

'Slackers' depicts society's rejects

NEW YORK (AP) - Call them passive subversives, masters of mellow, emperors of ennui. They don't have suits or ties or 9-to-5 jobs. They're into books and coffee and seeing bands on Friday night.

In Austin, they're known as "slackers," laid-back pariahs of the private sector, low-rent versions of New York intellectuals, idolators of idling who dare to be indifferent.

Slackers have seen the future and looked the other way, scurried back into their holes like groundhogs in wintertime. They've turned off and tuned out. They're through with college, but still in school indefinitely. Hanging out is the major industry, alienation a way of life.

"You see what your options are in the world and if none of them looks appealing, then they're not worth all the time and effort," explained director-slacker Richard Linklater, 28, who captures this languid lifestyle in "Slacker," his new feature film.

"You just retreat into your own thing. I like that because it's you rejecting society before

society rejects you.

"I think more and more people are getting away from the old thoughts about how to change things, the old, 'Oh, if you don't like the way things are, then why don't you change things.' People know what they don't want to do, but they don't have anything that they're definitely onto. That's what I see the slacker period as, knowing what doesn't work but having nothing to replace it with yet."

"Slacker" was filmed in Austin two summers ago and cost about \$23,000. Funding came from friends, relatives and the National Endowment for the Arts among others.

It looks like a documentary, with the camera drifting from slacker to slacker, but the film is actually a carefully scripted, well-rehearsed dramatization of a typical day.

About 100 people are seen, most of them real slackers playing themselves. Included are an aging ex-anarchist, a JFK assassination expert, a video fanatic, a woman selling an "authentic" Madonna souvenir and a hitchhiker who reasons, "I may live badly, but at least I don't have to work to do it."

"We were real serious and professional," Linklater said. "We just

said, 'Hey, we're making a movie this summer. It should be fun, kind of loose. Within this I'm really hoping we can work up something that's fun, creative, the summer art project.' And it was like, 'Oh cool, it'll be fun.'"

Linklater, the son of an insurance man and a speech pathologist, was born in Houston and began his road to slackerdom in high school, where his acute "anti-anything" attitude was born.

Two years of college were all he could take. He dropped out of Sam Houston State University, saved some money by working on an offshore oil rig and fell into the lazily outstretched arms of Austin's slacker community.

"I was going to movies all the time, but I just noticed friends who were going into coffee shops every day. I don't smoke or drink coffee or anything, but I could always appreciate what was going on. It seemed kind of neat, ultimately kind of optimistic, a world of ideas," he said.

"I had worked in the world and there were people with their myopic, special-interest view."

'Mobsters' makes no judgment of evil gangster life

Continued from page 3

Although its lack of critical commentary on its characters' materialistic, murderous lifestyle is rather disturbing in this age of increasing gang violence, the film preserves a kind of amoral integrity in its sympathetic, unflinching portrayal of the way it was in the kill-or-be-killed heyday of gangsterism.

"Mobsters" evinces a certain nostalgia for the good old days of Prohibition, before drugs and goodfellas, when loyalty to friends and family came before everything, and a Mafioso would sooner die than betray that trust.

For all its apparent superficiality, this movie, like the young criminals it depicts, gets better and cleverer as it goes along. Michael Mahern and Nicholas Kazan's screenplay dwells mostly on the friendship and "business" dealings of the four young men, only touching on their relationships with the women in their lives.

It also wisely avoids trying to give all four equal prominence and screen time, instead focusing on Luciano and Lansky, and their quest for revenge against the unscrupulous dons and anyone else who dares cross them.

Veteran actors Abraham, as the Jewish financial wizard reputed to have fixed the World Series, and Quinn, as a gluttonous don, lend colorful support to the surprisingly convincing young actors.

All involved, from production designer Richard Sylbert and costume designer Ellen Mirojnick to former commercial director Michael Karbelnikoff, and especially cinematographer Lajos Koltai, seem to be having a marvelous time bringing the story of these cheerfully ruthless criminals to the screen.

In a movie where the good guys are only slightly less evil than the bad guys, the beautifully stylized images artfully lull viewers into sympathizing with Luciano's gang, but the audience is probably having too much fun to care.

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Postal Service releases '92 Olympic stamps

(AP) - The 1992 Olympic Games aren't far off and collectors are looking forward to the wide variety of stamps with Olympics themes from countries all over the world.

The U.S. Postal Service is off and running with five 29-cent Olympic Track and Field stamps released July 12 in Los Angeles in conjunction with the 1991 Olympic Festival.

Each stamp shows a competitor in an Olympic event pole vault, discus throw, sprint, javelin throw and hurdles. The background of each stamp is a different color and corresponds to one of the five colors of the Olympic rings blue, yellow, black, green and red.

First-day cancellations are available until Aug. 11 in either of two ways:

Customers are encouraged to buy the stamp at a local post office, affix it to a self-addressed cover and mail in a larger envelope addressed to: Customer-Affixed Envelopes, Olympic Track and Field Stamps, Postmaster, 7001 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90052-9991.

The Postal Service will affix a single stamp or a strip of all five stamps. However, keep in mind that it will affix only random single stamps and will not honor requests for a specific stamp.

For each cover requested, send

a self-addressed envelope (No. 10 or larger for strip orders) and payment in check or money order (29 cents for one stamp, \$1.45 for a strip of five) to: Single Olympic Track and Field Stamps (or Five Olympic Track and Field Stamps), Postmaster, 7001 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90052-9992 (use ZIP code 90052-9993 for five-stamp strip orders).

•New Priority Mail Stamp

A new Priority Mail stamp from the U.S. Postal Service features a closeup profile of a bald eagle against a black background, and red lettering. The \$2.90 stamp is designed for use on Priority Mail pieces weighing up to 2 pounds.

Rodriguez records comedy special in California prison

NEW YORK (AP) - Paul Rodriguez conducts the interview in an exercise yard at San Quentin prison. "Who do you blame for being in here?" he asks. The immediate reply from the convict: "Myself."

Rodriguez: "Not society? Not 'cause you're black? Not 'cause the world is run by whites?" No, the convict says, smiling: "I mean, if I'm into crime, I'm into crime. If I'm into a peaceful life, that's how I'm going to live."

A documentary? Sort of. But few prison documentaries include a stage show in which the program's maker Rodriguez, in this case gets a roar of knowing laughter by telling a crowd of cons: "You miss it out there, right? Well, they don't miss you."

But then, "Paul Rodriguez: Behind Bars," a one-hour special airing next Sunday night, is a different kind of show, a hybrid that Fox Broadcasting calls a "docu-

comedy." A stocky, direct man born 36 years ago in Mazatlan, Mexico, Rodriguez is a comedian by trade, and one with a little more humanity and social commentary than usually emitted by those touring TV's standup comedy circuit.

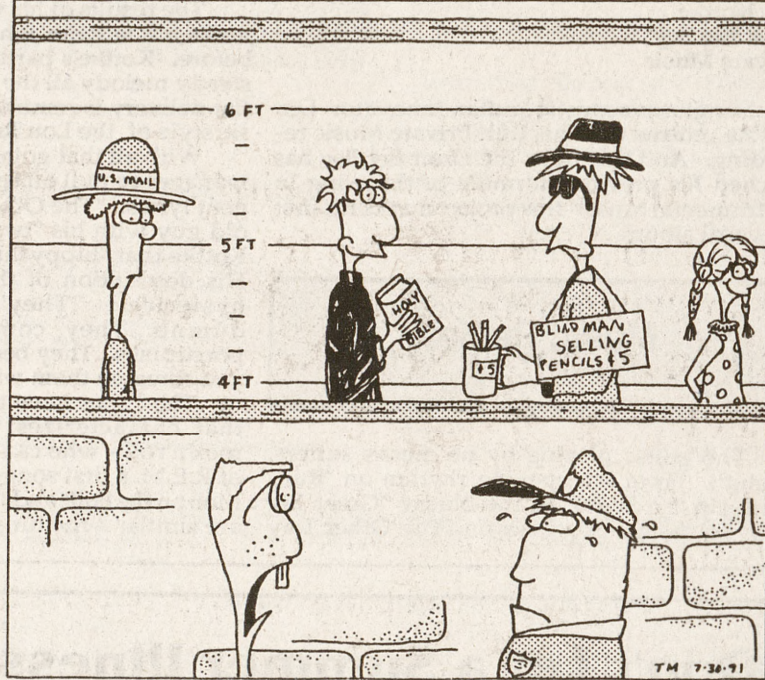
Not for him the usual "I just broke up with my girlfriend" or L.A. freeway jokes, or audience-rapport openers like, "So, where ya from?"

Barrio humor is an integral part of his act. It helped him land his first starring role, in Norman Lear's short-lived "a.k.a. Pablo." He was spotted in 1978 while working amateur night at the Comedy Store in Los Angeles.

His routine included these thoughts after a neighbor lady was shot by Los Angeles cops: "The only white people in my neighborhood are Jesus and the police department. If you see either of the two, you're in trouble."

Nerd House

by Tom A. Madison



"YES, SIR. THEY'RE THE ONES THAT BEAT ME UP, AND, YOU KNOW SOMETHING, YOU LOOK KIND OF FAMILIAR, TOO."

Supermodel Carol Alt launches singing career

NEW YORK (AP) - Let the critics beware. Former supermodel Carol Alt is launching her singing career and wants them to know she won't be intimidated.

"I don't care what the critics say because I'm out there and I'm vulnerable and I'm open to criticism," Alt said in an interview on Fox Television's "A Current Affair."

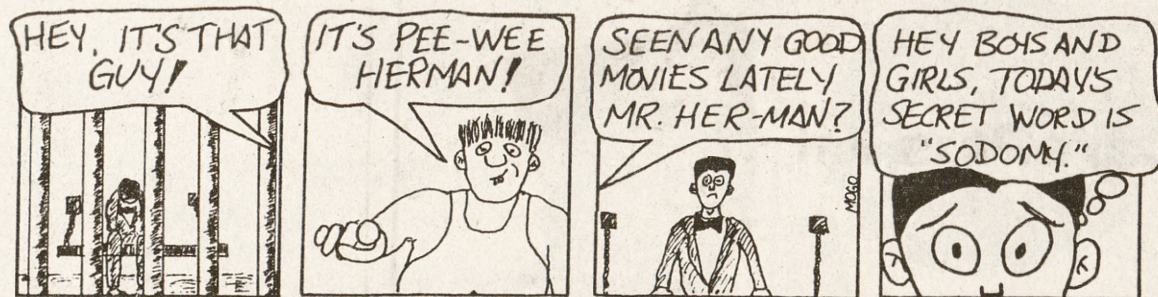
Alt quit full-time modeling in 1985 to pursue acting.

"If I listen to what everybody says, and I stop doing what I want to do and stop living and working, I would die," she said in the interview being broadcast Tuesday. "For me, this (a singing career) is my fantasy."

Alt said models take a lot of heat.

"The most challenging thing I've faced in my career is other people's prejudice," she said.

Ph.D



by Michael Magonye

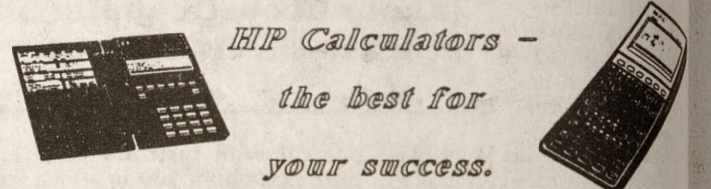
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