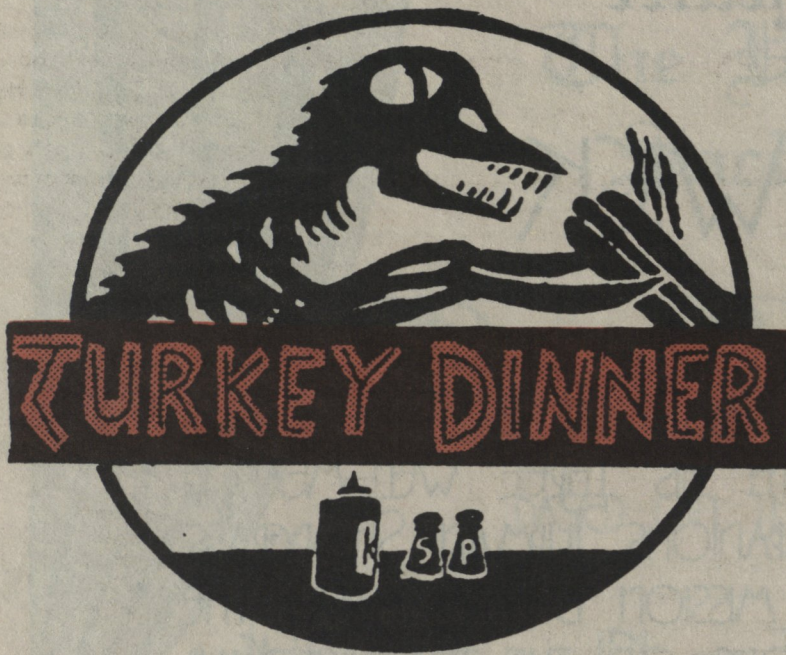


# ENTERTAINMENT



## This Week: *Hard Target*

IT SOUNDED LIKE A RECIPE FOR box-office magic: take a cult-favourite action star, devoid of talent but fun to watch; add two smartly dressed villains with attitude; concoct a plot by mixing equal parts of *Rambo: First Blood* and *The Most Dangerous Game* (which you may remember from your junior high English textbook); then let the whole mess

bake in the mildly demented mind of a cult favourite action director from Hong Kong until eighteen million dollars miraculously turns into a movie. Serve slightly overpriced at seven-fifty a head with a side-order of stale, overpriced popcorn. Makes a fortune.

Sounds like typical, cynical Hollywood thinking, right up to the part about the

director. And the typical, cynical movie critics did what was expected of them: they trashed it. David Gilmour of the *CBC Primetime News* insulted the star. Skinny and Egghead gave it a major thumbs-down. And let's not even think about those two yuppie morons from *The Movie Show*. You know, the ones who read their arguments from a cue card?

So, not being your typical critic, I went out and thoroughly enjoyed myself. And we know why, don't we...? That's right, because I absolutely love awful movies!

*Hard Target* is the first Hollywood film by James Woo and, as you may have guessed from the above ranting, it's not exactly Shakespeare. The plot is simple: There's these two Bad Guys. They have this great little business going. They hire out-of-work, down-on-their-luck Vietnam Veterans and promise them lots of money. But since they are Bad Guys, there is one catch: the Vets are being hired to play the fox for a Wealthy Businessman's hunting pleasure. They've just set up shop in New Orleans, where the cops are on strike. And that's when they cross the path of Chance Boudreaux.

Boudreaux is a local bum, played with talentless flair by Jean-Claude van Damme. Our short, baby-faced hero with brains of steel is hired by the Girl (Yancy Butler, recently unemployed after *Mann and Machine* flopped like a sumo wrestler on Prozac) to help her track down her father, who is (uh-

oh) a retired Veteran. Oh No! What if, before the heroes find him, he gets recruited by... Did you hear a gunshot?

Yessir, just before the Good Guys track him down, the Girl's Dad gets recruited and killed by the Bad Guy's henchmen. His death is made to look like an accident, but when Chance investigates, he finds evidence of foul play. When Chance, the Girl, and the only on-duty cop in town arrive at the recruitment office, they find a still-dripping corpse in a car out front and get attacked by the Bad Guy's Henchmen, and the chase begins.

At this point, at least halfway into the movie, that plot is thrown out the window and fun ensues as Chance and the Girl are pursued across miles and miles of bayou by the Bad Guy

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and a whole army of Wealthy Businessmen. They eventually meet Wilford Brimley and blow up a lot of old Mardi Gras floats. And then the credits roll.

Okay, so I lied. It is Shakespeare.

**The Technical Stuff:** This is a pretty good action movie with all the horrible flaws that genre requires. The first flaw is lousy acting. The three major stars, van Damme, Butler, and Lance Henriksen, have two things in common. The first is that their best roles were as androids in other films. Van Damme played one in his best movie, *Universal Soldier*. Butler played a shapely female android in a short-lived T.V. show called *Mann and Machine*. As for Henriksen, who has lately taken to playing a lot of B-movie action villains, he is most famous for his role as the 'artificial person' Bishop in *Aliens*. The second common denominator is that they are all still playing those characters. But the nod for worst actor in the whole film goes to Wilford Brimley, the old guy in the oatmeal commercials. He plays Chance's uncle, and does easily the worst job of his entire career. He's hilarious! First, you laugh a

continued on next page

## Rock the boat this summer.

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### Audition Schedule:

18, 19 February	St. John's - Arts and Culture Centre (Basement Theatre)
23 February	Sydney - McKnight Theatre
2, 3 March	Halifax - 1678 Barrington St. (3rd floor)
16 March	Saint John - Saint John High School
30 March	Corner Brook - Arts and Culture Centre

