

Life Stinks ★★★

Year of Release: 1991

Review by Randy Parker

Country: USA

Verdict: See It

In his first movie since 1987's disappointing *Spaceballs*, Mel Brooks takes a sympathetic look at America's homeless, a surprisingly sober subject matter for the usually zany comedian. However, even with its solemn theme, *Life Stinks* is still your basic Mel Brooks-comedy, which is to say that it's abundantly funny and immensely entertaining.

In addition to writing and directing, Brooks stars as an egotistical billionaire who wagers that he can live on the streets of L.A. for 30 days without money and without revealing his true identity.

Brooks steers the movie mostly towards laughs, but he also gives it heart and soul, especially when presenting the homeless.

Leslie Ann Warren, in particular, sparkles as the romantic interest (a crazy bag lady who's wary of men), bringing a tough grittiness to the role. The movie's Achilles' heel: it sometimes gets so ludicrous that you can't take its serious moments seriously. With a slightly sharper edge, Brooks could have carved out some memorable social commentary to sprinkle on top of his irreverent humor.

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