

'Dick Tracy' amuses with laughs, stars, but not summer blockbuster for Beatty

By DON ATKINSON JR.
Of The Battalion Staff

Most movie reviews are meant to answer one basic question — Will the public like the movie?

But "Dick Tracy" is not like most movies.

Released in a whirlwind of media hype and promotion, "Dick Tracy" has already been deemed a potential blockbuster and therefore must be judged as such.

Unfortunately, the movie just doesn't live up to blockbuster status.

"Dick Tracy" is a well made film with good acting, clever dialogue, a fantastic cast and imaginative makeup and set designs. The problem is that the movie itself is flat, two-dimensional with little emotional impact.

If "Dick Tracy" was promoted as a movie rather than a blockbuster, it would be considered an enjoyable film and a hit at the box-office. However, in the face of current expectations, the movie stands a good chance of being called a failure.

Produced and directed by Warren Beatty, "Dick Tracy" faithfully recreates the famous Chester Gould comic strip in exact detail. The scenic backdrops of the city are painted matte shots with a comic-bookish appearance. The villains are grotesque and distorted images of men, and the hero is a walking paragon of virtue.

Beatty plays Dick Tracy with his usual boyish charm and honesty, but it is Al Pacino as the villain Big Boy Caprice who steals the movie.

Thanks to a clever makeup job, Pacino looks like the butt of every Italian joke you've ever heard. He screams, he pounds on tables, he misquotes famous people and he does all of that with sheer comedic brilliance.

The plot of "Dick Tracy" revolves around Big Boy who wants to take over the city's crime syndicate. His

Dick Tracy
Starring Warren Beatty and Madonna
Directed By Warren Beatty
Rated PG

first move is to eliminate Lips Manlis (Paul Sorvino), owner of the Ritz club where Breathless Mahoney (Madonna) works.

Afterwards, Big Boy gathers all the other crime bosses together to explain his vision of the future. Claiming to quote Abraham Lincoln, he says, "If you ain't for the people, you can't buy the people!"

The rest of the movie finds Tracy desperately trying to stop Big Boy from taking over the city, Breathless from getting into his pants and Tess Trueheart (Glenne Headly), his girlfriend, from giving up on him.

Headly as Trueheart is one of the few three-dimensional characters in the film and adds an emotional angle to "Dick Tracy" that is lacking elsewhere.

Aside from Headly, another cast member worth mentioning is Dustin Hoffman as Mumbles. Even though Hoffman is on-screen less than a few minutes, his character provides much-needed comic relief.

Since Madonna has been promoted almost as much as the movie, her performance must be addressed.

When she is singing, dancing or slinking around in sexy outfits, Madonna is at her best. But when she must recite dialogue, her delivery tends to be wooden. Whether she is pouting, bitching, crying or seducing, her inflections stay the same. Still, since most of the characters in "Dick Tracy" are two-dimensional, she doesn't hurt the movie overall.

"Dick Tracy" is a fun movie, the kind that most of us will enjoy. If you can put the hype and promotional overkill out of your mind, you will not be disappointed.

In other words: expect a movie, not a blockbuster.

WARREN BEATTY



DICK TRACY

Public Enemy raps tough line on 'Black Planet'

By JOHN RIGHTER
Of The Battalion Staff

Controversial rappers Public Enemy offer a tongue-in-cheek, sometimes-scathing rebuttal to the tumultuous uproar they've created in suburban America with their latest release, *Fear Of A Black Planet*.

I must admit, *Fear Of A Black Planet* lays to rest many ill feelings I held against the militant rap group. The axing of Professor Griff recently buries a few more bones I had with Chuck D. and company.

The straight-line philosophy of Public Enemy always wore caution in light of the group's extreme unrest and dissatisfaction with the union of black and white America. A belligerent "us against them" attitude, rather than an attempt at harmony and conciliation was my perception

"The album is hilarious at times, especially when co-rapper Flavor Flav hams-it-up, but it sadly reminds of a certain inadequacy we'd like to forget.

of the surrounding controversy.

Fear Of A Black Planet tempers that belief, to say the least.

Although the song matter definitely revolves around lyricists Keith Shocklee, Carl Ryder and C. Ridenhour's perceptions of discrimination and racial unrest (on both sides), I find it difficult not to justify the opinions based on common sense.

The ideas and pictures might not be pretty in an era of supposed racial acceptance, but it's hard not to label them accurate.

We're just not as far ahead in racial harmony as we would like to believe, and sometimes it takes a slap in the face to realize this (a la Spike Lee's "Do The Right Thing").

In "Burn Hollywood Burn," guest rapper Big Daddy Kane furiously raps, "Like I guess I figure you to play some jigaboo. On the plantation, what else can a nigger do. And black women in this profession, as for playin' a lawyer, out of the question. For what they play, Aunt Jemima is the perfect term."

The anti-mainstream-movie-industry song ends with a hilarious dub over where Chuck D. and the crew walk out on "Driving Miss Daisy" (a shared opinion with the white supremist groups).

The first single "Welcome To The Terrordome" works Chuck D. through the problem of racial violence.

"First nothing's worse than a mother's pain. Of a son slain in Bensonhurst. Can't wait for the state to decide the fate, So this jam I ded-

Public Enemy
Fear of a Black Planet
Death Jam/Columbia

icate, Places with the racist faces. Just an example of one of many cases. The Greek weakened speech I speak, From a lesson learned in Virginia Beach."

When not exposing racial injustice, PE attacks the harsh criticism they've received with a trio of instrumental tracks (also courtesy of Shocklee, Sadler and Ridenhour) that use sound bites and dubs to interplay hilarious extremes of listener ignorance. The Tipper Gore's of the world get their say, but in less-than-ideal surroundings.

With the finale, "Fight The Power," the anthemic track from Lee's "Do The Right Thing," Public Enemy closes with the hardest bang of the entire album. PE's militancy surfaces full tilt.

"Elvis was a hero to most," D. pounds, "But he never meant s-t to me you see, Straight up racist that sucker was, Simple and plain,

"Like I guess I figure you to play some jigaboo. On the plantation, what else can a nigger do. And black women in this profession, as for playin' a lawyer, out of the question. For what they play, Aunt Jemima is the perfect term."

— Big Daddy Kane, Rapper

Mother f-k him and John Wayne. Cause I'm black and I'm proud, I'm ready and hyped, plus I'm amped. "Most of my heroes don't appear on no stamps. Sample a look back you look and find, Nothing but red-necks for 400 years if you check. Don't worry be happy."

Fear Of A Black Planet wears another album title well: "How Will I Laugh Tomorrow, When I Can't Even Smile Today." The album is hilarious at times, especially when co-rapper Flavor Flav hams-it-up, but it sadly reminds of a certain inadequacy we'd like to forget.

I don't agree with everything PE says, and I'm damn glad to see them dump Professor Griff and his paramilitary thugs (just pray they don't pick them back up — again), but I also recognize the importance of works such as "Do The Right Thing" and *Fear Of A Black Planet*.

Musically, *Fear* is but a spark, lyrically it just set the entire forest ablaze.

Weekly videos feature best, worst in movies

By TODD STONE
Of The Battalion Staff

Music Box (Rated R)

You will see a lot of Jessica Lange this summer on video. Her two most recent films will be at your local video store within the next month.

Lange earned a 1989 Best Actress Oscar nomination for her role in the film "Music Box"—debuting on video today. Her other film, "Men Don't Leave," will appear in your video store July 18.

In "Music Box" Lange plays an attorney, Anne, whose father (Armin Mueller-Stahl) has been charged with war crimes during World War II. She agrees to defend her father in court.

Although her father appears innocent, Anne's search for the truth raises doubts about her father's mysterious past.

This film has first-rate courtroom drama and tension, but it also has a sincere, human side, as Stahl and Lange's performances explore a father-daughter relationship. If you like Jessica Lange, this film will please. Release date — today.

Grade: B

Ski Patrol (Rated PG)

"Ski Patrol" may be the worst movie of the '90s because it may take a decade before lousy filmmakers around the world equal the stench permeating from this film.

Actually, "Ski Patrol" is only bad if you go to a movie expect-

ing good acting, an interesting story and clever directing. However, despite the dumb story and lame dialogue, this film has one good thing (besides its sheer length)—great skiing.

Fortunately, fantastic skiing was given more screen time than acting and plot development. If you enjoy skiing, it might be worth a couple of bucks to see the movie.

The story is flimsy. A nice ski lodge has his lease up for renewal with the Parks and Recreation Department. A merry band of guys in charge of safety—the ski patrol—try to help the lodge pass inspection.

However, a greedy, corporate, money-sucking bad guy (Martin Mull) wants to sabotage the inspection so he can take over and start his own development.

The actors do nothing to save the mundane script, but in fairness, they were subject to the whims of the bonehead filmmakers.

By far the best performance was by the bulldog who occasionally would belch and break wind. Sure, uncouth dogs are tacky, but compared to the rest of the film, the bulldog was creative movie-making genius. Enough said. Release date — Wednesday.

Grade: D+
Other releases: *Ewoks: The Battle For Endor*, Tuesday and *Gross Anatomy*, Wednesday.



Battalion File Photo

From left to right — Armin Mueller-Stahl, Lukas Haas and Jessica Lange star in "Music Box." Video debut is today.

Video Spotlight: 'Hawks'

Editor's Note: Video spotlight is a new feature that highlights an unknown but quality film to offer more entertaining video options.

If you like dark comedies, "Hawks" starring Timothy Dalton (of James Bond fame) and Anthony Edwards ("Top Gun") is sure to please.

Both actors play characters that are stuck in a hospital, dying from a disease that sounds suspiciously like bone cancer, although their ailment is never identified.

Edwards plays an ex-football player who is content to lay around and wait to die. A successful British attorney, played by

Dalton, encourages him to spend his remaining days in pursuit of his ultimate fantasy: a night in an Amsterdam brothel.

With a deft touch, director Robert Ellis Miller manages to swing "Hawks" back and forth between sheer comedy and heart-stopping drama.

Although everyone in the film does an incredible job, Dalton deserves the lion's share of the credit. His character is the center point of the story and is played so well that all the other elements come together without a hitch.

Grade: B

• DON ATKINSON JR.

In Advance



Photo by Sondra Robbins

Christina O'Connor, a sophomore theater arts major from Laredo and Ross Lambert, a junior theater arts and english major, star in "6 Rooms Riv Vu."

MSC Dinner Theatre and Aggie Players will present "6 Rms Riv Vu" this weekend and next.

Starring Ross Lambert and Christina Vela O'Connor, the comedy is based on a play written by Bob Randall, and it is directed by Robert W. Wenck.

The story involves two apartment seekers, Anne (played by O'Connor) and Paul (played by Lambert), who are attracted by an advertisement for an apartment with a view of the river.

Before Anne and Paul are able to leave, they are locked together in the apartment. This predicament leads to a round of humor-

ous exchanges as the man and woman become acquainted with one another in the vacant apartment.

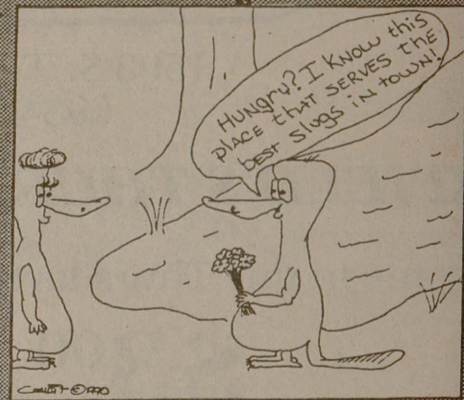
Before the play, MSC Dinner Theatre will serve a buffet with rotating menus.

Tickets for the dinner and theater are \$15 for students and \$20 for nonstudents. For the theater only, tickets are \$5 for both students and nonstudents.

"6 Rms Riv Vu" begins tonight with performances on Friday and Saturday. The play will also be presented next Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Tickets may be purchased at the Rudder Box Office.

A Touch of DEMENTIA by Paul Condie



"... AND NOW WE SEE THE MATING HABITS OF THE DUCK-BILLED PLATYPUS... ER... Ah... Could we go PAST this PLEASE!"