

MOVIES

Don't expect 'Scream 3' to measure up to the original

In *Scream*, director Wes Craven was credited with reinventing the horror genre. In *Scream 3*, he seems intent on reinventing *Scream*.

He doesn't.

All the familiar elements are in *Scream 3*. That cast of survivors from the first two *Scream* outings returns, it has excellent production values and the usual quota of shock scenes, although the gore factor is disturbingly low.

This time around the much put-upon Sidney Prescott is again targeted by a maniac with the pale melting mask and black cloak. Now, however, she lives in a secluded northern California where she works for a crisis hotline.

Imagine her surprise when the killer calls her. That sends her packing to Hollywood where the production of *Stab 3: Return to Woodsboro*, the mythical reflection of *Scream 3*, is being filmed. She links up with Dewey Riley, the Barney Fife-ish cop in the two previous *Screams*, who now is serving as a technical adviser on *Stab 3*.

Dewey had called Sidney when cast members began turning up with multiple puncture wounds. Sidney and Dewey join forces with a hard-boiled homicide detective to track down the killer.

Craven lets us know in the first few minutes that this is not going to be an easy ride. Cotton Weavers, Sidney's mentor in the last film and now the host of his own TV talk show called 100% Cotton, is quickly dispatched along with his girlfriend. It's Craven's way of saying expect the unexpected. He keeps hammering that this is the third part of a trilogy and in the final chapter, anyone can get killed — even the star.

So who is the killer? Could it possibly be Sidney herself, driven over the edge by the ghost of her mysterious dead mother who keeps reappearing? Or is it someone out of central casting? Just keep in mind, as is pointed out in the film, trilogies end where they begin.

The problem is that when the killer's identity is finally revealed, you'll say, "Yeah, OK."

Indeed, there is a tired feel to this whole film. *Scream* shone with its clever dialogue and the incisive manner in which Craven set traps for the audience by second-guessing what we were thinking, shifting the plot right in front of us and twisting clichés to make them fresh. He left us reeling.

Here he leaves us yawning. There are far too many jump-starts of someone popping out of the background. People spend an awful lot of time fleeing down dark hallways with the killer steps behind. And as for that big knife, every time the killer raises it it makes a *schwing* sound that would set Wayne and Garth drooling.

Scream 3 does have its moments. Hollywood horror legend Forrest J. Ackerman has a cameo or does Carrie Fisher, looking a long ways from her Princess Leia days. And the cast is uniformly excellent with Neve Campbell as Sidney, Courtney Cox Arquette as the bitchy TV reporter and especially Parker Posey, who is supposed to be playing the Arquette character in *Stab 3*, if you can follow all that. Posey and Arquette make a terrific team.



JOSEPH VILES

No need to 'Scream' again: Left to right, Parker Posey, Courtney Cox Arquette and David Arquette star in Wes Craven's third stab at scaring movie audiences in the Dimension Films release.

Only veteran actor Lance Henriksen, who excels in these type of films, is short-changed with far too small a role.

There are occasional sparks in the dialogue like when the bimbo actress whines that the shower scene she has to do has been a cliché since it was first used in *Vertigo*. Try *Psycho*. Only once does the film attain any sense of eeriness, which occurs when Sidney walks onto the still and darkened set recreating her home in Woodsboro, where the "actual" murders occurred.

But that may not be, as Craven literally has left the door open for *Scream 4*.

COMING ATTRACTIONS



Tigger and Company: Winnie the Pooh, Tigger and friends return to the big screen in "The Tigger Movie."

DIZNEY ENTERPRISES INC.

Scheduled to open Friday, Feb. 11

THE BEACH
A young American sets off on an exotic adventure in Thailand, only to discover that the modern-day paradise hides some disturbing secrets. Stars Leonardo DiCaprio and Robert Carlyle.

THE WHOLE NINE YARDS
Nicholas "Oz" Oserensky is a nice dentist living in suburban Montreal. His new neighbor Jimmy "The Tull" Tadeski is a hit man in hiding. Oz and Jimmy find themselves with something in common, someone trying to kill them. Stars Matthew Perry, Bruce Willis and Rosanna Arquette.

SNOW DAY
Chevy Chase, Chris Elliott, Pam Grier and Kelly Pop star in the holiday comedy about family responsibilities, friendship and young love. A lovesick teenager declares his affection for the girl of his dreams, a downtrodden employee defies his tyrannical employer, a 10-year-old tackles the scariest villain of her life and plastic action dolls suddenly come to life. Or do they? Anything can happen on a snowy day.

THE TIGGER MOVIE
When no one wants to play with him, Tigger goes on a quest to find his family so he can be with other tiggers, only to

discover that Winnie and the gang are his true family.

Scheduled to open Friday, Feb. 18

HOLY SMOKE
Exclusively at the Landmark Main Art Theatre, A young woman is "rescued" from an Indian guru by her concerned family, and turns her follow-up encounters with a drifter/programmer into an all-out battle of the sexes. Stars Kiefer Sutherland, Harvey Keitel and Pam Grier.

'Isn't She Great' — Bette and cast have some good moments

By JON KATZ
SPECIAL WRITER

There will be comparisons between "Isn't She Great" and "Man on the Moon." Both are biopics. And that's where the comparison should end.

Jim Carrey's homage to comic genius Andy Kaufman was a performance-and-a-half. The only enigma about the story of shock-schlock author Jacqueline Susann is why Bette Midler and David Byrne felt that anyone would be interested.

Not that the woman who perpetrated the publication of "Valley of the Dolls," "The Love Machine" and "Once is Not Enough" didn't lead a life worth telling. She was, in her time, the best-selling novelist of all time. She changed the way books are mass-marketed and contributed as much to mid-60s pop culture as go-go boots. All this while battling breast cancer, denying the severity of her autistic son's condition and keeping both a secret from the public.

Today's moviegoers, however, don't care any more about Jackie Susann than they do about, well, go-go boots.

"I know I'm about as aging stars, hopeful hockeys and people popping pills and nobody writes books about that," says Midler as Susann. The light goes

ered rim shot punchlines the same way. The screenplay by Paul Rudnick ("In & Out") gets into a standard rhythm early on and never strays from the sitcom pattern. Susann talks to God by way of a tree in Central Park, bullying him like everyone else ("C'mon, get on the phone and make me famous").

Nathan Lane does his one puppy-dog expression throughout, but David Hyde Pierce ("Frasier") scores as the prudish Connecticut Yankee book editor who grows to care for Jackie if not for her material. Stockard Channing has good moments as the boozey best friend, the Verna to Midler's Mame. Her best moment is a silent one, walking into the hospital room and seeing Jackie on her deathbed. John Cleese is wasted as the book publisher.

If you lived through the 60s, however, you'll enjoy a terrific impression of Truman Capote by Sam Street; a faithful recreation of those wild op-art clothes and colors, right down to the type; and note that singer Steve Lawrence is played by Steve & Eydie's son David.

But basically it's a "who cares" bio that will earn a brief blip on the big screen and a one-way ticket to videoville.



Photo: Michael Ochs Archives

All for complete listings and times	
Stuart Little (PG)	Call for complete listings and times
Horror	Horror
Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.	Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.
6550 Wilshire Blvd.	6550 Wilshire Blvd.
One block S. of Wilshire Rd.	One block S. of Wilshire Rd.
313-291-1662	313-291-1662
Bryan Maron's Baby	Bryan Maron's Baby
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