

Douglas delivers original cop thriller in 'Black Rain'

By Ken Nolan
Emerald Contributor

Director Ridley Scott, who has shown audiences his sleek, stylized filmwork in the futuristic *Blade Runner* and the

stomach-churning *Alien*, uses his unique brand of cinematography with potent ferocity in his new cop-thriller *Black Rain*.

On the surface, *Black Rain* is your basic buddy-cop, fish-out-of-water, action adventure film.

But unlike most of the wishy-washy cop thrillers made over the last few years, *Black Rain* is an intelligent, complex and rugged picture; probably the most compelling and potent film of its kind since *The French Connection*.

Michael Douglas stars as Nick Conklin, a New York City cop with an attitude. Conklin chases a slippery Japanese mafioso, Sato, from the back alleys of the Big Apple to the Land of the Rising Sun.

makes the audience loathe, admire, and detest Conklin all at the same time. No one has created such an intriguing and immediately compelling cop character since Gene Hackman played Popeye Doyle in *The French Connection*.

Co-stars Andy Garcia and Kate Capshaw both play their small roles effectively, but the real co-star is Japanese actor Ken Takakura. As the Osaka inspector assigned to assist and baby-sit Douglas and Garcia, Takakura's meek and sublime style creates a tension between the characters, helping to propel the film at a stampeding pace.

The audience feels as if it is walking a high-wire over a pit of scorpions for two hours. And like everything else in his films, Scott turns the inevitable cop-film violence into an art form. Scott's bad guys are pelted with bullets and thrown by explosions like crude ballerinas dancing to and opera of machine-gun bullets and shotgun blasts.

The intricate, powerful screenplay, potent acting by Douglas, and Ridley Scott's meticulous attention to detail makes *Black Rain* one of the most original and hard-hitting cop films of recent years.

Movie Review

Conklin, haunted by recent departmental accusations of pilfering money seized in a drug bust, has one last chance to regain respect. But Conklin has a hard time regaining face, for in Osaka, Japan, he and partner Charlie (Andy Garcia) find themselves wrapped up in red tape, and are ordered to remain observers only.

Of course, Conklin is one of those cops who never read "The Policeman's Guide to Being Nice," and uses every means at his disposal, legal or otherwise, to snag Sato.

Douglas, rebounding from his academy award-winning role in *Wall Street*, gives a gritty and powerful portrayal in *Black Rain*. Nick Conklin is an imperfect, fallible and irrational cop who realizes his own shortcomings, but still believes his ends justify his means. This is a tough, honest piece of work by Douglas, and he somehow

'World in Motion' faces growing up for Browne

By Rick Heyman
Emerald Contributor

Jackson Browne - *World in Motion*

As the preeminent introspective songwriter of the 1970s, Browne has faced the difficult task of growing up (that is, focusing on problems of humanity deeper than love and its illusions) without alienating the millions of fans for whom mending a broken heart meant

predecessor *Lives in the Balance*, is a focused, impassioned record that succeeds both as a work of art and as an act of conscience. On the last album he promised "I'm not going to shut my eyes/Til I go down" and *World in Motion* bears this out: the title song implores us to look around at the disadvantaged and get involved; another song asks Oliver North "Does the word justice mean anything to you?"

The album's most stunning song, "My Personal Revenge," is a poem of Christian forgiveness written by a Sandinista official to his former Somoza torturers. And lest anyone accuse him of being a disloyal leftist, the last two songs make it clear that he's not an "-ist" but a free thinker calling for justice, compassion, and human virtues.

Surprisingly, it is the love songs that provide the record's weakest moments — they're good but workmanlike by Browne's standards. All in all, *World in Motion* is contemporary not only in its high-tech gloss but also in its world view.

Record Review

listening to Jackson Browne. Sure, 1974's *Before the Deluge* beautifully and apocalyptically warned of environmental disasters and in 1979 he helped organize the No Nukes concerts, but spending whole albums on politics was and is a risky career move.

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