

Black Rain is stormy, tense and violent

AT THE MOVIES

By DIAHANN NADEAU
Herald Special

Violent, gritty, hard-edged and frightening, *Black Rain* is a stylistic triumph, a movie filled with vivid images and tension. Director Ridley Scott (*Blade Runner*, *Alien*) has taken a rather unoriginal police action plot and made it new with his cinematography and the strength of the acting. The streets of Osaka provide an exotic and unusual backdrop to this story of modern crime and cultural clashes.

Michael Douglas is DYPD detective Nick Conklin, a tough city cop with alimony payments and an attitude. He's under investigation for possible corruption. His partner is Charlie Vincent (Andy Garcia), a good-humored guy whose life is spent trying to smooth the ruffled feathers Conklin leaves in his wake.

The two capture a vicious killer, Yakuza (the Japanese mafia member Sato, and are assigned to take him back to Osaka to be tried there. They lose Sato (Yusaku Matsuda) at the other end and stay on to rectify the mistake.

Detective Masahiro Matsumoto (Ken Takakura) is assigned to guide the pair around, much to Conklin's chagrin. A traditionalist and by-the-book cop, Mas clashes with Conklin at every turn. As usual, Charlie is left to apologize for Nick.

The movie follows the search for Sato, whose murderous ways will place a chill in any viewer's heart. As the bodies mount, Conklin and

Mas find some common ground, and gradually come to respect one another.

Black Rain takes us inside the mysterious Yakuza, with its strict codes of honor and tattooed bodies. Sato is a renegade in the society, a rebel with no sense of honor or tradition, a dirty crook as it were. In Nick Conklin he has met his match - a dirty cop with his own set of rules, no more bound by society than Sato.

Michael Douglas gives a tough and exciting performance as Conklin, a cop on the edge of corruption. Andy Garcia (*The Untouchables*) is delightful as Charlie Vincent; his Ray Charles scene is especially notable. Ken Takakura is great as the mystified Mas, who moves from being a wimpy desk detective to a field warrior worthy of New York city. Kate Capshaw is good in her small role as an American club owner in Osaka and Yusaku Matsuda is absolutely chilling as Sato, the killer for the '90s.

Black Rain offers excellent direction and wonderfully moody, dark cinematography. Osaka is a terrible and beautiful place, an overcrowded industrial centre with a dark heart. We feel Nick's sense of isolation and alienation, while understanding Charlie's excitement and sense of adventure.

This is a good movie, but not for the faint of heart or weak of stomach.

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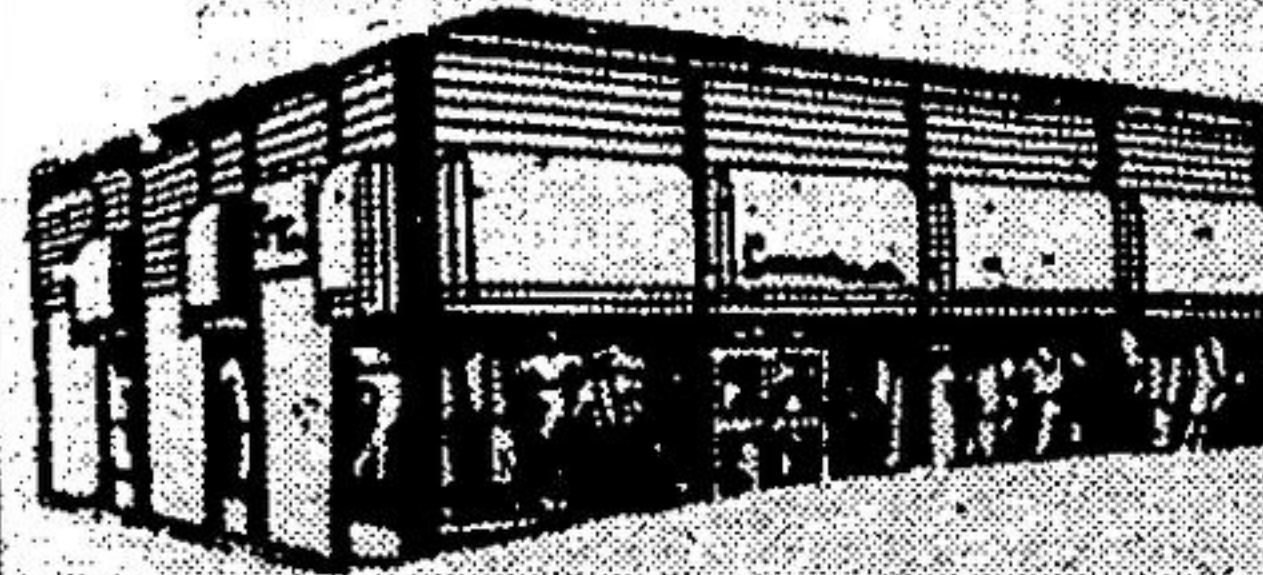
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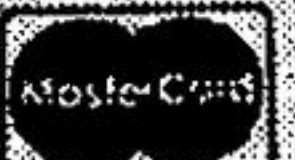
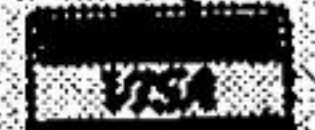
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