



THE MONSTERS NEXT DOOR



WHAT MADE THEM
DO IT?



BOOKS

GARDENS IN THE DUNES By *Leslie Marmon Silko* Indigo is the last remnant of a desert Indian tribe at the turn of the century. Orphaned by a U.S. cavalry raid, the girl is captured and sent to boarding school. She escapes, only to be discovered by a monkey and its newly married mistress, Hattie Palmer. Indigo, fighting to keep her culture, and Hattie, fed up with her own, form an uneasy bond. No matter how many new worlds Hattie takes the girl to, Indigo longs to return to the tribal gardens in the dunes. The plot undergoes some awkward twists to accommodate that wish, but Silko has crafted a dream-like tale out of one of the ugliest realities in American history. —*By Nadya Labi*

A THOUSAND SUNS By *Dominique Lapierre* The accomplished French author of the 1985 best seller *The City of Joy* recapitulates in honeyed prose more than a dozen stories he covered in his long career in journalism. He interviews the bullfighter El Cordobés and retraces Mahatma Gandhi's last moments. Much of the narrative runs to the cloyingly inspirational, and a good deal of it challenges credulity. For example, Caryl Chessman, awaiting execution at San Quentin, is portrayed as an intellectual who speaks in finely wrought sentences as he discourses about crime prevention, citing Albert Camus ("What a writer!"). Oh, what a mess! —*By Jesse Birnbaum*

TELEVISION

THE AWFUL TRUTH *Bravo, Fridays* The further the mainstream pushes Michael Moore away, the more tenacious he gets. He has been banished all the way to Bravo, and though his new show is not as slick as his last (*TV Nation*), it's even more hard-hitting. Moore bothers Big Business again, as he does when he invites Humana execs

STYLE AISLE



SHOW TIME: Thanks to architects Rem Koolhaas and Richard Gluckman, New York City's Second Stage Theatre has a new home—an old bank. Turning conventional notions of theater design upside down, the team put the box office in an old walk-in safe and retained the bank's windows and light-filled atmosphere. When a show starts, huge drapes cover the windows—a whole new type of curtain raiser.

to the mock funeral of a man whose pancreas transplant has been denied by the insurers. It's unusual to find an angry liberal in this economy, but Moore makes a better case for the working guy than any politician out there. —*By Joel Stein*

MUSIC

BURY THE HATCHET *The Cranberries* Their tranquil, folky sound was once dubbed "dream pop," so the Irish quartet spent most of the 1990s trying to dispel that label (and its implied wimpiness) by veering into rough-edged rock. *Bury the Hatchet* deftly reverses course, scaling back the band's vision from the worldly to the personal and unearthing the contemplative style that got lost in lay-



ers of guitar noise. The band has rediscovered where its allure lies: in carefully sculpted songs that aren't too overpowering. —*By David E. Thigpen*

CINEMA

eXistenZ *Directed by David Cronenberg* In this virtual-reality game, the gamepod looks like an animal kidney, and the plug (ugh) goes into a hole in your back. No big deal, says the game's creator (Jennifer Jason Leigh): "They do it in malls;



it's like having your ears pierced." She might be a stand-in for the writer-director, who in *Scanners*, *Videodrome*, *Crash* and *The Fly* has dealt creepily and eloquently with the disintegration of mind and body. *eXistenZ*, where Leigh and Jude Law get into a virtual reality game and can't get out, is more modest than its current twin, *The Matrix*, but it pulses with a furtive fury that's pure Cronenberg. Like the virtual game he plays on us, the film is weird, it's addictive, and Lord, it's alive! —*By Richard Corliss*

PUSHING TIN *Directed by Mike Newell* Air-traffic controllers are the true macho men of sky biz—cowboy choreographers who get the dozens of planes over New York City's airports "lined up like Rockettes." As long as Glen and Les Charles' script focuses on the controllers' wayward bravado, the film has the tang of an old Howard Hawks film about tough guys under pressure. But like its frazzled hero, Nick (John Cusack), this ambitious, well-cast movie goes haywire when Nick's rivalry with psycho-genius Billy Bob Thornton turns into a game of sexual one-upmanship. *Tin* tailspins into silliness and never regains its flight pattern. —*R.C.*

