

*From Home Media Retailer Magazine
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Me & Michael

Street 11/7

Cinema Epoch, Documentary, \$14.98

DVD, NR.

It's been said that Hollywood is a dog-eat-dog industry. Michael Moore's production company is even called Dog Eat Dog Films.

Comic Willard Morgan gives Moore the business in *Me & Michael*, a satire of Moore's "stalkumentary" film style in general and his *Roger & Me* in particular. Morgan skewers the film with his own quest for success in Hollywood. All the books suggest getting a mentor, so he sets out to get under Moore's wing. Someone in Moore's office tells his agent that Moore would look at his 10-minute film *Festival Fever*, and his yearlong quest for accountability begins.

The parody extends to the devices, narration and editing style of a Moore film, only with tongue firmly in cheek. We get snippets of Morgan's daily life as he tells his story to a handheld camera. The backgrounds — ranging from an upscale supermarket to a sex shop to Home Depot — are a sly wink to the "come-along" stalkumentary camerawork. Taking a cue from his comic hero, Ernie Kovacs, Morgan appears, costumed, as several different characters and in some scenes interviews his other selves.

The film's amateurish look, reminiscent of *20 Dates*, is shrewdly calculated to proclaim its innocence. Its biggest problem is that it's hard for anyone but Hollywood insiders to appreciate. If you can get past the inside jokes at the beginning, the satire picks up steam and delivers a zinger finish. Moore's fans will be surprised and his critics will find the red herring worth the wait.

Bonus materials are few and self-indulgent, and all referenced in the main feature.

Morgan dons a few other characters for some of his short films. These include *Misguided Tours*, apparently a trailer for a travelogue hosted by Gino Gelati; *Touch of Velvet*, a film noir parody short; *Festival Fever*; and *Confessions of a Filmaholic*, another riff on the industry. For the aspiring Ali Gs and Father Guido Sarduccis out there, these bits are a beacon of hope.

— Holly J. Wagner