



Not Uma Thurman: Marlene Dietrich

future of British cinema lies only in big-budget, Hollywood-style movies, he should reconsider his advice before it is too late and the British in Berlin stand space is allocated to another, more sales-minded organisation.

● I'm not as close to the corridors of power as I'd have to be to boast first-hand access to this story. So y'all are going to have to be content to have me open the doors that lead to them. The corridors in question are alive with the sound of animals and small children or, to be more specific, the sequel to *Babe* and the new series of *Rugrats*.

According to Michael Fleming in *Daily Variety* (who clearly does have access to said corridors), Christine Cavanaugh – who spoke for Babe in the movie and speaks for Chuckie in the television series – has been edged out of the sequel because she was asking for more (reportedly some 15 times more) than the \$30,000 she got for voicing the pig first time around. The movie, after all, took some \$120 million worldwide.

Following extended negotiations, E. G. Daily (the voice of Tommy in

Rugrats and an occasional guest on *Friends*) revealed that she could do the Babe voice just as well as Cavanaugh and got the job.

Should negotiations break down at some future date, my nine-year-old daughter does a pretty neat Babe and is prepared to talk terms.

Would you believe it? After all the speculation over a major Hollywood biopic about Marlene Dietrich, the Germans – whose relationship with the star has been, at best, problematic (plans to rename streets and squares after her in her native Berlin have been repeatedly blocked by those who feel she betrayed the country) – look like getting there first.

The American movie was to have been the next film for the late Louis Malle, with Uma Thurman pencilled in for the title role. But although there have been sporadic attempts to revive the project since Malle's death in 1995, nothing has so far happened.

The German project is not exactly imminent, though. Word is it won't be shot until the year after next (1999), as a co-production between Trebitsch Produktion International in Hamburg and broadcaster ZDF. But the lead role is already cast: Katja Flint, star of German hit *'Widows'*.

● A brief follow-up to the item about PolyGram bringing in their own editor to recut Robert Altman's movie version of the John Grisham story, *The Gingerbread Man*: legendary music producer Chris Blackwell, whose Island Records offshoot Island Pictures was a co-producer on

the film, has since resigned from the latter company, reportedly in protest at the *Gingerbread Man* situation.

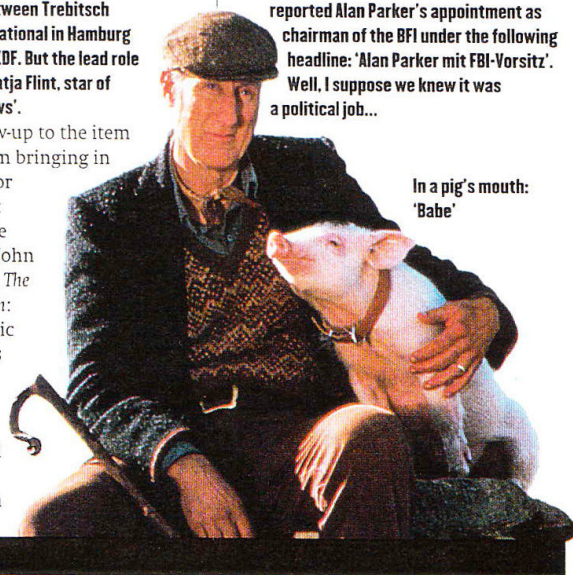
He was apparently going to leave anyway at the end of the year, because he wasn't happy with the way things were going under PolyGram. But when news of the Altman situation came, he decided to go early.

All of which may prove a tad hasty, since the fuss seems to have blown over: PolyGram's editor turned in a version eight minutes shorter than Altman's, but test results with preview audiences were pretty much the same. So it looks as though it will be Altman's original that eventually goes out – eventually being the key word, since the release of *The Gingerbread Man* has now been postponed (as predicted here last month) until early 1998.

Finally, it is not Mr Busy's habit to mock hard-working sub editors. But something obviously went seriously wrong at the sober-sided German trade paper *Film-echo/Filmwoche*, which, in mid-August,

reported Alan Parker's appointment as chairman of the BFI under the following headline: 'Alan Parker mit FBI-Vorsitz'.

Well, I suppose we knew it was a political job...



In a pig's mouth: 'Babe'

SARAJEVO NOTES

Bomb culture

The fourth Sarajevo Film Festival was the perfect spot for the Hemingway-esque cinephile: the programme, two parts cultural solidarity to one part aesthetic appreciation, mixed an interesting assortment of European art films with several films about the war.

Sarajevo is only just beginning to recover from its four-year siege, and this Festival acts as a rallying point for cultural and spiritual reconstruction. And with café society returning, especially to the largely restored old city, the Festival is also an important part of postwar Sarajevo social life.

As foreign journalists and filmmakers made their way to screenings at the newly opened Obala Art Centre (the old one was bombed), all postwar Sarajevo went to the outdoor cinema. Where just 2½ years ago people were dodging snipers' bullets, crowds gathered to watch how such films as Admir Kenovic's *Perfect Circle* (the story of a poet who survives the war)

showed the city under attack. Sarajevans wept in surreal catharsis at scenes of destruction, and cheered when gun-wielding *Chetniks* got their just desserts. The first postwar Bosnian film, *Perfect Circle* won kudos from the crowd for its authentic, very human portrayal of life under siege.

Such films as Michael Winterbottom's well-intentioned *Welcome to Sarajevo* and Spanish director Gerardo Herrero's forgettable *Territorio Comanche*, which both concentrate on foreign journalists' wartime experiences, were somewhat less popular. But *Batman and Robin*, *Con Air* and *The Lost World Jurassic Park* were enthusiastically received: great cheering and booing as moral dilemmas were simplified to celluloid battles between Mr Freeze and the Caped Crusader. And as dinosaurs stampeded and Nicolas Cage misbehaved on the giant outdoor screen, there were – in a nearby, almost simultaneous, strange

symbiosis – election rallies with just as much emotion and showbiz display. At one opposition rally, crowds cheered as pop singers crooned nationalistic anthems on a makeshift stage, while smokescreens and helium balloons framed candidates proclaiming "love" for Bosnia.

Meanwhile at the Obala, foreign critics watched the violent likes of Peter Liechti's *Marthas Garten* (an odd Swiss film noir about a homicidal man who loses his mind in a very, well, Swiss way), or Albert Dupontel's *Bernie*, a black comedy about revenge, or Mathieu Kassovitz's extremely dark *Assassin(s)*, which takes itself very seriously indeed. Takashi Ishii's *Gonin 2* was about Japanese women gangsters (a *Seven Samurai* meets Gloria Steinem deal); Croatian director Goran Rušinovic's *Mondo Bobo*, also about gangsters, threw in elements of *Breathless* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* for good measure. And, of course, there was Macedonian director

Antonio Mitrikevski's slow-moving, melodramatic *Preku Ezero*, about the 40-year incarceration and torture of a Macedonian man in love with an Albanian woman.

Other highlights included Belgian director Alain Berliner's *Ma vie en rose*, with its unpretentious yet charming meditation on tolerance; the short film *Szel* (a stark, haunting look at death and mourning by Hungarian director Marcel Ivanyi); a screening of *A Taste of Cherries* (though director Kiarostami was sadly a no-show); an appearance by John Malkovich; and a closing party with a dramatic power cut in mid-swing ("very realistic," said one partygoer: "Just like the war"). Indeed, Sarajevo experienced a 'stage three' security alert towards the end of the Festival (because of riots in neighbouring Serbia) and a small bomb exploded near the Festival office. But no one really noticed: they were all too busy watching movies. *Hadani Ditmars*