

20 *Basic Instinct* is the ultimate movie mind game

Film a stylish thriller exploring the violence within us all

by Sheena Jarvis

FILM

Basic Instinct
directed by Paul Verhoeven
starring Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone
produced by Carolco



George Dzundza, Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone share a quiet moment in Paul Verhoeven's *Basic Instinct*. Despite the graphic sex, and notwithstanding the protests by members of the gay community who feel the movie contains negative stereotypes of lesbians, the film is a stylish look at the dark side which everybody's personality holds.

Despite graphic sex, the filmmakers' well-publicized struggle to get an R-rating and demonstrations by the gay community protesting the film's portrayal of lesbians, *Basic Instinct* is short on shock value.

Love, sex, drugs, murder — it's all been done before. What *Basic Instinct* does offer is a suspenseful two hours of plot twists, high speed action and psychological mind games.

Michael Douglas plays San Francisco police detective Nick Curran, a cop with a history of alcoholism, drug abuse and "accidental" shootings in the line of duty, who falls in love with the wrong woman. The wrong woman is Catharine Tramell (Sharon Stone), a thrill-seeking hedonist whose novels of murder have a funny way of coming true.

The plot revolves around Curran, who is investigating the death of a retired rock and roll star. In the course of the investigation, he becomes involved with three very different, very dangerous women: Tramell, her sometime female lover Roxy (Leilani Sarelle) and Curran's counselling psychologist Dr. Beth Garner (Jeanne Tripplehorn). As the film progresses, Curran gets further and further entangled in an intricate web of deceit, lies and head games.

Douglas is good as a psychotic cop who lives on the edge, but Stone is better as a manipulator who uses people to get what she wants. What makes her dangerous is that she never sets boundaries for herself and has no problem breaking all the rules.

The gay community of San Francisco protested during filming and when the movie opened because of the film's portrayal of lesbians. Activist groups claimed the film perpetuated a negative attitude towards lesbians and could possibly promote homophobia.

In actual fact, the film does not suggest any connection between lesbianism and violence or murder. The fact that Tramell sleeps with women is actually incidental. She doesn't care who she has sex with, male or female, if they suit her purpose of the moment.

The film is very stylish, Hitchcock for the nineties. Instead of lots of dark, night shots, the filmmakers chose to use the San Francisco backdrop, the ocean and the beauty of the beach houses to contrast the darkness of the characters. The film is shot

almost entirely during the day, with some spectacular shots of the Bay and the picturesque streets of the city.

Each of the characters is exposed to the audience, bit by bit — not only their good, sometimes vulnerable qualities, but also their dark side. It is this examination of the grey area that exists in all people, this fascination with the darker sides of ourselves that makes the film so powerful.

Tramell embraces her dark side, Curran fights, but is irresistibly drawn into his. Douglas and Stone have a wonderful chemistry that carries the film's eroticism and elaborate psychological storyline.

The ending of the film is well

done, the audience is kept guessing right until the end about who did it and why. Even then, there is ambi-

guity; although one character in particular is implicated, there are still questions as to who actually com-

mitted the crime.

Basic Instinct is the ultimate mind game and a riveting film.

For All Mankind a testimony to our insatiable curiosity

by Agnes Timar

Familiarizing ourselves with the diverse geographies and cultures of this planet cannot alone answer the nagging question of how we fit into the grand scheme of things. Our thirst for self-knowledge transcends the Earth — so we send humans into space.

For All Mankind is the ultimate vicarious adventure — a vivid, celestial journey the likes of which you and I shall never experience.

The film is a compilation of footage shot during NASA's nine Apollo lunar flights, launched between the years 1968 and 1972. It is the labour of love of one man: Al Reinert. Reinert spent 10 years of his life and a considerable portion of his income creating this Academy Award nominee.

NASA contributed zilch. His task was formidable. Not only did he view 6,000,000 feet of film from the Johnson Space Centre's archives, but also, with the assistance of his technical crew, built an optical printer on site in order to blow up the original 16 mm video stock to 35 mm — frame by frame! The original, stored in liquid nitrogen, cannot, by law, be removed from the space headquarter's vaults.

To add to an already laborious task, he accumulated 80 hours worth of reminiscences from the 24 men who participated in the lunar flights.

FILM

For All Mankind
directed by Al Reinert
produced by Apollo Associates
Ontario Science Centre

It is their voices we hear, combined into one journey.

The absence of a conventional narrative voice, and the accompanying ethereal music of Brian Eno (available on the *Apollo — Atmospheres: Soundtracks* release) makes for a very heady experience. We are right there, travelling at an unprecedented 35,000 feet per second into a hostile blackness beyond comprehension.

With these men, we share the excitement of weightlessness and the loneliness of being out there in a little command capsule distanced from all that is familiar — people and nature.

Our concept of time and space, for the 80 minutes we sit in the theatre, takes on a whole new dimension. It is all-encompassing. It is endless. You cannot help but question what your place is in the vastness of the universe.

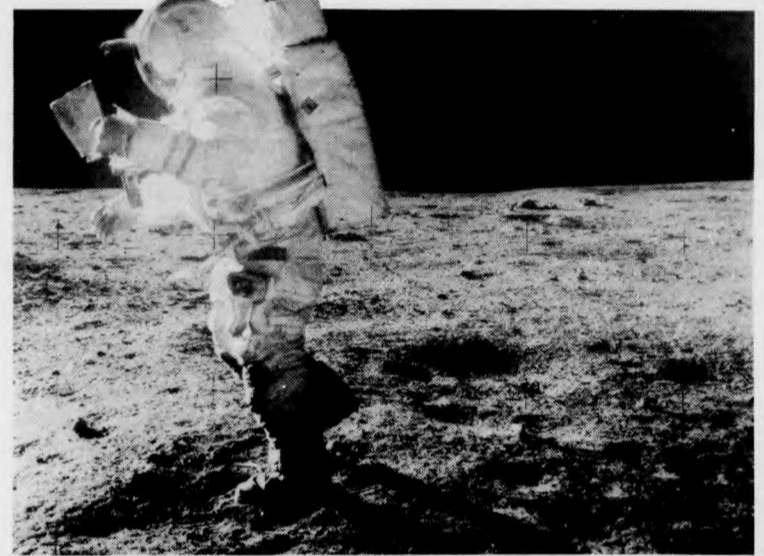
The scope of technology is absolutely flabbergasting, and it hits you hard. No television news coverage can do justice to the phenomenon of launching humans into the galaxies,

as well as this movie.

For All Mankind is a testimony of our insatiable curiosity and our desire for knowledge. It is a tribute to all those who have dedicated their lives to science — to the astronauts and

cosmonauts who lost theirs, and to the men who returned to earth completely changed by the experience.

For All Mankind opens April 1 at the Ontario Science Centre. For more information, call 429-0193.



Film producer Al Reinert sifted through six million feet of film taken of the Apollo missions which landed on the moon to come up with the 80 minute tribute to the American space program *For All Mankind*. Seeing the film will make you question your place in the universe.

From lavatories to La La Land

FILM

Riff Raff
directed by Ken Loach
starring Robert Carlyle and Emmer McCourt
produced by Parrallax Films for Channel 4

by Pedram Fouladianpour

Stevie (Robert Carlyle), a young man from Glasgow who has just gotten out of prison, comes to London to work on a construction site. There, he joins forces with workers from all over the island to solve a number of problems: low wages, a worksite full of rats, no place to live and a bossy foreman.

This is the story of *Riff Raff*, Ken Loach's recent film. Loach's previous film, *Hidden Agenda*, about the Thatcher government's involvement in violence in northern Ireland, created a wave of controversy. *Riff Raff*, on the other hand, won a Special Prize at Cannes this year and a Felix for Best Film (the equivalent of a Best Film Oscar).

Like *Hidden Agenda*, Loach deals with people on the margins, people who are not depicted often in mainstream films. His study of post-

Thatcher English society is thought-provoking, but at the same time very funny.

Loach's characters are situated in a setting dominated by drugs, job insecurity, unemployment, homelessness and all the other ills of modern society. At the same time, they comment on their lives with great wit.

Loach, who is known for his social neorealist, sometimes militant films, was originally commissioned to direct *Riff Raff* for Columbia Pictures. As a result of British producer David Putnam's departure as head of the studio, the project was dropped.

Channel 4, which makes television programs for Britain and exports them as movies, financed the completion of the film.

Riff Raff is based on screenwriter Bill Jesse's own experience as a construction worker. While writing the screenplay, he was assigned to keep an on-site lavatory clean.

Says Jesse of his decision to write: "I held out an old lavatory brush with several bristles still attached. You had two feature films on one hand, and an old lavatory brush on the other. It was a tough decision to make..."



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