

Interactive at the Multiplex



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Choose or lose:

Pressing buttons to decide plot twists in 'Mr. Payback'

IN 1959, AUDIENCES at a Vincent Price thriller, "The Tinger," sat in specially wired seats that zapped them at key moments in the film. "Mr. Payback," a new 20-minute interactive movie, is the latest Hollywood gimmick designed to let audiences do something other than just sit there. Part movie, part videogame, it allows people to vote on

which plot line they'd like to see next by pressing a button on a joystick. Would you like the vigilante hero to encounter a bicycle thief or a "car jerk"? Should the woman posing as a phone-sex operator pretend to be a mistress, a starlet or a nun? Votes are tabulated instantly on the screen—majority rules—but audience members howl so loudly for their choices,

they drown out the dialogue. "Mr. Payback" has so many plot possibilities, the filmmakers claim you can watch it 25 times before it gets repetitive. (Once may be plenty.) Bob Bejan, the president of Interfilm, which produced it, swears this isn't a fad: "There could come a day that every multiplex . . . will have an Interfilm screen." Just what every multiplex needs: more choices.