

THE JERUSALEM POST MAGAZINE

Friday, August 21, 1987

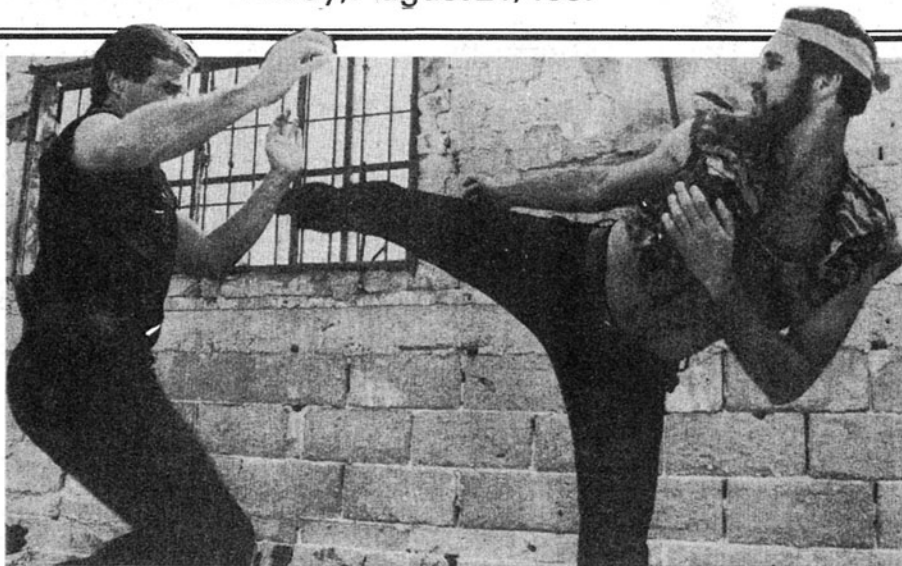
Film Andrea King

WHEN NOVICE film-makers set out to shoot their first movie they usually choose a subject that they are familiar with. Director Yitzhak Florentin, a black belt in karate and a graduate of Tel Aviv University's film school, did just that. The result is *Farewell Terminator*, a 28-minute action-packed short, set in a Tel Aviv of the future after the fall of the government and the collapse of law and order.

The military regime, helpless in the face of anarchy and rampant crime, sets up special police squads whose job it is to liquidate the gangs of murderers and other criminals roaming the streets. For each extermination, the cop receives points; and once he fills his quota he is entitled to a prize — the right to leave Israel.

The film focuses on the last day of a prize-winning cop who is due to leave Israel, but is given one final assignment — to kill the toughest and most dangerous criminal in town.

"From the very beginning, I wanted to make a film that would combine all the films I've liked since I was a kid," says 28-year-old director Yitzhak Florentin who co-



Yitzhak Florentin (right) as the gang leader for whom a contract is out.

TOUGH GUY, TOUGH FILM

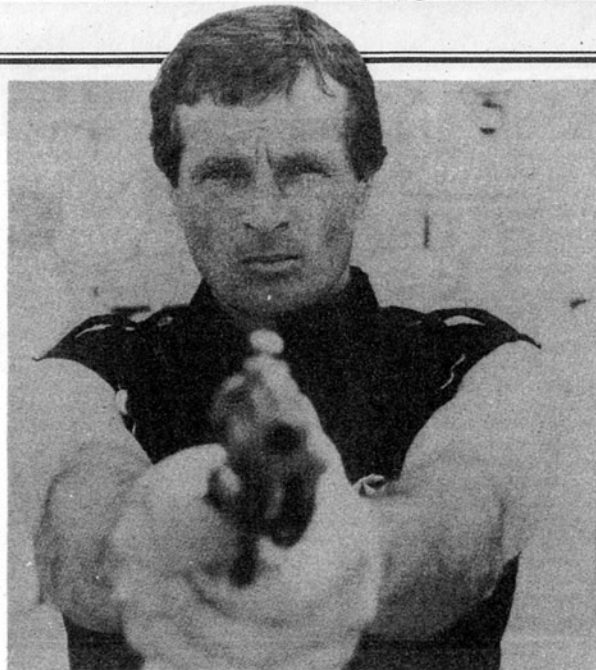
try and Trade. With this money, plus additional funds from personal loans, he began work on his film.

"Not every student gets to make a film, so I was lucky there, and the money we had was just enough to shoot with," says Florentin. "Everyone who worked on the film — the actors, editor, music director and camera man — worked for free. In fact, the gang members in the movie were Florentin's karate students.

THE FIGHT scenes for *Farewell Terminator* were shot at an abandoned lot in North Tel Aviv. Florentin also used the long corridors in the Hapoel Tel Aviv building, where his karate club is located. "This gave the internal scenes a dark and scary look" says Florentin, "like film noir — full of shadows and echoes."

The entire film was shot with a simple spring-driven Bolex camera, which was all the university had available when filming began. The camera cannot shoot more than 25 seconds per scene.

"Actually, it was good for the film," says Florentin. "It's a small camera and we could move it around



Yankel Jacobson — on his final mission before leaving Israel.

authored the film and also acts in it, "Cowboy movies, cops and robbers, and karate. I wanted to be the first to brak in such a movie in Israel."

Florentin, who graduated from the Tel Aviv University Film and Television department in 1985 is a karate expert. He holds a black belt, third dan, and owns his own studio in Tel Aviv where he teaches the martial art. He taught the main actor in karate technique.

"I love karate because it's an art without limitations that makes you healthy and strong and gives you tools to relax from the stress and pressures of the modern world," says Florentin, who is the chief representative in Israel of the San-Shin-Kan method. "Karate combines stamina, strength, aerobics, stretching and self-defence, and it gives you spiritual values as well. It teaches you never to give up, always to go on and to be determined."

Determination is a vital quality for anyone attempting to make a film in Israel, especially a first film. After his script was approved by the university's review board in 1984, Florentin received \$4,000 from the university and the Ministry of Indus-

try and make difficult shots with it. It was very good for the beat of our movie."

The Bolex does not shoot sound, so all of the dialogue and sound effects had to be dubbed afterwards.

"This made the sound come out cleaner, because we were able to make it the way we wanted it, not the way it would have been if we had been able to shoot with sound," says Florentin. "Half of the editing time was devoted to this procedure, but it was worth it. You can shoot cheap and fast, and you get better sound afterwards. All the spaghetti Westerns were shot this way."

THREE YEARS and \$15,000 after he first submitted his script for approval, Florentin's determination, hard work and love for his subject paid off. In June, *Farewell Terminator* was awarded a first prize of \$2,000 at the annual Gabi Mograbi film competition for Tel Aviv Museum.

In addition to the best-film prize, it also won nine other prizes and commendations for editing, production, music, photography, artistic design and costumes.

"The judges liked *Farewell Terminator* because of its parody of karate films and the way it treated the futuristic view of Israel," says Nachman Ingber, chairman of the committee judging the competition and a professor of film history of Tel Aviv University, "The fact that it was an action film did not disturb us. Usually students' films are very serious and introverted. This one was extroverted and full of action, and very different from your average student's entry."

"Israeli audiences like action films as much as any audience, but the problem is that no one in Israel knows how to make them and so there aren't any. I think Yitzhak Florentin has an eye for this type of film — for movement and action in the frame, and I think he could make full-length action films here."

Florentin says this is his dream. "But you have to be realistic about making movies in Israel. I'm starting from a good position, but there's still so much work that needs to be done in this industry."

Farewell Terminator will be shown on August 24 at Beit Liessin, Tel Aviv. □