Movie Review: 'First Sunday'

by David_Elliott

As star of "First Sunday," Ice Cube earns his name. He has an almost hibernating hum, glowering in his take on the old Brando and Mitchum routines, his aura of boredom radiating cool.

'FIRST SUNDAY' - Ice Cube, left, Katt Williams, back center, and Tracy Morgan star in the comedy 'First Sunday.' CNS Photo courtesy of Tony Rivetti Jr. RATINGS

4 STARS - Excellent.

3 STARS - Worthy.

2 STARS - Mixed.

1 STAR - Poor.

0 - Forget It (a dog.) The comedy is a quaint contraption (writer and director, David E. Talbert) about a former felon, Durell (Ice Cube), who can't seem to hold down a job. But he's desperate to grab fast money to prevent his ex from moving away with his beloved son (cute C.J. Sanders).

That pillow mint of family value is it for substance. It doesn't quite justify Durell's joining a pal (Tracy Morgan) who is both a wise-off and moron to rob a church whose fat pastor (Chi McBride) is almost as glacially chilled as Durell.

The silly heist (how did these guys come into plastic explosives?) soon becomes a hostage debate in the church. What keeps the tiny wheel of farce spinning are the talents: Cube himself, suddenly vitalized by shooting off some rounds; Olivia Cole as saintly Momma T; Malinda Williams as the congregation hottie, Tianna.

Best is almost infallibly funny Katt Williams as choir director Ricky. He can zing even dippy lines, often with a gay spin. As in many modern black comedies, it's the quality of the cast that puts somewhat saving zest into the obvious contrivances and stereotypes.

There is going to be some frightfully sober critic, somewhere, to tell you that "First Sunday" is really about church folk as the moral bulwark of the black community. Forget the dud sermon. Grab what laughs you can, even as Cube melts into niceness.

A Screen Gems release. Director, writer: David E. Talbert. Cast: Ice Cube, Katt Williams, Chi McBride, Tracy Morgan, Loretta Devine, Regina Hall, Keith David. Running time: 1 hour, 28 minutes. Rated PG-13. 2 stars.

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