

The Naked Gun ★★½

Year of Release: 1988

Review by Randy Parker

Country: USA

Verdict: See It

A powerful business tycoon dreams up an ingenious scheme to assassinate the Queen of England at a baseball game. And only one man can stop him. James Bond? Guess again. The Equalizer? Nope! Give up? Try Leslie Nielsen, a.k.a. Frank Drebin, the bumbling cop from the short-lived TV series "Police Squad." That's right, "Police Squad" is back and ready for action, this time as a movie from the team that brought us *Airplane*, *Top Secret*, *Ruthless People*, and—of course—"Police Squad." Their movie *The Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad!* reunites most of the original cast from the TV series and features the type of madcap, slapstick humor we've come to expect from Jerry Zucker, Jim Abrahams, and David Zucker.

Although *The Naked Gun* has more laughs than most comedies would dream of, it fails to duplicate the magic of the team's previous efforts. Since *Airplane*, Abrahams and the Zucker brothers have used the same formula so many times now that it has lost its novelty and become clichéd. Many of the jokes in *The Naked Gun* not only lack originality, but also get repeated over and over and over again. The first time Leslie Nielsen pulls up to the curb and crashes into something is mildly amus-

ing, if uninspired; by the seventh time, the gag has grown so stale it makes you want to ... gag.

Whereas most of the jokes in *Airplane* scored a home run, the jokes in *The Naked Gun* often get lost between the dug out and the plate. The first half of the movie strings together a series of non-stop gags one after another, half of which fizzle. The second half, to its credit, slows down and has some extremely inventive and hysterical sequences.

The actors in *The Naked Gun* deserve credit for their solid comic performances in the face of an uneven script. Nielsen is as lovable and inept as ever as Officer Drebin, Ricardo Montalban is appropriately despicable as the conniving tycoon, and Priscilla Presley as Nielsen's love-interest lights up the screen with her humor and sex appeal. The movie's clever cameos also keep things rolling.

Although it may pale in comparison to a masterpiece such as *Airplane*, *The Naked Gun* is by no means a failure. The movie easily has enough successful gags and honest laughs for me to recommend it to any fan of the Zuckers/Abrahams sense of humor.