Written by Tony Timpone
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On the eve of the big-budget Sony remake's opening, it seems like the perfect opportunity to revisit the original 1990 Arnold Schwarzenegger smash TOTAL RECALL. Making such a reevaluation easier, New York City's Film Forum (209 West Houston; [212] 727-8110) begins a special one-week engagement (thanks to a sharp DCP restoration) of the first RECALL from Friday, August 10 through Thursday, August 16, with more cities to follow courtesy rerelease distributor Rialto Pictures.

TOTAL RECALL stands out in my early days in the editorial bullpens at FANGORIA and STARLOG magazines. Both publications featured ample reportage and cover stories on the Paul Verhoeven-directed flick, and our publisher even bought the license to produce an official TOTAL RECALL movie magazine that I contributed to. It didn't take much for me to justify putting the sci-fi thriller on the cover of FANGORIA (issue #95). The movie sported (literally) eye-popping horror-style FX (courtesy of THE THING's Rob Bottin), lots of shoot-'em-up violence and it came from the pen of co-writer Dan O'Bannon, of ALIEN and RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD fame. That the film turned out to be such rip-roaring fun further validated Fango's choice.

Derived from the short story "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale" by Philip K. Dick (whose first name is misspelled in the opening credits!), TOTAL RECALL posits a future where human colonies exist on Mars and people can have artificial memories implanted directly into their brains. Despite rolls in the hay with sexy wife Sharon Stone, bored construction worker Douglas Quaid (Arnold) yearns for adventure. So he heads over to the Rekall offices, where he decides to have a two-week Martian spy mission mentally fabricated. But something goes very wrong… It winds up that Quaid really is a Mars-based agent named Hauser who had his memory erased. Before long, vicious hitmen (led by the indefatigable Michael Ironside of SCANNERS) want him erased. So Quaid/Hauser hightails it to Mars to unravel the secret of his identity, confer with local mutant revolutionaries and uncover the nefarious plot of greedy corporate baddie Cohaagen (Ronny Cox, who hasn't been this loathsomely evil until his recent turn as an elderly serial killer on DEXTER last season).