

Skip 'Quiet Cool' but catch 'True Stories'

While movies may not be better than ever, according to trade-paper reports there's a lot more of them. Variety recently noted 383 Hollywood film starts this year as against 282 in the same period of 1985.

Many of these new films are intended primarily for cable, cassette or export. You'll probably never have an opportunity to view many of them, given current distribution patterns.

And you probably wouldn't want to, given their poor production values and low quality. Unless you appreciate every old-time Western cliché liberally faced with explicit violence, "Quiet Cool" (R) is one of those to miss.

Apparently the film is based loosely on drug enforcement agency experiences with criminal corruption and marijuana farming in North California and elsewhere. But the film is so heavily crammed with trite images that this contemporary Western shoots itself in the foot before the first reel is finished.

THE GREER FAMILY lives in the northern California woods. Joshua Greer (Adam Coleman Howard) sees his parents, Stephen and Rachael, brutally murdered by the gangsters who are "herdin" marijuana in their parts.

The gang is led by Valence (Nick Cassavetes), who plays the deadpan, sadistic villain with a consummate lack of emotion. He doesn't demonstrate much acting skill either, particularly for being the son of actor-director John Cassavetes and actress Gena Rowlands.

But then why should he? "Quiet Cool" doesn't demonstrate much imagination, as Joshua takes to the woods and survives the gang that murdered his parents. His Aunt Katy (Daphne Ashbrook) just happens to have an old boyfriend, tough New York cop Joe Dillon (James Remar), who hops a plane west in the middle of an arrest, just because she called.

You can figure out the rest, as Joe hooks up with Joshua to wipe out the bad guys using every old trick and visual platitude imaginable. Naturally they stride into the small Northern California town for the final shoot-out. You want to know who Mr. Big was? Send me a stamp, self-addressed envelope — it's cheaper



David Byrne of the Talking Heads narrates "True Stories" as he drives around the fictional town of Virgil, in the offbeat, entertaining film he also directed.

You want to know who Mr. Big was? Send me a stamped, self-addressed envelope — it's cheaper than going to the movie, even on dollar night, and more fun.

than going to the movie, even on dollar night, and more fun. Totally on the other side of town is David Byrne's extremely clever and very entertaining "True Stories" (PG), a pleasant, whimsical view of American culture.

DAVID BYRNE, best known as leader of the popular rock band, Talking Heads, makes a very auspicious debut as film director and star on-screen narrator as he drives around the mythical, small Texas town of Virgil.

A whole bunch of familiar folks live in Virgil. They are people we recognize from whatever town and whatever neighborhood each of us lives in. In fact, the film's consider-

able appeal is that while the stories themselves may not be true, their characters are.

AS BYRNE DRIVES around Virgil in his red convertible, he affectionately recounts warm but sharp observations about life's comedy and the people who represent the very best, as well as the more prevalent mediocrity in life. Happy to report, this film ignores the terrors our world holds.

"True Stories" features Byrne's

music and the Talking Heads performing nine songs. The music and Byrne's narration tie together an elaborate series of vignettes about the eccentric inhabitants of Virgil.

While there is a storyline in the conversational sense, the people of Virgil hold our interest, particularly Miss Rollings (Swoosie Kurtz), the world's laziest woman, and Louis Fyne (John Goodman), who works in the "clean room" at Vericorp but spends most of his time trying to be loved. You will love him for it.

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the movies
Dan Greenberg

The film is well-photographed by Ed Lachman, with images that effectively portray so much of contemporary America — from the plastic veneer of suburban malls to the final stragglers in a small-town parade marching away from the sparse crowd that came to celebrate the town's "specialness."

Some sequences are overdone, for example, the mall's fashion show could have made its point in half the time. But it is significant that the "True Stories" concept obtained major financing and was able to present polished, elaborate images in an unusual, unconventional but very entertaining film.

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