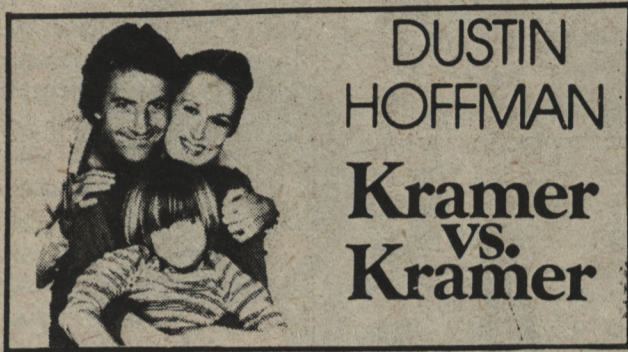


KRAMER VS. KRAMER

By Daniel Hopkins



The movie "Kramer vs Kramer" will be enjoyed by just about everyone. It is a well made picture. The photography is good, the acting, the lighting, the screen play, the direction, the editing, and the producing range from well done to excellent.

The story, based on a novel by the same name, written by Avery Carman, is involving, often to the point of tears. I found the movie to be even more so. The screenplay, by Bob Benton who also directs, faithfully

follows the book except in the matter of the baby-sitter who is not mentioned in the movie, nor is there any need. Indeed, the combination of dialogue with scene function is much better than in any of the more recent movies, such as "Apocalypse Now", "All That Jazz", and "Luna" among others.

Dustin Hoffman looks very much like an Al Pacino character, but only in one of the court room scenes does he drop into the former showy acting style. Hoffman's portrayal of the

ENJOYABLE BY ALL

busy executive (advertising) combined with Merrylynn Streep's JoAnne, the agonized housewife, Justin Henery's Billy, a confused little boy, and Jane Alexander's Margret, an insidious divorcee, lend satisfaction to good acting.

The cast is purposely small. The characters are thus brought out and the audience can relate to them. In the courtroom scene we can understand Ted's sympathy for his wife, even though she is trying to take the kid, Billy, away from him. Throughout the movie the audience has this understanding of the characters; that they understand and relate to a character's dynamic qualities.

Movies like this are often ruined by the unpredictability of the child actor, but Justin Henery plays the little confused lad in the midst of a domestic turmoil he doesn't understand with a dynamism characteristic of the movie, but rarely seen in actors so young. He contributes as much as Hoffman does.

Ted, a rather remarkable advertising executive, who is so wrapped up in himself he can't understand why his wife leaves him and doesn't even know what grade his son is in, undergoes a series of changes that reflect the psyche required for child rearing. Billy, who has been alienated by his father's work, responds with love and tenderness in forming a very good relationship. Part of this comes off in a rather remarkable encounter when Billy meets a naked business associate of his father's in the hall. She is more interested in covering her pudenda than in the turmoil of the small family into which she has asked herself.

Billy shows an innocent understanding reflective of the growing strength in their mutual respect that is developed by the dynamism of character. At least until JoAnne (Merrylynn Streep) returns as the rebuilt woman ready to reclaim her motherhood and the ensuing custody battle, things appeared to be improving in the familial part of Ted's life.

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