

## REEL CRITIQUE

MOVIE REVIEWS

### Summer of Sam

Starring John Leguizamo and Mira Sorvino  
Now Playing at Hollywood 16

Few films ever come close to capturing the face of human nature and the evolution of mind. Few can portray the raw energy that comes about in the scariest of times. *Summer of Sam*, directed by Spike Lee, truly does.

It is the summer of 1977. Disco is at its peak. Punk has begun to startle the masses. Sex and drugs are as widespread as ever, and the age of careless living just seems to go on forever.

One of the "hottest" summers in the history of New York City gets even hotter as a record heatwave

blankets the city and a madman, David Berkowitz, a.k.a. The Son of Sam, is on the loose.

The film should be viewed and interpreted as a whole. It is a story of chaos and pure craziness. It is of a neighborhood and its struggle against a madman. More importantly, though, it is an undertaking of the changing times, the clash of culture and the fall of the careless '70's.

The dramatic aspect of this film is a selling point. Sorvino (Dionna) and Leguizamo (Vinny) both do a swell job of portraying a strained marriage caught up in the heat of the summer. Sorvino is an innocent soul trapped within the mayhem, and Leguizamo is a wild-hearted sex fiend right in the middle of it. Adrien Brody (Ritchie) also does well in his depiction of an Italian street kid turned punk rocker and his internal struggle during the turbulent times of the summer.

It should be noted that *Summer of Sam* does paint a rather violent and explicit picture. As for the killings, though; the film does little to glorify them. In fact, it really does no more than other such documentary-style films throughout history. As for the nature of it, it is reality and should be viewed that way.

This could possibly be one of Lee's best yet. It does an incredible job of portraying a story and creating an energy that takes the audience on a wild ride through human emotion and experience. *Summer of Sam* is a true spectacle of great filmmaking. (Grade: A+)

— Brian Fleming

While Will may be the King of the Fourth of July weekend, his latest submission is nothing more than a dud. (Grade: D-)

— Aaron Meier

### South Park:

**Bigger, Longer and Uncut**  
Featuring the voices of Trey Parker and Matt Stone  
Now Playing at Hollywood 16

How *South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut* avoided an NC-17 rating is beyond imagination. That being said, this movie proves there is more to Stan, Cartman, Kyle and Kenny than just their pretty construction-paper animated faces.

The movie has the boys sneaking into the Terrace and Phillip movie, *Asses of Fire*, and emerging from the theater with an arsenal of new profanities that enrage their parents and eventually have the country declaring war on Canada.

By the way, Satan is having a homosexual relationship with Saddam Hussein — how's that for an original plot twist?

Parker and Stone have created a tongue-in-cheek preemptive attack on all the parents who will cry foul at this film and have done it with their traditional irreverence and raunchy humor.

The genius of the film is that it is built in response to parental criticism while still keeping the audience's interest in the shocking humor.

While *South Park* stays true to its roots, director Parker has lifted the series out of television banality and given a breath of fresh air to the quartet of foul-mouthed kids.

Parker also penned most of the movie's musical numbers (which are surprisingly outstanding), utilizing traditional musical techniques such as interludes, reprises and the fixed idea of showtunes that everyone learned about in high school.

However, the movie abuses the musical numbers and, after a while, viewers just want to see the film over and finished.

After the first hour, *South Park's* raunch lacks its original humor. After all, how many times can one person hear the word f-k in a movie? (Grade: B+)

— Aaron Meier

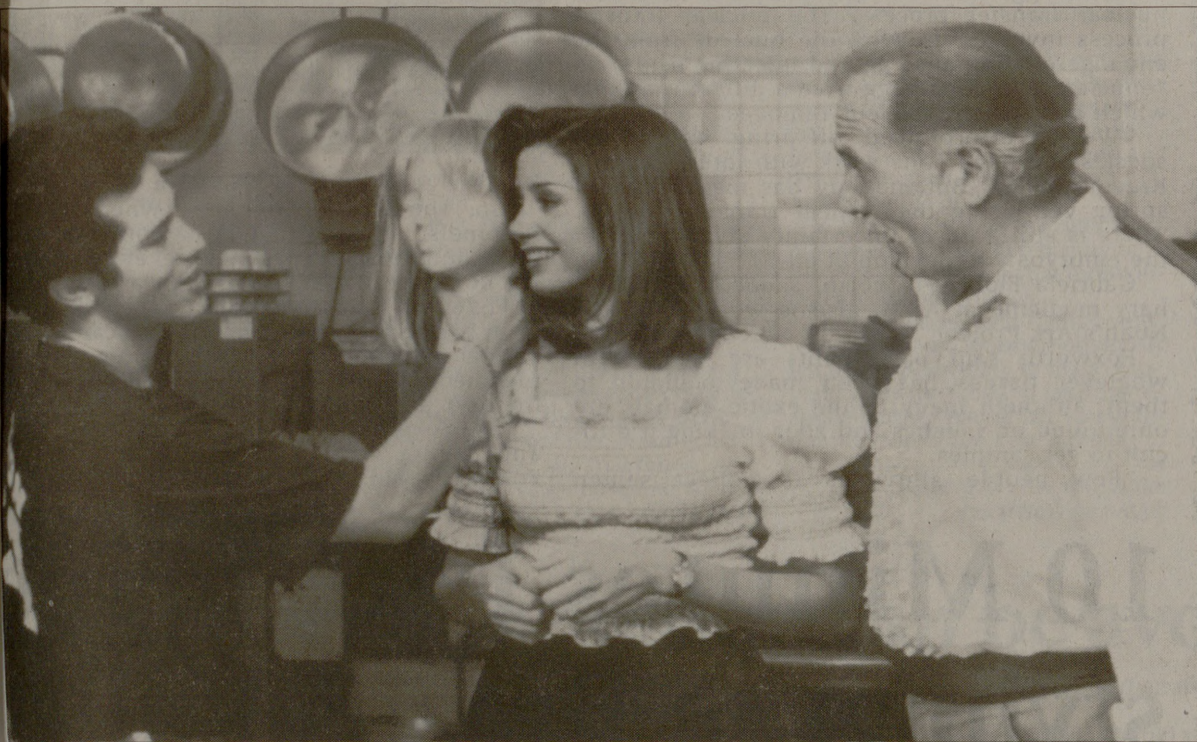


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Leguizamo, Sorvino and Nacarella star in Spike Lee's *Summer of Sam*.

### Wild Wild West

Starring Will Smith and Kevin Kline  
Now Playing at Hollywood 16

It isn't a coincidence that one of the nation's worst presidents, Ulysses S. Grant, is the commander in chief during the time frame of *Wild Wild West*. The movie brings new meaning to the word dull.

Smith plays Jim West, the hero who is forced to join forces with Kline's Artemus Gordon to pursue Dr. Loveless, played by Kenneth Branagh.

The original series relied on the chemistry of the original stars and the campy nature of the predicaments they were forced to solve. Neither survives in the film adaptation.

The chemistry between Kline and Smith is slightly better than oil to water — the scenes of witty banter between the two come off as genuinely hateful.

Salma Hayek plays the Old West equivalent of a Bond girl — window dressing with minimal acting ability. Her stilted delivery and attempts to seem over the top play off as just hokey.

This movie has to be the worst offering yet from director Barry Sonnenfeld, a Hollywood director who is normally known for his ability to bring creativity to the normally lukewarm waters of blockbuster filmmaking.

It appears as though Sonnenfeld got fed up with the pathetic progress of the film and simply gave up after the opening minutes. Some of the scenes with the stars riding around the desert make Jar Jar look realistic.

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