

# C I N E M A

## Two reviews: Eastwood's latest



Just as the movie *Tightrope* explores through juxtaposition the psyches of cop and criminal, we at the *Friday Edition* have juxtaposed the views of two of our reviewers.

Who would have expected Clint Eastwood's latest crime drama *Tightrope* to be a thoughtful exploration of the myth he helped create 10 years ago? Writer-director Richard Tuggle for one; producer-star Eastwood for another.

Tuggle and Eastwood satisfy the generic demands for this thriller while providing more than a touch of introspection and a healthy psychological perspective. The story concerns one Wes Block, a Dirty Harry-type cop in New Orleans hunting down a prostitute killer. Block is tough, gruff and speaks very little, but the similarities between him and Harry end there.

Block is divorced and bringing up two daughters on his own. He's also lonely, and finds consolation in a most unhealthy way — he pays social calls on "ladies of the evening." Some of his late-night companions later become the killer's victims.

Tuggle blurs the distinction between the good Block and the killer he's tracking with some very clever, and very scary, linkages. At one point Block indulges in a little kinky nighttime "fun"; he later finds the handcuffs he used that night at the scene of the woman's brutal murder. Do Block's adventures in sexual domination mean he hates women, and if so what is the difference between the murderer and Block himself?

*Tightrope* is Tuggle's debut as a director, and there are some rough edges: a few bad lines, some murky details, an obligatory climactic chase that is far less interesting than the rest of the film. Yet overall this probe into the darker side of machismo comes up a winner on two levels. As an action film it's duly tense and gripping, and as a psychological thriller it's more than a little disturbing. As it should be.

Sean Axmaker

The hype sounded good. Clint Eastwood exposing a darker side of his Dirty Harry character, blurring the values and clear-cut principles that had proven so successful in the past; a film that would underscore the fundamental similarities between a cop and a criminal, and operate as much on a psychological level as a physical one.

Even better, *Tightrope* lived up to its own hype. The promised goods were delivered, but so many little things were sacrificed (like plausibility, for example) that I found the film's faults more entertaining than its story.

Chief among many weak points in *Tightrope* is the endless list of unanswered questions it leaves with the audience. Some of my favorites are why don't any of the police



*Eastwood's new film probes the darker side of machismo in exploring the disturbing likenesses of cop and criminal.*

recognize Wes Block's tie, which the killer has left with one of his victims?

Why is the police lab expert so good at finding traces of the murderer on the dead prostitutes, yet unable to detect any signs at all of Block's recent visits with the same women?

How does the killer manage to get into securely-locked homes without alerting the people within?

Other flawed areas include visual and spoken cliches, red

herrings and a very weak (characteristically speaking) killer. He appears at the beginning and we clearly see his face, yet he sports a mask for the rest of the picture. What serves as the film's climax is the killer's obligatory unmasking by — that's right — you-know-who.

I have a theory: This flick, which runs almost two hours, was originally twice as long, then edited down to its present length. Unfortunately, the wrong two hours were released.

Kevin Frank

### Critic's choice: weekend films

In addition to the studio releases, a number of older, outstanding films are playing on and around campus this weekend. The most bizarre would have to be *Detour*, a dark, nihilistic film noir from the '50s and a personal favorite of mine. It plays Sunday at 8 p.m. in 150 Geology.

Another classic is Bergman's beautiful *Wild Strawberries*, a bittersweet tale of an old man reliving his memories and missed opportunities. It's playing Saturday at 7 and 9 p.m. in 150 Geology. However, if old black and white pictures aren't your speed, the Who "rockumentary," *The Kids Are Alright*, plays late-night at the Bijou Friday and Saturday.

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**OPENS FEB. 28**

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### HOW TO BUY SEASON TICKETS

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