

Document Citation

Title	12 years later, Carradine's Americana to open locally
Author(s)	Roderick Mann
Source	<i>Los Angeles Times</i>
Date	1985 Mar 30
Type	article
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Americana, Carradine, David, 1983

RODERICK MANN

12 YEARS LATER, CARRADINE'S 'AMERICANA' TO OPEN LOCALLY

If at first you don't succeed—give up, say the cynics. But don't tell that to David Carradine.

In 1973, during a hiatus from his television series "Kung Fu," Carradine co-produced, directed and acted in an offbeat little movie called "Americana."

He played a drifting Vietnam veteran who arrives in a small town and, in an attempt to make up for the recent carnage, tries to restore a broken-down merry-go-round, thereby arousing the locals' suspicions.

The movie, which co-stars Barbara Hershey, was shown at the U.S.A. Film Festival in Dallas, the Utah Film Festival in Park City and in 1981 at the Directors Fortnight of the Cannes Film Festival.

And Carradine, who had just made a deal with the UA Classics division to distribute the film, sat back and awaited its release.

But nothing happened.

Now, 12 years after completion, the

movie is to have its first public screening here, at Laemmle's Monica 4-Plex, on April 17.

"It's been a long wait," said Carradine the other afternoon, sitting out on the deck of his home in the Hollywood Hills. "But I've never stopped being optimistic. When the film was so well-received at Cannes, I was sure UA Classics would release it immediately, but they didn't. So I bought it back from them for \$12,000—the cost of the trailer they had made.

"Next, I took it to a distributor—who went out of business. Finally, I wound up with Crown International."

"Americana" was then shown at two small theaters in New York City—one on the East Side, one on the West.

"But the New York critics killed it," Carradine said frankly. "They not only condemned the movie; they attacked me for making it. When I turned up at the East Side theater with a pack of photos to sign,

there were just 16 people in the audience. So I went to the West Side theater; there were 50 there. After that, Crown seemed to lose heart."

But Carradine didn't. After another long wait, he called up Robert Laemmle and sent him a print. Laemmle liked it, and agreed to open it at the Monica.

Carradine, who says he is paying for the advertising himself, now has "something like \$600,000" of his own money invested in the film. "And I still owe money to the actors and crew who worked on it.

"I know I'll never get my money back,"



*I know
I'll never
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All I want
is for the
movie to
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—David Carradine

he said, "but that doesn't matter. All I want is for the movie to be seen. I don't worry much about money; my father (veteran actor John Carradine) taught me not to. So what if they take everything away from me tomorrow? I can still go out to work, can't I?"