



Roy Scheider is the close-mouthed hero who tests a new high-tech weapon, a do-everything helicopter called Blue Thunder.

the movies  
**Louise Snider**

# 'Blue Thunder' raises noise level but that's about all

Fasten your seat belts and put on your earplugs for "Blue Thunder" (R). This movie puts you on a fast-track through an aerial obstacle course and does it with a roar.

The gimmick is a helicopter that does everything but prepare a chocolate mousse. It looks like an armored cockroach that flies. Visualize a sci-fi monster, like Mothra, only with electric cannon, turbine booster and super surveillance equipment. That's Blue Thunder.

What is the purpose of this lethal, high-tech weapon? What else but crowd control in Los Angeles. (You know how testy Angelenos can get, what with the smog and the traffic jams.) The sophistication of the helicopter, however, bears an inverse relationship to the sophistication of the film, which is sophomoric by any standards.

Since the whole premise of this movie is action at any price, plot, characters and rational behavior are left to fend for themselves. Action is king. There are helicopter duels, car chases, shoot-outs, beatings and a lot of voyeurism thrown in for good measure.

The close-mouthed, square-jawed and, of course, misunderstood hero is Vietnam veteran and police helicopter pilot Frank Murphy (Roy Scheider). He's been assigned to test Blue Thunder.

THE VILLAINS ARE not dope dealers, terrorists or spies but a bunch of sinister Federal agents. They brought the chopper to Los Angeles for the local police to test because it was designed, initially, to thwart any terrorist violence at the '84 Olympics in L.A.

Now for the sinister part. The Federal agents conspire with top city officials to deliberately stir up trouble in the barrio so that Blue Thunder can be tested in a real-life situation.

A key figure among these instigators is another helicopter pilot, Colonel Cochran (Malcolm McDowell). Cochran and Murphy knew each other in Vietnam and hate each other's guts.

Murphy discovers what Cochran and the others are up to. They discover that Murphy has discovered their plans. It's war, after that. Murphy races to get a tape he's made of their conversation to a television station. Cochran and cohorts throw everything they can at Murphy, including Sidewinder missiles.

This aerial dogfight, with helicopters and planes crashing and missiles exploding, takes place over the second most populous city in the United States, a city which, incidentally, looks deceptively beautiful in the many nighttime shots.

Supposedly, there is some kind of message in this film. Implicit in the helicopter's video and audio surveillance equipment and computer hookup with various data banks is the warning that Big Brother has the capability of intruding, manipulating and terminating our lives.

THIS NOTION, HOWEVER, is quite secondary to the main thrust of the film, which is a showcase for the talents of stuntmen and special effects personnel. After all, it's not every movie that has a missile striking a barbecue shack and sending scores of chickens dropping from the skies.

This is the only bit of humor in "Blue Thunder," which is schizophrenic in its worship of machinery and its seeming concern for people — touchingly referred to as "civilians."



Candy Clark is the pilot's sometime girlfriend in the action drama "Blue Thunder."

## New talent will perform at Detroit 'Night of Stars'

"A Night of Stars," showcasing new Detroit talent, will be presented in two shows, at 9 p.m. and midnight, Saturday in the Promenade Room of the Fill Building, 2310 Cass, one block south of the Fisher Freeway in Detroit.

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Also featured will be Jasmin, a contemporary rock group, which has a soon-to-be-released single on the Queen label, "Do You Love Me" and "Could It Be Love."

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