

# Sniper misses mark; parody stays on target

By Henry Herx and Gerri Pare  
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — Two Americans are ordered to assassinate a Panamanian rebel leader in the lethargic action thriller *Sniper* (TriStar).

In order to foster "democratic" elections in Panama, the National Security Council decides to eliminate one of the candidates — an unfriendly rebel leader.

That supposedly makes sense to the espionage community and — logical or not — it's the premise of a covert mission given to a domestic intelligence agent (Billy Zane) with no experience in foreign operations.

Not to worry, however, because his teammate on the mission is a veteran Marine sniper (Tom Berenger) with 74 confirmed kills to his record.

The symbiotic relationship between the two grows increasingly antagonistic as they slough through the Panamanian jungle to reach their target.

Given the nature of this melodramatic twaddle, it's idle to wonder whether they overcome their mutual hostilities and formidable CIA-trained foes to accomplish their mission.

Director Luis Llosa fails to build

much interest in the personal differences between the two assassins, though that's the major portion of the movie.

The real energy of the movie focuses instead on the deadly fantasy of Americans licensed to kill on behalf of shady U.S. government officials.

Giving heroic status to the grisly actions of assassination, the movie wallows in the amoral acceptance of following orders.

Because it sanctions assassins as heroes, some graphic violence and occasional rough language, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is O — morally offensive. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

## Loaded Weapon 1

The *Lethal Weapon* cop team of Mel Gibson and Danny Glover get royally set up when Emilio Estevez and Samuel L. Jackson spoof them in *National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1* (New Line).

The goofy storyline has burnt-out Colt (Estevez) and his ready-to-retire partner Luger (Jackson) tracking down cocaine smuggler General Motars (William Shatner), who had Colt's ex-partner (Whoopi Goldberg) iced.



TriStar Pictures  
The jungles of Central America become a landscape for action and suspense in *Sniper*, starring Tom Berenger (left) and Billy Zane.

After Dr. Hannibal Lecher (F. Murray Abraham) hungrily cooperates, sultry Destiny Demeanor (Kathy Ireland) leads the crazed cops to a cookie company that cooks up coked-up cookies.

A self-mocking tone keeps writer-director Gene Quintano's spirited spoof mostly on track.

Zany sight gags, ditzzy dialogue and dippy non-sequiturs abound as a host of guest stars pop up in kooky cameos.

Less lively are Estevez and Ireland doing deadpan comedy as if they were wind-up dolls.

The obvious take-offs on *The Silence*

of *the Lambs*, *Basic Instinct* and *48 Hours* are mostly harmless throwaways, though some fall flat and flirt with vulgarity. Goldberg's death scene with killer Tim Curry, though, is a priceless delight.

This loaded weapon is a loony loose cannon that only occasionally misfires.

Due to much cartoonish violence, numerous off-color and sexual references and a flash of nudity, the USCC classification is A-III — adults. The MPAA rating is PG-13 — parents are strongly cautioned that some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

# 'Signpost to Jesus' offers refreshing themes in book

*Miracles Do Happen*, by Briege McKenna, OSC, with Henry Libersat; Servant Books (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1987); illustrated; 142 pages; \$8.95.

By E. Leo McMannus  
Guest contributor

When I was in Ireland last summer, observing the religious scene after the Bishop Eamonn Casey debacle, I was struck by the prominence of this Clarecian sister, Sister Briege McKenna. At a time of widespread cynicism, especially among the young, her example was a positive contribution.

Back in Florida, her home and mine, I had heard only a few vague and occasional references to Sister McKenna. In Florida, having exceeded Andy Warhol's allotment of fame, she was already something of a celebrity.

For someone who wanted nothing but to be a "signpost to Jesus" — her favorite metaphor — she got a lot of attention. I read a four-column newspaper review, accompanied by her photo, about an Aug. 5 half-hour documentary on Irish television. Sensationally — and a bit provocatively — titled "The Nun With X-Ray Eyes?" the documentary had been produced and televised in Britain 18 months prior.

She then appeared as part of a full-

page spread in the Sept. 6 issue of the *Sunday Press*. The first of a two-part series showed three smiling photos of her and an emblazoned headline: "If you believe, then you'll see God work." A week later, in the second part of the series, she was featured in a page-and-a-half story, titled "Sr. Briege, The Healing Hands."

For a humble farm girl, born on Pentecost, 1946, in County Armagh, across the border in the north of Ireland, her book, *Miracles Do Happen*, is a simple, chatty and anecdotal recital of what began as a volunteered journey. The young religious began her ministerial career in Tampa, Fla., where she served as an elementary school teacher. After her healing and witnessing, her journeys later on extended to various places in the United States, South America, Australia, the Orient, and Europe.

Sister McKenna's book, written with Deacon Henry Libersat, editor of the *Florida Catholic*, features a foreword by Francis A. Sullivan, SJ, professor of technology at the Gregorian University, Rome; her gracious acknowledgements of people as varied as Cardinal Leon Joseph Suenens of Belgium, and the tart-tongued J. Peter Grace ("Dinkins the pinkins," and "Cuomo the homo"), recently retired chief exe-

cutive officer of a multi-billion-dollar conglomerate; eight chapters; and a tender epilogue by Deacon Libersat, who, by managing to satisfy six of Florida's seven ordinaries as editor of their diocesan newspapers, is himself something of a journalistic thaumaturgist.

After her mother's sudden death on Christmas Day, 1959, she heard a voice that night in the midst of her tears: "Don't worry, I'll take care of you." It was only the first of many voices and visions that she would experience. The next morning, at the age of 13, Sister McKenna knew that she wanted to be a member of the Sisters of St. Clare congregation. She was admitted to the order shortly before her 15th birthday.

After attending an ecumenical retreat in Orlando in 1970, her rheumatoid arthritis wondrously disappeared. This marked the beginning of her involvement in the Catholic Charismatic movement, and the first of many reported healings. In her Tampa convent on the eve of Pentecost, 1971, she claims to have heard Jesus' voice speaking from the tabernacle: "You have my gift of healing. Go and use it."

Later, in Birmingham, Ala., she was counseled by Mother Angelica, an icon of the late Father Paul Cuddy, whose

popular column appeared in the *Catholic Courier* for many years. "Come to Jesus and let him teach you," Mother Angelica told Sister McKenna.

That has been the story of her life. In addition to spending three hours every day before the Blessed Sacrament, she has been instrumental in healing; consistently emphasizes Mary, "a Woman for All Seasons;" conducts retreats; and actively participates in the team ministry of intercession for priests.

In the words of Father Martin Kelly, stationed in the heart of troubled Belfast, her work is "powerful." According to the Irish priest, who has attended several of her retreats at Dublin's All Hallows College, she now plays a less prominent role than before.

"Now she is more in the background, praying. But she always maintains that when priests begin to believe in the power of their own priesthood that her ministry would cease to be necessary."

In an age given to demythologizing, Sister Briege McKenna is a traditional religious who wishes — like the Baptist — to be but a "signpost to Jesus" as she strives to build up and to edify.

McMannus, a professor emeritus of English, lives in Venice, Fla.

## Logos GUARANTEED BOOK OF THE WEEK!

All books reviewed in the Catholic Courier's weekly book review column are available at Logos Book Stores.

At Logos, we bring you the best in Catholic Reading. If you're not completely satisfied, return the book with the original sales receipt within 30 days and you'll receive a complete refund. That's our MONEYBACK GUARANTEE, and it's that simple. (Guarantee applies to books purchased up to 6 months from date of review.)

VISA AND MASTERCARD ORDERS ACCEPTED BY PHONE OR MAIL

TWO CONVENIENT LOCATIONS:  
OUT-OF-TOWN CUSTOMERS, CALL:  
**GREECE** THE STREET OF SHOPPES 1600 Ridge Road West (716) 663-5085  
**PENFIELD** PENN-FAIR PLAZA 2200 Penfield Road (716) 377-4480  
1-800-755-6467 (Greece Store Only)

### MIRACLES DO HAPPEN

is available at Logos Bookstores for \$8.99. Stop in to one of our two convenient locations to pick up your copy, or mail this coupon to:

**LOGOS BOOKSTORE**  
THE STREET OF SHOPPES  
1600 RIDGE ROAD WEST  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14615

Please send me my copy of **MIRACLES DO HAPPEN** Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(each Book \$8.99 + 7½% sales tax). Number of Copies ordered \_\_\_\_\_  
Please include \$1.65 (first book) postage & handling, 75¢ each additional book. Make check or money order payable to Logos Bookstore, or include your VISA or MasterCard # on order blank. (Allow 2-3 weeks for delivery)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
(Check One) VISA \_\_\_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_\_\_ Card # \_\_\_\_\_ exp. date \_\_\_\_\_