



Susie Porter stars as private investigator Jill Fitzpatrick in the thriller *The Monkey's Mask*

Photo by Derek Henderson

Sexy Thriller *Monkey's Mask* Falls Short

Strives to be Stylish Lesbian Thriller, Fails

By Mary Damiano

The title of the new Australian film, *The Monkey's Mask* makes a lot of sense as you're watching it. The monkey is wearing a mask because it's embarrassed that this movie got made.

The Monkey's Mask wants to be a stylish thriller about a lesbian private investigator, but it succeeds only in being a clichéd waste of film. Jill, the detective, is

hired by the parents of a missing girl to find their daughter. This leads her into the seedy underbelly of the Australian poetry world (yikes!) where she meets Diana, a proper looking poetry professor with a wild streak. She embarks on an affair with the bisexual, married professor.

Jill is extremely lackadaisical in her investigation and much more interested in bedding Diana until the girl is found dead by strangulation. Then, she gets serious. But either Jill is the stupidest detective in the world or her mind is easily clouded by her obsession with Diana, because she misses all the clues in the case. The strangled girl was having an affair with a married poet. Duh. Diana introduces a little sexual asphyxiation into her sex play with Jill. Double Duh. Diana insists that the girl preferred boys, and asks Jill if she'd be interested in a threesome with her hunky husband. You get the picture. In fact, everybody gets the picture except for poor dumb Jill.

Sure, there are a lot of nude scenes and sex scenes between Jill and Diana, but they

are not erotic, because they feel staged and posed. Except perhaps for their first lovemaking scene together, they don't feel natural. One problem is that Diana seems to be playing a cat and mouse game with Jill, marveling at how truly stupid this detective is.

The film drags badly. It uses several gimmicks in an effort to make it more film noir, neither of which succeed. Jill's voice-overs can be heard throughout the movie, and titles are used, maybe in an attempt to explain the film. The only explanation needed here is why this movie is so bad. By the time the film reaches its climax, it's more of a shrug of relief that the credits will be rolling soon.

Kelly McGillis is okay as Diana. McGillis's face, which is not helped by the lighting in this movie, is showing some wear and tear, but her body's holding up quite well. Susie Porter plays Jill as a pseudo-tough gawky P.I., too dumb to be really hard-boiled.

If you're hard up for some girl-girl sex scenes, then go see *The Monkey's Mask*. Otherwise, don't bother.

'Lost and Delirious' a Typical Teenage Love Story Fueled by Jealousy, Desperation and Lesbian Lovers

Lost and Delirious is your typical angst-ridden teenage love story, full of the wonder of first love and the heartbreak and desperation of rejection. The thing that sets *Lost and Delirious* aside is that the two teens in love are girls.

Paulie and Tory are roommates who share an isolated love nest at their posh boarding school. The addition of their new roommate, Mary, hardly upsets their amorous routine. Between the spiked punch at the afternoon tea to the sexual hijinks of the girls, there's no reason to be bored at this boarding school.

Everything's going along great until Tory's younger sister catches Tory and Paulie in bed. Then Tory, the good girl from the strict family, dumps Paulie and goes overboard trying to prove to everyone she's not like that. And though Paulie refuses to admit she's like that, she goes overboard trying to win Tory back.

This is when the movie gets strange. Fueled by jealousy over Tory's new boyfriend and her own desperation, Paulie



Piper Perabo, Jessica Paré and Mischa Barton

goes a little crazy. She becomes convinced that if she were more like a boy, Tory would come back to her, and she throws herself into one grand gesture after another. Paulie and Tory have a real star-crossed lovers thing going on, and star-crossed lovers never have a happy ending.

Freud would probably love the idea that the determining factor in these girls being

lost, as the title suggests, or saved, is their complicated relationship with their mothers. The underlying reason everything happens in this movie is the girl's distance, both physical and emotional from their mothers.

The film is mostly told from Mary's point of view. The three roommates share a sort of menage a trois, with Mary cast as the passive participant in her roommate's

affair. Mary knows what's going on, better than Paulie and Tory, and she accepts it better than they do.

While gay audiences will enjoy the beautiful scenes of Paulie and Tory together, they might have a problem that the only person who's completely accepting of Paulie and Tory's affair is the straight girl. In fact, Mary and one other girl at the school, Cordelia, are the only ones who see being

gay as no big deal.

Piper Perabo, seen last year in *Coyote Ugly*, does a great job conveying Paulie's downward spiral into desperation. Jessica Paré is also good as Tory, who's obviously torn between what she wants and she feels she has to do. The standout, though, is Mischa Barton as Mary. Barton's performance is full of subtlety and she conveys more with what she doesn't say.

It's interesting to think what *Lost and Delirious* might have been had the other girls at the school been happy and encouraging when Paulie and Tory's affair is revealed. What if the majority of the other girls adopted a 'So what' attitude toward the affair? What if they treated the relationship as they would a relationship between a boy and girl? What if the girls who disapproved were in a small minority? Imagine what a happy, positive and insightful movie that would be.

Instead, *Lost and Delirious* ends up recycling the same material, punishing girls who love girls by making them miserable and driving them out of their minds.

Halloween Party To Benefit SAVE Foundation Night of the Dragon Will Be Something Special

Mark your calendars - on Saturday, October 27th, 2001, from 9 pm to 2 am the place to be is the 6th Annual Belle Meade Halloween Bash, Night of the Dragon!

What began as a neighborhood Halloween party in the Belle Meade section of Miami has evolved into one of the largest and most exciting costumed events of the year - an event that attracts thousands of loyal supporters of SAVE Dade-working together to end discrimination.

Admission is \$20 per person with an open bar, and all proceeds benefit the SAVE Foundation and their work to end discrimination in Miami-Dade County. Tickets go on sale today, October 8th.

With 2,400 attending last year, and the annual event growing exponentially each year a crowd of no less than 4,000 is expected this year.

Said Jorge Mursuli, SAVE director, "It will literally be the biggest Halloween party in Miami-Dade County, and surely one of the most diverse Halloween events anywhere, blending everyone from families with children to drag queens partying together. The costumes alone are worth coming to see."

Five years ago, Belle Meade residents David Treece, Luis Gonzalez and William Vallenilla wanted to bring their community together for an old-fashioned Halloween bash. Spread through word-of-mouth, the party attracted 400 people to the home of Treece and Gonzalez, who financed it out of their own pockets, with no admission charge and free drinks for all. The Annual Belle Meade Halloween Bash was born.

That was then and this is now. Today, the party will take place at the historic American Legion Post on NE 64th Street, just 2 blocks East of Biscayne Boulevard. For one night only, this landmark building on the bay will be transformed into a *Night of the Dragon* theme.

William Vallenilla is the creative force behind the event and is planning an exotic "dragon" theme for the 6th Annual Belle Meade Halloween Bash. For a \$20 donation to SAVE Dade, partygoers will enjoy music by DJ Carlos Chambless and DJ Cuban from Orlando, a festive parade featuring outrageous costumes, open bar all night and free parking.

Volunteers will get to see the event



from the inside. Call Sean 305-751-7283 to find out how you can volunteer to be a part of this fabulous event. **This is one party you don't want to miss!!**

For more information on any of these events, please call the SAVE office

at 305-751-7283.

All proceeds benefit SAVE Dade, the broad-based coalition of individuals and organizations (gay and straight) dedicated to preserving equal rights for all, regardless of sexual orientation.