

THE TWENTY MINUTE REVIEW



OKAY, GUYS, ROLL THE WOODEN HORSE THAT WAY: Ed Harris adrift in a sea of lesser lights, in Alex Cox's ('s) 90-minute ordeal, *Walker*.

Cox's Walker a lame duck

By RUPERT PUPKIN

When *Repo Man* director Alex Cox set out to do his latest film *Walker*, he must have had a lot to work with: an intriguing, fact-based story about a nineteenth century American opportunist named William Walker who invaded Nicaragua and declared himself president; a unique satirical take on that story; a top-notch actor for the lead role in Ed Harris; and a favourable political climate for launching a black comedy which so clearly implicates the current American government for engaging in similar Central American foolishness. Over the course of filming *Walker*, he must also have run into some pleasant surprises, such as the naturally photogenic Nicaraguan countryside, or the quirky, winning performance he received from ex-*Clash* frontman Joe Strummer. In cutting the film for sound, there must also have been a moment when Cox reclined comfortably in his chair, well aware that the lush rock soundtrack of Strummer would work perfectly with the film he had intended to make. The problem for Alex Cox, notwithstanding all this good fortune, is that he forgot to make a movie along the way.

For aside from the odd anachronistic sight-gag (such as the moment we see Walker reading a copy of *Newsweek* while riding in his carriage through 1830's Nicaragua), or one-liner, *Walker* stinks, however badly its audience wants to like it. The jokes aren't good enough for the material, the supporting cast aren't good enough for television (which is funny, because I recognized many of the faces as fugitives from the small screen), and the whole project isn't good enough for Ed Harris (whose short suit since his memorable debut in *The Right Stuff* seems to be his aesthetic judgement). In a word: hideous.

Wall Street a good investment

By JAMES FLAGAL

O liver Stone can be accused of two things: overdirecting and oversimplifying political realities. *Platoon* is probably the best example. Stone's brutal portrayal of the Vietnam War simplifies the conflict to the fight in a young lad's mind between the forces of good and evil.

Well, that young lad, Charlie Sheen, is once again caught between the forces of good and evil, but this time back in America—in the big city, in the heart of the market economy which drives the capitalist

machine—*Wall Street*. And surprisingly enough, Stone does not oversimplify the market warfare and dirty dealing, but some parts are a bit over dramatic.

But the parts which are, are dominated by a man who knows how to truly take something which Stone himself reviles and make the audience despise it in the same fashion. Michael Douglas is brilliant in his portrayal of corporate raider Gordon Gekko, and his speech on greed makes you want to go out and have a huge Ayn Rand book-burning bash. And who could ever forget the remark, "Lunch is for wimps," some priceless advice for all Central Squarers who really want to make a buck.

The force of good is represented by Sheen's very own father, Martin, whose union background puts him at odds with his son's fascination with the size of Gekko's wallet. And so Sheen is caught between the world of luxury, money, and deceit on the one hand and honesty, relative poverty, and perrier only on special occasions on the other.

To add to the conflict, Sheen has a lover who is more interested in his potential money-making ability than himself. It's a sardonic sort of twist which Stone puts into the movie—the only female lead is a useless blonde leach, hanging onto the coat-tails of malicious corporate buccaneers.

But what makes the movie intelligent is Stone's use of each character to attack the senseless and corrupt business which goes on behind the trading on Wall Street. In the process, the director does a great deal to clarify his real feelings about the ever-elusive American dream.

Suspect guilty on all counts

By ADAM KARDASH

A thriller that just doesn't cut it. In a role unsuited for her, Cher plays a successful yet overworked public defender whose latest client is a mute, homeless, Viet Nam Veteran, charged with first degree murder of a crooked high-ranking judge's secretary. Sound convoluted and cliché? Just wait. The judge who presides over the case turns out to be the murderer! Surprised? Only if you're an idiot.

The film is a weak attempt at depicting the corrupt element that is pervasive in Washington's streets and in the shadows of its political and judicial arenas. In an early scene we're supposed to "feel" for Cher as in mid traffic, two young black hoods smash the front window of her car and steal the beautifully wrapped Christmas presents from her front seat.

Later on, we get a glimpse of the real Washington, as a Senator's aid

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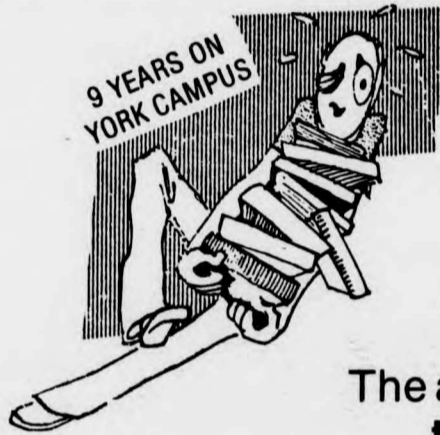
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