

'Thieves' doesn't steal money

by Jeff Round

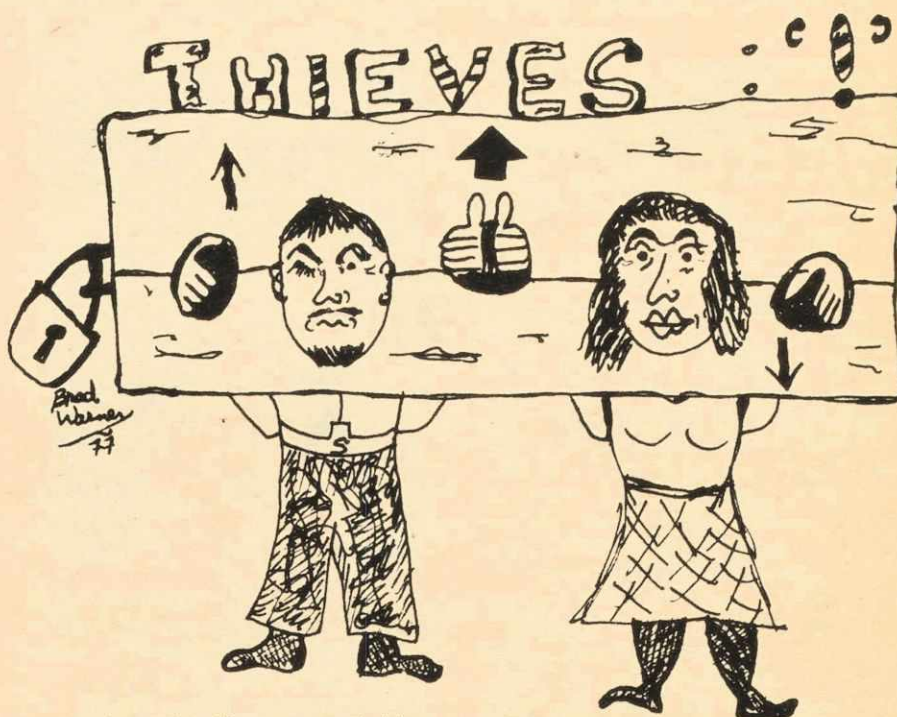
Director John Berry's film, **Thieves**, is a bit of a rarity these days as categories go. No ghosts, ghouls, gonorrhoea, burning buildings, fake sharks or simulated sex, it is quite simply a romantic comedy about real people. In this light the unfortunate fact that the film is not a particularly good one seems to be only an incidental misfortune. But I state emphatically that the film's failure is not due to its lacking any and all of the aforementioned desirables of filmdom. The reason lies elsewhere.

Thieves is the story of an apartment-dwelling couple - Marlo Thomas and Charles Grodin - who somehow have grown apart. Originally they both came from the same low-class neighbourhood where they did crazy things together, fell in love and got married. They even had the same dream once - to become teachers and come back to the old neighbourhood to help make things better. It is now a dozen years later. They are both teachers. He teaches a school of upper-crust, french-spouting flag-wavers who have inherited the expensive neuroses of their parents; she teaches a school of flag-stealing kids from the slums, some of whom can barely speak English, and who have inherited nothing but poverty. She still believes in the old dreams; he has left them behind. She still likes to play games like waking up in the night and pretending she doesn't

know who he is; he feels that they are both too old for such foolishness. Without fully realizing it they have run smack into an identity crisis at middle age. They don't know who they are except that they are "this couple with this coffee table living in this apartment expected over at this other couple's home next Friday for supper." There is an unspoken need to reaffirm their existence outside of their own relationship.

Without telling him she leaves and files for divorce. This precipitates his identity crisis. He goes back to his old neighbourhood where he eulogizes all the heroes of his youth, recreates the old acts of daring bravado and craziness, and finds that the past "beat the crap out of him." Meanwhile, she is intending to have an abortion without having told her husband that she was pregnant.

The author does seem to have a fondness in his heart for these two likeable, but mixed-up kids, however, he gives them little to do or say that really seems worth the effort. Marlo Thomas and Charles Grodin are both comfortably at ease in their roles, but lack the extra amount of vitality needed to sustain an often uninteresting script. Only Irwin Corey (you remember him, of course . . . he was the man who explained to the world how they got the caramel inside the Caramilk bars), as Marlo Thomas's father, Joe, a deaf, obnoxious, irascible incorrigible old taxi driver with a zeal for life that far outstrips his 78



years, gives the film any real drive and vitality. For this is what the film lacks - a driving force to sustain its inherent lack of animation. Herb Gardner's play, **Thieves**, is a clever social-satire. Gardner, in adapting the screenplay from his original stageplay, has turned much of his narrative dialogue into action sequences. But the action is too flimsy to support the film. There are several scenes that are quite excellent, but these seem to have been lifted verbatim from the play. Using these central episodes as the core of the film Gardner has tried to

give it a unity using weaker connecting sequences that fail to support the film's structure and interest in the long run.

In case anyone has been left wondering, the thieves of the story are the little things and the one big thing - time - that steal the joy from life. The way in which Joe steals from the thieves to give something back to his daughter is one of the more delightful moments in the film. All in all, the story does have a happy ending, and if nothing else it might well be worth the \$3.25 just for that.

Entertainment in the SUB

Now that term papers and exams are foremost in every dedicated Dal students' mind, regular weekend programming be terminated. However, starting April 23, summer entertainment will begin in the Green Room. On Saturday, April 30 the popular Irish duo, FINNEGAN, will be appearing in the McInnes Room.

Entertainment will be scheduled weekly, on Saturday nights, with Dyna-Crown Sound disco on alternating weekends beginning May

7. Dyna-Crown will also be spinning their discs on several Friday nights which will be announced via the S.U.B. Marquee.

Starting the first Sunday in June, Sunday movie at the S.U.B. will recommence and will feature a selection of feature box office attractions each week until the school year begins. A list of movies will be circulated as soon as all bookings are confirmed. Movie times will be 7:30 pm and the price will be \$1.50 and \$2.00.

Arabian night --

On Thursday April 28, the Dalhousie Arab Students Society will present an evening of middle-eastern entertainment. The event will include belly-dancing, a home-cooked Arabian meal, Eastern music, handicraft display, fashion show, and a dance combining both

Western and Eastern melodies.

Tickets for this unique entertainment are only \$3.00 and may be obtained from 1391 Seymour Street, Room 621, or at the S.U.B. Enquiry Desk. For further information call 424-6561.

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