

# 'Jennifer 8' leaves audience in the dark

by Daniel W. Duffy

*Jennifer 8*, a new psychological thriller featuring Andy Garcia and Uma Thurman is nothing short of a quagmire. From the get-go, the film is utterly confusing and hard to follow. It only gets worse as the story evolves and then dissolves.

Garcia (*Hero*, *The Godfather, Part III*) plays a former L.A. police investigator, John Berlin (a name that ranks up there on the cheese scale with Keanu Reeves' Johnny Utah in *Point Break*) who moves to Northern California to get away from the big-city hustle and bustle. His first case

is to investigate a potential serial killer and the only witness to the case is a blind woman, Thurman (*Dangerous Liaisons*, *Henry and June*).

Suspension of disbelief is hard with *Jennifer 8* because of numerous erroneous factors coupled with the fact the movie just doesn't make sense.

For starters, Thurman's character is radically underdeveloped and her romantic interlude with Garcia is really contrived. Garcia's sup-

posed best friend and brother-in-law Freddy Ross (Lance Henriksen) is completely indifferent to Garcia; he's as receptive as a wet



John Malkovich (left) whispers sweet nothings into the ear of Andy Garcia in 'Jennifer 8.'

**Jennifer 8**  
Starring Andy Garcia,  
Uma Thurman  
and John Malkovich.  
Directed by Bruce  
Robinson.



sponge.

Kathy Baker of TV's "Picket Fences," is cast as Garcia's sister. Baker has reddish-blond hair and looks to be of Welsh ancestry. Garcia is Hispanic. She could be his sister. Yeah, right—and Pippi Longstocking is related to Erik Estrada. Add to this, the chief of police in the northern town moonlights as a

fruit-loopy lookin' painter—sheaawwww right.

The incredible John Malkovich makes an arbitrary performance as an internal affairs investigator. It's a shame his talents go to waste.

The best thing about *Jennifer 8* is the murky look of the film as it explores the

world of the blind. Rain falls throughout the movie and adds to the dark effect. If you have your heart set on seeing this movie, I would recommend you bring a Walkman with some nice music—be it Mozart or Danzig—and just enjoy the parade of images rather than pay attention to the story and risk having your brain explode.



# Snipes better cover his bets

Wesley Snipes takes a stab at the action genre in 'Passenger 57'

by Hollywood Rob

As if the latest Steven Segal flick wasn't mind-numbing enough for the moviegoing public, last weekend the often-previewed *Passenger 57* took flight—or should I say crashed on liftoff. Not that it didn't clean-up at the box office, but then again it need only outrun the month-old *Under Siege* for the top spot.

Wesley Snipes stars in this '90s version of a more PC blaxploitation film. Hell, bell bottoms are back, so why not? America is in short supply of black heroes to stand as the Superfly and

Shaft for our generation. So let's get one of the best actors in Hollywood, rewrite a rejected *Die Hard* sequel script, and give him lots of cheesy lines like "Always bet on black!"

Snipes stars as John Cutter, a former airline security specialist who has relegated himself to ground training only. The filmmakers resurrect the time-honored action movie tradition of your hero to brooding through the first half hour of the movie.

Take the Charles Bronson/Chuck Norris flick motivation of killing someone close to them (i.e. girlfriend, best buddy) so

they can have scars to carry with them. In this case Snipes' wife was killed while he tried to stop a convenience store hold-up. Come on Wes, mini-mart employees have "stick up guy" written on their employment contracts.

On to the rest of the movie. Bruce Payne stars as Charles Rane, the terrorist the FBI is transporting by plane to Los Angeles to stand trial. (I won't even get into how inane *Passenger 57* is, that's a given for this type of movie.) He's a genuine psychopath. The only explanation for his insanity is a brief, non-expository mention of a bad childhood. Nevertheless, Payne pulls off a portrayal of a genuinely unlikeable guy.

Anyway, Snipes is on the same plane and it all hits the fan. Payne has a crew of terrorists on board who take over once airborne. Here's where the real death toll goes into effect. Up to this point we'd only experienced a few peripheral on-screen killings. The terrorists are armed with a seemingly endless supply of ammo. They fire indiscriminately at just about anything that moves. By the end, the on-screen death toll is approaching 30.

All the terrorists have sinister foreign accents which also seems to be an integral part of these films. I wonder if we couldn't get a nice domestic group of terrorists sometime. Americans can only seem to get the drug dealer bad-guy roles. It's just not fair.

Anyway, the rest of it goes down pretty much like this. Wesley single-handedly (surprise, yawn) wipes out all the terrorists in one way or another while barely

sustaining a scratch.

Kevin Hooks (*Strictly Business*) directs with all the subtlety of a hard-core porn pitting his black hero against all white terrorists. The police are all white and stupid and save one agent, that's the way the FBI is portrayed as well. I'm surprised the planeload of people Snipes is supposed to save aren't all black as well.

The overall production is lackluster—like not much money was spent (which is just as well).

Also lackluster is Snipes who spends most of the movie running around looking bored (though well-paid) with the exception of the leers he directs at any woman he comes in contact with.

If you like Wesley, watch *The Waterdance* instead.

At least it goes light on the smart-ass one liners that seem to be in every action flick these days. *Passenger 57* has that late-night cable feeling all over it.

**Passenger 57**  
Starring  
Wesley Snipes.  
Directed by  
Kevin Hooks.



## Ratings Scale

8

The Goods  
The Creme of  
the Crop

Solid  
Flick



Flawed, but  
worth watching

Doesn't cut  
the mustard



Monsieur Potty  
say—the film, she  
is very stinky.