



# Tale of love weaves mystery, intrigue, revenge

As a young brash agent fresh out of law school in 1962, FBI agent Kevin Walker (Matt Dillon) along with his partner Ron Pirelli (Bruno Kirby), is assigned to Chinatown to ferret out suspected subversives during the height of America's communist witchhunt. At Broadway Nathan's, a local hangout, Walker meets Cynthia (Teri Polo), a tall striking blond, who poses a simple question to the young agent — does he believe in law or justice? This question resonates throughout the rest of his life in "Golden Gate," opening Friday at metro Detroit movie theaters.

The agents ensnare a local laundryman Chen Jung Song (Tzi Ma), who has organized an innocent campaign to forward money to the community's impoverished families in "Red" China. Walker frames Song, who is prosecuted

and sentenced to 10 years in prison. Upon his release from prison, Song is once again investigated, now with reservation, by Agent Walker, which forces the already broken man over the edge. Song invokes a curse on Walker — that he "become a Chinaman," and inherit all the pain and suffering his cruel actions have inflicted.

Song's daughter Marilyn (Joan Chen), a child during her father's ordeal, now attends a local law school. She has no true memory of her father or the real circumstances that led to his misfortune. Kevin, in an attempt to assuage his guilt, befriends Marilyn. She has no notion of Kevin's complicity in destroying her father. Kevin introduces himself as a public defender who knew her father during his period of incarceration. In time, they fall in love. Kevin's moment of bliss ends abruptly when Marilyn discovers his true identity.

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Premising revenge, she invokes the name of the goddess Fu Mu Lan, the Woman Warrior, "the one who takes her father's place in battle." Marilyn's avowed desire for revenge and Kevin's quest for redemption climax poignantly against the backdrop of the Bay Area's civil disobedience of 1968.

The Samuel Goldwyn Company presents "Golden Gate" in association with American Playhouse Theatrical Films. It is directed by John Madden from an original screenplay by David Henry Hwang. The film is produced by Michael Brandman.

David Henry Hwang came upon the inspiration for "Golden Gate" in a New York City bar in conversation with a friend from New York's Chinese community. The friend recounted the story of the false prosecution of Chinese-Americans in the early 1950s for

sending money home to their impoverished families.

Hwang's penchant for taking historical footnotes and turning them into multi-layered dramas is not limited to "Golden Gate" and his smash Broadway hit "M. Butterfly." His first award-winning play, produced exclusively for the New York stage, "The Dance and the Railroad," is, according to Hwang, "a story about people who are shut out of the mainstream cultures and how they manage to create their own rites."

"America," Hwang continues, "at least in principal, subscribes to the notion that whoever takes residence on these shores may call it home. This is a relatively new concept in the history of ideas, and I think people of color grapple with it in a particularly vital fashion. One of the particular burdens of my minority is that we are never completely accepted as Americans."



Haunting tale: Joan Chen (left) stars as Marilyn Song and Matt Dillon stars as FBI Agent Kevin Walker in "Golden Gate."

# Lolita Davidovich bright light in 'Intersection'

AP — Mark Rydell's last movie, "For the Boys," was a critical bomb that never really grabbed a significant audience. With "Intersection," now playing at metro Detroit movie theaters, it looks like Rydell — who distinguished himself with such movies as "On Golden Pond," "The River" and "The Rose" — is on a downward spiral.

Rydell can't take all the blame for "Intersection." The movie is an excellent concept — a successful but emotionally crippled man who's unable to make a commitment — but gets bogged down by a trite screenplay and inferior performances by Sharon Stone and Richard Gere.

Gere certainly was miscast as Vincent Eastman, an award-winning architect married to his business partner, Sally (Stone). The carefree, sexy spark that leaves some marriages early on his face. Sally has become a workaholic whose ambitions and enthusiasm are more tied to the firm than her marriage. Bored and confused, Vincent leaves Sally and their daughter, Meghan (Jenny Morrison), for a vivacious and sexy magazine writer Olivia (Lolita Davidovich).

But Vincent is incapable of making a commitment to Olivia. Part of him is still attached to Sally. Almost as a symbol of his indecision, he leaves his car parked at his wife's home and drives there in the rain to drive. It also doesn't help that Sally is in the office with him. And when it

comes to company social events, he excludes Olivia.

Caught in the middle of course is the 13-year-old Meghan, who nevertheless manages to balance Daddy's girlfriend and Mommy's natural hostilities.

It all comes to a head for Vincent when Olivia, heady on too much wine, crashes the opening of a new museum that the firm has designed. Sally is there. The two meet in a car, and Vincent erupts in fury at Olivia. After dropping her off in the rain, he drives around for the rest of the night,

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winding up sleeping in his car outside a diner.

He's written Olivia a goodbye letter and is about to mail it when he meets a little girl who has the same flaming red hair as Olivia. He tucks the letter into his jacket (it would have been prudent to simply rip it up and throw it away) and leave the message on Olivia's answering machine to meet him at a romantic country hotel. He gushes excitedly that he loves her and wants to marry her.

Exhilarated by his decision and in a rush to meet Olivia, Vincent speeds along the mountainous two-lane road and breaks too late when he sees a stalled van. He does a 360 just as a tractor-trailer roars into view in the other lane.

This is how the movie opens —

with the accident. Even if you fall asleep during this movie, which is pretty easy to do, you still know how it's going to end.

And little things, such as the letter and the telephone message, are indeed telescoped.

If "Intersection" has one bright hope, it's Davidovich. She's a joy and a natural; and when she's on screen, you realize just how thin the acting abilities of Stone and Gere really are.

Gere comes across more so as a cad than a tortured man at a crossroads in his life. He offers little emotional confusion; the inner frustration is complicated but eludes Gere in his one-note performance.

Martin Landau doesn't have much to do, but manages to put

in an able supporting performance as Neal, a close family friend and partner in the architectural firm. Morrison is fine as the daughter.

But Stone fans are in for a disappointment: She doesn't take off her clothes. There are no hot moments here. Instead, Stone is required to — emote.

The screenplay was written by David Rayfield and Marshall Brickman. Bud Yorkin produced, with Rydell, Frederic Golchan was executive producer. And Ray Hartwick co-producer.

The Paramount Pictures release is rated R (Restricted). Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian for adult situations and partial nudity.

Reader applauds 'Philadelphia'

Debra Greka of Redford Township highly recommends "Philadelphia," a drama about a rising young lawyer (Tom Hanks) who, fired when he develops AIDS, hires a personal injury attorney (Denzel Washington) to help him win redress. "It's a wonderful film, very sensitive," said Greka. "I can see some Oscar nominations for Denzel Washington and Tom Hanks."

Greka called and told us what she thought about a movie, you can too. Share your comments about "Golden Gate," "Blink" or any other newly released movies with your friends and neighbors on our movie page.

To leave comments on voice mail, call 583-2105 on a touch-tone phone anytime. Be sure to include your name, hometown and a daytime phone number.

Or write your comments down, limit 100 words, and send them to the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, Attention: Kelly Wygonik, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, 48150. Call 591-7279 to fax review.

# Musician regains sight in thriller

Emma Brody (Madeleine Stowe) was blinded as a child. Now, a corneal transplant has returned the gift of sight to the musician, and once again, Emma can see. She can finally see her best friend Candice (Laurie Metcalf). She can see her fellow band members. She can see all the beautiful sights that her hometown of Chicago has to offer.

And she can see the face of the man who murdered her neighbor in "Blink," a mystery-thriller now playing at metro Detroit movie theaters.

Due to an unusual effect of her surgery, Emma suffers from a disorder known as "retroactive vision." As a result, when Emma looks at something, sometimes her mind doesn't register those images until a day later.

Did Emma really see the face of a killer, or was this a hallucination?

Detective John Hallstrom (Aidan Quinn) thinks she did see the killer. Despite the odd circumstances of Emma's condition, Hallstrom senses the woman is his best chance to crack this case. His partner, Thomas Ridgely (James Remar), is a bit more



Mystery thriller: Dr. Ryan Pierce (Peter Friedman, left) examines Emma Brody (Madeleine Stowe, right) following corneal transplant surgery in "Blink."

skeptical, however, and feels that perhaps Hallstrom may be blinded by his desire to catch the murderer, and by the beauty of his only witness.

As the investigation progresses, Emma and Hallstrom grow more

and more convinced that she has seen the killer. What becomes frighteningly apparent is that the killer has also seen her, and if they don't catch him soon, Emma may be his next victim.

Co-starring with Stowe and Quinn are James Remar, Peter

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Friedman, Bruce A. Young and Laurie Metcalf. The film was produced by David Blocker and directed by Michael Apted from an original screenplay by Dana Stevens.

For the character's musical prowess, Stowe came to the production with the benefit of having studied classical piano as an adolescent. To learn the fiddle for her place as a fictional member of the real-life group The Drovers, the actress first met with Los Angeles violin instructor Cait Reid, who is versed in Celtic violin. On location in Chicago, Stow got additional tips from The Drovers' founder Sean Cleland.

"Madeleine is much better than she gives herself credit for," said Cleland of Stowe's eight weeks of fiddle training. "In a few group rehearsals, she actually played the pieces. She mastered all the difficult things that go into playing the violin — the bowing, the fingering, the rhythm, trying to make it look natural while at the same time trying to make it look like she's blind."

UPCOMING MOVIES

There's something for everyone at the movies. Here's a list of what's in the wings:

Opening Friday, Jan. 28:

■ "Car 54, Where Am I?" — An action-comedy inspired by the 1960s television series, teams two goofy cops and a colorful cast of characters on a chase that fuels the humor of Car 54.

■ "Gunmen" — An action-thriller about an eccentric Bulgarian smuggler and a New York City tough who reluctantly team up and head for the Amazon in search of a \$400 million treasure.

■ "I'll Do Anything" — A romantic comedy set in Hollywood about an unemployed actor who's unexpectedly forced to take responsibility for his 6-year-old daughter.

■ "My Father the Hero" — Madcap comedy of errors has a love-struck teenage girl passing off her unknowing father as her lover in order to impress the boy of her dreams.

■ "Romeo Is Bleeding" — A conviving New York cop is employed by the mob and has an obsessive attraction to a cold-blooded murderer that he is hired to kill.

■ "The War Room" — Main Art Theatre exclusive. Documentary on Bill Clinton's 1992 bid for the presidency.

Opening Friday, Feb. 11:

■ "My Girl 2" — The story of Vada Sultenfuss's journey to self-discovery continues with the exploration of first love, the importance of family and the challenge of pursuing a dream.

■ "On Deadly Ground" — An oil rig worker who joins forces with an activist in opposition to his former employer's rapacious drilling program finds himself in a battle for survival.

■ "You So Crazy" — A one man stand up comedy show starring Martin Lawrence, star of the hit Fox series "Martin."

Opening Friday, March 4:

■ "With Honor" — The true story of Harvard University students who befriended a homeless man.

Opening Friday, March 11:

■ "Guarding Tess" — Tess is the beloved former first lady who is running her secret service detail ragged. Tired of being at the mercy of her impetuous will, one young agent squares off with her in a class of wits as unremitting as it is hilarious.

RICHARD GERE

SHARON STONE

Make every move as if it were your last.

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