

Just too bad to Bear

by Sandy MacKay

Want to save yourself some money? Here's a thought. Under no circumstances should you go see *The Bear*. It's a new movie playing at the Park Lane Cinema and it is pathetic.

The setting is the Canadian Rockies, in 1885. The movie opens with footage of the mountains. That is the high point of the movie. The rest is down mountain, not just down hill.

Enter the hero, a bear cub that sounds like a whiny little boy. As its mother digs under a tree after a beehive, her work dislodges a few rocks. One big rock falls on top of Mama Bear's head, and kills her instantly. A sadder scene was never seen since *Bambi*.

One may expect a bit of reality to creep into the movie at this point. One expects the cub to have to save the corpse of its mother from marauding coyotes or maybe savage buzzards. The little thing scurries around, sleeps with the dead form, and then makes its way off into the wide world.

Meanwhile, in another part of the world, two evil trappers shoot a giant male bear in the shoulder. He is wounded, and this extab-

lishes who is the antagonist and who is the protagonist. One evil trapper, upon finding his horse badly mauled, screams to the forest "I swear I'll kill you" and his echo calls back, menacingly, "kill you ... kill you ... kill you ..."

The hero (that is, the cub) sees the giant male. Next comes the age old love story. Cub sees bear, bear growls at cub, cub scurries off. Bear lies in mud to cool wound, cub sneaks up, licks the wound on the bear's shoulder. A fast friendship is made.

At this point in the movie, the person behind me bet her friend ten bucks that the bear would be so hungry that it would eat the cub. Unfortunately, these bears never read about Darwin.

The trappers eventually think they have the giant bear cornered. The young cocky trapper abandons his lookout to get some water. He washes his head, reaches back for his canteen, and who is there, ready to eat this stupid trapper, but our furry furious friend, the bear! Of course, the bear is wounded, a hunted yet gentle creature, so instead of killing this evil human, the bear simply roars until it feels it has roared enough to make the trapper learn his lesson.

The bear ambles away. The trapper runs back to his post, grabs his ominous bear-killing rifle and prepares to shoot, but his hand is stayed by mercy. He shoos the bear away, and when his partner arrives ready to shoot the slow-fleeing bear, the cocky young trapper-turned-environmentalist stays his hand too.

The end of the movie is the absolute cinematic peak of contrived crapola. The cub meets up with the real demon of the woods, a cougar. (Everyone knows cougars have no mercy.) The cub gets cornered by the hungry cougar, and I'll bet my best wooly socks that you can't guess what happens next. Does the cub live to see its first hibernation? Of course.

At the end of *The Bear*, a caption reads "The greatest thrill is not to kill, but to let live." This film was apparently made by some people who are concerned that we are indiscriminately killing off the wildlife on this planet. They are right. The problem is that they are not going to garner any support for their cause whatsoever by making a terribly sappy movie. Their cause would be furthered better had they created a film depicting the horrors of poaching; elephants with their faces cut off, tusks stripped and their huge bodies left to rot.

The Bear is just too sentimental to be real. Some clever beggar once said "We sentimentalize things when we attribute them more tenderness than God has given them." So, save your cash.



Hey Mia ... like my new film?

Woody's new triumph

by Meredith Usher

This is not going to be an average movie review, because *Crimes and Misdemeanors* is not a typical Woody Allen film.

There is no reason to recount the plot, as it would only trivialize the well-drawn characters and the predicaments they face. Suffice it to say that *Crimes and Misdemeanors* can most simply be described as *Fatal Attraction* meets *Hannah and Her Sisters* filtered through Allen's startlingly new sense of cold reality.

This is not to suggest a lack of humour here, but the one-liners do ring with a desperation never before seen in Allen's previous entries. Allen himself is the main source of the humour, and he delivers some classics. But the rest of the film is quite serious.

One character performs a self-

examination worthy of Ingmar Bergman (one of Allen's main cinematic influences). This character is mesmerizingly portrayed by Martin Landau, an Oscar nominee last year for his supporting role in *Tucker*. Landau tops that performance here and his perfect casting is representative of the rest of the cast, including great turns by Alan Alda, and Sam Waterston.

Other aspects of the film are typical of Allen's attention to atmosphere, especially the appropriately gloomy cinematography by Bergman alumni Sven Nyqvist, and as always, a great musical score.

Perhaps it is best, though, to let Woody have the last word:

"It's about love, reality, faith, delusion, success, failure, good and evil — it's also about what makes us laugh."

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Not to pass judgement but...

Look who's Travolting

by Stephen Jones

The romantic comedy *Look Who's Talking* takes a simple but unique approach to the love relationship between the two main characters, Molly (Kirstie Alley) and James (John Travolta). Molly, a single accountant, becomes pregnant after an affair with a wealthy married client, and is left to raise her son, Mikey, alone. The device which makes the film different is the fact that Mikey is given the voice of Bruce Willis, and relates his thoughts from the moment of conception onward.

The shock of finding the father of her baby with another woman induces Molly's labour on a busy New York street, and James is the driver of the taxi which she flags down to rush her to the hospital. After the birth of Mikey, James



becomes Molly's babysitter and Mikey's father figure. A short stint at single motherhood tells Molly she needs to find a father for the unassuming Mikey. The person who makes Mikey happiest is James, the down-to-earth, sensitive cabbie/babysitter. He is the only prospective partner for Molly in the film who isn't seeing a psychologist about some trivial personal hang-up. James provides a refreshing alternative to the uptight and picky men Molly dates in her search for a husband, because he leads an uncompli-

cated and happy life.

Giving Mikey a point of view and Bruce Willis' timing and delivery makes for some great comedy. Mikey screams in horror in the delivery room when the first fellow human being he encounters is Molly's large-nosed, bespectacled doctor, who peers at him from behind a mask and for some reason insists on slapping him on the behind. The children who play with Mikey at his different ages have extremely expressive faces and laid-back dispositions which complement the casting of Willis in the part.

Look Who's Talking is a comedy worth seeing for its outlook, that love should be seen as simply as Mikey views it; by what instinctively makes someone happy. By judging things in this way, Mikey knows exactly who's best for both James and Molly.