

SOUTHERN SHORTS AWARDS

“Driving John Lennon”

Judges Comments

** An intriguing fantasy, although the ending didn't make much sense. If she was asleep the whole time, she couldn't have heard the conversation. I've also been down Mulholland Drive, and ninety in that old Caddy would have been a quick suicide. It's too bad you couldn't get rights to the actual Elvis music cuts instead of imitations as they detract from the verisimilitude. Also, the guy playing Elvis seemed too young for the part, Elvis was 30 in 1965. Still, it was a fun, well-produced piece. Nice work!*

** An interesting premise, The King and a Beatle on a drive in LA. So... I went for the bait and it hooked me. Was almost waiting for the moment when I could say, ok there it is, that badly acted line and boom the film is dead to me. When the performances start off a tiny bit shaky but end up captivatingly good and with dynamic camera blocking without a lot of camera movement it helps allow for those solid line deliveries. This film is smart about efficiency in character. Hit the highest points without theatrics. Opting for the b&w seems like a good move. Normally I'm not a big fan of effected color or b&w but there was an interesting quality to the post work done on the film.*

** Driving John Lennon works at multiple levels. The music and actors are both iconic in American culture. I'd be hard pressed to find two celebrities who are revered, celebrated and remember more than Elvis Presley and John Lennon. The confrontation between Elvis and John in any setting would be spellbinding, but to place it in a speeding Elvis Cadillac roaring down a the road flexes your joy corpuscles to a place they haven't been for awhile. The photography, going from color to black and white and then back to color reflects where the story is. Color with Elvis and his Cadillac, black and white for the tense dialogue between the two stars, plus it goes with the era when TV and many movies were in B&W. The acting by both Max Helm as John and Alex Pappas as Elvis was as good as the best Hollywood can throw at you. The Elvis drawl and Alex Liverpool accent were both spot on. The dialogue whether accurate or not is believable because it matches the persona and style of each of them and it's biting dialogue. Elvis feels he has the top hand being older and first on the R&R scene, but John more than hold his own, with Elvis being the first one to flinch. Playing old Elvis and Beatles music is the thread that accentuates the time and is pure joy for the young and old since both of their music never grew out of style and is as popular now almost as much as when it first came on the scene. I can go on about the editing, locale, props and documentary footage, but suffice it to say that this film only fault is that it had to end way too soon.*

NOTICE: We encourage Judges to comment on films they have scored, however, commentary is entirely voluntary and your film may receive up to three comments, or none at all.

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