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MOVIE REVIEWS

Extreme Measures

Starring: Hugh Grant, Gene Hackman and Sarah Jessica Parker
Directed by: Michael Apted
Rated: R
Playing at: Hollywood 16

A homeless man is brought into a trauma room of Gramercy Hospital in the middle of the night.

The attending physician, Dr. Guy Luthan (Hugh Grant), attempts to provide emergency care for the man, but he later dies of unknown causes.

The weird circumstances surrounding the man's death heighten when the body disappears from the hospital morgue, and his records are nowhere to be found in the computer system.

As Luthan begins a personal investigation into what happened to his patient, he relies on Nurse Jodie Trammel (Sarah Jessica Parker) to help him discover an awful truth about the medical industry.

Dr. Lawrence Myrick (Gene Hackman) — one of the country's top medical researchers — is at the center of the controversy.

Once Myrick, Luthan and Trammel come together, the plot of *Extreme Measures* takes off.

In this first motion picture by Simian Films, a company formed by Grant and Elizabeth Hurley, the purpose is, clearly, to give the audience a thrill they will not forget.

Unlike his previous comedic line of films, Grant is believable as a doctor being kept in the fog about a secret medical operation.

He drops his usual bumbling dialogue and opts for a serious, straight-faced attitude about the rights and wrongs of medicine.

Parker, also taking a leap from her comedy outings, portrays an emergency room nurse with a friendly personality.

Her body language and facial



Sarah Jessica Parker stars as Nurse Jodie Trammel in *Extreme Measures*, playing at Hollywood 16.

expressions work well with her nurse character. Parker knows when to be technical and when to go outside the realm of medicine as a regular person.

Hackman, whose performance is strong and motivated, is not seen enough throughout

the film. His character decides to be more medical than moral; this can consistently be seen in the depiction of Myrick.

Extreme Measures tests the waters of morality, and the deliver performances which the edge. **B+** — James P.

2 Days in the Valley

Starring: Keith Carradine, Jeff Daniels, Teri Hatcher, Peter Horton, Marsha Mason, Austin Pendleton, James Spader, Eric Stoltz and Charlize Theron
Directed and Written by: John Herzfeld
Rated: R
Playing at: Hollywood 16

Moviefgoers want the maximum value of their money. So, if anything was revealed about John Herzfeld's *2 Days in the Valley*, many surprises would have been given away.

Instead, an abridged plot layout will cover the essentials.

The movie depicts events occurring over two days in the San Fernando Valley.

The story starts with Lee Woods (James Spader) as a mysterious hit man and Dosmo Pizzo (Danny Aiello) as an unemployed hit man hired by Lee to help kill a man named Roy Foxx (Peter Horton) who is staying at the house of his ex-wife, Becky (Teri Hatcher), an Olympic skier.

Meanwhile, Allan Hopper (Greg Cruttwell), an art dealer, experiences complications from kidney stones and is confined to his house with his tormented assistant, Susan Parish (Glenne Headly).

At the same time, two police officers, Wes Taylor (Eric Stoltz) and Alvin Strayer (Jeff Daniels), are busy trying to close down a massage parlor Strayer says is performing illegal services.

An out-of-work director, Teddy Peppers (Paul Mazursky), has become suicidal because of his lack of work and his wife's death, but doesn't want to die before he's sure his dog, Bogey, will have a

safe home.

The events are occurring simultaneously and eventually lead into one another.

The large cast of characters also includes Charlize Theron (Charlize Theron), Lee's hot-tempered girlfriend and Audrey Hopper (Marsha Mason), Allan's who is a nurse.

If all this sounds familiar, it should.

The idea behind this film is similar to *Pulp Fiction*.

I admit, I was expecting a complete rehash of Quentin Tarantino's ideas from the moment I entered the theater. But like a handful of other movies of a good idea, *2 Days in the Valley* was impressive.

Herzfeld, who until recently has done little more than made-for-television movies, wrote and directed the film.

The script, although full of improbable and well-written with seamlessly interlaced scenes, performances range from good to top-notch.

And there is graphic violence, extensive bloodshed and sexual content for anyone with those things.

The main problem with this film is that it attempts to profit from the success of *Pulp Fiction*. The idea of telling separate stories and connecting them all in some way has been done before.

It would not be right if I did not deduct points for lack of originality, but there is a difference between an obvious copy done poorly and an obvious copy done perfectly.

And *2 Days in the Valley* manages the latter. The film comes as close as legally possible to replicating *Pulp Fiction* without being a rehash.

I highly recommend this film to anyone who likes *Pulp Fiction*, graphic violence and dark thrillers. **B-**



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