

Turkey Dinner

This Week: *Warriors of the Wastelands* and
Warlords of the 21st Century

That's right, fellow B movie fans! In order to make up for missing last week's issue (due to an embarrassing computer crash) I'm reviewing two of the best in rotten cinema. The epics in question are almost mirror images of each other. *Warriors of the Wastelands* is about a reluctant hero in a post-apocalyptic war zone fighting to save a group of pilgrims from a group of murderous fanatics called the Templars. On the other hand, *Warlords of the 21st Century* is about a reluctant hero living in a post-apocalyptic war zone fighting to save a commune from a group of ex-military lunatics under one Colonel Sherman. See how different they are?

Warriors of the Wastelands (Thorn Emi Home Video, 1983) is one of those movies that's so bad the credits don't tell you who played what role. That's okay, because you don't really want to know...

Plot goes as written above with few minor complications. The hero in question is Skorpion, an ex-Templar who rides around in the ugliest car ever made for film. The Templars want to kill Skorpion for the crime of leaving, and while they're at it they want to kill everybody else for the crime of living. Why? Because their leader, One, believes that every human alive shares responsibility for the nuclear blast that wiped out the world and someone (read: the Templars) has to kill them for it. In an effort to avoid a plot hole, One also believes that the Templars can't kill themselves until they've done away with everyone else. Too bad they didn't notice all the other plot holes lying around...

Of course, Skorpion's not alone. His allies include Nadir, a big black guy with explosive arrowheads and an obsession with being the strongest man alive; a nameless girl with a remarkably rigid broken arm; and the Kid, a halfpint genius who keeps the Uglymobile running smoothly while shooting people with a slingshot.

The acting might be awful, but you really can't tell because the dubbing is worse than a Bruce Lee movie. The sets are really cheap looking, made of plywood and tin roofing. The real stars of the show are those awe-inspiring vehicles: Nadir's futuristic electric dune buggy (which sounds like a mosquito with a head cold) and the horribly beweaponed Templarmobiles (golf carts with spiked bumpers and flamethrowers under the hood).

Judgement: As bad as they get, but not without its moments. The acting sucks, but the script itself is full of hooks, one-liners and situations that may make you spurt beer from your nose. It drops dead for about fifteen minutes in the middle, but after that it pick up steam on its way to a really dumb climax. Scenes to watch for: the car stuck in the

radiator; the head that rockets skyward after Nadir shoots the guy in the neck; and Skorpion dressed in what looks like Clint Eastwood's costume from *A Fistful of Dollars*. Rated R for the ridiculous, badly filmed violence. Laugh your head off.

Warlords of the 21st Century isn't nearly as funny, but it's far more interesting. It was filmed in New Zealand (right across the sea from where they made those great *Mad Max* movies!). The acting's believable, with one notable exception. And the vehicles look kind of cool as opposed to being completely silly. The one drawback is the familiar plot.

The movie opens with a smoky sky. We hear a babble of radio voices telling us how the world ended. I won't tell you what happened (that would ruin the whole atmosphere of the movie) but I will give you a couple hints: it wasn't the bomb, and it might still happen...

The hero's name is Hunter (played by Mike Beck). He's a reclusive ex-soldier who still has his military motorcycle

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and his issue armour. Good thing too, because he gets into a lot of trouble with some very evil characters when he rescues a girl (Annie McEnroe) from Colonel Sherman's goons. Hunter takes her to a commune where she hopes to escape Sherman forever. No such luck. Sherman and the Battletruck track her down there and kidnap her. Again. Hunter is forced into the role of vengeful hero to get her back by destroying the Colonel.

Actually, it's a little more complex than that, but you'll have to rent it to find out why. This is a rarity in the car war genre: a truly good movie. It's only overshadowed by the fact that *Road Warrior* did exactly the same plot two years earlier. Mel Gibson similarities aside, this is one heavy movie. It's fast-paced and action-packed (it has to be), but it's also thoughtful and sometimes eerily deep. The only real weak point in the cast is Ms. McEnroe. She delivers most of her lines in the most annoying whiny voice I've ever heard.

Judgement: Entertaining and dark. Not as grim or as grimy as the *Mad Max* films, probably because of it's no-nukes apocalypse, but still pretty desolate and ominous. Stuff to watch for: Colonel Sherman's Battletruck, a truly imposing piece of machinery; creative solutions to the fuel shortage; Hunter driving the Love Bug from hell; and the Battletruck driving through some buildings in a very realistic demolition scene. Rated A for adult accompaniment, but still pretty violent for fans of big kabooms.

Trent Drake