



Black is likable (and relatable) as a good man pushed to kill.

Bernie

Jack Black, Shirley MacLaine | PG-13 | ★★★☆

COMEDY

Jack Black doesn't have to uncork his usual oddball mania to give the finest performance of his career in *Bernie*. The story is insane enough, given that genial, God-fearing funeral director Bernie Tiede just happened to be the nicest murderer Carthage, Texas, ever saw.

A townful of pitch-perfect actors testify about Bernie and his ties to

jealous widow Marjorie Nugent (a perfectly acidic MacLaine) in this mockumentary based on a true story. Even Matthew McConaughey gets in on the hijinks, slipping deep into his natural Texas drawl as town prosecutor Danny Buck Davidson. *Bernie* is so amusing, it's easy to forget that it's about a heinous crime. But like the good times in Carthage, it's fun while it lasts.

BERNIE'S SECRET WEAPON

MATTHEW'S MOM!

Matthew McConaughey gets bigger billing, but his mom, Kay, gets laughs too in *Bernie*, playing sassy East Texas local Tassie in her first movie role. Director Richard Linklater "surprised me by putting her in a scene with me [in a diner]," recalls Matthew. "We didn't do many takes on that scene; Mom did great." And why shouldn't she? "It was easy to be Tassie," says Mrs. McConaughey, 80. "I am Tassie!" —ANNE LANG



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