

Movie hits a cinematic hitch

Cinematic excess

The Hitcher
Tri Star Pictures
Odeon

by Gilbert Bouchard

The 20th century has a new archetypal fear: the fear of the serial killer. A breed of killers, often clean-cut intelligent drifters that wander about North America taking hundreds of victims, seemingly beyond justice, leaving law enforcement agencies baffled and impotent.

What makes these killers so frightening is their invisibility coupled with the already faceless nature of our modern urban society. Unlike our parents and grandparents who lived in small towns among people they knew and trusted, modern urbanites live and survive among hundreds of strangers. We are forced to put so much trust in so many people that the thought that one of those seemingly harmless strangers being a threat to our lives strikes at the core of our sensibilities. Trust is more important to the urbanite than to a rural citizen. The small town rube can afford to distrust strangers, the urbanite can't.

That's why Tri Star Picture's newest release *The Hitcher* could have been such a scary film, and why it's such a disappointment.

The Hitcher explores the phenomena of

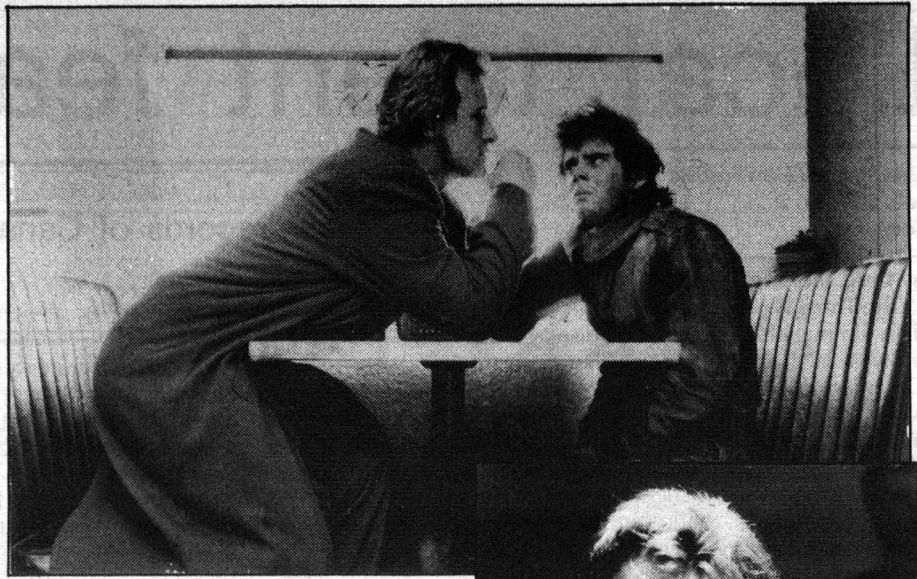
the serial killer and hits all the right nerves and exploits all the proper paranoia on the topic, but goes too far.

C. Thomas Howell plays Jim Halsey, a cute little boy next door who picks up a hitcher while driving from Chicago to San Diego. The Hitcher (Rutger Hauer) turns out to be a ruthless serial killer who engages Jim in a macabre cat and mouse chase across the southwestern desert.

I have no problems with the movie's premise, or even with its characters. The movie starts off chillingly enough, with Jim narrowly escaping his first encounter with the hitcher, but the filmmakers were not content with this subtle and realistic dramatic interaction between the movie's two leads, character after excess character is dragged into the action.

The hitcher starts knocking off policemen as easily as you or I would swat flies, and a waitress appears out of nowhere simply to provide Jim with a much-not-needed love interest and to inflate the body count.

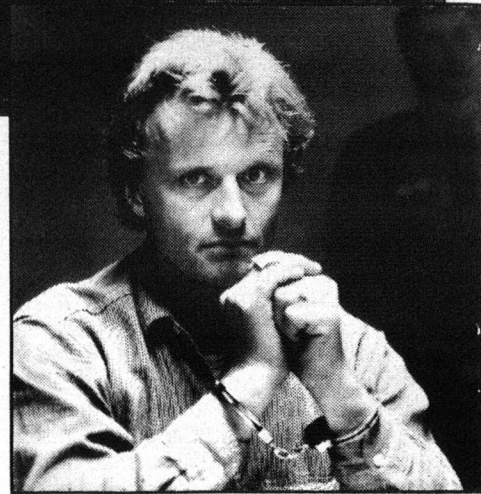
The best parts of the movie involve Jim's growing fear and irrationality as he futilely flees the hitcher. These are buried in the mass of characters and needless movement. Howell gives his character just the right balance of vulnerability and independence, foiling Hutger's more sophisticated, rugged



character, and manages to create a real feeling of dread and hopelessness surrounding his plight while not becoming pitiful. Hutger on the other hand is too static. His character is dropped into the movie whole and doesn't develop.

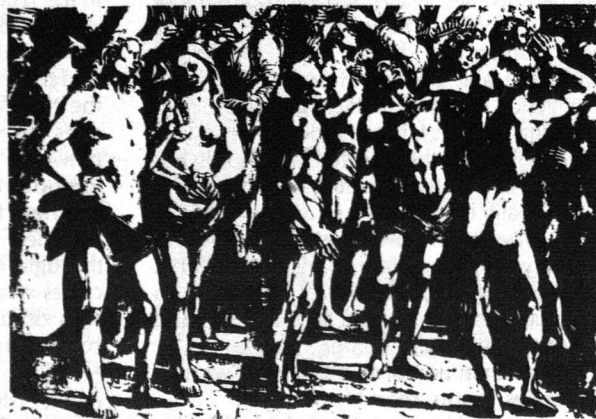
I also object to all the unnecessary violence. Multiple car crashes with dozens of cop cars and even a helicopter were uncalled for and weaken the film.

It's really too bad; while it had a good cast, a viable premise, and starts off good and scary, *The Hitcher* loses all subtlety and mucks about in the worst kind of cinematic excess.



(Top photo) Rutger hauer and C. Thomas Howell stare off. (Inset) Rutger Hauer.

Gateway
Literary
Contest



Rules

1. Open to all persons attending a post-secondary educational institution in Canada, except the employees of the Students' Union of the University of Alberta and writers who have earned more than two thousand dollars from their craft in 1985.
2. All entries must be typed on a single side of good quality bond paper. The name, address, and phone number of the author must appear on each page submitted.
3. All entries must be submitted by noon March 14th, 1986. No late entries will be accepted.
4. Each writer may submit a total of three entries in aggregate.
5. Submission may be in French or English.
6. The winning entries and additional entries selected by the judges will appear in the *Gateway Literary Supplement* on March 27, 1986. The *Gateway* shall hold only first North American serial rights to any entries that appear in this issue. All other rights will remain with the author.
7. Entries will not be returned.
8. Entries should be submitted to: LITERARY CONTEST, c/o Suzanne Lundrigan, Room 282, Students' Union Building, University of Alberta, T6G 2G7.

Short story 3,000 words max
Short poem 16 lines max
Long poem 100 lines max

First prize all categories \$100
Second prize all categories \$65

Sponsored by:

JAVA JIVE

Employment and Immigration Canada
Canada Employment Centre

Emploi et Immigration Canada
Centre d'Emploi du Canada

Are you looking for
**PERMANENT or
SUMMER
EMPLOYMENT?**

THE CANADA EMPLOYMENT
CENTRE

4th Floor SUB
is offering

**CAMPUS JOB
SEARCH SESSIONS**

3 TYPES: — Resume Writing
— Interview Preparation
— Self-Marketing
Summer Job Programs

Commencing: **March 3, 1986**
Students **Must Pre-register**

Canada

**AWARENESS WEEK '86:
FEB 24 - 28**

**'twenty years of service'
STUDENTS'
ORIENTATION
SERVICES**



**RECRUITMENT
RECEPTION**

Athabasca Hall, February 27
7:00 PM

Guest Speaker: President Horowitz

We would request that all leaders and applicants attend. Anyone interested in helping in the orientation of new students is also invited

**BECOME A LEADER —
EXPERIENCE THE CHALLENGE!**
FOR MORE INFO: 238-B SUB (432-5319)