ENTERTAINMENT



Roger Ebert's Video Alert

By Roger Ebert Universal press syndicate

FAR AND AWAY (PG-13, 140 m., 1992) stars Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman in a live story between shanty and lace curtain Irish, who run away to America, where they live in a brothel and he supports them by boxing bareknuckled in a saloon until they can head for the great land rush in Oklahoma.

The movie, shot in 70mm, has a great visual splendor, but the story is so simpleminded it seems pitched at junior high students. Rating: ★★

GLADIATOR (R, 98 m., 1992) is set in Chicago underworld of illegal boxing matches, where kingpin Brian Dennehy sets the odds and collects the bets.

James Marshall plays a white hope named Johnny, who hates fighting but needs to pay his father's debts. Cuba Gooding, Jr. is his best friend, and Robert Loggia is the smiling, slimy manager.

The gimmick of the secret, illegal fights permits the boxers to play fast and loose with the rules, and as the violence escalates, Marshall looks for a way to get even with Dennehy — and finds one.

Rating: ★★★

TAXI BLUES (No MPAA rating, 110 m., 1990) is a searingly honest look at present-day Moscow, seen through the eyes of a taxi driver and the jazz musician who stiffs him for fare.

As the driver tracks the jazzman and forces him to work out his debt, we see a confrontation between the Russian proletariat and bohemia, told in a documentary style that dramatizes the way that street smarts and black market connections are survival tools in today's Russia. Winner of the best director award at the 1990 Cannes festival. Rating:★★★

The 1993 edition of "Roger Ebert's Movie Home Companion," his best-selling book containing full-length reviews of more than 1,100 movies on videocassette, with an index of titles, stars and directors, is now available to his newspaper readers.

In paperback, it can be ordered by sending \$14.95 plus \$1 for postage and handling to Ebert's Companion, in care of this newspaper, P.O. Box 419150, Kansas City, Mo. 64141.



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