

FEATURE



Warner Bros./CNS

Jason Patric and Brad Pitt star in the melodramatic Sleepers.

Pacino lightens film fare heavy with brutal scenes

NEW YORK (CNS) — The following are capsule reviews of movies recently reviewed by the U.S. Catholic Conference Office for Film and Broadcasting. The review includes the USCC rating, and, where available, the Motion Picture Association of America rating.

Sleepers

Overblown drama of four inner-city boys who grow up to take revenge on the sadistic guards (led by Kevin Bacon) who abused them in reform school, with two of the four getting away with murder on the perjured testimony of their parish priest (Robert De Niro). Writer-director Barry Levinson's manipulative crime picture romanticizes the friendship between Catholic youths, then depicts their brutalizing imprisonment, with the payoff years later in a murder trial that raises morally ambiguous justice issues. Harrowing scenes of teen inmates subjected to sadistic violence and sexual abuse, cold-blooded murders, vigilante justice and habitual rough language. The USCC classification is A-IV — adults, with reservations. The MPAA rating is R — restricted.

Bound

Nasty thriller in which the wily mistress (Jennifer Tilly) of a gangster (Joe Pantoliano) teams with her lesbian lover (Gina Gershon) to cheat the mob out of \$2 million by framing the gangster. Co-written and directed by Larry and Andy Wachowski, the movie's soulless characters and non-stop brutality overwhelm the stylishly shot visuals. Fairly explicit bedroom scene with nudity, excessive bloody violence and constant rough language and profanity. The USCC classification is O — morally offensive. The MPAA rating is R — restricted.

Looking for Richard

Playful documentary exploring the historical background, Elizabethan language and dramatic stagecraft of Shakespeare's "Richard III" as undertaken by actor Al Pacino and his cohorts in preparing for an American version of the play. Also directed by Pacino, the result is an amusing hodge-podge of fact and whimsy. Dramatized violence, sexual references and occasional rough language. 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.

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Book reviews Teilhard's life

Spirit of Fire: The Life and Vision of Teilhard de Chardin by Ursula King. Orbis Books. (Maryknoll, N.Y., 1996). 245 pp., \$25.

Reviewed by Brian T. Olszewski
Catholic News Service

Somewhere in a theology class, you may have heard a professor mention "Teilhard." You remember that much, and that the professor spoke highly of the priest's work, of his brilliance and vision.

If that is all you remember, *Spirit of Fire* will be your reintroduction to the life and work of this Jesuit mystic.

Ursula King is certainly a fan of her subject — she founded the Teilhard Centre in London. She writes honestly about his personal life and his work, which were closely intertwined.

King does an outstanding job of easing the reader into the life of a complex man. Had she confined her work to his scientific and theological work, the portrait would have been incomplete. Had she dwelled only upon his personal life — his relationship with Lucile Swan, for example, — that, too, would have been lacking.

By bringing the two Teilhards together, the reader begins to understand the intensity of the man, whose attempt to make faith

and science compatible with each other was ongoing.

While revered in the scientific communities of his time, the priest found no such support from his superiors in Rome. Besides repeated prohibitions to publish *The Phenomenon of Man*, a work he revised each time it was rejected, he also was limited — exiled — from the lecture circuit because superiors questioned his orthodoxy.

What one learns about the priest, through the revelations about his personal and professional lives which King so thoroughly narrates, is that he was a deeply spiritual person — a person who recognized and identified his relationship with God.

This volume is visually attractive in that it provides plenty of white space around text, and features Teilhard photos and quotes. But it's more than that.

Those who have studied the priest's life may not discover anything new about him. For them, this text will be a welcome review of the man, a dose of inspiration.

Those who have only a passing familiarity with him will learn why that theology professor praised his brilliance and vision.

Brian T. Olszewski is the editor of the Northwest Indiana Catholic, newspaper of the Diocese of Gary, Ind.



BOOK REVIEW



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