

Dangerfield cops out in *Easy Money*

by Ken Burke

Monty Capuletti (Rodney Dangerfield) is a funny guy, but he's also what you'd call a terminal mess. His face looks like a cross between Marty Feldman and a nervous wombat, and, as his mother-in-law puts it, his "whole body is bloodshot." That's why Monty belongs in a movie like *Easy Money*. Like Monty, the movie's funny, but it's almost as much a mess as he is in parts.

For Rodney Dangerfield's first real starring film role (he appeared in 1981's *Caddyshack*) Dangerfield picked an agreeably safe star vehicle. Surrounded by solid but unrecognizable character actors like Joe Pesci as Monty's best friend Nicky, Dangerfield has the spotlight throughout the film. The only exception is a comic subplot involving his Puerto Rican son-in-law Julio (Taylor Negron) and his attempts to win back Capuletti's daughter (actually to consummate their marriage).

Even the premise of the movie sets the viewer up for a star vehicle. The idea that the smoking, drinking, gambling, overweight Monty has to reform himself completely in one year in order to receive his mother-in-law's vast fortune is a good point to start from, but Dangerfield's team of writers and director James Signorelli don't expand on it. Instead, the premise is just used for connecting the different skits.

In fact Dangerfield shows just how sharp he can be in this movie by managing to glue the plot together. In just about every scene there's one or two big laughs all due to him. The script has some sharp lines, but on the whole the good lines come quarterly amidst scads of medium to okay Dangerfield lines. He carries the film because of his nervous, over-weight, over-wrought, over-everything body and frantic face. For a stand-up comedian, Dangerfield does a good job at the tricky role of physical comedy.

The movie also plays around with stereotypes of Italians and Puerto Ricans, but is especially troublesome in dealing with

Monty's obvious racism. He disapproves of his son-in-law as strongly as his mother-in-law disapproves of him, even though Julio is shown to be completely committed to his daughter. There is also an exchange of tacky Italian - Puerto Ricans-with-musicboxes jokes.

Despite this, and the film's failure to generate much feeling for important characters such as his wife or his best friend, Dangerfield is worth seeing. He is a comedian in direct descent from another famous middle-aged harried (sometimes) family man with a sharp tongue - W.C. Fields. The two seem to share the same healthy taste for indulgence, although W.C. was never able to keep a store of joints in a bathroom "Roach Motel" as Monty does here. With the right film script, if he decides to attempt a challenge and work with a half-decent director, Dan-



Rodney Dangerfield

gerfield could make a damn funny movie. But right now, he's just going for the *Easy Money*.

Drivers kick off autumn at the Cohn

This weekend marks the beginning of *Autumn at the Cohn*; the fall series of events presented by Dalhousie Cultural Activities. For those of you who are new to Dalhousie the *Rebecca Cohn Auditorium* is this city's centre for artistic and entertainment events. The big rock, pop, and soul acts usually play the Metro Centre or the Misty Moon where high volume ticket sales or boozin' and boogin' are the main concern. When good acoustics or audience/artist intimacy are particularly important, the Cohn's the place where things happen.

As usual, they are offering a broad variety of events ranging from carefully selected films (new and classics) to drama, concerts, and art shows.

Friday (Sept. 9 at 8 pm) **The Drivers** roll into town and onto the Cohn Stage. Originally from Sussex England the band has

been operating out of Toronto and are probably best known for their single **Tears on Your Anorak**. Tickets are \$7.50 and \$6.00 and are available at the Dalhousie Arts Centre Box Office.

Sunday (Sept. 11 at 8 pm) the Fall Film Series also gets under way with **Taxi Driver**, directed by Martin Scorsese and starring Robert DeNiro. You may have caught a butchered version on commercial T.V. a year or so back but this is the real thing - the way the artists who created it meant it to be.

You can pick up a schedule of upcoming events at the Arts Centre (and I suggest you do) but watch for special activities that may suddenly appear as the year wears on.

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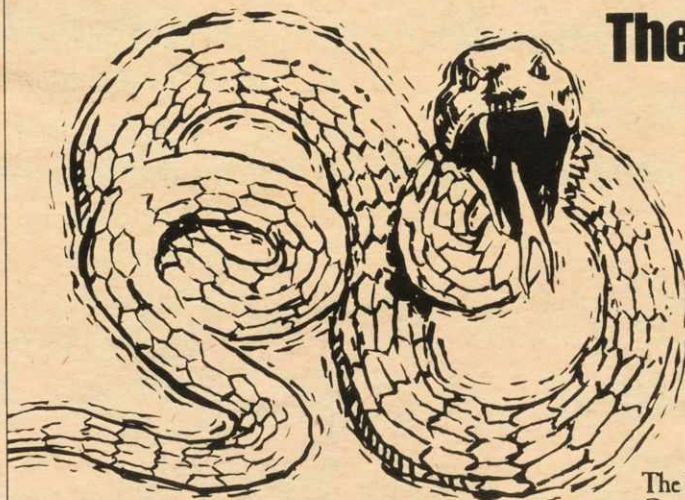


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