

WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT

USA | 1988 | 104' | Animation, Comedy, Crime | Rated PG

Directed by

Robert Zemeckis

Written by

Jeffrey Price

Peter S. Seaman

(from the graphic novel by G. K. Wolf)

With

Bob Hoskins

Christopher Lloyd

Joanna Cassidy

Charles Fleisher (voice)

Original Music by

Alan Silvestri



Première:

21/06/1988 (New York)

World release:

22/06/1988

It's the story of a man, a woman, and a rabbit in a triangle of trouble.

Budget: \$70.000.000
 Gross: \$329.803.958

REVIEW

Detective Eddie Valiant has history with cartoons. Obviously, not a good one. But the director of Maroon Cartoon Studios, R.K. Maroon, is worried about his star Roger Rabbit, who's wife, Jessica, seem to be unfaithful. In the purpose of separating the two for good, Maroon asks Valiant to find proof of the fact, which actually proves a very easy task; but that very same night Marvin Acme, the man in whose company Eddie caught Jessica, is killed. All the evidences are against Roger, accused of having committed the homicide out of jealousy. Judge Doom wants to condemn Roger to the terrible Dip, a mixture he invented which is the only way to kill cartoons, but Valiant is not convinced of the rabbit's guilt and he puts aside his past with cartoons to help him.

After a couple of decades from "Mary Poppins" and "Bedknobs and Broomsticks", Disney produced a movie with live action and animation combined again. Why? Well, Gary Wolf's novel, "Who Censored Roger Rabbit?", was too inviting to be withdrawn.

Despite the appeal of the novel, in 1982, when Zemeckis offered himself to direct the possible blockbuster, the company refused. But who else could ever direct this movie? Steven Spielberg (who was actually considered)? Not at all. After a few years struggling, the final result proved the visionary american director right (even if he had to wait 1985 to be reconsidered, year of "Back to the Future" release).

Beside this historical note, the main difficulty in directing a movie like this is not having all the cast (and the objects) in front of the camera; though, is right on this spot that Zemeckis displays his greatest skills: a simple direction, very quick camera movements and changes of perspective to get the eye of the viewer away from the detail while focusing on the main event. And this is an intelligent choice also regarding the 'noir' side of the story, with a crime to be solved and where the evidence must be drawn at the exact point to avoid annoying spoilers. Obviously, being this a cartoon after all, the plot is not as complicated as it could be, so that an adult understands from the beginning that Roger cannot be guilty of the crime; in spite of this, the true criminal is long to be predictable (it is not the butler!), so that the whole story is enjoyable also for a more adult public.

What actually seems not convincing in an overall analysis is the balancing between animated characters and real actors: the time allowed to, for example, Mr. Acme and Mr. Maroon could have been more, also because the two actors were pretty funny and convincing.

A part from the almost perfect dubbing of Jessica (Kathleen Turner) and Roger (Charles Fleischer, who also dubs other characters in the film), the best of the whole cast is Bob Hoskins, who was chose after the withdrawal of Harrison Ford; his performance, considering that he acts most of the time with a post-filming added character, is almost stunning. One of the greatest scenes from this point of view is the one in which he hides Roger into his washing basin: it is unnoticeable that the chain tying him to the rabbit is actually rigid so that, with light movements of his wrist, he could control also his mate's position. Not to mention, he has also a much realistic physique to portrait a noir detective than Indiana Jones' one. This role is one of the most remembered in Hoskin's long career, could it be otherwise?

A final note, as usual, on the music. Zemeckis historical partner, Alan Silvestri, begun not long before "Back to the Future", lasts until now. Well, the music is worthy of the best noir movies of the decades before and Amy Irving's performance of the hit "Why Don't You Do Right?" is unforgettable. Almost perfect.

This is indeed a movie for families, to watch and have fun with times and times over. But the first time is the best one, at least because you have yet to solve the question: "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?"

ASSESSMENT	
POSTER	70%
TAGLINE	75%
TRAILER	80%
SATISFACTION	75%
DIRECTING	80%
SCREENPLAY	87%
PRODUCTION DESIGN	88%
CINEMATOGRAPHY	77%
CAST	90%
MUSIC	70%
TOTAL	82% - B-