



A scene from *Pumping Iron II* which starts Friday, August 2 at the Bijou Theater.

Beyond the Walls

Directed by Uri Barbash; screenplay by Bennie Barbash and Eran Price with Uri Barbash; with Arnon Zadok, Muhammad Bakri, Assi Dayan.

Beyond the Walls is a prison picture with a twist—the prison is in Israel and the inmates are Jewish criminals and Arab terrorists. The traditional factional conflicts of prison films are given a sharper edge here as the decades old hatreds make for tense situations and genuinely hard hitting drama. Uri (Arnon Zadock), kind of an older brother figure, is the leader of the Jewish sector, which is largely composed of career criminals who nonetheless harbor a deep-seated antipathy for the Arabs. Issam (Muhammad Bakri) is the enigmatic leader of the Arab minority, a striking figure who talks very little in public but is friendly to his own people.

Into each of these little universes is thrust an alien. Uri's cell is joined by a "traitor," Assaf (Assi Dayan), a Jew who made contact with the PLO hoping to ease racial tensions and was jailed as a result. Only the intervention of Uri saves Assaf from the anger of his cellmates. Into Issam's cell goes a young Jew whose ex-cellmate is a violent ape who repeatedly attacked the young man. Again, it is leader Issam who prevents the other prisoners from abusing the "black sheep."

REVIEW

These two incidents nicely humanize the protagonists enough to give the political tensions some credence. The leaders are thoroughly decent people whose only weak point is in the realm of political vendetta, an angle the prison authorities abuse shamelessly. The head guard especially uses the conflict to keep the prisoners from upsetting the network of drug dealing and special favors they have established.

The inevitable conflict revolves around the death of Uri's cellmate Hoffman, the guard's inside drug man. His death is made to look like the work of the Arabs, who do have cause. A few days earlier Hoffman spat in the face of a cellmate of Issam's; the death could very easily have been a revenge killing. It comes to light, however, that the Arabs were innocent of the slaying and Uri must decide his next move. Is his hatred of Assim and the Arabs too great to overcome, or can the two races join to challenge the real criminals of the killing, the prison authorities?

Director Uri Barbash keeps his tale from ever becoming preachy or tiresome by stressing the uniquely human aspects of his protagonists. He found brilliant

performers in Arnon Zadok and Muhammad Bakri, two very charismatic actors with distinctive faces and an underplayed acting style which meshes well with Barbash's quasi-realistic approach. The more melodramatic aspects do surface in the scenes involving the plotting prison authorities, however, due to the lack of characterization given these men. Though perhaps understandable that these characters are kept "types," it would have helped if these men as well had developed into personalities. Almost every supporting character in the prison was given some substance, much more than would be expected.

Barbash develops his film well, punctuating the underlying tensions with dramatic highlights of violence and confrontations. It's a thoughtful piece he's constructed here, but an involving one with not quite enough moments of real excitement. This is a brave film for an Israeli director to make, for it neither praises nor condemns the Arab and Israeli factions, but simply exposes the humans underneath the political rhetoric which each side clings to so vehemently. I suppose one could argue that Barbash could have taken his material further, but I marvel that *Beyond the Walls* went as far as it did.

—Sean Axmaker

Weekly Eye Opener

by Larry Deckman

(Taken from the book, *The Nervous System*): "It has been calculated that the number of junctions between the neurons of the human cerebral cortex is $10^{2,783,000}$ (that is, 10 with almost three million zeroes after it)—this number is so enormous that to write it out in figures would fill several books."

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COTTAGE GROVE

Terrain: Hilly except for the section along Hwy. 99.

Road Conditions: Lorane Hwy. is uneven in places and has traffic between Cottage Grove and Creswell.

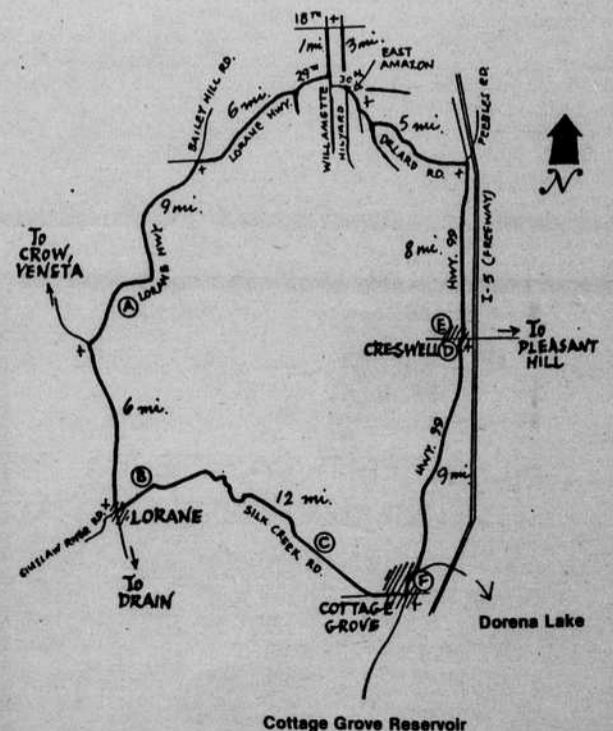
Total Distance: Leaving from and returning to 18th Ave. and Willamette: 59 miles.

Comments: This is a varied ride over some ridges, along some valleys, beside streams and out onto the plains of the Willamette Valley. Your ride through Cottage Grove is along a flowered and tree lined street, but just outside along Hwy. 99 is industrial and unpleasant for a couple of miles. This is a good two-day trip. Spend the night at Dorena Lake campground. Return via Creswell.

MAP KEY:

- A. "Unshaven mountain"
- B. Some days you will see a mule scratching his neck on the barn door.
- C. Trees heavily covered with lichen.
- D. One block southwest of the flashing light in Creswell is a small park - picnic table.
- E. Americana Gallery - step in and look around. Turn left at the flashing light and follow the main street west a couple of blocks. It's on the right side.
- F. Old "Dr. Pierce's pleasant pellets" barn.

A Scenic Bicycle Tour



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