

Burglar ★★½

Year of Release: 1987

Review by Randy Parker

Country: USA

Verdict: Skip It

Burglar, as a whole, is boring, confusing, incoherent, and not particularly funny. However, two fine comic performances almost salvage the film and make it somewhat worthwhile. Whoopi Goldberg is perfectly cast as a cat burglar whose masculine behavior challenges traditional sex-role stereotypes. The film makes good use of Goldberg's talent for drifting in and out of a wide range of characters. Goldberg's multiple personalities provide about half the fun and humor in *Burglar*; the Bobcat provides the other half.

Comedian Bob "Bobcat" Goldthwait almost steals the movie with his hilarious performance. In his largest film role to date, Goldthwait plays Goldberg's best friend, a poodle hairdresser. Goldthwait successfully incorporates material from his stand-up act into the film. Nearly every one of Goldthwait's scenes evokes laughter, which is quite a feat since the laughs in *Burglar* are few and far between. Goldthwait's performance is more restrained than usual, making *Burglar* his best work to date. Lesley Ann Warren also stands out as the yuppie dentist who hires Goldberg to commit a burglary.

Unfortunately, these amusing performances are

Burglar's only merit. The movie's plot is uninspired and muddled, leaving the viewer confused and ignorant of the mystery's solution. Goldberg's character, after an hour of detective work, figures everything out, but she and the film fail (or forget) to enlighten the audience about her conclusions.

Perhaps *Burglar's* main problem is its ineffective mixture of suspense and comedy. Many films, such as *Beverly Hills Cop*, have successfully assimilated comedy and action into one package. *Burglar*, on the other hand, fails to do so and consequently suffers from a lack of direction. The movie would have been more appealing had it committed itself exclusively to comedy or to suspense. Given the cast, comedy would seem to have been the appropriate path to follow.

Goldberg, Goldthwait, and Warren succeed in giving *Burglar* a few genuinely funny moments, but the laughs are just too infrequent to give the movie any significant momentum. With a stronger sense of direction (towards comedy), *Burglar* could have been thoroughly entertaining, but as is, one's appreciation for the film is limited to the cast's noble efforts to salvage it.