

Parenting Troubles For Hugh

During a near perfect five-year relationship, thriving careers, numerous nights of intense passion and the freedom to take weekends off at the whim, Samuel (Hugh Grant) and Rebecca (Julianne Moore) have had it all.

Then a little surprise is delivered, one which will turn Samuel's life into a whirlwind of utter chaos. Rebecca is pregnant and Samuel is scared out of his wits. Does he want the baby or does he not? Through-out much of the film he does not know — and well, that is basically the plot. This film has a very "Mrs. Doubtfire" kind of feel to it, probably since both films were directed by Chris Columbus, with numerous little weird incidences occurring which seem to carry the film.

Grant's last film, "The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill But Came Down a Mountain" suffered at the box office though it had fairly decent reviews. However "Nine Months" opened with nearly \$20 million, probably due to the great amount of promotion and Grant's recent 'lewd conduct' with a Hollywood tart.

Maybe I am being overly critical, but it seems Grant has not had a new facial expression in the past five years. His performance is very predictable, though ador-

DEAN HAIR

Movie Review "Nine Months" B-



Hugh Grant and Julianne Moore star in Chris Columbus' latest comedy, "Nine Months" as a couple of the nineties, who face the triumphs and tribulations of becoming parents.

able, and borderlines annoying.

Julianne Moore is pleasant and naturally beautiful as Grant's wife and she has the cutest smile in the entire film. This may sound odd but when Moore turns into a preying mantis and nearly eats Grant, it is one of the funniest scenes in the film.

Rounding out the cast as the annoying best friends are Tom Arnold (Marty) and Joan Cusack (Gail) who have all the best intentions in the world but come across as horrifyingly irksome. Arnold, whose career seemed over after two unsuccessful television shows and his recent divorce, delivers another buddy performance not

unlike his role opposite Arnold Schwarzenegger in "True Lies." Cusack is an over-bearing mother of three girls who seem to be mentally disturbed.

Jeff Goldblum is Samuel's best friend Sean who is a yuppie child and commitment-fearing individual who helps and hurts Samuel's decision about having the child.

However, what makes the film so hilarious and a perfect date flick is Robin Williams as the Russian obstetrician, Dr. Kosevich, whose only previous obstetrical experience has been with four-legged creatures. Williams only appears in two scenes

in the film but those scenes are the most memorable. Having trouble with his English, he utters, "I need a new clitoris," when he means thesaurus.

The best scene of the film is in a toy store where Samuel and Marty encounter 'Arnie' a big costumed dinosaur resembling 'Barney' and proceed to do what every parent has desired, to beat him up.

Columbus has presented another family-oriented date film which will be very successful and appealing for weeks, but how many more films can we watch that are nothing more than mere variations of "Mrs. Doubtfire."

Seagal Lumbers His Way Through 'Under Siege 2'

There are certain things in life which you can come to count on: the sun will rise in the morning, old men will wear ugly plaid pants, Jerry Stackhouse will make enough money to purchase his own country and a Steven Seagal movie will fail to challenge the brain.

Therefore it is not shocking that Mr. Seagal's latest endeavor, "Under Siege 2: Dark Territory," a follow-up to the 1992 action thriller, doesn't rival the best of Martin Scorsese.

BRENT SIMON

Movie Review "Under Siege 2" D+

Still, there is usually a skillful enough blend of the absurd and exciting to distract one's cranium for a long enough time to sit back and enjoy the cheap thrills that Seagal has to offer.

This sequel, however, does not improve on the original in almost every imaginable way, creating a poor follow-up that is drab, laughable and shockingly unappealing.

The actual story matters very little, but it is worth noting that there is at least the semblance of one. Seagal stars as ex-Navy SEAL turned cook Casey Ryback, which seems better suited to high-concept comedy than straight-faced action.

After saving the free world from nuclear disaster in the first "Under Siege," Ryback is traveling by train through the Rockies with his niece (Katherine Heigl) to visit the grave of his recently deceased brother. And yes, that would be the brother he hasn't spoken to for years before his death.

Next, so as to live no cliché unused, enter a highly-trained team of international

techno-terrorists. They decide to hijack the very train that Chef Death happens to be vacationing on, all in an attempt to set up their new satellite weapon command center. A slight mistake, no?

In the performance department, Eric Bogosian ("Talk Radio") shines, rising like a phoenix from the ashes of a horrible script.

He stars as the villainous Travis Dane, a wacky, egomaniacal computer programmer and the mastermind behind the entire soon-to-be-spoiled hijack.

Bogosian seems to revel in the pure wickedness of his role, to the point that he should take his performance on the road to comedy clubs. He's doing some heavy-duty scenery-chewing.

His partner in lunacy is Everett McGill, who plays Penn, the requisite short-haired foreign weapons specialist.

McGill joins Bogosian in displaying just the right blend of bad-guy anal-retentiveness and goofy, over-the-top flair. They know where they're stuck, but they make the best of it.

Still, "Under Siege 2" is not so much a case of the villains stealing the show as it is the villains simply being able to act. Alongside Seagal, who exudes all the charm and charisma of an inflatable monkey, Bogosian and McGill have no choice but to look good.

Say what you will about Jean-Claude Van Damme; he at least brings a distinct and likable character to every film he's in. Seagal lumbers like an ox through any scene that doesn't require him to severely beat someone.

Furthermore, there is no real tension because there are no complexities in any of the characters. They are neither believable nor acceptable as mere pawns in the greater scheme of the story. The script is weak and full of stupid and pretentious dialogue - in other words, just as you'd expect.

Seagal manages to keep his oil-slicked hair perfectly in place as he breaks more bones than any hero in cinematic history. The action sequences, while decent, are hardly enough to salvage the entire picture.

Whereas the first "Under Siege" had great action and a real and definite sense of danger (not to mention Oscar-winner Tommy Lee Jones and Gary Bussey), the sequel offers little worthwhile except for a fantastic, head-on double train wreck finale. After watching "Under Siege 2," one can only hope that the writers were on board.



MUSIC BRIEFS

Bodeco, *Callin' All Dogs* (Safe House) B
Bodeco's photo suggests a fashion sense drifting somewhere between Alabama and, uh, Bon Jovi, but their music is a totally different story.

If it's retro and it reeks of a) testosterone or b) gasoline, then Bodeco are practitioners thereof. Sort of an indie George Thoroughgood, in a sense.

Yes, in the duration of *Callin' All Dogs*, Bodeco manages to rip off the typical drag strip movie soundtrack gamut as well as the entire Estrus Records catalog (for those of you lacking the music-dork gene, Estrus is a label out of Washington state which releases album after album of nitro-fueled surf/garage/trash music, including the tuneage of Chapel Hill's own Southern Culture on the Skids).

Not that this is a bad thing of course, just a little unoriginal, that's all. But no matter how rehashed, Bodeco make a pleasant platter out of it.

After just a whiff of the first few songs, you can sense the presence of Bo Diddley, the Rolling Stones (the ninth song is a dead ringer for "Honky Tonk Woman"; upon closer inspection, a good many of the songs sound like the Stones themselves, vocals

included a couple of times), and any number of early rockabilly outfits.

In fact, most of the songs fall under one of the above categories, or some combination of the three.

There is one spooky Angelo Badalamenti...whatever that guy who does the music for all the David Lynch movies' name is-sounding piece, a dark kind of surreal beat-jazz, and that's pulled off nicely, I suppose. But that's the only real piece that deviates from the above formula.

This really isn't as blatantly a homage to the dead muscle car-culture as most of the Estrus bands perform. Stripped down, it's some guys getting together to play old standards and have a good time with it. Not bad, not dangerous.

— Barry Summerlin

Tank Girl soundtrack (Elektra) C-
Courtney Love-Cobain must like seeing her name in print. She's listed as the "executive music coordinator" for "Tank Girl," as though she's trying to prove she can do it all. The only problem is she's not doing it particularly well.

Everything starts out well. Bjork's "Army of Me" is engaging enough. And hearing Devo's "Girl U Want" again was a delight. But it's downhill from there.

The Magnificent Bastards were kind enough to grace us with "Mockingbird Girl," which made me hope Weiland does some serious time for his recent cocaine bust. The song one-ups the Stone Temple Pilots by ripping them off, which is testimony either to Weiland's ironic wit or incredible lack of originality.

L7, Hole, Verruca Salt, and Bush all

contribute stunningly average songs, none of which bother to live up to the quality of their albums.

The soundtrack does have some high notes. Belly's "Thief" proves that Gail Greenwood is the perfect backup vocalist for Tanya Donnelly.

Portishead's "Roads" is perhaps the best tune on the album, combining heavy reverberation and a keen hip-hop drum beat with ethereal vocals to create something just short of symphonic.

It seemed a shame not to end on that note, but the soundtrack wraps up with Ice-T, who is just a cartoon parody of his former self. But maybe Love-Cobain recognized that, because it seems appropriate for a movie based on a comic book character.

— Ross White



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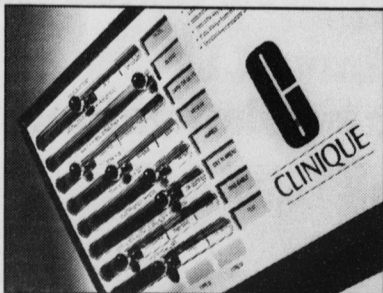
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