

# Disturbingly Fresh

by Mark Farmer

Fresh is the name of a chess-playing, drug-running kid with balls of steel and a business acumen to match. The movie he lends his name to is a slice-of-life look at growing up in the Projects as Fresh sinks himself into a whirlpool of death and drugs.

**Fresh**  
Boaz Yakin  
Wormwood's

Fresh starts out on the bottom rung of the drug business, running small amounts to small-time dealers. It's safe, steady money he keeps in a tin can in a drain, but Lord is he industrious. How many drug deals can one pre-pubescent kid make every day and still get to school on time?

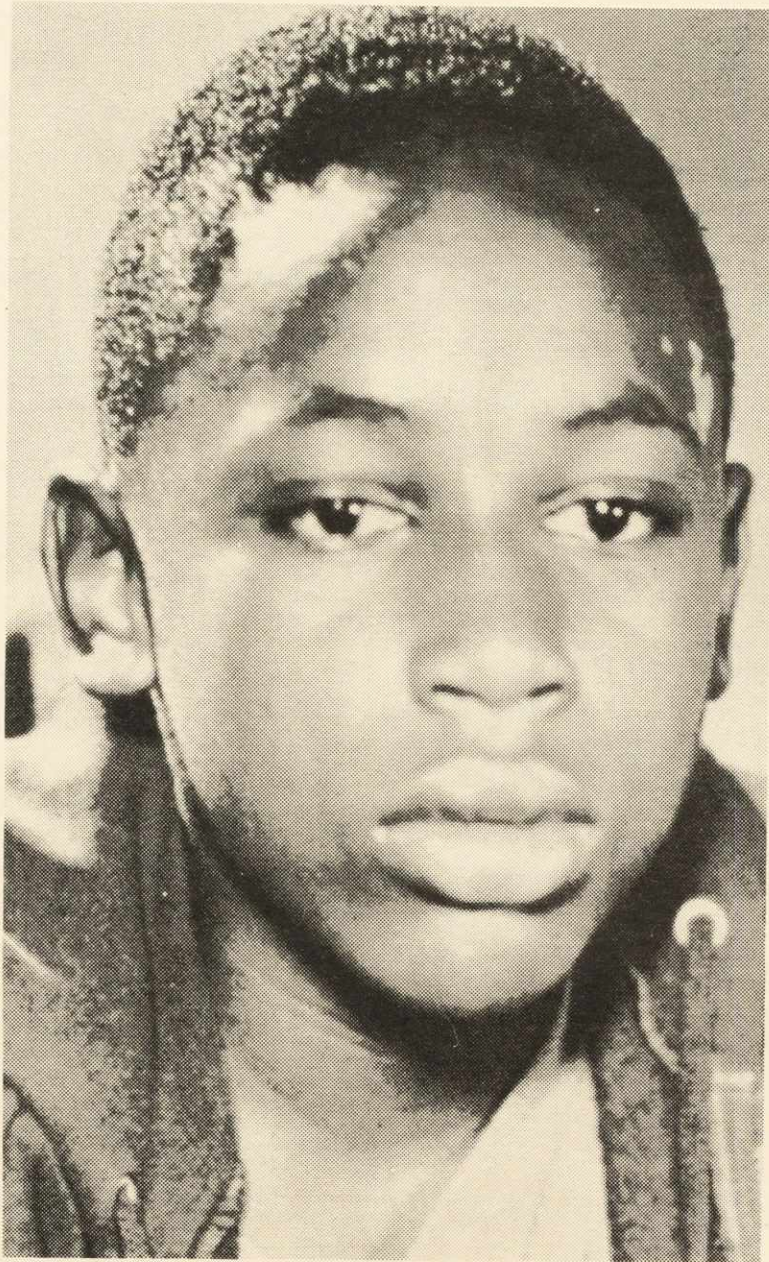
After school he hangs out with his estranged dad (Samuel L. Jackson, most recently of *Pulp Fiction*), a hard-ass chess player with no pity, who teaches Fresh life-lessons through chess: tailor your strategy to your opponent; don't become attached to one piece, no matter how powerful it is; keep focused on the goal. I never knew chess could be so hip, and let me just say Mr. Jackson is the coolest man alive — forget Jack Nicholson.

But life in the Projects ain't no chess match, which becomes abundantly clear when Fresh's friend gets a tracheotomy courtesy of a bullet in the playground. About that time Fresh starts becoming numb to pain, regret and death. There's only so far his sang-froid and cockiness will get him before he starts playing the big game, and another friend ends up getting shot to death.

The only words for the finale are "gruesome," or maybe "fundamentally disturbing." Fresh learns the value of lying his way out of a situation, but what's stomach-wrenching is the number of people it kills and how coldly he deals with it. In one of the last scenes Fresh sits on the hood of the car with a chocolate bar watching a mass-murder he's orchestrated.

Two things to remember: if you can't take swearing don't come, and if you can't take violence don't come (you might wince when the pit-bull scene comes up, but it's not that violent). Other than that *Fresh* has got a lot going for it. Some of the inner-city accents might be a little hard to penetrate, though.

What I appreciated most about the movie was how much it seemed like ABC's After-School Special updated for the Projects in the 90s. It's a dangerous mix of drug violence



Sean Nelson begins the downward spiral in *Fresh*.

and nostalgia for childhood, but underneath it all is a simple story of a kid trying to make it good, pick up some extra cash after school and play basketball, just like any other kid.

I can't say this flick will keep you on the edge of your seat for two hours, but it will for a good thirty minutes-worth. Those combined thirty minutes are outrageous, even stomach-turning as you realize what daily exposure to violence is doing to Fresh's mind. It's pretty safe to say the film's a comment on the effects of violence in our society, even our media. Maybe you'll even be able to see yourself in Fresh's shoes as the killing numbs him to the world and life.

B+

*Fresh* is playing at Wormwood's Dog & Monkey Cinema on Gottingen Street, Nov. 18-24.

## Manual flawed

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

On the back cover of their manual, the Research & Education Association promises that "All of the exam sections were prepared by test experts in the particular subject fields to assure the accuracy and difficulty of the exam questions." (Emphasis added.) The publishers of these manuals have an obligation to produce an error-free product, not only because that's what I paid for when I shelled out the \$21.95, and not only because it's the professional thing to do — but because of scholarship. The brains behind such manuals are, after all, models of erudition, supreme authorities, experts in their fields; they exemplify our scholarly

ambitions. They are, in effect, mapping out foreboding territory for us, territory which they have ostensibly explored and mastered. They are our mentors; we have a relationship with them built on mutual respect and unwavering trust. They have an obligation to check and recheck every word for spelling and every problem for accuracy. After all, what does scholarship mean?

If you have discovered errors in a test manual or on the test itself, or if you have any other comments, I would like to hear from you. My address is Suite 304, 700 Chilco Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6G 2R1.

David A. Scott



**TRIDENT BOOKSELLERS**

*& Cafe*

Books bought and sold  
Fine Cappuccino

Open 7 days a week  
until 9 p.m.  
• Smoke free •

1570 Argyle St. at Blowers  
423-7100

NATIONWIDE ACCESS  
**DATING SERVICE**  
FRIENDSHIP,  
ROMANCE,....?  
**1-900-451-4005**  
ADULTS ONLY (18+) VSN assumes no liability when meeting thru this service. \$1.50/min. T-Tone Service.  
VSN 900 SERVICES

**NEW**  
**PIZZA DELIGHT'S BLOCKBUSTER**  
**MEGA PIZZA DEALS!**

You want toppings? We've got toppings! Lots and lots and LOTS of toppings!! Try these incredible NEW "Mega-Toppings 12" Pizzas" on for size!!!

**NEW**  
**MEGA MEAT**  
A HEAVY DUTY FULLY LOADED PIZZA PILED HIGH WITH 5 MEATS INCLUDING PEPPERONI, SALAMI, BACON, GROUND BEEF & HAM  
**12" PIZZA ONLY \$8.88**  
VALID AT PARTICIPATING LOCATIONS ONLY NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER  
PLUS TAXES  
EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 1994.

**NEW**  
**MEGA CHEESE**  
SMOTHERED WITH 4 TYPES OF ZESTY MELTED CHEESE-OUR SPECIAL BLEND!  
**12" PIZZA ONLY \$8.88**  
VALID AT PARTICIPATING LOCATIONS ONLY NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER  
PLUS TAXES  
EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 1994.

**THE ORIGINAL**  
**MEGA WORKS**  
THE ULTIMATE!! FULLY LOADED WITH SEVEN STUPENDOUS TOPPING!!  
**12" PIZZA ONLY \$8.88**  
VALID AT PARTICIPATING LOCATIONS ONLY NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER  
PLUS TAXES  
EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 1994.

**Pizza Delight**  
On now at a Pizza Delight near you!  
\* A trademark of Pizza Delight Corporation Ltd., used under license.