

SCARS AND STRIPES FOREVER

In this movie crime does not pay

Fidel Castro releases 125,000 prisoners and sends them in the direction of Miami, where they are enthusiastically welcomed as refugees from communism.

They are given money, directed to accommodation and issued promises that they'll be able to play the capitalist's game and, possibly, win the American Dream.

Many of the refugees are hardened criminals. One is a guy with a scar on his face. He takes a quick look at the big bucks following drugs down the streets of Miami and decides that, for him, the American Dream is much closer than he had anticipated.

He becomes a drug kingpin in an industry that today is said to be the largest in the world — grossing a hundred billion dollars, much of that through Florida.

Film producer Martin Bregman took the above story, hung it on actor Al Pacino, and rendered a shocker of a movie he insists all kids should see.

It is called *Scarface*, an updated version of the 1932 classic from Howard Hawks.

Fifty years ago, Hawks borrowed from the story of Al Capone and

wove it through the gangster-filled twilight world of bootlegging and the Mafia.

Sitting in a New York City hotel room one night, Bregman happened to catch the original *Scarface* on television — and he was knocked out by its raw power.

Moreover, he immediately recognized the vehicle he had been hunting all his life for his close friend and first actor-client, Al Pacino.

Ever since Bregman saw Pacino on Broadway — back when the actor was parking cars between gigs — he was captivated by his special kind of menacing presence; just walking into a room, Pacino conveys the message that somebody other than himself is about to die.

Bregman cast him in *Serpico* and *Dog Day Afternoon* — movies that together won a total of seven Oscar nominations.

But still, those roles did not plumb the depths of Pacino's sloe-eyed malevolence.

Even in *The Godfather*, Pacino played a rich man's son; to him, the street was something you drove on, not a classroom for culture lessons.

By Colin Dangaard