

## Domestic Disturbance dark but far from reality

□ Don't expect this imitation thriller to be included in Hitchcock's library.

KRISTEN THOMPSON  
Staff Writer

It is the opening of a typical Lifetime movie: separations, divorces, second marriages and a 12-year-old son who rebels because his mother is remarrying a man who is not his father. Add a creepy stepfather, a murder and a round of abuse, and you have *Domestic Disturbance* before your eyes.

*Domestic Disturbance*, directed by Harold Becker and written by Lewis Colick, brings an extra element of fear to a typical divorce story.

Under the horizon of a small seaside town stands Frank Morrison (John Travolta), a low-income boat builder. He is the typical nice guy and devoted father, which makes you wonder why his ex-wife Susan (Terri Polo) divorced him in the first place to marry the troubling Rick Barnes (Vince Vaughn).

Frank and Susan's son, Danny Morrison (Matthew O'Leary), does not mesh well

with Rick from the beginning.

However, Frank encourages his son to give Rick a chance. However, it is not until Rick's friend, Ray Coleman (Steve Buscemi) shows up at Susan and Rick's wedding to collect an unpaid debt that the tension mounts. Later, the viewer discovers that Ray and Rick were once partners in crime.

Worried that his newfound image will be destroyed, Rick decides that the best way to maintain his new image is to kill Ray. He does, but not without an eyewitness to the event--Danny.

Yet when Danny contacts the police to report the crime, hardly anyone will take him seriously--including his mother and father.

It does not take Frank long to change his mind and trust his son's testimony but not before the evil stepfather Rick does what most TV-movie evil stepfathers do: Rick terrorizes Danny as a way of pressuring him to keep the murder a secret.

The dark and eerie cinematography seems only to increase the predictability of the plot.

Viewers know that when the lighting dims it is time for someone to jump out of the shadows.

The characters also add to the banality of the plot since they never fully develop. For example, Rick is the obvious "bad guy," the evil stepfather incarnate.

There was no need for the viewer to dissect characters' motives because everyone knows who is going to throw around the knife and the harassing jargon.

As the polar opposite of Rick, Frank represents the "good guy" whose character is stunted in developing because his optimism and pristine record make him appear un-genuine.

In fact, many of the scenes do not live up to their thriller potential. One scene even harks to the hackneyed and cliched thriller *Scream*, which places *Domestic Disturbance* far from the true thrillers: Seconds after Frank bashes his head through a car window, he looks up and smiles at Danny, who is tied up in the car.

Realistic? Hardly.

Inventive? Try again.

*Domestic Disturbance* provides enough tension and suspense to make it entertaining, but you can get that sitting at home watching Lifetime. It is rated PG-13 for violence, language and brief sexuality.

## Muggles rejoice!

### The Potter craze ignites the box office

□ You didn't think the wizardry would end with the book, did you? See what Hollywood has done.

MARGARET COONEY  
Staff Writer

The wait is finally over for children and adults alike: Hero, Harry Potter, has finally made his way from the pages of the J.K. Rowling hit books to the big screen. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* broke all records with its opening weekend box office sells of over \$90 million.

However, did the hype surrounding the movie live up to people's expectations? For muggles, Potter-speak for non-magical people such as fans of the series, it seems so.

In the title role, portrayed wonderfully by Daniel Radcliffe, the young Harry Potter finds himself introduced to a world of magic, which previously seemed unknown. To his delight, Harry is accepted to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, a superb change from his life at his aunt and uncle's house where he was treated like a slave.

On his journey to Hogwarts, Harry is accompanied by a giant name Hagrid (Robbie Coltrane), who explains that Harry is famous for being the boy who survived the curse of an evil wizard named Lord Voldemort. Harry's parents were killed by Voldemort, but mysteriously, Harry survived with only a scar on his forehead.

At Hogwarts, Harry is a legend, causing jealousy from some and admiration from others. Harry is able to make two very good friends, Ron Weasley (Rupert Grint) and Hermione Granger (Emma Watson), who like Harry for who he is.

The three spend much of their time getting into mischief

and trying to learn all the secrets of Hogwarts.

Much of the movie is centered on the mysterious Sorcerer's Stone and its power. The three friends become suspicious of it after finding a 3-headed dog named Fluffy is protectively guarding it.

Harry and his friends soon come to believe that someone is after the stone; they suspect it to be Professor Snape (Alan Rickman).

But why does Professor Snape want the stone? Viewers soon learn that the stone turns metal into gold and is able to give immortality to all who have it in his or her possession. This immortality is needed for Lord Voldemort, who is very weak and sustains life from drinking unicorns' blood.

Harry and his friends must find a way to stop Snape and save the stone from the hands of evil. The three go through various challenging obstacles, each friend having to exhibit his own personal strength and skills. At the end, Harry finally meets the culprit and has to face his mortal enemy Lord Voldemort in a life or death battle.

*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* juxtaposes solid acting along with groundbreaking special effects. The three child stars show much talent as they portray their characters.

What is most important of all, however, is that the script--directed by Chris Columbus who is best known for his work on *Home Alone*--is true to Rowling's creation.

Be forewarned that the movie does run two and a half hours long, an increment that may be too long to spin a wizard's tale but not long enough for the throngs of devoted Potter fans.

The movie is rated PG for scary scenes and mild language.

**Merry Christmas  
from the  
Herald Staff!!  
Dorms will reopen at 2  
p.m. on January 6th.**