

“The Happytime Murders”

By Helen Lutz

As we go along the journey of life, we find many things which just shouldn't be but happen every day. The anonymous bullying of a school child – shouldn't be, but is. Guns freely being made on 3-D printers – shouldn't be, but are. Muppets spouting profanities and having raucous sex – shouldn't be, but is in the new movie “The Happytime Murders.”



Los Angeles – sometime in the future ... People co-exist with puppets, however, puppets are definitely second class citizens. Phil Phillips, a blue skinned, chimney smoking, alcoholic private investigator puppet (Bill Barretta) opens the movie with an old Jack Webb “Dragnet” style narration of another day in the city. Phillips, the only puppet to have once been a police officer, now works various puppet cases after being part of a fatal mishap. Approached by a seductive Sandra puppet hoping that Phil will take her mysterious, nymphomania case, leads Phil to a puppet porn shop (it would be nice to un-see the action between the cow and octopus). A robbery gone wrong while Phil is in the back looking at store files, leads to a deadly scene – stuffing everywhere – enter the police and Phil's old partner Detective Connie Edwards (Melissa McCarthy). There's obviously no love lost between the two.

Phil knows the owner of the puppet sex shop from the good old days when he starred with Phil's brother in a popular 80's kids' show “The Happytime Gang.” Life after the show has gone downhill for most of the cast. After doing some digging and learning that the show is being syndicated with big paydays for the old-time cast, it doesn't take Phil long to figure out that someone is methodically murdering each of the show members to include Phil's brother – one of the show's stars; but who? Who cares?

If this story sounds at all intriguing at this point, I apologize. In the spirit of our beloved Sesame Street and The Muppets, my review of “The Happytime Murders” is brought to you by the letter “D” for Dirty – Despicable – Dumb – Dark – Degenerate – Delinquent – Disagreeable – Deranged – and Downright Nasty. This is one of the few films I've seen over the years where I really would like to have my hour and a half back. On a scale of one to four Hart Beats I give “The Happytime Murders” NO HARTS. There are some things which should never be – this is one of them; Jim Henson is probably spinning in his grave.