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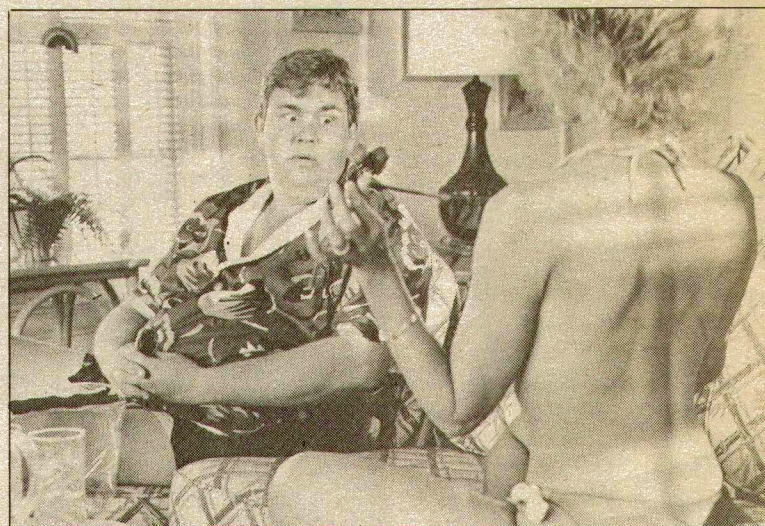
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## FILM

# 'Rental': Dumb and dilapidated



By Mitchell Bard

Because Carl Reiner is associated with *Summer Rental*, you might be reassured that it would be a very funny movie.

As Johnny Carson might say, wrong again bubonic plague breath.

If only Reiner, who is one of the best comedy writers in the business, had written the screenplay instead of just directed, there might have been hope for a great comedy; instead, *Summer Rental* is just mediocre.

*Summer Rental* is the story of flight controller Jack Chester (John Candy) who is forced to take a vacation by his superiors who decide he is burned out after he mistakes a fly on his radar screen for an airplane. Jack takes his family to Florida for a vacation and stays in a rented house along the beach. The house turns out not only to be a dump, but it is also adjacent to the public beach access, insuring that the family will have no privacy.

After injuring himself playing volleyball in an attempt to entertain his son, Jack spends the rest of his time learning how to sail with an old sea dog named Scully (Rip Torn) who runs a seafood restaurant where the catch of the day is always frozen fishsticks.

Jack's wife (Karen Austin) and children (Kerri Green and Joey Lawrence), meanwhile, are having a fantastic time with a divorced man and his son. Although serious marital problems might be expected from this situation, this part of the plot is made superfluous by the fact that Jack is totally oblivious to his wife's activities.

The relevance of Jack's sailing lessons is revealed when he bets the local sailing champion, Al Pellet (Richard Crenna), that he can beat him in the regatta that Pellet wins every year. Jack had earlier run into Pellet in a seafood restaurant where, after waiting for hours in line to have a fresh lobster dinner, Pellet and his party simply waltz in without waiting and order the last of the lobsters.

Later, Jack takes his son sailing and runs into Pellet's yacht. The enraged Pellet gets even by becoming the owner of the Chester's rented house and tells Jack his family will be evicted. The bet, then, is that if Chester wins the regatta his family gets to stay in their house for two weeks rent free but, if he loses, they leave and Pellet gets the rent money.

The remainder of the movie is spent with Jack's family rallying around him to prepare the boat (that had been Scully's restaurant) for the race. The race itself is predictable but that's to be expected in a movie with so little creativity.

There are laughs throughout the film, mostly provided by Candy who spends most of the film talking to himself. The cast is surprisingly good considering the stupidity of the plot. Crenna is particularly enjoyable as the obnoxious Pellet who bears a striking resemblance to the character he played in *The Flamingo Kid*.

Candy carries the film, however, establishing himself as one of the funniest men in America. In fact, with four movies to his credit this summer, *Summer Rental* might be a good way to describe the status of his career. Perhaps, next year he will find one truly great project that will enable him to come back and own next summer.

