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CINEMA

The Bedroom Window

Review by Dianne Weaver

The style is vaguely Hitchcock; the hero is confused with the villain and the villain just might get away with the hideous murders he has committed. But writer/director Curtis Hanson does not quite pull off the right combination of cinematography and suspense to be compared to the master of thrillers.

Don't take me wrong—it is a good movie and it is suspenseful. It's just that it will not be remembered as one of the classics.

The plot is too predictable. We know before the hero does what kind of mess he has gotten himself into. The story, however, is a good one and the scenes flow into one another quite smoothly.

Steve Guttenberg convincingly pulls off his innocent portrayal of Terry Lambert, the "romantic fool" who tries to be a hero. His first mistake is sleeping with his boss's exotic wife, Sylvia (Isabelle Huppert). What an odd couple! She is obviously having the affair out of pure and utter boredom, but he is blinded by love.

Sylvia witnesses a near-murder from Terry's bedroom window. She stops the potential killer from finishing off Denise (Elizabeth McGovern) just in time. The killer and the witness get a good look at one another. Later, Sylvia and Terry find out about a rape/murder

committed just blocks away on the very same night. They connect the two incidents and feel compelled to do something about it. Since Sylvia's presence in Terry's bedroom cannot be revealed, he impulsively decides to call the police and pretend that he was the witness.

He poses as the witness unconvincedly; Denise suspects a lie from the first time she sees him at the line-up. Terry follows a guy he intuitively believes is the "one" but he wishes to prove the man's the culprit on his own before he says anything to the police. After all, he didn't actually see the guy doing the dastardly deed.

He does discover that the man he is following is the killer. The killer is brought to trial but the defense finds a loophole in Terry's story and the killer is set free.

From that point on, the hero gets more and more tangled in a web of confusion. The police suspect that he is the killer because they know he lied about being the witness, they just don't know why. Sylvia refuses to come forward with the truth; she's more concerned about her husband's anger and her reputation. The only way that Terry can clear himself is to set a trap for the killer. To do this he and Denise team up and once again Terry nearly botches the plan.

Denise Connely seems to be the girl next-door type at first, but we discover that she is also tough-as-nails and smart. The only thing that was entirely out of place about her character is her apparent lack of trauma after being so brutally attacked. That was just too unrealistic.

But if she had just managed to cover up the trauma, at least she would probably not have the desire to be touched by a man so soon after the incident. Her sexual encounter with Terry is just too incongruous. Curtis Hanson just doesn't give us a realistic female victim recovering from a traumatic event. He ignored those feelings entirely and made Denise less of a human being. Perhaps, Hanson was just aiming for an R rating and had to throw in a little more nudity.

The Bedroom Window reminds me of an attempt to imitate Brian DePalma's *Body Double*, which did succeed in attaining the status of a Hitchcock thriller. In *Body Double*, there were many surprises and shocks. The photography and editing gave the audience a visually surreal motion picture. *Body Double* could give you nightmares or make you chew your nails for a week afterward, but *The Bedroom Window* is easily forgotten after you walk out the theatre door.

now showing

Aliens: Warrant officer Ripley, who alone survived *Alien*, finds her reputation in critical condition. Stars Sigourney Weaver. Late show at Bijou (686-2458).

Bedroom Window: To protect his lover's identity, a man claims that he has witnessed a brutal beating. Stars Steve Guttenberg (*Cocoon*), Isabelle Huppert, and Elizabeth McGovern. Cinema World (342-6536).

Crimes of the Heart: Dramatic comedy. Three sisters reunite and consider their various notorious lives. Stars Oscar winners Diane Keaton, Sissy Spacek, and Jessica Lange. Based on the Pulitzer caliber play. Cinema World (342-6536).

Critical Condition: Comedy. Richard Pryor stars a patient in a hospital during a power failure. Valley River Twin (686-8633).

Crocodile Dundee: A celebrated Aussie adventurer, naive to city ways, spends some time in the Big Apple. Oakway (342-5351).

Down By Law: A pimp, an out-of-work DJ, and an Italian tourist all end up in the same jail. Directed by Jim Jarmusch (*Stranger Than Paradise*). Bijou (686-2458).

The Golden Child: Eddie Murphy is the social worker chosen to find a kidnapped youngster in Katmandu. Valley River Twin (686-8633).

The Little Shop of Horrors: Rick Moranis (*Ghostbusters*) takes on Steve Martin in this wacky musical romance about a bloodthirsty flower. Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Lost City of Gold: Starts this weekend at Springfield Quad (726-9073) and West 11th (342-4142).

The Mission: A former slave trader helps a Jesuit priest try to protect South American Indians from Spanish exploitation. Stars Robert DeNiro. McDonald (344-4343).

The Name of the Rose: A medieval monk investigates a series of murders within the monastery. Stars Sean Connery, with F. Murray Abraham (*Amadeus*). Cinema World (342-6536).

Outrageous Fortune: A pair of women search for their two-timing lover, who has mysteriously disappeared. Bette Midler and Shelley Long star in this cross-country comedy. Cinema World (342-6536).

The Platoon: A day-by-day G.I. perspective of the Vietnam war. Directed by Oliver Stone (*Salvador*), who received a Purple Heart in 1967. National (344-3431).

Rule N X: A variety of America's many sexist faces are recorded in this modern document. Cinema 7 (687-0733).

Star Trek IV: More adventure for Kirk and crew. This episode brings them back to our present to help us do what we alone cannot—survive! West 11th (342-4142).

Top Gun: Tom Cruise trains to be a hot-shot fighter pilot when he's not relaxing with Kelly McGinnis. Fine Arts (747-2201).

Wanted Dead or Alive: Appears to be a modern version of Steve McQueen's old "bounty hunter" vehicle. This one stars Rutger Hauer (*Blade Runner*). Springfield Quad (726-9073).

The Wrath: Teenage drivers pay the price for bad driving and bloodshed. Lifestyles of the gory and stupid? Springfield Quad (726-9073) and West 11th (342-4142).

—Critical Michael Sussman

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—Sheila Benson, Whole Earth Review

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