



LOUISE SNIDER

'Black Sunday' routine thriller

If you've been upstream for awhile, perhaps doing field research in the Panamint Mountains for the last three years, then you may find "Black Sunday" (R) an engrossing film. If you are a regular movie-goer and you enjoy suspense thrillers, you also may find "Black Sunday" engrossing or you may simply experience a sense of déjà vu.

The bad guys in "Black Sunday" are Black Septemberists planning to fragment 80,000 people at the Super Bowl. The good guys are the FBI and the CIA, with commanders trying to apprehend the terrorists and avert the plot.

It's tense and suspenseful. People are killed quickly and remorselessly. There are no torture scenes as in "Marathon Man," but there is enough bloodshed and anticipated horror to make up for that deficiency.

HARDLY ANYONE gives a second thought to gunning down anyone else, whether it's the Israelis raiding Black September headquarters or a terrorist shooting his way through a crowded Miami street. "Shoot first, ask questions later," is the rule, and it's supported by the exceptions.

The FBI dawdles because of its respect for "legal procedure" and is shown to be ineffectual and dull-minded. The Israeli leader, Kabakov (Robert Shaw), hesitates once and it proves fatal. When Kabakov and his men raid Black September headquarters, he finds a woman crouching in the shower. He pauses but doesn't shoot. The woman (Marthe Keller) happens to be the agent running the Super Bowl play.

Of course, she leads a charmed life anyway. The commando plant explosives throughout the headquarters' building; yet she not only survives the interruption to her shower but manages to emerge clean and unscathed as everything blows up around her.

Bruce Dern, as the American blimp pilot who Keller controls, gives a remarkably good performance. Self-pitying, enraged, frightened, paranoid, impatient, calculating, sensual—his virtuoso acting includes an impressive range of feelings and emotions.

The blimp pilot is an ex-POW, mentally awashed who nevertheless manages a facade of normalcy on the job. (Director John Frankenheimer also directed "The Manchurian Candidate," which deals with the theme of innocent people caught up in the terror caused by a brainwashed and programmed ex-POW.)

THE OTHER important character in "Black Sunday" is the Goodyear blimp. Director John Frankenheimer has to be given credit for transforming this innocuous and funny-looking vehicle into something ominous and threatening. When it hovers over the Super Bowl, it possesses all the dark menace of the shark in "Jaws" relentlessly pursuing its victim.

Some daredevil acrobatics from the stuntmen dominate the finale in a helicopter-blimp showdown. It's all so well done, one hates to nicker, but the product lacks nutritional value. It's a run-of-the-mill thriller based on a run-of-the-mill sub-literary book.

Visually, however, it's terrific. A credit to Hollywood professionalism. Thus, "Black Sunday" is a slick, well-paced, polished film that moves toward an exciting conclusion. Most likely, the packaging will sell the product.

Top winners named in our Movie Contest

There's some good news and some bad news about the Observer & Eccentric's Movie Contest to guess the Academy Awards. The bad: In the seven categories listed, no one scored higher than four. The good: We grouped together the 15 entries that selected four Oscar winners, drew two names at random and now have two contest winners.

Mike Bass of Birmingham and Marlene Solomon of Southfield will each receive two passes valid at several area theatres.

Our readers' choices tallied with the Motion Picture Academy's in naming Best Picture and Best Actress. Of 155 entries, the top vote getter for Best Picture was "Rocky" and for Best Actress, Faye Dunaway ("Network"). The Oscar winner for Best Actor was

Peter Finch ("Network"). Forty per cent of our entries named Finch, but 50 per cent named Sylvester Stallone, the star of "Rocky."

The popularity of "Rocky" was evident in our readers' ballots. Many who named "Rocky" as Best Picture went all the way and checked off a "Rocky" candidate in every category that contained one.

The Academy Award winners in the other categories we listed are Best Supporting Actor, Jason Robards ("All the President's Men"); Best Supporting Actress, Beatrice Straight ("Network"); Best Director, John Avildsen ("Rocky"); and Best Foreign Language Film, "Black and White in Color" (from the Ivory Coast).

GLIMPSES

NEW RELEASES

AIRPORT 77 (PG). A disaster film that combines air and sea operations by crashing a 747 into the ocean and then trying to raise the plane or lower the ocean—something like that.

THE DOMINO PRINCIPLE (R). Gene Hackman is the trigger man in a nameless organization's attempt at political assassination. Muddled but predictable plot.

THE EAGLE HAS LANDED (PG). World War II suspense-adventure story about a group of German paratroopers who attempt to kidnap Winston Churchill. Michael Caine, Donald Sutherland and Robert Duvall star.

FELLINI'S CASANOVA (R). A lavish and lengthy production that abounds with grotesqueries, one of which is Donald Sutherland's strange make-up, as Fellini interprets Casanova's memoirs.

MUHAMMAD, MESSENGER OF GOD (PG). A flawed epic about the rise of Islam under the leadership of Muhammad. Desert spectacle with more emphasis on social reforms rather than religious faith.

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.

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.

SLEEP SHOT (R). A comic and cutting look at the violence of professional hockey and the loneliness and shallow lives of the players and their wives. Paul Newman as the amoral player-coach smiles beguilingly as he utters every obscenity in the book.

Spirits lift as April begins

Michigan welcomes April with the sweet aroma of maple sugaring, the crack of baseball bats and the splash of trout as they take the bait of eager anglers. It's green-up month when spirits brighten with summer days and thawed out things to do, according to the Travel Bureau, Michigan Department of Commerce.

Sports Cars in Review—an annual favorite at Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn—is celebrating its silver anniversary with the theme "The Best of 25 Years." The review continues through April 10. Among classic rarities to be seen are a 1917 Stutz Bearcat, 1913 Rolls Royce Alpine Eagle and a 1929 Riley Brooklands.

Other specials at Henry Ford Museum in April will be the "Plantation" banjo, ragtime piano, and Dixieland jazz concert April 17 and "Stephen Vincent Benet's Stories of America," the Sunday Theater Special, April 24. The Detroit Professional Photographers' Association will be in action Sunday in Detroit's Community Arts Auditorium. Ford Auditorium will host the Detroit Public Schools Industrial Arts Display, April 4-7, and the Shetland Sheepdog Show, April 29.

STILL IN the canine category, the Progressive Dog Show is scheduled at the State Fairgrounds, Detroit, April 30.

If you're a bargain hunter, browser, junker or antiquer you may not be

able to resist the World's Largest Garage Sale, April 10-14, in Cobo Hall. Among the items that will be up for sale: 86 chin straps, parking meters, chandeliers, prachutes, a grand piano and a baseball batting cage.

The Ann Marston Memorial Archery Tournament will be held April 16 and the Rock Beer Festival, April 22-24, in Yack Arena, Wyandotte.

A Maple Syrup Tasting Bee will be held Sunday at the Chippewa Nature Center, Midland, where guests will receive a guided tour of the sugar bush. You'll see firsthand how the trees are tapped, the sap gathered and processed and then treated to a taste of the final maple syrup product.

For those interested in more than a taste, try the Shepard Maple Syrup Festival, April 22-24, and the Maple Syrup Festival at Vermontville, April 30 and May 1, where you can indulge yourself in heaps of pancakes smothered in the sweet nectar with sausage to top them off.

HUNDREDS OF avid fishermen have been awaiting the opening of Michigan's trout season April 30. heralding the season is the annual Trout Festival in Kalkaska, April 29-May 1. For antique buffs and arty folk there are several events taking place. A few suggestions are: The Military Relic Show, Saturday and Sunday, Civic Center, Lansing; Antique Fair and Sale, East Grand Rapids High

School, Grand Rapids, April 7-9; Gem and Mineral Show, Community College Fishhouse, Jackson, April 8-17; Ceramic and Hobby Show, April 16-18.

Bunce gets UCS award

The Rev. John Bunce of Birmingham has received the first C.H. Haberkorn 3rd Outstanding Citizen Award given by United Community Services of Oakland County. The award will be given annually by the United Community Services (UCS) in memory of the late Mr. Haberkorn, who was active in the organization. He also was a member of the Bloomfield Hills Board of Education.

Mr. Haberkorn died in December. The executive committee of the Oakland Division of UCS selected Mr. Bunce to receive the award, following a suggestion from Mr. Haberkorn before his death that Mr. Bunce be considered as the first recipient. The

two men were close friends.

Mr. Bunce is an associate minister of the First United Methodist Church of Birmingham. He also is president of the Southeast Michigan Society for Mental Health, a member of the Methodist Children's Home Society and secretary-treasurer of the Birmingham-Bloomfield American Cancer Society.

Mr. Bunce has been active in the Oakland Division of UCS for five years.

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