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Starts 492 East 13th 686-2458
Friday, 11/9! <http://bijou-cinemas.com>

Owen Wilson
Adrien Brody
Jason Schwartzman

A Film by **Wes Anderson**
THE DARJEELING LIMITED
5:05, 7:20 & 9:35 Nightly
Sat & Sun Mat 2:30
SOON: MY KID COULD PAINT THAT

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20 admission card: only \$100
★ 20 SENIOR admission card: only \$50 ★

DIRECTED BY SEAN PENN
INTO THE WILD
5:20 & 8:25 Nightly
Sat & Sun Mat 2:10
WED. 11/21: ANG LEE'S LUST, CAUTION

BIJOU LATENITE \$4 FRIDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY
"Slickly charming, genteelly erotic and directed with supreme polish."
CASHBACK
11:50 fri, sat & sun
In-Concert LateNite SEASON 3
BOB MARLEY and the Wailers
Dortmund, Germany, 1980.
From the final tour before Bob's passing. Pro-Shot video, PERFECT SOUND! A legendary Uprising performance.
11:30 fri, sat & sun

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EARLY BIRD SPECIAL M-F, 1ST MATINEE SHOWTIME \$4.75
ADULT MATINEE BEFORE 6PM \$5.25

FRED CLAUSS PG
12:45, 1:50, 2:00, 3:40, 4:50, 6:25, 7:05, 7:40, 9:20, 9:55, 10:30
LIONS FOR LAMBS R
12:10, 2:50, 5:25, 8:00, 10:30
P2 R
11:40, 2:15, 4:45, 7:25, 10:00
BEE MOVIE PG
11:35, 1:10, 1:55, 2:35, 3:45, 4:25, 5:10, 6:30, 7:00, 7:45, 9:00
*EXCEPT THUR 11/15, 9:35, 10:20
AMERICAN GANGSTER R
11:55, 2:40, 3:30, 6:15, 7:05, 9:45, 10:40
SAW IV R
11:40, 2:15, 4:45, 7:25, 10:00
GARTH BROOKS LIVE CONCERT NR
ONLY ON WED 11/14 & THURS 11/15 AT 6 PM
BEOWULF PG13
STARTS THUR 11/15 AT 10:15, 10:30 & 10:45 PM
3D SHOWINGS AT 9:30 & 11:59 PM

MOVIES 12
Gateway Mall • Bellline @ Gateway 1-800-Fandango 1428#
\$1.50 ALL SHOWS • \$1 WED ALL SHOWS \$2 FRI / SAT AFTER 6PM

RENDITION R
[1:00] 4:00, 7:00, 9:55
THE COMEBACKS PG13
[12:10] 2:40, 4:50, 7:25, 9:40
THE BRAVE ONE R
[12:25] 4:25, 7:15, 10:00
SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING PG
[12:15] 2:35, 4:55
UNDERDOG PG
[12:20] 2:30, 4:40, 6:55, 9:30
THE NANNY DIARIES PG13
[1:05] 4:35, 7:40, 10:05
MR. WOODCOCK PG13
[12:35] 2:45, 5:00, 7:50, 10:30

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P2 (R) - ID REQ'D (1155 225 505) 740 1010

AMERICAN GANGSTER (R) - ID REQ'D ★ (1130 1200 300 330)
635 705 935 1000 1030

BEE MOVIE (PG) ★ (1145 1215 210 235 435 500) 700 730 925 955
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DAN IN REAL LIFE (PG-13) (1210 230 455) 720 950
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Sat. (340) 950

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FRED CLAUSS (PG) ★ (1030 120 410) 700 950
P2 (R) - ID REQ'D (1225 250 515) 740 1005

AMERICAN GANGSTER (R) - ID REQ'D ★ (1205 325) 645 1010
BEE MOVIE (PG) ★ (1210 230 455) 720 940

DAN IN REAL LIFE (PG-13) (1220 240 505) 730 955
SAW IV (R) - ID REQ'D (1250 310 530) 750 1015

THE GAME PLAN (PG) (1135 205 435) 710 945

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FRED CLAUSS (PG) ★ Fri. (140 420) 710 950

Sat. & Sun. (1100 140 420) 710 950
LIONS FOR LAMBS (R) - ID REQ'D ★ Fri. (150 430) 720 1000

Sat. & Sun. (1110 150 430) 720 1000
MARTIAN CHILD (PG) Fri. (200) 730

Sat. & Sun. (1120 200) 730
SAW IV (R) - ID REQ'D (440) 1010

ACROSS THE UNIVERSE (PG-13) Fri. (300) 650 940
Sat. & Sun. (1130 300) 650 940

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movies BY JASON BLAIR



Denzel Washington as Frank Lucas in *American Gangster*

Black & White

Smart gangster epic has blood, needs heart

AMERICAN GANGSTER: Directed by Ridley Scott. Written by Steven Zaillian. Cinematography, Harris Savides. Music, Marc Streitenfeld. Starring Denzel Washington, Russell Crowe, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Josh Brolin, RZA, Ruby Dee, Common, Carla Gugino, Cuba Gooding Jr, Armand Assante, Lymari Nadal and John Hawkes. Universal Pictures, 2007. R. 157 minutes. ★★☆☆

Have you ever met someone you hoped would inspire you — a college professor, perhaps, or the chef at your favorite restaurant — only to find the person uninspired and therefore uninteresting? To be skilled is one thing, but without inspiration, skill looks merely competent. This is the problem exemplified by *American Gangster*, a film that is focused and resolute in execution but lacks the intimacy and uniqueness required to be truly great. The film tells the story of two seemingly different lives linked by the logic of corruption: Richie Roberts (Russell Crowe) is a straight cop in a crooked department, a weary but wired crusader, while Frank Lucas (Denzel Washington), a dedicated bag man for Harlem's mob boss, is a daily witness to corruption, particularly in the black community. When Frank's mentor dies, he goes into business for himself, determined to sell heroin at half the going rate. The year is 1969, and from Harlem to Vietnam, people are shooting up to the moon and back.

According to the true story ("The Return of Superfly") published in *New York* magazine in 2000, Frank Lucas flourished by virtue of discretion. He turned the prejudice of the day — namely the belief of the mob and NYPD that a black man couldn't mastermind a sophisticated criminal operation — to his advantage. Frank buffeted that belief by staying under the radar, which is ironic given that he went all the way to Vietnam for his product, using military aircraft as couriers. Once stateside, he branded his drug Blue Magic, a form of heroin so potent that it immediately monopolized the market. In the film, Frank becomes immensely wealthy, allowing him to provide for his extended family. But Frank's success creates hardships for others, including Richie's partner, who eventually overdoses on Blue Magic. That sets Richie on a collision course with

Frank, albeit a long and winding one, as Richie joins a federal narcotics unit to track down the drug's supplier.

American Gangster, for all its sheen, is a well-built machine with a mass-produced soul. Given the talent involved, it doubtless will be considered for several awards. But the film is merely equal to, rather than greater than, the sum of its parts, largely because those parts — Washington and Crowe — don't collide until late in the film. Washington is as good as he's been in some time, but as an icy killer, his Frank is cool but dull. As a dope dealer with a surfeit of pride, benevolent and low-key in one moment but murderous and violent the next, Frank is a pastiche of gangsters we've seen before, from *The Godfather* to *Goodfellas* to even *The Untouchables*. Crowe is more impressive because, for a straight arrow, his personal life is bent out of shape. Josh Brolin shows up with his moustache, something he's been doing a lot of lately, and adds a little something sinister as a detective on the take. Director Ridley Scott (*Blade Runner* but also *Hannibal*), writer Steven Zaillian (*Schindler's List* but also *All the King's Men*) and Brian Grazer (uber-producer of *8 Mile* but also *Flight Plan*) collaborate here for the first time. Considering their potential, it isn't unreasonable to expect the extraordinary. Instead, we get simply ordinary.

Given all the machismo, it's the little things that grab you in *American Gangster*, like Ruby Dee's moving performance as Frank's mother. Her final scene is terrific. And Cuba Gooding Jr. resurfaces in a dark and convincing role as Nicky Barnes, the only real competition for Frank. *American Gangster* succeeds on a number of levels while containing very few surprises, other than depicting a richly diverse black cast in a genre usually reserved for Irish and Italians. It wants to be a black *Scarface*, but *Scarface* was naked, emotionally and psychologically. *American Gangster* just gives us nudity. It is a film carefully created by true professionals who might have done better by messing things up.

EW

American Gangster is now playing at Cinemark and VRC Stadium 15.