

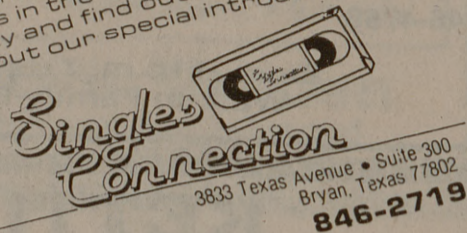
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'Bad Dreams' offers suspense, terror at AggieCon screening

By Matthew Stewart

AggieCon 19 opened Thursday with an exclusive screening of "Bad Dreams," a comic-horror film directed by Andrew Fleming. Cepheid Variable, which sponsors AggieCon, arranged with Twentieth Century Fox to screen the movie to survey the audience's reaction before the final edit.

"Bad Dreams" stars Jennifer Rubin, whose acting talents were introduced in "A Nightmare on Elm Street Part 3: Dream Warriors," and are ratified with "Bad Dreams."

She plays Cynthia, the survivor of a 1974 mass suicide committed by a member of a spiritual commune. Cynthia was comatose for fourteen years, and when she wakes she is haunted by terrifying visions of her "brothers and sisters," who feel Cynthia has cheated them.

Review

To help her recover from the memory block of the suicide, Cynthia is placed in a neuropsychiatric clinic.

She is treated by the compassionate Dr. Alex Karman, whose therapy consists of group sessions for borderline personalities.

Together, the group members realize the horrifying nightmares Cynthia has been having are about to come true.

Cynthia constantly is being urged by the gruesome remains of the commune leader to commit suicide, and this main plot of whether Karman can save her in time is handled effectively, playing the audience with suspense until the final resolution.

"Bad Dreams" combines the elements of terror, suspense and gore. While these are not mutually exclusive, care must be taken if the direction of the film is to remain in focus. The main flaws, and the scenes whose removal would most help the film, involve the mishandling of these elements.

The disgusting ghost of the

commune leader loses effect when viewed again and again. The cascade of blood and guts during a major scene seems pointless since until then the film's focus was terror, suspense and especially humor.

The macabre humor of "Bad Dreams" is most present in Ralph, a member of the group sessions. His cynical and scathing wit provides a constant relief from the terror.

However, some members of the group were represented as so oppressively neurotic that their actions were tedious and grating.

"Bad Dreams" uses the visions, memories and fantasies Cynthia experiences to riddle the audience. The overall effect of this unreality is heightened suspense, while the audience, in addition, learns what has happened in the spiritual and physical worlds as Cynthia regains her memory.

Only Cynthia can see the ghosts of her past, and since she is in a mental institution, no one will believe her. Rubin is convincing in

her portrayal of the beautiful Cynthia, a woman desperately trying to maintain contact with the world.

Puneet Sharma served as the son between Cepheid Variable and Twentieth Century Fox, and will ensure future screenings.

A screening differs from a preview, because after a screening the audience completes a questionnaire designed to help improve and assess the film.

More than 400 people attended the screening, and AggieCon workers said that initial indications showed that most of the audience members rated the film in the two of five choices for how much they liked it.

Set for limited release April 1, "Bad Dreams" is indeed a compelling and terrifying film.

Improvements could be made by removing aspects of the film that are confusing and unnecessary and would contribute to a respectable horror film to this reviewer's movies.

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Aerospace department gets \$150,000 faculty fellowship

By Jennifer E. Townsend
 Reporter

A \$150,000 endowed faculty fellowship is being established for the Texas A&M Department of Aerospace Engineering.

General Dynamics, a major defense contractor, contributed \$75,000, which will be matched by the University, said Carl Jaedicke, development officer for the College of Engineering.

"By investing in our program, General Dynamics is helping to maintain and enhance the quality of the engineering college," Jaedicke said. "They have been supporting A&M for at least 20 years."

The money will be invested with the interest producing the income, about \$9,000 a year, he said.

"They have given us a very valuable gift because it keeps giving year after year," he said.

The income from the endowment will be delegated to a top faculty member in the aerospace engineering department, Jaedicke said. The funds will be used for research and other professional expenses.

Dr. Valter E. Haisler, the department lead for aerospace engineering said the funds will be available in Spring 1989.

"During the next year, we will formulate plans with General Dynamics to establish the criteria for selecting a faculty member," Haisler said.

Norman Robbins, the community relations representative for General Dynamics, said a tremendous number of General Dynamics employees are A&M graduates.

"We were made aware by the University how competitive it was to hire

and keep the best possible faculty," Robbins said. "We thought by endowing a faculty fellowship, we could help ensure that our company would continue to receive the best engineers in the future."

"In order to remain competitive, we need to have the best possible technical minds," he added. "We hire a lot of people from A&M — it is a fine institution for the kind of employees that we need."

Jaedicke said that by establishing the faculty fellowship, General Dynamics is obtaining more visibility.

Charles Anderson, vice president and general manager for General Dynamics Fort Worth Division said he hopes other corporations will assist A&M in a similar manner.

"I challenge other corporations to do their part to support the College of Engineering," Anderson said.

Appeals court gives inmate execution stay

HUNTSVILLE (AP) — A Texas inmate scheduled for execution early Thursday was given a stay from a state appeals court.

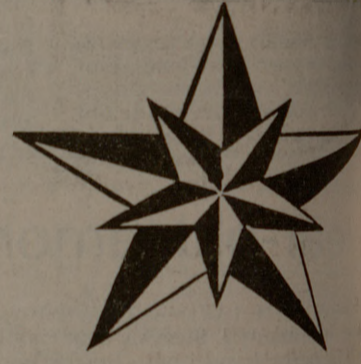
Michael Eugene Sharp, 35, was sentenced to die shortly after midnight Thursday, but the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals granted a 60-day stay last week so he could pursue the appeals process.

Sharp, a former oil worker, was sentenced to die by a jury in Ozona for the June 1982 murder of Brenda Kay Brantley, 31, of Kermit.

A jury in Lubbock convicted him of murder in the state death of Broadway's 6-year-old daughter, Christie Michelle, and sentenced him to life in prison.



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