

# The parables of Lina Wertmuller

**Richard Zywockiewicz**

Although Lina Wertmuller, throughout her distinguished career, has denied ever attempting to make any statements in her films, they clearly reflect social concerns often with a satiric bite.

Her last film, the immensely underrated **Nightful of Rain...** was one of the best studies of male/female relationships in a long time. Now, with **Blood Feud**, she returns her focus to social problems, and the result is a fiery drama full of conviction, feeling and power. Although not vintage Wertmuller, it displays a refined simplicity which is indicative of her maturity as a filmmaker.

Marcello Mastroianni plays a naive lawyer/politician who returns home on the eve of the Mussolini Regime. In a tiny village in Southern Italy, he falls in love and seduces a lonely widow, played by Sophia Loren. A year later, Loren's husband, and expectant child, were murdered by a bourgeois landowner who became mayor under the fascist dictatorship.

Mastroianni, along with Loren's other lover (Giancarlo Giannini), both plot to kill the mayor and avenge the murder of Loren's husband.

The story involves an intense conflict between the love triangle, impending social dangers, and Loren's fight to overcome her embittered past and the memories of her husband.

Although Wertmuller has walked this particular ground before, I cannot help but admire the intelligence and sophistication with which she handles her characters. Few filmmakers have conceived as many raw, emotional characters and brought them to live, love and die on the screen with such courageous honesty.

Now playing at the International Cinema and Cineplex.



The underrated Lina Wertmuller and star Giancarlo Giannini

## Sniper on roof

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Bo Widerberg's **Man on the Roof** is a complete departure from his previous work. It is a thriller whose origins owe much to American TV cop shows.

The movie begins with incredible violence, lapses into a slow-paced, low-key investigation of a brutal murder, and then erupts again with violence. The final 40 minutes of the film is filled with unnerving suspense.

The interesting premise of the film is the presence of violence amidst the normality of everyday life. The killer, after taking refuge on a building rooftop, plugs policemen with an automatic machine gun. His attack on the police is explained as revenge. Years earlier his wife, a diabetic, died as a direct result of police negligence. A later statement by the same lieutenant results in the abduction of the killer's only daughter.

Widerberg is very discreet about making any statements on police brutality, but his reticence in effect makes a disturbing parallelism between social injustice and the alarming breakdown of human endurance. Although the killer is hardly seen at all until the end, the final freeze frame on this gentle, almost refined face becomes more unnerving than the twisted gestures of a deviant killer.

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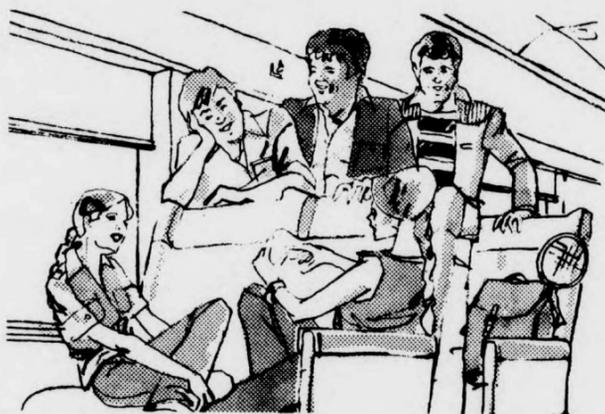
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