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STARTS FRIDAY, DECINIBER ISIN AMO SERVING CIRC STRUCK STRU

MOVIES

Wild Bill' does justice to legend



series of action scenes, spread out over some 20

out over some 20
years, that fueled
one of the West's
most enduring
legends. Played
by Jeff Bridges
with long rangy
mostache, and
fancy hat, Wild
greets each challenge with stole
coolness.

greets each challenge with stoic coolness.

We see Bill battle a begrudged Indian, six-guns blazing as they ride toward each other at full gallop, Bill take on a bar full of cocky soldiers; and finally Bill, as sheriff, keep the peace on the mean streets of Abliene only to shoot his own deputy in the process.

That "Wild Bill" can't sustain this level of energy is no surprise. Yet it does have enough vivid performances and sense of style to entertain fans of the classical

Western.
Modern western: play like funeral eulogise, larger-than-life storica of steely-ewel bresenness that even Hickock's contemporaries recognize as disappearing from the American West. "You can buy him a drink and shake his hand," an old-timer says to the skeptical young man at the Deadwood bar, "and then tell your grandkids that you met the great Wild Bill Hickock."

The young man remains unimpressed. He is Jack McCall (David Arquette), the men history credits with shooting Wild Bill in the back during a poker game. The famed dead man's hand signals to us that, for Bill, this really is the final roundup.

In the celebrity-stalking '90s, the weasally McCall takes on a new significance. He is Mark David Chapman, let off with warnings time and time again, finally

REVIEW

atriking home with the object of his obsession.

"Wild Bill" is written and directed by Walter Hill, no stranger to the western gener. His "Long wash havenness as contemporariate. You can buy diske his hand, and hand his hand had hand his hand, as hand, as the head washed had been continued the contemporary to the septiment of the history than the history ting Wild Bill in an hand sign than the history ting Wild Bill in a poker gene. Hill gets an analize when he had sign the history ting Wild Bill in a poker gene will be as a heartifeer will be seen the history ting Wild Bill in a poker gene will be an an endiffer wellow hown in arty cometimes tedious) black-and-white flashbacks.

Ellen Barkin makes a sexy Calamity Jame, a relationship less out of history than out of other movies, including two versions of "The Plaineman" in 1938 and 1956. As the Brit gambler fascined process of the pr

kots, to a town out of the Bible, "the part right before God gets angry."

Indeed, this Dealwood actually looks like it has some depth behind the fake facades of the studio backlot. Bill frequents a Chinese oplum den, one in a handful of spots where Jack locates, his target but finds it difficult to setually gun him down.

The success of "Dances with Wolves" might have signaled the production of more westerns. But it's guys like Hill who work herd to keep this archalc genre alive.

To leave a message for John Monaghan, dial 953-2047, mail-box number 1866, on a touch-tone phone, fax him a note at 591-7279, or write him in care of Entertain-ment, Observer & Eccentric News-papers, 36251 Schoolcroft, Livonia 48160.



feature: Jonathan.... Taylor Thomas stars as Tom Sawyer in: Walt Disney Pictures' live-action feature "Tom & Huck" opening Dec. 22 at metro Detroit movie theaters.

Frank Masi

We're searching for 'Tom and Huck' stories

Write and tell us about an adventure you had as a child that would make a good movie. Be brief but tell us what actor you would choose to portray "you" if a movie was being made about your life story.

The first 25 entries will receive a family-pack of four tickets to a special preview acreening of "Tom and Huck" 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 16 at AMC Old Orchard Theatre in Farmington Hills. Winners will be notified by phone.

Winners with the football of the phone.

Send or fax entries, as soon as possible, to: Keely Wygonik, Entertainment Editer, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 49150.

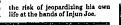
To fax entries, call (313) 591-

7279.

Walt Dianey Pictures' "Tom and Huck" opening at metro Detroit movie theaters Friday, Dec. 22, brings Mark Twains' classic story to life. "Tom and Huck" is the atony of a mischievous boy named Tom Sawyer (played by Jonathan Taylor Thomas of "Home Improvement,") who, along with pal Huck Finn, are witnesses to a murder.

When the killer, Injun Joe, realizes he can be identified, the boys must make a run for their lives. Back in town, Tom's friend, Muff is framed for the crime. At a moral crossroads, Tom must find the strength and courage to do what his heart tells him is right in order to exonerse Muff — oven at

Mutcracker!





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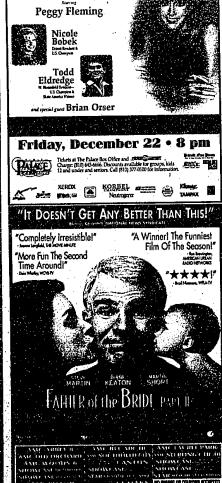
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