

Anderson unable to lift hopelessly flawed comedy

By Kam Williams
Sentinel-Voice

It's usually an indication that a film is going to be bad when, early on, you spot a boom microphone on the screen, dangling over the head of one of the actors. I remember seeing a mike dozens of times during "Gothika," a debacle starring Halle Berry, which set the previous record for just such a distraction.

Not to be outdone, however, "King's Ransom" is a worse cinematic disaster, easily ruined by the irritating appearance of even more microphones, believe it or not.

This type of infuriating intrusion repeatedly reminds you that you're watching a movie, which is the last thing one needs while trying to suspend disbelief in a theater.



"King's Ransom" puts Anthony Anderson's acting chops to the test. Critics say he fails.

The mikes arrive in shocking red and other colors, sometimes in pairs, sometimes with the poles

they are attached to in plain view.

Fault for this fatally-flawed flick must fall at the

feet of the film's director, namely, Jeff Byrd. Byrd, a once-promising protégé of Spike Lee, worked with the

two-time Oscar-nominee on "Malcolm X," "Jungle Fever" and "Mo' Better Blues."

But the brother has bot-tomed-out here, serving up an unwatchable romantic comedy which squanders the services of its star, the normally hilarious Anthony Anderson.

Also wasted are the efforts of a talented supporting cast which features Kellita Smith (Bernie Mac's TV wife), recent real-life mom Nicole Ari Parker, Loretta Devine, Regina Hall, Jay Mohr, Charlie Murphy (Eddie's brother), Leila Arcieri and Donald Faison (of TV's "Scrubs").

I'm not sure what New Line had in mind in releasing such a slapdash production that looks like it was edited by Edward Scissorhands. I suppose it's another case of pump-and-dump marketing, where a studio hypes the hell out of a picture to see how much money it can make over opening weekend till word gets out over the grapevine.

The preposterous premise makes no sense, which ordinarily would be okay in this sort of over the top adven-

ture. Anderson plays Malcolm King, a flamboyant tycoon apparently modeled on boxing promoter Don King. This "King" made his millions in advertising, and has plenty of enemies in his soon-to-be ex-wife (Smith), his disgruntled employees (Parker and Arcieri), and a half-wit he dished on the street (Mohr).

Everyone is conspiring to kidnap the filthy-rich businessman, including Malcolm himself, and all on the very same night. Each plan is foiled, however, except one, (though I won't spoil the story by saying who actually manages to grab and hold him for ransom). The movie has its moments but, regrettably, the amateurish cinematography left me laughing more at the editing than at any of the crime caper's jokes or hi-jinks.

A stupefying insult of any audience's intelligence, it would receive an incomplete as an unfinished project if submitted to a professor in film school.

Poor (0 stars). Rating: PG-13 for sexual situations, profanity, crude and off-color dialogue.

Cop doesn't ticket Emmanuel Lewis

WARWICK, Ga. (AP) — A police officer will be reprimanded for not giving a speeding ticket to former child star Emmanuel Lewis after he was clocked driving 25 mph over the posted speed limit.

Lewis, who starred in the '80s TV series "Webster," was clocked driving through town at 70 mph in a 45 mph zone last week. He was towing a trailer loaded with a sport utility vehicle.

He got off with a verbal warning. Lewis, 34, gave his autograph and posed for a photo with police Officer Ron Kirk and the police chief in this southwest Georgia town.

Although police officers can use discretion in issuing tickets, the Warwick City Council concluded Tuesday that Kirk's actions were improper. The council ordered that Kirk receive a written reprimand and that the police

chief review his department's policies on giving verbal warnings.

"The council wants the public to know they acknowledge and agree that mistakes were made," said Tommy Coleman, the town's lawyer. "Anyone who has been in government and anyone who is a driver knows that 70 miles per hour in a 45 mile per hour zone is too fast, especially when one vehicle is towing another."

Coleman said he conducted an investigation and concluded the incident was "simply a mistake." Lewis didn't attempt to get out of the ticket, and Kirk didn't ask for anything before issuing the warning, the lawyer said.

McFerrin loses luggage in Mexico

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Bobby McFerrin, the U.S. crossover musician of "Don't Worry Be Happy" fame, had to take a dose of his own medicine when he arrived in Mexico for a series of concerts, but his luggage didn't.

"Why does the world need to be happy right now? Imagine, I just lost my luggage," McFerrin, paraphrasing his 1988 hit single, told reporters jokingly during interviews Monday to discuss performances in Mexico City this week. "I'm trying to find my lug-

gage; forget the world."

The bags apparently were misplaced either on McFerrin's flight or between the Mexico City airport and his hotel.

The good thing, McFerrin said, is that "music is a therapeutic activity, as well as a mystical one."

The artist's performances will include a concert in the capital and an appearance as guest conductor of the Mexico City Philharmonic Orchestra.



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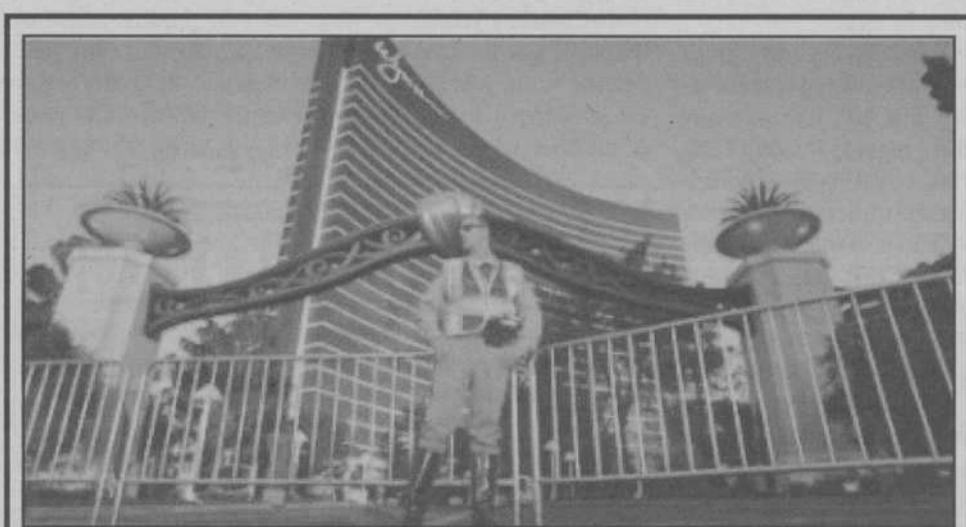
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