

'Glengarry Glen Ross:' Cynical, uncompromising drama



JOHN MONAGHAN

"Glengarry Glen Ross" has a lyrical-sounding title and beautiful wide-screen cinematography, but it's by no means a pretty picture. In fact, most people will walk out wondering why all these critics are drooling over such a depressing, foul-mouthed film.

Al Pacino's career-topping performance is just one of the pleasures of the year's most cynical

and uncompromising picture. Pacino plays Ricky Roma, top seller in an urban Chicago real estate office, as an ex-smooth, sly and subtle salesmanship.

He can sit across the bar from a meek little man (here Jonathan Pryce) and in a few minutes of double-talk about women, booze and morality, have this schmo convinced that Roma is the most profound guy on the planet. Give him an hour and Roma will have another sucker signing on the dotted line.

The office motto is "always be closing" (ABC), and for Roma and his three colleagues, it becomes a do-or-die situation. Ac-

cording to Mitch and Murray, the ubiquitous but never-seen down-town bosses, the month's top seller will be awarded a Cadillac. The runner-up will receive a set of steak knives. The other two will get their walking papers.

Shelley Levene, "the machine" as he's known around the office, is an older, Willy-Loman-style salesman played by Jack Lemmon. He no longer receives the premium "leads," or buyer prospects, from the head office and must rely solely on his antique brand of ingratiating, best-buddy hard sell.

Alan Arkin and Ed Harris round out the sales staff. Harris is

especially effective as a bundle of nerves who can't utter a sentence to anyone without spewing hostility and profanity. You think his head is literally going to explode.

"Glengarry" is possibly the best stage work to date from David Mamet, the playwright and sometime film director ("House of Games," "Homicide"). He creates an existential atmosphere whose worth is based solely on the ability to produce. Without numbers on the big board and without the leads to generate those numbers, you are nothing.

When an abusive representa-

tive from the head office (Alec Baldwin in a memorable cameo) tells the men to either shape up or ship out (though not necessarily in those words), we don't even know his name or title. He introduces himself solely by the amount of money he made last year, the car he drives and the watch he wears.

With "Glengarry," Mamet hands the director's reins over to James Foley, whose previous film was the noirish "After Dark, My Sweet." The choice was a wise one. Foley has added candy-colored neon lighting to some scenes, a deep dark brown to others. He also shoots in wide screen, perhaps to offset the overall claustrophobia of the film, which takes

place primarily in the office and at the Chinese restaurant across the street.

The film and play work best when focusing sharply on the ugliness and major flaws of its characters. So the scenes where Lemmon's Levene calls his daughter at the hospital add an unsettling sense of appoggness. Intentionally so?

Almost all of Mamet's work has a point of making you question dialogue and motivation. A conversation will go "round and 'round until you are back where you started, tired and beaten a bit, and vulnerable — just where a guy like Roma (or a playwright like Mamet) wants you to be.

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620 Men Seeking Women

AIA RATED: 62, 105, 37, 38, good, 100% secure, 100% honest, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

ACT NOW! Sharp guy in musical related field, needs a woman, 21-30, 100% honest, seeks sharp gal for concert dates, 100% no strings attached, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

AFFECTIONATE: 43, white, looks younger, 5' 9", 165, honest, com-passionate, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

CARING, ATTRACTIVE, COMMUNICATIVE: 30, white male, 5' 7", 160, honest, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

DISCRETE, INTERRACIAL: relation-ship, 21-30, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

FAT: 42, white, 5' 6", 160, honest, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

AMBIENT: 27, college student but traveling, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

A HUNK: 21, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

EXQUISITE: striking, benevolent, 26, single white male, 6' 3", 203 lbs., honest, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

INTERESTING: Single bachelorette, seeks Uninhibited single white female, 21-30, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

ARE YOU THAT BETTER, BETTER, BETTER? Single white male, 21-30, 100% honest, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

AUGUSTA ALABAMA: 22, 100% secure, 100% honest, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

ATTRACTIVE: Clean, nice, sincere, professional, 21-30, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

ARTISTIC: Contemporary romantic divorcee, white male, 40+, 5' 10", 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

FAT: Attractive Professional Artist, 21-30, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

FUN: 21, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

GIRL: 21, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

HONEST: Single white male, 21-30, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

INVENTOR: dark brown hair, blue eyes, tan, Asian, 21-35, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

LATIN: Male with a real sweet smile, 21-30, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

LET'S JUDDLE OUT THERE! (non-musical) many cheeses, too much meat, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

LOVING: PROFOUND, ATTRACTIVE, 21-30, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

MATCHMAKING: 21-30, 100% secure, 100% friendly, 100% compatible, 100% must be all three, 100% no strings attached.

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