

sound & vision...

“When coke deals go bad...”

Rise of the Foot Soldier

(Carnaby International/Flakjacket Films)

Director: Julian Gilbey



Let's face it; Reservoir Dogs wasn't so much a movie about a diamond heist gone wrong as it was about a gang of actors that wanted to be Lee Marvin. Rise of the Foot-soldier (Released 7th of September) is nothing more or less than a bunch of Scorsese fanatics who wished they'd been in Goodfellas – and be fair, who wouldn't?

'Foodsoldier' is a gangster film – pure and simple. “Professional” Football hooligans the I.C.F (Inner City Firm) have met their nemesis with a combination of high profile arrests. With the emergence of the ‘rave’ scene of the late 80's they recognise the lucre generating possibilities of the new counter culture; get ‘loved up’, ‘steam’ the groovy train and swap their Stanley knives and knuckle dusters for smiley T. Shirts, Kickers and eh... shotguns. Quickly establishing themselves as major ‘faces’ in the Essex underworld, it isn't long before these Knights of the glass table are running their cocaine Camelot through a gamut of girls, guns and high friends in dangerous places.

Based on a real life 1995 ‘hit’ which rendered three of those ‘face’s blown off at a secluded dirt track in Retterdon, the cinematic possibilities of what is now known as ‘The Range Rover Killings’ has not been lost on movie land. The semi fictional Essex Boys (2000) took its cue from this pivotal event in gangland history but ‘Foodsoldier’ is a more authentic account, retaining the facts and the actual characters as recounted in ‘Muscle’, the book written by one of the surviving members of the gang Carlton Leach, played here by a shark eyed Ricci Harnett.

'Foodsoldier' also boasts an impressive array of T.V tough guys including Ex-Eastender's Bill Murray and Craig Fairbrass, whose soap appearances had hitherto had me scrambling for the off switch. Both are excellent here, with Murray exuding menace from every pore and Fairbrass chillingly convincing as the ‘roid’ crazed Pat Tate. Mover and shaker Terry Stone has a face that suggests all the members of the Clash at once and follows his impressive turn in Gilby's last movie, the very excellent ‘Rollin’ With The Nines’ as Tony Tucker; a one man swear-a-thon sporting a syrup that looked liked it could have been a stunt double for Dougal in the Magic Roundabout.

Brandishing its Scorsese-isms loudly and proudly (sweeping crane shots, freeze frame voice overs etc) 'Foodsoldier' is no ‘feel good’ film by any stretch. But there is much to enjoy from watching these guys ‘go ta woik’ in a similar, but darker fashion to ensemble piece ‘Love, Honour & Obey’ (Was I the only one that liked that film?!) or the aforementioned Reservoir Dogs. Perhaps not quite dislodging any of the unholy trinity of Get Carter, Brighton Rock and The Long Good Friday from their lofty throne, Rise of the Foot Soldier doesn't let up for a second and holds its own as a ‘balls out’, ‘in yer face’ thrill ride, and certainly a worthy addition to the ‘Grit Brit’ gangster pantheon.

