

# Film Review: Nature is Abused By Jim Carrey in ‘Mr Popper’s Penguins’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 17, 2011 - 7:56am

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CHICAGO – Pity the poor penguin making pictures. Their wings cannot fly, they have no script approval or agents, just a trainer bribing them with food to hit the mark. Their presence, their cuteness, even their flightlessness are exploited for a dreadful Jim Carrey film called “Mr Popper’s Penguins.” Somebody call PETA.



Jim Carrey as Mr. Popper is the head of a New York City family, who are best described as schizophrenically insane. Somehow penguins figure in the story, which has no heart, soul or narrative center. It’s really just a sad circus parade of random, Jim Carrey-esque comic bits, clinging to the frayed and absurd premise that simply showing penguins being penguins is enough to sustain a feature film.

Mr. Popper is a typical movie Dad. He is wealthy, ambitious and somehow within that earning power and career determination managed to squeeze in a marriage and two kids. Naturally, he is divorced, but that is explained by his childhood. It seems his father abandoned him to go off on a series of worldly adventures, punctuated occasionally by a arbitrary visit or communication via ham radio. Popper simply doesn’t trust love.

His current dilemma involves the savory topic of property in the New York City. He represents a megalomaniac real estate firm, who wants to own all the landmarks in NYC (that warm fuzzy feeling is starting already). Central Park’s famed Tavern on the Green restaurant is their next target, owned by the ancient Mrs. Van Gundy (Angela Lansbury). The slimy Mr. Popper is convinced he can convince the old bag to sell, especially when assisted by his key associate Pippa (Ophelia Lovibond), who has an annoying tendency to speak in sentences only using the letter P. Mrs. Van Gundy, however, only wants to sell to someone pure of heart or some such similar requirement that all New York City property owners have.

In the midst of all this, Popper gets some bad news. His absent father has passed away, and in his will arranges for a package to be sent. When Popper receives it, inside is a penguin! It doesn’t matter how the animal was shipped without dying, it’s a penguin! And through a series of nutty circumstances, five more penguins are sent! Despite that in the real world it would probably take one phone call to get rid of the flightless fowl, Popper decides to keep all of the birds. This surprises his ex-wife Amanda (Carla Gugino) and the two kids (Maxwell Perry Cotton and Madeline Carroll) who regardless of their professed disgust over their father have a change of heart once they encounter the precious penguins.

So while he is still working the real estate deal for no discernible reason and taking care of his new friends, Mr. Popper also must fend off a New York City zookeeper (Clark Gregg), who wants the penguins so he can trade them for other animals (apparently zoos are like pro baseball teams). With with all this going on, how will Popper squeeze in any number of his wacky rubber faces? He’s much too busy dancing with penguins.

*“Mr. Popper’s Penguins” opens everywhere June 17th. Featuring Jim Carrey, Carla Gugino, Angela Landsbury, Jeffrey Tambor, Philip Baker Hall, Clark Gregg, Maxwell Perry Cotton, Madeline Carroll and Ophelia Lovibond. Screenplay by Sean Anders, John Morris and Jared Stern, directed by Mark Waters. Rated “PG”*

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Mr. Popper (Jim Carrey) and Friends in 'Mr. Popper's Penguins'

Photo credit: © 2011 Twentieth Century Fox



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