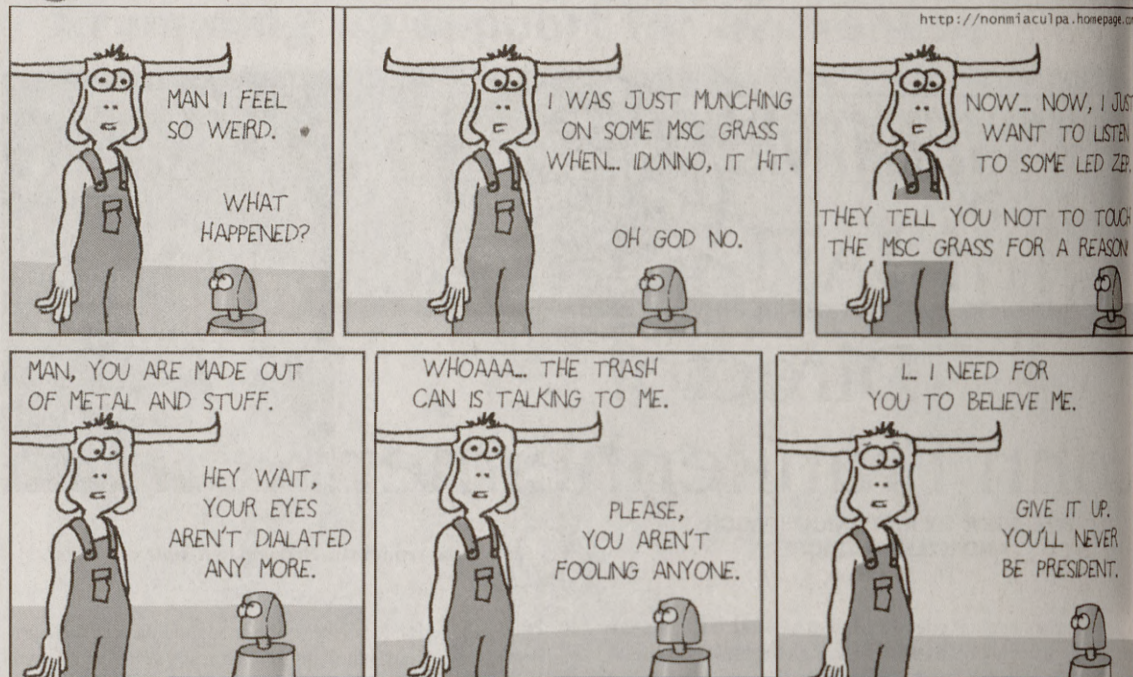


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FRANKENHEIMER

Continued from Page 3
really straight, but you can't have a lot of holes. I believe the audience goes into the movie wanting to like that movie, and it is up to you to not betray the audience. I think if you do, you never get them back.

Q: Did you ever work with Orson Welles?

A: The strange thing about it is I became a director in 1954. I didn't see *Citizen Kane* until two years later. It was such a feeling of validation when I saw it that I was doing this too and it was okay.

Q: Are you going to do more television?

A: Yes, I would like to keep doing the cable stuff because I think the best scripts today are on cable. They are not concerned with that opening gross that first weekend. It's less commercial.

Q: Do you have any other projects coming up?

A: I don't. I have got a script I like, and I think I am going to do it. Today, until you get the thing cast and until you get a budget, they don't greenlight. This script is not with Miramax either, and I would kind of like to do my next picture with them. Then I have a mini-series on Robert Kennedy that I want to do. We just got a script in on that—I haven't read it yet. I don't know. I think the next thing I am going to do is a commercial about not smoking [laughs].

REEL CRITIQUE

Reindeer Games
Starring: Ben Affleck and Gary Sinise
Directed by: John Frankenheimer

Reindeer Games posed many big risks for everyone involved in the project. This movie has one of the most expensive budgets the studio Miramax has ever green lighted. Director Frankenheimer needs this movie to be big hit or else the legendary director will permanently drop to second-rate status. Affleck needs to show that he can carry a movie by himself, without Matt Damon at his side. Unfortunately for all involved, the screenplay undermines their efforts.

Games tells the story of Rudy (Affleck), a just-released convict, who takes his dead cellmate's name in order to spend Christmas with his pen pal Ashley, played very well by the beautiful Charlize Theron. This is the first of a series of mistakes that Rudy makes because his decision ultimately leads to his kidnapping and his forced participation in a robbery of a casino on Christmas Eve by Ashley's brother, played by Sinise.

However, for better or worse, Frankenheimer directs this movie much the same way he directed movies 30 years ago, refusing to change with the times. Affleck, cast for his boyish charm and to give the otherwise dark movie a sense of humor, does an admirable job of playing the hero. However, he does make viewers wonder about his ability to act without a strong supporting actor. As for the other cast members, Sinise doesn't come across as mean enough to be the completely stereotypical long-haired, hard-ass villain, but Theron delivers a convincing performance.

Ultimately, despite many positive notes, the movie falls in on itself because the script, written by Ehren Kruger (*Scream 3*), just does not hold it together. Neither the direction, nor the actors nor the studio could save this script. The studio's only mistake was to pin such big hopes on such a script.

Although the end of the movie does serve up some surprises and is extremely exciting, *Reindeer Games* plays too many games with the audience before it gets there. (Grade: C)

— Matt McCormick

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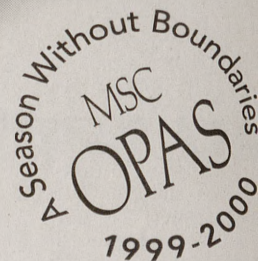
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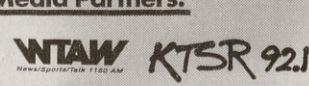
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