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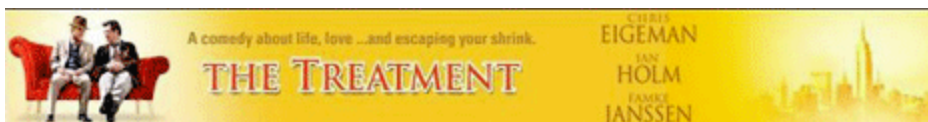
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Fido

Allan Hunter in Toronto

08 September 2006

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- Home
- Free news email
- World Box Office
- Archive
- Reviews
- Industry Jobs
- International Production Listings
- Festival Calendar
- Conferences
- Contacts
- About us/Feedback
- Advertising
- Oscar Moore
- Subscribe
- FAQs
- Links



TORONTO REVIEW



FIDO

Strong-selling zombie comedy has enough charm and smart moves

Dir: Andrew Currie. Can. 2006. 91mins.

A boy's best friend is his zombie in *Fido*, a reasonably inventive comic film that plays out like a fusion of *Shaun Of The Dead* and *Pleasantville*. Andrew Currie's feature has enough charm and smart moves to sustain what is essentially a one-joke premise, but its hybrid nature could make it difficult to position commercially, with gore elements that are too modest for scary movie regulars yet just ghoulish enough to give more mainstream audiences a jolt. The clever irony and wholesome young hero should endear it to general audiences but it might just appear too juvenile for the hip horror hard core. Careful handling is clearly required for a film that still has strong cult potential.

At Toronto, Lionsgate – which releases *Fido* domestically next year – has closed worldwide sales for, among others, Japan (Toshiba), France (Metropolitan), Italy (Rai), Mexico and Central America (Gussi) and Brazil (Paris Filmes); previous deals were announced for the UK (Entertainment) and Scandinavia (AB Svensk).

Set in a suburban world that has the look of a Norman Rockwell painting, *Fido* tells of a time when zombies have been domesticated and now perform all the endless domestic chores that the living consider too tiresome. Desperate to keep up with the neighbours, Helen (Carrie Ann Moss) has finally acquired a docile zombie (Billy Connolly) that lonely son Timmy (L'Sun Ray) names Fido. Neglected by his father Bill (Dylan Baker), Timmy comes to view Fido as a mixture of surrogate father and playmate, while Fido shows some signs of life in his craving for a cigarette and appreciation of a woman's smell.

A topsy turvy approach to the zombie genre, *Fido* generates a good deal of merriment and even a touch of pathos from its satire of squeaky clean suburbia and conventional family values. The idea that Fido is a beloved pet is exploited to the full and even results in a rescue sequence that mimics classic *Lassie* tales.

Although he has no dialogue and spends most of the film shuffling around in slate grey make-up, Billy Connolly uses his eyes to the full as he wins our sympathy for Fido, turning him into a mistreated,



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Screen



to sustain its one-joke premise, says Allan Hunter

TORONTO REVIEW



THE JOURNALS OF KNUD RASMUSSEN

Festival opener lacks the novelty of *Atanarjuat* but builds slowly to a devastating conclusion, says Len Klady

VENICE REVIEW



THE MAGIC FLUTE

Kenneth Branagh's sumptuous delight captures the original's seriousness and frivolity, says Lee Marshall

VENICE REVIEW



EUPHORIA

Ivan Vyrpaev's debut feature may over-reach itself but shows promise for the future, says Dan Fainaru

VENICE REVIEW



INLAND EMPIRE

David Lynch's baffling cinematic mindgame is less a dark and sexy

misunderstood figure in the tradition of Frankenstein's monster.

The entire cast enthusiastically embrace the cartoon-like tenor of the piece without succumbing to the pitfalls of mugging or playing it too large. The eye-popping production design and bright glow of the cinematography help create a convincing vision of a Disney world falling into the clutches of a George A Romero nightmare.

The perky story eventually runs out of steam and resolves everything in a conventional manner. Some audiences might also expect a little more bite to the proceedings but anyone who buys into the initial premise will enjoy the ride.

Production company
Anagram Pictures

International sales
Lions Gate Films

US distribution
Lions Gate Films

Executive producers
Peter Block
Patrick Cassavetti
Jason Constantine
Shelley Gillen
Daniel Iron

Producers
Blake Corbet
Mary Anne Waterhouse

Screenplay
Robert Chomiak
Andrew Currie
Dennis Heaton

Cinematography
Jan Kiesser

Editor
Roger Mattiussi

Production design
Rob Gray

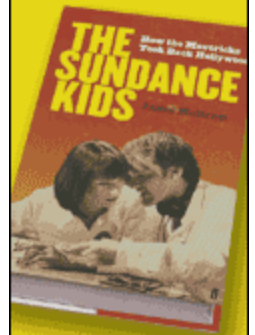
Music
Don Macdonald

Main cast
Carrie-Ann Moss
Billy Connolly
Dylan Baker
Henry Czerny
Tim Blake Nelson
K'Sun Ray

(while stocks last)

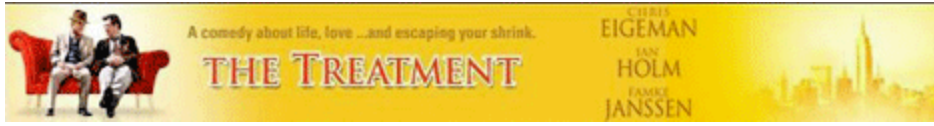
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mystery than a punishing
experimental
experience, says Lee
Marshall



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