

Movie Review: "Mad Money"

by David_Elliott

What is it with Diane Keaton? She just turned 62, has the facial lines to show it and is even willing to dress badly, but her comic timing hasn't lost a nip of zip and she can still beam one of the great smiles of movie history.

'MAD MONEY' - Katie Holmes, Queen Latifah and Diane Keaton (from left) star in the comedy 'Mad Money.' CNS Photo courtesy of Melissa Moseley. RATINGS

4 STARS - Excellent.

3 STARS - Worthy.

2 STARS - Mixed.

1 STAR - Poor.

0 - Forget It (a dog.) The main kick of the fluffy heist movie "Mad Money" is Keaton. She gets mad (her husband lost his executive job and they may lose their swell house), and then decides to get crazy mad. She joins the cleaning staff of the Federal Reserve Bank in Kansas City, sees the bulk loads of old cash being shredded like the last confetti of 1939, and chooses to rob the joint.

She needs two partners. So power mama Queen Latifah, deciding to commit a felony for her kids' sake, links

up in the crime chain with Katie Holmes as the winky weak link. Holmes plays a janitor bird who strides around the Fed shaking her flirty frame to her Walkman (fist-faced Stephen Root, fanatical head of bank security, keeps the place as tight as Attica, but doesn't mind kookie Katie doing booty duty).

The heist is both amusing and wafer-thin. It involves trash pick-ups, many restroom visits and a lock bought at a hardware store. "Rififi" this is not. But as a chick triangle comedy it works quaintly enough, and the script even toots family values - theft is OK, so is demented greed because the crooks are a family in the making.

The family grows to include snow-haired Ted Danson (Keaton's husband), Holmes' cute biker doof, Adam Rothenberg, and big guard Roger R. Cross, who tumbles for the Queen. When those two hold a closeup, the screen is full.

Callie Khouri, best known for writing "Thelma & Louise," directed the Glenn Gers script in strong debt to John Mister's for the 2001 TV movie "Hot Money." This movie is about as blocked for TV use, but it has a lively score, a snacky cast and enough sharp, funny dialogue to tweak consumerism and even current anxieties about it.

What's not to believe? A lot. But asking for bolted logic and dramatic structure in such a movie is about like asking former Fed chief Alan Greenspan to open a mosh pit in Miami. Anyway, the money in the bank here is Keaton, whose smile gleams us right back to Annie Hall.

An Overture Films release. Director: Callie Khouri. Writers: Glenn Gers, John Mister. Cast: Diane Keaton, Queen Latifah, Katie Holmes, Ted Danson, Roger R. Cross. Running time: 1 hour, 40 minutes. Rated PG-13. 2 1/2 stars.