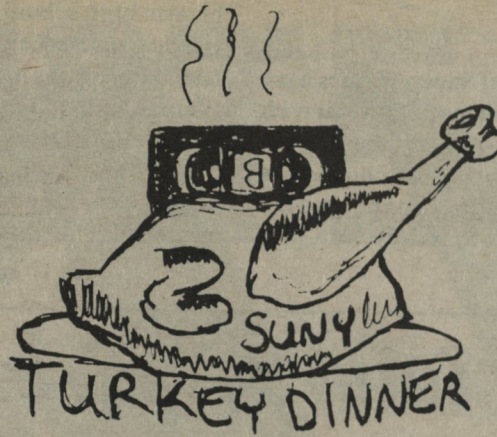


This week: *Captain America* (the remake)



Here's where the comic and the movie part company, to touch only briefly a little later on. Instead of racking up victory after victory, like the comic book version, this Captain blows it on his very first mission. Red Skull straps him to a rocket and launches him towards the White House. Cap deflects the rocket to Alaska (trust me. It's a really big rocket.) and

lies frozen there for 50 years. Meanwhile Red Skull has gone on to mastermind the assassinations of several people, like Martin L. King and J.F.K. Betcha Oliver Stone never thought of that one. And when Cappy finally thaws out, boy is he in for a shock... Here's where the movie and reality separate, never to meet again. It's far too complicated to go into any further, since the coincidences and plot twists come at you so fast they're almost subliminal. But suffice to say that it's a lot of fun to watch.

Now, about the more technical points of the picture. Matt Salinger's not that bad as Captain America. Red Skull, however, is excellent. He's a dark and intelligent villain, thinking and reasoning out the ways to his goals in a way that you rarely see. Even the Joker was just in it for fun, never really thinking about his villainy on screen. But the Red Skull actually stops to explain his plans and the reason behind them in a cool and logical way. His daughter (I forgot who played her) is also a cool and thinking villainess, taking after her daddy in her calm manners but with her mother's looks. The rest of the cast isn't bad either. Good performances are given all around in spite of the corniness of the situation. The dialogue, choreography, stunts, and sets are pretty neat too, which is surprising considering Marvel wasn't really trying. In fact, the only really awful part about the movie is Captain America's costume. It's gaudy, ill-tailored, and badly painted. If you ignore it, the rest of the picture is great fun. Stuff to watch for: Captain America's unique method of stealing cars; the incredible make-up job on the Red Skull; various twists, turns and coincidences that make this such a tightly tied up movie; some beautifully creepy lines from Red Skull's daughter as she locks up the heroine; neat combat scenes, including some very cool moves with the shield (like using it as a ramp); and more plot holes than the average graveyard. Judgement: I'd be repeating myself if I said this was a fun flick to watch, but it is! It's corny, campy, silly, sentimental and stupid. In other words, the perfect Captain America movie and the ultimate B-movie all rolled up into one fast moving package. If nothing else, watch it as a way of reaffirming the superiority of Canada over America. Just think of it like this: we don't have a dumb guy in a costume to make us look bad (for that, there's always that guy with the chin...).

Next Week: Maybe *Beastmaster II*. Maybe not. See you then. Maybe. ■

As I said last week, Marvel Comics is almost famous for making really bad movies out of their best characters. I was of the opinion that this was because they weren't trying hard enough. A friend of mine then advanced the theory that they stank because they weren't faithful to the source material. We argued on this for a while, using various unprintable obscenities to get our point across and to keep from sounding too much like Siskel and Ebert. As I paused for breath after one of our more vicious exchanges, I found myself thinking about what he said. Inhaling deeply, I suddenly realized that he might be right. Curses! Could I possibly be wrong? Could a Marvel movie that was faithful to its original be as good as *Batman*? Did such a movie exist in the form of *Captain America*, the universally panned and widely known embarrassment to Marvel which was available at any local video store? Could my friend shut up long enough to draw a breath, or would he faint right there in the Pit? Eager to answer all but the latter, I rushed out and rented *Captain America*. Sitting down with another friend who knew the character well, we analyzed the resemblances between it and its sire. Guess what? It wasn't faithful or well done! We were both right! What a relief! I love exclamation marks!!!!!!!!!!!!!(?)!!!!!!

Captain America (Columbia/Tri-Star, 1992) is an unevenly written romp through comic book dreamland. Starring Matt Salinger as Cappy/Steve Rogers and Scott Paulin as Red Skull, the movie roars across the screen, eating up time at light speed as Captain A wanders through several landscapes and plot holes, showing off his shield and his crummy uniform. The story of the Cap'n goes like this: a young patriot by the name of Steve Rogers (how's that for an All-American name?) tries to join the army, circa 1943. Rejected from regular service because of his frailty, he gets an offer to join Project: Rebirth as an alternative to regular service. He takes the offer. Project: Rebirth turns out to be a secret procedure to make wimps like Steve into athletic super soldiers. The process works incredibly well, but before more beefcakes like Steve can be made, the doctor who invented the process get killed by a Nazi spy. Oh well, that's life. The spy gets clobbered by a clumsy but powerful Steve, falls against a lot of uninsulated wiring and fries. Oh well, that's death. Turns out that the Doc hadn't bothered to write down any of her complicated notes on the procedure, so one super soldier is all there'll ever be. Undaunted, the army sends a completely untrained Steve Rogers into battle almost immediately. His mission: to destroy a missile base commanded by his Nazi counterpart, the hideous Red Skull. His only weapons: His wits, his strength, his speed, and his bull's eye shield with the star in the middle. His name: Captain America!!!(duh.....)