



FILM: **THE FLORIDA PROJECT**

FDG RATING: 3.6 ☺☺☺☺○

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Sean Baker: *Director, Writer*
William Defoe: *Actor: Bobby*
Brooklyn Prince: *Actress: Moonee*
Bria Vinaite: *Actress: Halley*

DATE: November 19, 2017

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **THE FLORIDA PROJECT**

The Florida Project shows us a slice of life, along the stretch of highway in a low budget “Magic Castle” motel managed by Bobby, (William Defoe). Six-year-old Moonee and her young, irresponsible, rebellious, unemployed mother, Halley, live week to week scraping by on whatever money Halley manages to get through questionable trysts and selling stolen perfumes to wealthy guests on the parking lots of fancier Orlando Hotels.

Despite the dire circumstances, we see everything as a completely unsupervised play adventure through the wide eyes of Moonee and her best friend Scooty, as they fearlessly and freely roam the motel grounds and those of neighboring motels, stirring up mischief. Bobby is both stern, kind and caring, with visible concern for Moonee, her playmates, and her mother. The story feels very real and poignant.

Brooklyn Prince, as Moonee, is a vivacious child star who with Scooty and new arrival, Jancey, bring back memories of The Little Rascals who also managed to create magical play days in the midst of their poverty. (Baker says that his film is an homage to “Our Gang”) It’s purposefully ironic that the lavender painted Magic Castle motel is across the highway from Disney’s Magic Kingdom, the “happiest place on earth”.

Halley absolutely loves her daughter, but just doesn’t have the maturity to responsibly care for her. A touching scene was when Halley brings Moonee to a fancy hotel restaurant and pretends to be staying there using the room number of some else to pay for their meal so they can have the experience of enjoying a really sumptuous lunch.

One resident reviewer observed that the mouthy, independent, little Moonee is probably going to end up being just like her mother so the cycle doesn’t end. Others commented on the realism. All the characters were well defined and each of the performances was outstanding. We see other residents at the motel, each struggling to avoid homelessness. Some are more successful, mature and responsible than Halley, such as Scooty’s mother. But there really aren’t any opportunities to make their lives any better. It’s hard enough to just keep from sliding backward. The Florida Project is probably not too different from life in projects in other cities. Using this slice of life for a larger message, Baker hopes people take away a better understanding of and concern for the affordable housing crisis in this country.

The Florida Project was an absorbing story with engaging performances earning an appreciative 3.6 on our scale of 2 to 5. (5 is the best).



See you at the movies!

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[Film Discussion Group](#) (FDG) organizer