

MOVIES



Mickey Rourke and Daryl Hannah are lovers whose relationship is in trouble in "The Pope of Greenwich Village," a United Artists release. (NC Photo)

'Pope of Greenwich Village' Interesting — for Adults

By Michael Gallagher

New York (NC) — "The Pope of Greenwich Village" (MGM-UA) is about two young men raised on the streets of Little Italy who dream dreams.

The dream of Charlie (Mickey Rourke) is more firmly grounded in reality than that of his cousin Paulie (Eric Roberts), an inveterate foul-up in the eyes of one and all whose ambition outruns his talent in about the same ratio as his eagerness to deceive outruns his guile.

Charlie wants to own his own restaurant and Paulie wants to gain riches as the owner of a race horse. Charlie has a closet full of expensive suits, but most of them aren't paid for. And, like Paulie, he's in hock to moneylenders whose collection methods are extremely elemental.

At the start of the story, which novelist Vincent Patrick adapted from his book, Charlie and Paulie both have honest jobs. Charlie is the maitre d' at an expensive restaurant in Greenwich Village and Paulie is a waiter. Paulie's penchant for petty larceny, however, gets both of them fired and their precarious financial state abruptly becomes one of outright desperation.

Paulie comes up with a scheme for a sure thing: a safecracking job carried out with the expertise of Barney (Kenneth McMillan), a

wearily, middle-aged locksmith who is the father of a 25-year-old severely retarded son.

Against his own better judgment and the furious protests of his beautiful young mistress Diane (Daryl Hannah), Charlie goes in with Paulie and Barney.

The safe does indeed contain a lot of money, but a complication arises when a crooked policeman is killed accidentally in the course of the robbery. He had come to pick up the money for a payoff to his superior office.

When Charlie cross-examines Paulie, the unsettling news that the safe belongs to a local mob bigshot, Bedbug Eddie (Burt Young), comes to light. Thus the hapless trio have both vengeful police and hoodlums after them.

The resemblance of lot and character is so similar to those of Martin Scorsese's "Mean Streets" that it is present grounds for litigation. But be that as it may, director Stuart Rosenberg ("Cool Hand Luke") has made a quite different kind of movie.

There is none of the frenetic energy of Scorsese's minor classic, but "The Pope of Greenwich Village," thanks in large part to Patrick's script and some excellent acting, is more thoughtful, more intelligent and, in some respects at least, more moving.

Two performances that stand out are those of McMillan as Barney and Geraldine Page as the tough mother of the crooked policeman. Especially affecting is a scene at a subway station when Barney, fleeing from the police, says goodbye to his wife, Nora (Betty Miller).

The main burden of the film falls upon Roberts and Rourke, however, and they overdo things a bit at times — in Roberts' case, at almost all times.

Ms. Hannah does her best with the poorly defined role of Charlie's blond, WASP mistress, a dancing teacher. (Where did these two ever meet, I kept wondering?) Her major function seems to be to show off her physical charms in as few clothes as possible, a touch characteristic of the film as a whole in that Rosenberg tends to put a gloss on gritty reality.

Though it lacks dramatic power, and the ending is a bit too neat in its eschewing of neatness, "The Pope of Greenwich Village" is an interesting and entertaining film, especially this summer in which movies made for grown-ups are practically non-existent.

Because of its extremely harsh language and some moderate violence, it has been classified A-III — adults — by the U.S. Catholic Conference. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.



50th Reunion Scheduled

The 1934 graduating class of Aquinas Institute will celebrate its 50th anniversary on Friday, Aug. 10. Above, this photograph from the 1934 yearbook features class officers, from left, Robert McCarthy, president; Thomas Brady, secretary; Frederick Mix, vice president; and Tully Ripton, treasurer. At 10 a.m., a memorial Mass for deceased class members and faculty has been scheduled at the school chapel. Father Thomas Miller, C.S.B., (Class of 1935) will be celebrant. Coffee and doughnuts will follow. At 5:30 p.m., a dinner-dance has been planned at The Party House on Behan Road. Music will be provided by Ray Doody (Class of '34) and the "Rochesterians." Reservations are necessary and can be made by contacting Doug Walker, reunion chairman, at 663-8665; or Edward Neid, treasurer, at 342-2785.

Catholics Give PG-13 Rating Mixed Reviews

By Cindy Liebhart
NC News Service

A new film rating intended to warn parents that certain movies may not be suitable for children under age 13 has met with mixed reviews among several Catholic media critics.

The rating, PG-13, urges parents to give "special guidance to the attendance of children" at movies which contain material that may be inappropriate for younger viewers, said Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America.

The change, which took effect July 1, follows a wave of protest over violence in recent movies rated PG — parental guidance suggested — such as "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" and "Gremlins."

But, Catholic critics say, although the rating may be helpful in alerting parents to the presence of questionable content, it may allow movies in the new category to contain more violence, nudity and harsh language than previous movies rated PG.

"I'm not entirely enthusiastic about the new rating," said James Arnold, professor of journalism and film at Marquette University in Milwaukee and a syndicated film critic.

Arnold said it will be useful information to "good, conscientious parents who are always

concerned about what movies their kids are seeing."

But he expressed concern that some producers may view this as an opportunity to "soup up" violence in movies that would come under the new category.

Because PG-13 does not prohibit theater owners from admitting children under 13, "those kids whose parents are not quite as conscientious may be watching films that are somewhat worse" than present PG-rated films, he said.

PG-13 will be an "extra flag" for parents in determining what movies their children should or should not attend, said James Breig, editor of The Evangelist, newspaper of the Diocese of Albany, who also writes a syndicated media review column.

"I think it is probably helpful, because PG was a somewhat vague, open rating. There were PG movies with nudity and PG movies with just one curse word," Breig said.

But, he added, the motion picture producers can only supply a general guideline.

It is the parents' responsibility to investigate movies before allowing their children to attend, Breig said. He advised parents to see a movie themselves beforehand. If that is not possible, they can talk to other parents and neighbors who have seen it, read a few

reviews and call the theater manager for a description of a movie's contents.

Humility Sister Elizabeth Thoman, editor of the ecumenical journal Media and Values, said "it is admirable that the movie industry is recognizing there is a certain difference between 11-year-olds and 15-year-olds in their ability to handle strong feelings and images, especially on the screen."

But, because theater owners are not able "to turn people away from the door," it becomes an individual moral decision as to whether someone sees or does not see a particular movie, she said.

The change presents "a real call for those who are responsible for the growth and development of young people" to help them develop internal moral guidelines for dealing with the mass media.

Evelyn Dee, executive director of the New York-based Morality in Media, said, "The rating system has been a joke from the beginning, so anything that warns parents about what's in these films is an improvement."

Ms. Dee said she believes the new rating will not cause movie producers "to be any more responsible than they have been. It is a way of letting them go on being irresponsible."

Capsule Movie Reviews

"Conan the Destroyer" (Universal)

A sequel more polished and less gory than the original, but this lead-footed, muscle-bound costume epic, because of its violence, still qualifies for an O — morally offensive — from the U.S. Catholic Conference. The industry rating is R — restricted.

"Rhinestone" (Fox)

This ill-conceived matchup of Dolly Parton and Sylvester Stallone is a witless, unfunny comedy so bad it is embarrassing to watch. Because of its vulgar dialogue and benign view of sex outside of marriage, the U.S. Catholic Conference has classified it A-III — adults. The industry rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

"Top Secret" (Paramount)

The creators of "Airplane" turn to the international intrigue genre for parody, but they haven't gotten it right this time and most of the jokes misfire. Because of the sexual nature of some of the humor, it has been classified A-III — adults — by the U.S. Catholic Conference. The industry rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

"Beat Street" (Orion)

A skimpy plot involving the aspirations of young blacks and Hispanics in the Bronx loosely holds together a series of production numbers, many of which involve break dancing. It is much more lavishly produced than the similar "Breakin'," but less effective because of its pretension and high gloss. There is some rough language now and then but it is innocuous for the most part. The U.S. Catholic Conference has classified it A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

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Unit to Appeal 'Can't Bury' Fetus Edict

Los Angeles (NC) -- The California Court of Appeals of the Second District has ruled that 16,433 aborted fetuses discovered in an abandoned storage container more than two years ago could not be buried by a local chapter of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights in a public cemetery. The court ruled that allowing the burial would create "excessive entanglement" between church and state.

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