Chris Rock makes directorial debut with Head of State

By Art Seavey
Staff Writer

T itle: Head of State
Starring: Chris Rock, Bernie Mac, Robin Givens, Tamala Jones
Director: Chris Rock
Rating: PG-13
Runtime: 95 minutes
Score: ★★★★☆ 1/2 out of 5 stars

Loud, brash, and offensive, the film also is a love letter to the most talented of audiences. That’s the usual description of Chris Rock. Yet the comedic giant walked through the door was a subdued version of his larger-than-life performing self. T he humorous surroundings of the Ritz Carlton suite with its presidential aura proved an appropriate setting for a discussion of his latest movie, Head of State. The conversation that ensued, however, gave insight to a side of his career to which most aren’t privy, including the core reason he has started writing scripts.

Head of State, which opened March 28, marks his directorial debut, Rock also wrote, produced, and starred in the feature. Rock plays Mays Gilliam, alderman for a district containing the dregs of Washington, D.C. At the opening, he loses his job and girlfriend. At the same time, running mates for a presidential candidate disappear amid a mid-air collision. Party leader Senator Bill Arnot, played by James Remar, needs a new candidate. With presidential aspirations of his own for 2008, Arnot drafts Gilliam to be his running mate. The plot is not important, and there’s not much of one. But this is a Chris Rock movie. A viewer does not enter the theater expecting to be blown away by a laugh-a-thon. The audience simply wants to laugh.

Rock explains, “There’s some dumb stuff in there. M and Bernie [Mac] smacking each other—it’s over the top… but you gotta give the people something.” It would seem that stepping into the role of director would be a cumbersome move, but Rock said it was quite easy. “I didn’t sit around all day worrying about the perfect light… we just get the joke.”

“We don’t sit around all day worrying about the perfect light... we just get the joke.”

Chris Rock
Actor, Director

“Yeah, because you know, I’m very insecure,” Rock said, something a celebrity does not say too often. His relationship with his actors changed any now that he’s on the other end of the lens! Rock replied, “No, one really has to kiss the director’s ass. You know you wanna be cordial, but you gotta get your way. All I can do is—up my own movie. I don’t know if there’s any relationship change, to tell you the truth. I was getting along with everybody,” he laughed.

He perks of being the director included picking the music to encapsulate the film. Rock is proud of the soundtrack.

“The music is way hipper in this movie than any movie I’ve done. The score is ridiculous. You know what I mean? It feels like it’s 2003, whereas Bad Company probably felt like 1988. It’s little things like that—you can’t let some old guy or woman or whoever pick the Out-Kast song!”

Being in total control of the movie let Rock do the main thing he wanted to do. “I felt it was much easier just like higher joke-per-minute quota.”

Ali and I collaborated with Rock on their earlier comedy, Down to Earth. Together again the pair hatched out the lines for Head of State.

“Me and my partner Ali, we sit down and we write the treatment… take it about an hour. Then we went to D.C. and, you know, you suck in the town. You

Carolyn Cook (left) plays the Homebody and Donna Biscoe (right) plays Mahala in the Homebody's current production of Homebody/Kabul. In the play, the Homebody mysteriously disappears to Afghanistan.

H omebody/Kabul chronicles a British woman in Afghanistan

By C. Jason Mabry
Contributing Writer

W hat: Homebody/Kabul
Where: Horizon Tเครmer
When: Wednesdays through Sat-
ursdays until May 11
Cost: $16-25
Website: www.horizontheatre.com
Rating: ★★★★☆ 1/2 out of 5

At once serious and funny, Homebody, the story of a British woman who voyages to Afghani-
stan and never returns, captures the viewer with an intriguing tale and earnest real-world parallel. The play, by playwright Tony Kushner, written in 1998, has found resurgence in popularity since the terrorist attacks on the U.S. in 2001.

The central character, the Homebody, lives in a world comprised of other cultures and its far-reaching issues presented, because they are so current and very ingrained in memo-
ries. This heightens the awareness of the audience to the material and issues presented, because they are recent and very ingrained in memories.

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At just under four hours long, Homebody/Kabul captivates the spirit and invigorates the mind, revealing the all-too-common ignorance of other cultures and its far-reaching effects. Eat before and enjoy through-out.
Two Bits is usually a light-hearted, refreshing break from the world that we live in. However, on occasion, something happens that commands a serious tone. Of course, this is the war.

The last thing the Two Bits man wants to do is turn this column into a political platform, so that will be avoided as best as possible. Again, this is usually a humorous account of things in life, but when your fellow citizens are halfway around the world dying for their country, something has to be said. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of published writers to be the ones who vocalize views, so I am simply fulfilling my duty.

Whatever your view of the war is, just put it on hold for a little while. At the start, war seemed like something we really needed to do—then the war started and people started dying.”
John Travolta takes on tough military role in thriller Basic

By Vivian Vakili
Contributing Writer

T HE TITLE BASIC
STARRING: John Travolta, Samuel L. Jackson, Connie Nielsen, Giovanni Ribisi
DIRECror: John M. C. Tiernan
RATING: R
RUNTIME: 98 MINUTES
SCORE: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ out of 5 stars

Your parents remember him from Saturday Night Fever. Your big sis-
ter remembers him from Grease. You remember him mainly from Pulp Fiction. I will remember John Travolta as a very nice man that sat down to talk to me for about 40 minutes, shortly before the release of his new movie, Basic.

I had seen theovi myself about a week before. Not really a fan of movies, much less a fan of action/military movies, I expected to be bored and maybe a bit confused (it is hard to pay attention when you feel you have to look away half the time to avoid blood and gore).

However, I found myself very interested throughout, and maybe a bit surprised. The element of surprise came from my ability to completely follow the entire plot thread of interest, courtesy of the movie’s successful balancing act.

Unlike most action movies that seem to revolve around one main storyline, Basic has multiple subplots and so in a strange way, this makes it a film that can entertain on many levels. However, the entertainment is shallow at best. Army rangers caught in the middle of a murder in the jungle are the main story of the movie.

When asked what he considered to be the smartest move of his career, Travolta promptly responded, “Pulp Fiction.” It revived his career.

Travolta played an ex-D.E.A. officer assigned to the case to find out who murdered whom, and Samuel L. Jackson played the sadistic commander of the ranger mission. The movie is filmed in flashback and out of sequence, so the audience slowly has the story uncovered for them.

I found the whole thing a bit strange, though, if not incredibly unbelievable. I believe the ending was intended to make the audience feel because the movie was too impressed by the surprise at the end orchestrated by the ingenious plot writer, but instead the ending was just stupid.

There were no bad guys at the end, but there were no good guys either. Just as in an episode of Barney, where everyone holds hands at the end, Basic ended with everyone, even those previously seen killing each other, in perfect harmony. Nevertheless, this was a bit unbelievable.

One of the biggest criticisms of the movie is that it has too many plot twists. I would have to agree with this, as probably would have enjoyed it a lot more had something been dealt with a bit more mysteriously.

Travolta had a few words about the movie as well. First, he mentioned having spent a few weeks at Ranger School to prepare for the role. At the time of our interview, he was obviously still in very good shape from the rigorous training.

He would certainly work with Quentin Tarantino again, he said of the smartest move of his career, “It totally rekindled my childhood at the same time that it was celebrating my present success.” The combination of those two was probably the most fun I’ve ever had. I just looked over to that side of the room, and there was Tom Hanks and Sigourney Weaver. And over on that side, there was Sharon Stone and Dustin Hoffman having a drink with Steven Spielberg.

“And they were all dancing and happy, and they were all there for me to have a party. And we were at the airport with jets flying outside the window, which is my favorite thing, and the music from my childhood and, I don’t know. I was just having a blast.”

Let it be known that John Travolta is not only one of the most memorable actors of our time, but also a charismatic individual capable of instilling starstruckness in its most severe form.
get three hotel rooms... and then write... room is in the middle. And you roll out of bed at nine o'clock, and you start writing till you're done. You immerse yourself in the thing."

Rock endured the routine for three months. Although there is not much in the way of real politics, his team did research how a real campaign would run. "It took some time with Clinton staff people and stuff like that so the movie wasn't going to run. "It took some time with Clinton staff people and stuff like that so the movie wasn't going to run."

"You immerse yourself in the thing." He went on to explain that it was the top movie brand. "It was okay, but [Latifah's] character is a cop, nothing fancy, nothing over the top. He's got his wife and he gets to yell and do some funny shit from time to time."

For the moment, Rock has no plans to return to television. This is an idea that he is content with, as he has no idea what he would do. "I got some idea that I think Ashton Kutcher was teaching me something, and I'm like, in what world is Ashton Kutcher smarter than me? I got to write my own movie!"

Recently his brother, Tony Rock, appeared in the HBO's The Chris Rock Show. Since opening at number one, Head of State appears to be a good start to the directing career. "I think if I keep it up maybe some day I'll do something really great and make a lot of money."

Perhaps a dramatic role? "Not a drama, f— drama."
Original Comic FrEsmHM en

Based (loosely) on a true story

Man, I still don't have an idea for FrEsmHM en. I guess—

Wham!

That's for keeping me up all night talking about training ninja monkeys to steal chickens!

Hey, are you alright?

My spine! It's not supposed to bend like that...

Singer Townsend

Iraqi neighbor

Immaculate, with span

Sick

Slimer's excretion

Solution on page 28