

Sound bites

Movie experience can be more interesting than film itself



Roberts and Richard Gere should have known better. No man was there by himself, except me. And I wasn't looking for a boyfriend.

But every girl hung on for dear life. A few were enveloped into each other with their arms.

I can hear my mother saying, "Oh, for God's sake! How do they even walk like that? It's ridiculous."

Exactly, Mom.

It is a phenomenon I cannot understand, this latching on. A few of the guys, they're cool with it - in the sense that they, apparently, enjoy looking like Siamese twins.

But every other guy flails outward, like a scarecrow in the wind, trying to do one of those fake leans toward the fern plants in hopes of breaking her claw grip, only to find the time has now come for him to pay for the tickets, which he must do, with his left hand alone, as he continues to be one with his girlfriend next door.

"Two please," he says, shoving not one but two student IDs in front of the teller, and the exact money, \$9, on the counter.

He has done this before, I thought. Since then, I'm sure he's done it again.

The Cinema Twin for "Wing Commander"

It's the worst movie I've ever seen. And this sucker in front of me... this is the worst moviegoer I've known.

He was at "A Civil Action," and he sat in front of me then, too, with

his Green Bay Packers gear on. And he coughed. And coughed. And coughed. And hawked up spit. And coughed. And cleared his throat. And coughed. And took off his hat, revealing a greasy muss that resembled hair. And he coughed.

And then his friend, God bless her, went and got him something to drink. Which must have went down the air tunnel, because he coughed.

At "Wing Commander," he made it through about half an hour, all the way up until the point when the movie's stupidity went into overdrive. And then he coughed. And hawked. And because he was alone, he did not get himself his own drink. Because I refuse to walk out of movies, no matter how bad (or somehow I'd feel cheated), my principles were put to the test.

My principles won.

The Plaza 4 for "Carrie 2: The Rage"

I watched this movie at the wrong projection size, which squished everything on the screen, for the first 30 minutes. So crazy Carrie weighed about 400 pounds, along with every other actor. High school can be so cruel.

A man, with his wife, shook his

fist at the projector behind him.

"What is this?" he shrieked. "Some kind of joke?"

"No," I replied. "It's 'Carrie 2: The Rage.'"

"Boy, you're a funny guy." He scowled and picked up his coat. I had to concur.

20 Grand in Omaha for "Titanic"

Not every movie do I see by myself. Once in a very great while, I tag along with my parents. In reality, it's the other way around.

My parents are talkers in the movie theater. Not bothersome. Just talkers. And movers. They shift in their seats every 20 seconds. And they get to the theater 30 minutes early, so you see the commercial for pool cleaners so many times you've memorized every word.

During the movie, they nudge every five minutes. Popcorn? Sip of soda? No. Five minutes later, same thing. And eventually, you'd better take some, unless you expect the five-minute nudge for the rest of the movie.

But the talking, it can kill me. Because they expect an answer from me that I cannot give. Talking to my parents about these things is some kind of guessing game, a game I

cannot win, do not choose to play, but somehow get wrangled into every time we go.

A sample from the titanic "Titanic:"

Dad: "Lemme ask you a question."

Me: "Yeah?"

Dad: (pointing to Leonardo DiCaprio onscreen) "What woman does he look like?"

"What woman?"

"Yes - What woman does Leonardo DiCaprio look like?"

"I have no idea."

"Just guess."

"I can't guess. I don't really... I don't really care."

"Just look at him."

"I have no idea. I do not know."

"Can you see it in his features? He has womanly features."

"He looks like Leonardo

DiCaprio."

"He looks sorta like a woman - he'd make a good-looking woman."

"Can we talk about this after the movie?"

"Just look at him."

"I don't know, I don't know, I don't know. Just tell me."

"Sharon Stone."

"Sharon Stone?"

"If he was a woman, he'd look just like Sharon Stone."

"My God, are you serious?"

"He looks just like Sharon Stone."

Meanwhile, my mom nudged from the other side for a popcorn check.

And Sharon Stone and Kate Winslet shared a lesbian kiss.

Life is about going a few things alone.

And for me this thing is movies, which is one of the more fascinating things to go the lone route on because everyone else... is with somebody else.

AMC Oakview 24 in Omaha for "Any Given Sunday"

In line, two in front of me, both boys, college age. And both have the puffed-out jackets. Homies.

Boy 1: "So she's hot?" He's picking his nose a little bit, his head tilted away from his friend, toward me. Nice view.

Boy 2: "Hot."

"Didya get on her?"

"Not yet."

"So how hot is she?"

"Hot."

"How hot?"

"I don't know, she's hot."

"Does she have big tits?"

"No, not really. I mean, they're good, but they're not big. Not Jenny big."

"Like, uh, Tara's?"

"Yeah."

"Good ass?"

"Very good ass."

"So she's hot?"

"Yeah, hot."

"That's cool."

"Yeah."

They buy tickets for "Any Given Sunday," a football movie. They go to the concessions, and they get jumbo popcorn, jumbo soda and jumbo Milk Duds. God bless them, they shared. And slapped hands several times during the pigskin carnage. Men. Gotta love 'em.

The Lincoln for "Runaway Bride"

I read once, in Cosmopolitan or something, that if a girl hangs on to her boyfriend's hand all night at a party, it's a message beamed out to every other unattached girl at the party: "This is my man. Stay away."

And so the girls in line for Julia



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This is your brain on politics

Front-running presidential candidates both used drugs; both condemn drug use



On Monday, the Iowa caucus gave us two front-running presidential candidates for the New Hampshire primary in February. The two leaders chosen, George W. Bush and Al Gore, have both been elected to public office multiple times. Both have also taken an immense amount of criticism from the public - Bush for his befuddling answers on foreign policy and Gore for his stale persona.

They have one other thing in common: both have used illegal drugs (Bush, cocaine, and Gore, marijuana in Vietnam), and both could have been put in jail if they were caught. They join quite a few others.

Twenty-five percent of the world's overall population has tried or uses marijuana. Of the nearly 287 million people in America, more than 71 million of these people have tried marijuana. In the past four years, studies show that 41 to 48 percent of teens use or have experimented with marijuana.

Coincidentally, there have been more than 22 million marijuana arrests in the past 30 years. The number of arrests has climbed, and now there is an average of more than 500,000 arrests per year. If Gore or Bush had been caught and convicted, they would not be eligible for the positions they are running for now.

These high figures of American drug use are often cited by organizations, such as "Project For a Drug Free America" and D.A.R.E., to cause alarm among the people and for the government to gain support for "the war on drugs."

The U.S. government spends billions of dollars trying to keep drugs out of the country each year. The amount of drug seizures in this country has gone up, but officials are not

sure they have made any progress because they "don't know how much is actually coming into the country."

But, because half the population desires at one point or another to have marijuana in this country, the drug keeps coming in. And thus, the people who are buying the marijuana are getting hit with a double-edged sword.

Not only are people paying for the marijuana, but their taxes are paying to make sure the marijuana is not getting to them. Not to mention these people are also paying for prisons that keep a high number of convicted drug users and dealers in jail. Perhaps they are making an investment in themselves if they ever were to get caught.

Yet with billions of dollars being spent to keep marijuana out of the country and nearly half of America at one time or another wanting it in, there has not been a mass movement to change popular thinking on Drug Culture.

Perhaps it's a good thing that America's children aren't told to get high after school, but it's still true

that most of the population never receives any information on why people do use marijuana. Instead, we are told to "be smart, don't start," and we are shown commercials, such as the "This is your brain on drugs" advertisement.

It is not until later as a public that we learn writers like Hunter S. Thompson, Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman and others have experimented with drugs. In fact, the more we delve into the subject, the more we know that drug use has influenced much of the writing, movies, architecture and art we know and love in today's society.

Drug culture, though it involves such a high populace, is still perceived as an underworld that much of the time escapes the eye of the U.S. government. Many people still think of the average drug dealer as the man in the dark trench coat hiding behind the bushes, when in fact it is their neighbor, classmate, coworker or even church-goer.

But even so, America as a whole wants to continue to shoot itself in

the foot, and the majority wants to give way to the minority and disallow marijuana in this country. For the most part, the vocal minority doesn't tolerate any pro-drug movement.

Instead, beliefs, such as the gateway drug theory, (which even Partnership for a Drug Free America admits has no validity), are allowed to be spread to an uneducated audience who is told to be ashamed of its own actions.

Even Bush and Gore are condemning drugs when both have experimented with drugs in the past, yet both think they are qualified for the highest office in this country, and most likely, one will be elected.

But even though the candidates condemn drug use, a known drug user will be in the president's office, and almost every other office in this country. Why doesn't anyone want to know this?

(Some statistics for this column were taken from the Web sites www.potsmokers.com and www.partnershipfordrugfreeameri-

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