

Act of Piracy

US : 1990 : dir. John "Bud" Cardos : : 101 min
 prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:
[Matthew Stewardson](#); [??? Hildebrand](#)
 Gary Busey; Belinda Bauer; Ray Sharkey; Nancy Mulford; Ken Gampu

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	€	M	⌘	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
2011a	1.5	2	0	847	-	-	-	-	-	No	July 1997

Video Movie Guide 1993 review:

"When modern-day pirate Ray Sharkey and his gang rip off Gary Busey's state-of-the-art yacht, accidentally kidnapping his children at the same time, our hero embarks on a no-holds-barred mission to get his property back. Ho-hum action movie. Unrated, the film has profanity, violence, nudity and simulated sex. ****1/2** "

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "The Critics' Film Guide", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

Radio Times review:

"Gary Busey is a popular draw in the straight-to-video stakes nowadays, and this is a typical no-nonsense slice of action hokum. Here he's a Vietnam vet who fights back when Ray Sharkey and some terrorist pals seize his yacht with his children on board. There are echoes of Busey's **"UNDER SIEGE"** in the ocean-bound plotting, but it's not in the same class as that action spectacular. May be edited *[sic]* for language, violence and nudity. ****** "

"Thriller. Mercenaries steal a yacht, kidnapping it's owner's children. ****** "

Mediocre though it certainly is, the film ought to be listed in one or two of these guides at least, which suggests a title change.

Of interest only to video rental junkies and Gary Busey fans, it's a hijack/kidnap thriller more in the spirit of **"DIE HARD"** than **"UNDER SIEGE"**, but with a far less interesting array of bad guys and action set-pieces. As with most kidnap thrillers (**"THE BLACK WINDMILL"** springs readily to mind) the children are inanimate things to be retrieved by their rightful owners, family valuables to be restored undamaged to their parents' possession. Accordingly we do not see anything of Mark and Tracy, spirited away with their dad's yacht, for the greater part of the film. The kidnapping is their *dad's* trauma, not theirs.

Mom and Dad are acrimoniously separated, and when Mom refuses to let Dad – Ted Andrews – take the kids off on a cruise to Australia with his new girlfriend, he produces incriminating evidence about her new boyfriend's murky business dealings. Threatened with a custody suit she demurs. Kids arrive on Dad's new yacht (beaming prettily, as kids do), poke gentle fun at his raunchy new girlfriend, and it's yo-ho-ho and away we go.

Except that Dad's new girlfriend is a treacherous minx, and that night primps about the sleeping yacht in her negligé, slaughtering the passengers with a silenced pistol. She spares the kids of course. The conventions of Hollywood plot mechanics would not permit Busey to

go tear-assing around Zimbabwe and Greece merely to retrieve a stolen yacht. Treacherous Minx is in league with a gun-running desperado, who commandeers the vessel after wounded Busey has leapt overboard. For her pains she is royally screwed and pitched off a hotel balcony in Zimbabwe, and so perish all treacherous minxes, I say.

In their efforts to trace the yacht, Mom and Dad sink their differences (nothing quite like a good abduction to bring folks closer together) and we just know the monogamous unit will be restored to pristine joy on the recapture of their brood. In films, unlike reality, it seldom occurs that the kidnapped child is **not** recovered by the closing titles, and they are always shaken but not stirred. In this particular instance the chief villain, a pathological control freak passed over for colonel, would certainly have disposed of these young encumbrances, even before dispatching his girlfriend from the hotel balcony. No rationale is offered for his keeping them alive but – you just can't mess with those conventional plot mechanics.

Gary Busey makes a likeable tough (see "**CARNY**", "**SILVER BULLET**"), equally at home in good guy/bad guy roles, and with the rare suggestion of a liberal intelligence beneath the beefcake exterior, but here he is merely a cardboard Avenging Dad ("Give us a hug, son") whose only depth of characterisation is contained in a brief throwaway dialogue on the boat, where he tells Mark about his Vietnam experiences and what they taught a man about his *Inner Nature*. "**ACT OF PIRACY**" has the flaccid look of a TV movie, perked up with a redundant interlude of dickless pornography to keep the morons watching between sporadic outbursts of violence. One knows the children will come to no harm, the bad guy does not sustain our interest (unlike Alan Rickman in "**DIE HARD**") and the budget did not run to any grandiose demolition work, so half the required ingredients for a thriller of this kind are absent.

Nothing further is known about Matthew Stewardson (here about 12) or Hildebrand, who plays his sister Tracy (about 8).

See subject index under **DIVORCE / CUSTODY BATTLES, KIDNAPPING** and **SEAFARING / PIRATES**.