

'tattoo' is boring and tedious



Maud Adams becomes a living canvas for an ancient artform practiced by Bruce Dern, a tattoo artist who becomes obsessed with her.

By EVA SHROYER
For the Emerald

"Tattoo," starring Bruce Dern and Maud Adams, fails to live up to its potential of being a sexy, mysterious thriller. Instead it is a boring, tedious film full of flaws.

Dern plays the role of an obsessed man with a shadowed past, as he did in "Coming Home," "Family Plot," and "Black Sunday." He is a tattoo artist in a run-down section of Hoboken, N.J. and he uses his body as a canvas.

Although he is capable of delicate, intricate art, most of his work is the usual array of hearts, flowers and embarrassingly explicit nudes.

By some miracle, he is hired by a Manhattan fashion magazine to paint fake tattoos on a few models for an upcoming feature. One of the models, played by Maud Adams, just happens to be the object of his idolatry. These remarkable coincidences go unexplained, and are very hard to swallow.

She, by another screenwriting miracle, becomes fond of him, despite his incredibly obnoxious behavior.

Dern kidnaps Adams midway through the film and takes her to his secluded beach house. For the next hour of the movie he waits on his victim by day and tattoos her by night.

Adam's actions also are strange. She finds peculiar ways of attempting to escape and even to murder him. But even the most painfully obvious ones are noticeable only by the audience.

Dern is a marvelous actor, in his own odd way. As Karl Kinsky he is as mad as he has ever been. His character is believable: he is

truly sorry when apologetic, yet convincingly crazy otherwise.

Adams, however, is wooden and awkward, as though this were her first screen appearance, which is not the case. The role is not a demanding one, the character is almost void of personality, but Adams fails nonetheless.

Perhaps she simply was uninspired. As an ex-model, she has all the physical qualities for the part. Her image clashes nicely with Dern's which is bland and morose - a dark cloud throughout the movie.

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One condition for membership that sannyasin-critics point out is that members must give all their possessions to the sect.

"If you have possessions you can keep them or give them to the ranch," says Nirmal. "Some people still have cars and bank accounts but others come to the commune with no money."

Members came from many different countries to Poona and have now migrated to Oregon. However, about 80 percent of the disciples at Rajneeshpuram are Americans, commune officials claim.

Commune life is not so different than the world outside its borders in some respects. Although no meat is served at the ranch, other sannyasins do eat meat, members say. Drugs are not permitted on the ranch, but beer kegs wait for the workers at the end of each long day.

The reasons for joining the group are as diverse as the people themselves.

"I was traveling and doing meditation and it was the next thing to do," says Nirmal, a woman in her early 30s from eastern Canada who has been with the group for eight years. "You take it one step at a time."

For others, it is a way to change

the world by first changing yourself, they say.

"I was into Greenpeace and the environment, but I felt something was missing," says Michael, a bearded disciple from Vancouver, Washington. "I realized that I had to change myself and then everywhere I go I'll change things. Before that I was just a Band-aid."

Although the disciples speak of their guru with the utmost respect, his actions are not endearing him to the Antelope townspeople. Secluded from the rest of the ranch and its people with his large mobile home and well-kept lawn, he enjoys racing in one of his two powder blue Rolls Royce every so often. But he terrorizes other drivers, Antelopers claim.

He has received one ticket, run into a cement truck and periodically dumps the vehicle in a ditch so seriously that it requires a wrecker to pull him out, one Antelope woman says.

"And he still drives like a maniac down the road," complains McGreer. "I have a friend who has driven off the road when he came barreling down the center line."

How long the guru will continue to live in Rajneeshpuram remains to be seen since he has followers totalling 200,000 in centers in 40 countries to visit.

"We asked him to come as our guest and it's entirely up to him whether he wants to stay or not," says Shanti B.

Followers do not see much of the Bhagwan, however, as he is convalescing in his trailer home from asthma, diabetes and back trouble and only communicates to them through "heart-to-heart" discussions, they say.



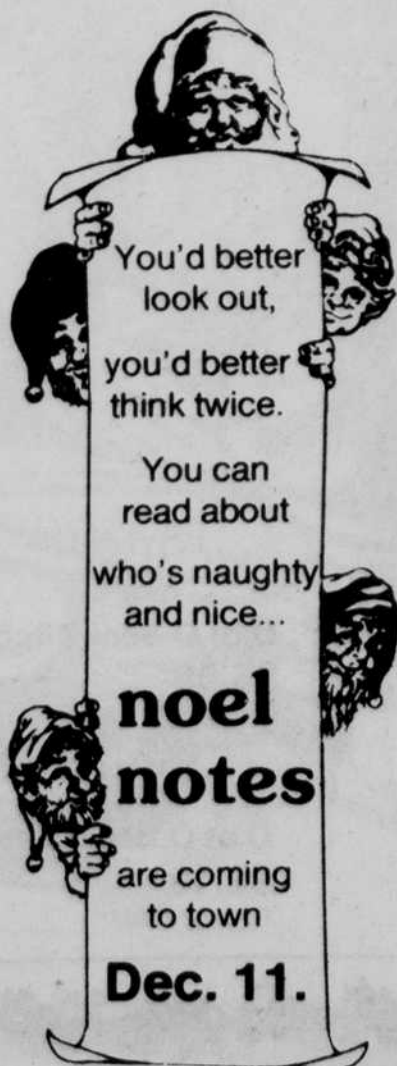
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