

New Releases plus Stanley Kubrick

The Bedroom Window

Writer/director Curtis Hanson draws on Hitchcock for this entertaining but ultimately tepid thriller featuring comedic actor Steve Guttenberg as a conscientious guy who stands in as a murder witness when mistress Isabelle Huppert (his boss's wife) sees an attempted rape outside his bedroom window. Would-be victim Elizabeth McGovern is at first pleased with her benefactor but soon recognizes him (as do others) as an unreliable witness. Soon the tables are turned, Guttenberg is the prime suspect and his life is in serious danger.

Hanson keeps the viewer guessing and effectively constructs his plot twists but fails to develop the key issue in the film: Ruppert never positively identifies the suspect. Guttenberg's decision to testify is based on circumstantial evidence and gut feeling, and since the audience knows only as much as he does we should be faced with a dilemma; despite good intentions, our hero could send an innocent to jail with false testimony.

Hanson steers clear of this problem to get to the action and more plot twists, missing the most interesting aspect of the picture. *The Bedroom Window* promises to be a

stylish, intelligent thriller but all of the punch lies on the surface and Hanson's missed opportunities relegate the film to conventionality.

Crocodile Dundee

An Australian import from the down-under spokesman himself, Paul Hogan, *Crocodile Dundee* took America by storm in its theatrical release and promises to do the same on video. Why? Because it is more American than most domestic films.

When's the last time you heard this one? A guy from the country meets an urban girl, saves her from the rural dangers of backwoods living, then brings his forthrightness to the big city, where his curious combination of machismo and naivete wins the hearts of all he meets, except urban girl's parents. Wait, there's more. You see, romance develops and . . . oh, you've heard it? Well, so have I, but it still works, maybe because of a fresh perspective offered by a foreign director. It isn't without some inherent sexism and racism, but then it was probably learned from American movies. To top it off, it has a heart of gold.

I liked *Croc* despite myself. Maybe it's just the glee of seeing someone create a classically conventional American style comedy in this day and age. Maybe it's the self-effacing but always self-possessed Hogan. Maybe it's the innocent romanticism of the film. I don't know. I just know I laughed a lot.

Kubrick on Video

Stanley Kubrick's latest magnum-opus *Full Metal Jacket* has critics split. Some call it the most insightful film on the Vietnam experience to date; others find it slow, uneven and retracing familiar ground. Certainly it misses the architectural construction and carefully balanced development of his best works, but the other hallmarks of his style—rich texture, methodical pacing,

visual precision and the cold, removed camera eye—are all present, adding a dramatic subtlety not always apparent on first viewing.

The Kubrick style has its roots in his first films, *Fear and Desire* (1953) and *Killer's Kiss* (1955) (not available on video as of this writing but periodically on TV), but it was with his next two far more interesting features, the caper film *The Killing* (1956) and the powerful anti-war piece *Paths of Glory* (1957) that he came into his own. The first is a minutely plotted, energetic picture marked by inventiveness and black humor; the latter a serious, somber drama with biting irony, expressionistic settings and a political perspective. Together they exhibit two sides of Kubrick which mix (in varying degrees) in his later films.

After helming the studio spectacle *Spartacus* (1960) as a hired gun and adapting Nabokov's *Lolita* (1962), a flawed work but nonetheless compelling, Kubrick created the three films on which his reputation rests. *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) have passed the test of time, remaining popular cult films constantly resurfacing in revival houses, on college campuses and, now, on video. The funniest film about nuclear annihilation, *Strangelove* presents the cold war as a black humored farce (probably a lot closer to the truth than we might imagine). *2001*, a poetic meditation on the past and future of mankind, broke new ground in special effects and became perhaps the most cerebral film to become a smash hit (almost a purely visual experience, this picture is best experienced in cinemascope on the big screen). *Clockwork*, still controversial, presents a vicious, nihilistic hoodlum-as-hero in a lethargic future. These films have commonalities—fully realized sets and settings, cinematic ingenuity, brilliant uses of music and an ever more coldly distant (and judgmental) vantage point—but at the root of it they are provocative, intelligent films that invite audiences to think.

Kubrick is always held up to himself, and perhaps that's why *Barry Lyndon* (1975), *The Shining* (1980) and *Full Metal Jacket* haven't fared as well with the critics. No matter. One thing about Kubrick you can be sure: He plays by his own rules and no one else's.

Something for everyone

by Gerald Reed

The Oregon Coast

Produced by Jesse Nazareth and Ed Mellnik. \$29.95. To order call 461-0423.

The Oregon Coast is a travelogue, a history lesson, and a nature show. The camera begins at Astoria on the north coast and in 55 minutes of sweeping vistas, soft forest scenes and shots of Oregon people doing their thing, it exits at Brookings, where grows "the largest cypress in the world."

The video is packed with information: The viewer learns that Astoria has the first post office in the Western U.S. and also the world's longest suspension bridge. Did you know that Bruno Heceta was a Spaniard? That Ft. Stevens was the only mainland point fired upon during WW II?

How about this for a list of Oregon facts? Haystack Rock is the third largest monolith in the world. At Oswald West State Park cars are not allowed—you pack in with a wheelbarrow. Less than 10 percent of Oregon's 400-mile coast is privately owned. Sleek black and white Holsteins at Tillamook give us 28 million pounds of cheese annually. Dirigible hangers south of Tillamook (190 feet high, 1000 feet long) are the largest wooden structures in the world. The 440 foot "D" River is the shortest in the world. Near Seal Rock is the largest collection of chainsaw sculptures. Sea Lion Caves is the largest sea grotto in the U.S.

The Oregon Coast has something for everyone: Its wild and rocky scenes are juxtaposed with the rich narration of Bob Griggs. A perfect gift for distant relatives, for schools or any group promoting tourism, *The Oregon Coast* brings the beauties of Oregon's spectacular beach cliffs, flower strewn waysides, soft-carpeted forests and thriving, peaceful towns to your TV screen.

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