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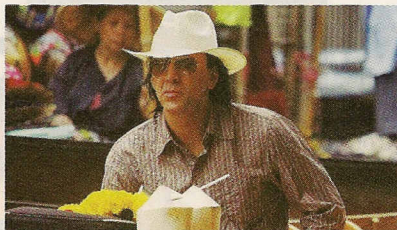
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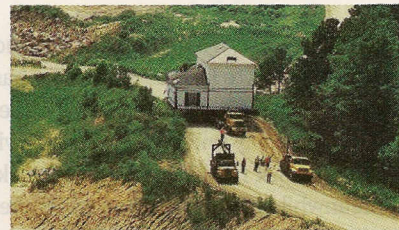
Reviews **Movies**



Bangkok Dangerous

Nicolas Cage, Shahkrit Yamnarm
R, 100 MINS.

"My name is Joe," says the familiar droopy voice on the soundtrack. "And this is what I do." He's making reference to being a hitman, but the actor might as well be talking about himself: His name is Nicolas Cage, and this is what he does—take the big bucks to star in slovenly, inert pulp of the sort no actor of his magnitude should be stooping to. The Pang brothers, remaking their 1999 Thai thriller, turn Cage into a scruffy, blank-eyed cipher of an assassin, who has been hired to kill four men; we learn so little about them that they flash by like the bad guys in a trailer. The filmmakers even manage to turn seamy Bangkok into the least exotic setting imaginable. **F**—OG



Moving Midway

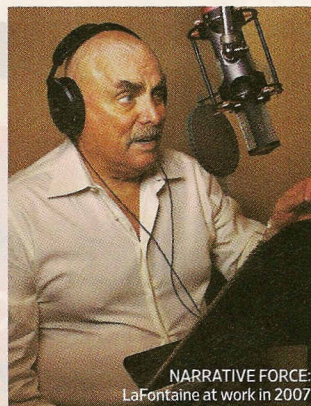
UNRATED, 98 MINS.

The whole idea of foundation—as it applies to family, history, and an actual, stately American house—receives a thoughtful inspection in this graceful nonfiction film from Godfrey Cheshire, a New York-based film critic with North Carolina roots. He documents the lifting, loading, and moving of Midway, an ancestral family plantation, out of the path of encroaching commercial Raleigh sprawl. With his deep cinematic knowledge and vivid visual references, Cheshire analyzes the romantic notion of "the plantation" and offers a compassionate meditation on Southern race relations. Plus, he had the small-world luck in finding Dr. Robert Hinton, a charismatic NYU professor and grandson of a Midway slave. **A-**—LS

TRAILERS AFTER DON LaFontaine

In a World Where... Voice-overs Are A Fading Art Form

After the Sept. 1 death of Don LaFontaine—the voice-over artist who breathed life into roughly 5,000 movie previews—we got to wondering: Why don't trailers feature much voice-over work anymore? Velvet tones accompany the trailers for the old Indiana Jones movies (LaFontaine himself did *The Last Crusade*), but the promos for this year's *Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* contained no voice-overs at all, just a montage of clips. In fact, LaFontaine-style vocals are hard to find in *any* trailer now. "There's been a sea change within the industry," says John Long, a partner at L.A.-based Buddha Jones, which produced trailers for *Tropic Thunder* (minimal voice-overs) and *Blindness* (none). "Audiences are more sophisticated, and people now think using graphics or title cards isn't as ham-fisted and obvious." Modern voice-overs are often ironic, Long adds, noting *Thunder's* trailer uses them to bring "an exaggerated heroic quality to the movie's larger-than-life characters." As a result, there may never be another Don LaFontaine. "Don was at a unique moment in time," says Phil Terrence, voice-over star of NBC's *Heroes* and the TV spots for *Eagle Eye*. "I don't think you can replace Don. Any one of us in the business would probably love to, but we're dreaming." —Gregory Kirschling



NARRATIVE FORCE:
LaFontaine at work in 2007



The Last Crusade



Kingdom of the Crystal Skull