

# DeVito should have stayed in background for 'Hoffa'



**JOHN MONAGHAN**

Danny DeVito made it perfectly clear that his new screen biography of many years would depict the labor leader as an American hero. So I entered this movie armed with the same justification that Hoffa's original supporters probably did: tamper with the facts, negotiate with the powerful, but get the job done.

What bothers me most about "Hoffa," which opened at area theaters on Christmas Day, is the major role that director DeVito has written into the film for himself. As Bobby, a composite of many of Hoffa's actual right-hand men, he's supposed to fill in the narrative gaps, maybe even give some background about the Teamsters, but he only drags the film out longer than necessary.

Although he's still the star of the film, Jack Nicholson's square-jawed, rock-solid presence as Hoffa is missed whenever off-screen. This, unfortunately, is the "War of the Roses" as we watch DeVito deliver messages and strongarm guys twice his size. We see one woman waiting to have sex with him, another begging him not to leave afterward.

I expected better from DeVito. His "War of the Roses" and "Throw Mama from the Train" were cleverly done, albeit gimmicky, little pictures that packed a punch both visually and emotionally. He opened a whole bag of camera tricks in that framework, but here he finds it necessary to shower himself with babes.

But with "Hoffa," which calls for a more gritty, documentary-style approach, DeVito employs tricky dissolves and camera angles and the font remains only slightly bitten off more than he can chew with a movie and subject as big as Hoffa. Worse, he doesn't



Trusted ally: Danny DeVito plays Bobby Ciaro, trusted ally of Teamsters boss Jimmy Hoffa, played by Jack Nicholson in "Hoffa."

See **HOFFA**, NEXT PAGE

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Professional male, 32, 6'2", 180 lbs, brown hair, blue eyes, looking for a woman who is intelligent, sexy, and has a great sense of humor. Call me at 4249.

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Commanding black male, 30, has radiance in me I'm seeking out. I'm looking for a woman who is intelligent, sexy, and has a great sense of humor. Call me at 4249.

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Professional male, 32, 6'2", 180 lbs, brown hair, blue eyes, looking for a woman who is intelligent, sexy, and has a great sense of humor. Call me at 4249.

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Single black female, 35, looking for a man to share my life with. Call me at 4241.

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### 622 Sports Interests

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