



the movies

Louise Snider

Tiresome action slows down pace of 'Hopscotch'

It's not exactly a spoof and not exactly a melodrama. It's filled with action but shuns violence (no one so much as requires a Band-Aid).

What is it? "Hopscotch" (R), a film that surfaces somewhere between "Three Days of the Condor" and "You Can Take This Job and Shove It."

Walter Matthau is a top CIA agent summarily demoted by his thoroughly dislikable superior, Ned Beatty. Matthau isn't about to become a file clerk, isn't ready for retirement and isn't inclined to defect, although the Soviets make him an offer.

Consequently, he decides to occupy his time and have a bit of fun by writing his memoirs. In his case, that means revealing the agency's gaffes, particularly, Beatty's blunders.

IN CAVALIER FASHION, he mails the first scorching chapter to the world's top intelligence establishments, including the CIA. Then the chase begins.

Washington wants to terminate him. The KGB wants to squeeze more information out of him. They're both on his trail as he "hopscotches" around the globe enjoying every minute of the game.

Beatty, as the mean-minded, pompous department head, is a perfect foil for Matthau's character — jocular and unorthodox with a taste for opera and a yen for an old flame, Glenda Jackson. She's also an ex-agent but after retiring from the trench coat service, she had the good sense to marry wealth and become a successful widow.

At her first meeting with Matthau, she pulls off an acting coup with a deadpan monologue about wine that manages to be an informative lecture and an alluring enticement at the same time.

WHENEVER THE TWO of them are together, they generate the same exciting chemistry that sparked their pairing in "House Calls." Their bright banter and double entendres give "Hopscotch" a very smart, lively appearance.

Unfortunately, they aren't together enough. Jackson assists Matthau with his literary venture but has little to do after the first half of the film.

"Hopscotch" hits its stride early with their biting repartee while Matthau befuddles his ex-employer with his irreverence. He uses agents' names on his fake credentials and, to add insult to injury, even subleashes Beatty's house.

After he rigs a shootout with the FBI which demolishes the property, everything else is anticlimactic. The director, Ronald Neame, tries to compensate for this deficiency by stepping up the vehicular activity. As the extens become repetitious, with Matthau keeping one jump and one chapter ahead of his pursuers, the variety of transportation increases.

Not only is there the usual array of autos, including a chase sequence with a pickup truck, but there are scenes involving a hovercraft, a helicopter, a seaplane and even a vintage biplane.

AS IN SO MANY idea-starved "action" movies, the action consists of watching someone sitting inside something that's moving. Since Matthau seems to possess an endless supply of money to rent, lease, purchase or charter, he logs a lot of travel time.

Consequently, a film which began with a lot of gloss and a lot of humor ends up, well, almost amusing.

what's at the movies

AIRPLANE (PG). A picture that takes off. This spoof of all those "Air-Port" movies is one of the zaniest films around.

THE BLUE LAGOON (R). Lush photography but silly story of two shipwrecked youngsters who grow up uninhibited on tropic isle.

THE BLUES BROTHERS (R). A film that is as unoriginal and dreary as it is expensive (very) with one meatball scene after another and enough car crashes to make AAA go belly up.

BRUBAKER (R). Serious drama with Robert Redford as reform warden fighting corruption on state prison farm.

CADDYSHACK (R). Chevy Chase and other comics in misadventures of caddies at a stuffy country club.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND (PG). Added footage and some judicious editing improve an already good product, Spielberg's sci-fi adventure of aliens contacting Earth.

DRESSED TO KILL (R). Horny murder mystery with more than a passing resemblance to Hitchcock's "Psycho."

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK (PG). "Star Wars" sequel unites original cast in continuation of battle against the evil empire.

FAME (R). Lots of young talent in vibrant musical about students at New York's School of Performing Arts.

THE FIENDISH PLOT OF DR. FU MANCHU (PG). Not very funny or very fiendish, but Peter Sellers' last film does include an occasional flash of comic genius that reminds us of what a gifted actor he was.

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN (PG). Kirk Douglas in action drama of a warship that goes through a time warp to the hour before Pearl Harbor.

HERBIE GOES BANANAS (G). Herbie, the Volkswagen bug, returns to the screen in a new adventure.

HONEYUCKLE ROSE (PG). Willie Nelson is the center of attention in story about a country-western star who forgets he's married whenever he's on tour, which is most of the time.

THE HUNTER (PG). Steve McQueen returns to the screen again as a modern-day bounty hunter in pursuit of fugitives.

MOUNTAIN MEN (R). Charlton Heston and Brian Keith in violent story of hunters in the Rockies in the early 1800s.

RAISE THE TITANIC (PG). Adventure as American special operations team tries to recover vital mineral from the ship while interested Russians have their own plan.

SMOKEY AND THE BANDIT II (PG). Most of original cast plus Dom DeLuise appear in sequel that is chockful of crude jokes and action as the Bandit transports a pregnant elephant from Florida to Texas.

XANADU (PG). Inisid characters inhibit trivial musical about nuse who descends to earth to help open up a disco, or something like that.



Ray Sharkey (left) and Michael Ontkean are best friends who fall in love with the same woman in "Willie and Phil," Paul Mazursky's romantic comedy. Margot Kidder co-stars in the film, which opened Friday at the Movies and Maple theaters.

Dakota's 2 stars double the show

By NICK CHARLES

review

There's a saying that "two" many cooks spoil the stew, but that saying doesn't hold true with the rock group Dakota.

Leaders of the band, Bill Kelly (known as "Kelly") and Jerry Hudzik, both sing lead vocals, play guitar and write the songs. The sound on their debut Columbia album, like their live sound, is harmonious.

Dakota was recently in Detroit opening the show for Queen at the Joe Louis Arena.

Even though this is Dakota's first album, the members of the band are not rookies to the business. Kelly and Hudzik recently released an album together under the name of the Jerry-Kelly Band. The two also played together in the group the Buoy, releasing the song "Timothy."

THE REST of the band is made up of bassist Bill McHale, who at one time played with the Bostons, keyboardist Jeff Mitchell, who has worked with Michael McDonald of the Doobie Brothers, and drummer Tony Roman, who is known for his extensive studio work in New York.

The album, which features the single "If It Takes All Night," was produced by Danny Seraphine, drummer for Chicago, and David "Hawk" Wolinski, who played keyboards for the group Rufus.

"The album and the tour came about through a sound mixer from Clare Brothers Audio. His name is Michael

Stall, who's now involved in our East Coast management organization," said Kelly.

"Michael was doing sound for Chicago for three or four years. He was playing our demo around his house and finally Danny said, 'Who are these guys?'"

As far as the sound goes, Michael was doing sound for Queen on the tour and after their first opening act didn't work out, Michael told their tour manager that he had a band for them. Queen liked us. That's how the tour came about and we've been with them ever since," said Kelly.

THE JERRY-KELLY Band was not an appropriate name for the group since it was hard rock. The name Dakota was suggested by Rufus' drummer, John Robinson, who also played drums on the album before they found Roman.

"We didn't like the name at first," said Kelly, since there were other bands named after cities like Chicago and we knew Danny so well. Danny told me an interesting story one night and after that the name didn't bother me anymore.

"The guys in the band came to him and said 'We have a name for the band.



Dakota played recently in Detroit. The rock band's first album has been released.

It's going to be great" he said he nearly killed them when they wanted to name the band after the local bus company good. Let's go with it."

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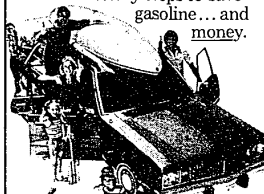
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