

ENTERTAINMENT

Police flick 'Blue Streak' less than arresting

Tammy D. McMahan
Special to Sentinel-Voice

My Mama always says, "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all." Well, Mama isn't a film critic and she hasn't seen 'Blue Streak.'

Sorry, Ma, but I just have to say that Blue Streak is an uninventive, by-the-numbers flick with lackluster acting. If you want to see a hip cop flick, rent the first two Beverly Hills Cop movies.

Blue Streak begins with the high-tech theft of a \$17 million diamond by career thief Miles Logan (Martin Lawrence) and his partners.

The robbery goes awry and countless police officers

are on the scene. Before Miles is caught, he hides the diamond inside a ventilation shaft in a building which is under construction.

Two years later Miles is released from prison and returns to the building to find that it's the home of the Los Angeles Police Department. In order to retrieve the diamond, Miles passes himself off as an officer. In his efforts to get the big rock back, he inadvertently solves crimes and nabs some bad guys.

Blue Streak's formula is nothing new. It's the story of a hip, smart-mouthed outsider who shakes things up among a group of stodgy or bored



MARTIN LAWRENCE

"big institution" types. Despite his unorthodox methods, the outsider does some good.

Don't get me wrong—this storyline has made for some

good comedy like that found in the first two Beverly Hills Cop movies.

Where Eddie Murphy infused hip wit into a formula story, Lawrence adds nothing and the movie quickly becomes tired. By the way, who told Martin Lawrence that he was talented? I see zero talent in his acting which consists of spouting, "ka-pow," "believe that," spewing profanity, bugging his eyes and contorting his body like Jackie Chan on crack.

The other actors, including Luke Wilson, Dave Chappelle, Tamala Jones and Nicole Ari Parker, were just going through the motions.

I'm guessing that the script

reduced their characters to one-dimensional types. As a result, the actors had that "I'm just doin' it for the paycheck" look in their eyes. Here's an example, Lawrence's character has an inept, nerdy, rookie cop (Wilson) as a partner. The cop has a thing about being courteous and driving safely.

However, before you know it, the rookie is spouting smart-alecky phrases and driving like Starsky or Hutch or Baretta in about an hour and 20 minutes into the film. His transformation was about as compelling as watching the grass grow.

In addition to the acting, if you want to call it acting, the

suspension of disbelief factor is too much to handle. 'Suspension of disbelief is the audience's understanding that the filmmakers are bending reality to make the story work. In Blue Streak the audience is asked to make so many suspensions of disbelief regarding Logan's ability to fool the cops that it's downright bothersome even for an action-adventure comedy. The filmmakers intended to get laughs and build tension by posing whether Logan will pull off the ruse and get the diamond or get busted.

They failed—big time.

I'd let the Blue Streak pass on by.

Minorities use Emmys to stump for more, meatier roles

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Minorities must create their own creative projects, not settle for small, unsatisfying opportunities offered by TV networks, says John Leguizamo, who won an Emmy for his HBO special "Freak."

"The Latin voice is something that is lacking and very missing in the media," said the comedian who won two weeks ago for best variety or music show performance.

"The opportunities are there but they're really small and unsatisfying and somewhat embarrassing," Leguizamo continued. "You do have to take things into your own hands to write and create. Richard Pryor did it and Woody Allen, those are



HALLE BERRY

my idols."

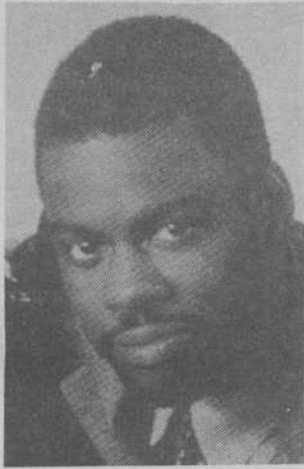
In jest and in earnest, several Emmy presenters and winners raised the issue of race. The lack of roles for minorities has been a contentious issue in recent months, with advocacy

groups criticizing the networks for largely white casting this season.

The National Council of La Raza, a coalition of Hispanic groups, is coordinating a two-week boycott of ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC to protest "the continued invisibility of Latinos on television." The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People says it will monitor how network shows incorporate minorities.

Leguizamo said things are improving but not enough.

"The roles are still not breakthrough. They're not the upscale Latin people I meet in my life," he said. "They don't represent the lawyers and doctors and writers who



CHRIS ROCK

are making a difference."

La Raza counts just one Hispanic — Martin Sheen, on NBC's "The West Wing" — among the lead characters in the 38 new series premiering this fall.

Three others continue on

returning series: Bruno Campos (NBC's "Jesse"), and, on CBS, Hector Elizondo ("Chicago Hope") and Cheech Marin ("Nash Bridges").

After advocacy groups raised the issue, ABC in July said at least five of their shows would add minorities.

Chris Rock, who won an Emmy for writing in a variety or music show for his self-titled HBO show, said he doesn't pay much attention to the number of minorities on TV. "White people own it. They don't want us on it. That's fine," the black comedian said.

Director Paris Barclay, who is black, credited Steven Bochco, whose company produces "NYPD Blue," for offering more minority roles.

"Without Steven Bochco and his commitment to diversity, which to him means

get the best people, look a little harder, I wouldn't be here, either," Barclay said. He earned his second consecutive Emmy for directing the police drama.

Halle Berry, presenting the award for miniseries or movie, said television has made some progress portraying blacks in positive roles.

She mentioned the TV movies "Miss Evers' Boys" about a study that denied treatment to black men suffering from syphilis, "Don King: Only in America," and her own "Introducing Dorothy Dandridge," about the first black woman nominated for a best actress Oscar.

"So many wonderful stories are just waiting to be told," Berry said. "Getting them made and to the screen, that is our goal."

B.O.M.

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between lectures that explained how the industry works.

"I felt so positive about it," said Kimberly Bailey-Tureaud, founder and coordinator of the annual conference. "We accomplished our goal. People went away and really learned how to do their own thing. This is the best conference I've given. This is also the first music conference in the country that's interactive. Executives had to go sit in the audience with the groups."

Bailey-Tureaud said that she came up with the concept to promote entrepreneurship in a low-income, minority community.

She said her challenge was to get people who have been working in the hotel and gaming industry for countless years to follow their own money-making endeavors.

"This is not too much about the partying and I downplay the showcasing," said Bailey-Tureaud. "This is about our community's economics. It's about having a successful business, and in the music industry as in any industry, an individual business has to be integrated into the industry."

Rapping since the age of 15, Las Vegas Virgil Hurd, a.k.a. Virg, came to the B.O.M. to meet President of Ish Entertainment/CEO of Creative Management and Las Vegas native Kenneth Crear, who works with artists like Dru Hill.

"The conference is just small enough that I met with Kenneth and talked to him for a while," said the 24-year-old Virg. "I'm not just starting out, so my objectives are very

specific at this point. I need management and Kenneth is hot right now. ... I think we clicked."

Some, like Jacqueline Shepard and Monique Jacques came from as far away as Denver, Colorado to participate in the event. "This is really good," said Shepard, 24, who is going after her dream to have a singing career. "I learned stuff that I never knew about, like, how to calculate points, reversion and copyrights. This conference is giving me the knowledge to know that I don't know enough." Jacques, 22, said, "This is helping me decide what to do with my life. I'm seeing if I really want to be involved in this business."

Moderator J.R. Reynolds, music business writer and a one-time editor at Billboard Magazine, provided the link between the audience and the presenters.

"Here, people can get the beginnings of the interworkings of the music business," said Reynolds, who has worked the B.O.M. for the past three years. "They get broad strokes for how to own their own careers and it gives courage and inspiration."

Although not the focus of the B.O.M., several artists did showcase their talents and Kevin Black did pick up one group.

The point of the conference is to serve as an introduction into the music business, however.

Participants and interested community members can continue their education in music business-savvy with free classes at the E.O.B. Microbusiness Development Program office. For more information, call 647-7735.

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