

# The pudding thickens in new 'Chefs' who-done-it

By JUDITH SCHOOLMAN

"I have eaten my way to the top. I am a work of art," says Max, the rotund, gluttonous editor of *Epicure* magazine. But, when Max's doctor tells him that the food he loves so well and eats so often in such great amounts is killing him, a curious series of events makes one wonder, *Who Is Killing the Great Chefs of Europe?*

One by one, the continent's most accomplished chefs find themselves cooked in the manner of their specialties. Who's next? Why it's Natasha O'Brien (Jacqueline Bisset), dessert chef extraordinaire, Max's favorite and ex-wife of Robby Ross (George Segal), a fast-food mogul responsible for "three-quarters of the world's acne."

## cinema

*Who is Killing the Great Chefs of Europe?*

As the pudding thickens, so to speak, signs point to Robby, who wants his wife back and also wants a chef to endorse his 'new omelette' chain. He also happens to be just one step ahead of the murdered chefs.

While the characters could be straight out of an Agatha Christie mystery, the sharp, saucy dialogue is clearly contemporary. Set in magnificent locations in London, Paris and Venice, the film does not aim to scare, but to offer a feast of beautiful

color, food, clothes and faces.

The cast, especially Bisset, Segal and Robert Morley (Max) perform with ease, mixing the absurdities of the plot with subtleties of the enormous culinary egos that abound in the film.

One classic performance is delivered by Jean-Pierre Cassel, who plays as the Swiss chef who finds himself

overcooked in his oven. As the sexy, sensuous chef, Cassel does well while performing with Bisset or having a gourmet food fight with liver and French bread. The appearances of the other minor characters and Max's secretary, Beecham (Madge Ryan) push the film on its slick pace to its grande finale.

Directed by Ted Kotcheff, *Who Is Killing the Great Chefs of Europe?*, is quite an enjoyable who-done-it and who-ate-what. Bisset's outfits deserve a credit line of their own. But the prize goes to the food, raw or cooked. Even the most avowed junk-food lover will salivate over the fresh lobster, duck and vegetables.

If this film could have a caloric count, we would all expand. Fortunately it doesn't, so we can let somebody else worry about the flab while we sit back and enjoy the show.

Judith Schoolman is a film critic for the *Daily Tar Heel*.

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