



LOUISE SNIDER

Dick and Jane beat the system

George Segal plays Dick. Dick is a good boy. Jane Fonda plays Jane. Jane is a pretty girl. And "Fun with Dick and Jane" (PG) is a hilariously funny movie.

Taking its cue from the ubiquitous grade school primer with its perfect children, Dick and Jane, the movie adds some interesting chapters by speculating, "What if?" What if Dick and Jane grow up, get married, have a son named Billy, a dog named Spot and a posh house in the suburbs? And what if Dick, an aerospace exec, loses his lucrative job during an industry recession?

Candyland becomes the pits. The couple's assets are a used car and their equity in a house with a \$77,000 mortgage. Their solution to their money problems is the subject of this movie.

Dick and Jane are an attractive, upper middle class couple, but their situation cuts across class lines and produces a sparkling social comedy that treats contemporary themes.

AFTER THE initial shock of unemployment, there is the whistling optimism. Dick's a sharp engineer; they figure he'll get another job quickly. Meanwhile, they'll economize. They switch from imported domestic wines, and Jane drops her book-of-the-month club membership.

Eventually, they face up to reality: Trying to pay essential bills with no income, keeping up appearances in front of neighbors, suffering humiliation at the welfare office, finding frustration in dealing with bureaucracy, and battling the repossessors—who are rolling up their lawn.

When there seems to be no remedy through the usual means—welfare, part-time jobs, borrowing—they turn to crime. They are spectacularly successful.

Many people will criticize this movie for seeming to demonstrate that crime pays. This reaction misses the point. "Fun with Dick and Jane" debunks some of the economic and social fairy tales we grew up with. It doesn't extol crime; it lampoons a system which makes crime pay.

The ads for this movie say "Bonnie and Clyde they ain't." Exactly so. Dick and Jane are white-collar people fumbling their way through blue-collar crime with a little bravado and a lot of luck. No one would laugh if the movie showed a couple of down-at-the-heels ghetto dwellers on a crime spree.

AT THE OTHER extreme, Dick and Jane's pickings are bush league compared with the scale on which Dick's ex-employer, a giant aircraft manufacturer, is operating. The irony of the class system of crime is one of the themes explored in this movie through laughter.

The comedy, like the social situation, has broad appeal. It is hilariously slapstick at times and snappy and witty at other times.

How can you hate an inept gunman who has to grope at his groin to find the gun which slipped down from his waistband? Would you censure concerned parents who get a babysitter before going out on a caper? Can you do anything but applaud (which is what previous audiences have been doing) two robbers who have the chutzpah to rip off Ma Bell?

Underlying the outrageous conduct are the assumptions which prompt it. When Dick and Jane face a financial crunch, they don't seriously consider altering their lifestyle, living more modestly. Giving up the affluent life, which supposedly every American aspires to, would be tantamount to giving the grade school primer a downbeat ending.

When Dick and Jane use extreme means to support their middle-class existence, it's almost out of a sense of patriotism. After all, as Dick proclaims in the movie, the middle class is the backbone of this country and must be preserved. No wonder Voltaire defined true comedy as "the speaking picture of the follies and Follies of a Nation."

GLIMPSES

NEW RELEASES

THE CASSANDRA CROSSING (R). A ridiculous melodrama about a plague-ridden train, a shaky bridge and a staunch colonel who has to make "tough decisions." Big names in this big turkey.

THE ENFORCER (R). Violence and gun play in the "Dirty Harry" manner as Clint Eastwood shoots it out with a terrorist gang in San Francisco in this third film in the series.

FREAKY FRIDAY (G). Disney movie about a mother and her teenage daughter who change roles (and bodies) for a day. Lots of fun and a little insight as each learns about the other's problems.

KING KONG (PG). The big ape is back again with his same old destructive but sensitive personality. Jessica Lange plays the love in his life. Revised version with some tongue-in-cheek dialogue.

LUMIERE (R). Jeanne Moreau wrote, acted and directed this low-key movie that takes a soft-focus look at the lives of four women friends, their careers and loves. In French with English subtitles.

NETWORK (R). Fierce satire attacking the television industry and mass media generally. Top performances by Peter Finch, Faye Dunaway and William Holden in fast paced, grimly humorous film.

THE PINK PANTHER STRIKES AGAIN (PG). More clowning with Inspector Clouseau (Peter Sellers) who fumbles his way to victory.

ROCKY (PG). Human warmth and exciting drama combine in this stirring film about a no-name boxer who gets a chance at a title bout. Acting accolades to entire cast and especially Stallone as Rocky.

SILVER STREAK (PG). Gene Wilder, Richard Pryor, Patrick McGowan and Jill Clayburgh make tracks in this comedy-thriller about murder and mayhem on a train, and sometimes off.

A STAR IS BORN (R). Long-awaited remake with Barbra Streisand and Kris Kristofferson as rock stars (rather than movie stars) whose careers head in different directions.

TWILIGHT'S LAST GLEAMING (R). A thriller about terrorists who take over a U.S. missile silo, thereby possessing the cloud to hold the country at bay and demand some heavy ransom.

MOVIE RATING GUIDE

- G General audiences admitted.
- PG Parental guidance suggested. All ages admitted.
- R Restricted. Adult must accompany person under 18.
- X No one under 18 admitted.

Auditions announced

The Youth Country Music Association will hold an Audition Award Program for youth talent ages 5 through 18 on March 18-19 at the Michigan Inn in Southfield.

Talent categories include vocal, instrumental and variety in the country music field—music folk, gospel and blue grass country. Awards will be given for the best male and female vocalist in ages 5 through 12 and 13 through 18. An award will be presented to the most versatile entertainer to the one who rates highest in stage presence and also for most photographic. Groups will be awarded on a separate basis.

Applications may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to Country Music, 11865 Main, Rosemead, Ill. 61073.

Getting Around

By ETHEL SIMMONS

Ambitious tasting with best vintages

The Connoisseur's Wine Tasting has got to be the most ambitious one planned by Les Amis du Vin (The Friends of Wine), Oakland County Chapter.

Monthly tastings by the local chapter give an opportunity to sample all kinds of vintages, both imported and domestic. But the Connoisseur's Tasting (at \$22 a person) includes five treasured first growths of Premier Cru from Medoc region; also St. Emilion First Growth including Chateau Petrus, a Grand Vin Pomerol.

and finally Chateau Cissac 1970 Cru Bergetis, a Bordeaux said to equal several cru classe wines.

Tastings are open to members only, at the Glen Oaks Country Club in Farmington Hills. The connoisseurs will gather Tuesday, for an aperitif at 7 p.m., followed by the tasting at 7:30.

MORE GOINGS ON at the Community House in Birmingham include disco dancing lessons taught by Ricky Dove, who also teaches ballroom dancing and acrobatics there. Recent bad weather conditions kept

some of the 100-plus enrollees away, but still about 30 couples showed up for the two-hour session.

Ages ranged from the 20s to mostly couples in their 30s and 40s. Ability went from basic lack of knowledge to some dancers who looked like they already knew how to move it.

Dove keeps the lessons on a beginner's level, to accommodate even the novice who hasn't danced since the two-step, if that. He showed the rock-step, breaking it down into simple stages.

THIS MOVEMENT, that occurs almost naturally when you're on the dance floor to disco music or a rock band, actually involves bending the knees, tapping the foot, stepping in and out with each foot, rotating the hips, shrugging the shoulders, letting the chest say "yes" while the head says "no," and moving the hands out and back as if pulling your shirtsleeves.

Dove had everybody laughing, trying to manage the "yes" and "no," which is really kind of a jutting motion. He also showed a swing step, where you hold hands and spin your partner.

• BANQUETS • MEETINGS

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