Wayans’ formula action film gets mixed comic results

A LOW DOWN DIRTY SHAME
Written and directed by Keenen Ivory Wayans. Starring Keenen Ivory Wayans, Charlie S. Dutton, Jada Pinkett, and Salli Richardson. Louis Fresh Pond.

By J. Michael Anderson

Keenen Ivory Wayans’ latest effort marks his personal foray from pure comedy into the action genre. A Low Down Dirty Shame is heavy on both the action and mixed success. Wayans is trapped in the body of an action film.

The film an identity crisis of sorts: it’s a comedy which is one of the better parts of the serious suspenseful scenes, Wayans goes too far, leading the viewer at times to wonder if the film is detracl from the film’s effect. A Low Down Dirty Shame is entirely Wayans’ production, but it isn’t beautiful. It’s just very funny action style, and the James Brown was more distracting than fuzzy. The film is full of scenes like this give it the feel of a parody.

The action sequences don’t feel like parody at all, though. The fights are serious with the possible exception of the car fight between Peaches and Angels near the end of the film and they stay away from the graphic violence that parodies de-emphasize. One scene, shot in slow motion, features some flying blood that would have made Doc Edgerton proud. If Wayans had been able to keep his comedy out of the action, the movie would have been much more coherent.

The film’s treatment of women and gays is a minor but refreshing point. Both women leads are strong and independent, even if Peaches does enjoy solo operas a tad much. And while the two gay characters are stereotype and rather eccentric (this is primarily a comedy, after all, they are treated with respect and no one seems to be uncomfortable with their orientation.

In the end, Wayans would be better off sticking with comedy, the genre that gave him his start.

The purpose of education is to develop basic thinking skills and to obtain a basis of knowledge in our chosen field. This provides the foundation for problem solving abilities across a range of disciplines.

However, development of better solutions to challenging problems requires dimensions beyond basic thinking skills and knowledge of the field. It requires creativity in conceptualization and problem solving.

The ability to be ‘creative’ is often regarded with a sense of mystery and apprehension. Sometimes it is considered the exclusive province of artists or others with the right aptitudes.

Of the many studies of creativity, there is one common conclusion; if we give creativity enough attention, we get better at it. This suggests that creativity is a challenge like any other, a ‘problem’ to be solved. It also suggests that, as with any other challenge, our attitudes toward it, our desire for a solution, and our belief in the intrinsic worth of the task are the most important ingredients for success.

The principle obstacles to achieving creative breakthroughs is a premature conclusion that a better solution is not possible. A ‘creative’ solution is by definition one that is different from those that have preceded it and one that often runs counter to accepted knowledge.

To overcome this obstacle, we need to add to our basic thinking skills and technical foundation the following elements of attitude:

1. A strong desire for a creative breakthrough.

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Wayans plays Andre Shame, an undercover cop expelled after a botched drug raid. Now he works as a private investigator taking dangerous cases to keep up with Shame. When Shame is hired by DEA agent Rothmiller (Charles S. Dutton) to track down $20 million in missing drug money, he dowtners some things about Ernesto Mendez (Andrew Divoff), the man he supposedly killed in the failed drug raid. He also meets up with a former flame: Angela Flowers (Salli Richardson) in the failed drug raid. She is heavy on both the suspenseful scenes, Wayans goes too far, leading the viewer at times to wonder if the film is detracl from the film’s effect.

I'm Gonna Git You Sucka, In Living Color and the feature film I’m Gonna Git You Sucka, Wayans is a brilliant comic writer, and this effort is no less hilarious. He puts words in Shame’s mouth that keep the audience roaring. “Don’t act like it’s your first time,” he says to the surprised looking-bad guy while sticking the barrel of his gun into the guy’s mouth.

One particularly well-delivered one-liner kept the audience laughing for a full 60 seconds, obscuring several lines of rising dialogue. The comedy is a bit one-sided as only Shame gets the one-liners, but this doesn’t detract from the film’s effect. A Low Down Dirty Shame is entirely Wayans’ production, but it isn’t beautiful. It’s just very funny action style, and the James Brown was more distracting than fuzzy. The film is full of scenes like this give it the feel of a parody.