

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Art

Willie Birch: Through Jan. 21 at the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art. This New Orleans-based artist presents his papier-mâché sculptures and paintings which promote racial consciousness. \$2. 725-1904.

Threadbare: Revealing Content in Contemporary Fiber: Through Jan. 21 at SECCA. This exhibit features a number of artists who have expanded the concept of fiber to communicate social, cultural and political messages. \$2. 725-1904.

Accounts Southeast: Craft — Function and Tradition: Through Jan. 21 at SECCA. The first group show of the Southeastern artists series, this exhibit highlights traditional and functional clay, basketry and fiber. \$2. 725-1904.

Art Department Exhibition: Through Feb. 1 at the Fine Arts Gallery, Scales Fine Arts Center. This exhibition highlights works from the faculty and staff of the department of art. Free. Ext. 5585.

The Scarlet Letter: 1 p.m. Wed. at the Reynolda House Museum of American Art. Margaret Ann O'Connor, from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, will lead a discussion of Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel. \$2. 725-5325.

Clubs

Ziggy's: Tonight, Mel and Manson, and Clutch, \$10. Fri., Freakopotamous. Sat., Bus Stop. 748-1064.

Cat's Cradle: Tonight, Everything, \$5. Fri., Athenaeum, Kickball, and Mike Garrigan. Sat., Doxy's Kitchen and Underwater. Wed., Verbal Combat. (919) 967-9053. Cat's Cradle is located in Carrboro.

Lizard and Snake Cafe: Tonight, Bus Stop, Jeff Carroll and Desmonds. Fri., William Christ Supercarr and Burst Into Flames. Sat., Tinsel and Stratotanker. Sun., Skurj and Inquisition. (919) 967-6303. The Lizard and Snake Cafe is located in Carrboro.

Movies

Breakfast At Tiffany's: 4 p.m. Sun. in Tribble A-3. This tried-and-true chestnut stars the alluring Audrey Hepburn. Free.

Pump Up the Volume: 8 p.m. tonight in Pugh Auditorium. A teenager moves to a new school and garners the students' attention through his pirate radio show. Starring Christian Slater. Free. Ext. 5255.

Double Feature: 7 p.m. Fri. and Sat., 6 p.m. Sun. in Pugh. This special AIDS awareness series features *Philadelphia* (Tom Hanks) and *The Cure*. \$2. Ext. 5255.

Viva La Muerte: 8 p.m. tonight at The Horse's Mouth Coffeehouse, 424 W. 4th St., Winston-Salem. Free.

Music

University Orchestra Concert: 8 p.m. Tues. in Brendle Recital Hall, Scales Fine Arts Center. Free. Ext. 5026.

Student Chamber Recital: 8 p.m. Wed. in Brendle. Free. Ext. 5026.

Music of William Grant Still: 8 p.m. tonight at the Reynolda House Museum of American Art. This concert and lecture is sponsored in part by the Delta Fine Arts Center. \$5. 725-5325.

Constantine Ionescu-Vovu: 8 p.m. Sat. at Crawford Hall, 200 Woughtown St., Winston-Salem. This pianist is a guest of the North Carolina School for the Arts. \$5. 721-1945.

Guitar Class Recital: 8 p.m. Tues. at Crawford Hall. Students of Gerald Klickstein and John Michael Parris will perform. Free. 721-1945.

Miscellaneous

Open Mike Night: Tonight in the Benson University Center. Come fulfill your destiny and perform in the Food Court. Free. Ext. 5255.

Blazing Saddles features Brooks' comedic genius

BY EDDIE CHILDRESS
OLD GOLD AND BLACK REVIEWER

In any list of great comedic filmmakers, there are a few that consistently appear near the top. Names like Charlie Chaplin, Ivan Reitman, Woody Allen and, of course, Mel Brooks.

This master of the movie parody, with recent films like *Robin Hood: Men in Tights* and the upcoming *Dracula: Dead and Loving It*, took a satirical look at Westerns in 1974 with *Blazing Saddles*, a hilarious introspection of land-grabbing and racism in the Old West.

Cleavon Little plays Bart, a black railroad worker scheduled to be hanged for whacking his foreman on the head with a shovel after the foreman almost got him and a co-worker killed.

He is saved from the noose by an insidious plot concocted by Hedley Lamarr (Harvey Korman), the district attorney/railroad baron who is scheming to grab the land on which the town of Rock Ridge lies.

The idea is to send them a black sheriff so that the racist townsfolk, if they don't kill him themselves, will leave rather than be protected by a man of color.

Our heroic new sheriff eventually wins over their favor, but Hedley isn't one to give up easily.

Trust me, the plot, while somewhat warped, isn't as complicated as it may sound. Among the many scriptwriters (including Brooks of course) was Richard Pryor, and his influence shows, in the dialogue as well as the story.

The entire cast seems to be enjoying itself immensely, particularly Brooks himself as the imbecilic governor with the well-rounded secretary (if you saw him in *Spaceballs*, you know the character).

Several famous or soon-to-be famous actors turn out very enjoyable performances: Korman as the sinister lawyer; Little as the wise and brave hero; Madeline Kahn as Lili von Shtupp, the burlesque singer who is Plan B in getting rid of the sheriff; and, in particular, Gene Wilder as Jim, the man who was once known as the Waco Kid, the fastest draw in the world.

An interesting technical note: proper costuming, by and large, is what anyone would find in most any Western, with one exception. Cleavon Little's costumes as the sheriff seemed a bit more appropriate to the 1970s rather than the 1870s.

If this was an honest mistake or if the person who made that particular decision had the foresight to realize how funny those clothes would look in twenty years, I can't say.

The real reason to see this movie is, of course, the comedy. It's not the wit of the dialogue, like in *Clerks*, or the touches of sheer lunacy, like in *Airplane!*. What Mel Brooks in particular has to offer is the fact that the characters are in on the joke. They know how silly they appear to the neutral observer (i.e., the audience),

Non-Western films by Mel Brooks:

- *Young Frankenstein* (1974)
- *History of the World, Part I* (1981)
- *Spaceballs* (1987)
- *Life Stinks* (1991)
- *Robinhood: Men in Tights* (1993)
- *Dracula: Dead and Loving It* (1995)

and occasionally we can see that.

For example, when Bart is depressed about how the people are insulting him because of the color of his skin, Jim comforts him and uplifts his spirits by telling him, "You gotta remember that these are just simple farmers. People of the land. The common clay of the New West. You know... morons."

Despite this, they plow onward fearlessly, hopeful that someone can make sense of it all. And if anyone can put this farce into an understandable form, it would be Mel Brooks.

It starts slow, but if you can sit through a single commercial break, you can wait for this movie to pick up the pace.

And rest assured, it does. Before you know it, you're cheering for the sheriff and the Waco Kid, booing the evil lawyer and his cronies, and laughing all the way.



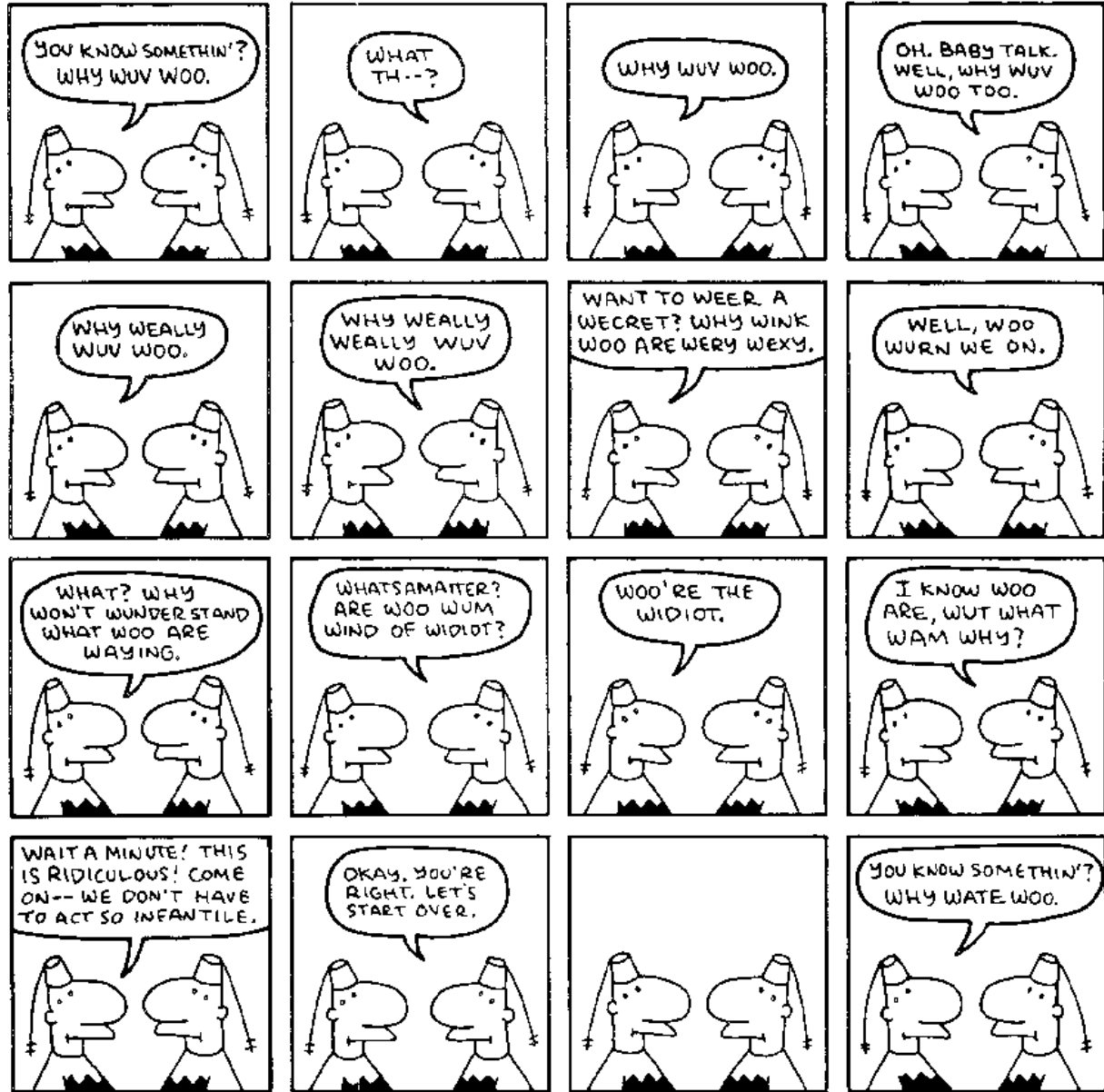
Courtesy of Savoy Pictures

Role Reversal

John Travolta and Harry Belafonte share a moment together at a local diner. These two star in *White Man's Burden*, a provocative and stimulating new drama from Savoy Pictures. The movie focuses on Travolta, a white man in a dead-end job who is trying to succeed in the world. The catch is that the racial balance of power, as we know it, has been reversed.

LIFE IN HELL

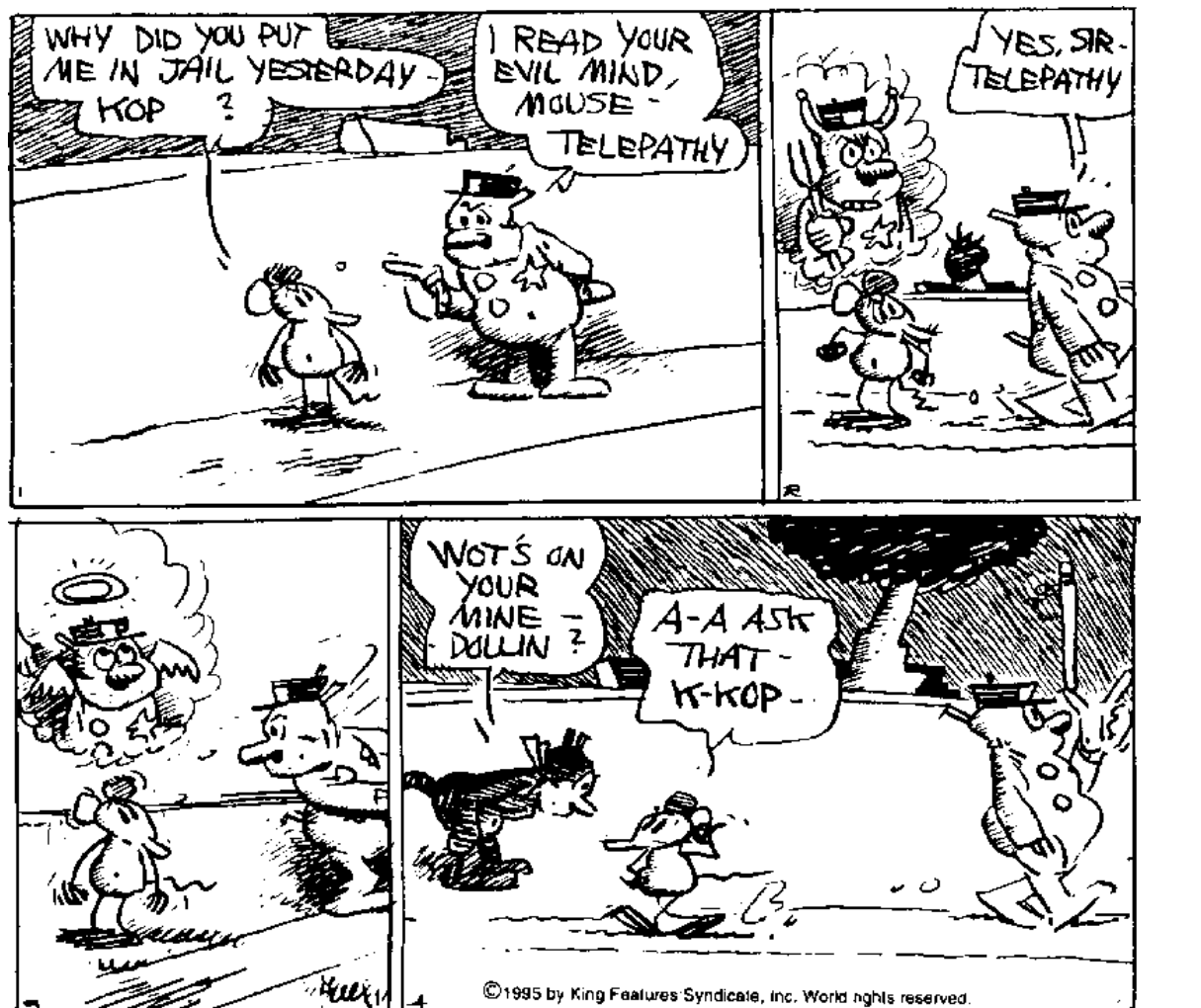
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