

'Blood Simple' a perfect murder story

By Tom Mockler
Staff Reporter

Blood-simple (Amer. slang, first used by Dashiell Hammett). 1. State of fear and confusion that follows the commission of murder: "He's gone blood simple." Makes the perfect murder almost impossible.

Yep. That pretty much says it all. "Blood Simple," showing Thursday through Sunday at the Sheldon Film Theatre, is a Texas-style murder story.

No, it's not like the "Texas Chainsaw Massacre." The film has been promoted as a "funny murder story." This is somewhat of a misnomer. It is not a black comedy.



John Getz and Frances McDormand in "Blood Simple."

Courtesy of Circle Films

Movie Review

The humorous element in the film is provided by the Private Detective (with no name), played by M. Emmet Walsh. Walsh is the unlikely star of this film, playing a two-bit hick slimeball private eye who is hired to commit murder. Walsh is traditionally a character actor, and his performance here is really no different.

The film is sufficiently "small," though, that he seems much bigger than usual. Even though he is doing some very brutal things, his manner of speech and observations of life are very amusing. He almost singlehandedly makes the film.

The story revolves initially around a love triangle in a small Texas town. Abby (Frances McDormand) has grown sick of her greasball husband Julian Marty (Dan Hedaya). She and Ray (John Getz) have an affair.

Marty is suspicious, and hires a private detective to do surveillance work. Marty's worst fears are confirmed, and he offers the private detective \$10,000 to have his wife and her lover killed. The detective accepts.

OK, so what do I do now? It gets really interesting at this point, and if I don't tell you what happens next you might not be interested in seeing the film. But if you do see it and I tell you what happens next, you might hate me because I've ruined a lot of the suspense.

Trust me. It's got some *really good* plot twists.

So what does the movie achieve? For one, it succeeds in telling a good murder story, much in the Hitchcock tradition. It is suspenseful, exciting and explores the crazy things that murder will drive people to do.

Secondly, it provides some innovative humor in Walsh's performance by reminding us that this isn't ancient Greece, this is *Texas*. They do things differently there.

Third, the film features some dramatic shots, particularly near the end, which cost nothing to set up, but requires only a little imagination.

Generally the backdrop of Texas was a wise choice. By constantly reminding us that this is Texas, that these are Texans and they do things differently there, we are not too surprised when the characters act in an all too human manner.

Everyone in this production is to be

commended, from the actors, (particularly Walsh) to director Joel Coen and producer Ethan Coen, who wrote the script together. This is yet another example of what can be done on a relatively small budget.

Even though this is a fine film worth seeing, I cannot help but react to the myriad of critics who jump up and down exclaiming what a great film it is. It is a good film. It is only great

considering its budget. Please, take my advice — see the film, but don't go in with any expectations. Maybe then you will be truly impressed.

"Blood Simple" is screening Thursday and Friday at 7 and 9 p.m. Saturday at 3, 7 and 9 p.m., and Sunday at 3, 5, 7 and 9 p.m.

General admission is \$3.75, \$2.50 for Friends of the Sheldon, senior citizens and children 12 and under.

Family's fate sealed in play's abrupt ending

DIARY from Page 11

Although the play is masterfully written, what most strikes the audience is the knowledge that what they are seeing is a true story, describing a real group of refugees.

Near the end of Anne's diary, there is hope in the air because the Allies are advancing rapidly, and Anne writes of returning to school in the fall. However, her entries end abruptly on August 1, 1944. The refugees had been discovered.

The play ends with the off-stage sounds of a door being battered down.

The fate of those captured at the end of the play was tragic. Only Anne's father survived the cruelty of the Nazis. He returned to the place of their hiding after liberation, and found his daughter's diary on the floor of the attic. The world thus came to know a story of true hope and courage.

Brendan Kelly will star as Otto Frank, the head of the family who sustains the refugees. Jill Anderson plays his daughter Anne. Anne Meek plays Mrs. Frank, and Melanie Gatzmeyer portrays Anne's older sister Margot.

Jenny Barron appears as Mrs. van Daan, the frivolous mother of the other family sharing the hide-out. David Duffy plays her grouchy, greedy husband. Tom Viessman appears as their shy son Peter, with whom Anne falls in love. Sam Schimek will play Mr. Dussel, a

crotchety dentist sharing the attic. Alice George and Howard Danner appear as the sympathetic friends who offer food and shelter.

MFA student Judith Kroeger directs "The Diary of Anne Frank," the scenic designer is Maryann J. Fleming, lighting is by Scott Pannier, and Janice Stauffer designed the costumes.

Performances are scheduled tonight through Saturday night, and October 7-12. All performances are at 8 p.m. The Saturday performance will be signed for the hearing-impaired.

Tickets are on sale at the University Theatre box office, located on the first floor of the Temple Building at 12th and R streets. The box office is open weekdays from noon to 5 p.m. and from 5-8 p.m. on performance nights. The telephone number is 472-2073.

Entertainment short

An exhibit featuring art by seven Minnesota artists who received either undergraduate or graduate degrees from UNL is now on display at the Richards Hall Gallery.

Also, from Oct. 14-31, an exhibition of photographs titled "Fractures and Severances" will be on display. The exhibit is by Diane Schoenfeld, visiting professor of art.

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Daughter: Oh... A dozen Red Roses!
Dad: What? Who are they from?!

Mom: Honey... you sent me flowers from Danielson's Floral when we were at UNL!
Grandpa: That's nothing; Grandpa sent me flowers from Danielson's when I was at UNL!

127 So. 13th 476-7602