

Arts & Entertainment

Adventure films top videotape hit parade

By Stew Magnuson

John C. May has a lot of 48 HRS days.

May is the manager of T & T Video, 217 N. 14th St. Running the video store is like running a small theater, he said. May tries to pick out titles that will be popular with his clientele, 60 percent of whom are UNL students.

In addition to 48 HRS, popular rentals include *Raiders of The Lost Ark*, *Blue Thunder* and *Brainstorm*.

These types of adventure movies are the most popular because they don't require a long attention span, May said. "You can sit down, pop some popcorn, have a few beers and not have to really watch the movie carefully to pick up the plot," he said.

Movies like *Frances* and *The Verdict* are rented by an older crowd, most prominently downtown business men. But because these movies aren't rented out often they just don't make a profit. A video must be rented out two to three times a week to be profitable, he said.

T & T's walls are plastered with movie posters and promotional items sent to the store. Many of the movies displayed by the posters are not available in the store itself. May sticks these posters up to see if people will inquire

about them. For instance, he put up a poster of the movie *Jaws* and an inflatable shark to see if anyone would ask if he had the movie. So far no one has inquired and May said he probably won't order it.

May said the business is growing all the time, although the store does take a loss when they buy a video no one wants to rent. That's why he compares the operation of the store to running a theater. He has the pressure of finding a movie that will be rented and the theater manager has to find a movie that will fill the seats.

This is part of the reason T & T specializes in the new, "blockbuster" movies and doesn't stock the older, classic films. Although May said he prefers the older black-and-white films, there isn't enough interest in them to make a profit. Even a classic like *Casablanca* isn't in demand enough to make a profit, he said.

According to May, T & T rents out videos "for less than you pay to see a movie at a theater." They have a special package deal for renting out both movies and video machine together. The store has 20 machines available, but May suggests reserving the machines for weekends and suggested reserving such popular movies as *Raiders of The Lost Ark*.



Dave Trouba/Daily Nebraskan

John May, manager of T & T Video.

'Silkwood' inconsistencies detract from Film

Review by Eric Peterson

Silkwood succeeds as a human situation; it fails as an adequate exploration of Karen Silkwood's death. Because of sensitive screenwriting and sensitive acting, a full and true picture of an ordinary woman forced into an extraordinary perplexity comes through — but there is no way the ending is full and true. *Silkwood* hedges its bets, and cheats.

Karen Silkwood was a worker in an atomic energy plant near Crescent, Okla. As a union organizer, she collected considerable evidence of safety violations at the Kerr-McGee plant, much of which was sub-

stantiated by the Atomic Energy Commission. She died in a car wreck on the way to meet a reporter from the *New York Times*, and many believe she was murdered by the Kerr-McGee management.

Silkwood's conversion from resentful but uninvolved worker to savvy and obsessive organizer is convincingly shown by Meryl Streep. This is a role unlike any other in which we've seen Streep — inarticulate but very sharp, flirt, winning. In one of the first scenes Karen tries to relieve some of the tension at work by flirting with everybody in the lunch room during her break; she kisses her lover Drew, played by Kurt Russell, jumps away abruptly to take a bite out of somebody else's sandwich, and then somebody else's, kidding and confronting all in the room. In a parallel scene near the end, she questions another worker about a safety infraction, starts taking notes, everybody gets uptight at her snooping, and the lunch room clears. Karen has stuck her neck out, and a sense of isolation and suspicion deepens.

Karen's growing activism turns everybody off — sends her lover away for awhile, and increases tension between herself and her lesbian housemate Dolly, strongly played by Cher. Their interaction is very convincing — Karen often feeling lost, sorrowing for her absent lover or for her children, who live with their father in Texas, Dolly the ultimate realist, even more plain-spoken than Karen. A number of scenes between them are sensitively done, including one in which Dolly hopelessly and quietly confesses her love for Karen, and Karen as quietly and plainly kills Dolly's hopes and offers the never adequate consolation of friendship.

The kind of workplace we see at Kerr-McGee is convincing and depressing. All of them — Karen, Drew, Dolly — work there for at least part of the picture, and it is in an all-pervasive weight on them.

The plant is a place of detention, complete with time cards and a passive union, which the company seeks to decertify, sleazy management practices and an overall feeling of impotent resentment. This picture of corporate oppression is a familiar and very

true one for millions, but particular to the Kerr-McGee plant is the kind of uneasiness atomic energy workers will feel about what they do. Any questions they may have about the sloppy management and the ultimate safety of work in a place where heavy exposure to radiation becomes almost inevitable at some time are deadened by their need for a job.

Two shocking and very good scenes bring the personal danger of nuclear work home — when an older woman and then Karen are "cooked" or become contaminated by heavy radiation, are rushed down — the old woman screaming as she goes — to a shower room where they are scrubbed in showers and told whether they are in radioactive danger. The shower scrubbing is very painful to watch and, in the lack of dignity they induce, and the helplessness, give the viewer the impression of extermination camps.

It is with the crucial ending that the film becomes sloppy and ultimately unconvincing. The atmosphere of tension and suspicion at Kerr-McGee has been for the most part well-developed, especially with Karen's massive contamination and the nightmarish search the Kerr-McGee radiation experts make of her home. The house search and seizure is filmed like an attack, in which the house is ripped up and Karen's possessions are carted away in plastic bags. "They're killing me," she later weeps to Drew, and we are with her and do feel the paranoia and are moved by her fear.

As *Silkwood* is shown on the road, going to meet the reporter from the *Times*, we hear "Amazing Grace" in the background for no very good reason — our fear builds as the voice lingers over phrases speaking of peril and despair. Slowly, ominously, headlights appear behind Karen's car, and we see growing alarm on her face. Then we see the effects and artifacts of death, the car wrecked with her head hanging out, the gravestone, Cher weeping. The film ends with a disclaimer that no one is sure what occurred — that she crashed into the concrete wall of a culvert and that tranquilizers were found in her bloodstream.

Celeste for president — Lovers of Latin unite

In the last installment of this column (soon to be a major motion picture), presidential candidate Celeste Underwood met her campaign manager, Addison Steele. Her roommate, Harley Davidson and Otis P. Davenport, had hired him in hopes that



Mary Louise Knapp

he might smooth some of Celeste's "rough edges." However, they weren't prepared for Addison's unorthodox style.

"I don't know, Otis, this may have been a bad idea," Harley said as the two enjoyed Happy Hour in one of Lincoln's watering holes.

"You may be right, Harley," Otis said. "Have you heard Addison's latest scheme?"

Harley shook his head. "What is it this time? Lavender wallpaper?"

"Not that bad, although he did recommend that we throw away our typewriter and start writing the *National Intruder* with a quill pen," Otis replied. "He's got Celeste reading all these great literary works and philosophy books. He says that the American people need a well-educated president."

"Is he giving her any lessons in political theory?" "Unfortunately, no. Addison thinks that politics is something with which no lady should soil her hands. No gentleman, either, for that matter."

"But questions about politics are sure to be asked at next week's press conference," Harley said, sipping his beer. "How does he expect to get around that?"

"It's not what you say, but how you say it," Otis said, mimicking Addison's Anglo-American accent. "He has instructed her to quote appropriate passages from esteemed authors. Whenever a particularly difficult question comes up, she's supposed to respond in Latin."

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Madmen and Englishdogs



By Dan Wondra