

# STEVEN SEAGAL IS A TOUGH COP WITH A DEADLY CHOP

## OUT FOR JUSTICE

**F**irst, he was *Above the Law*. Then, he was *Hard to Kill*. And now, Steven Seagal, the six-foot-four martial-arts-expert-turned-moviemaker is **Out for Justice**.

Indeed, justice may be the only thing lacking in Seagal's life these days. Married to the lovely Kelly LeBrock (*The Woman in Red*), Seagal is the father of four children — two by his first wife, a Japanese martial-arts instructor, and two by LeBrock. And, when he's not caught up in his family interests, he's carving out and securing an impressive niche for himself at the nation's box office.

He's no longer the heir to Arnold Schwarzenegger, Charles Bronson and the like — he's one of them.

And he's his own boss. A relative newcomer to the film industry, he holds enough sway over the Hollywood decision makers that he's afforded the privilege of writing, producing and starring in his own vehicles.

But, though moviegoers around the world line up in the millions to enjoy Seagal's unique brand of action/adventure, critical respect still seems to elude him — something he's obviously hoping to change with his latest release. In **Out for Justice**, Seagal the producer has cast Seagal the actor in a role tailor-made for his talents, set in a story crafted by Seagal the screenwriter, in concert with partner Lance Hill.

He's Gino Felino, a rough and tumble cop, trying to come to terms with his own life and the changing face of Brooklyn, where he grew up. Once the cradle of the American dream for thousands of immigrants, Felino finds his city increasingly at the mercy of a goon squad headed by his childhood adversary.

When Gino's best friend, a fellow cop, is brutally murdered, he takes justice into his own hands and, while the rest of the city cowers in fear, undertakes to stalk the vicious killer through the streets of his childhood. Of course, the scenario offers plenty of opportunity for

director John Flynn to capture the type of action/adventure scenes that loyal Seagal fans have come to expect.

Joined by a cast that includes William Forsythe, Jerry Orbach and Jo Champa, Seagal displays once again the graceful-but-deadly moves of Aikido, the martial art form in which he is steeped.

Seagal first became interested in martial arts at the age of seven. He saw a demonstration during half-time at a school football game and realized "that's what I was born to do," he told *GQ* magazine.

Born in Detroit, Seagal is the only son in a family of four children. His father is a retired teacher and his mother is a nurse. At the age of 17, Seagal moved to Japan, where he lived for nearly 15 years. He parlayed his studies in Aikido (considered the most difficult and spiritual of the martial arts) into an impressive reputation and career as a martial-arts master.

Seagal hopes this film will give him an opportunity to prove to the doubters that he is more than just a flash in the action/adventure pan.

Seagal has complained that his roles don't offer his acting muscle enough stretch to keep it in as good shape as his pectorals.

"I'd rather make *Terms of Endearment* than *Commando*," *People* magazine quotes him as saying. "I want to make a movie that can really grab people by the heartstrings."

And just in case there was any doubt, he went even further in an interview with journalist Barry Koltnow. "I do not like the cartoons that I have to appear in now," he said after the release of *Hard to Kill*. "But as soon as I get rid of these chains, these legal obligations, there are some wonderful films I'd like to make."

"And I'm going to make them," he stresses. "I'm just getting started in this business."

His career is only three films old — and already he's got his hands firmly on the reins and he's **Out for Justice**.

Smart money says he'll get it too.

— John Coulbourn

