



ENTERTAINMENT GATEWAY STYLE

Ad men kill *Wanted: Dead or Alive*

Wanted: Dead Or Alive
New World Pictures
Meadowlark Cinema

review by **Dragos Ruiu**

This film will not make a lot of money, which is too bad. It's no fault of the director, the cast, or anyone else involved in the making of the movie. The ad men killed this one.

If I was in charge of New World Pictures, I would take the guy who thought up the *Rambo* crossed with *Dirty Harry* ad campaign and have HIM shot. That guy screwed up a good, modest, medium budget action film which had good acting and a tight plot by marketing it with posters of Rutger Hauer looking mean in front of a wall of weapons.

Seeing this poster and the ad campaign, people are staying away from this film in droves. Do you blame them after the action-drivel they have had to sit through lately? *Cobra* was enough to make you swear off movies forever.

I viewed this movie in a huge theater with only two others watching. It might as well have been a private screening. This is really too bad, because this is A GOOD ACTION/ADVENTURE MOVIE. It's not great, but it is good.

Rutger Hauer (*Ladyhawke*, *The Hitcher*, *Osterman Weekend*) is an Ex-CIA agent turned bounty hunter, and he can be kinda nasty when he tries. Robert Guillaume (Benson) plays his old CIA pal who woos him to take just one more case, with promises that this time they will back him all the way.

Of course he is being lied to by his superiors, and Rutger Hauer starts hunting down a terrorist not knowing he is bait. The terrorist is Gene Simmons (c'mon admit it you were a Kiss fan too), and he really shines as a villain. Like his last movie exploit, *Runaway* (where his villain character was the only thing that saved this movie from Tom Selleck's over-acting) he acts by not saying a lot and looking sinister. He has sinister down to an art-form. Yikes, that guy could look mean as a mouseketeer.

The acting in this movie is good. The director didn't try anything tough, and is rewarded with credible performances. The same goes for the script; it's not masterpiece, but it works. The action is well filmed, and the sounds sound really good on a cranked Dolby system (See accompanying article).

This movie is not predictable or boring. It won't win any awards, but it will entertain

you for two hours.

Rutger Hauer makes for a good tough-guy hero, and luckily for us, the director spares us from the make-drama hero-assembles-weapon-of-ultimate-doom to dramatic music scenes. He isn't a lean, mean, killing machine but just another guy with problems.

Contrary to what you expect from the movie posters, there aren't any *Rambo* style slaughters, or *Exterminator* revenge scenes. The car chase, and the shootouts are not predominant in the movie and are handled credibly.

There really aren't any points in this movie where you groan, and for a movie of this genre that is a high compliment. Golam and Globus should watch this movie next time they try to do something stupid like *Cobra*. All in all this is a basic, unpretentious action film. And it works!

Too bad that it's box office takes are so low. It will probably go away soon. If you miss it, rent it on tape. If you don't expect a lot from it you will enjoy it, and in light of *Cobra* and the other schlock you get in this vein of film, this will seem like a masterpiece. You hear that, Stallone?



Rutger Hauer: not a lean, mean, killing machine; just another guy with problems.

The newest competitor in movie sound

Ultra-Stereo to battle with Dolby

by **Dragos Ruiu**

Watching movies in a single large-screen stereo theaters makes the umpteen-theater cine-boxes look like television sets. If a movie is playing in stereo and in mono, pick the stereo. Maybe that way theater owners will get the idea we like good sound with good pictures.

When you have the choice of a forty seat box, with a tiny speaker behind the screen, or a 400 seat theater with a riveting six-track sound-system, which will you pick? And for some reason, theaters with good sound systems like to turn them up more. (Yeah!) Probably because their better sound-system will not snap-crackle-hiss (into your movie) like the little ones!

A stereo sound system should be a must for every theater, but most theater owners balk at the expense. An excellent 800 watt, 16 speaker Dolby setup like the one at the Meadowlark Theater will cost \$62,000. Big

Bucks, No Whammies!

The guy who makes the most money from all this is Mr. Dolby. Since his company was the first with stereo film recording/playback equipment, they have the market cornered. Until George Lucas entered the arena with THX, the only way to get stereo in a theater was to shell out the big bucks to Mr. Dolby, buy his equipment and install it yourself.

Some theaters really botch up the installation, so Lucas entered the fray a year ago with THX, where you not only buy the system, but the guys come and do acoustic tests on your room and mount things properly. This is not cheap either, but eventually when more theaters have superior sound-systems the inferior ones will discover that the customers will give their money for the good sound.

Movie producers, however, are in a different bind — whenever they want to record a movie in stereo and advertise it, they have to call it "In Dolby Stereo" because they have to

use his equipment. Mr. Dolby charges these dudes big royalty bucks to use his company name.

Then, four months ago, a new competitor showed up: *Ultra-Stereo*. The first big movie which boasted Ultra-Stereo was *Wanted: Dead or Alive*. Ultra-Stereo is another trademark for stereo movies. The Ultra movies are playable on Dolby equipment and they probably charge a lot less for royalties. They will probably get very rich undermining Dolby's haughty prices.

New World, Tri-Star, and Cannon are reported to have already switched to Ultra-Stereo.

As for sound quality, I'm told the only appreciable difference between Dolby and Ultra is that Ultra has slightly less overlap on the different tracks. And in a good theater, I can attest, it sounds really good. Now, if only all movies and theaters had good sound. Sigh

Barron's book a disturbing peek at the KGB

KGB Today: The Hidden Hand
Non-Fiction by John Barron
Berkley Books

review by **Dragos Ruiu**

No matter what your political beliefs, if you have any interest in the world around you *KGB Today* by John Barron is a book you must read.

This book is non-fiction, and proves the axiom "fact is stranger than fiction" with its riveting, well documented, narrative of the intelligence world. The book starts off with a narrative account of the intelligence world by a famous KGB defector, Stanislav Levchenko.

Levchenko approached John Barron because he thought his story ought to be told, and he had read some of Barron's reference works on the KGB. From that meeting stems the major portion of this book, complete with its shocking insights into what Soviet life is really like.

The book itself has some rough sections where the reader tends to lose interest, but this is because the information contained does not translate into a simple story. Horrified fascination will make the reader pursue

this book.

Most people approach books of this sort with a cynical attitude, expecting yet another half-assed 'expose' with no substance. That's what I expected from this book, and that expectation disappeared two pages into the author's preface. He has compiled a 30 page list of references so that the reader may verify the facts presented in this book.

This book covers some of the major espionage cases of the last two decades. The detail and information Barron has managed to unearth about these cases is very surprising. By far the piece de resistance case is the narration arising out of the Levchenko interviews.

It is a fascinating story of a young Soviet idealist, an idealist to an extent that he volunteered to be trained for a suicide mission against England. Levchenko was as close to the ideal communist man as the U.S.S.R. has seen, yet even he became disillusioned by the politics of communism, and being screwed around by the bureaucracy one too many times.

Levchenko, the idealist, rose very high in the ranks of the Soviet Secret Police (KGB) and was one of their most successful agents in Japan. Then Levchenko, the disillusioned, defected and shocked most of the intelli-

gence community. When he defected he did not reveal his secrets, he merely stated that he wished to live in the United States. He still retained loyalty to the country and the political system that had so wronged him.

Only when the wrath of the political system he abandoned reached his wife did he retaliate against the KGB. When the Soviets let him contact his wife and find out that they were starving her and persecuting their child in the hope that they could force him to return, he bade them to stop, lest he reveal the horde of secrets he had accumulated over the years. They didn't.

Levchenko, the angry, then followed through on his promises. He went to the CIA and John Barron and proceeded to tell them his life story, in the process unravelling whole intelligence networks and crippling the 'Active Measures' work of the Japanese consulates and other 'embassy' bureaus.

His story gives us an amazing insight into what the Soviets euphemistically call 'Active Measures', a pleasant phrase for the practices of lying, cheating, stealing, and on occasion killing to disrupt the western world and steal their secrets. It is quite a sobering story, guaranteed to dispel the naivete and misconceptions most of us entertain about the supposedly glamorous world of spying.

After Levchenko's story Barron traces the work of two other major Soviet spies Rudi Herrmann and Hugh Hambleton as well as cataloging the major recent intelligence coups, and tracking some large funding the KGB gives to various protest and terrorist groups. Their stories are not as captivating as Levchenko's because they are merely listings of events instead of personal recounts, but they vividly illustrate how uninformed we are about what is going on around us. The intelligence world portrayed bears no resemblance to the 007 fantasy we all think of.

Most pleasantly, Barron's book is minimal in the political banter of democracy vs. communism. He only recounts the facts and lets the reader make his own decision.

That decision is not difficult to reach when confronted with facts. This book should be required reading for right-wing reactionaries and communist plotters alike. If you don't fall into those two categories, then this book should dispel some of those 'poor, innocent Soviet Union' myths with cold hard facts about Communist expansionism and almost open aggression. It should also show you how vulnerable you are to manipulation by politics, politicians, and their instruments of subterfuge. Read it, for your own survival.