

'Dick Tracy' is not deep



FILMETER



ROBERT DIMATTEO

In Movie Theaters

DICK TRACY (PG) It's not as flat as "Ishtar," Warren Beatty's last major production, but this long-awaited, live-action epic based on the Chester Gould comic strip is thin and two-dimensional — a minor entertainment inflated beyond all meaning, and then topped with Madonna. The result is like a half-melted sundae on which a big cherry has been placed to divert attention. Alas, the camouflage fails. This is comic-book moviemaking without the resonance of "Batman" or even the kiddie giddiness of "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles."

Gould's beloved strip about the straight-arrow detective may never have had much social meaning (beyond playing with gangster-era stereotypes), but it did have punchy, graphic power. Gould drew vivid, unsightly bad guys: Seldom have villainy and physiognomy been joined together with such creepy success.

But why pump up this simple strip into a full-length, big-screen movie? After all, many young kids don't know Dick Tracy, and all the marketing ploys in the world may not endear this

square-jawed, old-fashioned character to today's more sci-fi-oriented tykes.

Many kids probably don't even know who Warren Beatty is — and nothing he does here will change that. Beatty seems to think that playing Tracy as stolidly as possible will make him a satisfying cartoon hero. Instead, he just seems stiff and subdued. (The best thing about the performance is his lemon-yellow fedora and raincoat.)

That leaves Madonna to charm us. Doing her best Monroe/Mae West impression as bad girl Breathless Mahoney, Madonna is a visual knock-out, her cabaret singing both silky and steamy. But the role is embarrassing. She spends the whole movie trying to woo Tracy, virtually throwing herself at him, while he keeps rejecting her for good girl Tess Trueheart (Glenn Headly). It's impossible not to think of Beatty's vanity here. The renowned off-screen lady-killer has cast himself as a supposedly dashing action hero who spurns the advances of the hottest woman in the world.

What does work? The juicy hamminess of Al Pacino as arch-villain Big Boy Caprice, and Dustin Hoffman as the appropriately named Mumbles. Playing an orphan kid who keeps rescuing Tracy, Charlie Korsmo is likable — no "Annie"-style cutesiness mars this child actor. The wild make-up effects are fun, and, for a while, so is the visual scheme, with its emphasis on primary colors and blatantly artificial backgrounds.

The movie may not be a bomb, but neither is it much more than bearable. **GRADE: ★★**

LAST EXIT TO BROOKLYN (R) When Hubert Selby Jr.'s book of the same name was published in 1965, it shocked people with its raw language and tortured, seamy view of working-class Brooklyn. Now, belatedly, German director Uli Edel has come up with a heavy-handed urban nightmare that feels neither timely nor historical. The movie plays like a cross between a pretentious MTV video and one of those breast-beating, serious Hollywood movies of the '50s and '60s (especially "The Man with the Golden Arm") — all filtered through a Teutonic sensibility.

What makes the movie worth seeing at all is Jennifer Jason Leigh as a hooker. This chameleonlike actress never gives the same performance twice: Though she also played a prostitute in the recent "Miami Blues," she was a very different character. Here, she's fleshier and coarser. The potent image of this thick-headed tart strutting and stumbling her way through the dirty streets will outlast the movie's attempted fusion of Christian symbolism, labor unionism and arty expressionism. **GRADE: ★★½**

New Home Video

IN COUNTRY (R) Warner. A heartfelt if stylistically corny adaptation of Bobbie Anne Mason's novel. Set in small-town Kentucky, the film is about the residue of feelings left from the Vietnam War — how the pain and shame of that particular conflict have carried over into the next generation.

Bruce Willis surprised a lot of people with his unusual performance as a reclusive, traumatized vet, while the young English actress Emily Lloyd ("Cookie") disappeared into the role of a feisty teenage Kentuckian. **GRADE: ★★★**
(Film grading: ★★★★★ — excellent, ★★★★★ — good, ★★ — fair, ★ — poor)

'Total Recall' is a gripping movie

By DIAHANN NADEAU
Herald Special

Director Paul Verhoeven (RoboCop, Soldier of Orange), has given us another alarming look into a high-tech, brutal, and violent future. Populated by mutants, villains, and television screens, it is not a pretty sight. It is, however, a riveting one, and Total Recall grips the audience from the first moment to the last.



Arnold Schwarzenegger plays Doug Quaid, an average Joe (except for the muscles, of course), with a gorgeous wife and a tedious construction job. Plagued with nightmares of Mars, he is driven to Rekall, Inc. to have a 'memory implant.' For those who can't afford the time or money for a vacation, Rekall, Inc. will implant the memory of one for you. This way your holiday is guaranteed to be fun, and you don't even have to be yourself in it if you choose a little frill. And there's only a slight chance of an accidental lobotomy. Since this wife hates Mars, Doug decides this is the best way to go.

Before the implant can be made, it becomes clear that Doug has already been implanted, that he is not in fact Doug Quaid at all. 'If I'm not me, who the hell am I?' Quaid has to go to Mars to find out, pursued by vicious agent Richter, (Michael Ironside), not to mention his 'wife' (Sharon Stone). Top meanie Cohagen (Ronny Cox) wants him alive, but we're not sure why.

Although Verhoeven's 21st century Earth is a disaster, (the movie is set in 2084), his Mars is terrifying. A dry red planet with no air and hideous domed cities, Mars is

populated by mutants and rebels and vicious government agents. Cracks in the faulty domes have resulted in a large mutant population, and Cohagen, who is running the planet, just doesn't give a damn. The make-up on these people is fantastic, and a three-breasted woman is guaranteed to make you blink a few times.

On Mars, Doug discovers the truth, and it has more than a few twists. The movie goes into high gear violence, losing some of the philosophical edge and inner anguish that made it more than an action picture in the beginning. However, it is a compelling ending nonetheless, the chase scenes fast-paced and not tired cliches.

Arnold is good in this flick, managing to convey a sense of uneasiness, fear, and self-doubt. His action scenes are also well done, his powerful build giving a strong sense of invincibility. Ronny Cox, RoboCop's bad guy, is also strong, a businesslike villain with money as the bottom line. The ultimate CEO as envisioned by Ivan Boesky - 'greed is good' taken to its ultimate conclusion. The rest of the cast is fine, with Rachel Ticotin as Melina, Doug's real love interest.

Verhoeven is a fascinating director, his futuristic visions combining utter banality with evil so rampant and embedded that it leaves you numb. This picture, like RoboCop, is amazingly violent and not for the faint of heart. Even if you're not an Arnold fan, Total Recall is appealing, as visually arresting in its own way as the much softer and prettier Dick Tracy.

Fox's 'J' is for Andrew

ASK DICK KLEINER



DICK KLEINER

By Dick Kleiner

Q. What does the "J." stand for in Michael J. Fox? V., Dalton, Ga.

A. Would you believe it stands for Andrew? Well, it does. Here is the story as Fox told me himself: His real, full name is Michael Andrew Fox. When he became an actor and wanted to join the Screen Actors Guild, he wanted to call himself Michael Fox, but there already was an actor by that name. So they suggested he use his middle initial. He felt Michael A. Fox sounded sort of silly, so he simply took J. arbitrarily. It stands for Andrew.



Michael J. Fox



Lloyd Bridges

Q. Recently my daughter and I saw the movie "A Shock to the System," with Michael Caine and Elizabeth McGovern. I told my daughter I had always enjoyed McGovern on the TV se-

ries "Paradise." I was shocked to find out that the actress on "Paradise" is listed as Sigrid Thornton. I find it hard to believe they are not the same person. — M.K., Haverhill, Miss.

A. But they are two entirely different people — Thornton is an Australian. McGovern from Evanston, Ill.

Q. Can you give me some information on Frank Lovejoy? — D.B., Saginaw, Mich.

A. I would like to know whatever happened to Audie Murphy? — C.E., Santa Maria, Calif.

Q. What happened to actor Jim Hutton? J.R., Dothan, Al.

Q. What information can you give us about David Janssen? — M.E., Fairmont, W.V.

Q. Please tell me if Gloria Swanson is still living. — Mrs. D.S., Kalamazoo, Mich.

A. All of them have passed away — Lovejoy in '62, Murphy in '71, Hutton in '79, Janssen in '80 and Swanson in '83.

Q. A few years ago, around the Christmas holidays, I saw a movie called "Silent Night, Lonely Night."

Shirley Jones was in it, but who was the man who starred with her? Is it on video cassette? — J.D., Bernville, Pa.

A. Lloyd Bridges was the man, and, yes, it is on a video cassette. Ask the man for MCA80286.

Q. I recently saw "South Pacific" on TV. An actor, playing the bit part of a sailor, looked very much like Lee Majors. His name was not in the credits, but could he have been in that film? — J.W., Fairview, Pa.

A. No. "South Pacific" was filmed in 1958, and Majors' first job was in "The Big Valley" in 1965.

Q. In what movie did Walter Huston sing "September Song"? — Mrs. H.A., Sewanee, Tenn.

A. That comes from "Knickerbocker Holiday," but Huston sang it on stage. Charles Coburn sang it in the movie.

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