

Off-color innuendo mars comedies' appeal

By Judith Trojan
Catholic News Service

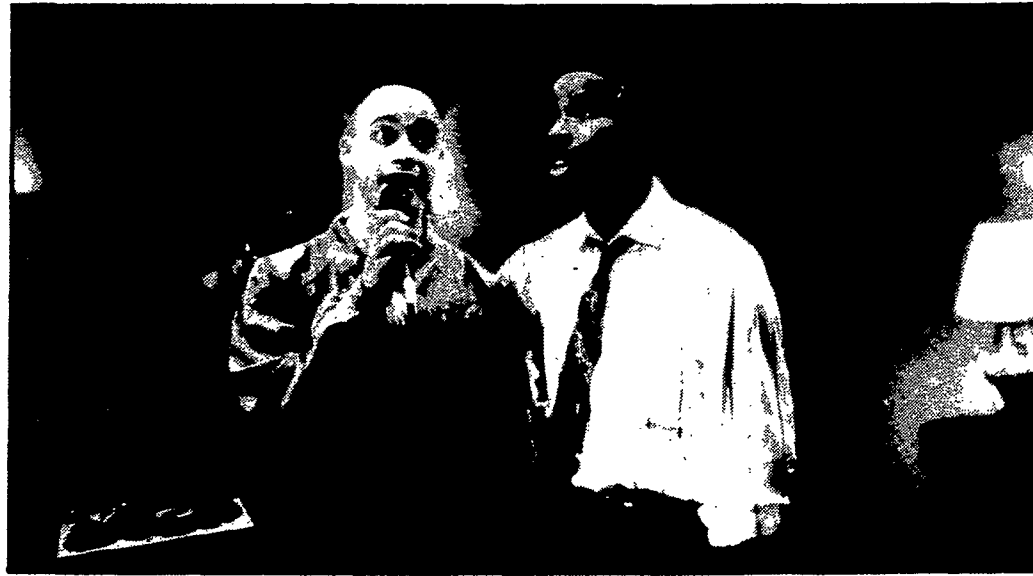
NEW YORK — "House Party" (New Line) is a spirited if overlong comedy about black, middle-class teenagers whose rap is rude and peppered with much sexual and racial lingo.

As written and directed by Reginald Hudlin and produced by his brother Warrington, "House Party" is a film by and about blacks, which aims for crossover appeal to white audiences. The black teenage protagonists live in Ozzie-and-Harriet suburban houses or non-menacing project housing. The hard-working parents in evidence are also strict disciplinarians, but this is no Bill Cosby idyll. The universal premise of this kids-will-be-kids comedy is that teenagers just want to have fun and will break curfews in lieu of missing a friend's big party.

Kid (Christopher Reid), a good student and a popular teen, lives in close harmony with his grouchy widowed Pop (Robin Harris) most of the time. Although he's grounded after being drawn into a fight with some school toughs, Kid is determined not to miss his buddy Play's house party.

The film follows star-crossed Kid as he is foiled in every attempt to enjoy this harmless party. He is unmercifully tracked by the school toughs (played by the hulky rap trio Full Force), sidetracked by his ranting father and harassed by two buffoonish white cops (these are troubling white stereotypes). Finally he ends up in a holding cell in jail, tormented by hard-core hoods who earmark him for jailbait sex.

Although most of this action is classic shtick found in teenage comedies, "House Party" features an abundance of black slang that may go over the heads of many



Bill Nott/News Line Cinema
Actors Christopher Reid (left) and Christopher Martin star as Kid and Play in the film "House Party," a spirited comedy about black teenagers.

older white audiences, as well as a good deal of sexually explicit rap and bathroom humor that, unfortunately, will be clear to everyone.

"House Party" plays up the dopey white-cop stereotypes and the sexually explicit, vulgar dialogue, much of which seems to comprise the teenagers' normal jokey banter and also crops up in rap songs as well. Viewers get a clear indication that these teens frown on drug and alcohol use, although it is implied that they are sexually active.

Due to some cartoon violence, non-stop rough language and white stereotyping, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-IV — adults, with reservations. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

Lewis not only finds his way in L.A., he also recaptures what he lost as a human being.

After subsequently hiring Vivian as his escort for a week of evening business functions, Lewis succumbs to her sexual charms and becomes enthralled with her human qualities. With new clothes and some lessons in poise and social graces, Vivian blossoms, Edward wilts, and the duo slowly but surely falls in love.

The only surprises in this hackneyed rags-to-riches Cinderella story are the attractive characterizations and director Garry Marshall's ability to make the lovebirds' initially disagreeable lifestyles seem agreeable — which may or may not be a good thing. Although streetwalking is the lowest and most dangerous form of prostitution, Vivian's involvement, for example, is too easily dismissed as a lark and temporary money-making scheme to buy her independence from the folks back home.

While these characters have ugly roots, somehow all is forgiven and sanitized by the final fade, and everyone — except Lewis' slimy lawyer (Jason Alexander) — ends up better for having met and done business.

Parents should be forewarned, however, that "Pretty Woman" is strictly adult fare that may mislead young, impressionable adolescents with its romanticized vision of prostitution.

Due to some suggestive sexual encounters between a businessman and prostitute and some rough language laced with sexual innuendoes, the USCC classification is A-III — adults. The MPAA rating is R — restricted.

'Pretty Woman'

Glossy production values, appealing characters and a sentimental story point to box office gold for "Pretty Woman" (Touchstone), a contemporary romantic comedy that steals heavily from such fairy tales as "Cinderella" and "Pygmalion."

Edward Lewis (Richard Gere) is your basic smarmy corporate raider. A workaholic who eats, sleeps and dreams corporate takeovers, Lewis is dumped by his New York live-in lover because she's tired of being booked into his schedule like a random business lunch. In Los Angeles for a business deal, Lewis picks up feisty young streetwalker Vivian Ward (Julia Roberts) for directions — not sex. He's lost in more ways than one. With Vivian,

COMMUNION COLLECTION

ANNOUNCING JCPENNEY'S



Visit your nearest JC Penney children's department to see one of the area's most complete lines of Communion apparel and accessories for boys and girls. Our selection includes an array of beautiful dresses from famous names and handsome dress-up looks for boys. Accessories to complete your Communion wardrobe are also available.

You're looking smarter than ever at

Long Ridge Mall 225-6800
Marketplace Mall 424-1010

Pittsford Plaza 381-4555
Northgate Plaza 663-3660

JCPenney

SPRING SALE

Free Estimates
100% Financing
No Down Payment
Senior Citizen Discounts!

Look What \$2995 Will Buy

KITCHENS: Free Consultation & Design Service; Install Classic Oak Cabinets (choice of stains); Includes up to 15' of Cabinetry • 5 Year Manufacturer Warranty

BATHS: Install New Bathtub, Commode, Sink & Vanity; Ceramic Tile Available

WINDOWS: Install 12 Deluxe Average Size Windows; Insulated Vinyl, Lifetime Warranty; Ask about woodgrain interiors & super-efficient R-20 windows.

SIDING: 1600 Square Feet • No Hidden Charges! New Designs, Styles & Colors; Lifetime Warranty (labor & materials)

PATIO ENCLOSURES: 150 Square Feet • Free Storm Door • Solid Wood

We offer expert workmanship & complete design service for
ADDITIONS
GARAGES • PORCHES
DECKS • SUNROOMS
Free Architectural Plans

FREE
Skylight or
Patio Door
with Additions
HURRY, SALE ENDS SOON!

WMI CONSTRUCTION CO.
Division of Window Man, Inc.
328-4100 ANYTIME
Member BBB & NARI CALL NOW