

GOOD VS. EVIL AT NAKATOMI PLAZA

IN 1988, THE LATEST ACTION movie hitting theaters was “Die Hard,” starring Bruce Willis as New York City Detective John McClane, who was pitted against a team of European villains led by Alan Rickman, playing ringleader Hans Gruber. In the film, Gruber seizes control of the skyscraper at Nakatomi Plaza, only to unexpectedly come up against McClane.

Equal billing in this popular film could have been given to the sidearms employed by both lead actors. McClane’s Beretta 92F pistol regularly delivered amazing firepower, bringing down bad guy after bad guy. Yet the sinister silver hard chrome finish of Gruber’s Heckler & Koch P7M13 delivered an equally intense performance, albeit with a lesser number of rounds. But in Hollywood, blank cartridges rule and each pistol had an internally threaded barrel fitted with a setscrew that could be regulated to provide reliable semi-automatic operation. For a time, Gruber’s H&K was even fitted with a faux suppressor using these same threads.

In casting the sidearms, just as with the actors, the choice of a well-worn Italian pistol for a determined police officer versus the sleek presentation of a custom H&K handgun for an uber-refined criminal establishes the film’s conflict on more than one level. The plot played out with each gunshot and at the climax, with Beretta pitted against H&K, viewers saw man versus man as well as machine versus machine.

Come to the National Firearms Museum at NRA Headquarters in Fairfax, Va., and see the movie guns you’ve enjoyed on the silver screen with our newest exhibit, “Hollywood Guns.” ㊦



The National Firearms Museum is open daily, offering visitors the opportunity to experience centuries of firearm technology through galleries showcasing thousands of historic arms. Admission is free (donations appreciated) and the museum store provides a unique shopping experience. For more details, e-mail nfmstaff@nrahq.org or call (703) 267-1600. View the galleries online at www.nramuseum.org.

