

Don't be fooled by ads for flick

By Christy Lemire
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Like a poor man's "Shrek," the fractured fairy tale "Hoodwinked" is waiting for you in theaters with big ears, big eyes and big teeth but little bite.

Yet another product of three-dimensional, computer-generated animation, "Hoodwinked" takes the story of Little Red Riding Hood and overstuff it with smart-alecky humor and contemporary pop culture references.

Besides "Shrek," it also borrows heavily from "Fletch" — so would that make it "Shletch"? — featuring a Big Bad Wolf who's really an undercover investigative reporter with fake names and a Lakers jersey, and an electronic score that sounds like something Harold Faltermeyer pounded out.

"Hoodwinked" is also the latest in a never-ending series of movies to use "Rashomon"-style storytelling to explain its convoluted comic mystery from a variety of perspectives — though it took three people, the writing-directing team of Cory Edwards, Todd Edwards and Tony Leech, to come up with it.

If you hadn't figured it out by now, "Hoodwinked" doesn't have an original idea in its head. Kids might be entertained by the colorful aesthetics and nonstop energy; there's an overcaffeinated squirrel, appropriately named Twitchy, who serves as the Wolf's overzealous photographer.



AP PHOTO
Little Red Riding Hood is confronted by a wolf posing as her grandmother in "Hoodwinked." Voiceover actors include Anne Hathaway and Glenn Close.

MOVIE REVIEW

'Hoodwinked'

• **Rating:** PG for mild action and thematic elements
• **Stars:** 1½ out of four

But adults, clearly the script's real target, will see the film for what it really is: hackneyed, inferior and irrelevant.

Red (Hathaway) arrives at the home of her Granny (Close) after delivering baked goodies throughout the forest and instead finds the Wolf (Warburton) dressed in a nightie and wearing a mask. Granny, meanwhile, is tied up and gagged in the closet.

Red turns to fight off this intruder, using her prodigious

karate skills. "You again?" she asks, annoyed. "What do I have to do, get a restraining order?" But, just then, in busts the axe-wielding Woodsman (Jim Belushi), who wants to be an actor.

Crime-scene tape goes up, reporters swarm outside and the rest of the movie consists of Police Chief Grizzly (rapper Xzibit) and Detective Stork (Anthony Anderson) interviewing the suspects to determine what happened in this apparent breaking-and-entering.

Granny, meanwhile, is forced to admit that she's secretly into extreme sports, which drives a wedge between her and Red, who feels she's been lied to her whole life. Not only is this subplot a flimsy source of conflict, it's also a forced attempt at injecting "Hoodwinked" with hipness.

TOP 5

of the week
ending
Jan. 8

Television

1. "Rose Bowl," ABC
2. "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation," CBS
3. "Rose Bowl Pregame," ABC
4. "Desperate Housewives," ABC
5. "NFL Playoff," ABC

— Nielsen Media Research

Movies

1. "Hostel," Lionsgate
2. "The Chronicles of Narnia," Disney
3. "King Kong," Universal
4. "Fun With Dick and Jane," Sony
5. "Cheaper By the Dozen 2," 20th Century Fox

— Exhibitor Relations Co.

Songs

1. "Laffy Taffy," D4L, DeeDee
2. "Run It!" Chris Brown, Jive
3. "Photograph," Nickelback
4. "Gold Digger," Kanye West with Jamie Foxx, Roc-a-Fella
5. "Grillz," Nelly with Paul Wall, Ali & Gipp, Derrty

— Billboard magazine



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AP PHOTO
Oscar host Billy Crystal imitates an Oscar statue's pose at a news conference introducing him as the host of the 76th Academy Awards in 2003. Crystal told the Los Angeles Daily News that he passed on the 2006 Oscar hosting job that went to Comedy Central's Jon Stewart.

Billy Crystal says he turned down another Oscar stint

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES

Billy Crystal said he passed on the Oscar-hosting job that went to Jon Stewart because his one-man stage show is consuming his attention.

Academy Awards producer Gil Cates repeatedly asked, "please do the show," calling as late as just before Christmas, Crystal said. But his Tony Award-winning "700 Sundays" was his first priority.

"I'm so tired at the end of '700 Sundays,'" Crystal told the Los Angeles Daily News. "I didn't want to go from that into a meeting where I'm saying, 'Give me 'Brokeback Mountain' jokes.' It seemed so not what I wanted to do."

"700 Sundays," currently playing in Los Angeles, concludes its limited engagement Feb. 18. It previously played in New York and Chicago.

Crystal has been a reliable performer for the Oscars. The cere-

mony turned last year to Chris Rock, who drew younger viewers but managed to annoy some academy members with his jokes about stars including Jude Law and Tobey Maguire.

Rock is producing and narrating "Everybody Hates Chris," a UPN sitcom based on his life. Stewart, host of Comedy Central's "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart," will be making his first appearance as Oscar host. He has twice hosted the Grammy Awards.

When Stewart was announced as host last week, Cates said he doesn't believe that Stewart — whose show revels in pointed political humor — will have any problems.

"Jon knows the difference of being irreverent without being impolite," Cates said. "This is not a political show. I think he understands that."

The 78th annual Academy Awards will air March 5 on ABC.

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• Horror

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1)

Gate President Tom Ortenberg said. "When a Rob Zombie movie like 'The Devil's Rejects' grosses \$17 million, or Eli Roth's first movie grosses \$20 million, that's very successful for us."

Meanwhile, the Weinstein Co. is in theaters with the low-budget "Wolf Creek," about a madman who targets tourists in the Australian outback. Harvey and Bob Weinstein released the star-studded "Scream" trilogy and several other horror movies under the Dimension Films branch of their former company, Miramax.

Bob Weinstein, who ran Dimension, bought "Wolf Creek" for \$3.5 million a month before it screened at last year's Sundance Film Festival because "it was very hard-edge, very real," he said. The company released it on Christmas Day amid the family films and Oscar contenders.

Paul Dergarabedian, president of the box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations, believes this kind of graphic fare is making a comeback because "when people want to be scared, they really want to be scared."

"With video games and all the entertainment options, it really takes a lot to impress audiences today," Dergarabedian said. "The level of violence and gore cannot be too intense for a lot of people."

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Johnson Memorial Hospital is proud to announce that Dr. Mark Travis has joined Johnson Memorial Health Affiliates in Franklin. A graduate of Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri, he completed his training in Internal Medicine at Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas, Texas. Prior to joining Johnson Memorial Health Affiliates, Dr. Travis was in private practice for 12 years in Atlanta, Georgia. He is Board Certified in Internal Medicine.

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