The parts get bigger for 'Relic's' Tom Sizemore

Los Angeles — Tom Sizemore has his hands full. As Vincent D'Agosta, the beleaguered police lioutenant in "The Relic," he lioutenant in "The Relic," he must battle not only a monster that's preying on the staff of a Chicago natural history muscum. He's also got the mayor breathing down his neck, urging him to reopen the murder scene for a fund-raising event. In real life, the Detroit-born actor has had an equally hectic schedule, appearing in some 14

movies since his debut in Oliver Stone's "Born on the Fourth of July" in 1989. He feels his memarable appearances in such high-profile films as "Natural Born Killers" and "Heat" have been grooming him for leading roles. "I have been playing unsavory characters, particularly in "Natural Born Killers" he says. "In this movie I'm the hero, the lead, and it was very important for me, one of the reasons I took the movie. I wanted to be the leading man. I feel I have the ability to be a leading man. ability to be a leading man. A leading man can control his des-

tiny more."

Based on the best-selling novel, "The Relic" is about a creature which takes on the genetic qualities of its victims. The movie, directed by Peter Hyams, is the same kind of hybrid, a cross between 'Alien,' "Jaws," and almost every other successful science fiction or monster movie from the last two decades. The movie also stars Penelope Ann Miller, Linda Hunt, and James Whitmore. Sizemore, who now lives in Los Angeles, doesn't consider himself a fan of monster movies. He is

more impressed with realistic drama, especially Robert more impressed with realistic drama, especially Robert DeNiro's performance as a Vietnam veteran in "The Doer Huntor," which he remembers seeing for the first time as a teenager. Sizemore's first acting assign-ment was "Stop the Pressen," an obscure one-act for a tenth-grade class at Austin Catholic High School.

obscure one-act for a tenth-grade class at Austin Catholic High School.

"After that I was sort of a lost teenagen," he remembers. "I had a girlfriend who talked me into trying out for the senior play. I played Conrad Birdle in "Bye Bye Birdle" at Grosse Pointe Summer Stock and knew then that this is what I wanted to do."

He attended Wayne State University as an undergraduate, playing such diverse roles as logo in "Othello," Tom Wingfield in "Glass Managerie," and Scrooge in the annual production of "A Christmas Carol" before carning a master's degree in the atter from Temple University. In classic struggling actor atyle, he moved to New York, kicking around in a number of jobs (serving drinks at Broadway theaters, selling "The New York Times" over the phone) while waiting for an acting break.

The first time I met (Relic costar) Fenelope Ann Miller was at the Neil Simon Theatre," he remembers. 'She was playing Daisy opposite Matt Broderick and I was serving drinks at intermission."

It's not difficult to see why he eventually landed choice parts. His wide, unblinking eyes stareright through you. His short-cropped hair still manages to look unkempt, a trait shared by many of his screen characters. He speaks openly, loudly, naturally about his strengths as an actor and the nature of a business that he still doesn't feel he's gotten ahold of.

He gained his first national notoricty as a continuing character on TVs "China Beach," which

He gained his first national nie gained his tirst national notoriety as a continuing charac-ter on TV's "China Beach," which prompted Oliver Stone to cast him in his Vietnam epic "Born on the Fourth of July." His list of

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Drama: Scientist Margo Green (Penelope Ann Miller) and police detective Vincent D'Agosta (Ibm Sizemore) track down a bizarre murder in "The Relic."

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movies since have been among the most memorable (and idiosyncratic) of the decade:
True Romance, "Strange Days," Devil in the Blue Dress," Heat.

Most people remember Sizemore in "Natural Born Killers," where his police detective Scagnetti had an unnatural obsession with serial killer Mallory Knox. He is still put off by politicians' (especially presidential hopeful Bob Dole's) criticism of the film.

"We were not trying to incit people to go out and kill people, he insists. "We were showing that the obsession with fame in America had grown pornographic. It didn't matter if you mowed down 26 commuters or come up with a cure for HIV. You're both superstitions.

"I got my first job in this pair of jeans that have becomes somewhat famous in my circle of friends," he says. "I insisted on wearing these jeans to every

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