witness the development of a coalition that represents an insurmountable force exercised with such cunning that the team assumes an almost invincible status.

Exploitation and bad taste - How would Mr. Parker handle these potential injuries to credibility? Perfectly. Action sequences are dealt with in such a way that the viewer still feels sick to the stomach but is spared from being numbed by a senseless schaden fraude. Too often, the tendency is to monopolize on violence, but in this instance we are offended by the brutal education of the experience without becoming complacent and indifferent.

It is always very difficult to rationalize why such subject matter should be regarded as entertaining, but remember this. If a film is entertaining the medicine that much more effective. **Alan Parker** and his contributors have made such a beautifully constructed film that is is impossible not to be left stunned by what is primarily a very important testament to these terrible times, but secondly is a visual spectacle that surpasses anything I have personally seen in a long long time. At the end of the film the audience will invariably be rather morose but at the same time overall perception tends to sky rocket. On the way home tiny details became vividly amplified. The squeaking of a seat belt, the way the light diffuses through the frosty corner of a windshield or the sound of boots in frozen snow. All of these tiny stimuli became crystal clear as the glorious hangover from the movie chases you to bed.

Trevor Jones who produced the exceptional soundtrack to one of Parker's earlier films (Angel Heart), delivers again with a score that must at least get a mention from the academy. At first a simple theme is a used to hammer home a feeling of tension and danger, but, as the film becomes more turbulent, the music blossoms into a rich paint board of sound that literally has the effect of squeezing the breath out of one's lungs.

Just as the coats are about to go on though, **Parker** slips up. Producers must demand some semblance of a happy ending because one of the final scenes is atrocious. Just as **Anderson** and **Ward** prepare to leave, a small congregation gathers at the site of a church, now raised to the ground by the Klan. The gathering is mostly black, but interspersed amongst them are some of the white community, including a handful of beautiful blue-eyed Aryan children with painfully blonde hair.

entirely unnecessary. It left me with the impression that the film had in one second stooped to the level of the bland generalization of a pop-video -- I left wishing I had gone to the bathroom precisely at that moment in order to miss this shallow inclusion.

Another criticism was suggested to me by a friend with a little more insight. "In the end," he said referring to some of the invigorating retribution by hackman "it simply goes to reaffirm the notion that terrorism can only be fought by terrorism." He is, of course, completely correct but nobody would argue that in such a situation a conventional approach would have been entirely useless. Who is worse in such a situation, the bigot or the man that attempts to wrench that bigot's testicles off? The liberal element will wince and cry foul of such an approach, while the conservative stronghold will gleefully applaud but at the same time experience some enjoyment that might be rather unsettling for the rest of us: That the action in this film can provoke such questions is further testament to its brilliance.

In his diary, Alan Parker writes the following:



Gene Hackman and Willem Dafoe play agents Anderson and Ward in the motion picture MISSISSIPPI BURNING.

In the concluding scene of Mississippi Burning the camera pans across a Mississippi cemetery and comes to rest on the grave of the young, black, Civil Rights worker murdered in our opening sequence. Our grave is the grave of an anonymous individual, a character in a fiction. A film. A movie. But James Chaney, murdered with Andrew Goodman and Mickey Schwerner, is buried in meridian and his grave has also been desecrated; his headstone, and his memory, smashed by ignorance and cowardice. The broken stones were dumped in a nearby ditch. His grave is still there in a forgotten corner of a hard to find East Mississippi cemetery. Still unmarked. I'd written '1964, not forgotten' on our film headstone. Just a movie prop in a movie fiction. Our film cannot be the definitive film of the black Civil Rights struggle. Our heroes are still white. And in truth, the film would probably never have been made if they weren't. This is a reflection of our society not the Film Industry. But with all of its possible flaws and shortcomings I hope our film can help to provoke thought and allow other films to be made because the struggle still continues. I wrote a speech for Willem in his concluding scene as the Mayor hangs at the end of a short rope. I didn't include all of it in my final cut because we thought it to be too preachy and probably it articulated all that I'd said, or was trying to say, in the previous two hours of film. It was a hard cut to make, so I'll include it now.

BIRD

Why did he do it? He wasn't in
on it. He wasn't even Klan.

WARD

Oh, he's guilty. Anyone's guilty who watches this happen
and pretends it's not All of them. Every governor or sen-
ator who allows the hate to fester to gather a few votes.
Every college kid who ever laughed at a racist joke.
Everyone who ever chewed their tongue when they should have spoken up. Mr. Mayor was guilty alright. As guilty as the
lunatics who pull the triggers. Maybe we all are.



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