

# ENTERTAINMENT

## CIA at it again

### Timely thriller electrifies with suspense

By JULIAN BELTRAME

Is there a second CIA inside the CIA, whose identity is secret even to agents of the Intelligence Agency?

That is the question *Three Days of the Condor*, a new spy-thriller just recently released in Toronto, poses. The unlikelihood of the American movie audience answering the question with an affirmative, at first had its director Sydney Pollack more than a trifle worried.

"We were worried that nobody would believe it," Pollack told an admiring crowd of over 500 at the Ontario Science Centre last Thursday at the first Toronto screening of the film. Since recent events involving the CIA have solved that problem, Pollack is now worried that the fantastic plot in *Condor* will be all too believable and take away from the shock value of the film.

But there's no real worry that movie audiences will stay away from this one, either because it is too believable or too sci-fi. Pollack has covered all the bases, starring Robert Redford and Faye Dunaway in the lead roles, and directing such a slick and fast-paced film that audiences will be swept away with the unfolding story and not touch down till the end of its two hour playing time.

The fine cast also includes Max Von Sydow as the professional assassin who cares little for sides or scruples, Cliff Robertson as a CIA man just beginning to discover the games his company plays and John Houseman as one of the leading gamesmen.

Redford plays the handsome and super-perceptive Turner, whose fringe-role in the Central Intelligence Agency is to read books for clues of other spy

organizations and for clever plans which may prove useful to the CIA.

The bookreaders are a gentle lot, quietly doing their job and handing in reports. None of them even carry weapons, save for the receptionist who is afraid of being raped.

It takes Pollack but a few minutes to establish the situation, naturally and in an uncontrived manner, so that when the wollop comes it is a double-barrelled wollop.

Within the first five or so minutes we are confronted with seven killings, stylishly choreographed by Pollack. In the first killing, a woman is seen shot, but no blood is seen. The action occurs when she topples over the chair. In each subsequent shooting, less of the actual shooting is seen and more and more damage is done to a prop in the vicinity, till the last shooting which is not shown at all - the audience only sees and hears a tele-type machine.

"The violence is transmitted to objects, not to the people themselves," explained Pollack. It is a stylistic device, but it keeps the film on the scent of excitement, not blood.

A small point, but an important one. *Condor* is filled with such small but important stylistic tricks which keep the film moving at a hectic, all-encompassing pace. Another scene to watch for is Redford-Dunaway love-scene.

It does not take a man like Turner long to figure out that if seven out of eight men in his department were shot down while he was away getting a snack, he'll soon be next. His mistake is to phone the CIA hoping for help. All the CIA sends is another assassin.

Somewhat at a loss as to where



Robert Redford uses gentle persuasion to enlist the aid of Faye Dunaway in *Three Days of the Condor*.

to turn, next Turner kidnaps Faye Dunaway at a sporting goods store and hides out with the dependable "spy-fucker" until he can unravel the mystery.

Pollack uses all the tricks of the trade to keep the film moving along - including a seemingly insoluble dilemma, ever-impending

danger for the admirable hero, the silent, stone-faced and efficient killer in the person of Sydow, and quick one-liners from the lovely Dunaway. (Turner pleads that she shouldn't be afraid since he hasn't raped her, to which she replies. "The night is young.") There are some improbable hap-

penings in *Condor*, which a discriminating audience might harp on, but that would be like criticizing Alice in Wonderland because it was make-believe.

"Obviously I was trying to make a spy-thriller," explains Pollack. As pure entertainment, few come close to *Three Days of the Condor*.

## Rosenblatt's book, *Virgins and Vampires: Man is menace, world going down drain*

By RISHA GOTLIBOWICZ

Recently, Joe Rosenblatt, one of Canada's more original poets, was at the Glendon campus, giving a reading of his new volume, *Virgins & Vampires*. His other books include *The L.S.D. Leacock*, *Winter of the Luna Moth*, *The Bumblebee Dithyramb*, and *Dream Craters*.

Rosenblatt is editor of *Jewish Dialogue* and 1968 short-list nominee for the Governor-General's award. He teaches a course of creative writing at *Three Schools*; moreover, he has a selection of drawings currently on view at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

As many readers already know, Rosenblatt is a poet who delights in a primeval cosmos, untouched by modern day's concorous way of life. His truth lies in the swamp where toads, fish and birds know nothing else but nature's intended ways.

Nothing could be worse for this poet than those indexes of contemporary life, such as the intellectualization of one's feelings, that undermine and destroy natural impulses.

His is a despairing view, counting the last days of man on earth.

In *Virgins & Vampires*, Rosenblatt portrays a world that is slowly going to the dogs. Man is a menace to the order of nature. The moon has been "raped by rockets & pimples of humankind...mugged by progress"; the whales are "disappearing like money from a gambling table"; and "there are those whose brains are pregnant with murder".

According to this poet, the vampires are politicians, psychiatrists, ad-men, priests, rabbis, anthropologists, and other moral mongers, who live off other people's leavings.

Anthropologists are vampires in an indirect way, since they want to be racist, but can't. Of this group, Rosenblatt cites Margaret Mead as a prime example of those

who suck at primitive tribes for the voyeuristic delights of imperialism. "It's social anthropologists you have to watch; it's a true pseudo-science."

The virgins are the victims. Rosenblatt takes the average housewife with the cinderella complex as an example, who, after being deflowered, becomes both bored and boring, the result being that nobody will listen to her. Both the ignorant, and those out for game are victims.

Then, there are ersatz virgins who are not really virgins, but have the appearance of one to attain their ends. Rosenblatt cites Mordecai Richler as both virgin and vampire, for in his ceaseless rendering of the con man, or the stereotypical Jew, he has become a bloodsucker of that very image.

You might ask how all this connects. Anthropomorphism runs right through this poet's work.

Mythological monsters stand for the worst excesses of human brutality; bees exemplify the work ethic; and frogs symbolize fertility in totemic style.

Rosenblatt proceeds to point out the irony in these symbols. He informs his listeners that there is a tribe in Brazil that uses the glands of frogs as a lethal weapon, for example. Moreover, there exists a giant toad in Tasmania which, weighing 20 pounds, suffocates smaller creatures before devouring them. And finally the African bee, a killer bee, caused a reign of terror in the U.S. not long ago.

The book contains some 85 poems, interspersed with delightful little drawings by the poet himself. Esteemed as "refreshingly nasty," hauntingly prophetic, and often downright funny," Joe Rosenblatt's poetry is just downright enjoyable to read.

## Stereo do's and dont's

By EVAN LEIBOVITCH

Going into some strange place to buy stereo equipment can be a royal pain, especially if you run into the wrong salesman. Unfortunately, there are too many of these types around, the ones who don't know the difference between a ceramic cartridge and a magnetic one. If you hint to them that you know the least bit about Hi-Fi, they'll try and get rid of you as fast as possible, or just leave you alone until you get fed up and walk out.

### World of Poetry offers \$ prizes

Things can't be as bad as the newspaper headlines indicate. For finally, and a long last, people are actually being offered money - real cash - to write poetry.

It's a contest, and it's sponsored by the World of poetry, a monthly newsletter for poets. Grand prize is \$1500, second prize is \$500, and there are 49 other cash or merchandise awards.

Poems of all styles and on any subject are eligible. Each winning poem will be included in the prestigious *World of Poetry Anthology*.

Rules and official entry forms are available by writing to: World of Poetry, 801 Portola Dr., Dept. 211, San Francisco, CA94127. Contest deadline is November 30, 1975.

If caught in such a position, search around the store until you find the store's audiophile (there's usually one in every store) and make sure you talk to him. Chances are he'll be a little more honest with you about what's good and what's not.

Be doubly on your guard if you find someone practically pouncing on you the moment you enter the store. A good salesman won't offer help until he can sense you need it.

If, after shopping around, you're convinced that one unit suits you better than the others, when you go to purchase, don't let anybody railroad you into getting something "better". This can be especially true for speakers, because of the highly competitive market.

Very often manufacturers of inferior equipment offer big incentives beyond the regular commission to salesmen to move their stuff. An uninformed consumer can be "shown" by any good salesman that any speaker can sound better than another. And while you're thinking about that, keep in mind that there is no such thing as a good "rock" speaker or a good "classical speaker".

A genuinely good speaker should sound good using any variety of musical material, and it is advisable to audition a speaker this way, even if you only listen to one type of music. But above all, use common sense, and follow up on your hunches.

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