

#7- Edge of America on Showtime

For 11/23/05

Lessons aplenty in Showtime's "Edge of America" By Marilyn Moss Sun Nov 20, 5:29 PM ET

LOS ANGELES (Hollywood Reporter) - James McDaniel ("NYPD Blue") joins a talented cast of American-Indian actors in "Edge of America," a fact-based Showtime drama about a black high school teacher who learns a thing or two about race relations.

McDaniel plays Kenny Williams, a high school English teacher who leaves his Texas home to teach at a public high school on Three Nations Consolidated Reservation in Utah. He bumps into kids with more than a chip on their shoulders -- and who are racist to say the least. After Williams takes on the underachieving girls' basketball team and tries to turn it around, all involved learn about tolerance in a big way.

Directed by American-Indian filmmaker Chris Eyre from an edgy script by Willy Holtzman, the project trots over familiar territory, especially the genre of kids learning to respect themselves through sports. But "Edge of America" also has a style of its own, a unique kind of realism where the camerawork moves along as if it were another character. The cast also serves McDaniel well, especially the girls on the basketball team. They have a kind of spirit that seems entirely believable, making it seem as if they've been around each other for a long time.

The atmosphere is sparse and oftentimes barren -- when we first see the kids playing basketball, it's a depressing sight, giving us a look into the makeshift lives they seem to have. When we look deeper, as with good drama, we find a world inside these characters, and story moves naturally from there.

Fine editing by Paul Trejo, along BC Smith's atmospheric music round off this first-rate production.

CAST:

Kenny: James McDaniel

<http://www.wchstv.com/abc/nypdblue/jamesmcdaniel.shtml>

Cuch: Wes Studi

<http://www.thestudigroup.com/>

Annie: Irene Bedard

<http://www.nativevoices.net/bedard.html>

Leroy McKinney: Tim Daly

<http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hc&id=1800025915&cf=gen&intl=us>

Carla: Delanna Studi

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1130669/>

Director: Chris Eyre; http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/rose/eyre_c.htm

Teleplay: Willy Holtzman; Executive producers: Tim Daly, Steve Burleigh; Producers: Willy Holtzman, Chris Eyre; Director of photography: Clark Mathis; Production designer: Mark Hofeling; Editor: Paul Trejo; Line producer: Robert F. Phillips; Music: BC Smith; Casting director: Rene Haynes.

Reuters/Hollywood Reporter

http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20051120/tv_nm/review_television_showtime_dc_1

Showtime website with schedule:

http://www.sho.com/site/schedules/product_page.do?seriesid=0&episodeid=119227

RATING: TV14 - L

SHOWTIME ADVISORIES: Adult Language, Adult Content Dolby Digital 5.1 / CC

1 h 46 m

8 pm most time zones