

Superb cast highlights an otherwise uninspired plot

By John Stanford
Old Gold and Black Reviewer

L.A. Confidential is a throwback to the glamorous, shady and thoroughly entertaining startup of Hollywood. Not that Hollywood doesn't connote these images in its present day form, but this movie presents Hollywood in its younger days, ripe with corruption and intrigue.

This is a thriller movie set against the backdrop of a thriller town — anything goes in this town for any price, and the police are no excep-

tion. In fact, the Los Angeles police force at that time was definitely not the place to turn if you were in trouble. *L.A. Confidential* skillfully recreates this magical but dark atmosphere with perfect plausibility for its viewers.

The movie is a simple cop thriller that turns out not to be so simple. Instead of the traditional good cops chasing the robbers, this film explores cops chasing each other, only you do not know who is good and who is the villain at first glance. Fueled by a gaping power vacuum left by the imprisonment of the town's most notorious gangster, a struggle ensues for control of the city.

This story becomes very complex very fast, and the audience is carried along by the narrating voice of Danny Devito as an tabloid re-

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porter looking for the dirt on anyone and anything.

Combine this with a brutal police enforcer, drug rings, movie star cops and a prostitution ring that specializes in starlet look-alikes, and an explosive mix is created. This film's strength lies not in its plot twists, but in its superb characters and their

continual development. These realistic, corrupt individuals are played by a cast including Kim Basinger, Russell Crowe and Kevin Spacey.

The only non-corrupt entity in the entire movie is Exley, played by Guy Pearce, who is fun to hate in this world of illusions and trickery. Everyone is so shady or repulsive at the onset of the film that it is truly difficult to realize who the hero will be.

The two main characters are a lethal cop who gives a new meaning to the term police brutality and Lt. Exley, a young, straight-laced lieutenant who will screw anyone over for his own promotion. The subplot of these two opposites is so enjoyable to watch that you almost forget about the real point of the movie.

It is difficult to imagine that di-

rector Curtis Hanson didn't have this effect in mind from the beginning though, as the rest of the film is expertly timed and managed. By the end of the film, you get the feeling that he is enjoying himself by exposing Hollywood in a dark, cynical, film-noir style.

Thankfully, he doesn't go overboard Oliver Stone-style and have the film collapse in on itself by making it a black hole. *L.A. Confidential* keeps its cynicism while craftily developing two heroes who make and beat the system.

Part of *L.A. Confidential's* lure comes from the remarkable cinematography that transports us back in time. Every aspect of Hollywood in the 1950s has been dutifully recreated in every detail; the massive Fords and Chevys dominate the streets while slick gray suits and

hats are part of every man's wardrobe. The entire film is enveloped in some sort of nostalgic glow that is addictive even as ruthless violence permeates the city. It is impossible not to like the colorful corruption that permeates the town with virus-like efficiency.

The soundtrack is nothing to go out and buy, but it does have an understatement effect during some intensely violent scenes that draws you back into the charismatic world of make-believe. Sadly, this film doesn't take advantage of the big screen it describes, so there is no reason to call it a must-see in the theaters.

However, *L.A. Confidential* is a good film that deserves to be seen, and one that embodies all of the corruptive elements that make Hollywood the success it has become.

CALENDAR

To have your event listed, send e-mail to arts@ogb.wfu.edu, fax to 910-758-4561 or write to P.O. Box 7569.

ON CAMPUS

Exhibits

Chinese Folk Art. "The Good Earth: Folk Art and Artifacts From the Chinese Countryside" will feature 25 paintings by farmers who were trained as muralists during China's Cultural Revolution. There will be an opening reception Oct. 24 from 7-9 p.m. Chinese refreshments will be served. RSVP by Oct. 17 at Ext. 5282.

When: Through Nov. 26
Where: Museum of Anthropology
Cost and info: Free. Ext. 5282

Jane Mulginer and Dan Devening. The downstairs gallery presents large-scale installations from Jane Mulginer, a visiting professor of art at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A painting exhibition by Dan Devening, a Chicago Art Institute faculty member will also be presented.

When: Through Nov. 26
Where: Scales Fine Arts Center Gallery
Cost and info: Free. Ext. 5585

Stage Designs. The upstairs gallery showcases the original drawings and laser prints of Jo Mielziner, a famous stage designer.

When: Through Nov. 26

Where: Scales Fine Arts Center Gallery
Cost and info: Free. Ext. 5585

Movies

Year of Religion Series. The series will focus on how the movies deal with the devil. Oct. 28 will feature the Omen, Oct. 29 will feature Rosemary's Baby and Oct. 30 will feature The Devil and Daniel Webster.

When: 8 p.m. Oct. 28, 29, 30
Where: Pugh Auditorium
Cost: Free

Scream. The scary movie of the summer starring Neve Campbell and Courtney Cox.

When: 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. Oct. 31, Nov. 1, 2
Where: Pugh Auditorium
Cost: \$2

Music

Halloween Orchestra Concert. Annual concert conducted by David Hagy. Music will include various seasonal classical pieces.

When: 12 a.m. Oct. 31
Where: Brendle Recital Hall
Cost and info: Free tickets required. Ext. 5026

Flute Fest. Annual flute concert

featuring University flute students and the Silver Wind Flute Choir.

When: 8 p.m. Nov. 8
Where: Brendle Recital Hall
Cost and info: Free. Ext. 5026

Theater

Fool for Love. Sam Shepard's cult classic about the American West will be performed by the Anthony Aston Players.

When: 8 p.m. Oct. 30, 31 and Nov. 1
Where: Ring Theater, Scales Fine Arts Center
Cost and info: \$3 for students, \$5 for adults Ext. 5295

Much Ado About Nothing. William Shakespeare light comedy about two love-struck couples seeking happiness.

When: 8 p.m. Nov. 7, 8, 12
Where: Mainstage Scales Fine Arts Center
Cost and info: \$5 for students, \$10 for adults Ext. 5295

ELSEWHERE

Concerts

Ziggy's. Oct. 30: Sister Hazel and House of Dreams. Oct. 31: Wake

Forest Homecoming Show. Nov. 1 & 2: String Cheese Incident and Keller Williams.

Where: 433 Baity St.
Info: 748-1064

Cat's Cradle. Oct. 30: Junior Brown with Joy Lynn White. Oct. 31: Jumpstarts with Blue Rags. Nov. 1: Low with Ida and Shark Quest. Nov. 3: Mike Watt with Hellbender. Nov. 4: Jim Rose Circus.

Where: 300 E. Main St., Carrboro
Info: (919) 967-9053

Lizard and Snake Cafe. Nov. 1: Semicolon with Glass. Nov. 2: Beatnik Filmstars.

Where: 110 N. Columbia St., Chapel Hill
Info: (919) 929-2828

Exhibits

Community Day Celebration. Biannual family event includes a film, art-making activities and guided tours.

When: 2-5 p.m. Nov. 2
Where: Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, 750 Marguerite Dr.
Cost and info: Free. 725-1904, Ext. 13

Reconstruction: William Christenberry's Art. The exhibit offers a comprehensive survey of the American's artist career, which focused on the culture of rural Alabama.

When: Opens Oct. 25 and runs through Jan. 4
Where: Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, 750 Marguerite Dr.
Cost and info: \$2 for students. \$3 for

adults. 725-1904

Sherri Wood. The North Carolina based artist presents an exhibition of nonfunctional quilts that examine her theological concerns.

When: Opens Oct. 25 and runs through Jan. 4
Where: Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, 750 Marguerite Dr.
Cost and info: \$2 for students. \$3 for adults. 725-1904

Lecture

Tales of Edgar Allan Poe. The Museum of American Art will sponsor this reading by Eric Kerchner of the Collective Theatre Company.

When: 7 p.m. Oct. 30
Where: Reynolda House
Cost and info: \$2. 725-5325

Music

Choral Magnificat. Choral Society of Greensboro, conducted by William P. Carroll will perform Bach's *Magnificat* and Puccini's *Gloria*.

When: 8:15 p.m. Nov. 1
Where: Greensboro Cultural Center, 200 N. Davie Street, Greensboro
Info: (910) 373-2549

The David Grisman Quintet. "Dawg music" performed by the quintet, a mix of jazz, bluegrass, Latin and folk music.

When: 7 p.m. Nov. 2
Where: Carolina Theatre, 310 S. Greene St., Greensboro

Cost and info: \$18 for students and seniors. \$20 for adults. (910) 333-2600

Winston-Salem Piedmont Triad Symphony with Andrea Padova. The program will include Overture to La Scala di Sete by Rossini, Symphonic Intermezzi by Frank McCarty (World Premiere) and the Piano Concerto No. 1 in D Minor by Brahms performed by Padova.

When: 3 p.m. Nov. 2, 8 p.m. Nov. 4
Where: Stevens Center for the Performing Arts, 610 Coliseum Dr.
Cost and info: \$5 for students, \$13 - \$26 for adults. 725-1035

Opening Concert of the Classical Series. Guest artist Andrea Padova and the Winston-Salem Piedmont Triad Symphony will perform classical works, including Scheherazade by Rimsky-Korsakov.

When: 8 p.m. Nov. 1
Where: High Point Theatre, 220 E. Commerce Ave, High Point
Cost and info: \$5 for students, \$13 - \$26 for adults. 725-1035

Biography: The Carolina Theatre: A Celebration of 70 Years of Arts and Entertainment. The life story of the Carolina Theatre sponsored in part by the A&E Network with music, dance and media presentations.

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Theater

Biography: The Carolina Theatre: A Celebration of 70 Years of Arts and Entertainment. The life story of the Carolina Theatre sponsored in part by the A&E Network with music, dance and media presentations.

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Comedy takes odd look at high school and hit men

Grosse Pointe Blank shows off talents of John and Joan Cusack

By Krista Neal
Old Gold and Black Reviewer

The opening scenes for *Grosse Pointe Blank* surround two assassins, Martin Blank (John Cusack), and Grocer (Dan Aykroyd), speaking to contractors via e-mail, the termination of contracts, and a very open competition between an older veteran and a young hotshot—Sound familiar?

Well, if you remember *Assassins*, starring Sylvester Stallone and Antonio Banderas, then you have a vague impression of the plot for *Grosse Pointe Blank*.

Blank is an intelligent comedy which signals an overdue return to film by Cusack. Cusack portrays a hit man whose career is endangered by a sudden disinterest in his work.

Upon completing an assassination which is ruined by the killing of the man he was trying to protect, his manic secretary, played by sister Joan Cusack, suggests that he take an assignment in Detroit.

Detroit, of course, just happens to be the location of this ten-year high school reunion, where he will have a chance to see who has moved on to be successful, etc., etc.

It would also appear that this reunion might actually be good for Blank's mental health, since he has been seeing a therapist, Alan Arkin, with disastrous results. His therapist can not seem to get pass his patient's occupation and they end up arguing all the time.

The reunion also holds several possibilities for Blank, including the chance to rekindle the flame with an old girlfriend, Minnie Driver, who he regrets standing up on prom night.

The plot thickens as Blank returns to his hometown, finding many unpleasant surprises. For one thing, when he tries to visit his home, which he has not seen in years, he instead finds a convenience store. All of this old rebellious friends have become dull yuppies. Also, Blank is being trailed the whole time by governmental agents, and Grocer, in an attempt to strong-

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arm Blank into joining the union, has placed a contract out on his life.

The plot quickly turns ugly when he is almost murdered by the contracted assassin during the reunion and Blank has to defend himself with nothing but a pen.

The reunion dance, though, does unexpectedly turn out to be pleasantly full of reconciliations, mainly between Blank and his old girlfriend.

Grosse Pointe Blank happens to be one of the most clever comedies released in a long time. The humor is not point-blank obvious, and the unusual assassination methods, such as Blank's killing someone with a fork, add a note of dark humor as well.

The film is further lifted by the showcasing of Cusack's surprising martial arts skills in the attention-grabbing action scenes which are golden.

Grosse Pointe Blank truly captures the audience's attention and keeps it throughout the film. The all-star cast and the upbeat soundtrack, featuring '80s favorites by David Bowie, Queen, the Bangles, A-Ha and many others, blend perfectly thanks to director George Armitage.

Grosse Pointe Blank is basically a comedy, so there are several light, touching moments. Of course, the film is also full of unbelievable coincidences, like how Blank's target in Detroit just happens to be the father of his old girlfriend, who just happens to hold a grudge for the first half of the movie but ends up falling back in love with Blank.

All in all, *Grosse Pointe Blank* is a smart, well-directed comedy. It even ends on a good note, speaking about the importance of not forgiving and forgetting, but just forgetting about forgiving and moving on.

Schumann's Ward

By Ken Perkins and Matt Nimchek

