



Tom Berenger (Lewis Gates), a rugged bounty hunter who journeys with Barbara Hershey (Dr. Lillian Sloan), a feisty female anthropologist, discovers a place lost in time deep in the Montana wilderness in "Last of the Dogmen."

Berenger's New Film Is for the 'Dogs'

"Last of the Dogmen" exemplifies the kind of film in which the producers assume that because a film has glorious scenery and music there is no need for any element of characterization or intelligent screenwriting. With this film Hollywood attempts to reduce its audience's intelligence to one that is easily seduced by a multitude of mountains and valleys. However, there simply are not enough mountains in "Dogmen" to hide all of its problems.

"Dogmen," written and directed by Tab Murphy, stars Tom Berenger and Barbara Hershey as a retired cop and anthropologist, respectively, who discover a tribe of supposedly extinct Indians called Dogmen within the Montana backlands. What the producers of the film aim for is a striking blend of two extraordinary films, "Dances

With Wolves" and "Legends of the Fall." The film wants to make a positive statement about Native Americans, as "Dances" did, and build a complicated love story between a rebel and a conformist, as "Legends" did. And at the same time it wants to fill the screen with vivid images of western scenery and fill your ears with great music, as both "Dances" and "Legends" did.

Sounds like an Oscar winner, huh? But what those two films have that "Dogmen" simply does not have is characters who have depth and a script that does not sound as if it were written by a second-grader (although a second-grader probably could have done better than Murphy did).

Berenger's character is a cynical and lazy cowboy who still mourns the death of his deceased wife who drowned in a river before he could save her. Hershey's character, Dr. Lillian Sloan, is a cold and shallow scientist who thrives on learning and the purest discovery. While the characters are potentially interesting, they never live

up to that potential, primarily because they are so unbelievable. As Louis, Berenger is supposed to convince us that regardless of the fact that he cares nothing about Native Americans, and that he possesses the motivation of a tomato, he would actually rob a drug store to obtain some penicillin for an ailing member of the "Dogmen."

Then there is Lillian's unrealistic enthusiasm. After their initial contact with the Dogmen, Lillian and Louis are taken prisoner by the tribe. Although they are being pulled by horses and dragged on sharp rocks through frigid water, Lillian exclaims "God, I feel privileged to be here!" Unfortunately, that kind of unrealistic enthusiasm simply cannot be applied to this kind of scene or film. A film must not become a mere voice of the writer's feelings; it must insert scenes that illustrate. There is none of this in "Dogmen," which yields no sense of inventiveness or creativity. The film results in nothing short of a poorly elaborated editorial.

Berkeley of 'Saved by the Bell' Fame Fails to Satisfy in 'Showgirls'

The strangest thing happened to me at about 4:15 Saturday. I found myself waiting in a line to see naked women. If Jesus Christ himself had walked up to me on the street, lit my cigarette and said, "You know what Jennifer? A year from now to this very day you will be waiting in a line to see naked women," I would not have believed him. But there we were, backed up past Pepper's to that obscure Chapel Hill Sports place, ready with open wallets and prepared for anything.

JEN ASHLOCK
Movie Review
"Showgirls"
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Now I realize that for some people, watching naked women prance around for two hours on a Saturday afternoon may be very appealing. I am well aware of this. And in fact, now with the help of cute little ratings like NC-17, only truly responsible members of society will be allowed to gape at these strutting nymphs. After all, anyone who has lived for 18 years can distinguish between reality and some male chauvinist's idea of a good movie. In the end, however, "Showgirls" only made me more desperate for a fantasy rating based upon the ability to read people's minds: NC-SSA. Those with Subconscious Sexist Attitudes not allowed.

But in America we need not resort to such tyrannical whimsy. We trust our society to form its own ideas about what is tasteful as opposed to vulgar, moral and immoral. In the end it is the individual who inevitably decides his or her fate after carefully thinking over the extremes, hopefully choosing somewhere in between. On Friday afternoon, Joe Schmo walks into First Union Bank, politely asks the teller to

withdraw his hard earned \$5.50 because he made the decision, on his own - goddammit - to see naked women. He realizes that, yes, perhaps women like this don't exist in real life, but if they do, he'll know what to do when he sees one. Our system figures that there are going to be some people like him but, for the most part, the majority will hold the moderate view, choosing to stay in that night and watch "Little House on the Prairie."

I wonder what Elizabeth Berkeley would have to say about all of this. It seems as though she may have lost her way from the set of the TV smash hit, "Saved by the Bell," and now she's been forced to hitchhike braless cross country. Evidently she's had amazing success with this method and arrives in Las Vegas just in time to start off the show. Using the name of Nomi Malone, she gets a job as a stripper but soon discovers that the job is more than she bargained for. In the world of Las Vegas dancing, competition is tough, stakes are high and the bossmen certainly don't play fair. She meets Crystal Connors, the prestigious showgirl, and does the whole "All About Eve" routine, stealing Connors' man (Kyle MacLachlan), kicking her down the stairs and taking her place in the spotlight. There are lots of scenes with topless women, bottomless women, men calling breasts "tits," women calling breasts "tits," and straight-out bad dancing.

Now I do not object to a poor attempt at portraying this line of work. I do, however, object to Nomi's resolution with the business. I believe this film tries to illustrate her naiveté in the beginning, her success in learning the breaks, and how she inevitably gains control in the end, leaving it all behind when she realizes it's not for her.

Yet this transition is never established, writing off a defenseless main character as the stereotypical "dumb blonde." She seems consistently oblivious to everything that happens to her, even acting on irrational impulses. Nomi spontaneously makes the decision to sleep with her entertainment director and is surprised when he happens to offer her the part of an understudy to the starring role the next morning. Not only is she stunned and thrilled when she, indeed, lands the role, but then becomes outraged when the girlfriend of the director becomes jealous of the affair and takes the role back. The audience is left scratching their heads, wondering just how stupid Nomi could possibly be.

Soon after Nomi proves to be an ineffective character, the film that revolves around her stumbles and twists beyond repair. Her obsessions with hamburgers, gaudy nail decoration and a reappearing purple phantom wonderbra become utterly ridiculous. Bright blue eye shadow, superfluous eyeliner, and strange attempts at lavender lip gloss prevent any attempt at sincerity in the script. Lines like, "I love your tits," and, "You ate dog food? I ate dog food, too!" are actually meant to signify an affectionate moment between characters, but by the time they roll around, they fail to inspire anything but snickering laughter. By the end of the two hours the nudity has completely lost its shock value and we are all climbing over the chairs to get home.

Luckily, the sexist elements of "Showgirls" are fairly obvious. It's just a shame that those who cannot discern between reality and fiction will continue to walk around and act like normal human beings afterwards, believing this crap about women.

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