

# Mix a touch of Hitchcock with a dash of Freud and you still get a lousy film

by Anthony Pizzari

## FILM

**Final Analysis**  
 directed by Phil Jourman  
 starring Richard Gere and Kim Basinger  
 produced by Warner Brothers

How can you make a psychological film interesting? The makers of *Final Analysis* seem to think the answer is to get Sigmund Freud to write the script and Alfred Hitchcock to direct it. Unfortunately, *Final Analysis*, like the bulk of modern Hollywood films, is creatively bankrupt.

What else is new? Richard Gere plays a psychologist who gets involved with the sister of one of his patients, Heather Evans (Kim Basinger). Evans is married to a gangster who abuses her; to get out of the marriage, she kills him.

From here, we go on a layperson's guided trip through the catacombs of the mind to discover how "Evil and Dark" human beings are. Ooooh.

Is director Phil Jourman paying some kind of "homage" to Hitchcock and Freud? I don't think so. He uses Hitchcock's techniques in a very superficial way. The spiral staircase of *Vertigo*, for instance, makes a guest appearance in the middle of *Final Analysis*, not because it helps develop plot or character, but because

it's "a really cool shot." Suspense is not built in this film, there are only surprises in character development.

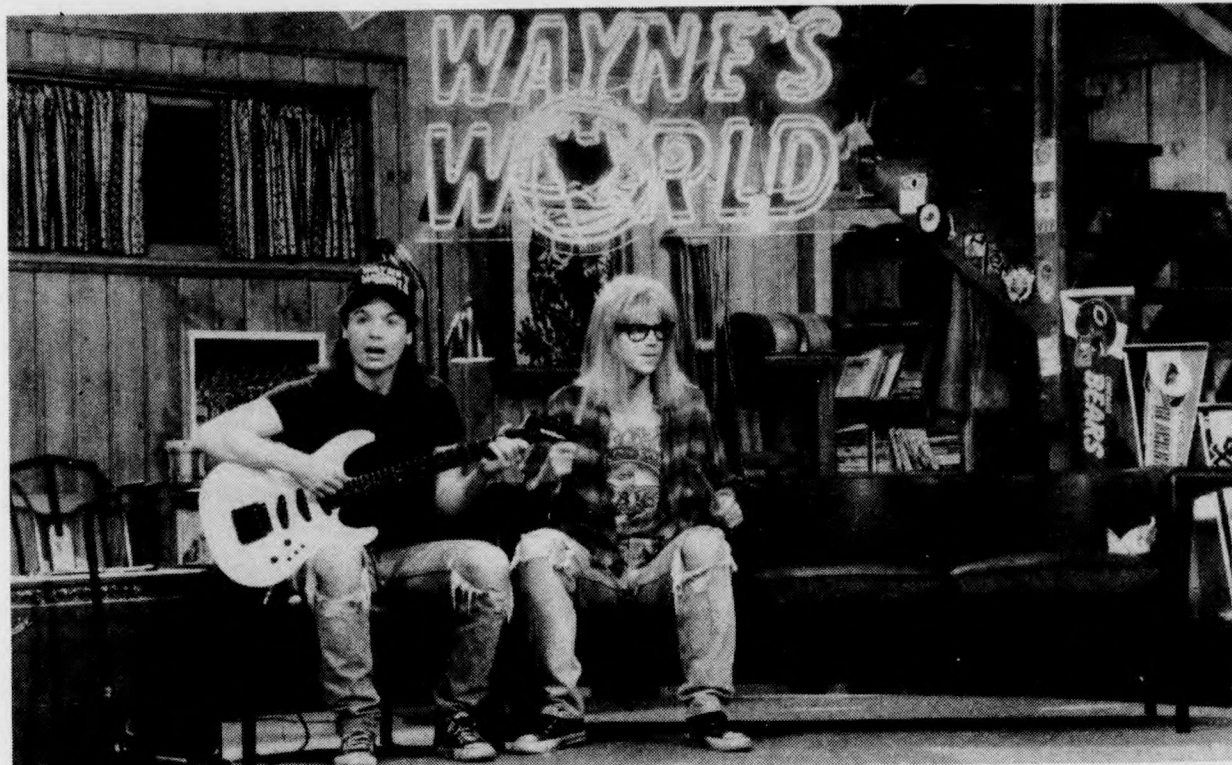
What about Freud? Well, the script "investigates" nothing. Freud appears only to give to an otherwise banal plot "motivation," and *Final Analysis* the pretense of being a psychological thriller. Perhaps Jourman senses the emptiness of American cinema and is looking to the past as a way out.

*Final Analysis* is a piece of intellectual pap, and an insult to Alfred Hitchcock. It is symptomatic of all that is wrong with mainstream Hollywood: torn between copying the past and trying to anticipate the future.

But, hey — the photography is excellent, Kim Basinger is extremely good looking and Richard Gere is super-handsome. *Final Analysis* is sure to be a box office success.



Richard Gere and Kim Basinger look prettily at each other in Phil Jourman's *Final Analysis*. Jourman swiped a few ideas from a great filmmaker and the father of psychiatry, but he still couldn't come up with a decent movie.



This photo is funny...NOT! Wayne's World, the sketch this photo is taken from is funny...NOT! Saturday Night Live, the television show from which the sketch from which this photo was taken is funny...NOT! If you hear this faux joke often enough, do you think you'll get sick of it and want something with more comic substance? Probably...NOT!

## Catchphrase culture spawns unfunny jokes

by Ira Nayman

George Bush is a great American President...NOT!

*Saturday Night Live* is an innovative, hilarious hour and a half of original comedy...NOT!

Nuclear is the energy source of the future...NOT!

This joke is funny...NOT!

You don't have to watch *Saturday Night Live* to be thoroughly sick of people making a statement, pausing a second or two and negating it with the word "not." This catchphrase has caught on with a force that could scarcely be credited; consider yourself lucky if you hear it less than a dozen times a day.

Not only is the joke constantly repeated in normal social intercourse, but I have personally witnessed intelligent, educated people reduced to tears by it. And the laughter seems to grow with each telling, not diminish.

Why do I not like it (aside from the fact that it is an obvious plug for *Wayne's World: The Movie*, and most people don't even realize they've been coopted)? The joke goes against ev-

## ANALYSIS

Not! Not! Not! Not! Not! Not only is this not a joke in any real sense, but it has ominous implications for human interaction.

everything I, as a person who has written humour professionally in the past and would like to make a career of doing so in the future, believe in.

A major element of humour is irony, where one thing is said but another is implied. The difference usually manifests itself in the tone in which the joke is delivered. In a medium like television, where much of the humour is verbal, the irony is often inherent in the way lines are delivered.

Using the term "not" at the end of a statement is a way of making the irony, which is usually implicit, explicit; it is, in effect, a way of making a joke idiot-proof. There is no way of not getting the joke, because it contains no subtlety. As an audience member, I like being given a little more credit for intelligence (although I may be in the minority in this regard).

It's also lazy writing. Why develop

a clever situation or a complex allegory when you can make fun of any idea by adding a single word to it?

I often worry about the declining standard of humour, fueled by the television laugh track and news soundbites, in our society. The popularity of catchphrases suggests that something other than the traditional "shock of recognition" is going on.

If television has become our temple, catchphrases are surely our catechism. People laugh at them, not because they are necessarily intrinsically funny, but because they become a shared language, a simple standard by which to determine one's hipness. If you aren't in on the joke, you haven't seen the right programme; if you haven't seen the right programme...

The personal, interpersonal and political problems with developing a catchphrase culture are numerous, and have been explored in a variety of places. Ultimately, thought is degraded; if it can't be expressed in a half dozen words or less, people are less likely to think it.

And that's no joke.

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