

FEATURES

'Willard' delights and creeps out audiences

Caroline Soesbee

Features Reporter

For those who become squeamish when it comes to rodents, "Willard" might not be the movie to see this weekend.

The movie remakes the 1971 horror film about a solitary loser who asserts himself by controlling an army of rats.

Crispin Glover, probably best known for his teen-geek role in "Back to the Future," plays Willard Stiles, a 30-year-old mamma's boy. Glover throbs with nervous energy and goes completely over the threshold of creep. The actor seems to have an unholty control of muscles located beneath his eyes and to the right of his cheeks, which he can make quiver on demand.

A handsome and sympathetic Bruce Davison had the meat in the 1971 original. Glover, with his angular face, plastered-down hair and knock for ticks and twitches, is far more fitting as the pathetic, repressed Willard. Davison does make a few appearances in this newer version through photographs as Willard's deceased father.

The best, and easily most comedic, scenes in the film feature Willard and his mother, and they take place early on in the movie. During these moments, the film oozes of the original "Psycho" only this time,

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mom's mother isn't a corpse. Willard's father, a business man, died broke after selling his company but his mean-spirited partner Frank Martin (R. Lee Ermy). They made an agreement that guarantees Willard a job for life, but the boss keeps looking for ways to dump his most incompetent employee.

The office looks so glum and gloomy it could use a presence to cheer things up. Only one employee, the office temp Cathryn (played by Laura Elena Harring) shows sympathy toward Willard.

In fact, when Willard goes into a mournful slump, she tries to cheer him up with a gift—a house cat. Unfortunately, the very moment Willard puts the cat inside his home is before the rats have had dinner.

Willard has 500 rodent pals whom he feeds in his basement and trains to obey him. He becomes most attached to Socrates, an intelligent little white rat he saved from a trap, but the music behind this outfit is the gray, malevolent, groundhog-sized Ben.

Willard vows to protect Socrates, the first, best and only friend in his life. He discovers Socrates will do whatever he tells him to and that the rat can teach his many brothers and sisters, including Ben, to do the same.

The film uses both real rats and animatronic ones. It also uses computer-generated animation for some attack scenes.

An oddball love triangle forms with the appearance of the enormous rat Ben, who just warts a little furry lovin' for himself.



COURTESY OF WWW.WILLARDMOVIE.COM
Crispin Glover stars as Willard, a solitary man with an army of rats.

Asheville, a good vegetarian town

Mary Wyatt
Features Reporter

You are what you eat, or so the saying goes. More and more people seem to be taking this phrase to heart and opting not to be chickens and hogs for ethical, health and environmental reasons.

"I don't necessarily have a problem with eating meat," said mostly-vegetarian Brian Winslett, a senior environmental science and chemistry major. "It's the meat industry that inspired me to not really eat meat."

A lot of vegetarians choose to abstain from eating meat because they have beef with the way animals and the earth get treated in the mass production of meat.

Vegetarian cookbooks and Web sites boast of the health benefits of a vegetarian diet. Diets high in animal protein and low in vegetables threaten a higher risk of heart disease and some cancers, according to

www.eatright.org.

"Being a vegetarian forces you to eat greens and balance your diet," said vegetarian Geneva Stork, a junior environmental science and music major. "But if you're a vegetarian and eat junk food, you're going to be unhealthy."

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The health benefits of a vegetarian diet require some time and effort, something a lot of full-time students don't have after writing papers and studying for tests.

"I quit being a vegetarian after 10 years because I felt like my body really needed meat," said Mary Labianca, a senior art major. "If you don't have the time, it's really easy to run yourself down."



COURTESY OF WWW.LAUGHINGSEED.COM
Max and Rosie's vegetarian cafe has nationwide acclaim. Max's art covers the walls.

A vegetarian must balance proteins to gain the iron and amino acids easily gained by eating meat. Beans, whole-wheat bread, broccoli and spinach have a high iron content, according to "Vegetarian Planet Cookbook."

"You have to cook a lot, and it's harder to eat out," said Stork. "But Asheville is this little microcosm of somewhat sustainable eating."

Downtown Asheville offers a number of strictly vegetarian restaurants, such as The Laughing Seed, Max and Rosie's, Rosetta's,

Kitchen and Melanie's. Many restaurants that serve meat also cater to the vegetarian crowd.

"Even restaurants that are non-vegetarian, there's always several vegetarian choices," said Winslett. "You won't find that in some towns."

Winslett and Stork both claimed Salsa Mexican Caribbean Restaurant as their favorite place to in-



COURTESY OF WWW.LAUGHINGSEED.COM
The Laughing Seed, located in downtown Asheville, serves delicious, all-vegetarian, international cuisine.

dulge in vegetarian meals.

"Their flavor combinations are like a party in my mouth," said Stork. "Even UNCA's food services have begun to better serve the needs of vegetarians."

"I think the cafeteria has gotten a lot better," said Winslett. "But I have problems with Cafe Ramsey and how wasteful they are."

Cafe Ramsey, however, has increased the amount of vegetarian products they serve, such as salads, hummus and bagels.

"There's enough you can eat if you're a vegetarian, but there's not a huge selection," said Ellen Wade, an employee of Cafe Ramsey. "More options would be a matter of student input."

Students choose to become vegetarians for a variety of ethical reasons. About 7 billion farm animals die each year in the U.S. for the production of food, according to geocities.com.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), an international nonprofit animal protection organization, protests meat-eating, fur-wearing and animal-testing through public education, research and investigations, special events, direct action and grassroots organizing.

PETA works under the assumption that animals should not be treated as a possession to eat, wear, experiment on or use for entertainment, according to a PETA bro-

chure.

Any circus in America typically has representatives from PETA outside protesting.

"Spiritually, I didn't really want to be eating something that used to be alive and feeding its young," said vegetarian Geneva Stork, a junior environmental science and music major.

People also boycott meat for environmental reasons.

"Through my studies I became aware of the impact of cow farms which contain methane, a greenhouse gas, causing global warming," said Stork.

U.S. cattle belch 60 million metric tons of methane gas annually, according to *Vegetarian Times*.

All-American Rejects make you love them

Rhiannon Richard

Features Reporter

Initially, loving to hate the band The All-American Rejects comes easy. They seem no different from all the other bands on the radio. Eventually, however, you start to hate to love them.

"We just write what we know," said Nick Wheeler, one of the two members of The All-American Rejects on their official Web site. "The things we love and listen to the most tend to be radio-friendly, so that's how we write."

The songs they write, whether you want them to or not, get stuck in your brain, and they do not come out without a fight.

But why fight it? The band's first radio release, "Swing, Swing" has certainly lodged itself in the head of every teenager listening to pop radio.

It can also work its way into the heads of those that normally hate this kind of music. They might even listen to it secretly, or under some other pretext. For example, they could tell their friends that they only listen to the CD in order to write a review of it.

But they lie.

After five consecutive days with the song "Drive Away" planted firmly in their heads they might tire of the lines "P.S. I love you, forever and today" running through their dreams.



COURTESY OF DREAM WORKS RECORDS
The All-American Rejects includes (from left to right) Mike Kennedy, Tyson Ritter, Nick Wheeler and Chris Gaylor. The band produces catchy pop tunes you hate to love.

This music does not reach perfection. Don't expect to see The All-American Rejects in the music hall of fame, but that doesn't make their music any less fun and catchy.

If you normally like pop rock this CD provides fun from the beginning.

If you don't like pop rock, maybe you should give it a few more listens and see if you can't begin to appreciate its catchy nature.

The two members of The All-American Rejects did not cross paths, even in their small town,

until high school. At that time Wheeler met vocalist and bassist Tyson Ritter, Wheeler's current band needed a new member.

"We didn't have a bass player at the time and when Tyson realized that, he was, like, 'Hey, I play bass!'"

The only thing was, he'd never played a bass in his life," Wheeler said on the band's Web site.

Ritter brought a bass and during Christmas break he held himself up and learned to play.

Eventually that band disintegrated.

"It was high school," Wheeler said on the Web site. "Some people just wanted to do the whole high school thing and weren't serious about the band. We eventually got rid of them."

And from this high-school mentality came The All-American Rejects.

Wheeler and Ritter both say that this new line-up of two new works just fine.

"It was kind of ironic that initially, Nick Wheeler and I had less

input than anyone else in the band, but when he and I were the only ones left, that's when the best stuff started happening," said Ritter on the Web site.

"It's definitely not something where you set up in your practice space, start with three chords and sing to it," said Ritter. "What we do comes straight from the melody; then goes to the guitar and it gets built from there."

What the music gets built into sounds familiar, which could potentially annoy listeners. One could so easily turn off the stereo and never give them another thought.

It only seems fair to warn of the specific short-comings of the album.

"Though the songs may get stuck in your head, they all sound similar, and thus you might have trouble figuring out which song wants to stand its ground in your memory. Many of the songs sound like everything else on the radio today, and a few sound like songs you may see on a "Back to the 80's" week-end."

The lyrics, although catchy, do not have much depth, but they might remind some of their own former relationships.

"It all comes from my ex-girlfriends. All my songs are about simple relationships B.S.," said Ritter on the Web site.

The Rejects tour nationwide this spring.

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