

MR OPINION

by Wm. (ubiquity) Sykes

They've brought back this movie *DIE HARD*, which has made loads of cash and somewhat solidified Bruce Willis' reputation as a feature actor, for a second run in Fredericton. It played a month or so in Nashwaaksis (July-Aug) and is now gracing the Plaza quadruplex. I expect the reasoning is that, now they've frittered away their summers on beer and sunshine, the great flock of academic aspirants, having returned to the serious business of school, are ready to get down to such trenchant pursuits as popping out for a bit of entertainment. This assumes that all the foreigners (from Upper and Lower Canada) who seek an education here managed to avoid this particular movie in their home towns.

Whatever.

DIE HARD is a brisk, simple, neatly tied-up action story wherein the nasties are all eliminated, the innocent are saved, and the hero exerts himself quite beyond reasonable tolerances. Not a shred of ambiguity, no strain on anyone's ethical proclivities, nothing to evoke any particular admiration (unless it's for the technical aspect of orchestrating and performing all these stunts and explosions); a very easy film to sit through.

I'm afraid I've forgotten the name of the scriptwriter for *DIE HARD* but the credits do tell us that the script was based on a book by Roderick Thorp. Thorp is an American who's been writing novels and a bit of nonfiction for nearly 30 years. He's perhaps best known for those of his books which fall into the mystery genre but, even here, his writing embodies a depth, intricacy and tone unusual in the field.

Thorp made a big splash in 1966 with the publication of a very long novel entitled *THE DETECTIVE*, for which he was acclaimed for having, among other things, elevated detective mystery fiction into the upper reaches of serious or quality literature (yes, of course this accolade traces back to Raymon Chandler and Dashiell Hammett, for good reason, and let's not forget Ross MacDonald, but Thorp did it too, in a bit of a different way; the praise was appropriate).

THE DETECTIVE concerns a former police detective named

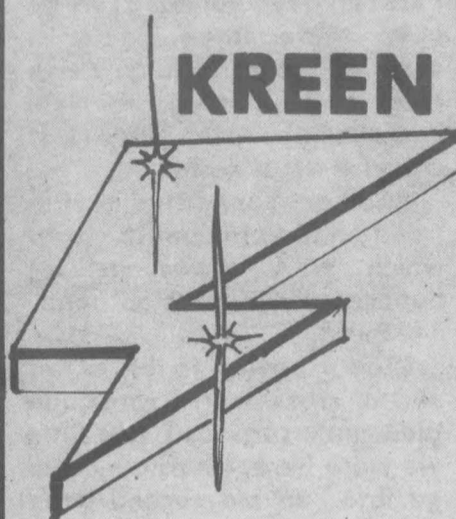
Joe Leland. He runs a private agency in a small east coast city and his marriage is taking a long long time to fall apart. Through episodes of child abuse, homosexual murder, power abuse (by the law, by psychiatry, by wealth), and major league fraud and corruption, the novel brings its protagonist to a point where he must face his own almost criminal responsibility for a past decision. It is sometimes not easy to read but it admirably portrays a whole person: in public and private, past and present, wise and foolish, subject to rash behavior, bad choices, victim of uncontrollable circumstance, both able and incompetent.

THE DETECTIVE was made into a movie of the same title in the 60's (starring Frank Sinatra, Lee Remick). Naturally, the story was trimmed and altered significantly but not maliciously; it did not suffer as badly as most victims of the book-to-movie process. In fact, anyone who's read *THE DETECTIVE* can probably see the movie without wincing in pain.

Such cannot realistically be said for *DIE HARD*. After a number of other works, Roderick Thorp wrote a sort of sequel in the story of Joe Leland called *NOTHING LASTS FOREVER* (1979) and it's this upon which *DIE HARD* is based.

If you take the thinnest possible summation of the plot (terrorist gänge seizes control of L.A. office tower, holding hostage people at office Christmas party, but eventually thwarted by one resourceful chap who's there unexpectedly) then, yes, the film is based on the novel. But if you consider the story from such points as the motivation of the characters, the rationale of the events portrayed, the several bases of conflict, and the ultimate resolution of the situation then, no, the movie ignores the book and invents itself out of pure stock cardboard. Oddly, most of what the movie is good at (the physical action) is derived from what Thorp wrote; where the film is weak and forgettable is where it neglects the novel.

Hasta semana,
Bill



CADDYSHACK II REVIEW

EXCITING! That's one word that describes this past summer's movie releases (phew!-Ed.). If you had a chance to see any movies this summer, and I'm sure you have, then you'll know what I'm talking about. Some of the movies of this stature include the much talked about *Willow* produced by George Lucas which lived up to its expectations even if it did fall short of the *Star Wars* Caliber. It still was a well thought-out production. *Crocodile Dundee II* also ranked with this summer's excellent movies. It may or may not have exceeded the original but it stood very well on its own. And of course who could forget Spielberg's eastern breakthrough - *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* which ranked no. 1 in the box office in the USA I might add.

Well if you missed out on any of these classics - never fear. You can always see them on VHS. Be patient.

However, in the meantime why not take in some of the great movies coming up this fall such as *Young Guns* or *Cocktail*. Both classics I can assure you.

This past week I took my own advice and went to see *Caddyshack II the Sequel*.

One thing which should be mentioned though is that if you can spare the extra cash I would recommend going sometime other than cheep night. Crowded, is an understatement. With classes just beginning I suppose that is understandable.

Maybe by next week the crowd will die down so that us poor reviewers can get a decent seat.

Anyway *Caddyshack II* was well written but was not overly impressive. Jackie Mason stars as the down-to-earth-working upper classman who involves himself with a high society country club because of his daughter's wishes. Her character is that of the

developing persona. She learns that money is not everything especially if it means your attitude towards people who are less fortunate becomes one that is stuck up and snotty.

Her retaliation makes for the finishing touch of the movie. Special guest stars included Chevy Chase who washumorous at times but depressingly silly at other times, Dan Ackroyd the nam veteran who was hired to kill Mason and Randy Quaid, lawyer to Mason and a client's nightmare. His part was the most exciting of the three and produced the most laughs, while Ackroyd's character was a bit bizarre but still funny at times.

Overall, the movie is a humorous demonstration of

the lower-upper class conflict which has always been a popular subject on the screen (and golf-courses -Ed.)

Perhaps the best part of the movie was Kenny Loggin's hit single "Nobody's Fool" from his album "Back to Avalon". This one will probably make the list of potential hits at the academy awards.

Despite the movie's unrealistic portrayal of circumstance, I'm still giving the movie a 9 1/2. But only because of the cute little gopher who probably was the most popular character of the production - even if he is a pervert. I wonder if he and the poodle ever . . . naw. He wouldn't; would he?

LARRY GRAHAM

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