

A Mark of Excellence

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Watchers Reborn

Justin Bielawa

What starts out as a trademark gore-fest, Roger Corman B-movie becomes rather interesting in the recent home video release of *'Watchers Reborn'* by New Horizons home video, based after a novel of the same name by Dean Koontz.

Mark Hamill plays Detective Jack Murphy, a man who's locked himself away in his work in the police department to forget the painful loss of his wife and child four years ago.

Following a grizzly murder of a guard at the local zoo, Detective Murphy and his partner are called down to the crime scene where the coroner comments that "This wasn't done by a human; the rips are not neat enough. This was an *animal*!". Jack and his partner speculate if this was an attack by an escaped zoo animal but all the animals, with the exception of some decapitated monkeys, are accounted for.

Looking for clues, Murphy stumbles upon a golden retriever that tries to get him to follow. After a brief one-way conversation, Murphy ends up following the dog back to the crime scene. Murphy's partner ends up taking the dog home with him. After only a few hours, the man is killed much

like the zoo guard, blood streaking the room.

The next day, Murphy and the police find the man butchered. Murphy mourns the loss of his friend but is soon driven to anger when the NSA steps in and takes over investigation. Murphy confronts the man, striking him in the jaw but the government agent retaliates and beats Murphy down in front of his workers.

After leaving work, Murphy finds the golden retriever in his back seat. Finding a gash but not a nametag, he reluctantly decides to adopt the dog.



Returning home, he calls a woman he met at the zoo, Dr. Hudson (Lisa Wilcox: *Nightmare on Elm Street 4 & 5*) who tells Murphy to 'stay there'. While waiting, the dog demonstrates incredible feats, including a Q&A session (where one bark is yes and two is no) and the dog also spells out its own name, Einstein,

in chicken gravy.

Dr. Hudson stops by and takes a look at the dog, more interested in it than its owner. Murphy ends up saving her life moments later as the attacking 'werewolf' creature, attacks the good doctor while leaving his house.

Upon the creature's retreat, Doctor Hudson claims that the golden retriever and the attacking monster are telepathically linked by a failed government experiment to make a 'effective-yet-expendable' soldier. The dog makes contact with a person and the monster, called the 'Outsider' follows, killing every target the dog meets.

Hounded by NSA crew, the detective and the doctor with the dog in tow head to a cabin in the north where they end up romantically involved. The dog continues to become more and more restless, fearing for its life as the Outsider draws closer each day.

The NSA closes in at the same time as the Outsider and a fight erupts outside the cabin. Murphy shoots one of the NSA officers, stopping him, and the monster slaugh-

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A Note from the Editors...

In his rather limited free time, Mark has been signing over 4000 items the former fan club's head put in storage for several years. Unfortunately, many of them are coming back with no forwarding address.

If you have sent an item and have moved since you sent it, please e-mail or snail your name, current AND former addresses, and what you sent. We will make every effort to get it returned to you. Please

be aware that the Hamills are doing this alone, and not using a service that would only send out copies of an autographed photo and not deal with specific autograph requests. Also, when handling with this massive amount of requests, remember that mistakes are sometimes made.

At this time, due to his heavy work schedule, which includes directing the voice actors on 'The Black Pearl' com-

puter game, Mark can no longer fulfill new requests for his autograph. Rather than disappointing any fans, and incurring a similar backlog as happened in the past, he is requesting that no items be sent for him to sign.

E-mail:
Lostmail@markhamill.com

Or snail the info to:
IMHFC-lost mail
PO Box 287
Grand Blanc MI 48439

Watchers Reborn

(Continued from page 1)

ters the rest in some rather cheap-and-not-so-effective effects. Murphy is knocked out by the hairy brute and the Outsider grabs Hudson and springs into a fruit truck, taking her back to a factory.

Murphy wakes up, Einstein at his side and finds the doctor gone. The dog helps fill in some clues and they eventually find a trail of oranges from the fruit truck leading to the packaging factory.

Murphy enters to find the doctor petting the now docile beast. It reacts to Murphy's weapon but the doctor calls both the detective and the dog friend. The Outsider calms and relaxes.

Still perplexed by the turn of events, Murphy and his friends fail to see one of the NSA agents, the one Murphy shot in the arm, enter the room. He passively disarms Murphy and

shoots the Outsider with both his guns. To prevent evidence that the NSA was at all involved, the agent makes Murphy overturn a chemical drum and light it on fire.

The Outsider, still alive and sensing fear, grabs the man and rips him apart, letting Murphy and the doctor escape through and open window thanks to Einstein. The factory explodes and kills both man and monster.

Murphy, Einstein and Hudson turn, leaving what's happened behind.

I've actually been a big fan of both Mark Hamill and Roger Corman for a number of years and this collaboration is rather good. It's not Mark's best (I still chalk that up to 'Slipstream') but he breaths life into a script that's got it's share of plot-holes. The only real problem I had with this film was the editing;

scenes would cut and the music would just end which is irritating, even to my tin ear.

The acting is only passable with everyone else outside Mark. The Outsider suit is rather hokey, even for Corman but the face is actually animated well-enough, the design hovering between a Wookiee and a Kilrathi from the 'Wing Commander' movie (which, by the way, Mark DID have an appearance in, as the on-board fighter AI called 'Merlin'. Why Mark was not credited is beyond me!)

I've seen far worse direct-to-video films, like 'The Prophecy 2' (a waste of high talent), and Mark is enjoyable as always. What I expected to be a loss of eighty-three minutes of my life ended up being rather fun, if predictable and a little hokey.

MY RATING: 2 out of 4
(2 3/4 for Mark)

Blast From the Past

Delancey Street: The Crisis Within

First aired: April 19, 1975
(NBC)

Delancey Street is a “halfway house” for troubled people, ex-cons, junkies and others who have problems in today’s society. The film based on the actual organization in San Francisco, California.

The film begins with ex-con Robert Holtzman (Michael Conrad) arriving at Delancey Street after 36 years in San Quentin. Soon he becomes friend with a lonely and very troubled teenager, Philip Donaldson (Mark Hamill). Philip suffers from hyperkinesis (excessive, impulsive reactions to even mild stress – an illness that causes lots of trouble and problems to all involved – children, youths and their parents and teachers). All his life Philip has been treated as a freak – based on misunderstanding and the inability to deal with that illness and people like Philip. They become outsiders. Bob is the first person Philip feels he can trust, and they form a father-son relationship.

John McCann (Walter McGinn) founder of Delancey Street, is the focus of this film – an ex-con himself – trying to mold new futures for his “charges”. These includes Otis James (Lou Gossett), an ex-junkie gone straight who will soon open his own restaurant. McCann cares about Philip – but on the other side he’s unable to do very much for him other than offer the security the 17-year-old needs so badly. Then Philip makes a nearly fatal error when he decides to take Bob home to meet his very wealthy and non-understanding parents. The visit was a total fiasco. It ends with Philip running away with one of his father’s guns. He climbs a tower and threatens to shoot everybody who dares to come near him. Finally, Bob manages to talk to Philip and get him out of his situation in a very emotional scene that’s also the climax of this film.

The film is very message-heavy but still a realistic film. If you know hyperactive children and/or youths then you’ll agree that Mark gives in this film one of his best performances as a young actor – handling the stuttering speech and jittery

movements of Philip very well. You just can feel the anguish, insecurity and fear emanating from him.

The City (1976)



What have Don Johnson and Mark in common? Right – they both played roles in this film beside Jimmy Dean and Robert Foster. A film that starts with a reflection of crime of the city of Los Angeles – filmed in a way as many crime stories of that time – not exactly a great drama but packed with action. It’s easy to describe Don Johnson’s role – he plays a cop – but it’s a bit harder to do the same with Mark’s – Eugene Banks – an unloved and unwanted kid who has spent most of his 21 years being shunted from one foster home to another – ill-used and neglected. And the film shows just two days of his



life.

It begins with Eugene reading a letter from his dying mother at a patrol station. She tells her in the letter who his father is - the famous Country and Western singer Wes Collins whose life is so totally different than his - living on the bright side of life - fame, beloved and enough money - a life he could have, too. So nobody wonders that the resentment is burning up in him. From one second to the next that changes him - it touches off his psychosis. He goes on a spree that leaves an innocent bystander and a policeman dead. Eugene wants Collins dead and he goes gunning for the singer. Two determined policemen (Don Johnson and Dean Foster) are hot on his trail after finding some hints

about a family connection between the singer and Eugene in Eugene's apartment that pull together the pieces.

Eugene knows where to find Collins. He terrorizes his family by killing their dog and threatening Collins' wife and his little son, and finally confronts him with the letter in a washroom of a recording studio. He then attacks him, wounding him with a knife. For some reason, Collins refuses to mention the incident to the police that talks to him to find out the reasons. He



moves his frightened family to a remote country hideaway in the Malibu hillside. Somehow Eugene manages to track them down but the police are close behind. At the boy's arrest he tells the police not to hurt him. The detective says "I thought he wasn't your son." Collins replies,

"He's not but he could have been." - that leaves you wondering if he's telling the truth.



For a TV film "The City" presents a surprisingly complex view of a mental illness. Eugene Banks is portrayed as a person with many varied aspects to his personality. Mark's performance as Eugene is a real gem. He handles the different facets of this psychopathic character with complete credibility - from Eugene's generally intense personality and apparently unprovoked rages to his calm and even ingenious encounters with non-threatening individuals (the scene with the ducks on a small lake in a park). Eugene is a killer but somehow you almost feel sympathy for him.

What's Going On...

Last November, while down in Florida working on 'Walking Across Egypt' (more on that later), Mark took some time off during the Thanksgiving holiday and visited the MGM Studios and



DisneyWorld with his family. While there, he placed his hands in cement outside of Mann's Theatre. Thanks to a fan club member for the picture!



Have you seen 'Woody Woodpecker' yet? Caught the infrequent airing of either 'Earth Angel' or 'Corvette Summer'? I was recently at a con with a good number of fellow 'Markfans', including a fan club member. During one discussion, 'Earth Angel' was brought up with the comment that Mark's character makes you believe he can play the sax. Very uncommon when actors are required to play an instrument in a movie. Just another example of how Mark 'becomes' the character he's playing!



People living in an area of Indiana, Kentucky, or Ohio that have 'Big Bear' supermarkets may have been fortunate enough to catch Mark on television in May and early June. Timed to coincide with the opening

of 'Star Wars: The Phantom Menace', there are two commercials featuring Mark as a customer at a Big Bear. In one, he is advised to 'Use the fork!' when eating a slice of a cake. The other has him using the Force to take his carrier bags out of the store. The commercials were filmed in Indianapolis in late April.

Mark continues to be very involved with the computer game version of 'The Black Pearl'. In addition to voicing characters, he is directing the other voice-over actors. As Access was sold earlier this year, the release date for the game has been tentatively changed from October 1999 to June 2000.

Mark and Bill Mummy are also working together on 'Outpost Omega'.

And Angelwear's website is now up and running, with some changes as to where profits are dispersed. Originally profits from a t-shirt sale would go to benefit a charity in the buyer's home state, now the profits are donated to the artist's designated charity. Mark has chosen **C**hildren **H**elping **P**oor and **H**omeless **P**eople (**CHPHP**). You can choose between a black or a natural colour shirt, and a

variety of both children's and adult's sizes. Shipping is available for both domestic and foreign orders. Just a warning: service is slow. www.angelwear.com



No word yet on who will be distributing 'Walking Across Egypt'. In this film, based on the book of the same name, Mark plays Lamar. Scripted by Paul Tamasy,, directed by Arthur Allan Seidelman, it will be rated PG-13. Other actors include Gwen Verdon and Kevin Pollak.

'Wing Commander' the movie has just been released on video and dvd by Fox. Mark has an uncredited voice-over in it.

If you get TLC, check to see if one of the shows Mark has narrated is airing. Recently, episodes from 'The Hunt For Amazing Treasures' have been re-run.

INTERNATIONAL MARK HAMILL FAN CLUB

PO Box 287
Grand Blanc MI 48439
USA

E-mail: HdShroom@aol.com
MHArchives@aol.com

The Last Word...

A Mark of Excellence is the quarterly newsletter of the ***International Mark Hamill Fan Club***. Yearly dues are \$15 US, and include 4 consecutive issues of the newsletter, a membership card, and special mailings as appropriate. For more information, please send a SASE to:

International Mark Hamill Fan Club
PO Box 416
E Amherst NY 14051

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Archivist:

Suzanne Askey
MHArchives@aol.com

Webmaster:

Sue Depping
HdShroom@aol.com

Staff Writers and Contributors this issue:

Tina Lebelt- Germany
Justin Bielawa- United States