

RM NEWS 3/5/82 P.7

## Popcorn duo exonerated in movie rift

A Parker couple who smuggled homemade popcorn into a southeast Denver theater, were found innocent Thursday of disturbing the peace.

A jury found David [redacted] and his wife, Mary Lou [redacted], not guilty of the charge following a four-day trial in Denver County Court.

The couple, tired of what they thought was inferior-quality popcorn sold at movie theaters, brought their own bags of popcorn to a showing of "Time Bandits" at Tamarac Square last November.

After buying the \$4 movie tickets, they were warned not to bring the bootleg popcorn into the theater. They ignored the warning and a sign prohibiting patrons from bringing food into the theater that wasn't purchased in the lobby.

Less than an hour later, [redacted] was wearing handcuffs and was on his way to jail. Both had been charged with creating a disturbance.

Assistant City Attorney Tom Combs argued that the couple had disturbed other moviegoers by the commotion over the popcorn. [redacted] told police the only way they were going to get him out of the theater was "kicking and screaming."

But the couple's lawyer, Steve Silvern, contended the couple had finished off the popcorn and were quietly watching the movie when they were asked to leave.

## Couple in popcorn flap file suit against theater

By KEVIN FLYNN  
News Staff

A Parker couple arrested last year after bringing their own popcorn to a southeast Denver movie theater have sued the theater's corporate owner and four employees for \$400,000.

David [redacted] and Mary Lou [redacted] filed the complaint Tuesday in Denver District Court.

They were arrested Nov. 21 at the Tamarac Theater, 3405 S. Tamarac Drive, shortly after they finished off two bags of homemade popcorn at a showing of the movie, "Time Bandits."

**THEY WERE ACQUITTED** of charges of disturbing the peace March 4.

In their suit, the couple claims the theater's employees subjected them to malicious prosecution, false arrest and imprisonment, and that they were libeled and slandered by theater personnel.

The theater is owned by Mann Theaters Corp. of California. Mann's president, Lawrence Gleason, is named as a defendant on the basis of remarks that he made in a television interview following the arrest.

The theater has a rule prohibiting the consumption of any food other than that which is purchased at its concession stand. The couple's suit claims the policy is "designed to protect corporate profits from sales of 'buttercorn' or 'butter-flavored popcorn' which product in fact contained no butter."

[redacted] and [redacted] said they brought their own popcorn because they do not like the popcorn sold at theaters.

[redacted] was jailed for five hours after four Denver police officers handcuffed him in the theater and carried him off. [redacted], who earlier had left the auditorium, was given a summons. She was left at the theater with no money or keys to the couple's car.

Named as defendants with Mann Theaters and Gleason are Ed Doty, district manager for Mann, Richard Kuratli, manager of the Tamarac Theater, and Michael Pagliasotti, assistant manager. Doty is now at a Mann theater in Utah. Kuratli and Pagliasotti no longer work at the Tamarac Theater.

**THE SUIT CLAIMS** the employees had the couple arrested for disturbing the peace when there wasn't a kernel of truth to the charge. [redacted] and [redacted] say they were seated quietly in the theater when Pagliasotti and Kuratli caused a ruckus over the already-eaten popcorn.

The couple claimed they refused to leave because the theater would not refund their admission money. The suit claims the couple was arrested and prosecuted to justify the initial overreaction to the situation.

According to the suit, Gleason and Doty later claimed that the couple had been loud and abusive to the theater employees, a charge [redacted] and [redacted] say is false and slandered them.