



A Dirty Shame

John Waters

USA, 2004
English

89 minutes ■ Colour/35mm
Production Company: **This is That/Killer Films/John Wells Production**
Executive Producer: **Mark Ordesky, Mark Kaufman, Merideth Finn, John Wells, The Fisher Brothers**
Producer: **Christine Vachon, Ted Hope**
Screenplay: **John Waters**
Cinematographer: **Steve Gainer**
Editor: **Jeffrey Wolf**
Production Designer: **Halina Gebarowicz**
Sound: **Blake Leyh**
Music: **George S. Clinton**
Principal Cast: **Tracey Ullman, Johnny Knoxville, Selma Blair, Chris Isaak, Suzanne Shepherd, Mink Stole**

Print Source: **Odeon Films, 121 Bloor Street East, Suite 1500, Toronto ON M4W 3M5 Canada. T (416) 967-1141 F (416) 934-6999**

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Production: **This is That, 417 Canal Street, 4th Floor New York NY 10013 USA. T (212) 601-5900 F (212) 601-5916**

"Let's go sexin'!" is the lascivious battle cry of Ray-Ray Perkins (Johnny Knoxville), a venerable Messiah on a quest to find the holy, never-been-done sex act that will bring on the divine Resursexion. He is the seductive saviour of a colourful posse of sex addicts – all of whom discovered their kinks after suffering head injuries. This amorous army is at war with the puritans of Hartford Road, Baltimore, who are in an uproar over the lewd and loose morals of their neighbours. After suffering a concussion, mild-mannered Sylvia Stickles (Tracey Ullman) finds herself Ray-Ray's twelfth apostle, but the frumpy housewife cannot stop switching sides thanks to repeated head trauma.

This, of course, is the new film by John Waters, and fans will be thrilled to hear that *A Dirty Shame* is in far worse taste than anything he has directed since the seventies. An hilarious heap of blasphemy, naughty bits and obscene anarchy pumped up with special effects, found-footage hallucinations and fisheye lenses, this is quintessential Waters. Every frame drips with innuendo, double entendre and uproarious euphemisms for fornication (anyone heard of "sneezing in the cabbage"?).

This sex farce is a catalogue of perversions, witty one-liners and cameos from the usual suspects – Patricia Hearst, Mary Vivian Pearce, Channing Wilroy and Jean Hill. The film also features memorable supporting turns by Chris Isaak as Sylvia's husband Vaughn, Suzanne Shepherd as Big Ethel,

her prudish mother and head of the citizens-for-decency group, Waters veteran Mink Stole as Ethel's hysterical second-in-command, and Selma Blair as Sylvia's exhibitionist daughter Caprice. A raunchy Ullman dazzles in every scene, whether working herself into a frenzy during an innocent round of Hokey Pokey at her mother-in-law's retirement home or tearing down the street on the prowl for clitoral satisfaction.

Waters takes on the "anti-tolerance" forces – or rather, "neuters" – who are terrified of sexual freedom by presenting them with their worst nightmare: a modern-day Sodom overrun with aggressive erotic libertines smack in the middle of suburbia. All hail *A Dirty Shame*!

■ **Noah Cowan**



John Waters was born in Baltimore and taught himself filmmaking as a teenager by directing his friends in short Super 8 films like *Hag in a Black Leather Jacket* (64), *Roman Candles* (66) and *Eat Your Makeup* (67). His 1974 feature *Pink Flamingos* is credited as the first

"midnight movie." Filmography: *Mondo Trasho* (70), *Multiple Maniacs* (70), *Female Trouble* (75), *Desperate Living* (77), *Polyester* (81), *Hairspray* (88), *Cry-Baby* (90), *Serial Mom* (94), *Pecker* (98), *Cecil B. Demented* (00) and *A Dirty Shame* (04).

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