

United Artists' 'Betrayed'

Film poses advertising dilemma

By The Associated Press

HOLLYWOOD — It's one thing getting filmgoers to watch the make-believe violence of a *Nightmare on Elm Street*. It's another luring them to witness a true-to-life racial lynching that mirrors the sickness of their society.

Yet that's the challenge facing the makers of the explosive movie *Betrayed*, which opens in theaters across the country on Friday but has already suffered one advertising snafu that left preview audiences steaming.

Filled with unbridled bigotry and an all-too-real racial murder, the film stands as a study in how — and how not — to market an earthshaker.

"This movie is enormously difficult," says Gordon Weaver, who is supervising the advertising campaign. "This is a very tough, tough film."

What makes *Betrayed*, directed by Costa-Gavras, a hard sell is its explicit depiction of U.S. white supremacists — a topic audiences might want to avoid. So producer United Artists looked for another marketing hook within the movie.

Cut to Debra Winger and Tom Berenger, the film's stars. For United Artists, the popular pair made for a natural advertising angle. Thus, in the first *Betrayed* posters, or "one sheets" as they are called, Winger and Berenger were shown embracing.

From the looks of the poster, *Betrayed* appeared to be a steamy little film, perhaps an update of *Jagged Edge*, which was, in fact, written by *Betrayed* author Joe Eszterhas.

But preview audiences expecting *Betrayed* to resemble an adventure-packed pulp romance were startled to see a band of hard-working Midwestern farmers who lead a double life as racist killers.

The white supremacists murder a talk-show host reminiscent of Denver radio personality Alan Berg, who was gunned down in 1985 by members of The Order. They hunt down and lynch a black youth and denounce homosexuals, Jews and various ethnic groups.

In more than one instance, preview audience members spontaneously erupted in anger, either walking out or speaking out against the film while it was still on screen. Said one woman at a Century City screening: "All white

people are not like that!"

"What we found out was that people didn't know how to react to this film," said Brenda Farrier, who with Weaver was called in to consult on the \$6 million advertising campaign.

"We had to help the audience along and say, 'It is going to be an upsetting film. It is not going to be a musical,'" Farrier said. The decision was ironic: If the movie were to be popular, United Artists was saying, people had to be ready to hate what they saw.

"Powerful films do cause people to say, 'I don't want to see this. . . . It makes me uncomfortable.' That's the risk that you run," said Tony Thomopoulos, chairman and chief executive officer of United Artists Pictures.

"When we first started screening the film for people," Thomopoulos said, "we found out that if people were not prepared for what they were going to see, their reaction was so shocked that they weren't able to digest it all, and they missed a great deal of the film. Now we are taking this approach of making people aware."

Among the first moves that Farrier and Weaver made was dropping the sexually tinged poster, which was to have been used as a newspaper advertisement.

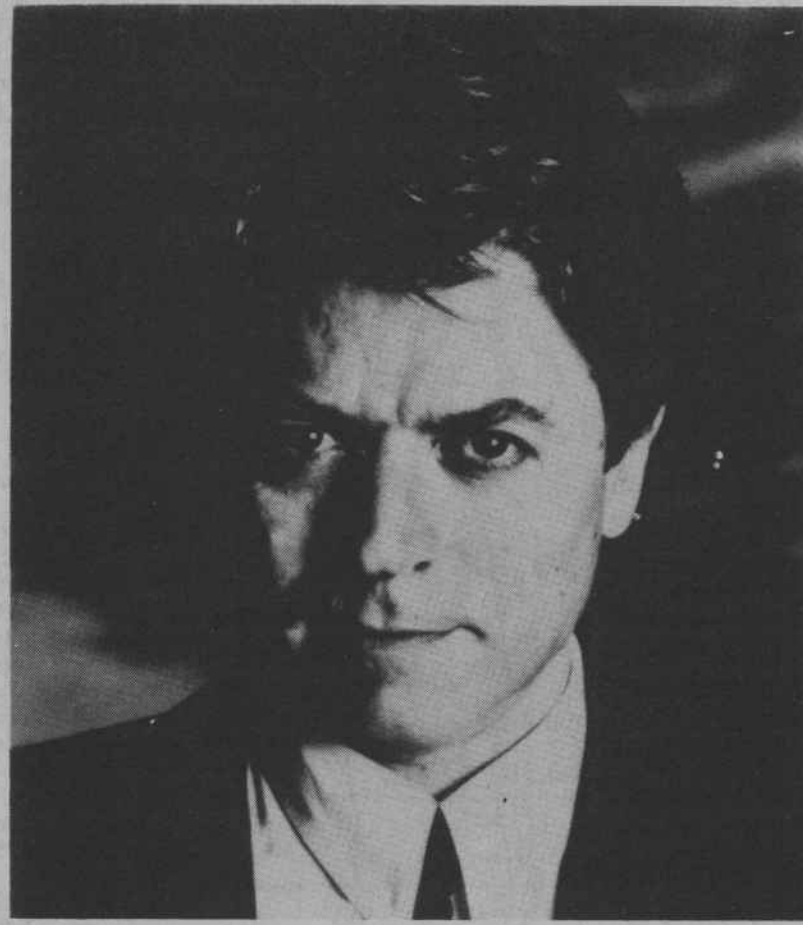
The poster was replaced with an unusual, unillustrated full-page ad that ran in newspapers in Los Angeles, New York and Chicago — but in the hard-news, not entertainment sections.

The movie, the ad said, is "a profoundly disturbing and often shocking motion picture portrait of a hidden part of contemporary America. It will anger you. It will upset you."

A new television ad, which began the first week of August, was just as blunt: "It will change the way you think . . . forever."

Soon, United Artists introduced a television commercial built around interviews with average-looking moviegoers leaving screenings. Said one: "The movie was terrifying." Said another: "It will kick you in the rear end."

After that ad ran, United Artists finally began running commercials that addressed the entire storyline, and Winger and Berenger were finally revealed to be lovers.



British rocker Robert Palmer hits the stage 8 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 3 at Carowinds Paladium. Palmer's latest tune is "Simply Irresistible" from his new album *Heavy Nova*.

British rocker Palmer coming to Carowinds

From staff reports

British rocker Robert Palmer will perform 8 p.m. Saturday at the Carowinds Paladium, highlighting the theme park's Labor Day holiday weekend.

Since beginning his solo career in 1974, Palmer has recorded 10 records and has produced hits including "Addicted to Love," "Bad Case of Loving You" and "I Didn't Mean to Turn You On." His most recent success is the hit single "Simply Irresistible" from his newest album, *Heavy Nova*.

Tickets to the concert are \$5.00 in addition to Carowinds theme park admission and may be purchased at Ticketron outlets, through Teletron

at 1-800-233-4050 or at Carowinds from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. on the day of the show.

For the holiday weekend the park will open Saturday through Monday at 10 a.m. and will close Saturday at 10 p.m. and Sunday and Monday at 8 p.m. After Sept. 5 the park will be open Saturdays and Sundays only through Oct. 16.

Carowinds admission is \$15.95 for ages seven through 59 and \$7.95 for ages four to six and 60 and older. Children three and younger are admitted free.

Carowinds is located just off I-77 (Exit 90) approximately 10 miles south of Charlotte and 12 miles north of Rock Hill.

Some stars should not leave TV

By CHUCK DEAN
Staff writer

A number of television personalities are choosing movie careers over the demands of a weekly series. Typically, movies pay more and demand less time to make, benefits appealing to actors.

But the crossover is often a tough one to make. Here are some classic examples of failed attempts:

Somebody Killed Her Husband (1978) — This was Farrah Fawcett Majors' first movie after leaving *Charlie's Angels* and was a critical flop. After seeing this incredibly stupid movie, many wished that someone would have iced Farrah instead of her husband.

Making Love (1982) — Farrah's partner Kate Jackson (the ugly one from *Charlie's Angels*) played a woman whose husband turns out to be real gay and in love and making love with another man. He probably did all this because Jackson was so whiney in the movie and because she is too damn brainy and ugly.

Care Bears Movie (1985) — These sickening colored bears got together with some high and mighty Hollywood executives and landed a lucrative movie deal — as if they weren't making enough manipulating the Saturday morning cartoon kids. Had they hired Martin Scorsese to direct this movie things might have developed more interestingly.

Leonard Part 6 (1987) — Bill Cosby in a joke of a movie. Who saw it? The public is slowly coming to the realization that this guy isn't God, and more so, he isn't funny.

Harper Valley P.T.A. (1979) — Barbara Eden, that annoying Jeannie from *I Dream Of Jeannie*, portrays a redneck mom from a redneck town trying to see that there is justice for her redneck daughter in this redneck movie that should never have been made.



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