

# REEL REVIEWS

by William Claire

The only advantage Mr. Mom has over your average, run-of-the-mill TV-sitcom is it doesn't have commercials. The bad news is a commercial would be a good excuse to leave.

Mr. Mom takes advantage of the increasing numbers of mothers in the workplace and of the high profiles of Teri Garr and Michael Keaton to create a story about a daddy who loses his job and a mommy who goes to work.

With all the plot logic of a comic book, this film might well have been called *Blondie and Dagwood Switch Roles*.

The biggest disappointment in Mr. Mom is the exploitation of Garr and Keaton. Garr, an accomplished actress who interned with Francis Coppola's Geotrope Reperatory Company (*The Conversation*), has spent a sizeable chunk of her career playing a middle-class mother (*Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *The Black Stallion*, *The Black Stallion Returns*).

Her performances as Michael Dorsey's friend in *Tootsie* and as a con artist in the *The Sting II* showed she is capable of more challenging roles. But the producers of Mr. Mom chose to play it safe and Garr is a middle-class mom again.

Keaton, who made a smash debut as the hyperactive go-get-'em morgue attendant in *Night Shift*, was potentially perfect for the role of the harried house-husband who must deal with the kids (three) and the housekeeping chores.

However, toned down from his high-energy first performance, Keaton is given little opportunity to display his special talents. This oversight is a shame. For my money, Keaton has more comic potential than the highly over-rated Eddie Murphy (*48 HRS.*, *Trading Places*).

And the kids. Another imitation, this time hoping to cash in on the recent spate of movies with youngsters carrying major portions of the film: *E.T.* -- *The Extraterrestrial*, *Poltergeist*, *Shoot The Moon*, *The Shining*, *Kramer vs. Kramer*.

In trying to impinge on Steven Spielberg's territory, director Stan Dragoti has made a big mistake. Spielberg is an acknowledged director of children, coaxing intimate performances from them (*Close Encounters*, *E.T.*, *Poltergeist*).

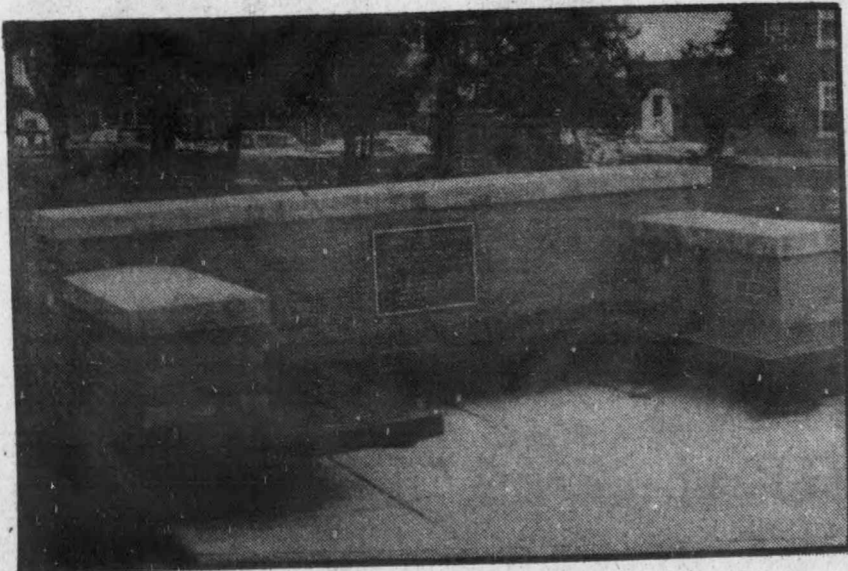
Mr. Mom demonstrates Dragoti is not a whiz with kids. A former advertising executive, Dragoti has churned out a trio of cute, socially acceptable, cardboard kids, commenting in adult ways with precocious dialogue.

In some instances, unreality is okay, like in cartoons with no pretensions of being serious. Mr. Mom unfortunately, also tries to have 'a message', complete with parallel plots where each parent superficially tries to cope with the other's role.

The predictably and artificiality of the ploy, however, prevents these sequences from carrying any weight. Garr (*Mrs. Dad*) is seduced by her lascivious boss (*Martin Mull*); Keaton (*Mr. Mom*) is the target of the neighbourhood divorcee-vamp (*Ann Jillian*).

Mr. Mom is an archtypical example of the movie industry combining various elements from different movies with saleable actors, hoping to cash in on what it perceives as 'what the people want to see'.

Sorry boys. Not this time.



## Voyage to Cocos Island

by Alan Doerkson  
'All right!' exclaimed the mustached musician. 'Let's hear it for the Coral Reefers!'

There was an enthusiastic round of applause through the lounge of the *Treasure Trove*. At one table near the stage sat a teenage girl and two friends.

'Isn't he wonderful?' she gushed. 'I think he's the greatest!'

'Why don't you make a request?' suggested one of her friends, a young sailor named Sam Durante.

'What? Are you kidding?' Before she knew it, Freebie Bates, her other friend, had taken the girl's hand and was waving it in the air.

'Hey Jimmy, this girl's got a song she wants you to

play! he yelled out. The girl, whose name was Maria del Ray, struggled to escape, and blushed voluminously. Meanwhile, the singer had taken notice.

'Oh yeah? What does she want to hear?' he responded.

Eager to get herself out of the awkward situation, Maria called out, 'Margaritaville!'

The musician cued up the band and started an energetic rendition of his number one hit. Maria was enthralled, and gazed starry-eyed at the star, while her two friends looked on in amusement.

After the show, Maria somehow got up the nerve to approach the singer and ask him to autograph her

copy of his latest album.

'My pleasure,' he replied, and scribbled 'Jimmy Buffet' somewhere over the map of China. 'By the way, you're the prettiest girl I've seen in this bar tonight. What's your name?'

Maria blushed again, but told him in a soft voice.

'No kidding,' replied the musician. 'I know a place in L.A. named after you! he joked.

'That's what everyone says,' Maria smiled shyly. 'It's been great to meet you.' With that, she abruptly turned and ran off.

Out on the street, Maria rejoined her friends, who she proudly showed the autographed album.

(continued next issue)



Coke is it!

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