

## MOVIES

## Dream cast leads intelligent, low key 'Cop Land'

BY JOHN MONAGHAN  
SPECIAL WRITER  
Keitel, DeNiro, Liotta, Stal-

lone. Stallone? You ask, noting the obvious false note in what could be a dream cast for the

next Martin Scorsese project.

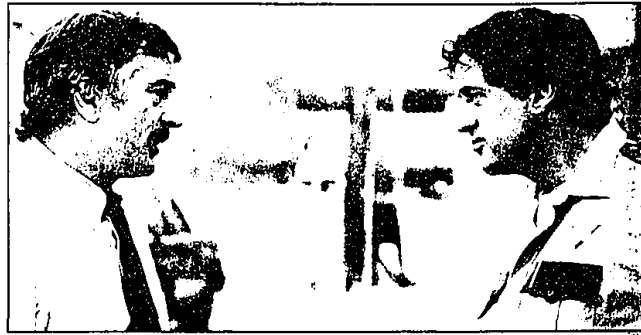
The movie is "Cop Land" and much of the press has focused on how Sylvester Stallone dropped the muscle tone and gained a substantial beer belly to play a small-town Jersey sheriff. Of course, there's always been pain and passion beneath those droopy eyes, but we haven't really seen it much since the original "Rocky" two decades ago.

Garrison, New Jersey, is across the river from New York City. Most cops in New York have to live within its limits, but by pulling time with the Transit Authority, they can reside in the quiet working class neighborhoods across the George Washington Bridge.

We see Stallone's Freddy in the opening scenes hunched over an empty glass at the Four Aces, Garrison's official "blue" bar where only off-duty police congregate. He stumbles out the back door and opens a parking meter for more drinking money, pretty small potatoes compared to what goes on around him.

You see, while Freddy is officially the sheriff, Garrison is really run by Ray (Harvey Keitel), a corrupt officer with mob connections. When Ray's nephew (Michael Rapaport) shoots a pair of black kids because he thinks he saw a gun, it's up to Ray to cover at all costs and with no interference from Freddy.

Freddy, whose bad ear has kept him out of the NYPD, begins to question his role in the town. Should he look the other



Drama: Robert De Niro and Sylvester Stallone in a scene from James Mangold's "Cop Land."

way, as he's been doing all these years, or bring this rampant corruption to light?

The question is hardly a new one, especially in Westerns, which "Cop Land" resembles far more than your average TV cop show. You may even think you're watching "Rio Bravo" when Ray Liotta appears in the Dean Martin role as a drug addict cop who pals around with Freddy and elicits both our sympathy and scorn.

Robert DeNiro rounds out the cast as an internal affairs inves-

tigator who encourages Freddy to do the right thing, but, like so many of his roles in the last decade, it's little more than a walk-on. DeNiro does share a few seconds of screen time with Keitel as the two former academy mates meet in a convenience store and recall what it was like, "back in the day."

For me, the best thing about "Cop Land" is that you're not reminded constantly of Quentin Tarantino, from whose style young directors too easily crib. Writer/director James Mangold

"Heavy" creates dialogue both stylized and clever, yet it sounds like it's coming from real people's mouths.

If Mangold's movie can be criticized for anything, it's overplotting. While it clocks in at well under two hours, "Cop Land" has enough subplots and vivid characters for four movies; not bad, I suppose, in a summer where most filmmakers are barely able to scrape up enough material for one.

John Monaghan welcomes your calls and comments. To leave John a voice mail message, dial (313) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, mailbox 1856.



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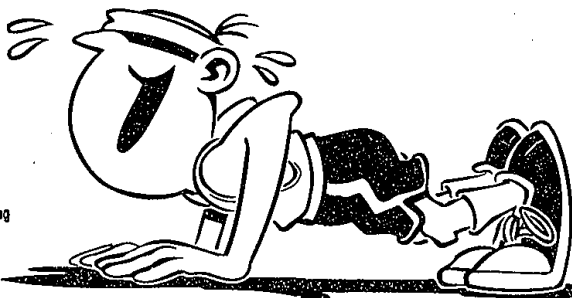


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## COMING ATTRACTIONS

Scheduled to open Wednesday, Aug. 27

### "HOODLUM"

Harlem of the 1930s is setting for war between two gangsters over the numbers racket. Stars Laurence Fishburne, Vanessa Williams, Andy Garcia and Tim Roth.

Scheduled to open Friday, Aug. 29

### "CAREEN GIRLS"

A Detroit Institute of Arts exclusive, the film follows the careers of two women in London as they encounter a number of old college friends 15 years after leaving the university.

### "EXCESS BAGGAGE"

An emotionally neglected rich girl stages her own kidnapping in an attempt to get attention. When the scheme backfires she must go on the run. Stars Alicia Silverstone, Nicholas Turturro, and Harry Connick Jr.

### "KILL THE CONQUEROR"

Film based on comic book, whose lead character, through twists of fate, rises from ranks of soldier/slaves to become king. Stars include Harvey Fierstein and Tia Carrere.

### "PAPERBACK ROMANCE"

A slapstick action film about a comic love triangle.

### "TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE: THE NEXT GENERATION"

Yes, the family is back and its very bad news for a carload of kids from a senior prom.

Scheduled to open Friday, Sept. 5

### "THE FULL MONTY"

Strapped for cash, and inspired by a visit from the Chippendales dancers to their town, six out-of-work steelworkers try to turn things around by forming an unlikely act. Stars Robert Carlyle, Mark Addy.

### "FIRE DOWN BELOW"

An EPA agent goes underground to discover who is behind the dumping of lethal chemicals in an abandoned mine shaft and becomes emotionally involved with the townspeople who are being endangered.

Scheduled to open Friday, Sept. 19

### "LA CONFIDENTIAL"

Three LAPD officers become separately entangled in a web of intrigue and deceit that threatens to destroy them. Set in the early 1950s. Stars Kevin Spacey, based on novel by James Ellroy.

### "WISHMASTER"

Folklore says find a lamp and rub it and a genie appears to grant three wishes. This is Wes Craven's take on the story; the real genie usurps the world for himself.

### "THE EDGE"

Psychological thriller about two men who must rely on each other to survive, when their plane crashes in the remote, Alaskan wilderness, while confronting their increasing and equally dangerous personality conflicts. Stars Anthony Hopkins, Alec Baldwin.

Scheduled to open Friday, Sept. 26

### "SOUL FOOD"

A young man struggles to keep his embattled Chicago family together after their matriarch becomes ill. Stars Vanessa Williams.