

BANNED IN CHAPEL HILL!

With the exception of the Chelsea, Movie Theaters in

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Friday night. Downtown Chapel Hill. How about a movie? "Juice," perhaps? Let's see. Is it playing at the Varsity? No way. Ram Triple?... Sorry. Plaza?...Are you crazy?

In the movie industry, blacks have always been second-class citizens. And despite the emergence of films by black filmmakers, not much has changed - especially in Chapel Hill.

Students must still travel to Durham to see the newest films by black writers and directors when they are released.

"It's not fair," Sophomore Milton Smith said.

Theater owners, however, say it isn't a question of being fair.

"Location has a lot to do with what movies are shown in certain markets," said Michael Patrick, CEO of Carmike Cinema.



Whether it's Lee, Singleton or Rich, the answer is the same: Not in Chapel Hill!

Carmike owns Ram Triple located at the NCNB Plaza.

Patrick said Chapel Hill is not an action town.

"It will do very well with movies that (win) academy awards or appeal to the intellectual group."

Jim Steele, part owner and manager of the Varsity located on Franklin Street, said his theater shows primarily foreign and independent films because they are what interest him.

"We don't want to duplicate commercial movie theaters," he said. "We want to serve as an alternative source."

Both the Ram and the Plaza I-III located on Elliott Road, show commercial films.

Teresa Puryear, who books the films shown at the Plaza, said the theater is not big on showing black films, which have contained mostly shooting and violence.

"We're into more intellectual films rather than a bunch of people shooting each other," said Puryear, an employee of Eastern Federal Corporation, owner of the Plaza.

Despite its policy, the Plaza ran the popular action film "Terminator 2" last summer.

"Terminator 2' did well everywhere," Puryear explained.

While the theaters have their own idea about what University students would like to see, students have their own ideas about the theaters themselves.

Senior Terrence Garrison said the theater operators may stereotype black audiences.

"I think the people in charge in a lot of cases, have the misconception that black people are nothing but trouble," Garrison said.

Rava Alexander, a senior, agreed.

"White people are afraid if they give us an opportunity to act dignified, we will act dignified and they don't want this," Alexander said. "This is the only way they can keep us in our place -- oppressed."

Meanwhile, both Alexander and Garrison

feel it would be beneficial for downtown Chapel Hill theaters to show more black films.

Sophomore Marcellus Howard added that black movies would attract a sizeable audience.

"There are enough black and white people here who would go and see a black movie if they're worried about making a profit," Howard said.

Garrison said he does not often go to the theaters, because they do not support black contributions to the cinema.

"I think that it would be very socially and politically irresponsible for me as an African American to lend my financial support to institutions which don't support African Americans," he said.

Steele of the Varsity said he is aware a lot of money can be made from black movies and other commercial films. But Chapel Hill is too small to support two theaters showing the same picture.

"There are too few screens in Chapel Hill and too many movies to be played," he said.

One theater which does attract



Kelly Greene/Black Ink

The Chelsea theater consistently plays films by black writers and directors.