

'Dickie Roberts' stars at the box office

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Reporter

It doesn't take long to figure out whether you would like "Dickie Roberts: Former Child Star." It stars David Spade, who always plays himself using the same kind of humor over and over. Therefore, if you like Spade then you would like the movie.

The plot is simple enough, although extremely contrived. Spade plays Dickie Roberts who, as a kid, used to be on a famous TV show. Once it was cancelled Roberts, like many of his fellow child co-stars, faded into oblivion. At the start of the film Roberts is in his thirties and working as a valet, desperate to hit stardom again.

His chance comes when a hot script lands in his lap. The script, "Mr. Blake's Backyard," will be made into a movie directed by Rob Reiner. Roberts convinces his friend Brendan Fraser to place a call with Reiner so Roberts can get a meeting.

When the moment of truth arrives, Roberts is slapped with the bad news. Reiner doesn't believe he can pull it off, because Roberts missed a real childhood. Without some kind of serious overhaul, he is out of luck.

This is where the film really kicks in with most of the laughs. Taking Reiner literally, Roberts hires a family to set him up for a month and raise him like a child. Once this happens Roberts is sure that the role is a shoo-in for him.

This film is funny, albeit not great, but it does manage enough laughs for a decent comedy. Spade's wisecracks for the most part hit the mark. Also, Spade does a lot of physical comedy in this film. The highlight is definitely when he learns how to ride a bike and manages to crash into a car, a stop sign and many other things.

The movie is a bit cleverer than most Spade films. Probably the most ingenious thing about the entire script is that it is framed as an episode on an E! TV show called "E! True Hollywood Story." This adds a nice level to the film that wouldn't have been there otherwise.

"Roberts" also manages to throw in some drama in the form of

domestic troubles. As Roberts is staying with a family, the marriage of the two parents is falling apart. Admittedly, it is not "Ordinary People," but it is handled quite well for this kind of film. This extra layer is quite helpful as the movie begins to run out of steam toward the end.

Still, there are other problems. Since the movie's prime purpose is to create jokes, many gaping plot holes form. For example, if Roberts is such a wash-up why does he know Brendan Fraser? Why does Fraser even talk to him? Although it was fun to count the many stars who made cameos. Also, what family would actually agree to this set-up?

In the end, though, one doesn't go to see this film for its brilliant plot points. It's funny and Spade holds himself well. It's certainly better than his last outing, "Lost and Found."

For a rainy day at the movies, watching "Dickie" is a pretty good way to spend it.



Photo courtesy of Yahoo! Movies

David Spade stars in the comedy "Dickie Roberts: Former Child Star," which debut at No. 1. It earned more than \$7 million at the box office in its opening weekend.

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