

Psychic wins in 'Deathtrap'

by Hope E. Paasch

Battalion Staff
Will the real "Deathtrap" please stand up? Ira Levin's thriller about an aging playwright who is struggling through a dry spell challenges any audience to separate intentions from real intentions, murder from real murder and the play from the real play.

The twisting and often humorous plot unwinds around once-famous playwright Sydney Bruhl, who is played superbly by Leslie Nielsen of "Airplane" and "Police Squad" fame. The curtain opens with Sydney reading a play written by a young man he once taught. Sydney recognizes the play as one which is bound for success and jokingly tells his wife, Myra, that he would kill her instead.

Myra, played by Maggie Jackson, senses that Sydney is seriously considering killing young Clifford Anderson and tries to convince her husband to co-author the play with the youth instead.

Michael Potter is excellent as Clifford, who refuses Myra's suggestion for co-authorship. After Clifford decides to keep the script, Sydney strangles him while Myra screams in horror.

When Sydney stands and sees the corpse lying on the rug, he gives himself one point for neat-

ness and drags the body outside for a quick burial.

As soon as Sydney finishes the burial, Helga Ten Dorp, the neighborhood psychic, comes knocking on the door.

Marie Lillo gives an exceptional and very enjoyable performance as Helga. Lillo's characterization of the colorful and boisterous Helga is flawless and her performance at times overshadows the rest of the cast.

Helga warns Sydney and Myra of the danger she senses and urges them to exercise caution and to watch her on the Merv Griffin Show later that week.

After Helga's departure, the twists in the plot become more humorous, more complicated and more unpredictable. Clifford isn't dead, or at least not yet. He returns from the grave and beats Sydney to death and scares Myra into a fatal heart attack. But Sydney isn't really dead — he and Clifford were conspiring from the beginning murder Myra.

The plot subtly conveys the reason for Myra's murder — Clifford and Sydney are lovers. Before the play ends, Clifford and Sydney kill each other in a quarrel over the publication of Clifford's new play, which happens to be a very accurate account of Myra's murder.

Braniff workers want to retain seniority

United Press International
DALLAS — Members of the only union yet to come to terms with bankrupt Braniff International over a proposed working agreement with Pacific Southwest Airlines said they would rather see their former employer liquidated than be forced to give up their seniority.

Machinists left the talks a week ago and have not returned. The group says it is willing to accept pay and benefit cuts, but members Saturday refused to accept a provision that would force them to lose the seniority they gained at Braniff.

The breakdown of talks between Braniff and the machinists was the only thing blocking Braniff's joint operation agreement with PSA, based in San Diego, Calif. Braniff has asked federal bankruptcy judge John Flowers to void the machinists' contract at a Nov. 29 hearing.

If the contract is canceled, Braniff could hire nonunion machinists to maintain its fleet of aircraft. But if the tactic fails, Braniff executives admit the joint venture with PSA could be finished.

"I'm for telling them to stick it," said Tom Pickett, a Braniff mechanic for 28 years. "I'd rather see it all go down the drain."

The machinists said they were willing to accept cuts in pay and benefits — but would rather see the liquidation of Braniff rather than accept a

proposal forcing them to lose the seniority they gained with Braniff.

They were sticking to their demands of full seniority because that would assure veteran Braniff machinists a job if PSA reduced its work force. The Braniff machinists all have more than 20 years of experience.

But under the Braniff proposal, Braniff workers with even 40 years of experience would be laid off before any PSA mechanic.

"I'm willing to give 'em a lot to make Braniff go," said G.H. Gray, a mechanic-inspector who worked for the airline for 34 years. "I'll go back under lower pay. But I won't go back without my seniority."

TDC tentative budget half of asked amount

United Press International
AUSTIN — The Texas Department of Corrections has received a tentative budget of \$774.1 million for 1984 and 1985 from the Texas Legislative Budget Board, about half of what prison officials sought.

Prison officials submitted a \$1.3 billion request for the biennium, which was significantly

trimmed in the board's Friday recommendation. The budget board's recommendations will be considered by the full Legislature when it convenes in January.

The TDC, which is the nation's largest prison system, currently is under a court order to ease overcrowding and improve inmate conditions. Much of the

proposed expenditures are aimed at staying in compliance with the court order.

The largest increases in the proposed budget were earmarked to provide more security personnel, expand TDC's agricultural operation, improve medical and mental health care and to step up construction of inmate housing.

The budget board also recommended the Legislature approve an emergency appropriation of \$74 million for use in building two new facilities that could house 3,000 inmates.

Without the emergency appropriation, budget officers said, TDC will have 583 more inmates than beds by the end of fiscal year 1985 and 4,000 of the inmates will be living in tents.

If the emergency appropriation were approved, the staff said, TDC could accommodate all of the prisoners and probably move them out of the tents by the end of 1985.

Gulf chairman predicts rivalry

United Press International
PORT ARTHUR — Flattened demand remaining flat, Lee foresees an equally competitive situation in the chemical industry as nations rich with natural gas feedstocks bank their own petrochemical facilities.

"The petrochemical industry has been impacted severely by the deep economic recession and many companies are losing money today," he said.

"There's going to be some restructuring in the industry with more companies shutting down or selling plants, reducing the number of competitors. They're going to be increased competition from those countries rich in hydrocarbons."

Even so, Lee said, worldwide petrochemical demand is expected to remain flat, the nation will remain dependent on crude oil and natural gas for energy.

Few alternatives appear on the immediate horizon, with the nuclear industry dead in the water and shale oil still unprofitable because of slumping oil prices, Lee said.

He predicted a change in the mix of refined products, with more diesel fuel and less gaso-

line than today, but with overall demand remaining flat.

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Regents

continued from page 1

tem-wide computer facilities.

Texas A&M President Frank E. Vandiver told regents the University is moving toward a computer network that would make all campus computers compatible.

Eventually, this system could be expanded to Prairie View A&M.

System Chancellor Arthur G. Hansen said: "The ... computer situation has been one that we've wrestled with for a long time. We envision a case where we could have a first-class mess."

To avoid that, a committee of computer users has been

formed to study the problem, Hansen said.

More computer topics were on today's agenda for the regents committee of the whole.

Regents will discuss \$360,000 appropriation for purchase and installation of computer software for an online registration system, \$500,000 for the purchase of 128-terminal interactive computing system.

The planning and building committee reconvened at 8 a.m. today to hear the results of a feasibility study on making old Bryan Air Force Base the primary airport for the University and the Brazos Valley.

All committee action is subject to approval of the full board. The formal business meeting scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday in the regents annex at the Memorial Student Center.

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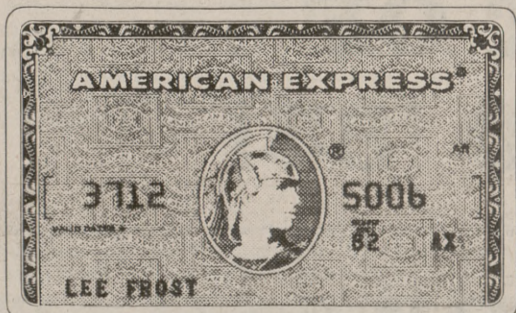
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