

'In a World...' a delightful, pointed look at a mostly male industry

Sr. Rose Pacatte | Aug. 20, 2013 NCR Today

Editor's note: The following review contains spoilers.

Because I did not want to wait an hour to see "Lee Daniels' *The Butler*," I saw "In a World...," writer/actor Lake Bell's directorial debut that premiered earlier this year at the Sundance Film Festival. What a pleasant surprise.

Carol (Lake Bell) is an employment-challenged voice coach and daughter of a famous movie trailer voice-over narrator, Sam (Fred Melamed). Up to this point, her voice-over work is limited to training actors to speak in foreign accents. Sam is ready to retire with his very young girlfriend, Jamie (Alexandra Holden), and kicks Carol out of the house. He names the conceited Gustav Warner (Ken Marino) his heir apparent to deliver the words of impending doom and disaster in deep somber tones for movie previews, the kind that begin, "In a world..."

Sam dismisses his daughter entirely as his replacement, telling her, "Let's face it. The industry does not crave a female sound. It's not sexist. It's just the way it is." He enjoys reminiscing with other voice-over actors about their past exploits in the recording business, especially recalling the legacy of Don LaFontaine (1940-2008), the king of movie trailer announcers who coined the intro line "In a world..."

By chance, a studio executive hears Carol's voice, and she is hired to voice-over the trailers for a series of films based on a series of young adult books about female warriors: "The Amazon Games." Carol can hardly believe it, and when she tries to tell her father, he dismisses her because, according to him, the situation is not possible in his world.

Bell is a revelation. She's written a meaningful script and directed it so well it belies her first-time status. She's also funny.

Academy Award-winning actress Geena Davis, who appears in the film as the studio executive who hires Carol, is known for activism in the entertainment industry by working to create equal gender representation in film and on television, both behind the camera and in front of it. If you know of Davis' work, her role here is significant.

With "In a World...," we have a film about women by women, and men are not mocked (except for Gustav, just a little). Indeed, Bell spreads around the characters' flaws evenly. The film is entertaining and insightful and hopefully will encourage more women to become filmmakers. Bell proves you don't need explosions to make a fine movie, and maybe her film will create a few cracks in the entertainment ceiling so women can step up and become full partners in this story-telling business. Someone once said, "Whoever tells the stories owns the culture." We need more women storytellers.

[Click here for an article](#) [1] by the Hollywood Reporter on why 99 percent of movie trailer voice-over actors are male. While it does seem to be true that male voices are more memorable than women's, this can change, as Bell's gentle film shows.

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[1] <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/lake-bells-a-world-asks-602872>