

# MOVING PICTURES

## 'The Chocolate War': It's a film worth seeing

Among the new films this week are two that don't hold enough promise to merit screenings.

"The Terror Within" stars George Kennedy and a bunch of scientists in a secret lab under the Mojave Desert striving to save the world from a deadly plague. Such diseases seem to attract screenwriters first.

Surprisingly, Donna Dixon is in a PG vehicle, "Lucky Stiff" that hasn't gotten much advance notice. Perhaps the story line is the problem as she meets a 300-pound man and takes him home to meet her cannibalistic family.

"The Chocolate War" (R, B+, 105 minutes) — It's a war about 20,000 boxes of chocolate. Sound funny? It's not. It's about man's infinite ability for cruelty to others.

Young teenage boys in a Washington state Catholic high school must sell 20,000 boxes of chocolate under pressure from Brother Leon (John Glover) for the profit and glory of Trinity High. There's also pressure from a school gang called "The Vigils" who, as most bullies do, crave personal power.

Jerry (Ian Mitchell-Smith) and his friend, "The Goober" (Corey Gumbert) are innocent pawns in these cruel games.

The Vigils leader Archie (the Walli Ward) idea of pranks are not the usual silly things boys do, they are cruel mind games. Archie likes to see people squirm and sweat, but plays one trick too many and the boys get even. Sadly, getting even makes them as cruel as Archie.

Beautiful photography, excellent acting and a thought-provoking story make "The Chocolate War" worth your viewing, but you'll never look quite the same at the young man at

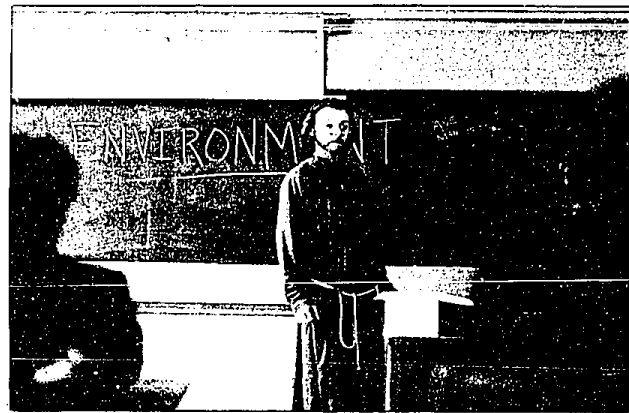


### Grading the movies

- A+ Top marks - sure to please
- A Close behind - excellent
- A- Still in running for top honors
- B+ Pretty good stuff, not perfect
- B Good
- B- Good but notable deficiencies
- C+ Just a cut above average
- C Mediocre
- C- Not so hot and slipping fast
- D The very best of the poor stuff
- D+ Poor
- D- It doesn't get much worse
- F Truly awful
- Z Reserved for the colossal bad
- \* No advanced screening

the door trying to sell you a box of chocolate. Reviewed by Kathy Guyon.

If you've never seen "Gone With the Wind," Turner Entertainment's finely restored print offers an opportunity to enjoy this MGM classic at



Brother Leon (John Glover) is the impassioned organizer of St. Trinity's annual chocolate sale in MCEG's "The Chocolate War."

area theaters.

Even if you have, here's a chance to see the unparalleled splendor of Technicolor, just like it was in the good old days.

In honor of the film's 50th anniversary, Turner restored it to mint condition for a special national theatrical tour.

### STILL PLAYING:

"The Accidental Tourist" (C+) (PG) 120 minutes. Slow-paced family melodrama.

"Beaches" (A+) (PG-13) 120 minutes. Bette Midler and Barbara Hershey in fine show of friendship.

"Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure" (B-) (PG-13) George Carlin gives the boys the

key to a time-traveling, A-plus history project.

"The 'Burbs" (D) (PG) 95 minutes. Tom Hanks in slow-paced, absurd satire of horror films.

"Cousins" (A-) (PG-13) 115 minutes. Charming romantic comedy about life, love and marriage.

"Dangerous Liaisons" (C+) (R) 115 minutes. Even lush images and good acting can't overcome the non-cinematic quality of this boring story of pre-Revolutionary French decadence.

"Dirty Rotten Scoundrels" (B+) (PG) 100 minutes. Super-slick con men on the Riviera are lots of fun.

"The Fly II" (\*) (R). Bad genes notwithstanding, our hero's still hovering.

"Her Alibi" (B-) (PG) 80 minutes. This murder-mystery-spy-detective-detective-story is well-

isn't always a wise act. Of course, few in 1951 knew that such goings-on were going on.

WELL, The complications — suspenseful, romantic and routine — are pretty fair, but the film's representation of 1951 political realities is pretty farfetched.

"The House on Carroll Street" suffers from trying too hard to resurrect those who suffered so much from blacklisting. The resurrection just doesn't work politically.

On the bright side, there's romance, suspense and some snappy repartee — particularly from Daniels and his partner-agent friend. The evening has a nice nostalgic quality, as do the collection of old cars. You'll never see a Toyota in this film.

All this decor provides a credible veneer of a time long ago when New York's streets were relatively safe and committee rooms weren't.

While "The House on Carroll Street" is pretty decent entertainment, it lacks enough political savvy to make it an important film.

### VIDEO VIEWING

By Dan Greenberg staff writer

Less than 20 years after Vietnam, the country is ready to cleanse the wound with movies of every sort. Someone even has written a book about Vietnam War movies.

Why then is there no similar cinematic interest in the Hollywood 10 (a group of movie writers and directors who refused to answer the questions of the House Un-American Activities Committee), the blacklist and the McCarthy era?

Streisand and Redford's "The Way We Were," Woody Allen's "The Front" and a documentary narrated by John Huston, "Hollywood on Trial," pretty much sum up what Hollywood has had to say about its bad old days under fire in the late '40s and early '50s.

Walter Bernstein, who scripted "The Front's" comic approach to those trying times when brother turned against brother, has attempted — much less successfully — to treat the anti-communist hysteria of 40 years ago in a serious, suspenseful film.

Last year's "The House of Carroll Street" (PG, B-, 101 minutes) is politically interesting and suspenseful but surprisingly enough got very little theatrical distribution when it was released. In fact, it was never exhibited in this market. Perhaps its availability on videocassette now will spark some interest in this touchy subject.

PICTURE A smoky Senate committee room in the summer of 1951 just after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld contempt of Congress citations against the Hollywood 10.

Emily Crane (Kelly McGillis), a picture editor at Life magazine, refuses to give membership lists to the Senate Committee. She is cited for contempt and Life magazine fires her.

To indicate just how sensitive the subject remains, the film carries a lengthy disclaimer of any intent to suggest that Life magazine, in reality, might have dismissed an employee for his or her political beliefs.

This Senate committee's chief counsel is a particularly unpleasant character, Ray Salwen (Mandy Pa-

inkin). The film is never quite clear whom he's supposed to represent historically, but he certainly is made up to look like Sen. Joseph McCarthy while he acts like Roy Cohn. He symbolizes the extreme rightist, irrational paranoia that discovers communist threats under every bush.

Well, Crane is out of work, but finds employment reading for the elderly Miss Venable (Jessica Tandy) and is surprised one day to see Salwen talking to strange folks in the house across the back garden. Just a bit too convenient.

HER CURIOSITY entangles her in Salwen's intrigues and, of course, in a minor romance with FBI agent Mike Cochran (Jeff Daniels).

Salwen, it turns out, is so rabidly anti-communist that he is smuggling Nazi war criminals into the United States simply because they are anti-communists. One of the film's problems is that the reasoning behind such activity is never explained in a cogent way.

And it should be, because there is a very important lesson here: Taking thine enemy's enemy to your bosom

isn't always a wise act. Of course, few in 1951 knew that such goings-on were going on.

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### ALTERNATIVE VIEWING

## Ophuls deserves Oscar for 'Hotel'

By Anne Sharp special writer

It's said that poor Marcel Ophuls never wanted to be a documentary maker. He would much rather have followed in the footsteps of his father, Max, and made light, Hollywood-style entertainments.

But the overwhelming success of his epic non-fiction chronicle of Nazi-occupied France, "The Sorrow and the Pity," more or less forced him to continue in the same vein.

If "Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie" serves to seal Ophuls' reputation as the guy who makes four-hour films about the Holocaust, it also offers a glimmer of what might have been had he careered as a director taking a more friskier approach to his art.

The tale of former Gestapo chief-

lain Klaus Barbie, the "Butcher of Lyon," is a strange, outrageous, chilling one. Ophuls documents his case with great sensitivity and an unerring eye for the truth.

He also factually, skillfully transforms it into a rousing adventure tale. You marvel that all its multitude of characters, all its plot details, could be contained in a mere 4 1/2-hour film.

BARBIE WAS a violent psychopath who did his part for Hitler's war effort by conducting an elaborate torture chamber for resistance leaders and other enemies of the Third Reich out of his headquarters at the Hotel Terminus in Lyon, France.

After the war, he was clever enough to pass himself off to American intelligence agents as a valuable anti-communist contact and so was smuggled safely to South America.

There he lent his talents to various dictatorships, advising them on the maiming and brutalizing of political prisoners, and aiding in the international arms and drug-smuggling trades.

Persistent Nazi hunters finally tracked him down and extradited him to France, where he was tried and convicted of crimes against humanity.

Through interviews with Barbie's victims as well as his relatives, comrades and sworn enemies, Ophuls recreates the progress of a very sick, dangerous man who was allowed to inflict untold damage on thousands of people, simply because it was useful for various politicians, government agents and other criminals for him to do so.

It's painfully easy in a film like this for the villain to acquire the glamor. Ophuls wisely never allows

the audience to identify with Barbie. He remains a faceless entity, seen only in rare glimpses. It's the people whose lives he affected that take center stage.

ALTHOUGH IT'S a serious story, the great tradition of Jewish "galloos humor" is simply represented here. Ophuls maintains a running joke about the perverse pleasures of interviewing ex-Nazis and their families.

He delights in popping in on them unexpectedly, recording their laane, evasive reactions to his questions. "Whatever happened to human rights?", grumbles one as Ophuls gleefully pounces after him with his microphone and camera.

"Hotel Terminus" richly deserves its Oscar nomination for best documentary. I'm rooting for Ophuls. He's a scholar, a gentleman and a great entertainer.

### SCREEN SCENE

DETROIT FILM THEATRE, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit. Call 832-2730 for information. (\$5 all seats).

"Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie" (1988), 7 p.m. March 5, 4, noon and 8 p.m. March 5, Marcel Ophuls' engrossing double-feature length (287 minutes) chronicle of the rise and fall of a Nazi war criminal is a sure bet to win this year's Oscar for Best Documentary.

MICHIGAN THEATRE, 603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Call 969-8397 for information. (14 regular, \$2.25 for students and seniors)

"Track 29" (1988), 8 p.m. Feb. 27, 7:10 p.m. Feb. 28, 8:15 p.m. March 1, 7:10 p.m. March 3. Director Nicolas Roeg and screenwriter Dennis Potter collaborated on this odd, haunting story of a woman's imaginary romance with her long-lost son. With Theresa Russell, Gary Oldman and Christopher Lloyd.

"A Handful of Dust" (1988), 9 p.m. Feb. 26, 7 p.m. March 1. Glorious BBC-type adaptation of Evelyn Waugh novel about horrible things that happen when a bad, rich Englishwoman betrays her husband. Directed by Charles "Brideshead Revisited" Sturges, with Kristen Scott Thomas and James Wilby.

"Crossing Delancey" (1988), 9 p.m.

March 21. A holly-lolly New Yorker (Amy Irving) finds love with the proper pickie salesman (Peter Flegler).

"A Cry in the Dark" (1988), Meryl got another best actress nomination for this one, based on a true story about an Australian woman unjustly accused of doing away with her own child.

PARK THEATRE, 804 Erie St. E., Windsor, Call (519) 971-9993 for dates and time (14 regular and \$3.50 seniors, children and members).

"Terry Tricker and the Stamp Traveler" Canadian animated kid's feature by Rick Demers. Double bill with "Abel," a

Dutch tale about a 33-year-old man who's never left his parents' home. (Finn, got a few of those out where I live, too).

TELE-ARTS, 1540 Woodward, Detroit. Call 968-8690 for dates and times. (\$2 matinee, students and seniors, \$3.50 regular).

"Wampus in Havana" Detroit premiere of animated feature about an undead jazz saxophonist who really gets his teeth into Cuban nightlife. Double bill with "Nosferatu" (1978), Werner Herzog's beautiful, funny, literate mistletoe of the Dracula legend, starring Klaus (the House) Kinski, Isabelle Adjani and Bruno Ganz.

done, but too much.

"I'm Gonna Get You Sucka" (C+) (R) 85 minutes.

Slow-paced satire of B-movies from the black point of view.

"The Land Before Time" (A) (G) 75 minutes.

Touching story of a group of young dinosaurs. Excellent animation.

"The Mighty Quinn" (C) (R) 90 minutes.

Murder, money and spits in the Caribbean.

"Mississippi Burning" (A+) (R) 130 minutes.

Brilliant political film about human greed, fear and cruelty. A must-see.

"My Stepmother Is an Alien" (B+) (PG-13) 108 minutes.

When extra-terrestrial Kim Basinger touches down, this comedy takes off.

"Naked Gun" (D) (PG-13) 90 minutes.

Overly broad farce never gets off the ground floor of the police squad room.

"Oliver and Company" (A) (G) 70 minutes.

Disney animation at its best.

"Physical Evidence" (\*) (R). Burt Reynolds is a cop with a nifty attorney, Theresa Russell.

"Rat Man" (A+) (R) 130 minutes. Tom Cruise and Dustin Hoffman star as brothers in every sense.

"Tap" (C+) (PG-13) 105 minutes. Nice dancing, but brittle story with Sammy Davis Jr. and Gregory Hines.

"Three Fugitives" (A-) (PG-13) 95 minutes.

Touching comedy about a tough guy, a little misfit and his cute daughter.

"Torch Song Trilogy" (B) (R) 122 minutes.

Sensitive, touching but questionable look at homosexuality.

"Twins" (B+) (PG) 95 minutes.

Do you believe Danny DeVito and Arnold Schwarzenegger are twins?

"Who's Harry Crumb" (D+) (PG-13) 85 minutes.

John Candy is, but not very well, thank you, in this detective-comedy.

"Working Girl" (B) (R) 115 minutes. Obstacles on the road to success in Big Business.

"Please, my little girl needs blood"

Imagine if you had to ask for blood to save the life of someone you love. Next time the American Red Cross asks, give blood, please.

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