

Movies

'The Woman in Red' is fine comedy

By SHAWN BEHLEN
Staff Writer

How far will an ordinary man go to sleep with the most beautiful woman in the world? That is the question Gene Wilder tries to answer in his delightful new comedy, "The Woman In Red."

Teddy Pierce, a happily married man, is innocently parking

his car one morning when a vision in red appears before his eyes. The most beautiful woman he has ever seen walks in front of his car and stops to do a dance over an air vent. In true Marilyn Monroe style, the dress flies up to reveal long, lean legs and scanty panties while Stevie Wonder sings in the background. Pierce is lost

forever and no one could blame him.

From there follows one of the most endearing romantic chases seen on the big screen in quite a while. Pierce can't believe that he is risking a successful marriage, but each time he catches a glimpse of the gorgeous Charlotte, he falls in love all over again. Wilder is in true

comedic form when he starts riding horses at the same equestrian club as she does just to be close. To say the least, the horse is not on his side.

The reason this film works so well is the excellent cast. Gene Wilder is hilarious as Teddy Pierce, a lovable and warm-hearted innocent completely obsessed with a situation he cannot control. Kelly LeBrock portrays Charlotte, the woman in red. To say the woman is beautiful and sexy has got to be the understatement of the year. Before this film, the English model was famous for being the center of the controversial set of Christian Dior ads. She, unlike many models, makes the transition from modeling to acting seem remarkably easy. I predict we will see much more of her in the future.

The other standouts in the cast are Charles Grodin ("The Lonely Guy"), Joseph Bologna ("Blame It On Rio") and Gilda Radner. Grodin plays one of Pierce's best friends and almost steals the show with a blind man in a fancy restaurant routine. Grodin's character is also homosexual and he experiences the same set of trials and tribulations with his lover as everyone else. This illustrates that all sexual relationships, whether homo- or hetero-, are the same.

Bologna is just as funny as another of Pierce's friends who is left repeatedly by his wife. He becomes manic immediately after she leaves, but soon after, he is back in his old form chasing anything on two legs. Radner portrays Miss Milner, the woman scorned and stood up by Pierce because of a misunderstanding over the phone. He thinks he is calling Charlotte and makes a date, but he is really talking to Milner. Her transformation from mousy office secretary to hot, bar-hopping sexpot is hilarious and the revenge she exacts from Pierce afterwards is just as funny.

These supporting characters are an integral part of this film. All of the subplots are woven into the story so as to illustrate Pierce's dilemma, not detract from it with meaningless side trips. That serves to make the film much more meaningful than it would be with just Pierce's story to examine.

Overall, the film is quite good. As we realize that everyone in the film is cheating in their relationships in one way or another, it becomes obvious that temptation is a universal experience. As director, writer and star, Wilder has made the only truly funny adult comedy of the summer.



Hot stuff

Kelly LeBrock turns up the heat with Gene Wilder in the sophisticated adult comedy, "The Woman in Red."

Eastwood takes risks in 'Tightrope'

By SHAWN BEHLEN
Staff Reviewer

Clint Eastwood's latest cop film, "Tightrope," is a taut, racy and hard-nosed thriller that looks at the fine line between the good and evil sides in all of us.

The film centers on the seamy side of New Orleans where someone is raping and murdering prostitutes. Detective Wes Block (Eastwood) is assigned to the case and the hunt begins.

That sounds like a good set-up for a Dirty Harry film and with Eastwood starring, that's what I expected. Block is similar to Harry Callahan, but there are some major differences between the two. These differences are what makes "Tightrope" a movie to contend with and not one for just Eastwood fans to sit through.

Block is divorced with two daughters, ages 12 and nine. As the film begins, this relationship illustrates the loving or good side of Block. He takes them to ball games, tucks them in bed with a kiss and fatherly words of wisdom and adopts every stray dog they can find.

As the film progresses, however, we discover that the evil in Block is just as strong. The man is no stranger to New Or-

leans night life. In his search for the killer, he travels from strip joints to warehouses and does a bit more than just interrogate witnesses.

It turns out that the killer's method of attack is to handcuff his victim, rape her and then strangle her with a red cord. That strikes home with Block. We see several scenes in which he shows signs of sexual violence — even to the point of using the handcuffs himself. Several of the women he ends up with become victims and eventually he and the killer almost parallel each other.

Those scenes are a change for Eastwood and a huge risk. That is what makes "Tightrope" worth seeing. He has taken a very serious subject, and, in a huge departure from his past roles, explored it fully with a complex and multi-dimensional characterization. It is nice to see him expanding and trying new stuff after so many films in which he did nothing more than squint into the distance.

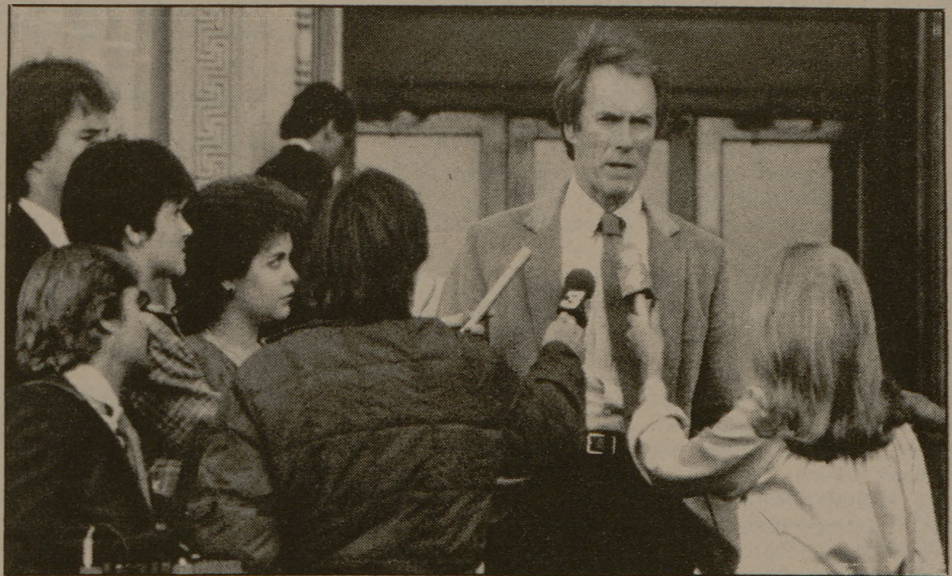
Block is another Dirty Harry only on the surface. Underneath, he is undergoing a massive psychological struggle. Coming to grips with the fact that he is so like the very man that he is hunting is not easy. In

the final chase scene, it is the killer who is in control. He has set up a path of sexual sleaze for Block to follow and shows Block time after time how much they are alike.

Block's daytime love interest in the film is portrayed by Genevieve Bujold as strong-willed and slightly masculine and she never wears any make-up. That

gives a visual counterpoint to the women he sees at night. Bujold does a great job of portraying the hard-nosed director of a rape crisis center and eventually becomes the protagonist for Block's emotional upheaval. When she and Block's daughters are threatened, his true feelings come to light and he is able to conquer his dark side.

This film explores its subject in great detail and is not pretty or sweet. In fact, it is highly depressing. It brings up some aspects of human nature that people don't like to think about, but should. Don't go see it expecting just action and adventure. Do go see it with an open mind that is ready to analyze and question.



"Tightrope" a departure for Eastwood
In this action thriller, Clint Eastwood does more than just squint and scowl, giving an emotional performance that goes beyond Dirty Harry.