

arts & entertainment

A psycho-cop movie with a big difference

by Mark Farmer

I Love a Man in Uniform is the perfect antidote to *Top Cops*. It's a disturbing psychodrama about ordinary guy Henry Adler, who gets far too deeply involved in his acting debut as a cop. He starts to unravel at the seams as his real-life and acting personalities merge.

This isn't just some rehash of the

nice-guy-flips-out theme you see in Hollywood product like *Falling Down*, and this is thanks largely to Tom McCamus, who plays bank teller and would-be actor Adler. McCamus makes this film — it's all about his character's breakdown as he tries to deal with the breakdown he sees in society at large.

McCamus plays Adler with an edge so sharp you could cut granite

with it. But Adler isn't a drooling maniac. He's ordinary. You've seen at least one Henry Adler before — he's the quiet, polite bank teller or bureaucrat or office worker who dreams about being someone important, someone with a spine.

Henry slogs away at his bank job and lands a role on the cop show, "Crimewave" ("An aggregate of every bad cop show ever made," writes the director). As soon as Adler puts on the uniform, he gets filled with the power, the purpose, the identity and authority his meaningless life lacks, and bad things start happening.

Adler starts wearing the uniform outside his house. He starts walking the streets with it on, then tries handing out tickets, then starts fantasiz-

ing about beating the pulp out of people for parking offences. All this time his relationship with his TV co-star Charlotte starts to turn obsessive. He can't seem to distinguish between her and the role she plays on the show. His bank is held up, his father has a stroke and dies, he quits his bank job and eventually discovers for himself police corruption. Then something deep inside Henry Adler snaps in two.

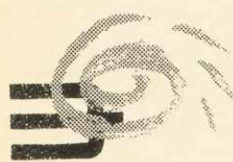
I Love a Man in Uniform is dark and menacing (very cliché, but very true), and a lot of the film is spent watching Adler slowly go nuts. But if you like tension, this film is it, and it doesn't hurt that *The Tragically Hip* help out on the soundtrack.

I really fell for the opening shot of

a cop swinging his night stick in slow motion while electric blues guitar wails in the background. I got a delicious chill watching Adler walk out on the street for the first time in uniform, oozing power, confidence and swagger. It's infectious.

The film does drag from time to time, such as when a Marilyn Monroe look-alike robs the bank. There are also some macho slow-motion shots you can do without. But there's more than enough to recommend this movie, and by the end I still hadn't decided: how much of it is macho fantasy, paranoid delusion and complete mental breakdown? "It's a simple matter of priorities," Adler says. I'm still not sure what his really are. A-

I Love a Man in Uniform is playing at Wormwood's Dog & Monkey Cinema, February 18-24.



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Spine

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problem is that Jason hates it, calling it dumb. "That's the point," David tells me. "Rock 'n' roll is dumb music. That's why it isn't called classical. The best rock songs are simple songs."

Simple in arrangement, maybe, but the lyrical content of "Rape Seed" proves to be something not dumbed down at all, dealing with the one-sided misogyny of many other songs in many other forms of music.

"For me, saying the word 'bitch' is a step from gunning down fourteen women. The word 'nigger' is a step away from a lynching. Both are part of the same line of reasoning, starting from the same place and ending up in the same place."

The Yin to "Rape Seed"'s Yang is a cover of an old Bee Gees tune, a song that has been a closer for all of their gigs, but might not last beyond this Thursday at the Double Deuce or their opening spot for Entombed this weekend. "Ultimately, it's not the song we want to be known for, but it has got us some attention."

The third round arrives and we each pay for our own drinks this time. The conversation has shifted away from music to Wormwoods and the Toronto Maple Leafs, and we both get a chance to dumb down for a while.



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