

# Yet Another War Movie Fails to Rescue Itself

By **GRAHAM PARKER**  
Staff Writer

"Behind Enemy Lines" is an excellent 30-minute movie.

Pity that it's surrounded by 75 minutes of crap.

As the title suggests, "Behind Enemy Lines" sees disillusioned Navy navigator Lt. Chris Burnett shot down over Bosnia.

Gene Hackman plays Adm. Reigart, Burnett's crusty superior who is faced with the usual Hollywood problem of obeying stupid orders or risking

all to save his pilot.

Burnett (played by Owen Wilson, who is not Tom Cruise) leads Serbian forces on a merry chase through some jaw-dropping Slavic terrain, dodging booby traps, battles and a deadly Bosnian sniper in his race to escape execution.

The sequences of Burnett sneaking around the war-ravaged Bosnian landscape offer some of the movie's finest points and vividly portray the suffering of civilians in war zones.

If the writers had focused more on the plight of Bosnia or Burnett's trek to safety, it would have been a fantastic film in the vein of "The Killing Fields" or "Bat 21."

Sadly, "Behind Enemy Lines" fails to focus on one topic, instead becoming a muddled, confused pseudo-epic.

Is it a war movie, genocide awareness or Navy recruitment commercial?

The answer lies nebulously — and frustratingly — somewhere in the middle.

Wilson almost succeeds at creating a believable character out of Burnett. But the pilot-on-the-run story has been done, and Wilson adds nothing new to the genre.

His radio conversations with Hackman vary from almost believable (an angry Wilson demanding to be picked up) to simply stupid (a calm Wilson cracking bad jokes over the airwaves, with his would-be rescuers smiling dutifully on cue).

And excepting a few surprises, the

whole movie is nauseatingly predictable: The rescue is called off, Hackman has to risk his career to pull his man out, and so on.

Even the camera work is repetitive and annoying.

The hand-held perspective is used far too much to be anything more than tiresome.

And the editors seem obsessed with the "pause" button, constantly stopping the action at pivotal moments.

"Behind Enemy Lines" fails to live up to the potential generated by a few well-done scenes, and the repetitiveness of the plot makes the audience wonder if the projectionist has the film in reverse by mistake.

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# Local Director Reinterprets Casting of 'Romeo & Juliet'

By **RUSS LANE**  
Arts & Entertainment Editor

Director Heidi Jacot likes to take overlooked Shakespeare works and polish them until they shine or dust off old favorites and put them into a new context.

Last March, she directed Company Carolina's rendering of "Pericles;" Jacot's latest project is a mostly male casting of "Romeo and Juliet," which opens Friday at the ArtsCenter.

"I have to feel like I'm doing something new," she said. "I've no desire to do 'As You Like It,' because I've seen it before done well."

While Shakespeare was living, all male casts wasn't anything new.

But Jacot's re-envisioning is a bit more radical: the play's protagonists are both male; Friar Lawrence is less of a "Friar Tuck" archetype and was reconceptualized as a repressed homosexual; Mercutio is cast as a woman; the Nurse is a mustached man in drag; a gun in the mouth replaces a knife in the chest as Juliet's method of suicide.

Jacot said that after she decided Juliet would be a man, her creative flood gates opened. She pushed her experimentation with gender roles further and further; between Juliet being a man, the Nurse in drag and Lady Capulet, all possible versions of femininity are present.

While Jacot plays with gender roles, she is wary of presenting the play as a social commentary. "I never wanted to make this a political statement," Jacot said. "What (the play) has come to be about is wanting to be loved."

Consequently, Jacot deleted the family feud subplot, and refocused the play on Juliet's relationship with her family.

"As a director you want to say 'this relates to you.' Even if it's not a socio-political statement, the emotions can transfer." The emotions are key to Jacot; overt shock value, however, is not. Anyone expecting this new rendering of the play to consist of explicit gay trysts will be disappointed, as the characters only kiss twice, as was dictated by the script.

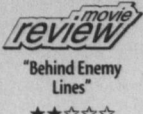
Jacot said she doesn't intend to shock as much as to jolt the audience and make them see Shakespeare in a different light — make them realize that this play isn't about glorifying love but revealing its danger.

Jill Burke, an actress who's performed in Chicago as well as Chapel Hill, said that's what attracted her to playing her double-billing as Mercutio and Lady Capulet. "General audiences don't like to listen to Shakespeare anymore," Burke said. "I wanted to get people to pay attention and really listen to Shakespeare."

Jacot said she realizes her reinterpretation is a risk, but similar to her description of the play, the risks are essential. "So that's the choice: knowing that you're screwed, do you live a life of authenticity or do you hide?"

"Romeo and Juliet" will be performed at the ArtsCenter at 8 p.m. Dec. 7-8 and 14-15 and at the Cary Page-Walker at 8 p.m. Dec. 21-22.

The Arts & Entertainment Editor can be reached at [artsdesk@unc.edu](mailto:artsdesk@unc.edu).



"Behind Enemy Lines" ★★☆☆☆

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By **Jeremy Hurtz**

■ "Sullivan's Travels" DVD  
Screwball-comedy director Preston Sturges tells the story of fictional Hollywood director John L. Sullivan (Joel McCrea). Unhappy with his lighthearted smash hits, Sullivan plans to make a tragedy about the plight of the homeless, called "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" To find an authentic angle, he dresses as a bum and sets out for the heartland with a dime in his pocket.

Sturges' film is a perfect mix of comedy and poignancy. Three of the best recent comedies overtly acknowledge their debt to "Sullivan" — "Dr. T and the Women," "State and Main," and especially the Coens' "O Brother, Where Art Thou?"

The Criterion Collection's new DVD sports a crisp picture and plenty of supplements. The commentary track, featuring Sturges admirers Michael McKean and Christopher Guest ("Best in Show"), isn't as funny or as informative as it might be, but the disc's many documentaries and interviews more than make up for it.

■ "X-Force: New Beginnings"  
In 1996, Marvel Comics was both financially and creatively bankrupt. Now the company is back on track, revamping title after title, bringing on writers and artists who made their names outside of mainstream comics. Writers like Grant Morrison ("The Invisibles") and Bob Gale (screenwriter of "Back to the Future") have reinvigorated the company's comics.

The cream of the cream is writer Peter Milligan and "Madman" pop artist Mike Allred's "X-Force." It's like "Making the Band" for superheroes. The idea is that a wealthy entrepreneur owns this glamorous group of mutant teen heroes, the way Jerry Jones owns the Dallas Cowboys. Except the Cowboys don't kill — and get killed — quite so much. The new "X-Force" isn't concerned with the morality of their often-lethal actions. They just want to sell official merchandise.

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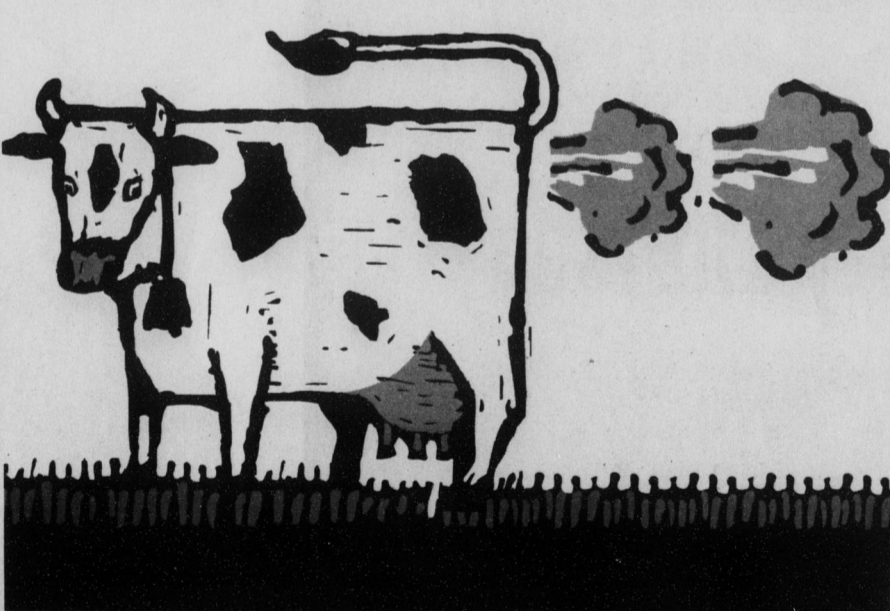
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