

**D5390 DIEXIE JIETOU (HONG KONG, 1990)**

(Other titles: Balle dans la tete; Bullet in the head)

**Credits:** director, John Woo ; writers, John Woo, Patrick Leung, Janet Chun.

**Cast:** Tony Leung, Jacky Cheung, Waise Lee.

**Summary:** Gangster film set in Hong Kong and Vietnam in 1967. Explores themes of friendship, honor, and betrayal in the context of the Vietnam war. In Hong Kong, Ben (Leung) is engaged to Jane (Yeun), while his friends, the clownish Frank (Cheung) and the ambitious Paul (Lee) have less certain futures. On Ben's wedding night, the trio kill a local gangster. Anxious to get out of town, they agree to deliver medicine and Rolex watches to a Saigon crime lord, Mr. Leong. Upon their arrival in Vietnam, however, a terrorist attack destroys their merchandise. Broke and desperate, they ally themselves with Luke (Yam), a CIA operative out to stop Leong from assisting the Vietcong. After a shoot-out at a Leong's Saigon brothel, Ben, Frank and Paul escape with a trunk of gold leaves, but are captured by the NVA and tortured. Luke arrives with the US Army to rescue them. In the melee, Paul critically wounds Frank and Ben and flees with the gold. After being nursed back to health by Buddhist monks, Ben returns to Saigon where Frank, thanks to the bullet Paul put in his head, is now a crazed drug addict. Ben tearfully puts him out of his misery. Back in Hong Kong, Ben is reunited with Jane, meets his three-year-old son for the first time, and resolves to settle the score with Paul. Paul is now a wealthy businessman, about to be named successor to a major crime boss. In front of all his associates, Ben presents Paul with Frank's bullet pierced skull. The subsequent shoot-out leaves Paul dead and Ben wounded and alone.

Ayscough, Suzan (Suze). "A Bullet in the head" Variety 341 (Nov 12, 1990), p. 63.

Devine, Jeremy M. Vietnam at 24 frames a second [GB] (p. 344)

Gingold, Michael. "Bullet in the head" Motion picture guide annual (edited by Jay Robert Nash and Stanley Ralph Ross) Chicago : Cinebooks, 1987-2000. (1995, p. 46)

Hoberman, J. "War zone" Village voice 36 (Jan 1, 1991), p. 49+ [2 p.]

Logan, Bey. Hong Kong action cinema Woodstock, N.Y. : Overlook Press, 1996. (p. 123-5+)

Weldon, Michael. The psychotronic video guide New York : St. Martin's Griffin, 1996. (p. 83)

Williams, Tony. "A Bullet in the head" Vietnam war feature filmography (1992 draft) [GB] (p. 62-3) and Vietnam war films [GB] (Entry 68)

\_\_\_\_\_. "To live and die in Hong Kong" Cine action n. 36 (1995), p. 42-52.