



MOVIES

Heist goes wrong in 'Dead Presidents'



"Dead Presidents" means cash, which Allen and Albert Hughes have a lot more of since directing their debut feature "Menace II Society" in 1993. The success of that film, a gripping and death on the success of the wint the chance to tackle an umbitious project about the effects of the Victnam War on black America.

the Victnam War on black America.

It would be great to say that these former Detroiters, raised here through the age of eight, have produced another winner. But "Dead Presidenta," which opens wide Friday, is an uneven and often routine fook at what they call "the American dream gone wrong."

American urean wrong.

Anthony Curtis (Larenz Tate from "Menace") is young and going nowhere when he decides to join the Marines in 1903. After a nightmarish five years overseas, he returns home to find that his neighborhood has changed, the girlfriend and haby girl he left behind now visited, by a flashy joinp.

When he loses his job at the lose all butcher about Anthony starts

When he loses his job at the lo-cal butcher shop, Anthony starts hitting the bottle. Desperate to provide real money for his family, he plots an armored car heist with his old army buddles and his Revolution-obsessed sister-in-

law.

According to Albert Hughes, in town recently with his brother to promote the film, "We like the story because it's about one person going through so many experiences, and how he deals with



those extremes ... we like to see him go through the ups and downs."

him go through the ups and owner."

To see the ads for "Dead Presidents" you'd think that it's a heist movie. "We realize that," said Albert, "but we didn't want anything attached to that other Victnam picture that came out last year. The whole one-sheet poster was in direct response to that other movie, "The Walking Dead" was made by another Detroiter, a low-budget story of a Merine unit with each member recalling how they got to the Namin the first place. The Hughes call it a "staiker" (which it was at the box office), quickly assembled after word of their project got out.

Actually, the brothers could learn a few things from that film, especially in terms of plot structure. Characters come and go in "Dead Presidents" and then pretty much disappear, among them Anthony's brother and a drug

REVIEW

dealer that helps push him to the

dealer that helps push him to the edge.

Though Allen and Albert Hughes were barely allow when the victnam War was raging, they did their homework. Much of the film is based on stories from the book "Bloods," a riveting collection of black veterans 'memories.

The late '60s/early '70s atmosphere, from clothes to black veteranitings, is especially vivid. "We heard from a lot of people who liked the authenticity of those scenes in "Menace," says Allen. "We designed a whole lot of the look on my dad's photo album from 1972."

After "The Usual Suspects" and "Reservoir Dogs," however, it's difficult to watch the routine heist scenes in "Dead Presidents" without drawing some comparisons. "We definitely went for a more linear type of movie mak-

and desper-ate after returning from service to his country in Anthony (Larenz Tate, left) enlists the help of buddy Skip (Chris Tucker) to plan a highstakes robbery.

Unemployed

ing," said Allen. "We didn't want to simply retread what was already done before."

The movie does have some moments it can call its own. One of the best finds Anthony leaping over backyard fences then cuts immediately to him jumping over obstacles in the fields of Vietnam. Whatever the shortcoming of "Dead Presidents," the brothers are understandably enthuslastic. The movie was selected for Screening at the prestigious New York Film Festival while they're already at order in a four-picture deal—Allen dealing with actors, Albert setting up the visuals behind the camera.

To leave a message for John Monoghan, dial 953-2047, mail-box number 1866, on a touch-tone phone, fax him a note at 591-7279, or write him in care of Entertain-ment, Observer & Eccentric News-papers, 36251 Schooleraft, Livonia 48150.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

OPENING FRIDAY, OCT. 6

ASSINS"
Veteran assassin joins forces with the woman he was assigned to lull when he becomes the target of a young ambitious hit man who wants to supplant him as the best in the field. Start Sylvester Stallone and Antonio Banderas.

"HOW TO MAKE AN AMERICAN Quilt"

Touching drama about a group of remarkable women who explore the nch subject of women loving men. Stars Anne Bancroft, Egen Burstyn and Kate Capshaw.

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"A MONTH BY THE LAKE"

"EMPIRE RECORDS"

Music can be a funny business when you spend the day with a group of young people working in record store. Stars Anthony LaPa-Lyncal remantic cornedy set on the shores of bountful Lake Corno in Italy just prior to the outbreak of World War II.



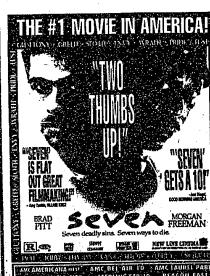
Action-suspense thriller: Sylvester Stallone and Antonio Banderas star in Warner Bros. "Assassins" opening Fri-day at metro Detroit movie theaters.

THE STATE FELL ON HENRIETTA"
Bitterswest comic drama set in the Teas distribution of the 1930s about an eccentric oil widcaster and a down on his suck farmer and how determination and the better in dreams unafform the link of the state of

OPENING FRIDAY, OCT. 13

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