



Bob O'Hara (Ed Asner) is comforted by his brother (Tom Bosley) and the ghost of his wife (Marianne Hartley) in O'Hara's Wife, currently playing at Thornhill Square.

O'Hara's Wife a frightful bore

By IAN BAILEY

The best thing that can be said about O'Hara's Wife, currently playing at Thornhill Square, is that at about 90 minutes running time, it's mercifully short. Much more of this earnestly well-meaning, but gruesomely inept comedy would go beyond being brutal and into the area of torture.

The film lumbers along, burdened by a story that has all the grace of a shackled bull running through a china shop. Here, however, the damage rings louder because of the calibre of the cast which includes Ed Asner, Marianne Hartley, Jodie Foster and Tom Bosley. The only thing director William Bartley succeeds at is humiliating his cast, which is all the more irritating because they are usually likable in other vehicles.

The film's title describes the character whose demise sets the narrative events in motion. Harriet O'Hara (Hartley), the wife of Bob (Asner), dies of a brain hemorrhage shortly before they were going to depart on a long awaited, perpetually rescheduled vacation. However, before you can shout "Heaven Can Wait," Bob sees her coming up from the basement of their suburban home, carrying several suitcases and preparing for their vacation.

What's the story here? Hasn't Hartley read the script? Doesn't she know that she died two scenes previously? Not quite. It seems she has returned as a ghost — a fairly tangible one at that — who can only be seen by her husband.

This quirk allows Asner to

make a fool of himself as he responds to the nagging of a being whom nobody else can see. It's not terribly funny...it's pathetic. Much of the film is the same...boring. It's supernatural overtones are undermined by gross technical ineptitude. More importantly though, it's thematic and emotional spirit is undermined by the clumsiness of the screenplay, the pacing, and especially the acting.

The film was allegedly slapped together in 1981 as a TV movie. If it had shown up then, on the small screen, it would have deserved little more than a quick look and a flip of the channel. As a movie on the big screen, using the generalities of a family film label as an excuse for its flaws, it deserves even less respect.

Movie Scene

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Thornhill Square
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2) No Looking Back (R)— Dennis Hopper stars in this drug oriented drama.

3) O'Hara's Wife (F)— Reviewed this week.

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