

RACE AND ADVERTISING

A&M professor explores African-Americans' roles in 'Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben and Rastus'

By Jeremy Keddie
THE BATTALION

The vast history of politics exhibits the manipulation of how racial, religious and gender images are manipulated in the face of the masses; the equation is no less different in the history of advertising. It just hasn't been documented as fully.

Texas A&M associate professor of journalism, Dr. Marilyn Kern-Foxworth, explores the stereotypical images of African-Americans in advertising and provides insight into a national icon and former resident of Hearne in her book "Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben, and Rastus: Blacks in Advertising, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow."

Starting with slavery and demonstrating how various symbols led to early stereotypes and contemporary portrayal in advertising, Kern-Foxworth said that the book will serve African-Americans as another source to find their heritage.

"Prior to this book no single literary work has provided a comprehensive report on the history and status of blacks in advertising," Kern-Foxworth said in the preface.

The late Alex Haley, author of "Roots" and other books dealing with African-American culture, wrote the forward for Kern-Foxworth's book. Haley said the book is timely because African-Americans have begun to "re-examine, investigate, analyze, and scrutinize" their heritage now more than ever before.

"This book provides a mirror to our past," Haley wrote, "a past that has been ignored or overshadowed for too long."

Kern-Foxworth, the first African-American woman to earn a Ph.D. with a concentration in advertising, found interest for the book while working on her Master's at Florida State University. She further developed her research while attending the University of Wisconsin and analyzed magazine advertisements which portrayed African-Americans.

"I was surprised that there were not any books on blacks in advertising and took interest in the issue," Kern-Foxworth said.

However, Kern-Foxworth said there were several difficulties in publishing and writing the book which made the process difficult. During the early stages of the project, Kern-Foxworth was working toward her tenure, concentrating on research and publication.

"Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben, and Rastus" also contains several examples of advertisements which Kern-Foxworth took painstaking steps to acquire through obtaining written permission from the copyright owners.

"It took over two years before I heard anything from Quaker Oats," Kern-Foxworth explained.

Aside from providing African-Americans another aspect of their history, Kern-Foxworth's book also helped provide Hearne, a city north of Bryan-College Station, with a better understanding of a nationally acclaimed celebrity from their hometown - Rosie Lee Moore

Hall, a.k.a. Aunt Jemima. From 1950 until her death in 1967, Hall was the Quaker Oats Company's Aunt Jemima. She departed Hearne in her late 20s and moved to Oklahoma City, working for the Quaker Oats Company. There she learned of the company's search for a new Aunt Jemima.

"Most people don't know Aunt Jemima was a real person, assuming that all of the faces on the pancake boxes are composites like Betty Crocker," Kern-Foxworth wrote in an article on Aunt Jemima.

"Because of this assumption, many Hearne residents aren't aware that a nationally acclaimed celebrity was born and raised in their town."

Kern-Foxworth is currently working on her next book, devoted solely to Aunt Jemima. She said she discovered a chapter in the original manuscripts of Haley's book "Malcolm X" that was not included in the publication. The chapter mentions Malcolm X's opinions toward Aunt Jemima.

The Quaker Oats Company continued

to use live models for composites of Aunt Jemima until Hall's death during the civil rights movement, which made her the last "live" Aunt Jemima used.

Unmarked until 1988, Hall's grave eventually received a national historical marker with the effort of Hall's sisters and the Hearne Heritage League.

With the coordination of Kern-Foxworth, the Hearne Heritage League and Jane Matthews, the wife of the mayor of Hearne, plans are now being made to build a replica of Hall's home and a museum which will be dedicated to Hall's life - before and during her Aunt Jemima years.

"We are hoping to provide a place of cultural exchange with our people to make us proud of our history," Matthews said.

The project is pending on funds, and Matthews said more definitive plans will be made this fall by Founder's Day, October 8. Although Matthews said she is not expecting difficulties with fund raising for the project, and a tribute will be constructed.

MOVIE REVIEWS



Arnold Schwarzenegger plays secret agent Harry Tasker in 'True Lies.'

'True' entertainment

By William Harrison
THE BATTALION

"True Lies"
Starring Arnold Schwarzenegger,
Jamie Lee Curtis and
Tom Arnold
Directed by James Cameron
Rated R
Playing at Post Oak Cinema III

After three films together, there's nothing else to expect from a film starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and directed by James Cameron.

But that's not necessarily a bad thing; the same for these two is unpredictability and excitement.

Cameron (Terminator I and II, The Abyss) is the movie business' premier action director. No one commands better scenery and action pacing as well as he does.

Yet, with all the emphasis on technical marvels, a masterpiece of story-telling eludes him, as in "True Lies."

Schwarzenegger plays Schwarzenegger again, this time as U.S. spy Harry Tasker in a top-secret nuclear counter-terrorism agency.

However, because Schwarzenegger plays Schwarzenegger, the spy is also a family man. Since marriage and fatherhood have en-

tered his life, Schwarzenegger takes only roles with a limited amount of senseless violence which must be coupled with a strong sense of morality - a "true lie," perhaps?

The plot, which in this film is only a nuisance, begins as Tasker finds his way out of a fashionable, James Bond-esque party, where everyone is dressed to kill. He dances the tango and then starts blowing things up and shooting people.

After this initial foray, Tasker and the movie audience are briefed on the storyline for the rest of the movie.

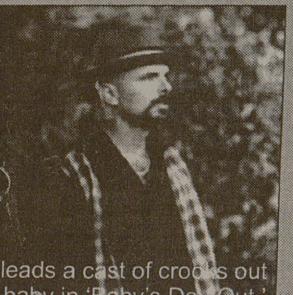
But Tasker's worst problems come at home, when he returns to his family, which doesn't know his real profession and has fallen out of touch with him.

The hero is surrounded by problems on all fronts, and it could only be a miracle if he sets everything aright...

Yeahright. Mail this one in before you go to see it.

However, no one accomplishes more outlandish, visually daring stunts than Cameron. His direction makes an otherwise mediocre film riveting and entertaining.

Just try to ignore the plot - the real "true lie" of the film.



Joe Mantegna (left) leads a cast of crooks out to ransom a baby in 'Baby's Day Out.'

'Home alone' again

By Warren E. Mayberry
THE BATTALION

"Baby's Day Out"
Starring Joe Mantegna, Brian Haley, Lara Flynn Boyle, Joe Pantoliano, Directed by Patrick Read Johnson
Rated PG-13
Playing at Hollywood USA

Norby (Joe Pantoliano), a kidnapper in "Baby's Day Out," sums up the film as follows: "Working at Burger King is easier than kidnapping a baby."

How true this is, as a nine-month-old baby leads three half-witted thieves through the torture of their lives.

Eddie (Joe Mantegna), Norby and Veeko (Brian Haley) hatch up a wild idea to kidnap Baby Bink, the son of one of the wealthiest families in Chicago.

The three bank robbers (turned kidnappers) attempt to secure \$5 million by kidnapping the child. But, while

reading Bink a bedtime story, the dim-witted Veeko falls asleep, Bink crawls out a window, and thus, the chase begins.

During the pursuit across Chicago, the trio falls victim to various bumps, bruises and annihilations; while tracking Bink through parks, tunnels, the zoo and a high-rise construction project.

It is painfully obvious as you watch the film that its creators are the same geniuses who brought us the blockbuster film "Home Alone." The only difference is the cute Macaulay Culkin is replaced by an even cuter drooling baby. But the antics and laughs are exactly the same.

While this film is no "Aladdin" or "Ghostbusters," it keeps its audiences in stitches as the predictable, yet silly gags unfold.

If a corny but cute flick is what you are looking for, take time out to go see "Baby's Day Out."

'Whitesnake's Greatest Hits' reveals a band that never reached its prime

By William Harrison
THE BATTALION

Whitesnake
"Whitesnake's Greatest Hits"
Hard rock
Geffen Records

Assuming one were to release a greatest hits album, by definition the band should have - A: some hits and B: some great ones.

The sad thing is, Whitesnake has some, but the band should have made more before releasing a "greatest hits" compilation.

Not that the band didn't try - there are four new releases. But one of the new tracks, "Here I Go Again," is a re-mix of the original.

It's so pop-oriented and bouncy, Daryl Hall and John Oates would be at home singing on this version.

Led by singer David Coverdale and guitarist Adrian Vandenberg, Whitesnake seemed well on its way to fame after its 1984 release "Slide It In" and the 1987 self-titled "Whitesnake."

With a sound mirroring Led Zeppelin's Coverdale's bluesy love balladry matched with Van-

denberg's dizzy, schizophrenic guitars created then several of the band's best tracks - "Still of the Night," "Love Ain't No Stranger," "Slow and Easy," and "Fool for Your Loving."

But an image-conscious band fell apart, pigeonholed after a series of sex-touting music videos with a voluptuous red head. Coverdale admitted the band's success became a stigma it couldn't overcome until its recent reunion for the release and a tour.

So Whitesnake's greatest hits may be yet to come. Maybe.

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