

After a slow start, comedy provides lots of zany gags

By Gerri Pare

Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — When a vacationing psychiatrist tries to rid himself of a persistent patient, his family keeps insisting, "What About Bob?" (Touchstone).

A harmless patient named Bob (Bill Murray) is terrified of most everything, but convinced that Dr. Marvin (Richard Dreyfuss) can talk him out of his phobias.

The trouble is that "Dr. M" is heading off on a month's vacation with his wife and the kids (Julie Hagerty, Charlie Korsmo and Kathryn Erbe). No sweat. Bob may be a scaredy-cat, but he's also got a cat's cunning.

Soon he's told where they are vacationing, and away he goes. The more Bob ingratiates himself with the wife and kids, the more he infuriates the increasingly uptight Marvin.

Things get so bad for the good doctor that he ships Bob off to a mental institution following the duo's disastrous interview on "Good Morning America." Bubbly Bob resurfaces but the shrink shrinks until it's anyone's guess who's the looney tune here.

Director Frank Oz, best known for his creative association with the late Jim Henson and the Muppets, delivers some goofy family fun in this lightweight comedy.

It takes a while to take off — the first half is leaden and laden with predictable developments. It finally gets zesty about the



Barry Wetcher-Touchstone Pictures
Bill Murray (left) and Richard Dreyfuss star in Touchstone Pictures' new comedy "What About Bob?"

time the "GMA" interview crew shows up and Murray and Dreyfuss switch their sane and insane roles.

Hagerty has a thankless throwback role as the adoring, doormat wife. In fact, this movie could have played just as well 30

years ago, and in other respects (no real violence, sex or profanity) that's not so awful.

Due to some mildly vulgar expressions and cartoonish violence, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

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