

Trio



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The movie turned out to be an interesting look at the state of the country's educational system, disguised as a high concept comedy, and targeted at the recent high school graduates preparing to enter the system of higher education. They couldn't have picked a better release if they tried. Now, how successful it will be at actually delivering on its message has yet to be seen.

[pic]Now, don't get me wrong, this is by no means a great movie, nor is the message that deep. Accepted? survives on a high concept that works, and a story that is populated by likable characters. It is a movie for the outsider, all of those kids who think they are being left behind, those looking for a direction, those looking for a way to realize their hopes and dreams in a system that does not foster their chosen paths. What starts out as a clever, yet highly unbelievable, ploy to garner parental unit approval, turns into a force of nature that aims to bring out the hidden abilities in everyone. The conflict is set up between the structure of the current system, classes, fraternities, boring lectures, hazing, and everything that goes with it, versus the free thinking individualists, those who listen to what you say and act upon that. Old school taking on new school, if you will.

Long plays Bartleby "B" Gaines, who just can't seem to catch a break. He's an outsider at school and rejected by all of the colleges he has applied to. There is one thing he happens to be good at, and that is spinning a credible web of BS at a moment's notice. He takes these skills, and those of his outsider friends, to create a fake school to fool their parents. Unfortunately, one of those friends is too good at his job and actually makes the school's website functional.

That leads to a great influx of new students. Problems only get bigger when they draw the attention, and the ire, of the local “ real” school. Along for the ride, adding just a touch of class, is Lewis Black, who brings his in-your-face style to the role of dean of the fictitious school. Oh, how I wished he had a little more screen time. He was perfect for the role.

The actual conflict is there, but its not really the point, its the window dressing. It - along with the other cliches of the teen comedy, like the underdog getting the girl and the heavysset loser best friend - all of it helps to provide the surface comedy upon which the more serious thoughts play out. It is always a pleasant surprise to have a movie come out of left field and actually have some ideas buried underneath a more mundane surface, much like the excellent? The Devil Wears Prada, a movie that disguised a subversive “ drink the Kool Aid” story buried underneath a more traditional “ ugly duckling” story.

[pic]Accepted? delivers on a few levels. The surface comedy is pretty funny, trying to hide the fake school, trying to deal with the influx of students, trying to get the girl and make the frat boys look stupid. Beneath that the higher concept of a non-traditional education, of challenging long established standards, also works very well. It is not an idea of lowering the standards, but looking for new ways of teaching the traditional concepts, a way of involving those who otherwise may get lost in the system. Steve Pink steps away from the word processor and gets behind the camera for the first time, working from a screenplay written by Adam Cooper, Bill Collage, and Mark Perez. They all came together to make a pretty good movie, a movie that is actually worth the trip to see.

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A movie that gives you the warm and fuzzies in its underdog story, as well as pointing out some of the problems of our system of higher education. Bottom line.? Surprisingly good. Fun story, with some laugh out loud moments. Long pretty much has a lock on these underdog characters, doing another good job here. The low expectations worked in my favor, allowing me to be surprised, in a good way.