

THE TRIBUNE
Arts & Entertainment

Routine action picture saved by inventive script

You've really got to hand it to Steven Spielberg and his cohorts at Dreamworks. Not only do they launch their studio with a huge action picture, the kind that can just as easily sink as soar, they chose two unlikely action stars to carry the picture and an untested director to helm it.

That's chutzpah. Fortunately for the company, the gamble pays off, though just barely. In *The Peacemaker*, George Clooney and Nicole Kidman star as a pair of American military operatives — he a wild-child officer who'll do anything to get the job done, including bribing mafia truckers; she a straight-laced nuclear physicist who heads up the government's nuclear smuggling division — trying to track down a missing shipment of nuclear warheads en route from Russia to a disposal site.

When they determine that the weapons are in the hands of a particularly nasty and corrupt Russian general (Alexander Baluev) who plans to sell them on the black market for about \$200 million each, they become concerned.

The chase takes them from the States to the former Soviet Union, then to Austria and back to the States again, in a globetrotting adventure of James Bond-ian proportions.

They finally track down the cargo, only to discover one of the warheads is missing, possibly in the hands of a Bosnian national terrorist (Marcel Iures), on his way to New York for a UN meeting.

The chase begins anew as they pursue the terrorist through the

streets of New York. *The Peacemaker* is a



Screen Scene

Stuart Green

fairly routine action picture that owes a great deal of its edge and smarts to Michael

Schiffer's (*Crimson Tide*) sprawling, inventive, multi-dimensional script.

Just as the initial incident that sparks the hunt for the warheads is not what it appears to be on the surface, things in *The Peacemaker* are not always what they seem.

Kidman and Clooney, who are not exactly household names in the action genre, work well with the material, helping defuse what could have been a 'reel bomb.'

Kudos should also go out to director Mimi Leder (*ER*), making her motion picture debut. A film of this size and scope could easily have gotten away from the novice — it's happened to bigger and better. But Leder keeps things focussed and moving; at least for the second half.

Although far from a major artistic accomplishment, *The Peacemaker* is entertaining, albeit occasionally clichéd.

Career Girls is a deliciously offbeat comedy

For crackling originality in a more artistic setting, *Career Girls* is a better bet.

Written and directed by Mike Leigh, the film follows two college friends as they get reacquainted after years apart.

Through a series of flashbacks to their wild youth, we learn that the two are remarkably similar although nothing alike.

Lynda Steadman is Annie, a shy, introverted loser who had a skin problem that made her especially bashful, while Katlin Cartlidge is Hannah, an oddball extrovert.

The two of them are deliciously offbeat together, as is Leigh's dark and poignant script.

Throw in a few other strange characters and you have a wickedly-funny and wonderfully-fresh film, which should further secure Leigh's status as one of England's best film-makers.



TICK ... TICK ... TICK: Nicole Kidman and George Clooney are trapped in a race against time as they join forces to find nuclear terrorists who are threatening to ignite the bomb in the new high-tech thriller, *The Peacemaker*.

New trivia with Martyn Allmand at Fullerton's

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