C4755 CITIZEN RUTH (USA, 1996)

Credits: director, Alexander Payne; writers, Alexander Payne, Jimi Taylor.
Cast: Laura Dern, Swoosie Kurtz, Kelly Preston, Burt Reynolds, Kurtwood Smith, M.C. Gainey

Summary: Comedy/satire set in contemporary Iowa. Ruth Stoops (Dern), a pregnant white-trash drifter, becomes the unwitting object of a wacky tug-of-war between pro-lifers and pro-choicers who are willing to go to ridiculous extremes trying to claim her as a national symbol for their cause. Ruth likes to get high sniffing fumes from glue, paint, you name it. She is pregnant for the fifth time and has been arrested for drug abuse for the fifteenth. A fed-up judge threatens to add a felony charge of endangering her fetus unless Ruth agrees to ‘take care of the problem.’ In jail, Ruth meets a group of ‘Baby Savers’ whose leader (Place) takes Ruth into her home in order to rescue the baby. When the pro-choicers learn of this, they connive to abduct Ruth to send a message about the right to choose. Ruth is too busy tending to her immediate needs (food, fumes and booze) to pay much attention to what is going on around her, until a financial payoff creeps into the equation. The source of the money offer is a pro-choice Vietnam vet (Gainey).

[Reprinted in Film review annual 1997]
Clark, Mike. “‘Citizen Ruth’ takes satiric stand” USA today (Dec 6, 1996), p. 1D.
[Reprinted in Film review annual 1997]
[Reprinted in Film review annual 1997]
Guthmann, Edward. “‘Citizen’ Dern: In her new movie, Laura Dern plays a pregnant pawn in the country’s abortion wars - and she plays it for laughs” San Francisco chronicle (Jan 5, 1997), Datebook, p. 39.
Howell, Peter. “‘Ruth’ stoops to conquer; Unheralded little movie satirizes fanatics on both sides of abortion debate” Toronto star (Feb 7, 1997), p. D1.
Klein, Andy. “Abortion for grins; ‘Citizen Ruth’ is pro-choice, pro-life … and pro laughs” New times Los Angeles (Dec 12, 1996), p. ?
Murray, Steve, “Movies; Dern zeroes in on fanaticism” Atlanta journal and constitution (Mar 28, 1997), p. ?
Rickey, Carrie. “Abortion satire looks askance at both sides: Zealots stage a tug-of-war over a pregnant, glue-sniffing indigent” Philadelphia inquirer (Jan 10, 1997), Weekend, p. 3.
Ringel, Eleanor. “Movies; Review; ‘Citizen Ruth’” Atlanta journal and constitution (Mar 28, 1997), p. ?
Taylor, Jim (see under Payne, Alexander)
[Reprinted in Film review annual 1997]
[Reprinted in Film review annual 1997]