Simple Men is proof of incompetence in filmmaking

**SIMPLE MEN**

Written and directed by Hal Hartley.
Starring Robert Burke, William Sage, Karen Sillas, and Elina Lowensohn.
Coolidge Corner Theatre.

By John Jacobs

The movie Simple Men opened at the Coolidge Corner Theater last Friday, but that's hardly important. Even a bored person could think of, offhand, hundreds of better ways to spend his or her time than to sit through this film.

In the opening scene, two men and a woman rob a computer warehouse. One of the men gets double-crossed by his partner and his girlfriend, who absconds with the money and goods. Now a depressed unemployed criminal and a fugitive, he and his brother (Bill and Dennis, played by Robert Burke and William Sage) decide to search for their father.

Their father is a former pro shortstop. On the road, he dabbles in radiation, a bad habit he picked up in, of course, 1968. Also in that year, he was convicted for planting a bomb in the Pentagon, a bomb which killed seven people. For the sake of the plot, he escapes from prison by taking a stake, allowing him to be transferred to a low-security hospital. Dennis (the younger brother) hears of the prison break and discovers in time to use her for sex and then dump her. She is a terrorist/murderer. According to direc-

The brothers' search takes them to a small town, where Bill, even though he is in his post-relationship woman-hating phase, falls in love with Kate (Karen Sillas). With all the believability of a movie character, Kate sup-

pełns herself by working at a diner where no one eats at. Her only apparent hobby is planting trees to save the environment. Bill, fearing the risk involved in love, consults a bottle of alcohol and little brother (both of whom know less than he does) about his troubles. The two brothers have a mildly interesting conversation about love and they wonder what women really want from them. No one really knows, though, so how should they? They come up empty-handed, but not before Bill unconv-

vincingly commits himself to womanizing. He tries to make Kate fall in love with him in order to see her for sex and then dump her. But Kate's not that stupid and Bill can't keep up his mysterious-and-experienced yet medi-

um facade. He proposes to her, saying (oh, so romantically) that he would "plant an entire orchard for her."

Meanwhile, Dennis falls in love with a Bulgarian girl (Elina Lowensohn) whom he discovers is his father's girlfriend (even though she is at least 50 years younger), following his anarchist teachings like a cult member. She is waiting for the father to come back for her. In time, he does, and Dennis confronts him. He finds out that his father is innocent, that wait! His father also says that even if he knew who did it, he wouldn't blith.

Of course, this doesn't make the son any happier about his dad's inno-

The son leaves and his mur-

derer-accomplice old dad escapes to Europe in a boat that really wouldn't make it from Boston to Cape Cod. It is a movie, after all. Throughout the movie, the actors step out of character to offer social statements on behalf of the director. The director justifiably lacks faith in his ability to convey his message any other way. The best actor in the film is Damian Young, who plays the son.

Not coincidentally, the movie is replete with bad acting (or no acting). The plot isn't interesting and the "musician" who does the soundtrack needs a new practice before he will qualify even to do beer commercials. I high-

ly recommend this movie to anyone who isn't aware that there are third rate artists in America, damn it. And something should be done about it.

This is your self-sacrificing public movie critic saying, "Stick a fork in me: I'm done."

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