

The Devil's Own leaves too many loose ends

By AARON MEIER
 THE BATTALION

In the new film *The Devil's Own*, old meets new in more ways than one. First, the film marks the matching of two of Hollywood's biggest stars, Harrison Ford and Brad Pitt, who are talented men from two different generations. Second, the film pairs the old world of Ireland with the new world of New York City. Despite these potentially interesting extremes, *The Devil's Own* does little to meld the raw energy of the new with the experience and patience of the old.

The Devil's Own
 Starring Harrison Ford and Brad Pitt
 Directed by Alan J. Pakula
 Rated R
 Playing at Hollywood 16
 ★★ 1/2(out of five)

The film's story centers around the conflict in Northern Ireland. Pitt plays Frankie McGuire, a young Irishman who witnessed the murder of his father, an Irish nationalist. McGuire devotes his life to the Irish Republican Army and becomes one of the most hated terrorists of the British government. In an attempt to strengthen the IRA, McGuire is sent to New York to purchase anti-aircraft missiles, which he hopes to smuggle back to Ireland. While waiting in New York for the missiles, McGuire adopts the alias Rory Devaney and lives with New York cop Tom O'Meara, played by Ford. A dangerous situation erupts when O'Meara discovers McGuire's secret life, posing a dilemma for the straight-arrow police sergeant. The teaming of Ford and Pitt offers a potential tour de force of acting talent, but only one-half of the team delivers.

Pitt does an excellent job of giving his murderous character a heart. In spite of his merciless killing, Pitt forces the viewer to feel compassion for the crusading terrorist he portrays. In the scene in which O'Meara confronts McGuire, Pitt delivers a heart-crushing performance that proves he is one of the most talented

actors of his generation. Even Pitt's accent is passable as Irish. Although he tends to say "arse" and "aye" too often, the accent is solid and believable. The same cannot be said for Ford. The veteran actor does not deliver the acting goods in *The Devil's Own*.

In one scene, Ford's character is supposed to be incredibly drunk. However, when he gets home from the "traditional" night of Irish binge drinking, he casually emerges from the car and delivers his lines, as if sober. The supporting actors are greatly underused, and when the movie ends, an empty feeling persists. Too often in the film, plot threads are forgotten or end too quickly and conveniently. O'Meara's wife, played by Margaret Colin, is simply shipped off-screen, when things get too intense. His partner (Ruben Blades) is quickly killed off. Finally, McGuire's love interest, hauntingly played by Natascha McElhone, is forgotten once she has served her purpose.

The film offers no closure to these interesting sub-plots, making the movie incomplete. The story of *The Devil's Own* is seriously flawed. In order to get the missiles to Ireland, McGuire plans on simply sailing across the Atlantic. With no consideration given to customs officials or the Coast Guard, the writers envision McGuire sailing off into the sunset. This is a totally unrealistic plan for a man surrounded by the cruelties of reality.

The conclusion of the film is extremely disappointing. The movie simply ends. With so many unresolved aspects in the film, the ending is sudden, abrupt and vastly unfulfilling.

The Devil's Own could have been a great movie. All the elements of blockbusterdom are present—bankable stars, an intriguing plot and a killer soundtrack featuring Dolores O'Riordan of the Cranberries—but they do not come together to



Harrison Ford (far left) stars opposite Brad Pitt (far right) in *The Devil's Own*.

Working together for **Literacy**



Rosa Garza, a senior international studies and Spanish major, tutors Ricardo Gomez at the Workforce Center. Gomez is learning to read and write English.

Students, other area volunteers teach adults to read and write

By MELISSA PRICE
 THE BATTALION

Fdsatr sdtfoar asr malkals jasekr ablb goursr johrmadz cljamdfald amldgaur. This is what a newspaper may look like to an illiterate person.

The problem of illiteracy, or the inability to read or write, continues to persist in the United States. Texas has one of the worst literacy levels and one of the lowest budgets for literacy education in the nation.

Ray George, executive director for Literacy Volunteers of America-Brazos Valley, said one in four adults in Texas is illiterate. One in three adults in the Brazos Valley cannot read or write. The Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA) began a national literacy program about 30 years ago, to combat the problem of illiteracy.

George said the Brazos Valley branch of volunteers, which opened in 1984, strives to educate illiterate adults in Bryan-College Station.

He said the definition of literacy has changed dramatically over the years.

"In colonial times, if you could sign your name, you were considered literate," George said. "As technology and job requirements have changed from a rural farming life to an industrial setting, requirements have changed for what

skills a person needs for a job."

George said the program is fortunate to have an abundance of volunteers, many of whom are Texas A&M students, who dedicate their time to helping illiterate adults. He said volunteering with adults who cannot read or write is a rewarding experience for the tutor and the student.

A&M students involved with Aggie Literacy Volunteers, a campus organization dedicated to promoting adult literacy, tutor A&M employees at least two hours a week.

Andria Hunt, president of Aggie Literacy Volunteers and a junior biomedical science major, said everyone should be concerned with the issue of adult literacy.

"If we say that the children are our future, we need adults who are educated or who have been through these experiences to help mold our children into the leaders of tomorrow," Hunt said.

George said many illiterate adults are embarrassed that they are unable to read or write.

"It's like being on the playground and no one picking you to be on their team," he said. "It does

a real job on their self-esteem — these people just assume they're not as bright."

Maston Ray Orr, a 46-year-old volunteer who is still learning how to read and write, said he has dealt with being illiterate his entire life. Orr said his seventh-grade teacher, who used to put him in a closet because he could not read or write, treated him as an outcast. He said his illiteracy actually stemmed from his dyslexia, a reading impairment.

"The teachers in the early '60s didn't know what I had — they thought I was retarded and I had a speech problem," Orr said. "The other children would make fun of me, and when I did ask questions, the teachers felt like I was getting smart with them."

After a job injury left him disabled in 1989 and he was unable to find employment, Orr decided it was time to seek help and began attending tutoring sessions at LVA. Orr said he is now on a fourth- or fifth-grade reading level, and he continues to practice every day.

"(Illiteracy is) like being on the playground and no one picking you out to be on their team."

Ray George
 executive director
 Literacy Volunteers of
 America-Brazos Valley

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