

Do not read any reviews of 'Blair Witch'

(Not even this one)

BY MARK BALDRIDGE
Staff writer

Do not read this review. Drop the paper like a neurotic boyfriend and go see "The Blair Witch Project." Do it now. I'm not kidding; why are you still here?

... OK, so you don't know what's good for you. You think you know better. All right, only don't blame me if you're left out like a cheese in the wind just because you can't resist being "in the know."

The "Blair Witch Project" is either the scariest documentary ever blown up from video or one of the worst films ever made.

The problem with that is, it can't

be both. I mean, can it? But there it is, and you sort of have to decide for yourself.

Ugly, with the production values of your cousin's wedding reception footage, "Blair Witch" will give you a headache. It will cross your eyes, stuck, like your mother always warned you.

But that's because the movie was shot by actors, hiking into the woods, where they were scared to death by sadistic film makers like some kind of grotesque game of Dungeons and Dragons.

This mess of amateur filmmaking poses as the results of amateur filmmakers' messy efforts to document a local legend by hiking into the woods where they are scared to death by sadistic ghosts. Or something. You know, witches.

You can see how the brilliant self-referential nature of the film might have had a little something to do with the possibility of it being taken for the

real thing — except for the discovery of certain glaring inconsistencies which can be left to the discerning viewer.

But you don't absolutely have to believe the film is real to buy into it; after a few minutes of the outrageously bad cinematography it's not too hard to suspend a little disbelief.

And the funny, quirky, personable moments at the beginning help you accept the characters for who they seem to assume they are.

Once you're sufficiently hypnotized, the film takes on the eerie quality of ghost stories told late at night, under the covers, an illicit flashlight burning long after lights out at your best friend's sleep over.

A quality which has nothing to do with belief, but rather with a certain tone of voice. The calm, almost neutral, detached and serious, instantly recognizable tone one adopts when beginning a story that "really happened" to a friend of a friend of a friend, right

around here, just a few years ago.

The kind of story that ends, like this film, with a short, sharp, shock.

So now you know, you just had to read ahead, skip to the end, look behind the curtain. Well good for you, if that's your cuppa' joe.

Now drop the paper like an ugly bug, find yourself an innocent, borrow your nephew and his friend, anyone who doesn't know, and take them to the movie.

The Facts

Title: "The Blair Witch Project"
Stars: Heather Donohue, Joshua Leonard, Michael Williams
Director: Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sanchez
Rating: R (language, horror)
Running Time: 1:27
Grade: A (for effort, at least)
Five Words: Grownup ghost stories for cheap

'Dick' favors cute factor over historical facts

BY MARK BALDRIDGE
Staff writer

Do not read this review. Drop the paper like a neurotic boyfriend and go see "The Blair Witch Project."

Unless it's still sold out with people waiting to get in, that same old hassle. Or maybe you're afraid?

Then "Dick" might be more your speed, fraidy cat. Nothing to be scared of here, ya' wuss.

Just two cute girls in their pajamas bringing down the leader of the free world, baby!

Of all the 1970s deconstruction flicks, this is just about the most deconstructed; nothing, and I mean nothing about this film bears any resemblance to the facts in the strange case of Richard M. Nixon and his arch nemesis, "Deep Throat."

Woodward don't look like Woodward, Bernstein don't look like Bernstein. You can't tell the players without a scorecard but don't be a'scared of that either (gee, you're a wimp) cause each character will step up to the mic and introduce him/herself, just in case you don't know dick.

For those of you who slept through American History in junior High (or had the off-season coach who lingered lovingly over "Doubleyou Doubleyou Two" and never really got around to that messy decade) the 1970's were troubled times.

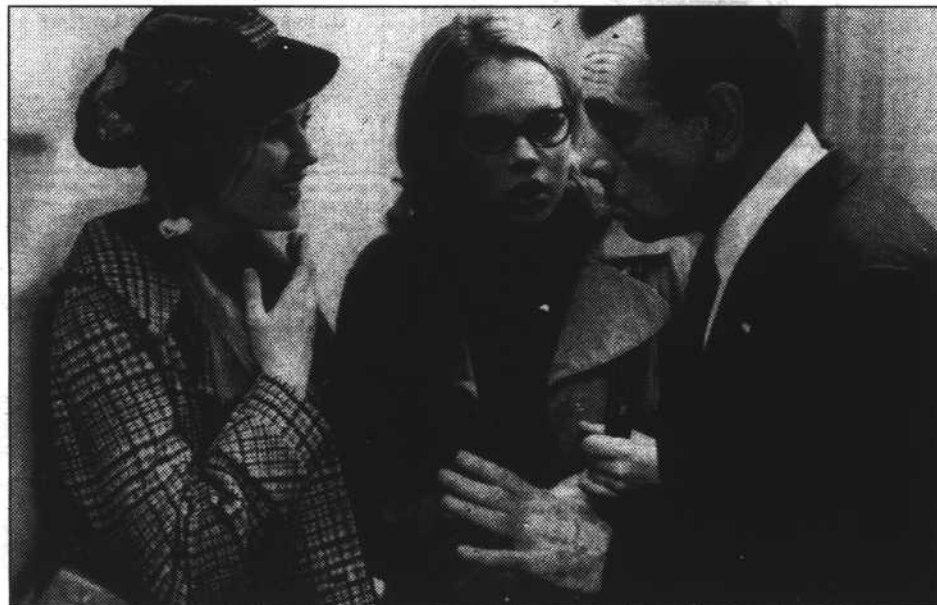
Vietnam was a far away place where American boys left their limbs and minds, or died trying. The folks at home watched it on TV, in color, all green and gray and crimson.

It was scary, if you paid any attention, and a lot of kids (like me, I'm that old) tried to imagine the Viet Cong were like, you know, Nazis and tried to hate them.

But that's not what this movie is about.

Then of course, there was Watergate, a vague ministerial crisis which preempted scads of daytime television, (there were only four stations in those days, if you counted PBS) interrupting the sacred after-school cartoons.

And maybe that's what caused the social unrest that lead young people to pelt National Guardsmen with marshmallows or very small rocks, getting themselves shot down for their trou-



ble. But this movie isn't about that either.

This movie is about two cute girls in their pajamas — and just entire Goodwills full of the most tripped-out clothes, but all brand new, without yet a hint of funk — who stumble into a job as presidential dog walkers in the nick of time to save the world from war, pestilence and famine, staving off the latter with "pot" cookies which they toss like Scooby Snacks into the mouths of waiting dignitaries.

Michelle Williams ("Dawson's Creek") is cute. Kirsten Dunst ("Interview with a Vampire," "Wag the Dog") is cute. (They play the two cute girls.)

The send up of "All the President's Men" is cute.

The dream sequence, where Nixon (Dan Hedaya — "The Usual Suspects," "Nixon") rides a white stallion on the beach, is cute.

Checkers is cute.

The whole ding dong movie is cute, and not the least bit scary.

So if you like laughing at America, or you're just afraid of the big bad Blair Witch ... well ... you know.

COURTESY PHOTO
KIRSTEN DUNST, Michelle Williams are a pair of teens who become entangled in the Watergate Scandal and Dan Hedaya is embattled President Richard M. Nixon in the '70s satire "Dick."

The Facts

Title: "Dick"
Stars: Michelle Williams, Kirsten Dunst, Dan Hedaya, Will Ferrell, Bruce McCulloch
Director: Andrew Fleming
Rating: PG-13 (God knows why)
Grade: C+
Five Words: All the President's ditzy chicks