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Assassination

(COLOR)

Variety Jan 20
Fun Bronson vehicle. 1987

A Cannon Group release of a Golan-Globus production. Produced by Pancho Kohner. Executive producers, Menahem Golan, Yoram Globus. Directed by Peter Hunt. Stars Charles Bronson. Screenplay, Richard Sale; camera (TVC color), Hanania Baer; editor, James Heckert; music, Robert O. Ragland, Valentine McCallum; production design, William Cruise; art director, Joshua S. Culp; sound, Thomas Brandau; costumes, Shelley Komarov; assistant director, Craig Huston; casting, Perry Bullington. Reviewed at Hollywood Pacific theater, Hollywood, Jan. 9, 1987. (MPAA Rating: PG-13.) Running time: 88 MINS.

Jay Killian Charles Bronson
 Lara Royce Craig Jill Ireland
 Fitzroy Stephen Elliott
 Charlotte Chang Jan Gan Boyd
 Tyler Loudermilk Randy Brooks
 Reno Bracken Erik Stern
 Senator Bunsen Michael Ansara
 Briggs James Staley
 Polly Simms Kathryn Leigh Scott

Hollywood — Short on plausibility but diverting enough to while away a Saturday afternoon, "Assassination" is the kind of bare bones entertainment Hollywood used to turn out by the score, usually as the back end of a double bill. Formula filmmaking from the first frame, pic has a good performance by Charles Bronson and enough wit to win over an audience not looking for great art.

Story sandwiches an antagonistic man and woman in danger in a plot with more holes than Swiss cheese. It's sort of a poor man's "To Catch A Thief" with elements of "It Happened One Night" thrown in for

(Continued on page 20)

Film Reviews

(Continued from page 17).

Assassination

good measure. In the film's main section, with White House secret service agent Bronson traveling cross country on the run with the First Lady (Jill Ireland), one hasn't the foggiest idea where they are going or why.

What makes the film watchable anyway is Bronson's self-assured charm. No matter that he's reaching retirement age for a secret service man and has no business chasing young chippies, Bronson has by now mastered a low-key but menacing presence that's simply fun to watch and rarely has he been better.

The fact that a corrupt senator (Michael Ansara) wants Ireland dead and the chase takes them over land, water, rail and air only adds to the silliness of the film, but this kind of entertainment was never meant to be taken seriously and Bronson and director Peter Hunt know it.

Phoniness of the sets, a whiter than white White House and an awful matte job for the Washington backdrop, and inauthenticity of the action only adds to the film's likable comic book mentality. Luckily Richard Sale's script introduces little politics and has a nice sense of tongue-in-cheek humor to boot.

Action scenes are less pleasing and by the end are downright monotonous. Chased by a high-priced terrorist (Erik Stern) who is good enough to somehow survive a fall off a cliff in a burning truck, Bronson and his colleagues fire more bullets than the allied forces in World War II.

As for romance, Bronson scores with one of his colleagues (Jan Gan Boyd) but not surprisingly resists Ireland's charms. Though they spend most of the film bantering, there is not much chemistry between the two. The First Lady, or "One Momma" as she is referred to in the jargon, is really rather a bore and impossible to take seriously, but that seems to be the point here.

—Jagr.