



'Farmer' opts for violence, gore

The opening scenes of "The Farmer" (R) suggest a movie of some promise. A World War II hero, winner of the Silver Star, is returning to his farm in the South. There is a racial incident about the homebound train, and he gets tossed off for defending a black soldier's right to be served at the "white" bar. He finally arrives home to find his farm run-down and the mortgage debt built up.

For a while, it looks as if the movie will explore some important social issues: The plight of the returning veteran, the problems of the small-estate farmer, the lingering racial tensions. But between the initial conception of this movie and the final production, someone must have lost faith, because "The Farmer" abandons every promising line of development to opt for that box office staple, bloody violence.

The veteran and his wife, Conway, in an effort to raise money to save his farm, gets involved with gamblers. For \$50,000 he agrees to be the instrument for revenge planned by a gambler (Michael Dante) blinded by the mob.

Midway through his five-person killing spree, when the gambler's girlfriend (Angel Tompkins) brings him the payoff money, the farmer says, "The money's not important." Hard to believe, don't you think?

EVENTUALLY (though not soon enough) he gets the grisly job done, gets the money and gets the girl—the one who had been the gambler's girlfriend. The mob conveniently disposed of the gambler.

One threat is left. The mob's hit man, following orders he received before everyone was killed off, is now after the girl. He trains the sight of his high-power rifle on her and the farmer, but he spares them both because of a coincidence that is beyond all credibility.

At the end, the farmer is back on his land, mortgage presumably paid off and his cuffed, brassy girlfriend is wearing a ruffled organza and gleefully tending the chickens like Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm.

Responsibility for this shoddy movie with its confused values and annoying pretensions rests with Gary Conway. He was both producer and star.

The acting requirements were minimal. Conway's role called for physical dexterity, not emotional range. Similarly, the others in the cast were stereotypes—slick or sleazy, greaseball or weasel, whatever was needed.

There is a love scene in "The Farmer" that is beautifully photographed in a succession of slow dissolves and superimpositions. That and some original songs are about the only entries on the plus side of this movie's ledger.

It's somewhat puzzling that the setting for "The Farmer" is post-World War II, not post-Viet Nam. Within the context of its story, the excessive violence and the image of the returning vet as a hardened cynic, disdainful of his own heroes, seem more attuned to the 70s than the 40s.

Another puzzle is the title of this movie. The important fact about the leading character is not that he is a farmer, but that he is a killer.

The difference warrants recognition.

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.

FREAKY FRIDAY (PG). 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.

FUN WITH DICK & JANE (PG). Jane Fonda and George Segal in a snappy social satire about an unemployed engineer and his wife who turn to crime when he can't find a job and they flunk welfare.

THE LAST TYCOON (R). Based on F. Scott Fitzgerald's last novel, this is a sensitive but enigmatic movie about a film producer (Robert De Niro) during the '30s. Good visual recreation of the era in Hollywood.

NETWORK (R). Pierce 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.

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.

THE SENTINEL (R). Another yarn where supernatural horrors unravel in a New York brownstone where the forces of good and evil clash.

SILVER STREAK (PG). Gene Wilder, Richard Pryor, Patrick McGeehan 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 disidents who take over a U.S. military base, thereby possessing the clout to hold the country at bay and demand some heavy ransom.

VOYAGE OF THE DAMNED (PG). Moving story of a historical incident about a ship filled with Jews expelled from Hitler's Germany who are denied haven in free countries.

BACK AGAIN

THE BAD NEWS BEARS (PG). Tatum O'Neal and a motley team of exchange four-letter words with snickered baseball coach Walter Matthau. Delivers a karate chop to some cherished myths about children and athletic competition.

MOVING 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.

Sign points to Old West trail

Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota share a heritage of the buffalo, a once near-extinct animal that freely roamed millions of acres in this area. Today a buffalo head sign points the way for travelers seeking adventure in these states, known collectively as the Old West Trail.

The Old West Trail, organized in 1965 to promote tourism in these beginning-of-the-West states, is actually an automotive tour along interstate highways and major state roads in this region.

The buffalo head symbol was chosen to mark the Old West Trail because the buffalo was lord of this western country before the coming of the white man. After almost complete extermination, the buffalo has outlived its adversaries, and again roams these four states—on private ranches, in national and state parks and on bison ranges and game refuges.

The buffalo head signs lead travelers to approved attractions, mark City and Area Circle Tours and keep the visitor headed toward prime vacation fun wherever he roams on the trail. The symbol is a dependable guide to quality attractions and facilities throughout the four-state area.

THE OLD WEST TRAIL is a trail for modern travelers, although it parallels the pioneer trails of yesterday: The Oregon Trail, Bozeman, Overland, and Lewis and Clark Trails. Today's travelers drive and ride in automobiles or recreation vehicles while the people who trekked these routes in the 18th and 19th centuries walked or rode in covered wagons.

Pioneers Lewis and Clark were among the first to traverse these states on the Old West Trail. Following them were mountain men, prospectors, cattlemen, subesters, track-layers and city builders. Today the

pioneering traveler will find himself following in the path of Lewis and Clark, as well as traveling segments of these other famous trails.

In the traveler's search for vacation adventure on the Old West Trail, the buffalo head symbol leads him to historic sites, museums, cemeteries and saloons. State and national parks, monuments, national memorials and natural attractions are marked, too.

A City Circle Tour in North Platte, Neb., for example, will take the visitor to Fort Cody Trading Post, Buffalo Bill's Ranch and State Historical Park, a steam locomotive, a museum and Buffalo Bill's Wild West Arena. Each site is designated by the buffalo sign and the self-guided tour follows a complete circle, bringing the vacationer back to his original starting point.

In Montana, the Lewis and Clark Expedition traveled through the Great Falls area during the summer of 1805. The city of Great Falls, named by

Lewis and Clark for the large falls of the Missouri River located nearby, offers a seven-stop City Circle Tour.

VISITORS CAN tour the artist Charles M. Russell's original studio and art gallery, Giant Springs and its fish hatchery, the Lewis and Clark portage marker and other attractions.

The Medora, North Dakota, City Circle Tour guides the visitor through the old haunts of Teddy Roosevelt—his beloved Badlands, the old Rough Riders Hotel, a zoo, riding stable and museum. In Deadwood and Lead, South Dakota, the traveler can take an area tour which includes the cemetery where Wild Bill Hickock and Calamity Jane are buried.

For more information on City and Area Circle Tours of the Old West Trail, contact the Old West Trail Foundation, P. O. Box 2554, Rapid City, S. D. 57709.

Special shows on cruises

This spring Holland America Cruises will feature a wide variety of entertainers who will perform on five 7-day "Special Entertainment" cruises on board the r.s.s. Rotterdam departing from New York for Nassau and Bermuda. There is no increase in fares which range from \$460 to \$810.

The "entertainment themes" and guest artists are:

• **COME TO THE CABARET** (April 23-30) ... featuring Peter Nero and his trio, Anna Maria Alberghetti, Henry Youngman and the song stylings of David Lawton and Daniele Dorice.

• **AMAZING WORLD OF KRES-**

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• **DANCE TO NOSTALGIA** (May 7-14) ... with the sophisticated sounds of the Peter Dreibin Orchestra, Cal Calloway and Cecilia, the Incomparable Hildegarde, the song stylings of Teddi King, and three professional dance teams, Ray and Dick Heatherton are Masters of Ceremony.

• **A SALUTE TO MUSIC** (May 14-21) ... with the Ray Bloch Or-

chestra, Edie Adams and Pete Candoli, Enzo Stuarti, song stylists June Oliver and The Carlses, and the International championship barbershop quartet The Four Statesmen.

• **JAZZ FESTIVAL AT SEA** (June 4-11) ... starring the Duke Ellington Orchestra with Mercer Ellington, Billy Taylor trio, Dick Hyman, Joe Williams, Margaret Whiting, Earl (Fatha) Hines and "Wild Bill" Davis.

Brochures on "Special Entertainment" cruise are available from your travel agent or Holland America Cruises, 2 Penn Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10001.

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