

Blink satisfies with old plot

Catherine Jernigan
Staff Writer

Recognize this story? The attractive cop/lawyer falls in love with the extremely attractive witness/suspect/client and, after a harrowing confrontation with the homicidal maniac/ tense trial scene, the handsome couple lives happily ever after. Apparently, the criminal justice system is responsible for more happy couples than computer dating services. Everybody knows this premise is completely stale, but *Blink* feigns ignorance towards its hackneyed plot line and saves itself with some clever twists.

Most notably, the witness in this case is blind. Well, not quite. Emma Brody (Madeline Stowe) has been completely without sight for 20 years when her doctor informs her that a cornea donor has been found. After the operation, she can see distorted images, which sometimes don't register in her brain until 24 hours after she actually sees them.

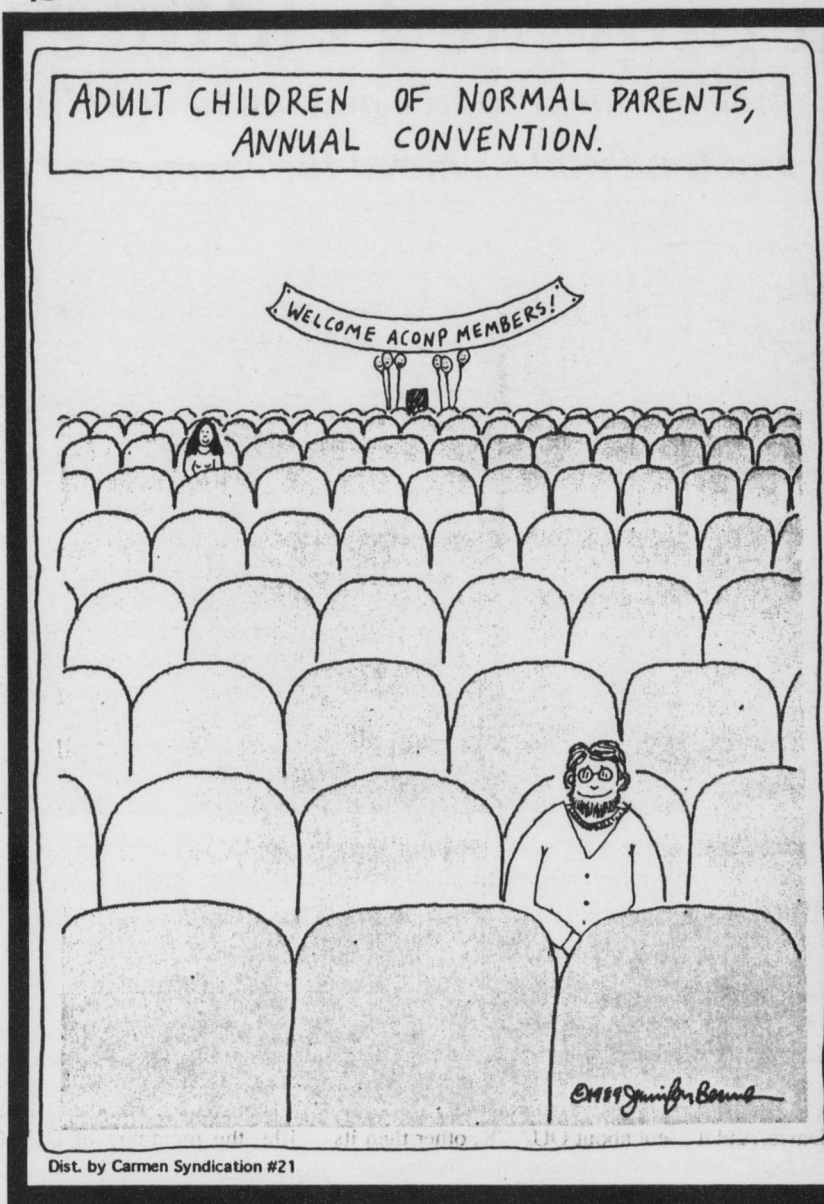
This phenomenon is disconcerting enough in itself, but the trouble really begins when Emma realizes she's the only witness to a neighbor's murder. She eventually convinces the cynical detective assigned to the case (Aidan Quinn), but by that time, the mur-

derer is after her. From there, they follow the standard "we've got to find him before he finds us" procedure. The final showdown is eerie and suspenseful, though it is suspiciously similar to the confrontation in *Silence of the Lambs*.

The film's most redeeming quality is its visual effects, which bring Emma's warped and contorted visions to the screen. Watching faces swim and bulge or jump out of a blank wall is fascinating, and this aspect of the film is extremely effective. Some of the scenes are startling, like the killer suddenly appearing in Emma's apartment; others, like the hallucinations which detail the cause of Emma's blindness, are genuinely disturbing.

Madeline Stowe shows great diversity as Emma, portraying the character's impressive strength and independence, as well as the insecurities and fears which plague her. She is at no time a helpless, trembling victim waiting to be saved by her leading man. Quinn plays the hard-nosed homicide detective well. He's a bit flat at first, but as his relationship with Emma develops, he gains a degree of depth.

Even though the basic premise is lacking in creativity, *Blink* is worth seeing for its innovative special effects and fabulous score, as well as the riveting final scene.



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