

TheDelinquentsRobertAltmanTomLaughlin1957TextTVS

by Tim Van Schmidt

The Delinquents \*\*

Delinquency is a disease- that's the public service message here and the action is custom cut to prove the point: a good boy gets mixed up with some bad boys and things end up getting violent- let that be a lesson to you.

The trouble is that the message falls flat as the liveliest scenes in this movie are those including the loose gang of delinquents that bedevil a straight, struggling young couple. In fact, their party looks kind of fun, kids dancing to some cool music. Now, cutting someone's tire at the drive-in movie is something else again, especially when they blame it on a squeaky clean guy like the troubled lover. Yeah, it gets worse, but the years have worn off the shock appeal of the young hoodlums in this movie, making even the rough guys seem naive and even likeable to some degree.

That is, except for the movie's most intense sequence- when the good boy is forced to drink some liquor straight- drink after drink- turning him into a rubbery mess. This is a unique torture scene- no hitting, no cutting, but with plenty of dramatic effect. Both Peter Miller and Richard Bakalyan show plenty of spark as the bad boys, dominating every scene they are in.

Directed by Robert Altman...1957...72 min...featuring Tom Laughlin (as Scotty), Peter Miller (as Cholly), Richard Bakalyan (as Eddy), Rosemary Howard

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