



the movies

Louise Snider

Can you believe malice is absent in Luedtke film?

You can't believe everything you read in the newspapers. In fact, judging from "Absence of Malice" (PG), you can hardly believe anything you read in the papers.

If you think this view is exaggerated, consider that it is advanced by someone who should know what he is talking about, Kurt Luedtke, former executive editor of the Detroit Free Press. Luedtke, who wrote the script from his own book, has chronicled absorbing social drama that zeroes in on newspapers and their use and abuse of power.

The case is illustrated by the actions of a fictional daily, the Miami Standard, which prints a story that nearly wrecks one person's life and causes the death of another. The facts in the story are correct, yet the story is not truthful. By selecting certain facts and omitting others, by phrasing of a headline and the use of photographs, a newspaper can be factual and still present a false image of a person or an event.

THAT'S WHAT happens in "Absence of Malice." But the newspaper is not the sole culprit. The paper becomes the unwitting but cooperative dupe of an unscrupulous federal investigator who is trying to solve the murder of a union official.

He leaks a story to reporter Megan Carter (Sally Field) that implicates a local businessman, Michael Gallagher (Paul Newman), in the murder. Gallagher runs a legitimate business, but his deceased father had Mafia connections. The investigator hopes to harass Newman into using his supposed contacts with the mob to help the feds uncover the killer.

The reporter, eager for a scoop, rises to the bait, with terrible consequences for Gallagher. He retaliates against the newspaper and the government investigators. His strategy unfolds in a fascinating "Sling" twist.

SYDNEY POLLACK directed the movie and elicited fine performances from everyone in the cast except the female lead, Sally Field. She is supposed to be a seasoned, competent journalist in line for an editorship, but she acts more like a cub reporter, and a poor one at that. She looks ready to burst into tears if anyone rebuffs her.

She doesn't fare any better in her love scenes with Newman. The reporter and her victim have a brief affair while they are sorting out the facts (Isn't that conflict of interest?). The chemistry just isn't there. They may as well have been communicating with each other via video display terminals.

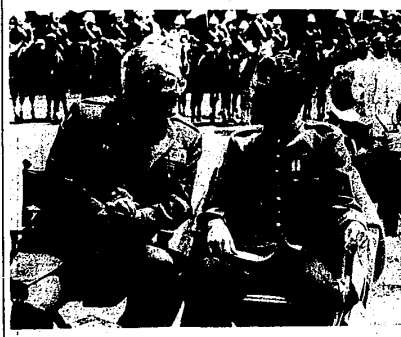
Whether in the newsroom or the bedroom, Field's wishy-washy performance takes away a lot of credibility from this movie. That's too bad, because Luedtke has raised some interesting questions about the ways in which news organizations operate and has pointed out their vulnerability to manipulation.

Movies generally have treated journalists in a positive way. They may have been depicted as cynical or nervy, but we could forgive any rude conduct because it was always in a good cause — the pursuit of truth. In "All the President's Men" the role of investigative reporter practically was deified. With that in mind, "Absence of Malice," in spite of its faults, helps give a more balanced view.



Serious business

Jane Fonda and Kris Kristofferson (above) are doing some high-level negotiating with Saudi Arabians in "Rollover," a drama about international high finance. In "Taps," (below) head of the military academy George C. Scott is idolized by young cadet Tim Hutton. The cadets rally to the academy's defense when its existence is threatened.



Dance center offers classes

The Midwest Dance Center's annual holiday Dance Workshop continues from 6-9 p.m. Monday-Wednesday at the center, 8556 W. Nine Mile Road, between Woodward and Coolidge, Oak Park.

Visiting artist Gary Schaaf, from the faculty of the University of Massachusetts, will conduct classes in intermediate and advanced ballet and modern dance. Joining him is resident artist Maureen Hurwitz, who will teach classes in jazz.

Call 545-8055 or 546-4949 for reservations and information.

what's at the movies

NOW SHOWING

CINDERELLA (G) Based on the French version of the rags-to-riches fairy tale written more than 300 years ago, this Disney classic is being distributed a fifth time to delight young and old alike.

MODERN PROBLEMS (PG) It's Chevy Chase and his slapstick antics again as he stars in this romantic comedy involving the misadventures of a loveless air traffic controller and a fiery wheelchair-bound Vietnam veteran.

ARTHUR (R) Dudley Moore is a playboy millionaire in love with Liza Minnelli in this contemporary comedy.

HEARTLAND (PG) A young widow with her 7-year-old daughter goes to work as a housekeeper for a Scottish widower. The two strong-willed individuals grow to share their love for the land and family commitment in a drama set in Wyoming in 1910.

ROLLOVER (R) Jane Fonda plays a former movie queen who assumes the most challenging of roles: running her deceased husband's troubled

corporation in a financial war that takes on international proportions. Kris Kristofferson shares the star billing.

SHARKY'S MACHINE (R) Burt Reynolds is Sharky, once a top undercover cop, demoted to the vice squad. He can accept the assignment, or turn a colorful crew of vice cops into a personal police "machine."

TAPS (PG) George C. Scott and Timothy Hutton star in this powerful drama about a group of young cadets who defend the military academy that is their home when its survival is threatened.

THE WOMAN NEXT DOOR (R) Francois Truffaut's modern story of passionate love set in the Dauphine region of the French Alps.

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.

Beaux-Arts offers studio theater workshops

The Fine Arts School: Academie des Beaux-Arts in Southfield will have four new studio theater workshops beginning Jan. 15.

The workshops will be held Saturday afternoons through March 23, and the 10-week tuition will be \$75 each.

Interview/auditions will be held Jan. 9, from 1-3 p.m., on open-house registration day. The Academie des Beaux-Arts is in the Lycee International at 13 Mile and Evergreen roads.

Musical Theater Scene Studies will be conducted by Roger Johnson, a stage and vocal ensemble director who has worked in both Los Angeles and New York. Dramatic arts workshops are offered for ages 7-12, 13-18 and adults.

LAURA NIESEN, an actress with the Fourth Street Playhouse, will teach the children's workshop.

The Studio course for high school

students will be taught by Eve Pruden. Jeff Nahan, artistic director of Actors Alliance Theatre, is in residence at The Fine Arts School: Academie des Beaux-Arts. For further information, call 642-1178.

A new professional theater, Actors Alliance Theatre, is in residence at The Fine Arts School: Academie des Beaux-Arts. For further information, call 642-1178.

DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

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Everyone will be guaranteed a "50 yard line seat" when you join the team at Jacques/Marvin's N.Y. Deli for Super Bowl Sunday, January 24th.

The pre-game hoopla begins at 12 noon with all fans receiving a "super" value ticket making them eligible for some "super" prizes later in the day. From noon 'til 2:00 p.m. you can satisfy your quest with wine appetizers at our champagne buffet — all you can eat, and between glasses, of bubbly!

And what's a football game without a marching band and pom-pom girls, you say?

Well, o.k. — we'll have a marching band and pom-pom girls! We'll even give your favorite girl some "super" flowers to celebrate the occasion.

From kick-off time 'til the last whistle, you can sit back and enjoy the game on one of our many quad-screen T.V.'s. In case you get the munchies, there's no need to leave your seat — we'll be offering "stadium vending delicias" (hot dogs, pretzels, popcorn, flyers, clams, shrimp, crab legs, ice cream and more).

What about those raffle tickets we mentioned earlier? Winners of "super" raffle will be awarded off to the Silverdome (with 2 tickets, choose your prize and get in line to see the opening kickoff in person! Other fabulous food prizes will also be awarded. We'll even be holding an auction to give you the chance to bid on items donated by local professional sports celebrities (all donations go to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation).

Sound great? Well, so will the price.

\$32.50 per person

This will also include wine, parking, coat check, taxes and tips, and reduced drink prices. Reservations are limited, so prompt replies are necessary. For more information call 642-2183.

RESERVATION FORM

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Number of persons attending _____ \$32.50 per person, in _____

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Jacques / Marvin's N.Y. Deli 30100 K. Telegraph Road South of 12 Mile 642-2183

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The Up With People Show is an internationally acclaimed cast of over 100 young people who sing and dance their way right into your heart. With music from home and abroad.

Don't miss this chance to see this beautifully choreographed, colorful festival of music.

Up With People Show

FRIDAY JANUARY 8, 8:00 P.M. at these locations

Birmingham: Seaholm High School
Madison Heights: Bishop Foley High School
Pontiac: Pontiac High School

TICKETS \$7.00 for adults, \$5.00 for students & senior citizens

Tickets available at Hudsons in Oakland Mall & Pontiac Mall. Also at The Community House in Birmingham.