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REEL CRITIQUE

MOVIE REVIEWS

Way of the Gun

Starring Ryan Philippe and Benicio Del Toro
Directed by Christopher McQuarrie



Oscar-winning screenplay The Usual Suspects, proves his direction is even more impressive than his writing by creating a story that works on numerous levels. It would take several viewings just to absorb everything.

Gun is the story of two career criminals determined to go against the odds and shoot the moon by kidnapping a woman carrying the son of a wealthy front man for organized crime. On one hand, this film is another great crime film, but on the other hand, this film rises above standard crime film fare. The social commentary, coupled with almost philosophical discussions, makes this film as intelligent as it is exciting.

McQuarrie plays outside the rules. There are no "good guys" and "bad guys." There is no black and white. There are only real people in surprisingly real situations, which McQuarrie makes funnier by employing irony, the oft-forgotten plot device. He does this in such rapid abundance that one cannot help but be amazed by the effortless way McQuarrie juggles so many different themes.

This film is one of those amazingly original films that

heralds the coming-of-age of another great director. Comparisons to Tarantino's Reservoir Dogs must be made, but, in reality, the two films are really only similar on the surface. McQuarrie has a more deft touch than Tarantino ever demonstrated, and his vision is even more original and pleasing to the senses. This is in spite of his seeming unwillingness to cut five to ten minutes from the middle of the film to tighten it up. In retrospect, those extra minutes made the ending more enjoyable, so maybe they do belong.

Gun is filled with a number of solid actors with solid performances. The performances caught in this film are some of the best of these actors' careers. Taye Diggs finally demonstrates a quiet steeliness to match his broad smile. Phillippe conveys a sort of reckless innocence that is invigorating. Del Toro keeps the audience in stitches, often with only a facial expression. James Caan does terrific work as usual, but for some reason, his character seems more personal, more real than any he has played in a long time.

This movie is really about people, relationships and the fact that sometimes the decisions a person makes do not come out for the best.

Like a roller coaster, Way of the Gun careens along wildly, with the audience laughing and groaning every step of the way. Rarely has a film been this much fun to watch while connecting so well with the audience. Way of the Gun is, in a word, exhilarating. (Grade: A-)

— Matt McCormick

The Watcher

Starring Keanu Reeves and James Spader
Directed by Joe Charbanic

The Watcher is the greatest film of all time — for moviegoers who enjoy hackneyed tripe. This film is so full of cliches it nearly makes the viewer burst. The film's saving grace is the chemistry of its lead actors, Reeves and Spader. While complementing Reeves' acting comes as a surprise to anyone who has seen one of his films, he does a respectable job in this film.

Spader does a convincing job as obsessed FBI agent Campbell, nearly rising above the ungodly amount of cliches in which his character is buried. His house is empty and he is a borderline psycho himself. Reeves' "Wow, dude," manner of acting perfectly suits his role as a voyeuristic killer. The on-screen chemistry between Spader and Reeves is some of the finest between two actors.

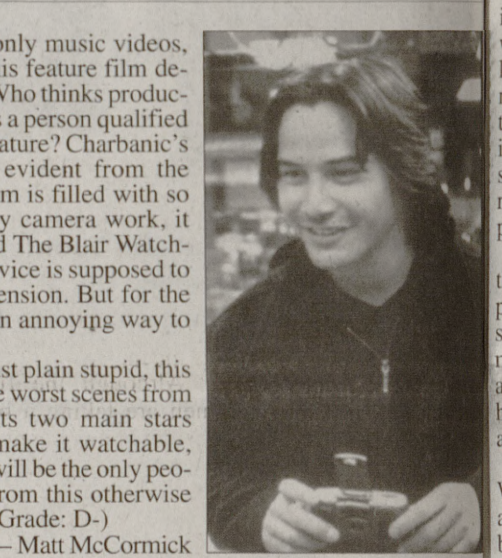
It is too bad that these two actors chose such a horrible project to work together. The problems with the film begin with the horrible script. Unoriginal and relying heavily on convenience, it fails to engage the viewer at any level.

The real problem with the film rests solely on the director's shoulders. With

experience producing only music videos, Joe Charbanic makes his feature film debut with The Watcher. Who thinks producing music videos makes a person qualified to direct a full-length feature? Charbanic's lack of experience is evident from the opening frame. This film is filled with so much shaky and grainy camera work, it should have been called The Blair Watcher. This voyeur-type device is supposed to enhance the dramatic tension. But for the most part, it serves as an annoying way to kill time.

Slow-moving and just plain stupid, this film is a rehash of all the worst scenes from serial killer movies. Its two main stars somehow manage to make it watchable, but fans of either actor will be the only people deriving pleasure from this otherwise mind-numbing film. (Grade: D-)

— Matt McCormick



Phi Beta Chi Fall 2000 Rush

Informational Mtg
Tuesday, Sept. 12
7:30pm MSC 212
Business Attire

Coffee
Wednesday, Sept. 13
7:30pm MSC 206
Casual Attire

Bible Study
Thursday, Sept. 14
7:30pm MSC 206
Church Attire

*** Bid Party**
Friday
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For more info, call/email:
Charissa Runyon 822-8463
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Jennifer Gregory 693-0244
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