

GATES OF HELL

A Film Review by Linton Corbie

Director: Otto Chan Juk Tiu

Cast: Chan Kwok-Bong, James Pax, Strawberry Yeung Yuk Mooi

Running Time: 90 minutes

Language: Chinese with English subtitles

Rating: Unrated (For Mature Audiences)

Format: DVD

Special Features: Chapter Selection, Film Information, Theatrical Trailers, Actors' and Director's Filmographies, Actors' and Director's Biographies

Released By: World Video & Supply Inc.

US Distributor: CAV Distribution Corp.

In addition to being an allusion to the famous Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco where this story takes place, the title, *Gates Of Hell*, also aptly describes the physically and emotionally wrenching experience that plunges a couple into a living nightmare.

A young, recently married couple named, Cheong and Yin have just emigrated from China to San Francisco. Like most newlyweds, they are intoxicated with love for each other; and they spend many fun-filled and carefree days checking out all the tourist attractions in their newly-adopted home.

One night, Cheong leaves Yin at home and visits a local strip joint that also happens to have a fairly large clientele of Asian men and prostitutes. While enjoying the strippers on stage, Cheong is approached by a very forward young lady who ostensibly seeks nothing but the pleasure of his company. What Cheong doesn't know is that this woman actually works with an organized gang of criminals that prey upon unsuspecting men in the club. The woman surreptitiously slips a drug into Cheong's drink and he is rendered unconscious within minutes. At this point, the thugs hovering nearby move in and rob Cheong of all his valuables, including the key to his apartment.

While Cheong is still passed out, the hoodlums use the key to visit his apartment to steal yet more valuables. While there, they discover the presence of Yin who is just getting out of the shower. They abduct the terrified Yin. After the bewildered Cheong comes to his senses, he returns home to find Yin missing. The authorities prove to be of very little help in locating Yin, so Cheong who, by now, is a walking basket case, decides to go searching for Yin himself.

A secondary plot unfolding parallel to all of this involves a battle between two organized criminal gangs for control of the pornography and prostitution business in San Francisco.

One gang is Asian and the other is American Caucasian. With the help of a sympathetic Asian prostitute who befriends Cheong, he discovers that the triumphant gang has coerced the captive Yin into a life of prostitution and pornography. It is at this point that the primary and secondary plots merge, as Cheong takes on the entire gang by himself with the hope of rescuing Yin.

Gates Of Hell is a sad story and, due to its backdrop of pornography, prostitution, and gang warfare, it contains a fair degree of gore, violence, nudity, and sexual situations. Every member of the cast perform admirably in this film, especially the actor playing Cheong, who credibly conveys the sense of extreme anguish and desperation we would expect to witness in someone placed in such a predicament.

One noticeable flaw with this DVD production is that, for about the first fifteen minutes of the film, the English subtitles displayed at the bottom of the screen are truncated. This makes the story quite challenging to follow at the beginning. Fortunately, it is not difficult to put everything into place once the subtitles become readable.

Gates Of Hell is an exciting movie and it is enjoyable... in as much as one can enjoy such a tale of woe.