

Magic Realism

Transitions

NORTHFORK: Directed by Michael Polish. Written and produced by Mark Polish and Michael Polish. Produced by Todd King. Cinematography, M. David Mullen. Editor, Leo Trombetta. Music composed by Stuart Matthewman. Costumes, Danny Glicker. Production design, Ichelle Spitzig, Del Polish. Starring Peter Coyote, Anthony Edwards, Duel Farnes, Daryl Hannah, Nick Nolte, Mark Polish, James Woods, Ben Foster and Robin Sachs. Paramount Classics, 2003. PG-13. 94 minutes.

Two deaths await the viewers of the Polish Brothers' third film in a mountain-states trilogy that includes *Twin Falls Idaho* and *Jackpot*. Like these earlier films, *Northfork* owes its outstanding cinematography to M. David Mullen. Montana's solemn plains achieve a mythic grandeur here, while the soon-to-be flooded town of Northfork faces a bleak, limited future.

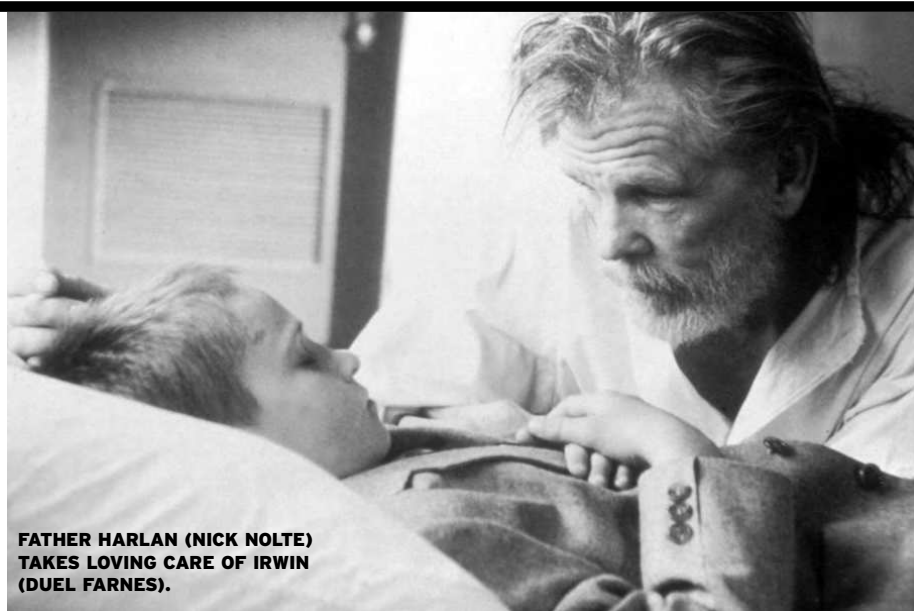
Northfork is being sacrificed to a government project — a large, hydroelectric facility and dam built in the name of progress. Too bad for the families of pioneers who built the town and have lived in it for generations. Now even the holdouts have to be routed one-by-one, and a faceless squad of dark-suited men are ready to do it.

On a smaller, more personal stage, a

small, ill boy named Irwin (Duel Farnes) has returned to the orphanage where he used to live, because he is dying. The filmmakers play out the boy's death against the large forces of nature and man behind the destruction of the town.

Because this is a Polish Brothers production, you might expect something out of the ordinary, but are you ready for angels? Moreover, these are no ordinary angels but four surreal figures, who somehow figure into the boy's death. Cup of Tea (Robin Sachs), the leader of the angels, likes to argue. Flower Hercules (Daryl Hannah), a creature of indeterminate gender, believes the dying boy when he claims to be an angel in his high-fever dreams or hallucinations. One angel is a cowboy named Cod (Ben Foster from HBO's "Six Feet Under"), who speaks very little. The fourth, Happy (Anthony Edwards, formerly of "E.R."), is a weird science nerd with hands made of wood and an eye-glass apparatus with ever-finer lenses attached.

But the dying boy has a friend in the devoted priest, Father Harlan (Nick Nolte), who has cared for Irwin since he was aban-



FATHER HARLAN (NICK NOLTE) TAKES LOVING CARE OF IRWIN (DUEL FARNES).

PARAMOUNT CLASSICS, 2003.

doned infant. For all his shambling, shuffling ways, Father Harlan is the moral center of the film. The character reminds me of the Ron Perlman character in 1995's *The City of Lost Children*, which also featured a crazed inventor with eyes like optical instruments. Nolte's flawless, accessible performance grounds the film and gives it grace.

The men in suits seem to me a stylistic flourish the film could have done without. The scenes where they try to persuade the

last homeowners to leave the land they've always lived on shakes their determination. But no matter; the river is coming anyway.

Not entirely successful, but interesting and peculiar, *Northfork* remains in a class of its own, while some images remain with the viewer for all time. Moody and impenetrable to logic, *Northfork's* tale nevertheless throws its weight against the destruction of landscapes and lives of the West. Opens Friday, Oct. 24, at the Bijou.

EW

movie clips

OPENING OR RETURNING: CONTINUING:

Beyond Borders: Angelina Jolie and Clive Owen star in this romantic adventure set in Third World hot spots. He's a doctor working behind the lines in war-torn countries; she's a socialite who loves him. Directed by Martin Campbell. R. Cinemark.

Friend of the Deceased, A: (1987) Directed by Viacheslav Krizhtofovich, film's about an unemployed translator who enters a world of sensual crime and punishment. At 9:15 pm on 10/27 in 115 Pacific Hall, UO campus. Russian, with English subtitles. Free.

Gigli: Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez star in a "romantic gangster comedy." Critics hated it. Written and directed by Martin Brest. R. Movies 12.

Northfork: The Polish Brothers (*Jackpot*) employ magical realism to tell the story of a dying boy, strange angels, a dedicated caregiver and much more, set against the story of a small Montana town circa 1955 to be flooded by a dam. Haunting. PG-13. Bijou. See review this issue.

Open Range: Kevin Costner directs and stars with Robert Duvall in traditional Western about a corrupt cattle baron (Michael Gambon) who forces the cowboys to fight. Annette Bening's performance is warm and real. With Abraham Benrubi, Diego Luna. Recommended. Movies 12.

Online archives.

Radio: High school football coach (Ed Harris) shocks a Southern town by taking on a mentally challenged youth (Cuba Gooding Jr.) and developing a decades-long friendship with him. Also stars Alfre Woddard and Debra Winger; directed by Mike Tollin. PG. Cinema World. Cinemark.

Scary Movie 3: Horror spoof satirizes movies such as *The Ring*, *Signs*, *The Matrix Reloaded*, *Eight Mile*. Stars Anna Farris, Charlie Sheen, Denise Richards, Eddie Griffin and Queen Latifah. Directed by David Zucker. R. Cinema World. Cinemark.

Wonderland: James Cox directs this biopic of 1970s porno star, John Holmes - aka Johnny Wadd, as played by Val Kilmer. Also stars Kate Bosworth, Lisa Kudrow, Dylan McDermott and Christina Applegate. Sensationalistic; didn't wow critics. R. Bijou

American Splendor: Cleveland crank Harvey Pekar, writer and file clerk, is celebrated in this excellent film for his ordinary, working-class life and daily gripes, made famous in his illustrated comics. Stars Paul Giamatti, Hope Davis and a host of great supporting actors. Very highest recommendations. R. Bijou.

Online archives.

Bad Boys II: Martin Lawrence and Will Smith reunite with producer Jerry Bruckheimer and director Michael Bay. Smith and Lawrence play Miami narcotics detectives assigned to stem the flood of designer ecstasy into Miami. R. Movies 12.

Bruce Almighty: Jim Carrey, Morgan Freeman and Jennifer Aniston star in this tale of a TV reporter, who has a really bad day, rages against God and receives more than he expected. PG-13. Movies 12.

Finding Nemo: Pixar's computer-animated fantasy of two Clownfish, Marlin and his son Nemo, who get separated in the Great Barrier Reef. Written and directed by Andrew Stanton (*A Bug's Life*), with voices by Albert Brooks, Ellen DeGeneres, Willem Dafoe, Geoffrey Rush, Allison Janney. Very highly recommended. G. Movies 12.. Online archives.

Good Boy: Doggie sci-fi comedy stars Liam Aiken as a dog walker who finally gets a dog of his own, Hubble (voice by Matthew Broderick), only to discover he's really an alien agent from the Dog Star Sirius. PG. Cinemark.

House of the Dead: Based on a video game, horror flick's about teens who go to a deserted island to hold a rave only to learn it's inhabited by zombies. R. Movies 12.

Intolerable Cruelty: The Coen brothers comedy about L.A. divorce attorney Miles Massey (George Clooney), who falls for gold-digger Marylin Rexroth (Catherine Zeta-Jones). Also stars Geoffrey Rush, Cedric the Entertainer, Billy Bob Thornton, Edward Herrmann and Richard Jenkins. PG-13. Cinema World. Cinemark. Online archives.

Italian Job, The: Back in town again. Mark Wahlberg leads a heist that's double-crossed by one of his crew. Charlize Theron plays a safecracker in this cool revenge movie. Also stars Edward Norton, Mos Def

and Donald Sutherland. Highly recommended for its pure entertainment value. PG-13. Movies 12. Online archives.

Journey, Warren Miller's: The 78-year old master of the mountain brings his 54th annual movie about skiers, snowboarders, free-fallers and a personal trip with Miller himself. Freebies for all who attend the Eugene performance at 8 pm on 10/23 at McDonald Theatre. Also at 8pm Oct. 24 in OSI Austin Auditorium, Corvallis. And at 7 pm on Oct. 26 in Elsinore Theatre, Salem.

Kill Bill Volume 1: Quentin Tarantino's first of two films stars Uma Thurman as a woman with a mission: Kill Bill (David Carradine), the former boss who betrayed her. With Lucy Liu, Daryl Hannah, LaTanya Richardson, Vivica A. Fox, Michael Madsen and Samuel L. Jackson. R. Cinemark. Cinema World.

Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life: Angelina Jolie stars as action heroine Lara Croft who saves the world, again, from unspeakable evil. Directed by Jan De Bont, also stars Gerard Butler and Noah Taylor. PG-13. Movies 12.

Lost in Translation: Directed by Sofia Coppola (*The Virgin Suicides*), this highly acclaimed film was shot entirely on location in Japan. It stars Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson as lonely Americans in a Tokyo hotel

who become friends. With Giovanni Ribisi. Very highest recommendations. R. Cinema World. Online archives.

Medallion: Jackie Chan action comedy co-stars Lee Evans and Claire Forlani. A mysterious medallion turns police detective Chan into a superhero, but the bad guys want it back. Gordon Chan directs. PG-13. Movies 12.

My Boss's Daughter: Comedy directed by David Zucker stars Ashton Kutcher, whose boss, Terrence Stamp, asks him to look after his house for a night. But he has company, including the beautiful Tara Reid and strange visitors. PG-13. Movies 12.

Mystic River: Directed by Clint Eastwood; written by Brian Koppelman, based on the novel by Dennis Lehane, this tragic masterpiece stars Sean Penn, Tim Robbins, Kevin Bacon, Laurence Fishburne, Marcia Gay Harden, Laura Linney and Emmy Rossum. Very highest recommendations. R. Cinema World. Cinemark. See review this issue.

Runaway Jury: Gun manufacturer's explosive trial stars John Cusack, Gene Hackman, Dustin Hoffman, Rachel Weisz. PG-13. Cinemark. Cinema World.

Rundown, The: Peter Berg directs Seann William Scott, The Rock, Rosario Dawson and Christopher Walken in this adventure about a

kingpin's son who disappears in the Amazon in search of a valuable artifact. PG-13. Movies 12..

S.W.A.T. Police Special Weapons and Tactics unit buddies Samuel L. Jackson and Colin Farrell star in this action-thriller based on the 1970s TV series. Also with Michelle Rodriguez, LL Cool J. PG-13. Movies 12.

School of Rock: Faking it as a substitute teacher, wild guitarist Jack Black turns elementary musical prodigies into a high-voltage rock band. Directed by Richard Linklater, it also stars Joan Cusack, Mike White and Sarah Silverman. PG-13. Cinemark. Cinema World.

Seabiscuit: A has-been racehorse becomes America's Depression-era success story, along with jockey Tobey Maguire, trainer Chris Cooper, and owner Jeff Bridges. Written, directed by Gary Ross based on Laura Hillenbrand's best-selling non-fiction book, also stars Elizabeth Banks, William H. Macy. Highest recommendations. PG-13. Movies 12.

Online archives.

Secondhand Lions: Haley Joe Osment is sent to his great uncles' rural Texas farm, where the city boy has much to learn. Robert Duvall and Michael Caine may have been bank robbers. Written and directed by Tim McCanlies (writer, *The Iron Giant*). PG. Cinemark.

Texas Chainsaw Massacre: Remake of Tobe Hooper's 1974 horror

classic is directed by Marcus Nispel, music video guru. Backwoodsy killer clan runs amok. Stars Jessica Biel, Eric Balfour and Andrew Bryniarski as Leatherface. R. Cinemark.

Under the Tuscan Sun: Diane Lane plays writer Frances Mayes in this screen adaptation of her best selling book about buying a run-down villa in Italy and creating a new life. Escape from real life - beautiful people, gorgeous scenery, everybody's got money. PG-13. Cinemark. Online archives.

Uptown Girls: Brittany Murphy stars as the freewheeling daughter of a late rock legend, but when her inheritance is stolen, she's forced to get a job as a nanny to precocious Ray Schleine (Dakota Fanning), an "eight-year-old going on forty." In a comedic battle of wills, each discovers in the other a true friend. Directed by Boas Yakin. Also stars Heather Locklear. PG-13. Movies 12.

Veronica Guerlin: Based on the true story of courageous Dublin journalist (Cate Blanchett), this treacherous game of can-and-mouse set in the mid-1990s is directed by Joel Schumacher. Also stars Gerard McSorley, Ciaran Hinds and Brenda Fricker. R. Cinemark.

Bijou Art Cinemas (686-2458) Cinema World 8 (342-6536) Cinemark 17 (746-5202)c Movies 12 (741-1231)

video clips

NEW RELEASES ON VIDEO

Releases subject to change. Available the Tuesday following date of EW publication, sometimes sooner. See archived movie reviews at www.eugeneweekly.com

Alien Hunter (2003) Directed by Ron Krauss, this sci-fi thriller stars James Spader, Leslie Stefanson, Aimee Graham, John Lynch, Carl Lewis. Did not play Eugene theaters. DVD extras include director's comments, deleted scenes and more.

Blind Spot: Hitler's Secretary (Germany, 2003) Documentary about Traudl Junge, who was Adolf Hitler's secretary from 1942 through the end of the war. Not much new information, but reportedly fascinating anyway.

City of Ghosts (2003) Directed by and starring Matt Dillon, James Caan, Natascha McElhone, Gerard Depardieu, Stellan Skarsgard.

House of Fools (Russia, 2003) Andrei Konchalovsky's film is compared to Philippe de Broca's 1966 *King of Hearts* and found wanting. Some inmates are not ready for the world on the other side of the door. Stars Bryan Adams, Julia Vysotsky, Sultan Oslamov. R.

Hulk, The: Director Ang Lee's action-adventure adaptation of the Marvel

Comics series hits darker notes than usual superhero comics. Scientist's (Eric Bana) inner demons change him after a catastrophic experiment. Written by James Schamus, it also stars Jennifer Connelly, Nick Nolte, Josh Lucas and Sam Elliott. Highly recommended. PG-13. Online archives.

Sopranos, The: The complete fourth season of the HBO series, a 4-disc set. This season looks at Tony (James Gandolfini) and Carmela's (Edie Falco) marriage, up-close at home and in Dr. Melfi's (Lorraine Bracco) office as well. Smart writing, directing, cinematography and editing as well as memorable performances by an incredibly talented cast. Highest recommendations, if you can handle the violence.

Whale Rider: Winner of the World Cinema award at Sundance 2003, Niki Caro's Maori drama about a spunky girl, played by Keisha Castle-Hughes, who decides to show her beloved but authoritarian grandfather that she is able to lead the tribe, despite being a girl. Wonderful, inspiring drama features the exquisite New Zealand coast. A don't-miss movie. PG-13. Online archives.

Next week: Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights, Bogart collections, Finding Nemo, Legally Blonde 2, The Ox-Bow Incident (1943), and "The X-Files" Season 8.