

Train Ride (2000)

“Train Ride” is much more complex and provocative than it seems at first glance.

The film begins with a bang — literally — as the head of an African-American man is targeted in scope of a shotgun. We never know until the final scene who this is or why it’s happening, but we’re quickly introduced to Will (Wood Harris of “The Wire”), a senior at an all-black college who lets us in on his story — which may be

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the same story as the person being lined up for the shooting. Will is a slick operator who sweet-talks his two friends Russell Hornsby and Thomas Braxton, Jr.) into partaking in some nasty hanky panky—that is, having relations with freshman

Katrina (rapper MC Lyte) after they drop a date rape drug in her drink. The action, of course, comes with its complications for all involved, especially since the calculating Will has a strong desire to videotape the proceedings and two of Katrina’s girlfriends leave the Will’s apartment before the deed is carried out. Powerfully acted, sharply written and well directed (by Rel Dowdell, who now teaches screenwriting at Boston University), “Train Ride” is definitely worth seeking out, as it tackles some serious issues in an up-front and stimulating fashion that demands to be taken seriously.



Most of the exteriors were shot at Cheney University.

Rating:

