

The GQ search...

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I looked down at him. He didn't move. What a gift it must be to be able to sleep through anything, I thought.

"I came to present you with a bill for damage to the Showcase," Mona said. You could tell she had been elected the mouthpiece for the gang. "But when I got here I ran into her," she said, indicating Pemberton. "She told me a sad little tale about a guy she calls the GQ Guy and an even sadder little tale about how you agreed to work for no money, to find the GQ Guy for her out of the goodness of your heart."

She tore up what I presume was the bill for the damages and stared at me with Perry Mason eyes. "After I heard that one, the only thing I wanted to know was, What's in it for Gumshoe?" You may be able to fool this little tootsie, but you won't fool me. You want her for yourself, don't you? You'll wander around doing your flatfoot act for a couple of days, show up at all the right speakeasies and make a few very public efforts to find this guy, and score big points with Diane here. Then you come in with the sad news that there is no GQ Guy, or a barfly you know says he left town or something. She puts on the big downcast face about how she'll never get the GQ Guy, and simpers about what a fool she has been.

"Then you," she said, pointing at me, "will put on your best heel-with-a-heart face and tell her that a fodi in love is redundant and maybe she'll feel better about the whole thing after a drink that turns into dinner that turns into dancing that turns into who-knows-what with that lovable lug, Miles Gumshoe."

I thumbed through my mental Rolodex of profound one-liners for a snappy response and came up empty. Time for a brief dodge. "What about her," I said, pointing at the dame whose name I didn't know. "How does she fit into the welcoming party here?"

"She came here to apologize for beating you senseless at the Showcase," Mona said gruffly.

I leaned back in the chair. "No problem," I said magnanimously. "All in the line of duty."

"Fortunately, we talked her out of it," Mona said.

"Oh," I said, my voice floating around the room like a dime-store balloon and falling nowhere near anyone's ears. "Well, you seem to have everything figured out, don't you?" I said, hoping that if I kept talking I would eventually have something worthwhile to say. "Let's say you are right, and I duped Diane Pemberton here with a little bit of tough-guy breezetalk and I'm actually out to get her for myself. If that's true, how come I am going to the Drumstick tonight to meet the GQ Guy?" I said, sitting back smugly as if I had just found Dorothy an easy way out of Oz.

"We're going with you," Mona said defiantly.

"He wants me to meet him alone," I said.

"So that you can tell Pemberton here that you almost had him and he got away, right?" Mona said.

I looked at the dames one at a time, at faces that had heard all they wanted to hear from me, well, when in Rome, bet heavily on the lions. "OK, we go to the Drumstick. But don't be surprised if the GQ Guy gets scared and bolts when he sees that I'm not alone."

"Believe me," Mona said. "We won't be surprised."

Bad editing means 'Curtains' for film

By Steve Abariotes

Ever since John Carpenter released "Halloween," low-budget horror films have consistently copied Carpenter's utilization of stupid characters and implausible plots without embracing his jolting cinematic style. When the camera stops moving, or the subject is somehow placed awkwardly within the frame in a Carpenter film, it's time to hang onto your seat because something is about to happen. The scare then comes or it doesn't. Or it nearly comes, followed by a relaxed pause and then it really comes! The scene must be skillfully set up and executed or the film will not successfully grab the audience by the throat. The latest horror film, entitled "Curtains," is no John Carpenter film.

If you enjoy seeing beautiful women butchered with a variety of sharp implements, this film is for you. Despite one or two scary moments and some nice imagery, "Curtains" is, for the most part, a waste of time.

The story is plausible enough; an eccentric movie director invites six gunning actresses up to his mountain estate to audition for the psychotic leading role in "Audrey."

his upcoming film. The "casting session" turns into a bloodbath, with scenes of bloody pursuit that are drawn out far too long.

Despite a script with potential and a story with possibilities, "Curtains" does not work primarily due to bad direction and editing that lacks integrity. At one point, a car brakes hard to avoid a doll that has been mysteriously placed on the road. When the vehicle skids to a stop, it is still about a half a mile away and the flighty young lady leaves her car and walks the rest of the way. The familiar "haunted doll" motif is never developed and in the end this "whodunit" becomes something more like "who cares" or even "why do it?"

The scariest thing about this film is how it ever got released. With the horror genre being in the sorry state it is these days, one must ask the question: Would six girls really go at it this hard for a role in a horror film? The three dollars for a ticket to this film would be better spent cast to the wind from the open window of a moving car, disappearing in the rear view mirror. "Curtains" is playing at the State Theater.

Film festival features Fonda

Actor Peter Fonda and cinematographer Michael Butler will head the list of speakers at the fifth annual River City Film Conference March 25 through March 27 in Omaha.

More than 200 film professionals are expected to assemble at the Red Lion Inn, where nearly 150 current releases will be screened.

During the conference, Fonda will take part in the dedication of the Henry Fonda-River City Short Film Collection, comprising the outstanding short films of the past five years.

The film, "Wanda Nevada," a collaborative effort of Fonda, his father and Butler, also will be shown.

Butler, a close friend of Fonda, is a noted cinematographer whose works include "Close Encounters

of the Third Kind," "Jaws II" and "Harry and Tonto."

Those interested can register for the three-day event by calling 391-1266 any weekday or at the door. Pre-registration costs \$35; registration at the festival is \$40.

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