

FILM REVIEW / *Whispers* has bugs that can really act,

— the new Ruth Gordon and a Canadian director — what more can you ask for?

## Corny cops and 'voodoo stuff'

BY RICK GROEN  
Film Critic

**J**UST a few of the reasons why you might want to take in *Whispers*, based on the Dean Koontz novel and billed as a "gripping psychological thriller with a twist ending that explodes in a frightening, spine-tingling climax:"

- You always believe any billing larded with more adjectives than nouns.

- You think Dean Koontz was robbed of this year's Nobel Prize for literature.

- The pretty blonde (Victoria Tennant) who is attacked by the scary psychopath (John Leclerc) lives in a really keen loft-apartment, the kind with a grotty elevator just like the one in *Fatal Attraction*.

- The plot features a pair of mismatched buddy-cops, and you just don't get much of that in movies these days.

- When the rough-and-ready cop gets blown away by a dark-skinned drug-dealer, the sensitive cop (Chris Sarandon) delivers a tearfully profound eulogy: "He was a screwy,



Victoria Tennant

### WHISPERS

DIRECTED BY PETER BENISON

Screenplay by Anita Doohan

Starring Victoria Tennant, Jean Leclerc

loud-mouthed son of a bitch, but he was my partner."

- The scary psychopath, who is heavily into "voodoo stuff," drives a stake through the heart of a literary agent, a feat long considered an anatomical impossibility by most bud-

ding authors.

- In the fleeting seconds of her cameo appearance, you discover that age (or a cruel make-up artist) is turning Jackie Burroughs into a dead ringer for Ruth Gordon.

- Someone says, "I am a Satanist — I believe in the Dark Lord." Someone else says, "Identical twins by incest — they didn't stand a chance of being normal." Delivering these lines, neither performer cracks the hint of a smile — now *that's* acting.

- The director, Doug Jackson, is a Canadian — that still counts for something, doesn't it?

- During the "frightening, spine-tingling climax," bugs the size of Cadillacs crawl all over some poor schnook's bleeding body. Hastily summoned for no apparent reason other than their considerable screen presence, the bugs respond to the call like real troopers — more superb acting.

- Right at the end of the movie, an emissary of the Dark Lord shrieks, "Don't make me stay here — I'll be good," and you get to ponder the metaphysical irony: an emissary of the Good Lord would have shrieked it 90 minutes earlier.