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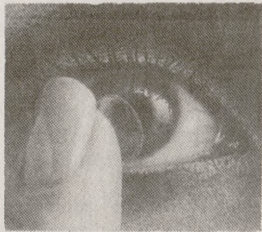
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Smith's sophomore slump

Mallrats lacks humor and dialogue that made *Clerks* work

By Michael Landauer
THE BATTALION

When an independent filmmaker hooks up with a major film company, certain demands might be made that compromise style.

In Kevin Smith's case, Gramercy Pictures might have demanded a plot. And in Smith's attempts to deliver, *Mallrats* fails miserably, especially in comparison to

Smith's last effort, *Clerks*.

Smith, who wrote and directed both movies, has an incredible knack for creating dialogue. In *Clerks*, the dialogue was the focus, but *Mallrats* comes out looking like a bad episode of *Saved By The Bell*.

At the beginning of the show, Zack, oops ... I mean T.S. Quint (Jeremy London) and Brodie (Jason Lee) both screw things up in their respective relationships. After rightfully getting dumped by their girlfriends, they take solace in a trip to the mall.

Quint cannot stop brooding over the loss of Brandi (Claire Forlani). After they discover that Brandi's dad is producing a live dating game show from the mall, Brodie and Quint seek out "mischievous" Silent Bob (Smith) and Jay (Jason Mewes) to destroy the set and keep the show from happening. With Brandi subbing as a contestant on the show, it was a major source of tension in the break-up.

Silent Bob and Jay are a major source of comedy in the film. As was the case in *Clerks*, Silent Bob only has one line and delivers it at the end of the film. Unfortunately, his one speaking scene in *Clerks* served to tie the whole thing together, but in *Mallrats*, he borrows a line from *Star Wars*, which only compliments one of the film's motifs.

The rest of the film is splintered between several subplots. A lot of "inside jokes" pop up between the subplots, but viewers will only understand them if they've seen *Clerks*. Otherwise, a lot of the humor gets lost in what most people will write off as meaningless babble.

But the weird thing is that meaningless babble made *Clerks*

MOVIE REVIEW
Mallrats
Starring Shannen Doherty, Jason Lee and Jeremy London
Rated R
Playing at Hollywood 16
★★ (out of five)

a success. There are few hints of the writing of which Smith is capable.

The film's bright spots are hard to plain. When the crowd laughs loudly, usually followed with a collective, "What hell was that?" For example, Shannen Doherty, who plays Brodie's ex, acts weird after being referred to as "Brenda."

Smith's sense of humor may not appeal to the masses, but it is earning him a like following.

Some of the film's best moments come with the delivery of Smith's dialogue. London, a professional skateboarder, adds a dimension of realism to the film which at times makes an attempt at comparisons to *Saved By The Bell*.

But it really can't. The characters lack depth, and the film seeks to resolve a subplot after a day full of waffling major characters.

Whatever the reasons for the film's failure, there are enough blunt and humorous moments to offer audiences hope, if not else.

Hopefully, Smith will return to the mall and tap in to what works for his next project. One area where he needs to move forward, however, is in the subject matter itself.

Smith has done all he can with the film, up, girl-that-got-away plot. Maybe his film should be about a creative writer who takes the film world by storm only to lose his creative soul — not to mention his sense of humor — to a major film project.

Smith's already done the research.



Brodie (Jason Lee) tries to cheer up his friend T.S. (Jeremy London) by taking him to the mall in *Mallrats*.

Get Shorty wins with chaotic humor

By Wes Swift
THE BATTALION

Get Shorty is about as organized as a third-grade fire drill. Storylines fly at you from every angle so haphazardly that viewers' heads spin.

But just like the fire drill, it gets the job done.

John Travolta stars as Chili Palmer, a Miami loan shark who travels to Los Angeles looking for a person with a delinquent payment. While in L.A., he looks up Harry Zimm (Gene Hackman), a Hollywood producer who owes a Las Vegas casino \$150,000.

When Palmer goes to Zimm to collect the bucks, the producer persuades him to wait for the cash. In return, Palmer tells Zimm his own idea for a movie, a story that resembles his own venture to California.

MOVIE REVIEW

Get Shorty
Starring John Travolta, Gene Hackman, Rene Russo and Danny DeVito
Rated R
Playing at Hollywood 16
★★★★ (out of five)

Zimm likes the idea and pulls Palmer in as an investor. But his ideas also get the attention of Bo (Delroy Lindo), a small-time gangster who has an IOU from Zimm. Bo wants into the flick, but he has to eliminate Palmer.

As Palmer and Bo duke it out, Colombian drug lords enter into the picture looking for some drug money from Bo. Then Palmer's boss from Miami

comes looking for the loan shark. Palmer and lover Karen Flores (Rene Russo) try to woo mega-star Martin Weir (Danny DeVito) to star in the film, and ...Get the point?

When the smoke clears, though, all the ends are tied up and everything, somehow, makes sense.

Reminiscent of last year's *Pulp Fiction*, *Get Shorty* is a hari-kari comedy built on a wonderful script and powerful cast. The story has so many subplots that it teeters on collapse but pulls back from the brink to deliver a funny, yet chaotic, film.

The script is deftly crafted to keep all the storylines separate but connected. The storylines never seem too distant from one

another, and the inevitable connection keeps viewers interested.

Travolta is just as smooth as he was in *Fiction*. Palmer is basically a light-hearted Vince Vega — the dark mobster who is part monster and part comic. Hackman is solid as the hapless Zimm, and Russo is excellent as Flores, the Hollywood-wise B-movie actress.

DeVito has such a small part that it's hard to get a handle on his performance. It is hard to believe he got almost top-billed for the film.

Lindo, however, is brilliant as Bo. Lindo plays the hood straight faced, but with enough style to make his lines straggly funny.

Throw in cameos by Harry Keitel, Bette Midler and others and *Get Shorty* turns out to be a film that's long on entertainment and short on flaws.

AGGIE ATHLETICS HOME EVENTS

Football

October 28 vs. Houston 1 p.m.

Volleyball

October 25 vs. Houston 7 p.m.

W. Bktb

November 2 vs. Women's Military 7 p.m.

M. Bktb.

November 13 vs. N. Zealand 7 p.m.

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The R.C. Slocum Call In Show

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The Texas Aggies

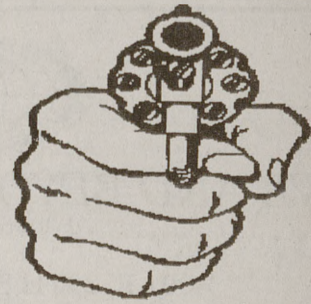
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MSC POLITICAL FORUM PRESENTS:



Back in the Holster and Under the Jacket

A discussion program on the concealed handgun law that takes effect on Jan. 1, 1996. A question-answer session will conclude the program.

Panel of Speakers:

The Honorable Steve Ogden
Texas State Representative

Mr. Robert E. Wiatt
Director, University Police Department

Mr. Dave Burdett
N.R.A. Member, Shop Owner, and HCL Instructor

Wednesday, October 25, 1995
8:30 PM - 292A MSC

Memorial Student Center, Texas A&M University

Persons with disabilities please call 845-1515 to inform us of your needs. We request notification three (3) working days prior to the event to enable us to assist you to the best of our abilities.

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