

Kris Kristofferson stars as an MIA who returns

FILMETER



ROBERT DIMATTEO

In Movie Theaters

WELCOME HOME (R) "Patton" director Franklin J. Schaffner's last movie before his recent death was this well-meaning but maudlin affair. The subject (a person who is presumed dead reappears, by which time his/her mate has remarried) is a perennial that has sometimes been played for comedy and sometimes for sobs. Here, it's sobs, with the basic situation dressed up in post-Vietnam War traumas.

Stony Kris Kristofferson stars as an Air Force lieutenant shot down over Cambodia, where he survived for 17 years, taking a Cambodian wife in the interim. When he finally returns home to the United States, he must make amends with his first wife (JoBeth Williams), her second husband (Sam Waterston) and a resentful son who has never known him.

With corny, geriatric direction and a script that settles for soap opera insights, this movie is a contemporary Rip Van Winkle story that never awakens to its dramatic possibilities. Along the way, there's at least one interesting irony: The Kristofferson character *liked* his life in Cambodia. **GRADE: ★½**

WAR PARTY (R) Terrific subject, terrible movie. One hundred years after Blackfoot Indians were slaughtered by the cavalry at Milk River, Mont., the mayor of economically ailing Binger decides to stage a re-enactment, using Indians from the local reservation and white men from the

town. But the fake battle turns into a real one, as one of the participating whites — a bigot packing a rifle with real bullets — is killed in self-defense

into a completely predictable good Indians vs. bad white posse shoot-'em-up. It certainly doesn't help that the good guys are callow young dudes

who talk in lame macho-ese. As Skitty (Kevin Dillon), Sonny's best buddy, says during an intense moment in a shoot-out: "I could kill for a pack of Marlboro Lights."

M. Emmet Walsh does one of his gruff, old codger numbers as the posse leader, and American Indian Movement co-founder Dennis Banks appears in a small role. But the leads are stiff. Part Huron Indian Billy Wirth ("The Lost Boys") is attractive, but he's not much of an actor. Neither, in this vehicle, is Kevin Dillon, who puts more than his brother Matt, and without the latter's raw charisma.

This message-action film makes some noise about how its young protagonists need to regain their tribal identity, and it trots out the outlaw-as-media-celebrity theme that was so

popular in the late '60s and '70s. But most of the film is very primitive drama. It makes you wonder: Why didn't the moviemakers just give the money they spent to the Indians, and spare us all? **GRADE: ★**

TALES FROM THE CRYPT (not rated) HBO. A nifty trilogy of D.C. Comics horror tales that first appeared on Home Box Office, these three short films make for a stylistically varied collection. The directors are no slouches — Robert Zemeckis ("Who Framed Roger Rabbit"), Richard Donner ("Lethal Weapon II") and Walter Hill ("Johnny Handsome"). **GRADE: ★★½**
(Film grading: ★★★★★ — excellent, ★★★ — good, ★★ — fair, ★ — poor)

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SARAH'S (JoBeth Williams) life is thrown into turmoil when the husband she thought had been killed in Vietnam (Kris Kristofferson) turns out to be alive in "Welcome Home."

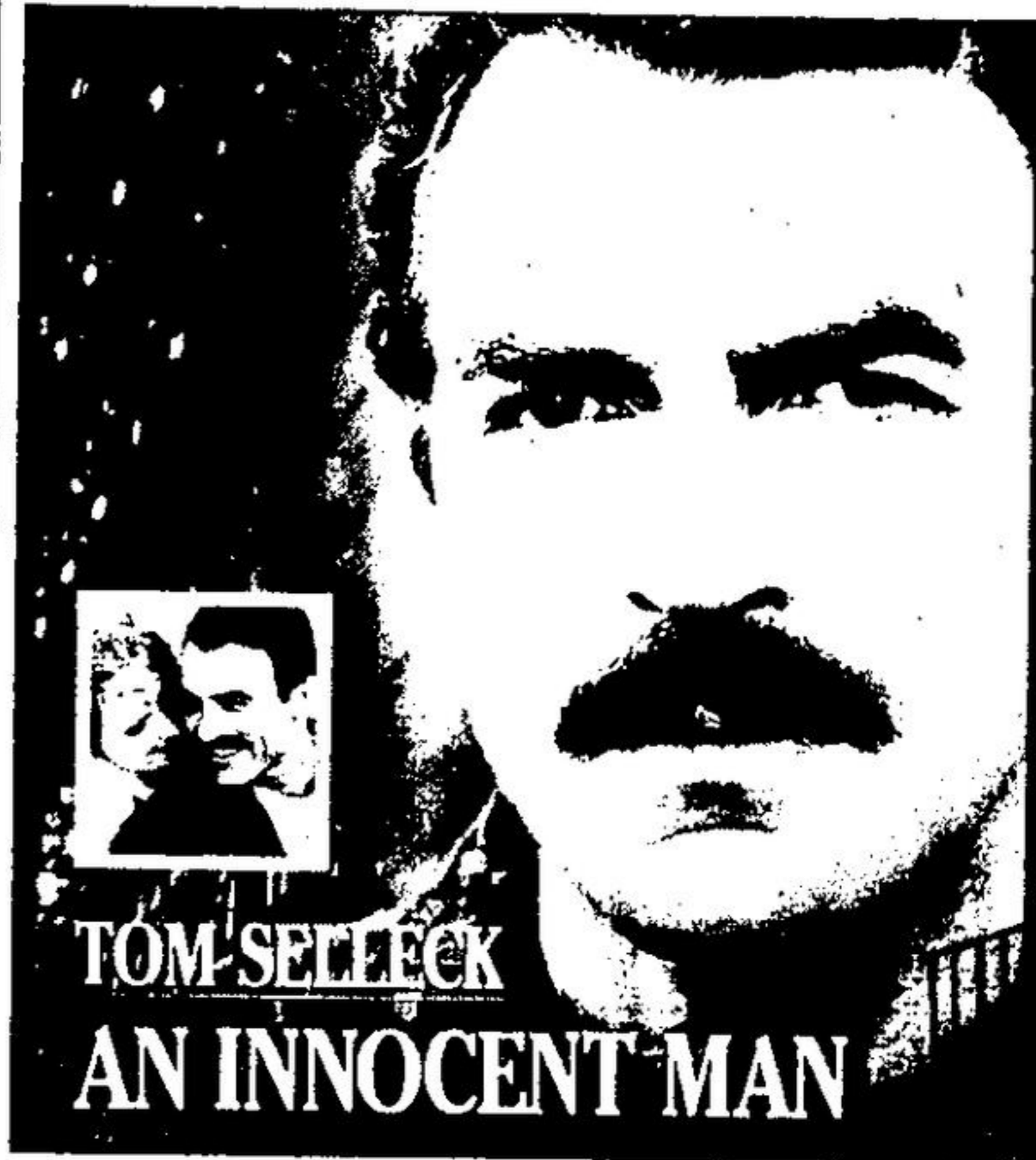
by Sonny Crowkiller (Billy Wirth), a descendant of the chief in the original skirmish. Convinced that "nothing's changed in a hundred years," and that they will be blamed for the violence, Sonny and his buddies go on the lam. And so does the movie, as it turns

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