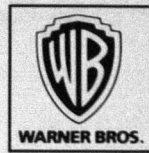
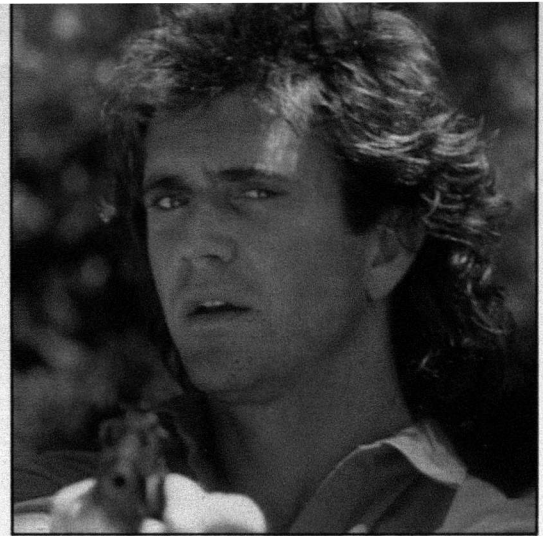


LETHAL WEAPON 2



MEL GIBSON RETURNS



In *Lethal Weapon* Martin Riggs (Mel Gibson) was given his last chance to stay with the public force. Riggs had lost his wife of 11 years; he was a drunk and given to explosions of anger that usually resulted in him risking his life and the lives of those in the general vicinity. For his last-chance assignment, Riggs was partnered with a horrified Roger Murtaugh (Danny Glover), the ideal officer. Murtaugh played it by the book and at 50 wanted to make it to retirement without getting himself killed.

The two of them had plenty of close calls but Murtaugh managed to save his hide and Riggs learned a tiny bit about moderation – so they're back, partnered again for *Lethal Weapon 2*.

Gibson loves Riggs and has said of the character "I pictured Riggs as an almost Chaplinesque figure, a guy who doesn't expect anything from life and even toys with the idea of taking his own. It's not like these stalwarts who come down from Mt. Olympus and wreak havoc and go away. He's somebody who doesn't look like he's set to go off until he actually does."

For opposite reasons Glover is equally passionate about Murtaugh "Aside from the chance to work with Mel, which turned out to be pure pleasure, one of the reasons I jumped at this project was the family aspect. The chance to play intricate relationships and subtle humor that exist in every close family group was an intriguing challenge, as was playing a guy turning 50. Murtaugh's a little cranky about his age until

everything he loves is threatened."

The strength of the *Lethal Weapon* films comes from the humor. Richard Donner, director of both films, claims much of it comes from Glover and Gibson. "They found innuendoes. They found laughter where I never saw it. They found tears where they didn't exist before and most importantly they found a relationship."

By the beginning of *Lethal Weapon 2* Riggs and Murtaugh have been partnered for three years. They are ordered to protect an accountant who has been called to testify before a federal commission. Both are disgusted with the assignment until they discover that the guy they're babysitting is tied up with a narcotics ring they have been trying to bust.

Behind the camera many of the faces are the same; Donner, director of photography Stephen

Goldblatt, production designer J. Michael Riva and most importantly producer Joel Silver who brings with him huge box office success as the man behind *Commando*, *Predator*, *48 Hours* and *Die Hard*.

Donner, who directed *Inside Moves*, *Ladyhawke*, *The Goonies* and *Superman*, *The Movie* had never made a real action film before *Lethal Weapon* and that may be why these films have a different feel from other "cop" flicks. As Donner explains "I can't handle gratuitous violence so we focused the story on the relationships, which continually grew richer as Mel and Danny worked together. Violence never seems to have any humor whereas action can have a lot of it."

— Jane Hawtin

