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March 1990 — INSIGHT — 8

Cruise: Impressive in *Born on the Fourth of July*

By Daniel J. Lyons

Do you remember the last time that you were truly moved by a movie? If you don't or just want to experience that type of movie again, I must recommend Born On The Fourth Of July.

Born On The Fourth Of July is based on the autobiography of Ron Kovic, a Vietnam veteran who was crippled in the war. Tom Cruise stars as Ron Kovic, a man who volunteered to go to war so that he could serve his

nation and lost the use of his body for his trouble. The movie centers on how Kovic responds to being crippled, the new and different way people treat him as a crippled war veteran, and his role in anti-war demonstrations.

The presentation of this movie is startlingly real. The sights and sounds of the war, where bullets fly and people die, and the army hospitals, where blood spurts and rats scurry, are gut wrenchingly accurate.

The portrayal of Ron

Kovic by Cruise was extremely well done. Even though playing a man who is paralyzed from the mid-chest down required mature acting skills, Cruise pulls it off with a great deal of skill and believability. When we see him falling from his wheelchair we could swear that his legs really are lifeless.

If you are going to this movie expecting to see Cruise as a clean-cut sex symbol, you are in for quite a surprise at the hero's unkempt, scruffy

appearance in the latter half of the film. In this film he has exchanged formally lightweight roles that he played in Top Gun and Cocktail, for this substantial, dramatic portrayal of Kovic.

In addition to Cruise's power, much of the film's impact is the result of Oliver Stone. Stone, director of Platoon, has had experience in making films about Vietnam, but Born On The Fourth Of July is more than just another Vietnam movie. The stark contrasts

between the war and Kovic's hometown is what sets this movie apart from previous Vietnam films. The direction by Stone keeps the characters, places, and feel of the two sites separate yet still interlocked with the story.

Although the film is graphic in parts, it is a movie well worth seeing. It has a very strong message which is underscored by the quality of the film's acting. Born On The Fourth Of July is rated R.