

Omen is captivating, but unbelievable

Review by Marella Synovec

Movie makers in the past gave us monsters and science fiction oddities—*Rosemary's Baby* and *The Exorcist*—which spurred the imagination and toyed with the human fear of the unknown. Now they have warned us with *The Omen*.

If we were asked to believe in the obvious technical hokiness of *The Exorcist*, then the more sophisticated and realistic production of *The Omen* hits closer to home. *The Omen* can make us wonder if we are as safe as we might think.

We are not called upon to witness rotating heads, guttural animal cries of a child possessed, flying beds and pea-soup vomit. *The Omen*, however, does have adequate gore—a beheading by means of a plate glass window, a face burned beyond recognition, a priest impaled on a lightning rod, numerous bloody bites, scratches and violent bruises. The effect of *The Omen* is more chilling. The result is a better movie.

The film, by relative technical standards, is well made. The screenplay is smooth, the tension is consistent, the performances are convincing. The dramatic and foreboding musical score by Jerry Goldsmith enhances the ominous theme.

Captivating screenplay

The screenplay, written by David Seltzer, does not totally depart from the plots of previous "devil" movies. It is nonetheless captivating. Seltzer apparently did some research and, with the consultation of religious advisors, presented an almost plausible interpretation of the birth of the anti-christ as foretold in the Book of Revelations. It is, after all, only a movie.

Lee Remick and Gregory Peck are cast as Katherine and Robert Thorn, an aging couple who have long awaited the birth of a child. As the movie opens, an ominous voice in the background informs Peck that their newborn child is dead.

The well-meaning Peck, not wishing to break the news to his wife, follows a priest's suggestion that he "adopt" an orphaned infant born at exactly the same moment as his child. As the movie progresses, it becomes apparent that

forces outside the realm of Peck's world have been working against him.

The movie is aptly titled. Throughout, the viewer is given provocative hints that something is amiss. The chain of visual forewarnings begins with the newborn infant having an incredible amount of hair on his head. We later discover that the hair has been covering a "666" birthmark that is a part of all the devil's children. His birthdate fell on the supposed birthdate of the anti-christ—the sixth hour of the sixth day of the sixth month. The Thorns innocently called their child Damien—a nice name, perhaps, but highly suggestive of demons.

Things go awry

Until cherubic Damien's fifth birthday, the couple is blissfully unaware of the child's heritage. But things begin to go awry at Damien's birthday party and life from then on is not easy for the Thorns.

Damien's nanny hangs herself and is mysteriously replaced by Mrs. Baylock (Billie Whitelaw), a soft-spoken governess who turns out to be a devil's apostate vehemently guiding her little charge.

Peck, an ambassador to Great Britain during the tirade of strange events, is warned by a strung-out priest that his son is the anti-christ. Saturnally refusing to believe this (the film contrasts the ancient and unknown with the modern and sophisticated), Peck does not heed the warning.

Peck continues to stubbornly deny what he has been

told. But further warnings—including those of Jennings, a photographer played by David Warner who accompanies Peck in his search for the truth and meets a macabre death, and his wife's "accidental" fall from a balcony—begin to make Peck realize that something must be done. He is gradually being torn apart emotionally, frightening in itself because one can empathize with his anguish.

Damien not human

Seeking the advice of an exorcist at an excavation site, Peck discovers he must impale Damien on an altar to destroy his demonic calling. It is a difficult duty for Peck to consider, and he must be reminded over and over that Damien is not a human child. The devil, and the director, once again personified Satan in the form of a child to play with one's emotions.

Peck, however, is convinced beyond a doubt when he discovers the "666" birthmark. After fighting a duel to the death of Mrs. Baylock, Peck gets Damien to the altar where he must be killed, only to be blown to smithereens by the police.

The movie's flaw is in the ending. It was carried too far. When the gun fires and whitens the screen we don't know if Peck managed to stab Damien and rid the world of its potential end. It would have been more terrifying if the film had ended here.

Instead, the film pushes the limits of believability to their breaking point.

**America.
It only
works as
well as
we do.**



The Hitchin' Post & Wooden Nickel

Blue jeans — \$8.99

Halters and summer blouses — 1/3 off

Guys' knit shirts — \$4.99-\$7.99

Vested suits — \$69.00

Girls' dress slacks — \$12.99

90% of the store
is on SALE!

**Hitchin' Post &
Wooden Nickel**

144 N. 14th

Dippy



Donuts

OPEN 7 DAYS
6 am-7 pm

Dippy Donuts

1227 "R"

48th & Holdrege

Always fresh

- Donuts
- Rolls
- Drinks
- Bagels
- Sandwiches
- Soft serve ice cream

RJ Willy's
RESTAURANT
Homemade Rolls

Open All Night

(11 p.m.-6 a.m. Mon.-Fri.;

11 p.m.-5 a.m. Sat.; Closed Sunday)

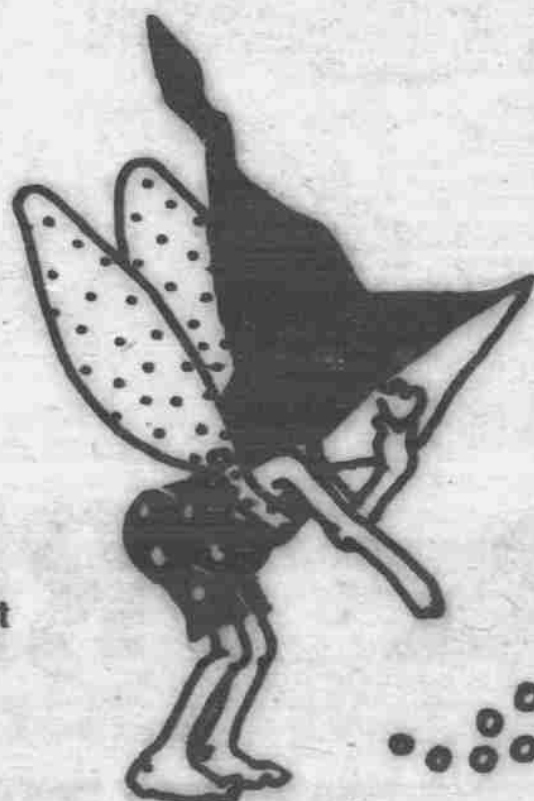
**Breakfast, Omelets,
Roast Beef, Meatloaf,
Chicken, Sandwiches,
Steaks, Hamburgers**

and
**Great Coffee
Great Prices**

★ We Accept Checks ★

1823 O St.

another plus
from
gateway bank & trust
member fdic.



Yee
hoo!

the **CAMPUS BANK**

Nebraska Union 14th and R| Lincoln. • Open 8:30-5:30/Saturday 8:30-noon