

Blacks Serve as Brunt of the Jokes in Insensitive Buddy Comedy

Written by Film Review by Kam Williams



Grown Ups

In the opening scene of *Grown Ups*, a Black kid (Jameel McGill) who has very obviously double-dribbled during a basketball game unreasonably calls the referee a racist for blowing the whistle on him. That scene sets the tone for the rest of a movie which is essentially a series of offensive one-liners coming mostly at the expense of African-Americans.

Unless you enjoy laughing at outdated stereotypes suggesting that Blacks are loud, stupid, lazy, smelly, promiscuous and criminal, you might like to pass on this insensitive exercise in bigotry masquerading as a buddy flick. Don't be fooled by the fact that Chris Rock is one of the movie's stars, what's served up as humor here is cruel, hateful, and anything but funny.

Let me offer a few examples, so you can judge for yourself. Rock's character, Kurt, is chronically unemployed, a situation that doesn't sit well with his resentful, expecting-again wife (Maya Rudolph) or with her terminally-sassy mother (Ebony Jo-Ann).

Still, the shiftless slacker returns their stinging barbs by telling his overweight mother-in-law "You look like Idi Amin with a propeller on his head." Meanwhile, she's supposedly so ignorant that she says, "I think I just sat on your adding machine," when she actually crushed a cell phone. Granny is also oversexed, which is proven by how she insists on French kissing Kurt's friend, Lenny (Adam Sandler) as a greeting, at a funeral, no less.

Kurt can't contain his carnal urges either, as he's caught putting the moves on his pal's young nanny. Plus, he's able to have intercourse with his nine-months pregnant wife "because the baby thinks he's getting a Tootsie Roll." Even Kurt's prepubescent son (Nadji Jeter) is depicted as lusting after a friend's breastfeeding mom (Maria Bello) by asking, "Can I have some of her

Blacks Serve as Brunt of the Jokes in Insensitive Buddy Comedy

Written by Film Review by Kam Williams

milk?"

Furthermore, granny is relentlessly classless and crude, whether she's releasing one annoying fart after another, or exposing her unsightly bunions in public. And when she demands a big meal, she's asked whether it's her last before she gets the electric chair. Then, in the end, she gets what she apparently deserves, when she trips and falls face first into a pie comprised entirely of whipped cream.

Young Black females fare no better, such as Kurt's daughter (China Anne McClain) who wonders whether "we get to hang ourselves" at the sight of a tree swing she mistakes for a lynching rope. Then there's this dubious exchange between Kurt and a friend (Tim Meadows) over who is more intimidating to Caucasians. "When white people see me come into a store, they get scared," Malcolm boasts. "Yeah, when white people see me coming into a store, they run," Kurt retorts.

When not poking fun at African-Americans, *Grown Ups* takes aim at other minority groups, and at the mentally and physically-challenged. "I don't know if you're looking at me," is a mean-spirited line leveled at a guy who's cross-eyed. And there's a running joke involving a deferential Asian-American (Di Quon), so dumb she probably couldn't count to two if you let her take off her bra.

The principal plot revolves around the 30-year reunion of members of a championship basketball team (Sandler, Rock, Kevin James, Rob Schneider and David Spade) in honor of their recently-deceased coach (Blake Clark). Despite bringing along their wives and children to the lakefront retreat, they degenerate into a bunch of self-indulgent, potty-mouthed brats over the course of an irreverent 4th of July weekend.

A midlife crisis disaster more akin to *Billy Madison* in search of a second childhood than anything evocative of *The Big Chill*. Grow up already!

Poor (0 stars)

Rated PG-13 for profanity, male rear nudity, crude humor and suggestive material.

Running time: 102 minutes

Studio: Columbia Pictures

To see a trailer for *Grown Ups*, visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZB44Ea1A0k>