all—the family, the job, the social order—trades his car in on a Porsche and drives off to Dallas to have a fling with a Dallas Cowgirl (a cheerleader for a professional football team, for those of you who are uninitiated to the NFL).

Sounds like your average disgruntled youth who throws off responsibility and hits the road to "find himself", or just have a good time, right? Sure. Who could blame him? The only problem is, Bobby Lee Burnett has just turned 40, and older people aren't supposed to do this sort of thing. They're sellouts, right? Cashed in their freedom and ideals for money, material possessions and someone they can have sex with regularly. They made their choice, and now they just fade away into bourgeois complacency. I mean, can you imagine your father ditching his job and family and running off with a cheerleader?

Well, maybe you'd better start imagining. Things get pretty boring after twenty years of repetition. It's not easy to accept a role of over the hill, predictable, incapable of anything new or exciting.

You go "Middle Age Crazy".

Burnett exhibits the first symptoms just after his birthday. People keep asking him the Question that haunts middle-aged people: "Have you seen a doctor, lately?" (It's only a matter of time, you know.) He resents having to be a father confessor to his wife, son, mother, and sister. He feels threatened by young guys in trendy clothes and sports cars.

Next, he goes into a Walter Mitty-ish world where he fantasizes himself giving the finger to cops he speeds by, picks up beautiful girls with ease (including his son's girlfriend), or giving a rousing and hilarious address to a graduating class which demythologizes the old "you are the future" schtick. The future, he says, is baggy tits, beer, and T.V. The students aren't the future, and wouldn't want to be. The future is the shits. The future is their parents, and why would anyone want to be like them? (Look at your own, and think about it).

Burnett then makes the break. He gets a Porsche, a new set of clothes, kisses off his clientele, and chases around after a Dallas Cowgirl—whom he catches. He cuts all the strings. Unfortunately, he finds the strings were all that were holding him upright. He's got nothing without them. He goes back to his wife, a little freer, but presumably with most of his restlessness out of his system.

Middle Age Crazy is very

funny, until the end when you realize it's true, that eventually you can no longer say "well, Things will be different tomorrow (or next year . . .), because tomorrow is here and you know damn well you're trapped in one place. Bruce

Dern, who finally gets to play someone nearly normal, finds his love for his wife (Ann-Margaret, who shows a surprisingly wide range of emotions) balances out the shit. Personally, I think the movie shows Pete Townshend

was right when he wrote "I hope I die before I get old." In all, though, the movie was entertaining and often very funny, while being more than just entertainment and a comedy.

CKDU - Gazette Trivia Quiz

by Kimrilda df.

1. Who wrote the song "Leaves That Are Green"?
2. Who is the late lead singer of AC/DC?
3. Serge Fiori and Michel Normandeau are in what Québec group?
4. Who is jazz's Ms. Fitzgerald?
5. What album by The Who appeared in 1973?
6. What Toronto based musician sings about Soviet Jewellery and the Moscow Drug Club?
7. On what album does the song "Blue Jay Way" appear?
8. Nickname of Jeff Baxter from Steely Dan and the Doobies?
9. What instrument does Julian Bream play?
10. Who is Boston's lead singer?
11. What do Alan Parsons and Issac Assimov have in Common?
12. Who wrote "The Firebird"?
13. What is Elvis Presley's middle name?
14. Who does Kathi McDonald sing back up for?
15. His big break came in 1951 with "3 O'Clock Blues". Who is he?

In order to win the album "Movin' " by Minglewood Band, print your name, telephone number and the quiz answers on a piece of paper and submit to the CKDU offices on the fourth floor S.U.B. of the Gazette offices on the third floor S.U.B. Winners and quiz answers will be aired on CKDU at 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday and printed in the next issue of the Gazette. For further contest regulations, visit the Gazette or CKDU offices.

Answers to Trivia Quiz No. 1:

1. T Rex.
2. Feb. 3, 1959
3. Miles Davis
4. Stevie Wonder
5. Antonin Dvorjak
6. New York
7. Satin Green Shutters
8. Genesis
9. Django Rienhardt
10. Kris Kristofferson and Fred Foster
11. Verdi
12. The Boomtown Rats
13. Billie Holiday
14. The Doors
15. Blue Oyster Cult