

Hollywood to take on Argentine story

Upset with Madonna as first lady, Peron fans plan to tell truth

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — As if an unflattering Broadway play weren't enough: Now Hollywood's plan to cast Madonna as Evita Peron has Argentina crying for its legendary first lady.

The president is outraged. The archbishop calls it blasphemy. A local filmmaker has launched his own production, with official support, to set the record straight.

"Evita was a pioneering feminist, not the prostitute others would have you believe," said movie producer Victor Bo.

Bo's film, to be called "Evita: The True Story," is backed by President Carlos Menem, who is a Peronist, and will feature a squeaky-voiced Argentine soap opera star, Andrea del Boca. Production is to begin in March.

While the Broadway musical "Evita" painted the second and most famous wife of dictator Juan Peron as a corrupt populist who slept her way to power, the Argentine production

will promote her image as a champion of the masses.

To many Argentines, Eva Peron was nothing less than a saint.

They didn't take kindly to the Broadway musical, which was banned in Argentina. And for many of the former first lady's fervent admirers, casting Madonna in a film version of "Evita" only adds insult to injury.

"A total and utter disgrace," said President Menem. The Argentine version, he said, will be "a film about the real Evita, not like one of those fakes people who know nothing about her life have been making."

Antonio Quarraccino, archbishop of Buenos Aires, called Madonna "pornographic and blasphemous — an insult to Argentine women."

The Hollywood version of "Evita," directed by Alan Parker, is set to go into production in January, and will be filmed mostly in Budapest, Hungary, a decision that producers said was based on budgetary and not political concerns.

In 1993, Menem granted American filmmaker Oliver Stone access to the presidential office to film his own version of "Evita." The president

changed his mind a week later after many Peronists protested. Stone later scrapped the project.

Few subjects split Argentines as passionately as Evita's controversial legacy.

Admirers still hang her portrait in their homes and her name is evoked during political and union rallies. But detractors are inclined to agree with composer Andrew Lloyd Webber, who before his musical's 1979 opening said Evita was "easily the most unpleasant character I've written about."

Eva Duarte met Peron in 1945, as he was preparing for the presidency and a decade after she came to the capital to be a stage and radio actress.

They were married a year later, and almost immediately, Evita became a heroine to the poor masses and blue-collar workers. She helped get women the vote and her Eva Peron Foundation built schools and hospitals and bought gifts for needy children.

All state workers were obliged to contribute two days' salary per year to her charity, money her detractors claim was siphoned off for private use.

Jury acquits man who beat dog after it attacked his 1-year-old

SANTA ANA, Calif. — A man who beat a dog with a baseball bat after it mauled his 1-year-old son was acquitted Monday of an animal cruelty charge.

Orange County Municipal Court jurors deliberated nearly three hours before finding in favor of defendant Alan Roberts, 30, who threw his arms up in joy at the verdict, then covered his face with his hands and sobbed.

"We have a dead dog and a son who will never be the same," Roberts said later. "Irregardless of the verdict, those things will never change."

The toddler, Andrew, and his mother were waiting outside a coffee shop on July 30 when the loose dog attacked the boy, grabbing his face. Andrew, a child model, needed 60 stitches to close the wounds.

Roberts testified last week that when he got home from the hospital,

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ALAN ROBERTS

Acquitted of an animal cruelty charge

he took a baseball bat and went looking for the dog, an Akita-Chow mix. He found it tied up outside the home of owner April Wyld.

Roberts admitted beating the dog, which later had to be put down. A

witness said he clubbed the animal 10 to 15 times. Roberts said he lost control.

"I was an emotional wreck. It's not my normal nature," Roberts testified.

He had faced a maximum penalty of one year in prison.

Prosecutor Tammy Spurgeon said she wasn't surprised at the verdict.

"We knew that the jurors would have a lot of sympathy for the defendant," she said. "I'm a little bit disappointed because I think a crime was committed."

The case polarized the neighborhood and attracted attention around the world. The Roberts family had to move out of their home for a while because of angry calls.

Roberts said his son still wakes up screaming "dog, dog."

Paper shortage, high prices plague schools

BOSTON — At the Peter Fitzpatrick Elementary School, teachers get in line twice each day. Once in the morning and again at noon, they come for their daily ration of paper.

At another Massachusetts school, students write on the back of scrap paper donated by Nynex.

Around the country, paper has doubled in price over the last year, and some schools — especially in smaller districts where there's less room for budget maneuvering — are hurting for something to write on.

"In business, the paper price is passed on to the business, the business passes it on to their customers, but we can't pass it on to anybody," said Kathy Corley, principal of Saltonstall Elementary School in Salem. "You can't say, 'Kids, bring in another \$1 because paper prices have gone up.'"

At the Fitzpatrick school in Pepperell, third-grade teacher Nancy Beringer said the shortage is making it hard for her pupils to practice their

penmanship because they're not getting enough practice on the wide-lined sheets usually handed out by teachers.

"Their P's go into their L's, so it gets frustrating," she said.

Industry officials said a boom in the global economy, combined with a slowdown in the number of paper plants being built, has driven paper prices up sharply.

The paper market last boomed in 1989, and companies rushed to build new plants, but the recession began just as many of the plants began operating, causing prices to plummet.

"We invested a lot in capacity because the economy was very good, and then we went in the tank," said Barry Polsky, spokesman for the American Forest and Paper Association, a trade group in Washington. "So now we have to pay off the loans we took out to open those plants" instead of building new ones.

In constant 1994 dollars, copier paper cost an average of \$1,028 a ton

in 1989, \$700 a ton in 1992 and about \$1,160 this year, said Harold Cody, a San Francisco analyst who publishes the Pulp and Paper Forecaster newsletter.

Administrators at Potrero Middle School in San Francisco said a case of such paper, or about 18 pounds, jumped from \$16.97 in October last year to \$35.24 a case this fall.

Victor Atkins, principal of the Cashman School in Amesbury, said this year's order was never filled by his supplier, so he appealed to parents and businesses.

At the Fitzpatrick school, paper for copy machines — the kind schools are shortest on — is locked in a closet and Principal Joyce Smith rations out eight reams a day.

"I had to buy a lot of paper on my own. We cut back a lot on some of the things we have to do," said Linda Dee, a third-grade teacher.

News

in a

Minute



Park police put crowd at 400,000

WASHINGTON — Although organizers of Monday's "Million Man March" claimed to have met and exceeded that goal, the official count by the U.S. Park Police put the number at 400,000.

Even at the smaller number, it still becomes the fourth largest demonstration crowd on record. The largest, 600,000, was at the Vietnam War moratorium rally, Nov. 15, 1969.

The U.S. Park Police arrived at the 400,000 figure after comparing photographs made of the rally site from a helicopter every two hours beginning at 8 a.m.

"They compared the pictures on a grid and came up with the number through a mathematical formula," said police Lt. Philip Kramer. "The formula is based on Metro (subway) ridership, buses and other ways of getting to the site."

The Rev. Benjamin Chavis, co-organizer of the march, said at one point that the crowd had reached 2 million.

Kramer said the park service estimate covered the entire day and did not represent any peak time.

Other big demonstration crowds included 500,000 each at an anti-Vietnam War rally in 1971 and the National Organization for Women rally in 1992, and 300,000 at the 20th anniversary civil rights march in 1983.

A Solidarity Day labor march in 1981 drew 260,000 by official estimate and the throng at the Lincoln Memorial for Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech numbered 250,000.

Three dead in Pennsylvania fire

ROUSEVILLE, Pa. — An explosion and fire rocked a Pennzoil Co. refinery Monday, killing three people and injuring four, one critically. Tanks of naphtha solvent and fuel oil ignited, said Steve Hickman, a company spokesman. The fire was put out two hours later.

Black smoke billowing from the plant in Rouseville, about 75 miles north of Pittsburgh, could be seen for miles.

The cause of the blast was not immediately known.

A 50-year-old man listed was listed in critical condition at Pittsburgh's Mercy Hospital with burns over 60 percent of his body.

The dead were not immediately identified.

About 200 people work at the oil refinery.

Rouseville is a few miles south of Titusville, where the Drake Oil Well — the first oil well in the country — was built in 1859.

Man questioned in bombing will enter plea

LOS ANGELES — A man who was questioned in the Oklahoma City bombing told a judge Monday he will plead guilty to two unrelated charges of resisting arrest and weapons violations.

Steven Garrett Colbern, 35, was arrested May 12 in the former gold-mining town of Oatman, Ariz., by federal agents investigating western Arizona areas believed frequented by bombing suspect Timothy McVeigh.

A search of Colbern's bedroom and pickup truck turned up a number of weapons and two bags of ammonium nitrate, the type of common fertilizer used in making the Oklahoma City bomb.

McVeigh and Terry Nichols are charged with murder and conspiracy in the April 19 bombing of the federal building that killed 169 people and injured more than 500. Both face the death penalty if convicted.

Colbern, a former DNA researcher at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, told U.S. District Judge Audrey Collins he will enter his pleas on Nov. 6.

13-year-old runaway killed at pay phone

LOS ANGELES — A 13-year-old runaway was killed by a stray gang bullet as she stood at a pay phone just minutes after calling her mother to say she wanted to come home.

The mother, Maria Macias, arrived at the phone to pick up her daughter just as the ambulance was pulling away.

"She was really scared about the neighborhood she was in," Macias said Monday, fighting back tears. "I got there late."

Her daughter, Wendy Macias, died Sunday at a hospital.

Wendy left home Saturday evening. She called police Sunday afternoon, and they put her temporarily into a children's home, said Deputy Benita Nichol.

She left hours later, and called her mother from a nearby pay phone, Nichol said. The deputy didn't know why the girl ran away, or why she left the children's home.

After speaking with her mother, Wendy called a friend. During that conversation, a gang member took a shot at two rivals on the street and hit Wendy instead, Nichol said.

Detectives were looking for an 18-year-old suspect, she said. His name was not released.

Mother delivers son on State Fair midway

DALLAS — Erica Vann took something away from the State Fair of Texas, but it wasn't a blue ribbon or Kewpie doll.

No, she came away with a baby son, delivered on the State Fair midway.

Diante Thomas arrived shortly before 1 p.m. Monday while his father and 8-year-old brother were riding the nearby Space Loop.

"When we got off, she wasn't there," the surprised dad, Gregory Thomas, said. "We looked for her for two hours before I finally called her mother and found out what happened."

While father and son were sharing an exciting ride, Ms. Vann was having some excitement of her own. She went into labor, and paramedics arrived just in time to deliver the 5-pound, 12-ounce boy.

"We were trying to coach her through it when she basically said, 'It's coming!'" medic Stuart Grant said.

Mother and son were whisked away to Presbyterian Hospital, where both were good condition, Thomas said.

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