

# Ambitious movies reveal seldom seen worlds

NEW YORK — Kevin Costner makes an impressive directorial debut as a man caught between opposing ways of life in "Dances with Wolves" (Orion).

Arriving at a deserted fort in the final days of the 1860s Dakota Territory Indian wars, Lt. John Dunbar (Costner) maintains a lonely guard with only his trusty horse and a wolf he names Two Socks as company.

Eventually, curious Sioux approach the fort. They are baffled by this white man who shows no fear and dares to enter their settlement with Stands with a Fist, an injured white woman (Mary McDonnell) the tribe adopted as a child. When she reluctantly serves as translator, Dunbar befriends their holy man, Kicking Bird (Graham Greene), and the fierce warrior, Wind in His Hair (Rodney A. Grant).

The lieutenant comes to respect their family values and harmony with nature, and when he joins their buffalo hunt and falls in love with Stands with a Fist he is further bonded to the Sioux people.

The Native Americans call him Dances with Wolves and enlist his help fighting off bloodthirsty Pawnees.

Dunbar's voyage of self-discovery meets a crucial point when the Army finally reaches his fort and he must choose between being a U.S. soldier or a Sioux warrior.

As star, co-producer and director, Costner has crafted a movie of ambitious proportions and excessive length.

Dean Semler's cinematography is exceptional throughout. From shots showing charging buffalo herds to those conveying the intimacy of a firelit tepee, his images are haunting reminders of America's Native American heritage.



Ben Glass/Orion Pictures  
Lieutenant John Dunbar (Kevin Costner) rides out with a Union flag.

The film gives a fresh perspective on this maligned group. Use of a Native American cast and Pawnee and Lakota languages (translated in subtitles) also lend authenticity to the production.

Wild animals play an important part in the movie and Costner's scene feeding a wolf is superb. On screen almost continuously, Costner is a likable everyman who wins over the Native Americans and

audience alike.

The film is too long, however, and a half hour of the more than three hours running time probably could have been trimmed to improve the pace without sacrificing style or panoramic beauty. The attacks by Native Americans are graphic and the violence includes gory, agonizing deaths which may be too much carnage for young adolescents.

On the other hand, the fresh perspective on the role of Native Americans in U.S. history may make it worthwhile for parents and older adolescents to see together.

"Dances with Wolves" is an interesting story, handsomely shot and a noteworthy reversal of the more common red-man-as-bad-guy theme.

Because of gory battlefield violence, minimal, restrained lovemaking and a flash of rear nudity, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents are strongly cautioned that some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

## 'The Krays'

A chilling fact-based drama, "The Krays" (Miramax) tells how twin brothers from humble cockney origins rose to the pinnacle of London's mob world in the '60s.

Born to a fiercely domineering mother (Billie Whitelaw) Ron (Gary Kemp) and Reg (Martin Kemp) become devoted to her, their aunts and grandma. Meanwhile, they treat their weakening father with undisguised contempt.

The two are viciously violent and wrest

control of London's mob-run nightclub world in the most intimidating way possible — they personally execute rivals with razor-sharp sabers.

Although still ridiculed as "movie-star gangsters" for their flashy lifestyle, the Krays are feared by all when they reach the top. Their downfall begins when Reg unravels following the suicide of his young wife (Kate Hardie) and when homosexual Ron is dismissed as a sissy.

After this, even their showy executions of two enemies cannot return them to the top of the mob heap. Instead the sociopaths are arrested and imprisoned.


The ice-cold, dead-eyed Kemp brothers are riveting in director Peter Medak's vision of evil unleashed and finally corralled.

The film methodically tracks their working-class upbringing in an environment where women value their ruthlessness and excessive material possessions.

The director maintains the scary atmosphere that surrounds the hot-headed, unpredictable duo without going to extremes in depicting their lurid killings. However, he may be too understated when he shows their downfall in one mere shot of them in handcuffs. It hardly conveys the fact that each is doing 30 years for murder.

Nevertheless, "The Krays" is a coldly fascinating psychological portrait of twisted twins who at one time were virtual celebrities in London's swinging '60s.

Due to occasional gory violence, homosexual innuendo, intermittent rough language and a flash of nudity, the USCC classification is A-III — adults. The MPAA rating is R — restricted.



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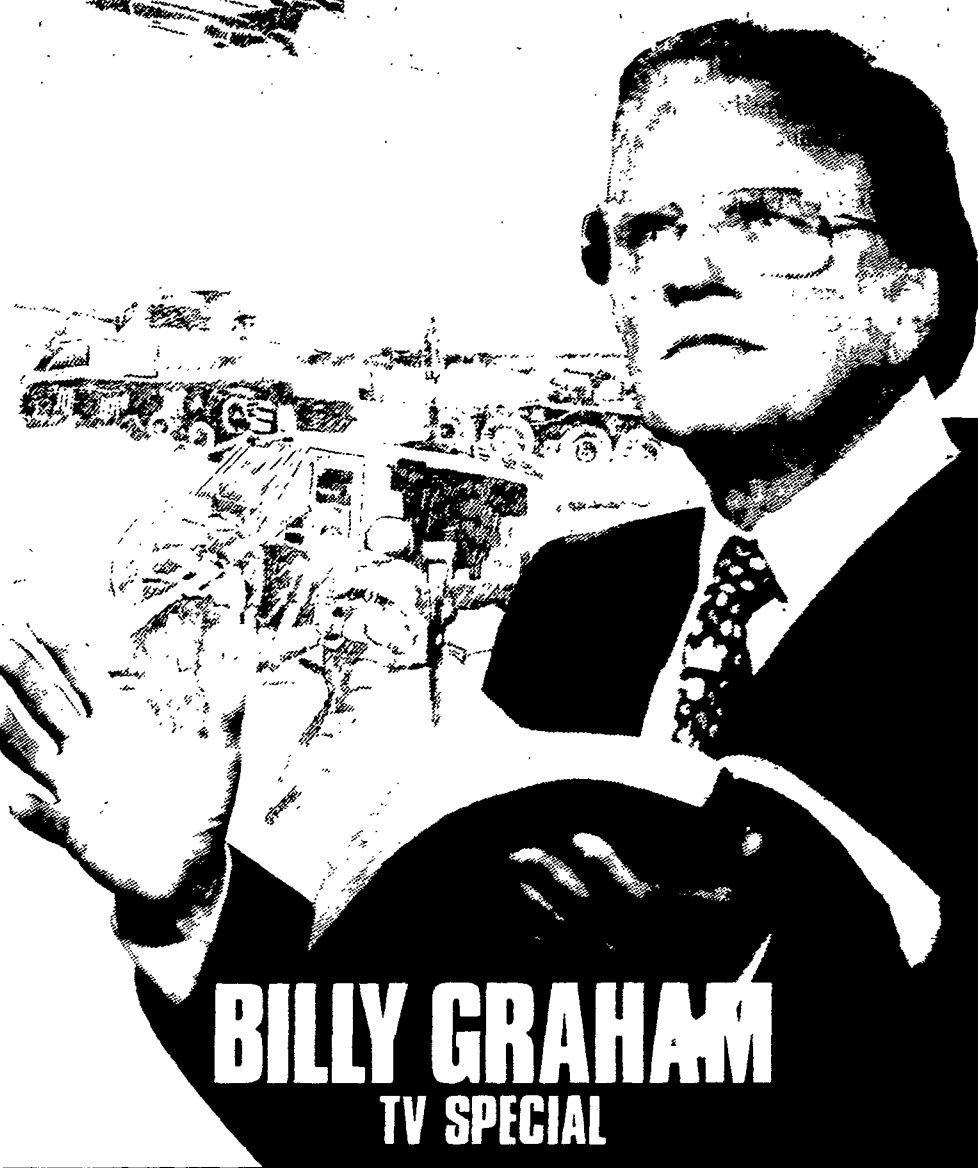
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