

'Iceman' cometh, but not satisfying enough

Review by Ward W. Triplett III

At some point in the making of *Splash* director Ron Howard figured out that a farce about a mermaid in New York probably wouldn't wash in the computer age. So, he had his main character play it seriously, thus restraining the overall effect of an otherwise good movie.

Along those same lines, sometime during the filming of *Iceman* the directors decided that a comedy about a caveman in modern society also wouldn't wash very well these days. So, they split it half way, hoping to make some sort of "serious" film with a light touch. It didn't work.

Iceman's problems are mostly in its presentation and self-image. It begins

with the finding of a frozen creature in an arctic glacier. With the Russian discovery of a frozen-in-tact Woolly Mammoth, the creature will be America's answer to the new science.

But, the creature turns out to be a prehistoric man, with an age estimated at 40,000 years. The plan is to dissect him, remove his organs and see how man has evolved. However, the Iceman comes to life again on the operating table.

The Iceman is placed in an experimentally controlled wildlife center at the base, his existence hidden from the press and an anthropologist and a linguist are called in to determine the Iceman's background.

As the anthropologist, Timothy Hutton has what should have been a better role. He convinces the scientists not to kill Charlie (the name Hutton derives from the caveman's growling), and attempts to "understand" the former way of life by spending time with the outsider. But Hutton, like the other "civilized" roles in the film, is never really in the picture. The movie reveals little about its supporting cast nor why the Iceman is so important to them. It rarely tips off what, if any, motivations anyone in the film has. That's a picky point, but in the movie it appears they were trying to make, some understanding behind the characters' actions (other than what they just say) is somewhat important.

On the other hand, John Lone, who plays Charlie, is nothing less than fas-

inating, particularly in the "discovery" stages of the film where he is learning about Shepard (Hutton) and they, in turn, are trying to learn about him.

The best part about Lone's character is that he acts and reacts to the changes around him about as you'd expect any person unaware of modern technology would. In other words, he doesn't play it as a buffoon, although that would have been easy to do.

In fact, Lone's wild-eyed Charlie saves *Iceman* by doing just what Tom Hanks did in *Splash*. Lone, however, succeeds where Hanks failed. By playing his role straight, Lone keeps the film from being unintentionally funny. The whole unbelievable idea lends itself to some laughs by itself, and had Lone been anything less than the enigma he presents, *Iceman* would have been easy to laugh at.

As it is, once the plot makes it obvious that one way or another Charlie will have to die by the film's end, the movie dies as well. While Charlie is prancing around looking for his children, or singing (?) "Heart of Gold" with Shepard, the film projects a warmth and sincerity.

Once the ending is obvious, however, even Lone can't prevent *Iceman* from getting boring and a little mundane.

Iceman would have been more satisfying with deeper characters, some more plot twists and a little more of the Caveman's exposure to the new world. As it is now, it's just a yes for Lone, but a no for the movie.

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On Stage

- The Nebraska Director's Theatre production of *Measure for Measure* begins tonight at the NDT theatre, 421 S. Ninth St., Suite 112. The play was adapted from the William Shakespeare play by Charles Marowitz. The play is directed by UNL MFA student Timothy Mooney. The curtain goes up at 8 p.m.
- The final performance of Don Winslow's latest theatrical effort, *The Struggle for the Vote*, will take place tonight at the Lincoln Indian Center, 1100 Military Road. The performance is a historical perspective on the problems faced by women, blacks and native americans trying to gain the power to vote and be represented in the American electoral process. Winslow obtained his master of arts degree at UNL. The production begins at 7:30 p.m. and is open to the public.

AROUND TOWN

- The RV's, a dance band with a soul feel, will be at Bill's Saloon, 1042 P St. tonight. The cover charge is \$1.
- Jim Jacobi's Crap Detectors will appear tonight at the Drumstick, 547 N. 48th St. The cover charge is \$2. Jacobi, incidentally, will be represented in an art exhibit opening Saturday at the Eleventh Street Gallery, 305 S. 11th St.

Outstanding films end Sheldon's semester

Sheldon Film Theatre's second semester season is coming to a close, but not before three outstanding films are reeled off.

The Moon in the Gutter, a stunning thriller by Jean-Jacques Benieux, the director of *Diva*, is showing today through Saturday. Gerard Depardieu and Nastassia Kinski star. Admission is \$3.

Academy Award winner *Tender Mercies* is returning to the Film Theatre during finals week. The film played earlier this semester, and was brought back because of the excellent response it received. The film will be screened at 7 and 9 p.m. Sunday through May 13. There is a 3 p.m. matinee Sunday. There will be no screenings on May 11. Admission is \$3.

Finally, *The New York School*, a documentary film by Michael Blackwood, is being screened May 12 and 13 in conjunction with the American Abstract Expressionist Paintings exhibit, which opens May 11 and runs through July 29 in the Art Gallery.

Written and narrated by art critic Barbara Rose, *The New York School* includes contemporary footage showing artists at work in their studios talking about works in progress.

The film features Adolph Gottlieb, Arshile Gorky, Phillip Guston, Al Held, Hans Hofmann, Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning, Lee Krasner, Joan Mitchell, Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman, Jackson Pollock, Ad Reinhardt, Mark Rothko, Clyfford Still, Jack Tworok and critics Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg.

The New York School will be screened at 3 p.m. May 12 and 13. There is no admission charge.