

Burt Reynolds' name is box office 'poison'

By Micki Haller
Senior Editor

Hollywood's sexiest man in the 1970's has become the box office's deadliest poison in the 80's.

movie REVIEW

Since starring in "Switching Channels," a somnolent rip-off of "Broadcast News," Burt Reynolds has gone on to star in a movie that is unique only in its overabundant clichés, stereotypes and stock characters.

In fact, "Burt Reynolds" has almost become an instant tip-off that anything connected with the name will be trash. He should have quit with "Cannonball Run II," possibly the height of his dismal career.

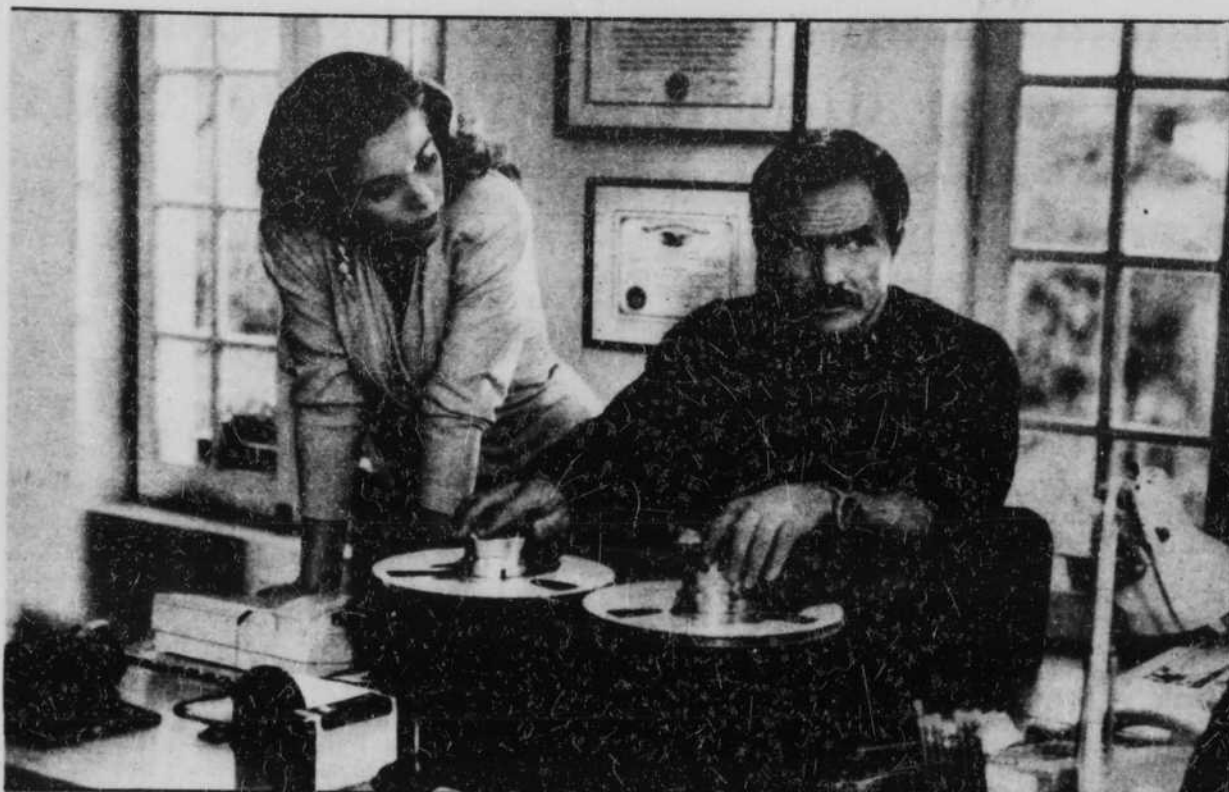
In "Physical Evidence," Reynolds plays a suspended police officer, war hero, lover, fighter and super-lovable (in theory) slob who also happens to be the prime suspect in the murder of a mobster.

Theresa Russell as Jenny Hudson is his cold, professional, ultra-sophisticated and ambitious lawyer. With this unlikely and mismatched combination, the audience is supposed to sit back and watch the sparks fly.

But nothing flies in this movie except occasional popcorn kernels at the screen.

Reynolds is totally believable as a quick-tempered, boozing slob -- he should be, after playing the character so many times.

But Russell is wooden and stilted, or overacting as if her life depended on it. The woman is unnatural -- she seems like a pretty mannequin to hang the plot on.



Courtesy of Columbia Pictures

Theresa Russell and Burt Reynolds in one of the few mildly clever scenes of "Physical Evidence."

In fact, all of the women in the movie are beautiful and busty. A majority of them are blond floozies as well. On the other hand, most of the men are about as attractive as Tip O'Neill.

The exception to this is Ted McGinley, who plays Jenny's shallow, yuppie, stockbroker boyfriend. Perhaps most people will remember Ted as Ace on "The Love Boat."

Luckily, "Physical Evidence" hasn't demanded that Ted grow much

as an actor. McGinley can play his role as a material brat who whines when his girlfriend becomes "mannish" while pursuing her case.

"I thought we were going to spend some quality time," he moans when Jenny has to work late.

At any rate, the movie doesn't really know what it wants to be. It starts out with a grisly suicide attempt/discovery of the dead gangster, but has a "comic" twist. The man who tries to hang himself off a bridge

first writes a sign that says "Happy now?" and hangs it around his neck.

Throughout the film, comic asides are inserted at the most inopportune times. Someone involved with this movie does not have a very good grasp of comic relief.

This could be the fault of writers Steve Ransohoff and Bill Phillips or director Michael Crichton's catastrophe.

Crichton has aimed for the overdramatic in this film. He wants the audience to laugh, cry, scream, feel

and exit the theater thinking "Ooh, what a succulent peach of a movie!"

The problem is, Crichton overmanipulates his audience. Movie-goers are not stupid; they know when they are being pushed to feel one way or the other. Crichton's devices are sometimes more interesting to watch than his movie is.

For instance, Jenny is portrayed as a little girl. Her boyfriend calls her "Jenzer," she overreacts to situations, and she seems very insecure.

When the prosecuting attorney, Ned Beatty, calls her a little girl, she flips him off behind his back. Do we: a.) feel sorry for Jenny? b.) feel angry at the prosecuting attorney? c.) stalk out of the theater in disgust?

At other points in the movie, the audience obviously is supposed to be excited, scared and sympathetic to the characters. Crichton only succeeds in scaring the audience. His directing is not enough to let the audience escape into a fantasy world.

The acting had so little to do with what was going on in the plot, it's ludicrous to deal with either point in any more depth.

Let it suffice to say that Burt Reynolds' name is like a jinx sign -- it means run, do not walk, to the nearest exit, and scream "fire" to save the other movie-goers.

In all fairness, "Physical Evidence" may gain a devoted audience. In fact, Burt Reynolds may someday have a cult following, much like the one that avidly watches for Tor Johnson, the 300-pound Swedish wrestler who starred in such hits as "Plan Nine from Outer Space."

Don't waste any money on "Physical Evidence." Perhaps the viewing public can get Reynolds off the big screen, and into the cable boxes where he belongs.

Alternative bands and musicians gather; make album

By Bryan Peterson
Staff Reporter

"After all, if you can't stand the Big Chill, get out of the freezer. Better yet, burn it down."
-- Jello Biafra

"Oops! Wrong Stereotype" is the 68th release on Alternative Tentacles Records, former home of the Dead Kennedys. Jello Biafra, lead singer of the Dead Kennedys, assembled this compilation album.

It features nine bands or performers, and all have had prior releases on Alternative Tentacles. The tracks on the album span the spectrum of alternative sounds, from the 30-second thrash blast of Nomeansno to the 12-minute spoken word selection of Biafra.

My biggest complaint is the absence of a lyric sheet, a must for the listener to comprehend the incomprehensible. Still, the general themes come through and all the performers have much to say. After all, they are part of the mirror of America.

Biafra's selection, "Love, American Death Squad Style," is one of the best portions of the album. Think of combining Dick Gregory, Mark Russell, Jonathan Swift and a man charged with "distributing harmful material to minors." The result is both caustic and comic.

Who else could refer to Oliver North as "a sexy, home-spun, non-sense Nazi Andy Griffith with fangs?" And people took this man seriously when he modestly proposed the H-bomb was created to "Kill the Poor."

Among other things, Biafra predicts the Contras will move to America to operate and suggests

an American police state is less than a decade away.

"Let us all choke on the vomit of Olliemania," Biafra sings. "A coldly calculated ploy, if there ever was one, to get freedom-loving Americans everywhere to actually look forward to living in a police state."

Also notable is "Pre-war America" by The Beatnigs, with its unrelenting drumbeat and simple lyrics: "Pre-war America/ Collect your medals now/ Because after the next one/ There won't be anyone left to give them to you."

**'Let us all choke
on the vomit of
Olliemania'**

--Biafra

The diversity continues with Stickdog, which could have taken its pneumatic guitar introduction directly from Mannequin Beach.

At the same time, Tragic Mulatto gives a primordial performance which must have been more harsh on the singer's throat than swallowing hot gravel after gargling with formaldehyde.

False Prophets, one of the longest-surviving and most innovative hardcore bands in America, adds a violin for "Never Again, Again." Stephen Ieldi's vocals are as gripping as ever and are well complemented by those of Debra Adele.

Bernard Goetz, a would-be American hero, comes to life in towns across America in "Neighborhood Watch" by Christian Lunch, referred to as the "bionic hermit crab from hell."

But in this song, handguns are replaced by machine guns: "I get my rocks off/ with my

Kalashnikov."

It can be a crazy country. Drive-by shootings, shopping mall tours, giant, four-wheel drive vehicles with tires taller than persons and flag-waving fascists. What is next in the capitol of convenience?

How about those little comics distributed by fundamentalist Christians on street corners? Alice Donut does a good job setting the comic book story "Lisa's Father" to music, but comes across as unconcerned about the problem of incest.

Other selections on the compilation include two each from Klaus Flouride, former bandmate of Biafra, and Canadians Nomeansno.

For a good slice of the American underground music scene and a glimpse of forthcoming releases on Alternative Tentacles, listen to "Oops! Wrong Stereotype." Be prepared to share a disturbing view of America in decline with ranting voices in the wilderness.

"I'm scared," Biafra sings. "I seriously wonder if people like me have only five more years. Five more years to say what's on our mind, five more years to even have a mind."

The straight edge movement has been a sub-culture within the punk movement since the early 1980s. "Real" edgers must have a crew cut and big, black X's marked on one's hands.

The X's are to show everyone that the marked one does not partake of alcohol or drugs. The idea is to have a clear mind and a clear body.

For some reason, women do not seem to be in straight edge bands. It is a very sweaty male thing, as shown by photos on almost every straight edge album cover. Then again, the entire punk scene is

male dominated, despite all its equality rhetoric.

The straight edge ideal is admirable, but many young devotees take it to excess, trying to convert the world to their own ideals.

Most straight edge bands sound pretty much the same and point a lot of fingers. They often form a local clique of followers and sell lots of T-shirts that all look the same.

Insted is a straight edge band which does not do much finger pointing but does sound the same on almost every song. Insted released its "Bonds of Friendship" album last year on Wishingwell Records, home of Uniform Choice.

The album's 13 songs are pretty standard thrash fare; short, repetitive and full of anger. Straight edge bands sing about POSITIVE things, so Insted does have much hope and talks about "us" or "we" instead of "them" or "you."

Straight edge bands also have to sing about UNITY. Insted is no exception. Like most other straight edge bands, when the vocalist (Kevinsted) sings about UNITY and POSITIVE things, the lyrics are overly vague.

Lyrics like the following are more trite than inspirational: "If you're in doubt/ Don't count yourself out/ Believe in yourself/ And keep the faith."

Still, some songs like "Live and Let Live" have lyrics which set Insted somewhat apart from other straight edge bands. "But rather than pointing/ At someone's bad points or problems/ Why not look at yourself and search" is a good example.

While full of good intent, most of the songs are trite and have even more mundane choruses, as in

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