Whoopi is wonderful but "Flash" fizzes

**JUMPIN' JACK FLASH**

Directed by Penny Marshall.

Starting Whoopi Goldberg.

At the Cinema '57 and Circle theaters.

By PETER DUNN

I T SHOULD BE CLEAR TO ANYONE who caught Whoopi Goldberg's *Spook Show,* a one woman comedy tour de force, that Goldberg's ability as a comedienne is beyond question. It is a shame that her many talents are wasted in "Jumpin' Jack Flash," her first film comedy role and Penny Marshall's (of *Laverne and Shirley* fame) feature film directorial debut.

In "Jumpin' Jack Flash," Goldberg plays Terry Doolittle, an eccentric young woman who works in the international money transfer department of a large bank. Terry's eccentricity is reflected both at home and at the workplace. Her apartment is furnished with a multitude of movie paraphernalia (posters of Bogart and Bacall, "Metropolis," and "Attack of the 50 Foot Woman") and with other random trinkets (gigantic toothbrush, bunny slippers). Terry's confident, jumpy stride, and that their conversations amount to little more than discussions as to how to rescue Jack. It seems reasonable that Terry and Jack never meet but that Goldberg's comedic talents than a well rounded comedy. The result is that the audience easily factors their talents into the plot. Unfortunately the humor in this film is completely dissociated from the plot. Laughs result mostly from Goldberg's ability as a comedienne, but the film's failure to satisfy Terry's comedic talents rather than a, second lacking in "Jumpin' Jack Flash" is its pitiful attempt to develop a love affair between Terry and Jack. This romance seems most improbable, considering that Goldberg shows in "Jumpin' Jack Flash" why she is so popular as a comedienne, but the film lets this fantasy get out of hand. Terry is lonely inside. Her personal communications over the computer with her clients - essentially her only gratification in an otherwise dull job - are stifled by her strait-laced boss. The decorations of her small apartment reflect a ding, isolated fantasy world. Her friends at work chastise her for not dating.

This makes the film more a showcase for Goldberg's comedic talents than a well adjusted fantasy world. Her friends at work are trying to thwart her plans. The theme of an amateur sleuth jumping into the fray of international espionage has often resulted in many humorous situations. Unfortunately the humor in this film is completely dissociated from the plot. Laughs result mostly from Goldberg's idiosyncrasy, rather than the absurd situations in which she becomes entangled. This makes the film more a showcase for Goldberg's comedic talents than a well rounded comedy.

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Terry's chance to break free from her solitude presents itself when an encoded message appears on her computer terminal from a "Jumpin' Jack Flash." Jack is a British operative trapped behind the Iron curtain and his plea for help leads Terry along the trail of intrigue and mystery. In order to rescue Jack, Terry must attempt to contact other operatives. In the meantime, Terry must also avoid the cutthroats of international espionage, which she becomes entangled in an otherwise dull job - are stifled by her strait-laced boss. The decorations of her small apartment reflect a ding, isolated fantasy world. Her friends at work chastise her for not dating.

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