

the movies
Louise Snider

Undercover duo just hasn't a clue to solving crimes

Ryan O'Neal and John Hurt are paired in "Partners" (R), but it's a partnership that would best be dissolved.

O'Neal plays a straight cop, Hurt a gay one. Their commanding officer has teamed them on an undercover mission to infiltrate the gay community. Their assignment: find the person who has been murdering homosexuals.

As undercover police officers, they are not to be believed. In fact, as any kind of police, they are less than credible. Neither one seems to know what he is doing. O'Neal, who is supposed to be the experienced, street-wise detective, doesn't show an inkling of smart.

While he is supposed to be winning the confidence of the gay community, he is conspicuously chasing after every female he meets. He doesn't think through any situations or heed his partner's warnings. He is a total sexist jerk.

SO MUCH FOR the "detecting" in "Partners." The other themes don't fare much better. There is the occasional funny line, but this is basically a one-joke movie.

That joke consists of O'Neal always looking embarrassed about compromising his manhood. The consequences of this play are that the same stock situations are repeated over and over.

O'Neal parades around in tank tops and tight jeans, picking up men or trying to be picked up by them, while Hurt mimes about their apartment preparing elaborate dinners.

Both actors seem little more than caricatures. This movie is a real waste of talent. It is particularly distressing to see Hurt, who received an Academy Award nomination for his role as the Elephant Man, in this demeaning characterization. He does everything but lip, in creating the stereotypical image of a male homosexual.

The best one can say for "Partners" is that it demeans everybody equally, since even the "regular" police appear to be absolute clods. When they stake out a motel in an episode that is not intended to be comical, their stake-out ends up being a disaster, neither serious nor funny — just dumb.

"PARTNERS" WAS written by Francis Veber, who created that very successful French import about homosexuals, "La Cage Aux Folles." Whatever he had going for him in France, he seems to have lost it crossing the Atlantic.

"Partners" has none of the innovation or interesting characters of the French film.

It isn't a case of poor acting but of a terrible script and bad directing. It is as if the director, James Burrows, couldn't decide when to go for what effect — comedy, suspense, straight drama. When he does make a decision, it always seems to be the wrong one.

"Partners" has the disjointed look of a movie constructed by a committee. One person said, "Let's take Felix and Oscar from 'The Odd Couple' and make them gay." Someone else added, "Let's make them cops," and a third person suggested throwing in some murders for excitement.

The result would be a gay-comedy-thriller. "Partners" fails in this undertaking. It is substantially less than the sum of its parts. All it has to offer is a lot of cheap jokes.

what's at the movies

- CHARIOTS OF FIRE (PG).** True and compelling story of two runners. One runs for the glory of God, the other to battle bigotry. Outstanding and elevating movie.
- DEATHTRAP (PG).** The film version of Ira Levin's comedy suspense thriller starring Michael Caine, Christopher Reeve and Dyan Cannon.
- IF YOU COULD SEE WHAT I HEAR (PG).** Based on the life of Tom Sullivan. True story of bitter-sweet love and the fun and games most college students engage in just prior to entering the "real" world.
- MONTENEGRO.** Bored wife of diplomat in Switzerland discovers earthy pleasures in cafe where Yugoslav workers meet.
- ON GOLDEN POND (PG).** Beautiful, sensitive and humorous film about an older couple's 48th summer at the cottage as they reflect on their lives and relationships. With Katharine Hepburn and Henry Fonda.
- PORKY'S (R).** Director Bob Clark's rowdy, raunchy comedy of adolescence derives its title from the name of a notorious redneck dive, to which six lusty teen-agers are hypnotically drawn.
- PRIVATE LESSONS (R).** A light-hearted tale of lost innocence with a surprising twist or two. Stars Sylvia Kristel, Howard Hesseman and Eric Brown.
- QUEST FOR FIRE (R).** This science-fiction epic follows three courageous warriors forced to venture beyond their tribal lands when their life-sustaining flame is lost during a battle.
- ROBIN HOOD (G).** Disney's animated musical version of Robin Hood features voices of Peter Ustinov, Phil Harris, Terry-Thomas and Andy Devine.
- SOME KIND OF HERO (R).** Richard Pryor as Vietnam POW who returns home to find his personal life a shambles.
- THE SWORD AND THE SORCERER (R).** From a time before history comes a tale of wizards, warriors, kings and kingdoms. Stars Lee Remick, Kathleen Beller, Simon MacCorkindale, George Maharis and Richard Lynch, directed by Albert Pyun.
- VICTOR/VICTORIA (PG).** Julie Andrews in Blake Edwards' comedy about unemployed singer who becomes smashing success after becoming "Victor," a drag queen.
- 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.



Christopher Reeve (left) and Michael Caine toast their good fortune in the suspense thriller "Deathtrap."

Neil Sedaka opens Friday concerts

The Meadow Brook Music Festival will begin its nine-week Friday night Variety Series on June 25 with hit composer-performer Neil Sedaka.

Comedian David Saphy, frequent guest on Johnny Carson and other television talk shows, will open for Sedaka.

The festival, held in the Baldwin Pavilion, is a cultural program of Oakland University on campus near Rochester.

The Kingston Trio will return with its '50s favorites "MTA" and "Tom Dooley" and others July 2, sharing the stage with the (Irish) Rovers. A gigantic fireworks display will burst upon the Meadow Brook hill following the concert.

BENNY GOODMAN will bring his swinging clarinet to the outdoor festival July 9 and will be followed July 16 by the "Coal Miner's Daughter," Loretta Lynn. Country singer Randy Barlow will open for Lynn.

Contemporary jazzman Chuck Mangione will play flugelhorn and trumpet with his quartet July 23.

On July 30 Meadow Brook audiences will march to the saints once again, with the Preservation Hall Jazz Band from New Orleans.

Andy Williams will sing his songs Aug. 6. He has won 15 Gold Records since his 1953 "Days of Wine and Roses" and "Moon River" albums.

Folksinger Judy Collins, touring for the first time in several years, will sing some of the tunes from her "Hard Times for Lovers" album when she appears Aug. 13.

Comedian-songwriter Steve Goodman will open the show.

COUNT BASIE's familiar piano "Plink Plink Plink Plink" will start the Basie Band off and playing Aug. 20. Pianist George Shearing will be the opening act.

Besides the Friday Variety series, the festival also features Thursday/Sunday Symphonic series, a Saturday Variety/Pops series, children's concerts, plus many non-series specials.

All concerts are held at 8 p.m. Festival entrances leading to Baldwin Pavilion are on Walton Boulevard and Adams Road. More than 7,000 people can be seated in the pavilion and on the lawn.

Information on season subscriptions and a brochure are available by calling the Meadow Brook Box Office at 377-2610.

Musical 'Pinocchio' ends children's series' season

"Pinocchio" by New York's Nicola Mariannes will close the season of the children's performing arts series "Lively Arts for Little Ones" at 11 a.m. Saturday at Andover High School in Bloomfield Hills and 1 p.m. Sunday at the Southfield Civic Center, 26000 Eyergreen.

Tickets will be sold at the door for \$3.50 per person. Group rates are available in advance. For more information, call the Bloomfield Hills Community Education Department at 334-3578 or the Southfield Cultural Arts Division at 354-4717.

A musical score, 12 carved characters — from the kindly Gepetto to the plotting Stromboli, six sets, and special light and sound effects bring life to the folk tale.

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