



Alpine Holiday Takes A Death

By Michael Gallagher

New York (NC) — "Five Days One Summer" (Warners), produced and directed by veteran filmmaker Fred Zinnemann and based upon a story by Kay Boyle, is a genteel story of incest, set 50 years ago against the stunning background of the Swiss Alps.

Douglas (Sean Connery), a wealthy Scottish physician, comes to a little village in the Swiss Alps in 1932 on what seems to be a skiing vacation with his young wife, Kate (newcomer Betsy Brantley). The austere innkeeper (Gerard Bahr) and the villagers look somewhat askance at the spectacle of a man in his 50s married to a beautiful young woman who seems no more than 20, especially since the happy couple spend so much time in their room. The good burghers would react with considerably more dismay, however, if they could see the flashbacks that Zinnemann soon treats us to.

Kate, it turns out, is not Douglas's wife but his niece — and not by marriage either. She is his brother's daughter. Kate has adored her handsome uncle since

she was a little girl, and she took it very badly when, after a decade in India, he returned to Scotland with a wife. Passion flared between the two, and the result was the deception of a supposedly innocent ski trip where they were to meet some friends of Douglas who would have offspring Kate's age. (As with everything else, it seems, it's much easier for the rich, rather than the poor, to carry off incest in style.)

Douglas and Kate, however, have consciences, a radical departure for a movie these days. They know they're doing wrong, and they also know that there is no way out for them. And if internal remorse is not enough, they find themselves surrounded by intimations of morality and mortality.

Johann (Lambert Wilson), their handsome young guide isn't reluctant to show his disapproval of the age difference, and so he becomes downright condemnatory when Kate — driven by a desire for exposure, for Johann, for both? — goes so far as to tell him they're an adulterous couple.

And then in the course of a climb they come across the body of a man frozen in the ice for 40 years. He had disappeared the day before he was to marry. The villagers disinter him from the glacier and a white-haired woman comes to identify her lost bridegroom, preserved as he was while she, faithful to his memory all these years, has grown old.

Kate decides she wants to end it, but Douglas is adamant in refusing until tragedy overtakes all three of the main characters in the course of a final climb.

"Five Days One Summer" is beautiful to look at, and its depiction of climbing techniques used 50 years ago is rather interesting. The always-dependable Connery is very good, and Miss Brantley and Wilson are both extremely attractive and do well enough in what they have to do. The main problem is that neither they nor Connery have enough to do and the pace of the film is much too slow.

Zinnemann and screenwriter Michael Austin don't go deeply enough into motives in this essentially three-character drama. The flashbacks tell us too much, but the events in the present are often too cryptically staged. How much, for example, are Kate and Johann drawn to each other? Is Johann's moral condemnation really as disinterested as he makes it out to be, or does he want Kate for himself? We never know, and as a result, the impact of the film is far less than it should be, and there is a lingering sense of frustration.

Still, it's hard not to have a good deal of positive feeling for a film which has such good acting and which acknowledges in no-nonsense fashion the existence of good and evil. Also welcome is the reserve with which Zinnemann handles the love scenes. The Catholic Conference has classified it A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

MOVIES

Still of the Night A Slack Effort

By Michael Gallagher

New York (NC) — "In the Still of the Night," Robert Benton's first movie since his immensely successful, much overrated "Kramer v. Kramer," is a Hitchcock-style suspense melodrama, complete with a mysterious and chilly blonde — in this case, the talented Meryl Streep. The result, though slick and beautifully photographed by Nestor Almendros, is much less likely to be a popular success. This time Benton, in collaboration with David Newman, wrote the script himself and didn't have a shrewdly sentimental novel to draw on.

Sam Rice (Roy Scheider), a psychiatrist somewhat at emotional loose ends after a divorce, finds himself irresistibly drawn to a beautiful, if obviously overwrought, young woman named Brooke Reynolds (Miss Streep) who, Sam has the best imaginable reasons for believing, may have murdered one of his patients, a cultured, middle-aged philanderer named George Bynum (Josef Sommer), found with his throat slit.

Brooke, who was one of the dead man's many conquests, shows up at Sam's office with a watch left at her apartment by the victim and asks Sam to return it to his wife. As it happens, Sam knows an awful lot about Brooke before he sees her, an obvious echo of Otto Preminger's "Laura," one of the many films that Benton and Newman have plundered. Bynum talked about her constantly in his sessions with Sam, obsessed, it seems with a desire to excite the psychiatrist's interest in her, an obsession that springs from plot considerations, not

characterization, and which Benton and Newman never feel obliged to explain.

One look at Brooke, and Sam is a goner. He withholds evidence from the police, he plunges headlong into peril, and he even talks back to his mother (Jessica Tandy in a throwaway role), who tells him, "Sam, you're putting yourself in a very dangerous position," as sensible people always advise the hero in Hitchcock movies, never to be heeded.

There are many problems with Benton's film. We can't expect great characterization or a persuasive sense of reality in this kind of movie, but we have a right to expect clever dialogue and a good plot, and "In the Still of the Night" fails to deliver. Nor does it abide by the rules of the genre.

In schlock horror films we've grown accustomed to apparently quite dead characters suddenly rising to strike one more, but when in a

supposedly sophisticated film we see somebody to all intents and purposes dispatched by a knife-wielder demonstrated to be quite proficient in this line of work, we have a right to cry foul if the victim suddenly comes back on board in blatant deus ex machina style.

Meryl Streep does very well given the limitations of her role, not falling into the excesses she committed in a similarly overwrought and underwritten role in "The French Lieutenant's Woman." Roy Scheider gives the one-dimensional role of the psychiatrist more warmth and appeal than it deserves. Josef Sommer comes off the best of all, however, in his flashback appearances as the victim, a role that suffers least from the slackness of the film.

There is some violence, but it is restrained. The U.S. Catholic Conference has classified it A-II, adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG, parental guidance advised.

'Creepshow' Is Offensive

"Creepshow," the anthology film of five crude, unimaginative horror stories written by Stephen King and directed by George Romero may not be the most loathsome and sickening movie ever made — Romero's X-rated "Dawn of the Dead" is worse — but it will do nicely, thank you. It features such touches as a rotting corpse twisting a woman's head totally around, millions of cockroaches swarming out of a dead man's mouth, a man in agony after being covered with a green growth blowing off his head with a shotgun, and a monster clawing away half of a man's head. All this is supposed to be a bit funny, by the way, as well as horrifying. Pity the poor actors trapped in such garbage — Hal Holbrook, Fritz Weaver, and E.G. Marshall, for example. Because of its graphic gore and violence, it has been classified by the U.S. Catholic Conference as O, morally offensive. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R, restricted.

BOOKS

Waging Peace, edited by Jim Wallis. Harper and Row (San Francisco, 1982) 295 pp., \$4.95.

By James E. Milford
NC News Service

The publication of this unsparing collection of articles on the struggle to abolish nuclear weapons arrives just in time for the ripening of the peace ground swell, that, at last, is taking hold in American churches.

Jim Wallis, editor of Sojourners, a magazine devoted to religion, has pulled together 27 tough voices of outrage, blending thereby medical, technical, moral and evangelical strains into a tidy unwordy handbook.

Here we have both old and new guard peace wagers. Tireless Jim Douglass of Ground Zero at the Trident submarine base stands with later recruit, tax-resisting Bishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle. Grizzled laborite Sidney Lens shares pages with a former Lockheed missile engineer, Bob Aldridge. Peace strugglers will recognize veterans William Stringfellow, Gordon Cosby, John Howard Yoder and Akahiro Takahashi among a felicitous choice of critic-activists who have paid the price of vilification, loneliness or

jailing which often comes to those who practice peace-making without guns.

Wallis casts his effort into a framework of 12 reflections which accommodate neatly to study, church, seminary or action groups — all of which are guaranteed to jolt any reasonable participant.

This is not bedside reading. It is probably best digested in a chapel, or on one's knees.

Wallis estimates that to provide adequate food, water, health, housing and education for everyone in the world would cost \$17 billion a year. The world, he says, spends that much in two weeks on its military. Meanwhile, as a billion people suffer worldwide, the Congressional Budget Office reports that between 1982 and 1986 the country will spend \$1.6 trillion on so-called "defense."

All contributors stress the fact that we have acquired means for our total suicide, a situation which Wallis says "seems no longer to shock anyone... We have allowed our faith and security in God to be overcome by fear, the greatest enemy of faith and its final contradiction."

Just as slavery challenged Christians in the 1800s, the

arms race now challenges everything that churchly people say they believe about Jesus Christ.

Believing in spite of the evidence around us, and watching that evidence shape peoples' lives is what this book is all about. It is a sober but rousing antidote to those who make their living by peddling what Jim Douglass calls "despair in Jesus' name."

Wallis' 12-page appendix is cause for optimism. Its listings of national research and lobby groups is impressive, none so more than the evidence that business people are realizing that bombs kill bankers, too. Business Executives Move (BEM) is promoting the idea that the current rash of bankruptcies, suicides, inflation and alcoholism is related directly to Pentagon-madness.

BEM members are telling church groups: "Businessmen unite — you've got nothing to lose but high interest rates." The leading light of BEM has actually declared that "people in the inner city have already been nuked."

The peace wagers have breached the barricades.

(Milford, educator and lay theologian, has long been interested in the peace movement.)

TELEVISION

Hispanic Group Sets TV Series

Chicago — A weekly half-hour television series, "Nuestra Familia," "Our Family," will be produced by a new national Hispanic television production company, Hispanic Telecommunications Network (HTN).

Announcement of the development was made at the Hispanic Catholic Communication Conference here by Adan Medrano, company president, who said, "HTN will serve the Catholic Church nationally as it ministers to the needs of the Hispanic community through the media of communications."

The series is funded by the Catholic Communication Campaign and several religious organizations including the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. It will air on the Spanish International Network beginning in January.

"This is truly a giant and bold step" for Hispanic Catholics," said Father Virgilio Elizondo, who delivered a major address at the conference and who is the president of the Mexican-American Cultural Center. "It is especially noteworthy because it demonstrates the strength of the lay Hispanic leadership in the Catholic Church."

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