



# Cops invade suburban household in comedy



Meet the Robbersons, the very model of a '90s suburban family. There's Norman (Chevy Chase), a mild-mannered accountant who drives a mild-mannered minivan to work every day. His one little quirk: He's more than mildly addicted to TV cop shows.

Helen Robberson (Dianne Wiest) is supermom, equally adept at whipping up a lobster crab souffle or a functioning volcano for her son's latest science project. She runs the household with a precision even a drill sergeant would admire.

Now meet grizzled veteran cop Jake Stone (Jack Palance), who knows only one way to get things done — alone — and hates nothing more than interfering civilians. But Jake's headed for a lot of disappointment on both counts, Jake is about to meet the Robbersons.

TriStar Pictures' new comedy "Cops and Robbersons," opening Friday at metro Detroit movie theaters, is a Channel project directed by Michael Ritchie from a screenplay written by newcomer Bernie Somers. Ned Tanen and Nancy Graham Tanen produce with Ronald L. Schwary. Also starring are Robert Davi, David Barry Gray, Jason James Richter,

## PREVIEW

Fay Masterson and Miko Hughes. Jake, on the trail of a mobster named Osborn (Davi), finds out that the crook is holed up in the suburbs. Taking along his unwanted rookie partner (Gray), Jake becomes Osborn's new "neighbor," stalking out the gangster's lair from the house next door. The trouble is, Jake is being stalked out, too — by Norman, Helen and the three Robberson kids. It's their house he's moved into, and Jake soon discovers that he's not moving his hands than just catching a bad guy.

He has to deal with Helen, who after her initial misgivings about cops invading her house, decides it's wonderful having two extra family members to feed and care for — and to scold.

Jake also has to contend with a budding romance between his young partner and the Robbersons' 18-year-old daughter, Cindy (Masterson), and with the adulation of Kevin (Richter), the Robbersons' teenage son, who is bowled over by Jake's tough-guy coolness. And what dedicated cop needs a 5-year-old (Hughes) hanging around, particularly

when the kid thinks of himself as a vampire?

But Jake's biggest problem is Norman. From "Policewoman" to "Hawaii 5-0" to "Highway Patrol," Norman is a walking encyclopedia of detective drama from the past 30 years, able to quote verbatim Sgt. Joe Friday or Kojak and to instantly recall obscure plot lines. Norman's goal is to play "cops and robbers" for real, and he's determined to use all the best TV crime-fighting techniques to help Jake crack the big case.

"I think people in the '90s want to see family pictures," Chase said. "There aren't that many movies that will make adults laugh and also keep the kids entertained that aren't salacious or violent. That's the kind of movie I want to make, and that's what this movie is."

Fay Masterson, who plays Cindy, a teenager on the verge of a major hormone explosion, comes from a serious dramatic background in her native England and might seem an odd choice to play an 18-year-old American girl in a comedy film, but "Fay plays this teenager to perfection," said director Michael Ritchie.

"We had a good time making this film," Ritchie said, "and that made for a congenial arena which encouraged the actors to try things with their roles."



STEVE SCHAPIRO

**Model family:** Fay Masterson (left), Miko Hughes, Chevy Chase, Jack Palance, Dianne Wiest and Jason James Richter star in "Cops and Robbersons," a comedy in which a suburban family is thrown into pandemonium when a grizzled cop (Palance) moves into their home during a stakeout.

# 'White Fang' faces new challenges in adventure sequel

In the classic tradition of Disney family entertainment, comes the adventure-filled sequel to the 1992 motion picture "White Fang."

Surviving in the harsh and unyielding wilds of Alaska takes strength, determination and courage. For White Fang, the brave and spirited, half-dog half-wolf, a carefree journey down river to civilization turns into an extraordinary encounter with a peaceful

tribe of Native Americans known as the Haida. Now, an age-old Indian prophecy is about to lead White Fang into a new world of danger and adventure, and he must rely on his sharp, cunning instincts for survival as he risks his life to save these people and his beloved master Henry Casey (Scott Bakula), and bring the legend of White Wolf to life, in Walt Disney Pictures' new live-action sequel,

## PREVIEW

"White Fang 2: Myth of the White Wolf."

Charmaine Craig, Alfred Molina and Geoffrey Lewis also star. "White Fang 2" is the directorial debut for Ken Olin, star of the television series "thirtysomething." The screenplay was written by David Fallon and produced

by Preston Fischer. The coproducers are Justin Greene and David Fallon. Buena Vista Pictures distributes.

Filmed on location in Aspen, Colo., Vancouver, Squamish, Whistler and Hope, British Columbia, "White Fang 2" evolved from the classic tale by Jack London but introduces a new character, Henry Casey.

Principal photography for the film began in July in Colorado,

where the company shot scenes involving a herd of reindeer at an altitude of more than 10,000 feet. In a remote spot an hour north of Vancouver, a replica of a Haida Indian village was built on the banks of the Squamish River. After consultation with the chiefs of the Squamish nation, an area was chosen that didn't interfere with the native fishing on the river.

Animal trainer Joe Camp and his partner, Tammy Maples, had

their hands full during the shooting with more than 20 dogs, a Kodiak bear, mountain sheep and a raven. There were five dogs playing the role of White Fang and two playing his love interest, Cinamon. More than 14 other dogs were used, with varying degrees of breeding, to play pack animals in the film.

"White Fang 2: Myth of the White Wolf" is scheduled to open in theaters this week.

## UPCOMING MOVIES

There's something for everyone at the movies. Here's a list of what's in the wings:

**Opening Friday, April 15**  
■ "Surviving the Game" — A homeless man discovers he has been recruited as a human hunting target and must use his street

smarts and instinct in order to survive.  
■ "Serial Mom" — A black comedy about the "perfect suburban family" and the possibility that "Mom" may have segued from car-pooling into serial killing.  
■ "Night of the Demons 2" — Freddy watch out and Jason

beware — sly, sexy and outrageously campy, Angela, the Queen of the Demons is back, and this time she's more evil than ever.  
■ "Savage Nights" — Main Art Theatre exclusive. Shocking portrait of reckless youth in the age of AIDS is based on the autobiographical novel by the late Cyril Collard.  
**Opening Friday, April 22**  
■ "Brainiac" — Teenage boy faces a living nightmare when his playing of an interactive fantasy game might in fact be responsible for real murders.  
■ "Chasers" — A couple of (MPs) retrieve an errant enlisted woman and find themselves well over their heads on an eventful trip back to their base.

■ "Bad Girls" — Four women of the Old West become gunfighters to win back their money, their rights and their dignity.  
■ "The Inkwell" — On Martha's Vineyard circa 1976, a shy black teenager discovers love for the first time while dealing with the emotional and familial conflicts of the era.  
■ "Backbeat" — The story of a young rock quartet who come to be known as the Beatles, and fifth member Stuart Sutcliffe's relationship with photographer, Astrid Kirchherr. Opening Friday, April 29  
■ "PCU" — Tom Lawrence is about to get his first lesson in politically correct behavior as a freshman at Port Chester University when he moves into a renege dorm that sets out to defy the rigid and "correct" behavior of its fellow students.  
■ "With Honor" — True story of Harvard University students who befriend a homeless man. Stars Joe Pesci.

## Events cater to film fans

■ Talk Show host David Newman will be autographing copies of his new movie quiz book 3 p.m. Saturday, April 16 at Harvard Books, 6551 N. Wayne, Westland.  
■ "Let's Talk Movies" at the Jewish Community Center, 6600 West Maple Road, West Bloomfield 1 p.m. Tuesday, April 26. Go see the movie "In

the Name of the Father" on your own, and join the group to discuss it. For information, call Doris Roby 661-7648.  
■ Barry Baker will play Mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ at the Senate Theatre, 6424 Michigan Ave. in Detroit 7 p.m. Saturday, April 16. Tickets \$10 at the door. Call 894-4100 for information.

## Reader gives drama, comedy good reviews

Share your comments about any newly released movies with your friends and neighbors on our movie page.

We're interested in hearing from readers of all ages — your comments are important to us. See Reel to Reel for details on how to share your views.

Betty Jean Awrey of Plymouth called with these comments about "Guarding Tess" and "On Deadly Ground."

"I'd give 'Guarding Tess' a three on a scale of one to four," said Awrey. "Shirley MacLaine was great. The film is comical, but there are some serious parts." "Guarding Tess" also stars Nicholas Cage and tells the story of Tess Carlisle, the beloved former first lady who is running her secret service detail ragged. Tired of being at the mercy of her imperious will, one young agent (Cage) squares off with her in a clash of wits. The film is rated PG-13. (Parents are strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for young children.) Awrey would give "On Deadly Ground" starring Steven Seagal and Joan Chen a 3½. "It's an environmental movie, very action packed with a lot of different scenes," she said. "It's entertaining."

"On Deadly Ground" tells the story of an oil rig worker who joins forces with an Inuit activist in opposition to his former employer's rapacious drilling program and finds himself in a battle of survival. The film is rated R. (Restricted. Under 18 requires an accompanying parent or guardian.) Parents, how do you decide if you'll let your children see a movie? Do you call other parents? Do you agree or disagree with how movies are rated? What movies have you seen lately and recom-

GET READY FOR A LAUGHTER ATTACK!

CHEVY PALANCE  
COPS & ROBBERSONS

PG

AMC AMERICAN WEST  
AMC STERLING CTR  
RENAISSANCE  
SHOWCASE  
STAR TAYLOR  
DARKEN

AMC WOODS  
SHOWCASE  
STAR WINCHESTER  
12 OAKS

AMC LAUREL PARK  
GCC CANTON CINEMA  
SHOWCASE  
STAR GRANT  
FAIRLANE  
WEST RIVER

STARTS FRIDAY, APRIL 15

WHITE FANG 2  
MYTH OF THE WHITE WOLF

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|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| AMC AMERICAN WEST | AMC STERLING CTR | AMC WOODS       | AMC LAUREL PARK   | AMC AMERICAN WEST |
| AMC STERLING CTR  | RENAISSANCE      | SHOWCASE        | GCC CANTON CINEMA | AMC STERLING CTR  |
| RENAISSANCE       | SHOWCASE         | STAR TAYLOR     | STAR GRANT        | RENAISSANCE       |
| SHOWCASE          | STAR TAYLOR      | STAR WINCHESTER | STAR GRANT        | SHOWCASE          |
| STAR TAYLOR       | STAR WINCHESTER  | 12 OAKS         | FAIRLANE          | STAR TAYLOR       |
| STAR WINCHESTER   | 12 OAKS          | WEST RIVER      |                   | STAR WINCHESTER   |

REEL TO REEL

If you've seen a new movie lately, either good or bad, we want to hear from you.

Call Betty Wygonik, Entertainment editor, 953-3106, to comment on newly released movies. If you reach her voice mail, leave your comments, name, city and day-time phone number. To fax comments, dial 501-7278. Or write: Entertainment Editor, Observer & Economist Newspapers, 35251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.