

'Dead Ahead' a powerful indictment

HBO chronicles Exxon Valdez oil spill

By Steven Alan McGaw

Moments after midnight on Friday, March 24, 1989, Exxon's oil tanker, The Valdez, ran aground on a reef in Alaska's Prince William Sound. The accident ruptured several of the ship's storage tanks and eventually spilled 11 million gallons of oil into the sea. Over 1,000 miles of previously pristine shoreline were affected and the impact on the area's wildlife was colossal, killing nearly 400,000 birds and thousands of fish and land animals. The most conservative scientific estimates say the true toll of the event will not be sufficiently appreciated until well into the next century.

On Saturday, Dec. 12, HBO unveils *Dead Ahead: The Exxon Valdez Disaster*, a dramatic chronicle of the event and its aftermath.

Christopher Lloyd stars as Frank Iarossi, an Exxon executive in charge of shipping. Within hours after the Valdez accident, Iarossi is awakened in his Houston home and dispatched to Alaska to ensure the safe containment of the tanker's remaining oil and oversee Exxon's

role in the massive cleanup. What follows, however, is day after day of finger-pointing, name-calling and argument, as Exxon, the Alyeska pipeline consortium, various environmentalist groups and even the Coast Guard squabble over who's to blame, who should do what and whose head(s) should roll.

Dead Ahead producer Leslie Woodhead says the real problem became shockingly clear as he and his staff did their 18 months of research. "What was going on," he says, "was an attempt on all parts to clean up their own image, rather than clean up the oil spill." The result, he charges, was a "devastating inertia" in mobilizing cleanup efforts, making the disaster far worse than it had to be.

John Heard co-stars as environmentalist Dan Lawn and David Morse plays outraged fisherman Rick Steiner. Rip Torn appears briefly as Adm. Paul Yost. Each of the film's principals, as well as the supporting players and many extras, contributes to the film's urgency. Director Paul Seed keeps the story moving swiftly and makes effective use of archival footage of the actual event.

CABLE NEWS

Eight days of Bond, Beatles this week

By Dan Rice

Meet the forgotten Bond on Sunday, Nov. 29, when TBS airs the kinescope of the 1954 live TV production of Ian Fleming's *Casino Royale*, starring Barry Nelson as the American Jimmy Bond. The rarity leads into TBS' 30 Years of James Bond festival, an airing of the first 13 Bond films, beginning with 1962's *Dr. No* on Monday, Nov. 30, and ending with *Octopussy* on Sunday, Dec. 6.

All you need is love, but a free week of The Disney Channel couldn't hurt. The highlight of Disney's holiday preview from Sunday, Nov. 29, to Sunday, Dec. 6, is their "Eight Days a Week" Beatles Festival, offering nightly Beatles' movies and specials including *Magical Mystery Tour* on Wednesday, Dec. 2.

Comedy, comedy, comedy. Tuesday, Dec. 1, is a night for laughs on Lifetime, with *Girls Night Out: Cathy Ladman and Jeff Cesario*, followed by *Six Comics in Search of a Generation*, featuring Ellen DeGeneres. Saturday, Dec. 5, on Showtime, *Carol Leifer: Gaudy, Bawdy & Blue* has the comedian performing as "Rusty Ber-man," a 1950s burlesque queen.

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