

Susan Sarandon is a former reporter, now a suburban housewife, who becomes involved in an investigation when her dentist is murdered.



the movies

Dan Greenberg

## Ethnic emphasis is a big drawback in routine mystery

As a murder mystery, "Compromising Positions" is rather pedestrian even though it does have some slick moments commenting on contemporary suburbam manners and mores. But the film falls by equating decadent suburban conduct with ethnic stortcomines.

nortcomings.

Judith Singer (Susan Sarandon) is a discontented Long Island ousewife who needs "fulfillment" and wants to resume her career

housewife who needs 'fulliliment' and wants to resume our career as an investigative reporter.

Conveniently, her dentist, Dr. Bruce Fleckstein (Joe Mantegna), is murdered under mysterious circumstances. He had lived ille to its suburban fullest as an all-around sleazeball who, as Judith discovers, had regular Tuesday and Thursday trysts with his patients, the very best ladies in the neighborhood. Boy, are there a lot of supports.

the very best fadies in the measurement of the suspects.

Dr. Bruce took pictures during his illicit sexual liaisons and was linked to a Mafia pormography ring.
Judith's inquiries get her house trashed by someone (we never learn whom) who doesn't like nosey ladies. She also incurs the wrath of her husband, Bob (Edward Herrmann), a hardworking attorney who naively believes a modern woman is going to appreciate the role of wife and mother. He doesn't think she should mean in other people's business, which leads to some fairly effective discussion about the role of contemporary, educated, suburban women.

women.

JUDITH ALSO GETS entangled with Homleide Lt. David Suarez (Rual Julia of "Riss of the Spider Woman"), whose anger at her interference in police matters soon turns to love. He should have stayed home and kissed the Spider Woman But that sort of essentially simple-minded, unresolved plot compilication is typical of the Ribe.

tially simple-minded, unresolved plot complication is typical of the film.

A good mystery weaves many threads into one tapestry but "Compromising Positions" leaves many strands dangling. The but-ier didn't do it but the resolution is so tritle that one almost which he had. Then, at least, we'd have an explanation of all the red

herrings. "Compromising Positions" does make some entertaining state-ments about bi-Jinks on Long Island, as the very straight Judith discovers that her friends and neighbors all have a motive for Dr. Bruce's demis."

The one exception, and the best role in the film, is Judith's rappy-volted, free-loving, artist friend, Nancy Miller (Judith Ivey). She may be where it's at these days but that doesn't speak well for the moral life.

She may be where it's at these days but that doesn't speak wen not the moral Ille.

As for the stereotypical component, it seems to me that when someone tells an ethnic joke it's usually OK, if it's his own race. In this case, however, I'm willing to make an exception. Certainly, leases, who adapted her novel for the screen, has an unpleasant view of her own people. That's her problem, but it becomes all our problems when the media projects adverse stereotypes for their own sake.

THEPPE IS ARSOLITELY no reason that Dr. Fleckstein has to

own sake.

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY no reason that Dr. Fleckstein has to be Jewish, or any other ethnic derivation for that matter. Whatever limited burnor or social commentary the film has to make is a function of human folbies, not of a specific group.

One needs to deal kindly and humorbusly with social characteristics in sature in order to win an audience's attention and regard.

islies in satire in order to win an audience's attention and regard.

"Goodbye, Collumbus" (which has become a generic term for certain ethnic celebrations) is neither offensive nor embarrassing. Although some do not appreciate its satire, it does have warm regard and positive humor for those it needles.

Not so "Compromising Positions," whose acerbic quality taints whatever message it may have to offer. It certainly is offensive—and not a very good murder mystery either.



Edward Hermann is the worksholic husband, who thinks his wife should keep out of other people's busi-

## Tasting panel picks the best

"This is the Bruce Springsteen concert of the William of the Willi

preferences.
The set-up was interesting.
The set-up was interesting.
Fifteen of the major wine distributors in the reason were into their wines are were into their wines in this competitive interesting a participating teating panel of nearly 400 people (more than 150 had to be turned away) assembled to evaluate the wines and voice their preferences.
The wines were separated into two categories, reds and whites. The whites included binsh and sparkling wines. Entries came from California, France, Spain, Germany, Michigan, Italy, Australia, and Rumania. Each patron was allowed three votes per category.

OF THE 53 wines en-

of the Special whose entered (one distributor submitted only three), no one person was able to sample them all, of course (or, it is hoped). However, in the evening, nearly a case of each wine was consumed; the average was close to a bottle per person. As a tribute to the dignity and seriousness of the occasion, the tasters conducted themselves well in the face of all this temptation. These were serious wine people.

The results were interesting.

The results were interesting.
The results were interesting to the property of the property of

and Wincry of Napa, with its 1982 Cabernet Sauvignon.

It, too, was a fine entry and was full of warm, earthy flavors. Actually, this showing was no fluke; the Groth winemaker is Nilk Venge. However, the Groth winemaker is Nilk Venge. I conduct with the control of many an impressive release.

The competition showed that suburbanties don't 'drink labels.' The evening had a bit of the David and Gollath aura about it.

Third-place finish was a lie between two other highly esteemed cabernets, the 1983 Schastland Reserve and the 1981 Seaulleu from Ruther ford. The only some-drink the 1981 Caymus Zinfandel, a truly remarkable wine of deep fruit and completity. This earned an honor-

## Pianist to give concert

French planist Richard Clayderman will perform at 8 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 28, at the Royal Oak Mu-sic Thatra

at a p.m. Saturcasy, Sept.
28, at the Royal Oak Music Theatre.
Tickets at \$17.50 are
on sale at the theater box
office and and all Ticket
World Outleta.
Clayderman's last visit
to the United States, in
January, included a solfout performance at Carnegle Hall. The artist,
who is known as the
"Prince of Romance," is
on a 20-city tour.
The 31-year-oid has
sold more than 41 million
albums worldwide. He roecentity returned from a
world tour of Europe, Japan, Australia and South
America.

America.

He has 177 gold and 42 platinum records to his credit. His American debut was as featured performer at an award dinner given in honor of First Lady Nancy Reagan by the International Center for the Disabled last October.

able mention.

VOTING AMONG the white wines was much tighter, as was too be expected with 42 entries. The surprising (again) winner was the 1983 Chateau Grand Traverse Riesling (alea harvest), only Michigan wine entered in the event (sadly, there was no Zug Island offered or the results might have been different).

It is an extremely well-made wine, one that described have been different).

It is an extremely well-made wine, one that described have been different in the proposition. I may sure two this fairly. There's little regional loyalty around here.

Second place was awarded to the Beringer 1982 Barrel Fermented Chardonnay, an intense, complex and very serious from California. One

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Richard Watson

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That is what the California wine industry is all wasn't there four U-M son about as it shows its revenls these inside





