

Action fails to lift fight sequel

By Kam Williams
Sentinel-Voice

In 1994, the popular computer game Street Fighter was adapted to the big screen as an incoherent concatenation of poorly-choreographed, martial arts action starring Jean-Claude Van Damme.

The only reason that otherwise forgettable disaster is even a footnote in the annals of cinematic history is because, sadly, it turned out to be the swan song of Raul Julia who passed away prior to the picture's release at the tender age of 54.

Since the original bombed at the box office, one must wonder what might have prompted a studio to greenlight a sequel 15 years later, especially when you see that the results are equally-abysmal.

This unmitigated mess of a movie was directed by



"Street Fighter: The Legend of Chun-Li" draws high marks for intense action but scores low in nearly every other area.

Andrzej Bartkowiak entirely, starting with Kristin Kreuk in the title role of Chun-Li.

Other substitutes include Neal McDonough as the diabolical Bison, along with Michael Clarke Duncan and the Black Eyed Peas' Taboo as his sadistic henchman, Balrog and Vega, respectively. At the point of departure, we learn via flashback narrated by Chun-Li that, when she was a little girl, her father (Edmund Chen) was kidnapped by some creeps in the Shadalao (pigeon English for "Shadow Law") crime syndicate.

Fast-forward to the present when we inexplicably find Chun-Li somehow an accomplished karate master and en route to Thailand where, rumor has it, her daddy has remained kidnapped in the clutches of Bison and his cohorts all these years.

Her arrival proves to be timely, since the merciless madman recently hosted a "Last Supper" during which he beheaded the boss of every competing crime family in Bangkok.

With the Shadalao gang on the verge of gaining complete control of the waterfront, it falls to Chun-Li, in league with Interpol Agent Charlie Nash (Chris Klein), local detective Maya Suneo (Moon Bloodgood) and a secret society of ninjas led by a mysterious man named Gen (Robin Shou) to save the day.

The revenge-fueled plotline subsequently seizes on the flimsiest of excuses to embark on the ensuing series of clumsily-orchestrated fight scenes, punctuated by sloppily-executed stunts, chase sequences, pyrotechnics and detonations.

Unfortunately, only die-hard fans of the legendary video franchise are likely to keep track of the body-count in the high attrition-rate enterprise.

For as the butt-kicking heroine sets about exacting her vengeance, the epic battle of good versus evil is so undermined by cheesy special effects and corny dialogue that the spectacle adds up to an experience that is best described as laughable.

And to top it all off, this insult to the intelligence even has the nerve to end on a cliffhanger setting the stage for yet another sequel. Oh well, at least after this fiasco I only need 9 more movies for my next 10 Worst List.

Poor (0 stars). Rated PG-13 for sensuality and martial arts violence.

Bits 'n' Pieces

Samuel L. Jackson's ironclad Marvel deal

Samuel L. Jackson may be S.H.I.E.L.D.ed from ever having to work again. The ubiquitous actor is negotiating a nine-picture deal with Marvel Entertainment that would have him playing secret agent Nick Fury in "Iron Man 2" and eight other comic-book-inspired superhero films. Jackson popped up briefly as Fury, who works for the U.S. government's Strategic Homeland Intervention, Enforcement, and Logistics Division, at the end of the 2008 blockbuster "Iron Man," when he asks Robert Downey Jr.'s Tony Stark if the billionaire is interested in coming onboard. A rep for Marvel told E! News the studio "does not comment on active negotiations," but Jackson is said to be a sure thing for at least "Iron Man 2," and if all goes according to plan, the Oscar-nominated actor could wind up in "Thor," "Captain America," "The Avengers" and their sequels as well. A S.H.I.E.L.D.-centric action flick is also a possibility, according to the *Hollywood Reporter*.



Samuel L. Jackson



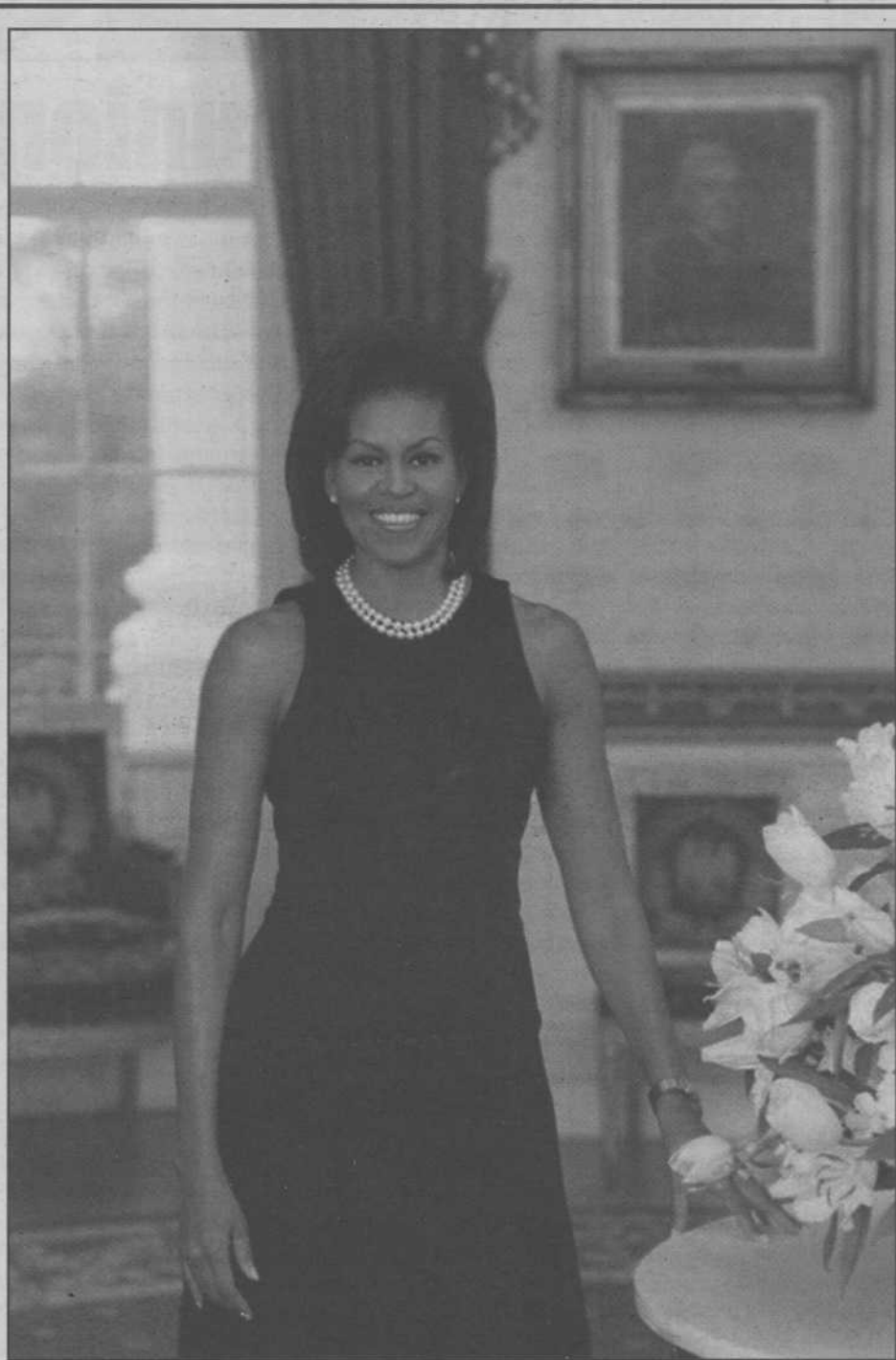
Madea continues box-office run

"Tyler Perry's Madea Goes to Jail" wasn't paroled from the top spot at the box office, taking No. 1 for a second straight weekend and raking in \$16.1 million. The comedy bested "Jonas Brothers: The 3D Concert Experience," which rocked out with \$12.5 million. Oscar champion "Slumdog Millionaire" finished third with \$12 million. "Tyler Perry's Madea Goes to Jail," Lionsgate (distribution studio), \$16,175,926 (gross), 2,052 locations (number of theaters), \$7,883 average (receipts per location), \$64,525,548 (total gross), two weeks in release — as compiled Monday by Media By Numbers LLC.



Usher criticizes Chris Brown

In a video posted by producer Jermaine Dupri, Usher slams fellow R&B star Chris Brown for being photographed last weekend joyriding around Diddy's Miami Beach mansion in what was his first public outing since the incident with Rihanna. "I'm a little disappointed in this photo," Usher said Monday on Dupri's online *Living the Life* series. "After the other photo [of Rihanna's brutalized face]? C'mon, Chris. Have a little bit of remorse, man. The man's on Jet Skis? Like, just relaxing in Miami?" Brown and Rihanna spent the weekend in Florida apparently working toward a reconciliation. They returned to Los Angeles on Monday in anticipation of the "Gimme That" performer's tentatively scheduled arraignment on Thursday. Prosecutors are awaiting evidence from the LAPD before deciding to file charges.



FIRST LADY MICHELLE

The White House, last week, released the official portrait of First Lady Michelle Obama. The photo, taken by photographer Joyce N. Boghosian in the blue room of the White House, features Obama in a sleeveless black shift dress designed by Michael Kors. Social and political pundits say Obama is redefining the image of the first lady.