

**** Powerful Parable ****

MERCY STREETS

Quality: * * * * Acceptability: +4

WARNING CODES:

Language: *

Violence: *

Sex: None

Nudity: None

RATING: PG or PG13 (not rated by MPAA as of this review)

RELEASE: October 2000

TIME: 100 Minutes

STARRING: David White, Eric Roberts, Cynthia Watros, Shiek Mahmud-Bey, Robert La Sardo, Stacy Keach, & Lawrence Taylor

DIRECTOR: Jon Gunn

PRODUCERS: Kevin Downes, Bobby Downes, Geoff Ludlow, Jon Gunn, David White, & Travis Mann

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: Marta Wells, Dan Wells, Greg Bowerman, & Karen Bowerman

WRITERS: John Mann & Jon Gunn

DISTRIBUTOR: Providence Entertainment

CONTENT: (CCC, BBB, L, V, A, M) Strong Christian worldview with many moral elements; 1 light obscenity; mild violence heightened by threats of violence with slapping, chopping meat as a threat, visualizing a mock murder, & several shootings which are done in a very discreet manner; no sex scenes but some kissing; no nudity; and, lying, cheating, kidnapping, counterfeiting, & stealing rebuked.

GENRE: Crime Drama

INTENDED AUDIENCE: Older children & adults

REVIEWER: Dr. Ted Baehr

MERCY STREETS is a masterful piece of moviemaking with a strong Gospel message. It compares favorably with big Hollywood movie studio fare, and, in its genre, the crime drama, it is much better than contemporary Hollywood fare. It achieves jeopardy and captures audience interest without resorting to foul language or excessive violence, or even perversity.

The story opens with John, played by David White, getting out of prison. Eric Roberts

plays Rome who meets him at the prison gate with the offer of another con. John wants to get out of his life of crime, but he needs money to do so, and Rome is convincing, especially when he shows him the dead body in the trunk. The plan is to con a Japanese billionaire, who wants to buy counterfeit American money.

As the con develops, John escapes the clutches of Rome, survives an exciting car chase, and ends up on the doorstep of his twin brother, Jeremiah, who is about to be ordained as a pastor. Jeremiah is a straight arrow all the way. He is so rigid and inflexible that his girlfriend is ready to leave him. Rome mistakes Jeremiah for John and takes him hostage. John tries to pose as his brother the pastor. With their lives switched, each one learns something important about God's love and grace.

MERCY STREETS has terrific dialogue and characterization. One audience member said, "I didn't know that Christians made movies as good as this . . ." – quite a compliment indeed!

Hollywood loves crime dramas, the gritty underside of life. This movie treats that area where characters can really explore the human condition in a powerful way without resorting to cheap stereotyping, foul language and excessive violence, as previously noted. Teenagers also love these types of crime dramas, but instead of a movie that will lead you to think that crime pays, MERCY STREETS leads you to the truth.

MERCY STREETS is a breakthrough movie for Christian filmmakers. It doesn't rely on biblical conventions as biblical epics and apocalyptic movies do; rather, it tells a redemptive parable in a convincing, powerful way. It should reach a large audience, if only the word gets out.

Please address your comments to:

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SUMMARY: The crime drama MERCY STREETS is a Christian parable about an ex-con and his twin brother, a pastor, who learn about God's love and grace when confronted by the villainous plans of a conman and kidnapper. MERCY STREETS is a masterful piece of moviemaking with a strong gospel message that compares favorably with Hollywood fare.

IN BRIEF:

The crime drama MERCY STREETS opens with John, played by David White, getting

out of prison. Eric Roberts plays Rome who greets John with an offer of another con. John wants to get out of crime, but he needs money to do so, and Rome is convincing, especially when he shows him the dead body in the trunk. Eventually, John escapes Rome's clutches and ends up on the doorstep of his twin brother, Jeremiah, a pastor. When Rome mistakes Jeremiah for John and kidnaps him, the switch in roles teaches each one of the brothers something about God's love and grace.

MERCY STREETS is a breakthrough movie that treats the gritty underside of life in a powerful way without resorting to cheap stereotyping, foul language and excessive violence. Instead of a movie that will lead you to think that crime pays, MERCY STREETS leads you to the truth. Although it isn't a biblical epic, it tells a Christian parable in a convincing, captivating way. As such, it is a masterful piece of moviemaking with a strong Gospel message that compares favorably with Hollywood fare. It should reach a large audience, if only the word gets out.