

# International students brave a new world at Texas A&M

By MICHAEL SCHAUH  
 THE BATTALION

When Rajesh Kumar first came to Texas A&M University, walking across campus was an adventure. "That 'Howdy' concept was new to me," Kumar, a business administration graduate student, said. "It's good, but in India, we don't just say 'hi' to strangers."

The unofficial A&M greeting is one of many cultural differences that students from other nations encounter when they arrive on campus.

Majed Azouqah, a freshman electrical engineering major, said friends in his native Jordan tease him about living in a real-life spaghetti western movie.

"All my friends keep cracking cowboy jokes at me because I live in Texas," Azouqah said. "It's just what they see on TV."

"Howdys" and cowboys aside, the A&M campus is known for students who are friendly, open and willing to learn about international topics, he said.

"It's a lot friendlier than I thought it would be," he said. "People are very nice. I'm happy here — so far, so good."

Kumar, who is also president of the International Students Association, said students from other nations often find themselves overlooked by their native Texan counterparts at A&M.

The goal of International Week, which begins today, is to promote awareness of other cultures on the A&M campus, he said.

"We try to get students to interact with people of different cultures, to enlighten themselves and to dispel the myths and stereotypes they may have," he said.

Cristina Montero, a Uruguayan native and vice president for administration of the ISA, said A&M harbors a diverse in-

ternational community.

"I like meeting people — that's what's great about A&M," Montero, a junior international studies and economics major, said. "There's a great amount of international people here. It's pretty much an international center, and that's great for the community."

Bolivian native Percy Prieto, a junior international studies and management major, said A&M is friendly to international students, despite the school's political climate.

"It's kind of conservative here, but at the same time, it's very diverse," Prieto said. "You have students from all over the world and from all over Texas — and Texas is like another country, right?"

But Julian Trevino-Villarreal, a native of Monterey, Mexico and a wildlife and fisheries sciences graduate student, said Native-American students are often unaware of international cultures.

"I don't know if it's because, as international students, we haven't been able to promote international cultures sufficiently," Trevino-Villarreal said. "I still believe we have to focus more on everybody. If I tell people I'm from Mexico, they think I'm from New Mexico."

The University's conservative climate surprised students such as Montero, who said A&M students have different attitudes than citizens in her native Uruguay.

"It was a little bit of a shock, but I got used to it," Montero said. "This place is very traditional, very conservative, compared to the way we are in Uruguay."

Trevino-Villarreal lamented the lack of soccer teams in Texas, but said he saw more similarities than differences between Texas and Mexico.

"I had trouble trying to absorb the



idea of traditions," he said. "A lot of things are alike, like the way people dress in jeans. The only thing really different is the amount of resources this university has."

But not all international students consider A&M a friendly place.

German native Erich Reich (not his real name), a physics graduate student, said he finds the A&M climate "not very good but not bad."

The differences between German and American cultures are complex, Reich said. "I can't explain that in a few words," he said. "America is more capitalistic, more materialistic."

But Azouqah said he is happy in Texas' "twin cities."

"I like College Station," Azouqah said. "It's very laid back. I think I made a good choice coming to A&M."

Erica Vidal, an oceanography graduate student who hails from Sao Paulo, Brazil, said A&M students are supportive of their

schoolmates from other countries. "People try to help international students here," Vidal said. "I've been helped by a lot of students. For me, it's been a very nice experience."

## ► At the movies

# Singleton's *Rosewood* falls short

True story flick bolstered with dramatic shots, weakened by trite acting

By AARON MEIER  
 THE BATTALION

In 1995, the Susan Smith incident horrified the nation. The young mother murdered her two sons, but before she confessed

to the murders, she claimed an African-American man carjacked her and took her children.

After the truth emerged, many leaders of the African-American community asked if America was so eager to believe her because it

saw a young mother sobbing on television — or because she claimed a black man did it?

In *Rosewood*, a similar accusation causes the massacre of a town and a racial witch hunt.

Based on a true story, *Rosewood* dramatizes the incidents that occurred in the small predominantly black town of Rosewood, Fla., in January 1923.

The plot revolves around accusations made by Fannie Taylor, a resident of the nearby white town of Sumner. Taylor spends a lust-filled afternoon with her white lover, who beats her savagely and flees town.

Taylor realizes she cannot hide the wounds from her husband. She walks onto the front porch of her home and screams frantically. As the neighbors run to help the battered woman, she sobs that a black man raped and beat her.

Soon, the white residents of Sumner are in an uproar and, under the tenuous control of the town sheriff (Michael Rooker), the misguided men of the town proceed to destroy Rosewood and kill at least 40 black citizens in search of this nonexistent black rapist.

Director John Singleton uses the camera powerfully to tell the horrifying story of racism at the dawn of the 20th century. After directing a mediocre film such as *Higher Learning*, Singleton is returning to the quality of his debut film, *Boyz n the Hood*.

The return appears to be a rough journey. Although Singleton brings solid emotion to the sweeping epic shots of the town's destruction, he cannot elicit the same intensity of emotion from the actors in the film.

In the scenes where Rosewood is being destroyed, Singleton unflinchingly shows scenes of racial atrocities. Singleton stands out as one of Hollywood's most promis-

ing young directors, but he should motivate his actors better. In *Rosewood*, Singleton could have produced some moving scenes, but the cast comes off as trite and melodramatic.

*Rosewood* stars Jon Voight as John Wright, the white owner of Rosewood's local grocery. Voight delivers the film's strongest performance as a man with divided loyalties. Wright intimately knows and trusts the residents of Rosewood and doubts the accusations of Fannie Taylor. However, as a white businessman, he must stay in good favor with the whites of the neighboring town.

The character of John Wright poses an interesting paradox to the audience. He is a tolerant man in a time where racism is the norm. However, he does not crusade for the residents of Rosewood; he exists as a quiet

man who has difficulty choosing between the immense pressures of society and his beliefs in right and wrong. Voight plays Wright deftly, making him at

times a hero and at times a coward. Ving Rhames plays Mann, a roaming World War I vet who accidentally gets caught in Rosewood at the wrong time.

Rhames, who in other movies has proven extremely charismatic, seems uncomfortable in the role of Mann. Physically and mentally, Rhames is too rough and intimidating to play a character with tender lines and a soft demeanor.

Watching a scene between Mann and his love interest Scarpie (Elise Neal), is like watching Frankenstein trying to ballroom dance with Ginger Rogers.

*Rosewood* powerfully demonstrates the continued oppression of blacks after the end of slavery. The memory of the residents of Rosewood deserves to be told with extreme respect and caring. *Rosewood* attempts to achieve this goal but falls short.

**Rosewood**  
 Starring Jon Voight and Ving Rhames  
 Directed by John Singleton  
 Rated R  
 Showing at Hollywood 16  
 ★★1/2 (out of five)

# An appeal: Shut mouths and shoe all smelly feet

Movie-goers of the world unite! Fight against the aggression of screaming babies and people stepping on your toes. Support the Movie-Goers of America's Manifesto and stand up for your rights as a theater patron.

Rise against the oppression of the stranger sitting next to you who talks during the entire film. Strike out against the young teen-age couple who chooses to publicly demonstrate their ability to swallow each other's faces for two solid hours. Rise up against the infidels and shout from the projection booths of America, "I'm mad as hell and I'm not gonna take it anymore!"

*The Movie-Goers of America's Manifesto*

### Article One

Anyone who becomes separated from their group shall not attempt to walk to the front of the theater and shout the names of their friends. This is grounds for summary execution under the manifesto. Any idiot who cannot follow the buddy system deserves to sit by themselves or worse yet be forced to sit in the seat where a young boy decided he had to "go now."

### Article Two

Under the manifesto, any form of GPDA (Gross Public Displays of Affection) shall result in mandatory sterilization. We, the Movie-Goers of America, understand the hormonal urges experienced by all teen-agers, but the latest Disney movie is not the time for the youth of America to recreate a certain lyric from an Alanis Morissette song.

### Article Three

Maturity tests will be given to all audience members. The recent releases of the *The Star Wars Trilogy* and *Scream* have proven to all decent movie-watchers that some legal adults cannot handle everyday excitement.

Anyone caught wearing a Yoda mask or attempting to reproduce the

### Columnist



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cinnamon roll hairstyle of Princess Leah will be taken to a mental hospital for further evaluation.

Spot checks will be conducted to see if a potential horror movie-viewer screams every time a phone rings or someone knocks on a door. If the viewer fails to react properly, they will be escorted from the theater and given a tattoo on the forehead declaring them a coward.

### Article Four

Any footwear brought into a movie theater must stay on the feet at all times. When acceptable, a viewer may put his properly covered feet on the chair in front of him. But under no circumstances are shoes (including sandals, loafers and moccasins) to be removed.

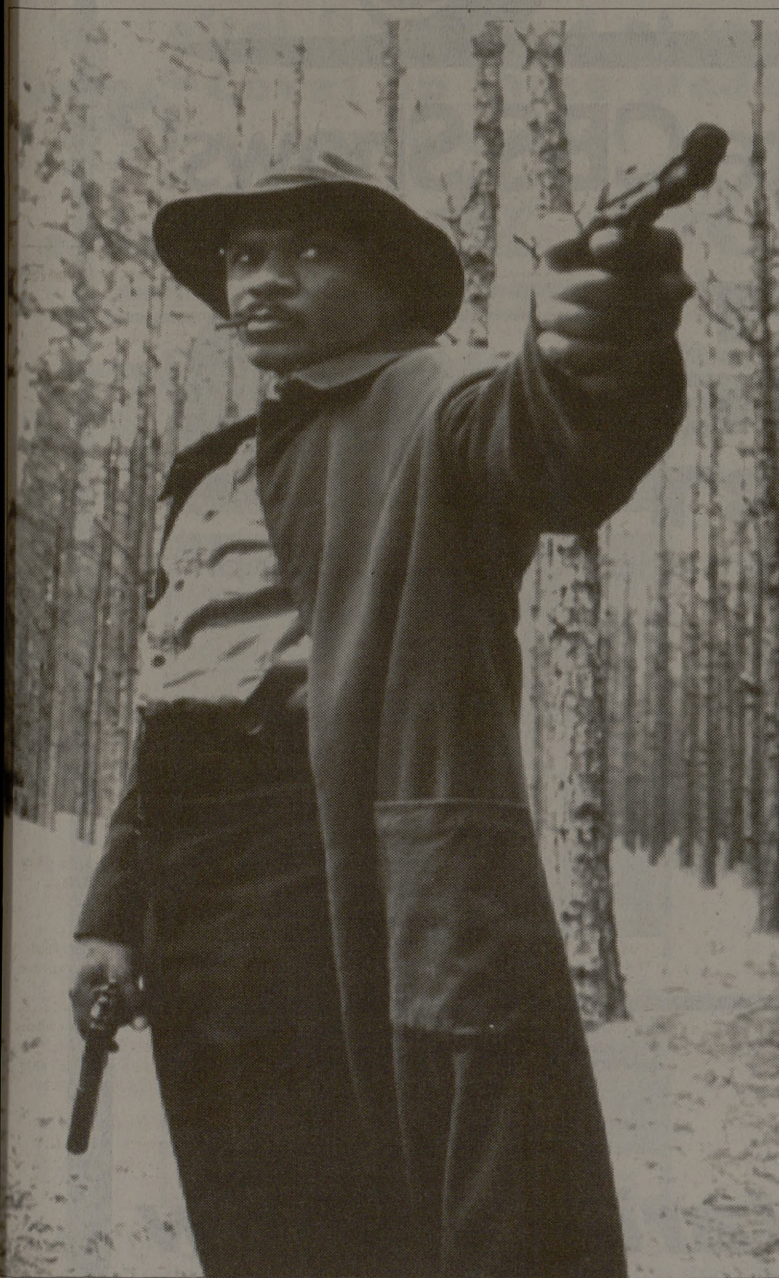
Special odor detectors will be installed in all theaters to ensure compliance with this article. If violators are discovered, their toenails will be painted with permanent Glow-in-The-Dark polish to warn all future audience members of the violation.

### Article Five

This article is hereafter referred to as "The Supreme Law of the Theater." There will be no talking during the movie! The official talking embargo will start when the fat cat hops in the car and the screen flashes, "Warning! Annoying Talker!"

This includes all whooping and hollering when such names as Nicole Kidman and Brad Pitt appear on the screen. All movie-goers are aware of the stars of the picture — tribal noises to alert other natives of the presence of a sex symbol is pointless and grounds for drawing and quartering the violator.

We, the Movie-Goers of America, respect the right of all Americans to enjoy a movie. We simply demand the rights the founding fathers meant to imply when writing the Constitution. We thank you for your continued support and please enjoy a mint on your way out of the theater. The mint bowl will be monitored to ensure compliance.



*Rosewood* stars Ving Rhames as Mann, a roaming World War I veteran.