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Who Slew Auntie Roo? [Review of the film "Who Slew Auntie Roo?" at the Capitol Court Theater, Milwaukee]

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by Curtis L. Carter

Who Slew Auntie Roo? at the Capitol Court Theater is another of those films about which the only pertinent question is, WHY? There is no apparent reason why a responsible film maker would waste talent and resources on such a mediocre venture.

There are suggestions of "Hansel and Gretel." A boy and girl are held captive by Auntie Roo in her castle, and the boy keeps reciting lines from "Hansel and Gretel" to suggest the connection.

Despite associations conjured up from past experiences, **Auntie Roo** didn't seem to offer much. Shelly Winters has a few good moments in a thoroughly ambiguous character role. Auntie is at once a benevolent soul who brings joy to children at the local orphanage with her annual Christmas party, a victim of grief over her own daughter's accidental death, the target of exploitation by a fake medium and her house servants, and possibly a cruel witch who plans to harm orphans Katy and Christopher.

Auntie determines that the spirit of her deceased child is in Katy, whom she detains at her home after the other children return to the orphanage. Christopher, Katy's brother, who tries to rescue his sister is also imprisoned. The latter part of the film becomes a con-

test between Auntie and the children. They think she is planning to eat them.

Throughout there are various shock techniques, designed to thrill persons who enjoy the macabre. However, the measures are only half-hearted. Knives and cleavers are brandished, the decaying corpse of Auntie's child is shown and the children are frightened by a sort of horror room with animated masks and scare techniques. But the implied violence never actually occurs, except when the children burn up Auntie.

The film is unfortunately sufficiently restrained in horror to get by the GP censors but quite capable of giving pointless nightmares to children who might happen to attend.