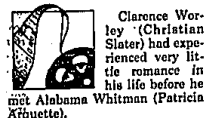


GOING TO THE MOVIES



'True Romance'

Negotiation, adventure propel it



Clarence Worley (Christian Slater) had experienced very little romance in his life before he met Alabama Whitman (Patricia Arquette).

"An loner who worked in a comic book shop and spent most of his spare hours watching old kung fu movies in shabby cinemas, Clarence was in his own world. Then Alabama walked into the Lyric Theatre and changed that world in the name of love in 'True Romance,' opening Sept. 10 at suburban movie theaters.

"True Romance" tells the story of the two unlikely lovers whose whirlwind romance propels them into a dangerous game of high-stakes negotiations and high-speed adventure.

After a whirlwind courtship, Clarence commits a crime defending Alabama's honor. His noble act spins the couple onto a collision course with both gangsters and police in an adventure that takes them on a feverish flight from Detroit to Los Angeles.

The pair find themselves in unexpected possession of a suitcase full of valuable Mob contraband.

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which they decide to take from Detroit to Los Angeles. There, they plan to sell their booty and begin a new life, but the gangsters — and police — have other ideas.

Directed by Tony Scott and written by Quentin Tarantino, "True Romance," a Morgan Creek Production distributed by Warner Bros., takes the two young lovers to the dark edge of their lives as they fight to stay together in a violent world.

"Alabama has had a more difficult life than most people," said Arquette. "But she's a romantic at heart. She knows how to defend herself and fight for what she loves, even if that means dying for her man."

Christian Slater and Patricia Arquette both underwent major changes in appearance. Slater had his normal light brown, longish hair cut spike-short and colored jet black. Patricia Arquette's long, sandy brown hair was cut into a short 1970s bob with butterfly waves dyed platinum blonde.

"There are two sides to 'True

Romance,'" said director Tony Scott. "It's a bittersweet movie. I had actors such as Christian and Patricia who have charm as well as a darker side that suits this story well."

"Violence is integral to the piece but it is not gratuitous. It is the nature of the beast. I want to show that although true romance can survive, it does so in a very dangerous world."

"True Romance" is rated R. (Restricted, under 18 requires an accompanying parent or guardian.)

"True Romance" opens Friday at these suburban movie theaters: AMC Old Orchard, AMC Southfield City, AMC Wonderland, General Cinema Canton, General Cinema Novi, Quo Vadis, Showcase Auburn Hills, Showcase Dearborn Showcase Pontiac and Star Rochester.

To let us know what you think about "True Romance" or any other newly released film, call Keely Wygonik Taste/Entertainment editor, 953-2105, fax comments to 891-7279 or write Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.



Explosive story: Clarence (Christian Slater) and Alabama (Patricia Arquette) are two unlikely lovers who double-cross the Detroit mob in "True Romance."

RON PHILLIPS

'Witchboard 2' a supernatural murder mystery

BY KEELY WYAGONIK

STAFF WRITER

"Witchboard 2: The Devil's Game," opening Friday at suburban movie theaters, is "not just a straight horror film, it's fun," said Ami Dolenz, one of the leading characters.

"It won't save the world. It's like going on a rollercoaster. It's fun to get scared."

"Supernatural murder mystery" is how Laraine Newman, who stars with Dolenz, describes it.

"Witchboard 2: The Devil's Game" tells the story of Paige Benedict (Ami Dolenz).

"She's someone who's always been taken care of — first by her father, then by her boyfriend," said Dolenz in a phone interview.

Paige wants to become an

artist and leaves her boyfriend, a cop, who still wants her back. She innocently discovers an ouija board in the closet of her new apartment left by the former tenant.

"Paige opens the closet door and it falls out," said Newman, who plays Elaine Loudon, Paige's landlady. "She whimsically picks it up and starts to play with it. She becomes intrigued, then entranced. Almost immediately, the pointer starts spelling out words."

Through the ouija board, Paige is contacted by the spirit of Susan Sydney, the former tenant who claims she was murdered in the apartment.

Unsure of herself, but fascinated by the seductive power of the board, Paige returns nightly to the ouija board to investigate the mystery — unaware

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that her contact is opening the door to powerful evil that she can never control.

"I befriended Susan. She's a very strong woman. She helps bring out some of my stronger traits. I trust her, but then she turns on me," said Dolenz.

Paige's dreams are soon filled with horrible visions of Susan's death — and a series of brutal murders that has the whole building gripped with panic.

Each nightmare is more terrifying, each murder is more shocking than the last — and each is taking her one step closer to solving the mystery and confronting the ultimate terror face to face. "Susan

wants to possess me," said Dolenz.

The dialogue in "Witchcraft 2" is what attracted Newman, best known for her work on "Saturday Night Live," to the script.

"There's not an excess of horror and gore," said Newman in a phone interview. "I thought the dialogue was funny. It was very unique. Elaine lives in the 1960s. She's kind of the comic relief in the story."

Newman and Dolenz both praised writer/director Kevin Tenney. "He's very creative, he's an actor's director," said Dolenz.

"Kevin develops the characters. Paige is someone who needed a change. The ouija board is used as a tool for change. Elaine is forced to deal with certain realities. She was

traumatized by her parents' death and got stuck in the 1960s," said Newman.

"Witchboard 2" is a sequel to the cult classic "Witchboard" released in 1986, is a Republic Pictures release. Tenney said his goal was to capture all the imagination and terror of the original, and at the same time do something totally new.

Instead of a gothic house in the suburbs, Tenney chose a gritty downtown loft; instead of college students, young professionals. But, like the original, the heart of the story is the strange and supernatural powers of the ouija board.

Dolenz, 23, is the daughter of actor-turned producer/director and famed "Monkee" Mickey Dolenz. She made her big

screen debut in a feature role in 1987 with Patrick Dempsey in "Can't Buy Me Love." Her debut in a leading feature film role was in 1990 when she starred in "She's Out of Control," with Tony Danza. Her latest film credits include "Rescue Me" and "Miracle Beach."

"Witchboard 2: The Devil's Game" is rated R (Restricted, under 18 requires an accompanying parent or guardian).

"Witchboard 2: The Devil's Game" opens Friday at these suburban movie theaters: AMC Southfield City, Showcase Dearborn, Star Rochester, Northwest, Quo Vadis, United Artists Oakland, United Artists 12 Oaks and United Artists West River.

This journey to 'Kalifornia' fascinating but flawed



JOHN MONAGHAN

It begins as a simple auto tour of famous American murder sights and turns into a living hell.

Jason and Freddy no longer populate these locales, but the strangers who come along for the ride with a writer and his photographer girlfriend provide nothing but trouble.

As the sloppy serial killer and his teenage girlfriend in "Kalifornia," Juliette Lewis and Brad Pitt have their best roles to date.

"They're the most exciting things about a thriller, which has plenty of energy but the subtlety and panache of an exo murderer."

"If there was a definition in the dictionary of White Trash, there would be pictures of Early and Adele," notes writer Brian in voice-over narration. They have hooked up through a bulletin board posting, agreeing to share expenses and turns at the wheel on the cross-country trip to California.

Brian can't hide his fascination with the couple, especially Early, who is like some strange and sexy animal. Brian shoots pool with him and enjoys blasting out the windows of an abandoned building with Early's handgun.

Girlfriend Carrie, meanwhile, grows increasingly apprehensive.

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Girl-talk reveals that Early beats Adele regularly, but, according to the girl, "only when I deserve it." Carrie doesn't like the idea of guns and even less the idea of Brian getting mixed up with them.

At the heart of "Kalifornia" is the American preoccupation with psycho killers, fueled in part by the mainstream success of "Silence of the Lambs."

Jonathan Demme, the director of "Lambs" and the road picture "Something Wild," could have done wonders with a movie like "Kalifornia."

Here instead, we have music video director Dominic Sena, surveying a warehouse area on a lightning-streaked night, looked like something out of "Blade Runner."

Sena offers more shots from high above, whether it be building or blender, and we soon realize the visual acrobatics add up to absolutely nothing.

He does best when the travelers actually make it to a handful of the murder sights. Brian, writing a book on serial killers, wants the experience of actually standing

where the murders occurred. These locales — a farmhouse, a meat packing plant, a warehouse — take on eerie lives of their own, especially when captured in Carrie's camera flashes.

Pitt is almost unrecognizable behind the scruffy beard and greasy hair, a far cry from the James Dean-style characters he played in "A River Runs Through It" or even "Cool World." For the wolfish Lewis, this is almost a

sequel to "Cape Fear," answering the question of what would have happened if she had run away with Robert DeNiro's slimy ex-con.

As fascinating as it is flawed, "Kalifornia" ultimately veers off onto a psycho-killer highway too often traveled.

"Kalifornia" is now showing at these suburban movie theaters:

General Cinemas Canton, United Artists Fairlane, AMC Southfield City, General Cinemas Novi Town, Showcase Westland, Showcase Auburn Hills, United Artists West River, Star Winchester 8 and Showcase Pontiac.

To leave a message for John Monaghan, dial 953-2047, mailbox number 1866, on a touch-tone phone, fax him at 891-7279, or write him in care of Entertainment,

Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

FILM CLIPS

'KALIFORNIA'

Released by: Gramercy Pictures
Starring: Brad Pitt, Juliette Lewis, David Duchovny, Michelle Forbes
Directed by: Dominic Sena
Produced by: Aris McGarry, Joni Sigurdson, Steve Golin
Written by: Tim Meale
Running time: 125 minutes
Rated: R (Restricted. Under 18 requires an accompanying parent or guardian)
Rating (out of a possible four)

Key: Don't miss it ☐ Strongly recommended ☐ Worth a look ☐ Wait for video ☐



GRAMERCY PICTURES