

FILM REVIEWS

Should we make light of the kidney trade?

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Loud Speaker. Producers: New Generation Cinema, director: Jeyaraj; language: Malayalam.

I must confess that I am a Mamooty fan and felt that my review would be biased in favour of this film. Unfortunately even the presence of Mamooty did not help me enjoy this movie. The script writer seemed confused, as he did not know what message he wanted to convey. It was difficult for the viewer to understand whether the focus was the unethical methods by which kidneys were being procured, or the fact that unrelated donors could also be extremely kind-hearted and generous.

There was enough meat in the theme to have made my two hours worthwhile. And this movie boasted some of the stalwarts of the Malayalam film world - Nedumudi Venu, Innocent, Sukumari, Sabitha Jayaraj, and KPAC Lalitha. Unfortunately, the talent of every single one of them was wasted. The comedy was pathetic. The music was pedestrian. The editing was juvenile. I am no movie critic, but I can definitely say when I have been taken for ride (a bad one at that).

The movie revolves around Mike Philipose (Mamooty), a simpleton from the village, agreeing to donate his kidney

to Menon (Shashi Kumar), an astrophysicist returned from abroad. Called "loud speaker" because of his booming voice, Philipose agrees to "donate" his kidney for the money that he is promised, so that he can retain his father's ancestral property. The movie shows potential kidney donors being recruited by middlemen. It is quite obvious that these middlemen are not very discriminating and will take all comers. This aspect of the movie is not focused upon and I consider that a missed opportunity. Instead it is shown in a lighter vein which definitely leaves a bad taste in the mouth. The issue of kidney donation by unrelated donors (without middlemen) for money is an issue that is worthy of an international debate and maybe the celluloid world could have led the way, if this movie had been handled appropriately.

At the end of this film, the unrelated donor refuses to accept money as he has befriended the recipient. The recipient on his part makes sure that he compensates in kind by paying off the donor's loans and making sure he does not lose his ancestral property. All this, I guess, is supposed to warm the cockles of the viewer's heart and jerk out a tear or two. In my case, I shed more than a tear, because I had wasted two precious hours of my life on this movie.

An innocent view of a troubled world

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My Name is Khan. Dharma Productions, 2010. Director: Karan Johar. Screenplay: Shibani Bathija. Hindi: 2 hrs 40 min.

Rizwan Khan (Shahrukh Khan) is a person with Asperger's syndrome, a neurological disorder within the range of autism spectrum disorders.

His condition is portrayed through his response to his environment. Loud noises make him nervous, the colour yellow freaks him out, new places and people make him very

uncomfortable, and he doesn't make eye contact when he speaks. His interactions with others are devoid of feeling. His emotions are not dead; it is just that he does not know how to express his feelings. But he has a sharp mind. He is also as innocent as a newborn baby.

People with an autism spectrum disorder have a reduced ability to communicate and interact with others. Asperger's syndrome differs from other autism spectrum disorders by its relative preservation of linguistic and cognitive development.