

# Scorcese shoots... scores

by Kevin Spencer

After Henry is busted as a twelve year old for selling stolen cigarettes Jimmy tells the mafia code, "Never rat on your friends and always keep your mouth shut". From the outset the audience is aware that Henry has eventually violated both rules. Based on his true story, Martin Scorcese crafts the new drama "Good Fellas".

"Good Fellas is an assaultingly violent and truly powerful look at mafia life in New York. Scorcese assembled a strong and effective cast that was more than up to the task at hand and with the director's accustomed brilliance the end result is a film that will no doubt be strongly represented in the race for this year's Oscars.

The film traces thirty years of gangland activity in the life of Henry Hill, played by Ray Liota. Henry is initially attracted to the mafia bosses who have dealings across the street from his family home and, once drawn into their nefarious world he quickly rises through the ranks to become a powerful boss in his own right. This Cinderella style rise is followed by the inevitable corruption and fall when Henry turns state's evidence to save his life from the people he once worked with.

Scorcese, with his distinctive low-level meandering camera, allows the audience to get up close and personal with the back room dealings of the underbelly of mafia crime. The film manages to make the mafia life look very desirable and almost innocent and (aside from the violence) we can see how Liota is initially attracted to the life and easily addicted. Scorcese has continued his successful long-time working relationship with Robert DeNiro, the two previously having teamed up in such successful films as "Taxi Driver", "Raging Bull" and "The King of Comedy". Once again, these two work well together.

## astounding performance expected

DeNiro is beginning to get treated in a similar way to Meryl Streep - an astounding performance has come to be expected - and therefore he is often not given the credit he is due. His reputation as a dramatic actor is well-established and deserved, and DeNiro has also shown in films like "Midnight Run" that he has comedic talents as well. He shows

Ray Liota, known chiefly for his portrayal of Shoeless Joe Jackson in "Field of Dreams", turns in a very convincing part as the lead and narrator of the story. He plays a person who was initially seduced by the flashy mafia life of cars and easy money and who subsequently falls prey to the addictions of power and crime. His performance is nicely tempered and Liota shows that he is an actor who can hold his own when surrounded by the best.

Joe Pesci, who also worked with Scorcese in "Raging Bull", plays Tommy, the movie's least developed and most unsympathetic character. It is Pesci that is the most consistently and personally violent character and yet even he is given many very funny moments. Pesci is given some of the more memorable scenes in the movie and the end result, his portrayal of the epitome of wiseguy sleaze, is a character that may very well stay with you for a long time.

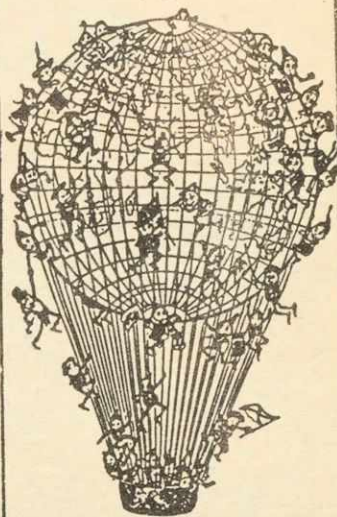
The rest of the cast is also very strong, from an assortment of sleazy mafia types to their equally sleazy wives. The whole cast helps to create an almost unreal world where acceptable behaviour and morality are bent to conform to their particular society's

isfying (if inevitable), you are left with Henry living the life of a nobody, and fondly reminiscing about the old days.

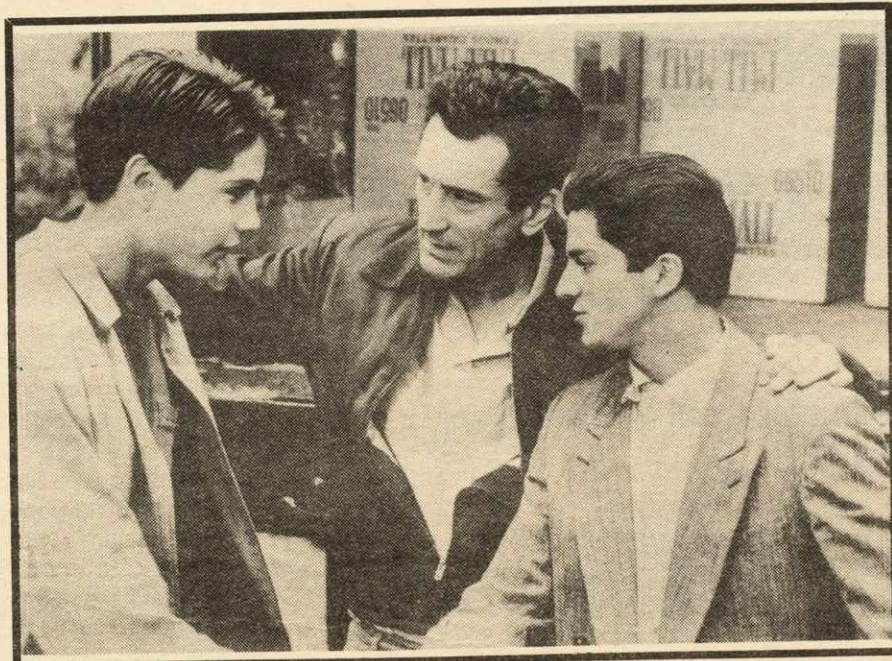
## warped view of the American dream

Also of note is the score which is particularly effective in this tale of the grotesquely warped view of the American dream. Songs which are usually associated with more benign images and feelings are juxtaposed against the movie's constant scenes of brutality, and just serve to make them all the more so.

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Good Fellas is now playing

Martin Scorcese once again proves that he deserves his very respected position in Hollywood as an innovative director who is willing to take risks, and who usually ends up successful. From "Taxi Driver" to "Raging Bull" and "The Last Temptation of Christ", this native New Yorker whose films are often surrounded in controversy (this one being no exception), has consistently proven that he is one of the few directors today who comes up with a good movie on a regular basis. He did not disappoint with "Good Fellas".

both in this film. DeNiro plays Jimmy, a powerful mafia wiseguy, and he gives the portrait a decidedly nasty edge. Like many of DeNiro's characters, Jimmy is capable of sudden violent mood swings that propel him from one extreme of emotion to another. He is capable of committing a chilling series of graphically brutal killings with an apparent lack of conscience but, on hearing of the death of his friend, he also shows that he is capable of great remorse and DeNiro manages to make the character not wholly unsympathetic. He is perfect for this role.

standards. Scorcese creates a world where murder and theft are commonplace and once that is accepted you can see how the minds of the characters are at work trying to cope with everyday life.

Although the movie is very funny, the humour is often coupled with brutality and the film never strays very far from its strength, which is the graphic depiction of the strange mix of callousness and fraternity that mafia life is fraught with. Like all mob movies everyone usually ends up betraying everyone else, and in the end, which to me was strangely unsat-

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