

In movie terms, it rivals Peter Minuit's purported purchase of Manhattan from the Indians for \$24 and change worth of beads, mirrors and other assorted gee-gaws.

But actor Robert De Niro has fared considerably better than the Indians of old since he made three pictures with then fledgling director Brian De Palma for a per-picture fee of \$80.

In last year's De Palma treatment of *The Untouchables* De Niro spent about 10 minutes on screen as a rivetingly repulsive Al Capone.

His wages for this particular batch of sinning? — A cool \$2 million.

Which means that *Going in Style's* Martin Brest probably had to dig pretty deep into his pockets to land De Niro for the role of the ex-conv turned bounty hunter in his soon to be released action comedy *Midnight Run*.

Whatever price De Niro demanded, it's a safe bet that Brest anted up gladly. What other modern actor, after all, is capable of combining the cachet of critical success with the boon of box office draw to such telling effect?

Besides, in the unlikely event that the movie flops, Brest doesn't have to worry about being bad-mouthed in the media by his leading man after the movie is released.

For openers, the Oscar-winning De Niro's magic has only tailed him with Sergio Leon's *Once Upon a Time in America* and besides, bad mouthing colleagues isn't De Niro's style.

As a matter of fact, talking to the media at all isn't De Niro's style.

Unlike many of Hollywood's hot properties, De Niro's willingness to share the details of his private life (or professional, for that matter) has decreased in direct proportion to his rising celebrity status.

# ROBERT DE NIRO

## RETURNS IN MIDNIGHT RUN



The more famous he becomes, the less he talks.

Even when his celebrity status unwittingly dumps him in situations which rocket him to the forefront of public awareness.

John Hinkley Jr. had seen De Niro in *Taxi Driver* so many times that he may have actually thought he was De Niro when he made his attempt on President Reagan's life.

"There are always people who jump with a towel from the roof because they think they are Superman," De Niro told the *L.A. Times* — and then shut up.

De Niro was just one of many friends comic John Belushi saw on the day of his fatal overdose.

Tight-lipped De Niro retired to his penthouse at the Chateau Marmont for several days, watching Belushi's *Saturday Night Live* performances on his VCR and saying nothing.

Though he eventually made a telephone statement to the grand jury investigating the comedian's death, he declined a request for an interview from *Wired's* Bob Woodward and has never talked publicly about this friend.

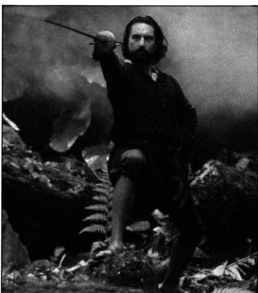
He summed up his philosophy in 1977 when he told *Time* magazine: "After my first movies, I gave interviews...then I thought what's so important about where I went to school and hobbies? What does any of that have to do with acting, with my own head? Nothing!"

Not a lot changed in a decade. "Why should I talk to journalists who put some stupid questions to me?" he asked the *L.A. Times* after he served as Jury President for the Moscow Film Festival last year.

"I do what I have to do and I don't waste my energy talking. People should go into the cinema, watch my movies and make up their own minds."

So far, that's been a winning formula for De Niro — and if it's not broken, don't expect him to fix it.

—John Coulbourn



The many faces of De Niro as reflected in *The Untouchables* (above), *Taxi Driver* (below left) and *The Mission*