

Dirty Habit riveting film

Dirty Habit is one of those movies that makes you want to go for a coffee afterwards while you hash out its layers of meaning with your friends.

It had my attention from start to finish.

The independent 90-minute made-in-Los-Angeles feature premiered in Red Deer Saturday night at Red Deer College's Arts Centre.

It was written and directed by Bryan Root,

Told in parallel reality style, it's a tale of two completely different women who find themselves trapped in a stalled elevator in a grungy grimy hotel.

One is a coke-addicted foul-mouthed hooker, Leslie,

played with chilling authenticity by Australian actor Kirsty Hinchcliffe.

This is one scary chick.

The other is a young, naive nun, Sister Amelia, played by Red Deer's own Reagan Dale Neis, who with Root, introduced the movie.

Neis's performance is exceptional. She and Hinchcliffe together, exploring and revealing their darkest secrets, are gripping.

Anger, sorrow, defiance, bravado, fear and repugnance erupt as the two women bare their souls, and more.

As the story progresses, it's clear they have a lot more in common than at first meets the eye.

One is on her way to a meeting with someone, one is on her way from an encounter with the same person.

Binding the two women together — or are they two halves of the same person? — is the Catholic bishop.

He is played by Sam Anderson, currently appearing in the TV series *Lost*.

Anderson, too, turns in a superb performance as the self-serving bishop. Nothing is sacred in his book when it comes to getting what he wants.

In the end, what he wants is too much for Sister Amelia to bear. It's too much for

Leslie, as well.

This is a very dark, complex movie that details the broken dreams, torment, and despair that result from sexual abuse in an original way.

It lets the viewer figure it out instead of laying everything out in short, easy, pieces.

It's very worthwhile and very well done.

It also showcases the depth of Neis's talent.

A talking handbag plays a role in this endeavour and probably needs a

mention.

You can make of the animated purse what you will, but somehow it works in this surreal tale.

The small audience of about 70 was treated to a 90-minute long riveting film.

Considering that the low-budget movie (as compared to commercial Hollywood movies) has only three characters and that the lion's share of the action takes place within the confines of a stalled elevator, all the elements had to be working for it to work so well.

Those elements, of course, included the performances, the screenplay, the directing, the filming, the editing and on and on. It takes a lot of people to make a movie.

Director Root, dressed down in a tuque and plaid jacket, looked more like a Canadian all set to head out for a game of pick-up pond hockey than a Californian.

He and Neis were set to hold a question and answer session following a post-movie reception.

The film is currently being shown on the film festival circuit.

Caster is the Advocate's entertainment reporter.



Penny Caster

FILM REVIEW



Reagan Dale Neis

CARNIVAL CINEMAS	
MATINEE \$2.00	ALL DAY TUESDAYS, \$2.00
EVENING SHOWS \$4.00	
IN HER SHOES	PG
Mature theme, not recommended for children	1:00, 3:30, 6:55, 9:25
TWO FOR THE MONEY	PG
Coarse language	1:10, 3:40, 7:15
MADAGASCAR	G
	1:30
LORD OF WAR	18A
Violence, substance abuse	3:25, 9:35
THE WEDDING CRASHERS	14A
Coarse language	7:10, 9:40
CORPSE BRIDE	PG
May frighten young children	1:35, 4:00
40 YEAR OLD VIRGIN	18A
Coarse language, sexual content	7:15, 9:45
WALLACE & GROMIT THE CURSE OF THE WERE RABBIT	G
	1:20, 3:55, 7:30