POZ Picks

August 1, 1999 By Michael Polson

COMING ATTRACTION

The Next Best Thing
Directed by John Schlesinger

Paramount Pictures

What's left to live for after you've paid $8 to see Rupert Everett and Madonna sleep together? In The Next Best Thing, trés gay Rufus (Everett) kicks back a few cocktails with his best friend, Abbie (Madonna), and hark!, a child is born. According to Paramount's publicity parrots, these two form "an unconventional family bound by friendship." Five years later she falls for a straight man and a brutal custody battle over the child erupts. Keep an eye out for Rufus' HIV positive lover in the mélèe. Shooting started in April, but the release date is up in the air—after Paramount sat on the script for two and a half years before giving it the green light. —Michael Polson

BOOKS

Boundaries of Blackness
by Cathy J. Cohen

University of Chicago Press

If African Americans comprise only 12 percent of the nation's population, why do they account for an estimated 57 percent of all new HIV infections? Yale political scientist Cathy Cohen's answer is an ambitious leap beyond victimology. She says that black leaders have not provided what she calls the "transformative leadership" that would define AIDS as a political issue rather than as a secondary issue affecting only a marginalized segment of the black community, primarily gay men and IV drug users.

Cohen argues that this inaction is not simply the result of homophobia or a lack of resources. Instead she asserts that the CDC, the mainstream media, the black press and black political leaders have all inhibited political mobilization. Rather than risking their own hard-won respectability by assuming leadership around AIDS, Cohen argues, black elites worried that focusing on HIV among gay men and drug users would feed stereotypes about the immorality of

blacks. The only PWAs the black community will embrace are those who can be painted as victims—women and especially children.

Cohen's tone and willingness to take a position are refreshing in an academic work. One wishes she had included more voices of blacks living with HIV, but this is an important work and the first to fully explore the reasons for the lackluster response to AIDS in the black community. —Renee Romano

Beach Totes

So you've slathered on the SPF 500 and have the map to the shore. What to bring with your fine self? We suggest these four surefire summertime selections:

Has all the suspense gone out of cruising? *Justice at Risk* (Doubleday) will leave you breathless. And jeez, Louise, look how John Morgan Wilson packs the red-button HIV issues into this newest offering in his seemingly straightforward gay-crime Justice series.

What's Beach Blanket Bingo without *OndaSonora: Red, Hot & Lisbon*? This latest in the AIDS benefit music series will fill your ear with the sounds of Portugal by way of David Byrne, k.d. lang and a few dozen world-music singers with whom you can pretend to be on a first-name aural basis.

And lest you float away into the big blue beyond, come back down to earth with *AIDS Capitation* (Haworth Press)—not a Stephen King thriller but an extremely in-depth guide to the many ways AIDS is changing national health care policy. David Cherin and George Huba are a pair of PhDs who seem to get off on facts and figures. If you're the same type of policy wonk, pack this one with a towel.

Bone up on the latest in safe sex with the *Condomania Catalogue*. To order, call 800.9CONDOM and ask for Matt. He'll explain the Astroglide lube phenomenon and their "call by 2, ship by 5" policy. Priority mail adds three bucks to the $5 shipping and handling charge, but you'll get your rubber lovin' in three days. Drop a quarter from the cabana and give them a treasure map to your door. XXX marks the spot! —Kevin O'Leary

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