

MR SIGNIFICANT
FILMS



SYNOPSIS

THE WHISKEY ROBBER

COP'S, ROBBERS, FOLK HERO'S, DREAMS AND WILD LAWLESS ADVENTURES...

HAVE YOU GOT THE BOTTLE TO FOLLOW THE WHISKEY ROBBER?

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Once upon a time, there was a little boy who lived in the Ceausescu-era Transylvania, who always dreamt that when he grew up he will travel all around the world. That he will have tremendous amount of money and everything that he could never have at home (love, for example). Then, he climbed up on the bottom of a train and smuggled himself over to Hungary, because he thought that his dreams would come true there. But he soon realised, that with a decent job, his dreams will never happen. And because as a child, and even later in life, he did not have moral guidance, he decided to become a bank robber. ("I've decided to make a living from robbery")

And truly, he became the most famous bank robber of Hungary. He robbed thirty banks and was caught twice - the first time of which he was able to escape from prison under some really adventuresome circumstances. Occasionally he had a partner with him on his raids. Over the course of six years in the "business", he stole 200 million Hungarian Forints. He never really took life seriously - he was playing with the police, playing with women. He made his childhood dreams come true and travelled all over the world.

Still, deep down he is always a loner. He is tough and bold - as a hockey player he learned not to fear anything. The general public saw some sort of folk hero in him, because he never really hurt anyone, "just" took the money. Each one of his bank robberies was a separate adventure, some are almost funny, others are hard core criminal stories. He carefully planned and rehearsed every single job, but before leaving, he would always drink a glass of Whiskey (hence the nick name). His drive was to prove himself, feeling that in a different place, he could be capable of something much more than what he is pre-destined by his given circumstances.

The film starts with a childhood mistake (back in Romania): he "borrows" instruments for a concert that he is giving with his band at the school party. They are caught and his father beats him senseless: - You will end up rotting in prison - he says between two hits.

14 years later he is just caught to be taken to prison after his 27th bank robbery - at this point he is an adult, known as The Whiskey Robber. In jail, he is given an old typewriter, on which he writes his "confessional" diary, that tells the story of his life, his robberies, all the way up to the police catching him.

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These accounts are about a variety of different things: Strange adventures with women, with partners in crime, and some parts of it serve as his guide on how to rob a bank. He regarded this as his profession, wanting to be good at his job. The money he took he spent on luxurious living that he dreamt of: on women, travelling, cars, gambling... He did not put anything aside as a "retirement". When the money was gone, he robbed again.

Slowly, as his diary comes to life adventure after adventure, he gets fed up with being in prison. And on a sunny Saturday afternoon he escapes, with a great amount of skill and braveness. The police are livid, as they have been scorned by the media even before the Whiskey Robber was finally caught - after 27 unsuccessfully investigated bank robberies. When he escapes, his case detective sends him a message on national television: "I will catch you!" He tries to find shelter turning from one old girlfriend to the other, but slowly everyone who has regarded him as a star (the media, the women, and the general public) turn away from him. From the time of his escape the story continues in present tense. He needs money to leave the country and he is getting ready for his last bank robbery. Half-drunk he succeeds to do it, but there are some shots fired and he gets hurt. He has to run and hide at a run-down apartment, waiting for fake documents. Next to him on the bed is the forty million Forints that he took. But it is too late...

The doorbell rings. He is standing in the middle of the room in Bermuda shorts when the door almost falls on him, as a team of five commandos jump on him in bullet-proof vests. The Whiskey Robber asks: "Can I drink my whiskey?" - but he is cut off, mid-sentence.

Yet, what is the truth?

What is the moral of the fairytale?

Why is the story (the crimes) of a criminal interesting?

Crime, as "means" of distinction and separation from the crowd, of self-definition and self-realisation, is always a teasing temptation. Further, is robbing a bank, stealing from the "community" a "crime"? In an era when communities are rather virtual than real (even only at an emotional level), when the majority society (or rather the major part of society) believes that others ("the untouchables", "the rich", "politicians", "the elite") steal much often and much more. Well in times like this, ordinary people cheers rather for the thief than for the cop.

Hungary in the '90s lived such times.

The Whiskey Robber was such a "hero".

His story is an almost ordinary story of the quest for happiness, leading to perfect unhappiness and loneliness, just like the "ordinary" story of most of us with the difference that we will never dare (be able? be capable? or wish) to choose the path of crime.

Is it worth risking?

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What is there to gain or loose for the one who (almost in our stead) steps onto the excitingly shaky ground of an existence outside the common understanding?
That is the key issue of the film.

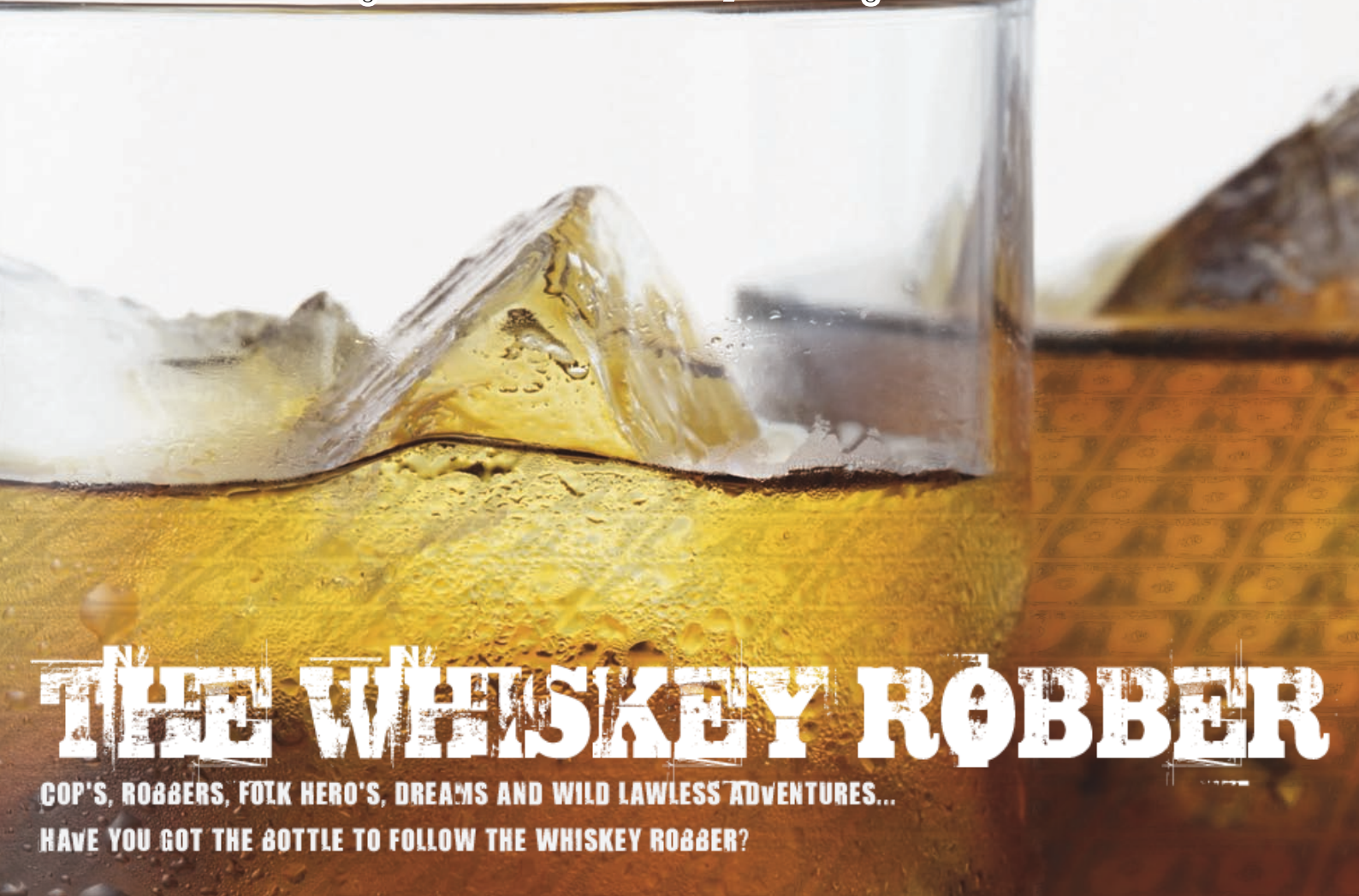
The picture itself is naturally “eventful” and “action packed”, the bank robberies are exciting, as is the investigation, the chase, the catch and the interrogation too. It is a POPULAR MOVIE. Yet, it is intriguing how the personal relationships of the ever more successful bank robber develop, how they fail one by one and how The Whiskey Robber remains perfectly alone at the end. An ART MOVIE then.

The story line, based on the diary of the bank robber, as well as the film itself, is continuously balancing fact and fiction to show not only the “real” but also the “true”; even if they seem to contradict each other.

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