

"Osterman Weekend": Powerful

By WILLIAM CLAIRE

The Osterman Weekend

Once a year, John Tanner and the boys get together for a weekend to remember old times and shoot the breeze. This year, the CIA has told Tanner that his three friends are Soviet agents.

This situation forms the basic premise of the *Osterman Weekend*, a gripping suspense-thriller based on the Robert Ludlum novel of the same name. The pace is quick. Once the plot begins to unravel, the action keeps moving until the final credits roll.

Director Sam Peckinpah has assembled a fine ensemble of talent. It is to this credit that, while each contributes to the overall texture of the film, no one performer dominates.

Rutger Hauer (*Blade Runner*), Dennis Hopper (*Apocalypse Now*) and Craig T. Nelson (*Poltergeist*) are cast against their usual characters and prove themselves talented actors. The same goes for the wives, especially Meg Tilly, with the Paul-Newman-blue eyes and Helen Shaver.

John Hurt is altogether convincing as a deranged, revenge seeking CIA agent who sets the weekend's wheels in motion. Burt Lancaster plays a pivotal roll as the head of the CIA. But neither feature player distracts from the story. And *The Osterman Weekend* is definitely a story movie.

Especially hair-raising is the film's token chase sequence. In Peckinpah's hands, the scene becomes so much more than the taken for granted crash fest a la Burt Reynolds and *The Dukes (Pukes?) of Hazzard*. Four separate incidents combining slow motion and regular speed are superbly intercut to forcefully underline the real danger inherent in such activities.

What places *The Osterman Weekend* a cut above other spy thrillers is the film's powerful comment on television's impact during the last quarter century.

Peckinpah has made a statement about the insidious use of video much in the same way Francis Coppola used sound surveillance in *The Conversation*.

In the latter film, Gene Hackman was a private eye, using sophisticated microphones, tape recorders and editing equipment to snag evidence which allegedly uncovered a murder plot. In *The Osterman Weekend*, Peckinpah gives us a peek into the ultimate in video spying. *Big Brotherism* (1984 is only two-and-a-half months away) and the crafty manipulation of sound and picture to create a perception.

The manipulation aspect is most interesting because Tanner is a dedicated TV journalist raking political muck, and because the illusions on the movie screen and on the TV screens in the film are strikingly reminiscent of the latest trend in TV newsdom -- news as entertainment, piecing together disparate snippets to elicit a calculated response.

Underneath Peckinpah's characteristically superior



Bernie Osterman (Craig T. Nelson) puts the choke hold on John Tanner (Rutger Hauer) as tension reaches peak levels during long, terror-filled "Osterman Weekend"

exposition of violence and the effect its power has on man, and underneath Ludlum's accepted skill in spinning spy thrillers is a naggingly vulnerable underbelly -- the soft flesh

of the minds of the masses yielding to the cutting edge of the abuse of technology.

The Osterman Weekend suggests that through our preoccupation with video

gadgetry we are unquestioningly allowing thoughts to be created by someone other than ourselves.

And we all believe our own thoughts, don't we.

Jazz Nouveau at Social Club

Jazz Nouveau, a contemporary music group featuring Marc Lulham on wind instruments and voice, guitarist Paul Donat, and

bassist Don Gorman will be in performance at the College Hill Social Club this Sunday night from 8:30 p.m. until midnight.

Presenting an interesting mixture of jazz and original music, the group will be

joined by special guest Ian Sedgewick on piano. Other Sunday evening perfor-

mances are to take place on Oct. 30, Nov. 13 and 27. Join in on the excitement

and enjoy music that lives with Jazz Nouveau, a first in musical entertainment.



Jazz-Nouveau at Social Club last summer. Left to right are Marc Lulham, Paul Donat and Don Gorman. Photo by: Jean-Louis Tremblay.