

MOVING PICTURES

Nichols' message is off the mark in 'Regarding Henry'

By John Monaghan
special writer

Tasteless lawyer joke No. 532: How do you get a lawyer to start acting like a human being?

If you believe the premise of "Regarding Henry," you shoot him in the head and cross your fingers during the recovery.

Mike Nichols' new film begins with the closing statements of high-powered attorney Henry Turner (Harrison Ford) during a controversial court case. He, of course, is defending the hospital charged with negligence for allegedly disregarding a patient's diabetic condition.

And though he hates to bring it up again, Turner delves into ancient history and the man's previous bout with alcoholism. He deftly turns the jury over to his side and wins the case.

That same night, gloating over his victory, Turner descends from his high-rise Manhattan apartment and walks to the corner market for a pack of cigarettes. A young punk in the process of robbing the place casually pumps a pair of bullets into him. One hits a major artery, the other his frontal lobe.

FROM HERE, "Regarding Henry" could have gone just about anywhere. But director Nichols, who teamed with Ford for the infinitely more insightful "Working Girl," takes the easy road. With a few exceptions, the story of Henry's painfully slow recovery only offers predictable situations and characters.

The first stage of recovery is handled by Bradley, a young black therapist with an eye for the ladies. For Turner, who remembers nothing of his past, Bradley becomes his best friend and soulmate. Ford is surprisingly good as Henry, who walks through the film bedridden and infinitely more likable, discovering what a creep he was be-

fore the shooting. He now talks to and learns from the young daughter he only lectured at before.

Wife Sarah, played by Annette Bening, also undergoes a dramatic change. She starts out as shallowly as he does, wallowing in the power and the luxury, but then learns the responsibilities of marriage and finances.

Perhaps the change is too dramatic. While the audience undergoes every painful first step and syllable of Henry's recuperation, you need to read too much into her character. At one point you see her on the phone, apparently back to work as a secretary to make ends meet, but you have no idea how she got there.

DIRECTOR Mike Nichols, still best known for 1987's "The Graduate," is still fighting battles against the establishment. He paints a calculatedly grim picture of the legal profession, where crass attorneys justify the practice of withholding evidence.

"It's paying for our lunch," Turner's partner says.

There are some clever and subtle moments, too. The law firm takes Henry back, knowing full well that he is unable to carry on his duties. "We're human, too," they say, though they keep files from him, realizing that he has developed a conscience.

And just by the way she looks at him, you can size up the situation between Turner and an attractive female attorney. You just know they had an affair. This becomes the film's one memorable twist.

But soiling backfires here. Perhaps it's because we've been through too many movies about slow recoveries and therapy concerning every disease from AIDS to autism to amnesia.

Little quirks that will supposedly

Please turn to Page 4



Harrison Ford stars as Henry Turner and Mikki Allen as his daughter Rachel in Mike Nichols' "Regarding Henry."

SCREEN SCENE

FOX THEATRE, 2211 Woodward, Detroit. Call 567-6000 for information. (\$10)

"Spartacus" (USA - 1961). Continuing through July 28, no Monday performances (call for show times). Stanley Kubrick's epic about a slave who said "no" is much better than anyone remembered. Kirk Douglas plays the title role with typical square-jawed conviction, while Laurence Olivier and Tony Curtis (especially in their steamy scene in a Roman bath) have their characters fleshed out considerably through added re-release footage. A real feast for the eyes, shown here in 70mm.

HENRY FORD CENTENNIAL LIBRARY, 13671 Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. Call 943-2330 for information. (free)

"The Battle of the Sexes" (Britain - 1960), 7 p.m. July 15. Peter Sellers stars as an elderly Scotsman who wages a quietly determined battle against an American efficiency expert hired by his employer. A wacky British comedy based on the James Thurber story "The Catbird Seat." Also starring Robert Morley and directed by Charles Crichton ("A Fish Called Wanda").

LIVONIA MALL, Seven Mile and Middlebelt Roads, Livonia. Call 476-

1166 for information. (free)

"It! The Terror From Beyond Space" (USA - 1958), 10 a.m. July 16. The highlight of the Mall's current sci-fi series finds a deadly alien stowaway aboard a space ship. The crew battles it with everything they can. Sound familiar? It should. Ridley Scott virtually remade "It!" as "Alien" in 1979.

MAGIC BAG THEATRE CAFE, 22918 Woodward, Ferndale. Call 540-0560 for more information. (\$4)

"Home of the Brave" (USA - 1987), 8 p.m. July 16. Talented musician/

Please turn to Page 4

The Beautiful New
Garden Wedding Chapel

Wedding Ceremonies
Renewing Vows
In a
romantic indoor setting.
25 Years Experience
in Wedding Planning
Call 442-B-WED

pass the popcorn
LeAnne Rogers

'Sugarbaby' is Eurotechno Flat even as a video

By LeAnne Rogers
staff writer

Dressing bodies at the RIP Funeral Home where she works and helping lug coffins around, the amply endowed heroine of "Sugarbaby" has about as much animation in her face as some of her customers.

Things aren't any better during her off-hours, as the woman blankly rides the subway home, does some power grocery shopping while munching an éclair, and then crawls into bed for an evening of eating and doing before the television. Her major recreation is floating on her back in a swimming pool.

One day things change for the woman, played by Marianne Sagebrecht. Riding on the subway she becomes entranced by the subway train conductor, hypnotized by his voice as he calls out the stops and warns passengers to stand clear of the doors.

After riding to the end of the line, she finds a purpose in life — tracking down the tall blond conductor with whom she has become smitten.

AFTER HER preoccupation disrupts her work at the funeral home, she decides to use her accumulated vacation time to further her pursuit. Her "dour" employer expresses the hope after taking some time off she'll be back to her old self. She smiles and nods but that's clearly not likely to happen.

The film has some good points as Sagebrecht, with her flat dull hair and sensible shoes, tries to dress like romantic success, wobbling in high heels, floating on perfume and giggling over special order lingerie. She stalks her prey with a fierce determination and the cunning of an espionage agent.

Being a large woman, about whom

She stalks her prey with a fierce determination and the cunning of an espionage agent.

one somewhat awestruck male character says "she sure is a lot of woman." Sagebrecht's size is never really an issue. She doesn't go on a crash diet to attract the man of her dreams; she offers him a candy bar in the subway station. She is totally open to her chosen.

Sagebrecht has some nice moments as she goes through that agony of wondering whether you've made a fool of yourself or your loved one will respond as you hoped. Will he show up or won't he?

LATER, SHE has an especially nice monologue about her family life that explains a lot about how she came to where she is in her life.

Overall though, the film has a kind of eddily detached feeling. Sagebrecht's character acts pretty obsessively in the lengths she goes to in tracking down this man whose name she doesn't know and with whom she has never spoken.

The feeling that her behavior might be neurotic or at best adolescent is reinforced by the title of the film and the nickname she gives to her beloved, which comes from a record she liked as a 15-year-old.

A 1985 German film, directed by Percy Adlom, "Sugarbaby" has a pretty flat Eurotechno look to it, not to mention a distractingly wobbly camera in some scenes. A better film from Adlom is "Bagdad Cafe," which also features Sagebrecht.

REALTOR® IS ANOTHER WORD FOR RESOURCE.

The decision to buy a home can be intimidating. That's why many prospective buyers and sellers turn to one of the best resources around: a REALTOR®.

As members of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®—a professional association with over 80 years of real estate-related education and research—REALTORS® have a strong working knowledge of the intricacies of buying and selling property, such as financing, market values and other aspects of property transactions.

And a REALTOR®'s commitment to provide service for both buyers and sellers, gives you confidence when you make one of the most important purchases for your family.

So put our staff on your staff. Hire a REALTOR®—a resource for your home.

