

# In terrible flick, 50 Cent dies trying

BY WILLIAM FONVIELLE  
STAFF WRITER

Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson's new film "Get Rich or Die Tryin'" isn't so much a movie as it is factory-produced merchandise — designed to make more money off the rapper's already tired mythology.

Don't be surprised if the studio releases 50 Cent action figures with detachable bullet holes.

This paragraph was about to make some snide comment about how the film's plot will be familiar to fans of 50 Cent, but let's get a little snider: It will also be familiar to anyone who has ever seen a rags-to-riches story before.

The screenplay by Terence Winter is completely and utterly paint-by-numbers, and no one has the courage to draw outside the lines.

It's not helped by the fact that it's released in the shadow of "Hustle & Flow," an infinitely better hip-hop film with a similar plot.

The difference is that film took the standard formula and infused genuine intelligence and charm into its main character, played by Terence Howard, who has a supporting role in the 50 Cent flick. That allowed Howard's character to become a hopeful soul with whom the audience could identify.

"Get Rich or Die Tryin'" never brings 50 Cent down from his plateau of vanity, always reminding us that he's more gangster than anyone else could ever dream to be.

It takes that technique one step too far, however, when 50 Cent gets shot and is taken to the hospital.

The surgeon peers over his body and remarks something like, "You know, a four-year-old gets shot once and dies. This guy's riddled with nine bullets, and he's gonna make it."

So if you take nothing else from the movie, just remember: In the event of gang warfare, 50 Cent owns that 4-year-old.

Common sense dictates that the project was doomed from the beginning, but there was always the hope that director Jim Sheridan would bring a fresh take to the film's stale formula. After all, this is the guy behind such wonderful and memorable films as "In America" and "My Left Foot."

Apart from a few pretty shots of the sunset, Sheridan comes across as bored and uninspired, never elevating the story from level one.

He's a gifted filmmaker who will no doubt be good again. Here,

## MOVIE REVIEW 'GET RICH OR DIE TRYIN'' ★★

he's nothing more than hired talent brought on to steer the 50 Cent masculinity train.

This isn't the first film to chronicle the rise of a famous rapper, and it certainly isn't the first in which a rapper crosses over to acting.

But 50 Cent should stick to music — actually, he shouldn't even stick to that, but that's another review.

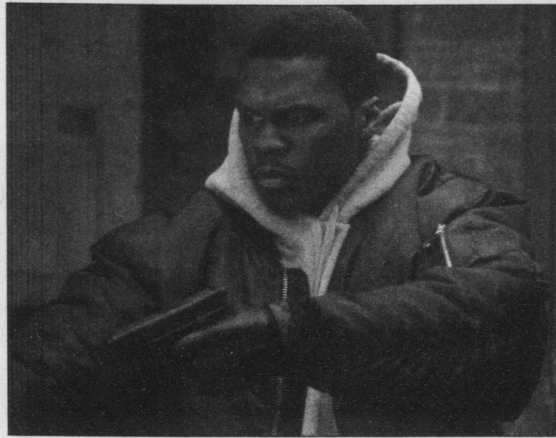
Considering that the film just asks him to play himself, he's astonishingly flat.

There's no soul in his eyes and no spark in his voice — he's just a guy reading his lines and collecting his salary.

To be fair, "Get Rich or Die Tryin'" does have two saving graces. One is Howard, who has found himself in solid performance after solid performance this year. He actually manages to rise above the overblown, awkward dialogue and render it quasi-bearable. This is a feat in and of itself.

Also, credit Sheridan and Winter for not completely glorifying the gang lifestyle.

The audience is reminded of an interesting tidbit that most gang



COURTESY OF PARAMOUNT PICTURES

Curtis '50 Cent' Jackson shuffles a rap career and armed robbery in 'Get Rich or Die Tryin',' a movie based on his life (pre-fame, that is).

films gloss over: After dividing the amount of time he spends standing on the street by the money he earns, a drug dealer makes only minimum wage. It's a sobering reality in movie that more often borders on the ridiculous.

Subtract the time 50 Cent spends in prison, and he makes even less than that.

"Get Rich or Die Tryin'" is a disappointment of the highest

order, a film with proven talent both behind and in front of the camera that still manages to fall on its face.

It doesn't take more than nine bullets to kill this flick — 50 Cent is enough.

He dropped a verse. His acting's worse. And now his movie's in the hearse.

Contact the A&E Editor at artsdesk@unc.edu.

ward to continuing challenges with working with young bands," said Dicker.

## Identified with greatness

With recent releases from the Comas and Robyn Hitchcock receiving major critical acclaim and a wealth of buzz surrounding recent signings, Yep Roc seems poised for something greater.

"I can see 2006 being a really big year for them. I think they're trying to make more of a name for themselves in the indie world," said Kilgore. "People have heard of Merge and Matador and Sub-Pop, and if Yep Roc keeps doing what they're doing, they're going to be one of those labels."

Clarque Blomquist, bassist and drummer for the Kingsbury Manx, another recently signed band, said he feels that the label already has garnered some of that notoriety.

"Yep Roc has all kinds of stuff, indie kind of stuff, spacey kind of stuff; there isn't so much of a product identity, but I don't think that's what they're going for," he said. "It's not like buying a record from Dischord or Thrill Jockey where you kind of know what to expect. I think people will more and more start to identify them with quality

music," Blomquist added.

Dicker said he feels that the most important aspect of running a record label is drawing support from an established audience and gaining new fans by releasing worthwhile music.

"I think that the thing about it is that with every release hopefully we're making new fans and connecting with new people. Not just the consumers but people behind the DJ booth or behind the desk writing reviews," he said.

"Whatever it is we feel with every record we're taking a step forward and building on it one small step at a time. The important thing for us is to continue putting out quality music and have people recognize that and help spread the word with us."

Contact the A&E Editor at artsdesk@unc.edu.

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This is one of those groups that is better left unnoticed. [page 7](#)

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Almost 50 years old, Madonna tries to stay in vogue. [page 8](#)

#### PORTERDAVIS

Genre-hopping band goes through identity crisis. [page 8](#)

#### CROSSTIDE

Cheesy pop band destined for life on the sidelines. [page 8](#)

#### POX WORLD COMPILATION

Local groups band together to show off regional style. [page 8](#)

## dive recommends

### [ANNIE — DJ KICKS]

The Norwegian songstress puts up her microphone and grabs her turntables on this release in K7's popular DJ series.

The set is full of danceable bubblegum tunes as well as some more obscure tracks that are loaded with kitsch appeal and hip-shaking grooves.

Also included, two nonalbum cuts from Annie herself.

### [FLOWER TRAVELIN' BAND — SATORI]

This was Japan's answer to Black Sabbath during the '70s. They only released two albums, but this one is a monster.

The album is a six-part epic with two of the tracks coming in at more than 10 minutes.

Gigantic guitar riffs and a vocalist that sounds like a Japanese Robert Plant make for an intense foray into the world of heavy psychedelic rock.

Anyone into this type of music should definitely check out Satori.

Contact Ben Pittard at jbenton@email.unc.edu.

## YEP ROC

FROM PAGE 5

It's amazing that we're working with some of our favorite artists growing up," he added.

The established fan bases of those iconic figures helped to add credibility to the label and to bolster sales as well.

"These people have great sales history and Nick Lowe was one of the first artists to really legitimize the label," said Dicker. "That sort of opened up a lot of doors for us; you're only as good as the artists on your label are."

### Pumping younger blood

Dicker said the sales from established artists allowed the label to support records from newer developing artists that carry less guaranteed success.

Growing support for artist development has led to what in

many ways seems a change of direction for the label.

Collins Kilgore, lead guitarist and vocalist for the recently signed American Princes, said he feels that a change is evident at Yep Roc.

"I think that they're clearly trying to launch a separate direction for the label with different kinds of bands," he said.

"I think they're happy working with indie or punk music icons. They're very good at doing that. They've grown a whole lot. They're using the successes of doing that to get more into artist development, and that's why they're signing bands like us and Cities."

Rob Mackey, guitarist for Cities, said he thinks that the label should do its best to support upcoming artists as well as historically important ones.

"Hopefully Yep Roc can get to the point where they can develop these young bands and young artists and also keep doing music by these large

figures from the past," said Mackey. "Hopefully they can do double duty like that and offer stuff from both ends of the spectrum."

The passion for music within the label and its artist-friendly atmosphere has made Yep Roc an enticing home for up-and-coming bands.

"What interested us with Yep Roc was what we'd heard from other people," said Kilgore.

"We were actually talking to Yep Roc as well as a few of other labels and we asked some friends and they said they were a really artist friendly label. They were really personable and were like, 'We want to enable you guys to do what you want to do,'" he said.

Dicker said the label is always thrilled to be working with developing bands.

"We still are motivated by our passion in the music and the people that are in these bands. We're very excited and are looking for-

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