

'Departed' classic Scorsese crime caper

By Kam Williams
Special to Sentinel-Voice
Massachusetts State Trooper Billy Costigan (Leonardo DiCaprio) is masquerading as an ex-con in order to infiltrate a ruthless, South Boston crime family run by a mercurial mobster named Frank Costello (Jack Nicholson). Meanwhile, Colin Sullivan (Matt Damon), a Costello mole, has penetrated the police department, quietly climbing the ranks until he became privy to the plans of the Special Investigations Unit, thus enabling his boss to keep a step ahead of the law.

Initially unaware of each other's existence, Costigan and Sullivan, both native sons of Southie, operate inside some of the same circles, frequently coming close to,

if not literally crossing paths. The tension mounts as the police and the crooks gradually become aware that their every movement is being telegraphed to the other side by a saboteur. Thus, with discovery meaning almost certain death, Costigan and Sullivan find themselves caught in a high-stakes race to expose and eliminate the other first.

They even unknowingly share a romantic interest in Madolyn (Vera Farmiga), a shrink who specializes in counseling cops. She's dating Colin, ignorant of his allegiance to the Irish Mafia, and originally seeing Billy as a patient, keeping his confidences as he vents about the rigors of leading a double life among such unsavory characters.



Alec Baldwin, standing, is part of the star power driving Scorsese's epic "The Departed."

This raw-edged game of cops and mobsters is the raison d'être for "The Departed," a pressure-cooked crime caper directed by Mar-

tin Scorsese. Over-plotted and touching on every classic theme imaginable, the grisly gangster flick is actually a remake of "Infernal Affairs" (2002), the first in a graphic trilogy created by Hong Kong's Siu Fai Mak.

Interpreted here as a quintessential Scorsese saga of Shakespearean proportions, this multi-layered mystery features a plethora of peripheral characters lurking in the shadows.

For instance, there's Captain Queenan (Martin Sheen) and Sergeant Dignam (Mark Wahlberg), Costigan's only contacts in the department; and then there's Chief Ellerby (Alec Baldwin), Sullivan's suspicious boss at SIU, and his doubting colleague, Officer Brown (Anthony Anderson). Over in the mob milieu, we find a motley mix of disposable mugs, most notably, Mr. French (Ray Winstone), Costello's loyal henchman.

Relying on an intricate, absorbing script, which cleverly conceals its increasingly lurid twists, "The Departed" unfolds at a breakaway pace, which never pauses to take a breath once it builds up a head of steam. Tautly edited to maximize tension and thereby keep an audience on edge, this movie might be considered a cinematic masterpiece, were it not for the emotionally numbing bloodbath it unfortunately spirals into.

Despite the Damon-DiCaprio cat-and-mouse maneuvers, it is Jack Nicholson's jaunty Costello who steals the show, humoring the room one minute, exacting retribution the next. DiCaprio fares second best, delivering the most spell-binding performance of his career as a terribly tormented soul who has all but lost his sense of self.

A masterpiece marred unnecessarily by gratuitous gore.

Very good (3 stars). Rated R for pervasive profanity, ethnic slurs, drug use, frank sexuality, and gruesome, gratuitous violence.

Diddy in Burger King ads

MIAMI (AP) - Diddy will soon be adding some sizzle to Burger King's marketing efforts. Hip hop mogul Sean "Diddy" Combs has agreed to join Burger King Corp.'s promotional efforts as the world's No. 2 hamburger chain reaches out into the entertainment, fashion and music world, the Miami-based company said in a statement Tuesday.

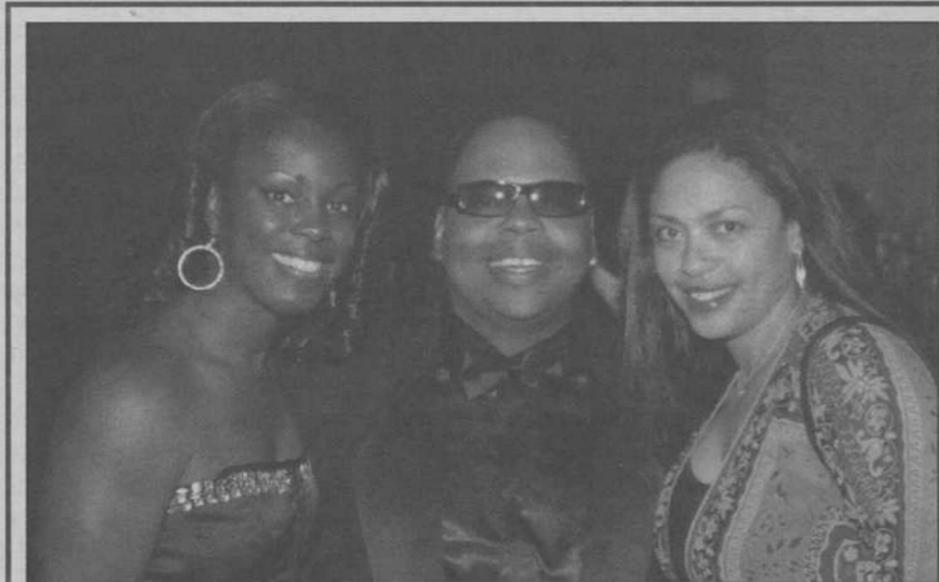
Known in the past as Puff Daddy and P. Diddy, the artist known as Diddy is set to appear in an upcoming Burger King advertisement campaign. Financial terms were not disclosed. "Sean 'Diddy' Combs is a pop culture icon, and we're thrilled to be able to collaborate, using the breadth of his talents as an artist, entrepreneur and change agent to

impact and inspire our guests," said Russ Klein, president of global marketing, strategy and innovation at Burger King.

Also on the plate is "DiddyTV," a channel featured on the popular website, YouTube Inc., which is being bought by Google Inc. The channel will allow fans to access music tracks and video clips from Diddy's new CD "Press Play" which comes out Oct. 17.

Burger King, which went public this summer, also is an official sponsor of the rapper-producer's tour.

"I'm having it my way on this album, and it's been a great journey for me, so I'm grateful for partners like Burger King Corporation." Diddy said.



SWEET

Lou "Sweet Lou" Collins celebrated his 40th birthday on Saturday with friends at the Celebrity nightclub downtown. Picture above is Lou, middle, with Carvelle Brown, left and Erika Strong. Below, Alexander O'Neal performs at the party.

Photo special to the Sentinel-Voice by Marty Frierson

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