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Letter to the Editor of the Seattle Sun

"Death Wish", is it really "an amazing distortion of reality" as Bruce Olson would have us believe in his one-sided and obviously politically motivated movie critique? Or is it a true approximation of the violence which New Yorkers and many other Americans are being subjected? Having lived in New York for over twenty years and with relatives still residing there, I can state that "Death Wish" is not a distortion or even an exaggeration, it recreates with documentary precision the constant criminal violence which unexpectedly explodes on innocent persons. My sister who lives in Manhattan, and who is a 'long-haired' artist herself, tells me that the whole city is being terrorized by black and white youths but primarily by black youths. Thousands of innocent persons are beaten, knifed, raped, robbed and murdered each year. And although these vicious, murderous scum are generally well armed, an individual is prohibited by law from carrying a gun in the City.

"Death Wish" deals very adequately with the dilemma facing every peaceful citizen in this country. It goes like this: if the police can't or won't protect my right to life and property, and if the courts won't convict criminals and if the entire government and intellectual apparatus of this country seems bent on coddling and justifying these criminals, then who will protect me and mine from physical aggression? "Death Wish" presents the agonizing answer: yourself! You must do it. You owe it to yourself to value your life at least that much!

In his critique of "Death Wish", Bruce Olson is representative of the "New Left" distortion of many college students today. They have been brainwashed with a view of man as a socially determined being: in other words, an individual is not directed by his rationally understood moral code - his actions are seen as resulting from a coincidence of "conditions". This is the underlying motive for the new lefty's (and Bruce Olson's) venomous hate for any kind of "hero", thus, the paragon of collective virtue is the so-called "antihero". Andy Warhole's "Trash" epitomizes the depths of the new left decadence in the characterization of "joe", a weak, unambitious, crumb of a heroin addict whose main virtue lies in cohabiting with a homosexual of unknown gender. I am sure that Bruce Olson would regard this film as of 'authentic social significance'.

As is the case with many campus bound neo-intellectuals, Bruce Olson does not seem to recognize the difference between self-defense and the initiation of force. Olson, in his haste to attack the crowd for applauding the film, conveniently omits the fact that in every scene it is Bronson who is threatened with violence, often by several armed muggers. In no way does the film portray or justify Bronson going out and killing potential muggers because of their appearance as Olson would have us believe. Bronson reacts only to the direct and explicit threat of physical aggression. It is a credit to Olson's muddled thinking that he cannot understand the difference.

Olson obviously detests Charles Bronson as actor for his capacity for violence and machismo and as a person for his personal success. In both cases, Olson gives himself away as one who would demand pacifism from the victim while defending the violence of the criminal whether it be that of a mugger or a Viet Cong terrorist. Olson's distaste for Bronson's personal success, from that of an impoverished youth to that of famous actor, is characteristic of Olson's peevish, collectivistic envy. Olson's antipathy for Bronson's success betrays

the real motive for his proclaimed concern for the interests of ethnic minorities. The false feeling of self-esteem which an unwholesome personality gains from patronizing kindness towards "inferiors" is a common attribute of many "liberals". In turn, the success of an "inferior" always generates envy and scorn in altruistic "liberals", although, in this case it is more overt.

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## *Charles Bronson cashes in on violence*

By Bruce Olson

Charles Bronson, 52, the world's most popular and prolific actor, is at the top of his career. He has made 24 movies since escaping the poverty of his Pennsylvania coal mining background, using his multi-national looks and his violent style to make enough money to own a home in Bel Air, Calif., and another in West Windsor, Vt.

In the last month two of his latest films, "Mr. Majestyk" and "Death Wish" have played at Sterling's Seattle Seventh Theater—both films are classic examples of what is wrong with Hollywood. Both are nothing more than Charles Bronson movies, nothing more than crass attempts to cash in on the paranoia of this country.

It matters not at all that one of the films is set in Colorado and the other in New York City. It matters less that Bronson is a melon-picker in one and a design engineer in the other. He might as well have been an Apache or a Japanese diplomat or a mafia chieftan or a prisoner of war, the roles all add up to the same thing—Charles Bronson. More than any other actor this man is a symbol of violence. His films constantly revolve around death, around gore and around the view of the world shaped by the corruption of Darwin's survival of the fittest theories. Bronson's world is the world of machismo, the world where the toughest are the best, where strength and brutality are justified.

Take "Death Wish." It is the most

blatantly fascistic movie to come out of Hollywood this year. In it Bronson watches the rape of his daughter and the murder of his wife, he paces his office, he rubs his temples, then decides to embark on a one-man crusade to kill muggers in New York.

Before the film is over he has shot ten "criminals" through the heart; he gets the blessing of the police, of the population and anyone else he talks to. He stands as the isolated hero fighting all odds for What Is Right.

The police find out who he is, but they don't arrest him. It is all right that he's killed 10 people, the mugging rate in Central Park is down and all the victims had police records. The only problem the police face is political and a homicide detective tells Bronson to leave town. The end of the movie has Bronson arriving in Chicago, willing to go along with the police, willing to go to another city to kill as many more muggers as possible.

The movie is an amazing distortion of reality. It appeals to a series of right wing images, making the media look like hungry wolves, making the cops look stupid and defining all criminals as black youths or long-hairs.

That the crowd would applaud at the end of the film is perhaps more frightening than the content of the movie. But Americans have always loved violence, and they have always loved the idea that a

single powerful man can do whatever he wants to do as long as he is tough enough.

These images perpetuate an outlook that has made America a world cop. The idea that this country should kill a million Vietnamese for some murky ideological reason and some real economic reasons is part of this outlook, as is the view that most blacks are muggers and most long-hairs are junkies.

This is not to say that Charles Bronson is responsible for the Vietnam war. Or even that Charles Bronson is responsible for his movies. His main interest, apparently, is money.

His father died when he was ten, he was part of a family of 15 children, he has been in jail, he was a B-29 tailgunner; has worked in a Harlem post office. Bronson has found a niche where he can become rich and, not surprisingly, is playing it for all it's worth.

The Hollywood filmmakers are the people really responsible for the distortions in Bronson's movies. They are the people who make the real money out of violence, out of the sexism and racism that fills every scene of a film like "Death Wish."

These films aren't as popular as they once were, but still plenty of people go. It will indicate a changed climate in this country when these films play to empty theaters, but until then the Hollywood violence merchants can line their pockets on the misfortune of others.