

# REEL CRITIQUE

## MOVIE REVIEWS

**Bait**  
Starring Jamie Foxx and David Morse  
Directed by Antoine Fuqua  
Now Playing at Hollywood 16

Since Jamie Foxx's last film, the easily forgettable *Field Up*, failed to make even a ripple at the box office, one would think it a risky proposition for him to headline another film. Directed by the talented Antoine Fuqua (*The Replacement Killers*) and backed up with a superb supporting cast of David Morse, Jamie Kennedy, Doug Hutchinson and Robert Pastorelli, *Bait* dispels any such notion as it laughs and explodes its way through a fairly entertaining time at the movies. Foxx plays Alvin Sanders, a career criminal busted for stealing shrimp from a seafood factory. In jail, yet again Foxx's character is placed in a jail cell with Pastorelli, who double-crossed his recent partner in a robbery of the Federal Reserve and then hid the money. The tough-as-nails Treasury agent shows up played with an uncharacteristic vehemence by Morse, and, after the Pastorelli's character's untimely death, the agent decides to use Alvin as bait to lure the other robber out

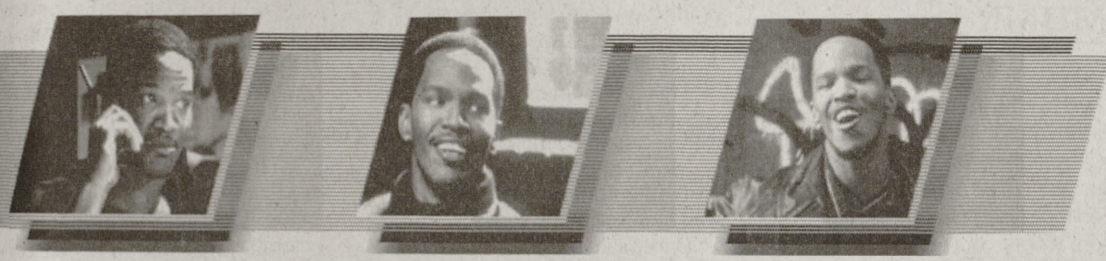
of hiding. In the tradition of Beverly Hills Cop and any Martin Lawrence movie, *Bait* attempts to cross the appeal and humor of a young black comedian with an action flick. No film since the original Cop has succeeded, but, thanks to Fuqua's eye-catching direction, this movie manages to rise above some recent releases.

Fuqua seems to have watched Michael Bay's *Bad Boys* several times — nearly every shot in *Bait* seems borrowed. Fuqua uses an array of tracking shots, refusing to let the camera sit still at moments of rising tension. This adds excitement to a film that is spread thin on action.

Foxx charms and laughs his way through this movie holding it together between the scenes of Fuqua's energy.

Fast and funny, *Bait* comes close to being a good movie. Momentary lapses in comedy and a number of failed sub-plots turn this into a just-better-than-average popcorn flick. (Grade: C+)

— Matt McCormick



**Nurse Betty**  
Starring Renee Zellweger and Morgan Freeman  
Directed by Neil LaBute  
Now Playing at Hollywood 16

*Nurse Betty* is a truly surprising film. Refreshingly original, this movie has moments of true humor coupled with a dark mood. Extremely charming, and at the same time quietly unsettling, *Betty* could be an Oscar contender in the months to come. A young waitress, played perfectly by Zellweger, witnesses her trashy husband's brutal murder and suffers a psychotic break. She is no longer Betty the wife — now

she is Nurse Betty, a character in her favorite soap opera, "A Reason to Love."

*Nurse Betty* then takes off on a cross-country journey to reunite with her character's love interest, played with oozing charm by Greg Kinnear. The whole time she is pursued by an odd pair of hitmen played by Rock and Freeman.

This movie is a rarity because of the numerous emotions it manages to pull from the audience. It can make people squirm in their seats while they are laughing.

Director Neil LaBute (in the *Company of Men*) does a nice job directing this film because he realizes it is Zellweger's to carry, and

he lets her.

Zellweger delivers one of the most charming and heartbreaking performances in years by a female performer as she displays raw and untempered emotion at every turn. She plays Betty with child-like innocence and her pretty face, looking freshly scrubbed, enhances that sense. If she is not nominated for Best Actress, the Academy members should consider themselves morons. Her purity carries the film.

Freeman and Rock, good as always, feed off of each other as the pair of hitmen. They are funny to watch but also serve to enhance and drive home many of the film's more important moments.

*Betty* is a deep and involving film. On one hand, it is one of the most intelligent and intense dramas of the year. However, at times it is so powerful it will be easy for audiences to dislike it because they do not like the emotions the movie makes them feel. Give the film a chance, and most people will see that is brilliant exactly for that reason. (Grade: A-)

— Matt McCormick



**A = instant classic    B = a cut above    C = average**  
**D = don't buy it        F = burn in effigy**

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Ms. Jackson is currently Senior Vice President, TXU Electric & Gas, Business Development and Customer Service. She previously served as Vice President, TU Services, Customer Operations, 1992-97 and as Home Service Advisor, 1977 (First job with TXU, then "Dallas Power & Light Company").

Ms. Jackson has received numerous honors and awards, some of which are listed below:

- 1995- Women of Excellence Award from the YMCA and Women's Enterprise Magazine
- 1997- "A Woman of Power", Black Enterprise Magazine
- 1998- Dallas Women's Foundation Circle of honor
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