

TARANTINO

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And this time they're really getting it.

By winning the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival this year, *Pulp Fiction* has served to help solidify Tarantino's place in the world of film.

Drawing together an all-star cast that includes John Travolta, Samuel L. Jackson, Uma Thurman and Bruce Willis, Hollywood's hottest young director is back in the house, with a vision that once again pitches the audience from one extreme to the other, like a tilt-a-whirl from hell.

Some said that it couldn't be done, that the bullets Tarantino fired at the audience would eventually come back at him in the form of a tepid sophomore effort. It has happened to many young writer/directors who find out all too soon that the fast lane is full of charred wrecks and theatrical roadkill.

But Tarantino likes to drive fast, and his latest vehicle is loaded like a drunk thug with a cheap Saturday night special.

Born from the trashy heaps of cheap 1950s detective 'true-story' drivel, *Pulp Fiction* has an episodic heart that beats to the tune of three storylines, which intertwine and twist with gore and intrigue.

Making the most fuss in this film is John Travolta (Vincent Vega), who finally returns to a role that he can sink his teeth into; teeth that have been suffering from some serious atrophy as of late.

But 'hit' he does. And teamed up with Samuel L. Jackson, they make a helluva killing machine, schoolin' lackeys who are dumb enough to cross Marsellus Wallace (Ving Rhames), the mob boss the two gun for.

In between hired hits, Vincent gets signed up to play babysitter to a real hot number, Marsellus's cokehead wife Mia (Uma Thurman). Mia has a rep like a black widow though. Vince is cool though, and the two



Samuel Jackson (left), Uma Thurman, John Travolta and Bruce Willis are the major players in Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*.

share a sexual tension that gets warm without overheating. What Vince doesn't know is that his little harmless date is about to take a serious bend straight to hell.

I won't spill the beans, but the end result gave me a new phobia for hypodermic needles.

Then there's the tale of Butch the boxer.

Butch (Bruce Willis) is a man on the way out. A boxer with only a few fights left and an offer from Marsellus to throw one for big bucks. But Butch won't go down for the count and faces some king-hell retribution for double-crossing the mob.

But Butch is splitting town for a new life. Almost.

Unfortunately for Butch, his girlfriend forgot to pack his father's watch on the eve of their departure, and unwilling to part with an heirloom that his father had carried with him during Nam (in a very unique place, I might

add), Butch hurls himself back into the fray to retrieve the gem from his staked-out and soon-to-be-warzone of an apartment.

Suffice it to say, going back gets Butch involved with Marsellus as well as with a pair of sado-masochistic hillbillies that offer up one of the film's most memorable scenes.

Bullets fly. Extras die.

And whenever the bullets aren't flying, the verbal zingers are. Tarantino has a virtually unparalleled talent for creating sharp dialogue to go along with his larger-than-life, spine-cracking anti-heroes.

No doubt *Pulp Fiction* will come under the same criticism that Tarantino's previous work has; that the violence is the foul fuel that feeds the beast.

Violence is a factor, but not THE factor.

Tarantino just does it with more style.

FICTION

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Travolta) and Jules (Samuel Jackson) are driving with this kid in the back seat. Vincent is talking to the kid as Jules drives. Vincent turns to face the kid, gun in hand. Jules drives over a bump, the gun goes off and you can imagine the rest. Bits of brain are in Jules' hair and the car is soaked with blood. I saw *Pulp Fiction* at a screening, but I have heard that at this point, the audience was laughing.

That is disturbing. Tarantino is quoted as saying, "I always stop short of calling my work comedy because as funny as it is, there are things you're not supposed to be laughing at... but when I'm writing it, I'm hearing laughs, when I'm directing it, I'm hearing laughs. I edit it for the laughs."

"If I watch it with an audience that doesn't laugh, I think they're bored," Tarantino said.

This is demented.

There is a scene where Butch (Bruce Willis) and the mob king he crossed (Ving Rhames) are taken hostage in a pawn shop. What happens to the mobster, is unspeakable. But Butch rescues him, and in return, Marsellus forgives Butch of his crime. This horrible situation created a bond between the two, but there are other, less violent and less disgusting ways of doing this.

Everyone I know loves this movie. I can see its qualities and I can appreciate the creativity it took to make the film. But what I can't do is see past all the violence and deem this movie "great."

PULP

Continued from 11A

basic bad guys. You can actually relate to them, and you are sad to see them die. That's Tarantino.

The dialogue is brilliant. That's Tarantino.

OK, so there's a lot of violence in this film. Graphic violence. Unfortunately, that's also Tarantino. But this film varies from his other

movies (namely, *Reservoir Dogs* and *True Romance*) in that the violence isn't in the spotlight and, in some cases, it even adds to the subtle humor.

I would go so far as to call this film Quentin Tarantino's best. The cast (John Travolta, Samuel L. Jackson, Uma Thurman and Tim Roth, to name a few) give wonderful performances, with Tarantino's screenplay twisting the entire cast through events sometimes crazy, sometimes bizarre, and some-

times unnaturally normal.

It looks good, it sounds good, and it's entertaining. Who wants more from a movie?

You'll probably note that I haven't written anything about the plot. That's because there are several closely interwoven plots. You'll just have to see the film to understand. And I recommend seeing the film.

Oh, by the way, the worst performance was that of the character Jimmie. That's Tarantino.

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