

Entertainment

Recently released films reviewed

Head Office
Tri-Star Pictures
Rialto

review by Dean Bennett

Hollywood has failed to kick the new year off in style as this first weekend saw the opening of *Head Office* — a film that tries to be a light comedy and a serious social commentary, but fails miserably on both levels.

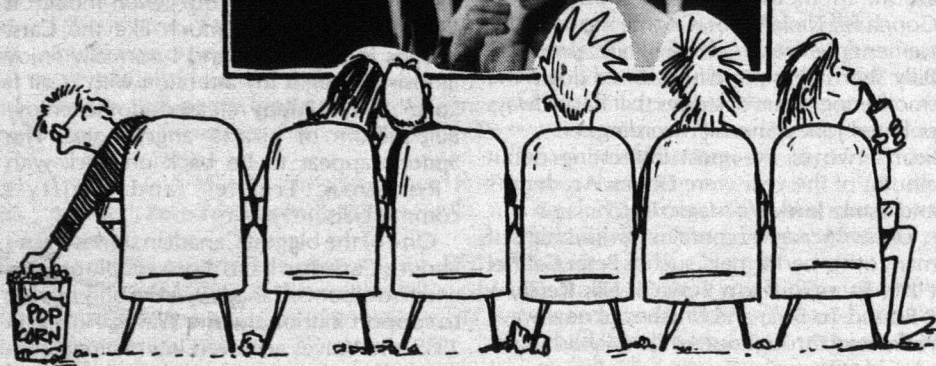
Head Office is the story of Jack Issel (Judge Reinhold). Jack is a laid-back business student who, upon graduation, is hired to work for INC, the world's most powerful company and one that makes everything from ladies' hair remover to nuclear warheads. What Jack doesn't realize is that he has been hired to be used as a pawn in a little squeeze play INC is forcing on Jack's father, the senator.

Once at INC, Jack learns firsthand about the cutthroat world of big business. The plot revolves around whether he will become one of the amoral robots in blue suits and ties or whether he will rise above them.

Head Office is trying to make a comment on the moral depravity that currently ails American business, but it wields its satire with all the delicacy of a blunt instrument.

On his first day on the job, Jack is escorted by fellow employee Max Landsberger (Richard Masur). Throughout the day Max barrages the greenhorn with cute aphorisms like: "Never make a decision. The minute you do you're screwed." or "Never volunteer, never contact, never talk to anyone unless you absolutely have to". Also, later in the movie, Jane the bitchy woman executive (played by Jane Seymour) delivers a pithy monologue on how power corrupts the best of intentions. It would have been nice if this film did a better job of showing us these problems rather than just telling us about them.

The cast are a bunch of cardboard cutouts



A night at the movies.

with few distinguishing characteristics. In addition, I don't really understand why Rick Moranis and Danny DeVito are given top billing because both are gone before the movie is twenty minutes old.

The comedy is rarely comic in this film. Like the satire, it also wields too heavy and obvious a blow. One example of this is when DeVito is unceremoniously canned and is later seen falling past a window on his way to an undignified death — face down in a fountain forty floors below. In another scene Jack wanders by an office where the previous occupant has just hung himself. Neither of

these scenes is particularly funny and, more disturbingly, *Head Office* is treating the very real problem of executive stress in a morbidly glib fashion.

Head Office, a film about corporations by corporations, is an example of how films are now packaged like other consumer products. The film fits a specific pattern: light comedy, shallow social message, romance between the lead and some woman, and an exciting action finish complete with gunfire.

Head Office is slickly packaged, appealing to the lowest common denominator, offensive to few but appealing to none.

Hail Mary
Princess Theatre

review by Gilbert Bouchard

Godard's *Hail Mary* should be picketed, but for artistic reasons.

At the screening I sat through (in great pain) people were getting up and walking out an hour into the movie, not as a result of theological outrage, but because of boredom.

To be blunt, the movie is a snore. It's not all that cinematically interesting, has no real narrative, and is chockfull of second-rate theology.

The movie shows potential early on when it zeroes in on a young innocent Mary and a loutish uneducated Joseph coming to grips with a miraculous pregnancy.

But interesting and strong themes like predestination, Christian faith, and the will of God forcing its designs upon Joseph and Mary, get lost in a flurry of disjointed images, second string philosophy, and nudie scenes.

It can be done. Norman Jewison's *Agnes of God* treated an almost identical subject matter and theme (a virginal innocent nun is impregnated by God) and produced a sharp in-focus film, with a vibrant story, and clean easy theology. In *Agnes* the characters toss themselves into biblical and religious debate with clear and defined terms, while *Hail Mary*'s protagonists talk about ants and toss themselves into endless (meaningless) monologues, and bouts of bad poetry.

It's long, it's pretentious, and if it wasn't for the unholy stink being raised by certain religious zealots in town, the movie would have died the slow painful death it deserved.

Whether or not the movie is blasphemous I'm not going to debate, that I'll leave to the priests. However, I will state that *Hail Mary* is certainly a bad film, and that is a far worse sin.

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