



Courtesy of Disney & Amblin Entertainment

Finding water in "Far Away Places."

Desert adventures pleasing in movie

'A Far Off Place'



The adventurous styles of Walt Disney and Amblin Entertainment have come together to bring "A Far Off Place" to children and adults alike.

The setting is the desert region of Africa, and newly arrived Harry (Ethan Randall from "Dutch") is looking for the satellite dish and mistaking cat food for pâté.

The willful, seasoned Nonnie (Reese Witherspoon from "The Man in the Moon") isn't fond of Harry's egotism, and is anxious to track and kill the ivory poachers that have been plaguing the area.

After an attack on their home that kills their respective parents, Harry, Nonnie and a bushman named Xhabbo (Sarel Bok) set off on a 2,000-kilometer trek across the unpredictable Kalahari desert.

"If the wind can do it, we can do it," Xhabbo says just before their trek begins.

In true "Wilderness Family" tradition, the three must deal with the elements, wildlife and the poachers who are determined to eliminate everyone involved.

All performers in this film took on an incredible job with not only the roles that they played, but also the climate and conditions in which they had to work.

What is truly incredible (and cannot be captured on any television) is the amazing scenery shots throughout the picture. Sweeping camera work and dazzling shots of the African desert are almost mesmerizing.

In a diametric opposite from the dramatic "A Far Off Place" is the absolutely hilarious Maroon Cartoon "Trail Mix-Up" with Roger Rabbit and Baby Herman, which plays with the feature.

Roger's cartoon antics are a hoot, and you'll probably bust a gut laughing.

Both flicks are great for kids, and come highly recommended for a family function.

— Gerry Beltz



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Roger is Back!

Foreign film is lone bright spot in week's releases



Another blah week at the video store. Nothing much exciting to take home, although this week's foreign film release looks somewhat promising.

"Candyman" Virginia Madsen stars as a doctoral candidate working on her dissertation. Oral folklore is her topic and in attempting to research some urban legends she accidentally awakes a bogeyman called "Candyman."

The candyman is a hook-handed killer, come back to kill again. And again.

Vanessa Williams of "Melrose

Place" co-stars. The film's based on the Clive Barker short story, "The Forbidden."

"Mediterraneo" This comedy about shipwrecked Italian soldiers in World War II won the 1992 Oscar for best foreign film.

The soldiers are forgotten and left on a Greek island — where they discover a hidden paradise and have the time of their lives.

"Mr. Baseball" Tom Selleck stars as an American baseball player who's seen better days.

He's traded to a Japanese team. Unfortunately he has a good deal of trouble adjusting to his new surroundings.

Billed as a comedy, its dismal box office record indicates there weren't many laughs.

All titles available Wednesday.

— Staff Reports

More than romance

Powerful acting outshines disjointed script

'Love Field'



"Love Field" (Starship 9, 14th and Q streets) is billed as an interracial romance. Clearly it's a period piece, but there is more going on than romance.

It's November, 1963, Dallas. President John F. Kennedy and his wildly popular wife Jackie are en route to Dallas.

That same day, in Dallas suburbia, Lurene Hallett (Michelle Pfeiffer) bustles in her bathrobe, preparing herself to see the woman she idolizes and the president she adores.

After JFK's assassination, Lurene's obsession with the Kennedys drives her to D.C. to pay her respects and attend the president's funeral, despite

her husband's heated objections.

While traveling via Greyhound, Lurene meets Paul (Dennis Haysbert), a young black man traveling with his 5-year-old daughter (played expressively by newcomer Stephanie Janelle McFadden). Together, they get in all sorts of trouble, including falling in love.

Directed by Jonathan Kaplan ("The Accused"), "Love Field" is a bit disjointed. It almost seems as if the editors accidentally left a few important transitions on the cutting-room floor. But strong performances salvage the film.

Pfeiffer snagged an Oscar nomination for another wig-and-accent performance. Typically a solid actress, here she has a believable accent and her on-screen chemistry with both Haysbert and McFadden is strong. But her performance in "Batman Returns" was easily as impressive as the one she gives here, if not more so.

Haysbert, a relative unknown, displays a healthy dose of talent. It wasn't an easy part, especially considering he had to overcome taking the role after Denzel Washington backed out at the last minute. His performance gave Paul the quiet dignity that the script only halfheartedly developed.

"Love Field" tries to show that crossing racial, social and class barriers is possible. The attempt is admirable, but flawed, lacking the continuity it needs to make the ending more powerful.

Still, it is a pleasant film, and the performances, coupled with a few wonderful moments, make it worth viewing.

While it did not play Lincoln during its first run at the theaters, there is no reason to avoid it now, especially when it can be seen for \$1.50.

— Anne Steyer

Emotional ride

Film studies boy's fight against rare disease

'Lorenzo's Oil'



"Lorenzo's Oil" (Plaza 4, 12th and P streets) is two hours and 20 minutes of raw, emotional energy.

And it's definitely a double-fisted hanky film, too.

Australian filmmaker George Miller (the "Mad Max" flicks) wrote and directed this heart-wrenching tale based on the true story of a couple who refused to let their son die.

Susan Sarandon and Nick Nolte star as Michaela and Augusto Odone. In 1984, their 5-year-old son Lorenzo (Zack O'Malley Greenburg) was diagnosed with adrenoleukodystrophy (ALD), a rare and debilitating disease with no cure.

ALD affects the tissue that sur-

rounds the body's nerve cells, causing them to degenerate and the victim to go blind, deaf, mute, immobile — and more horrifying things. The disease gene is carried by women and affects only little boys.

The heart of the movie details the Odone's quest to find, if not a cure, at least a treatment for Lorenzo's disease. They meet tremendous stonewalling by the medical community, so they strike out on their own, relying on determination and love to save their son.

The oil in the title is the treatment they research, discover and fight for, despite the findings of medical science.

Both leads are superb. Sarandon received a Best Actress Oscar nomination for her portrayal of Michaela, and the nomination was not unwarranted. Nolte's character is Italian,

and, at first, the accent is difficult to reconcile with the blond Southerner from last year's "Prince of Tides." But Nolte deftly captures Augusto's passionate nature.

In fact, it is surprising the film has not had numerous other accolades heaped upon it as well.

"Lorenzo's Oil" is not a pretty film. The subject matter is depressing at best. Miller, who has a medical background, doesn't flinch from showing the realistic effects of the disease and the result is emotionally devastating.

But Miller has crafted a truly intimate and emotional portrait of the Odone's heroic struggle for life — one that is not to be missed.

— Anne Steyer

Rap industry spoof offers mature comedy

'CB4'



In a spoof of the rap music industry, "CB4" (Cinema Twin, 13th and P streets) provides lots of laughs for the audience, and it doesn't matter whether or not they enjoy rap music in the first place.

Chris Rock ("Saturday Night Live") stars as Albert, who with his buddies Otis (Deezer D) and Rip (Allen Payne), have been trying to break into the big time rap scene at a gangster club managed by a ruthless hood named Gusto.

Their ideas of "The Bagheads" and "The Overweight Lovers" don't pan out, so when Gusto gets busted during a drug deal, Albert assumes the role of MC Gusto, Otis becomes Stab Master Arson and Rip becomes Dead Mike.

Their group, called CB4 for "Cell Block Four," now stands for degradation of women, empty sex and everything else that makes Tipper Gore wake up in the middle of the night,

dripping cold sweat and screaming "SUPPORT FAMILY VALUES!"

We also have hilarious appearances by Chris Elliot as a weenie rapumentary creator and Phil Hartman (also from "Saturday Night Live") as a public-schmoozing political hopeful that tries to use CB4 as a catalyst to get him into office.

Director Tamra Davis brings a great piece of work to the screen, and provides lots of laughs for the moviegoer, but some parts of the movie are unnecessarily obscene.

The movie has an impressive list of cameos, including Ice-T, Butthole Surfers and Shaquille O'Neal. The film also has a great soundtrack, with contributions from P.M. Dawn, Ice Cube and Public Enemy.

With loads of profanity and sexual situations, "CB4" has garnered a well-deserved 'R' rating, and under NO circumstances should you take the kiddies to this sucker, no matter how "mature" or "seasoned" they may be to such behavior.

A proverbial hoot for the mature moviegoer, "CB4" is worth a look.

— Gerry Beltz

Documentary unveils media, political facade

With "Panama Deception," Barbara Trent and David Kasper offer chilling eyewitness accounts of the 1989 American invasion of Panama and its aftermath.

The film contends that what was common knowledge among Panamanian citizens and journalists hardly made a dent in the coverage the invasion actually received in the American news.

While mainstream media reported a straightforward invasion to capture Gen. Manuel Noriega, the film's witnesses (including policy makers, official spokespersons, and politicians) explain how destruction of Panamanian defenses occurred to give the United States an advantage in renegotiating the Panama Canal treaties.

The film also documents massive devastation of residential areas, as well as U.S.-supervised mass burials of Panamanian citizens.

"The Panama Deception" is showing Thursday only at the Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater. Screenings are at 7 and 9 p.m.