

KREENSKREENSKR

## SEA

(Harold Becker- Director)

A duplicitous little monster in the best tradition of what's-goingon-behind-the-camera? tinglers, Sca of Love isn't actually as bad as you've been lead to believe. For the first half hour the sleuths in the audience are perplexed as to why three middle-aged men are shown dry-humping the mattress with preternatural enthusiasm only to have their respective crania severely ventilated by a large bullet.

Of course Pacino is in it so, despite the original premise that is is about a New York cop with personal problems (whee! what a fresh approach), the cinephile has got to get a look, and well worth it it is too. Initially we have reservations Pacino's Frank Weller, a twenty year veteran up for retirement, stumbles through the introductory segments like a somnambulist; almost minimalist in his delivery with bags under his eyes the size of small rugsacks.

"Something Al walked through in his lunch--hour" I note mentally and sit back expecting a rather unspectacular film. After a while however Weller's laconic and world weary persona begins to have a subliminal effect on us. The very nature of the effortless performance draws us in, make us scrutinize every movement and off-the-cuff witticism for something more substantial to go on with.

Meanwhile Frank thinks about the dead dry-humpers. At a salutatory police dinner (where Detective Weller is show to be not completely ordinary-he indulges in a friendly bout of Tac-Kwon-Do with an oriental

detective that has come across an accompanied by a wire-tap. He almost identical murder in a neighboring precinct. Now the disclaimer for all of this, but one fun starts. The nasty under rated wonders why all of a sudden we John Pacino's counterpart and the no uncertain terms, a bit of a to watch.

Eventually our friends establish that all murder victims were wart to place rhyming messages on the personals section of the local newspaper. "I've got it" says Frank. "We place our own rhyming message, wait for the women to respond (the assailant like to frame the actors in as is a femme fatale, match) meet small a working space as 'em for a drink, get their possible. This is probably to fingerprints on a wine glass and whammo! case closed! And so the plot continues with such gratuitously obvious clumping steps that it would rarely make twenty minutes.

Yes it's not long before the painfully gorgeous Ellen Barkin shows up on the scene and if any member of the on the good old is she/isn't she format so quickly that one can almost hear the writer's yawning in the background.

Pacino's character. While we are cognizant of the fact that Weller has an admirable talent for street-wise savvy, we learn that he can also be brutally thick. On a surprise visit to the shoe shop run by Barkin's jocularly named Helen Crueger, he is still moving around his new flame under the disguise of actually being in the printing profession. Suddenly their moment of snatched intimacy is disrupted by two young mafioso who enquire about designer boots. Rather than turn away, Weller stares them down until one of them is virtually forced to recognize that he is in fact a policeman. Outside the shop, Helen confronts Frank with this recent enlightenment, only to be given the whole story that colleague) he meets another their first date was actually has a meaty cock-and-bull Goodman plays are being told that Frank is, in relationship that develops knob-end. Essentially we settle between them is tremendous fun for the fact that the lonely detective is becoming crazed with affection and perilously throwing Pacino is remarkably effective, caution to the wind.

Director Harold Becker likes to grab his subjects at close quarters. While there is little of that vaguely irritating obsession with tiny detail, he certainly does achieve a greater degree of suspense in a you-are-there sort of way but in retrospect, the technique lacks a little precision producing a vague claustrophobia any difference if the film makers | more than anything else. In that flashed cue-card messages onto respect this is the sort of film the screen explaining what is that Alan Parker would do going to happen in the nest wonders with and it is possible that it is this latter directors influence that had the greatest impact in the production of Sea of Love. By coincidence (surely?) Trevor Jones, audience doesn't click that probably the most important Weller will eventually do the contemporary film score Wild Thing with the suspect, composer since Morricone, then the likelihood that that lends his mixture of saxophone, person either enjoys professional ethereal synth voices and subtle wrestling or is a member of the cardiac percussion to the film's engineering department is rather action which benefits quite high. Off we go then, launched considerably as a result. Conceptually, however the score is based almost entirely on one of Jones previous projects namely

Angel Heart. Barely audible Nevertheless we continue to bass drones climb out of nowhere enjoy the development of to herald the richly textured

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music of sweaty dread and Goodman is superb and both are anticipation.

Having endured the paint by numbers plot, we gird our loins for a climax of almost grand guignol proportions but unfortunately I must admit to feeling rather cheated. True, the solution to the crime comes straight out of nowhere, but it is a solution that really doesn't draw any strings together except for the notion of someone slapping you about the ears with a stick of celery chuckling (see - you would never have figured it out in a million years, smart ass!"

You could do a lot worse than catch Sea of Love though. Steve Griffiths

probably bubbling under next year's Oscar's list. Barkin is

not hot and after the Big Easy, it won't be long before some barely literate dickhead in People magazine will be referring to her as the next Basinger (what? already?) But in the end one can't help wondering if this movie has been hastily assembled. It lacks a certain cohesiveness and fluidity that is imperative for a great opus. The closing question would be why the hugely significant parts are not allowed to realize an exemplary whole.

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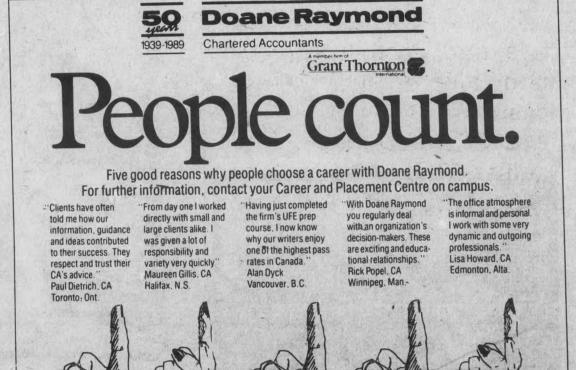
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