

MR OPINION

by Wm. (ubiquity) Sykes

Excuse me; would someone please bomb the Franklin Mint? I'm sorry, I don't know exactly where it is nor whether it's all in just one place. I can't tell you how much TNT or dynamite you'll need but, when it comes to relieving humanity of a cultural embarrassment, can you ever really have too much high explosive?

How do you feel about understatement? As a narrative device, that is.

The movie *Betrayed* has met, to date, with what we call 'mixed reviews.' Why? One reason is an apparent inability or unwillingness by some to accept the film's subject matter and storyline as, in any way, resembling what is possible, likely or actual in the real world. Another reason may have to do with a kind of emotional insulation which you might notice between yourself and the movie on the screen. I noticed it: the events I saw and the dialogue I heard were remote. There was some distance between what the characters felt and my experience of their situations.

Regarding subject matter and storyline, *Betrayed* concerns itself with people (rural Americans) who are becoming bewildered and desperate in the midst of a world, a society from which they feel alienated; they sense a loss of control over certain basic com-

ponents of their lives and livelihood. As an excuse, they seize upon racism and bigotry and, beginning with simplistic common attitudes then progressing to coordinated direct action, they resort to violence and anarchy (in the word's universally misunderstood sense). Among the extreme actions to which these people profess to be driven are: the assassination of outspoken advocates of tolerance and cooperation, the pretend sportsmanship of hunting an armed black person in the woods at night, the quasi-religious independent schooling of their children in both ideology and weaponry, and the creation of martyrs to their own cause. The personal drama of the movie arises from the experience of a woman special investigator for the U.S. Department of Justice who infiltrates a community looking for evidence in a particular murder case in which a Chicago radio talk host was killed in terrorist style. The investigator (Debra Winger) becomes involved with a widowed farmer and his young family and forms a rather deep attachment before finding out that he is one of the main proponents of this white supremacist organization. Her conflict, and thus the story's conflict, is very internal, despite the very starkness of the events portrayed.



But people are having problems with the premise of this story. A number of reviewers can't seem to swallow the idea that a small cross-section of a population might band together in the face of what they see as a social conspiracy to cheat them out of a fair share in life and rebel violently, forming their own rudimentary conspiracy. One critic (David Elliot) said "If America is in this bad a shape, then we don't need this movie, we need exit visas." If he were to go somewhere that offers a fuller perspective on the

chronic oversimplification to which Americans are so often victim then yes, he would be better served by an exit visa.

The Ku Klux Klan does have a long and frequently respected tradition in the U.S. The active, violent oppression of visible minorities, especially in times of economic uncertainty, is nothing new in the world. Anyone who's come across information about such organizations as the Posse Comitatus in its present-day manifestations would have no difficulty appreciating the reality of what this movie suggests.

The other problem with *Betrayed*, I suspect, arises from the general inability of the film idiom to treat complex, intricate situations and personal, internal difficulty as well as does good written fiction. Hence the 'barrier' between the characters and the audience; hence the need for some basic grounding in history and real experience in order to appreciate this movie. I'm willing to predict that this film will live for quite a while; I

don't think it will be so easily dismissed as it would probably be if it had taken its message and browbeat us with it. *Betrayed* could have been a crusading film (which usually makes a movie ridiculous) but by somehow muting its action and dialogue, by using what I call understatement, by being almost gentle in the portrayal of deranged fanaticism, perhaps the movie will inject its ideas under our skin for a longer and more influential stay.

As I write, it's only been 24 hours since I saw *Betrayed*; I feel it deserves at least a second viewing.

For what it's worth, the screenplay was written by Joe Eszterhas (he's also one of the Executive-Producers) and you may recall him as the author of 1985's *Jagged Edge*. You may not expect him to have been the co-author of the movie *Flashdance* in 1983, but he was, and I guess he's managing to live that down.

Otherwise, and it's maybe superfluous to say this, but as an actress, Debra Winger is really unique; she never comes across as glamorous in the way of movies, which suggests to me that somebody is exercising sound judgement because she could very easily be made-up and photographed in such a way as to negate the believability she conveys.

Did you notice my absence last week? Yes, well, it took a while to recover from being shot in reversal, rendered negative and having all my 'e's washed out two weeks ago. What imaginative cruelty will my bastard editor contrive next?

SLASH - FEST!

FREDDY KEEPS CHOP CHOP CHOPPIN' ALONG

By RAY & STEVE

Freddy's back (surprise, surprise!), and he's out for fresh souls. The fourth installment of the "Elm Street" series stars Rober Englund once again as the morbidly witty Fred Krueger. Freddy comes back to life when Jason, the dog does a hot number on his grave during Kincaid's (Elm Street 3) final nightmare. Kristen and Joey, also from Part 3, make a brief appearance in the movie as well. Most notable is Joey's "wet dream".

Basically "Elm Street 4" was just a re-hash of the previous movie with new jokes and

dream sequences. Freddy delivers more one-liners than Schwarzenegger and Stallone combined, and provides a humorous and grotesque ninety minutes. The special effects were the best yet for the series, but the story line was quite familiar and provided few surprises. This was no doubt due to absence of Wes Craven's direction.

All in all, "Elm Street 4" is not a great movie, but it is certainly entertaining, and is a must-see for Freddy fans. It ranks about a 2.5 out of possible 5 stars.

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BETRAYED

GORILLAS IN THE MIST