

Movie Previews • Does NC-17 Spell Box-Office Failure? Hughes Brothers Get Gritty In Menace • Video Releases

By PHILLIP ZONKEL

The Northern Star, Northern Illinois U.

With Hollywood executives recovering from the desperate rush to release Oscar-caliber flicks in time for nominations, the pickings for January and February are slimmer than ever. But why not take in a movie anyway? That pesky 12-page research paper isn't due until April.

Groundhog Day (Columbia Pictures)

It's not *Saturday Night* with Todd giving noogies to Lisa. Instead Bill Murray is live from Punxsutawney, Pa., as your local TV weatherman, Phil Connors. He's no Willard Scott, though; Connors is a selfish schmuck on his least favorite assignment — the Groundhog Day Festival. He finds himself stuck in time, endlessly repeating Feb. 2 — ad nauseam for him and, hopefully, ad hilarium for audiences.

Untamed Heart (MGM)

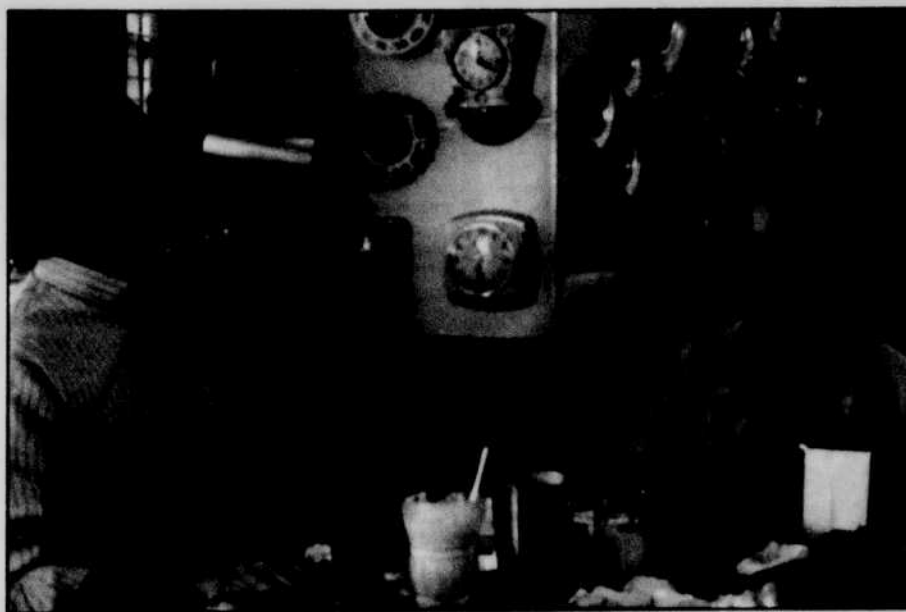
Christian Slater pumps up the drama in this film exploring the never-been-explored topic of young adult love. Caroline (Marisa Tomei) is a street-smart waitress with a history of bad relationships. Slater plays Adam, the reclusive busboy who tries to clean up the leftovers of Caroline's life. It's an entree of learning about life with a side order of romance. Together they may become the special of the day.

National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1 (New Line Cinema)

From the company that brought us classics like *Animal House* and *Vacation* comes an action-comedy starring Emilio Estevez. Still smoking from box office bonanza *Mighty Ducks*, Estevez should be in prime form for this one. With cameo appearances from Whoopi Goldberg, William Shatner, Charlie Sheen and *CHiPs* actors Erik Estrada and Larry Wilcox, it's bound to be an intellectually stimulating cinematic experience.

Lorenzo's Oil (Universal Pictures)

Originally set for an early fall release but delayed in an effort to ring in the new year with loads of Oscar notices, this film stars Nick Nolte and Susan Sarandon in the real-life story of Augusto and Michaela Odone. A doctor tells the couple no cure is available for the condition afflicting their 5-year-old son, Lorenzo, who is given a two-year life expectancy. For this couple,



Six more weeks of winter? Bill Murray travels to Punxsutawney, Pa., to celebrate Groundhog Day.

taking two aspirins and calling the doctor in the morning isn't an option.

Blood In... Blood Out (Hollywood Pictures)

The lives of three Latino cousins are linked forever, among other things... blood. In case you missed the last 80 gang flicks, here's another, but, undoubtedly, not your last chance to see street violence at its finest. During a span of 10 years, the cousins' lives take unexpected turns in their individual pursuits and survival. Will their quests leave rivers that run blood red? Will Hollywood ever stop making this tired genre of film?

Children of the Corn II: The Final Sacrifice (Miramax)

Brutal murder, father-son bonding and romance combine to fuel a provocative storyline in this sequel to the junior high classic that frightened many a preteen-ager. Again a band of murderous youths has killed a slew of adults in this sleepy Nebraska town. (Is there any other kind of town in Nebraska?) But hark, a reporter desperate to save his career arrives to get the scoop and brings along his son in an attempt to reconcile their strained relationship. What better way to improve family relations than by sur-

rounding your son with frenzied Clearasil creeps? But wait, there's more. Romance blossoms when the duo meet two women. What else could a film offer? Free admission maybe.

The Temp (Paramount)

You know her as Stacey — Wayne's mentally unstable girlfriend from *Wayne's World* — but Lara Flynn Boyle won't be riding her bike into any parked cars as she portrays the vicious temp of doom. She's not just typing, answering phones and making copies; she's hell bent on climbing the corporate ladder even if it requires murder. Get ready for *Working Girl* meets *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle* in this action thriller that will make you tremble in fear every time you stroll past a temp agency.

Passion Fish (Miramax)

A routine leg waxing turns into a brush with death when wrathful soap star May-Alice (Mary McDonnell) is hit by a cab on the way to the salon. But she's about to get an attitude adjustment from a scaly creature. That's right; it's a fish, and if you squeeze it when thinking of the one you love, anything can happen. Set in the Louisiana bayou, this film should be a finger-licking good cajun comedy.

on the set

Meet Albert and Allen Hughes — a unique set of twin brothers. At age 20 they are directing their first feature film, *Menace II Society*, slated for release in May. It's a film that doesn't pull any punches about inner-city strife. *Menace's* central character, Caine Lawson, lives in Watts. Amid accusations of murder, the fatherless 18-year-old must find a way to survive in the Los Angeles ghetto.

"It is a pretty fucked-up place to live in right now," Albert says.

"Any major city for minorities — Latinos, blacks, anybody — has problems, and it is time to look at them. There is no way you can close your eyes."

And the twins make no attempt to shut their eyes to the reality of the projects. The brothers, born in inner-city Detroit, say they're first-hand wit-

nesses to issues in the film like car jacking, police brutality and discrimination.

"From a day-to-day basis we were constantly being called niggers," Albert says of his former home in a city near L.A. Despite their age and race, the Hughes brothers are set on conquering Hollywood. Making movies isn't enough; they want to change attitudes. "When Francis Ford Coppola, Scorsese and De Palma do films, [the critics] never ques-

tion them the way black filmmakers are questioned," Allen says. "If black filmmakers got to resort in making violent films about streets, that is not our problem — we are making what we see." — *Justine Agallo, Daily 48er, California State U., Long Beach*



ALBERT AND ALLEN HUGHES, DAILY 48ER, CALIFORNIA STATE U., LONG BEACH

video calendar

A brief look at January/February releases

A Stranger Among Us, Hollywood, 1/13; *Othello*, Academy, 1/13; *Live Wire*, New Line, 1/13; *3 Ninjas*, Disney, 1/20; *Man Trouble*, Fox Video, 1/20; *Raising Cain*, MCA, 1/20; *Diggstown*, MGM, 1/20; *Storyville*, Columbia, 1/20; *JFK — Director's Cut*, Warner, 1/20; *Single White Female*, Columbia, 1/27; *Lies Before Kisses*, Turner, 1/27; *Me' Money*, Columbia, 2/3; *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, New Line, 2/3; *Unlawful Entry*, Fox Video, 2/3; *Waterdance*, Columbia, 2/10; *Death Becomes Her*, MCA, 2/10; *Stephen King's R.*, Warner, 2/10; *Poison Ivy*, Columbia, 2/16; *A League of Their Own*, Columbia, 2/17; *Against the Wind*, Republic, 2/17; *South Central*, Warner, 2/17; *Boomerang*, Paramount, 2/22; *Bully the Vampire Slayer*, Fox, 2/23; *Rapid Fire*, Fox, 2/24; *Snatchers*, MCA Universal, 2/24; *Honeyman in Vegas*, New Line, 2/24; *Light Sleeper*, Live, 2/24

quotable

"I had no idea he would give annoying people all over the country something to annoy people in the office."

—Rob Schneider on his role as the copy man on *Saturday Night Live*