

Harvey Keitel chawks another minute of fame in 'Clockers'

LIGHTS! CAMERA! REACTION!

BOB WERTZ Staff Writer

BIG MOVIE

★★★½ (out of four stars)

If you don't like to think, stop reading here. This movie is not for you...

"Clockers," Spike Lee's newest film, provides a look into life in the inner city and challenges the viewer to think about its implications on society and on individuals.

Based on a book by Richard Price, it is a story about Strike, a drug dealer (or "clocker") who is involved in the murder of another dealer. The plot revolves around a homicide detective's relentless pursuit of the murderer and Strike's relationship with others on the street.

Mekhi Phifer, who portrays the street-smart Strike, does a magnificent job depicting the emotional and mental anguish present in the inner city. His performance is especially remarkable considering that Clockers is his first film experience.

The movie brings up many disturbing topics that will cause you to think more about social ills that plague our society. Perhaps the most noticeable to me was the attitude of the police as portrayed by the movie. The police, in general, are shown as having little desire to see justice served, and are generally held to be cruel, insensitive and apathetic. The notable exception is Detective Rocco Klein, played by Harvey Keitel. His character is driven to uncover the truth about the murder out of a concern for

justice and for the people involved.

He is countered by his partner, Larry Mazilli (John Turturro), who doesn't care as much about justice as he does about just busting someone. He is portrayed as more of the typical cop, and Rocco is shown as an exception to the rule.

Kietel is perfect, opposite the considerably younger Phifer. The interaction between the young, brash Strike and the older, wiser detective is remarkably insightful and exposes many of the generational conflicts as well as some socio-economic conflicts that exist in the inner city.

Another major topic addressed by the film is the issue of kids growing up without the proper role models. It is disturbing to see how children are sucked in to the drug business.

This is an incredible movie, but it isn't perfect. It moves a little slowly at times, and the plot isn't as action-packed as I had thought it would be. In fact, it feels much like a documentary in the way it presents information. Don't get me wrong, its nothing like anything you'd see on PBS. In fact, the slower-developing plot adds to the film's credibility. The issues addressed seem more realistic and genuine than if the movie had been some action-packed movie with a couple of issues thrown in for good measure.

This is a movie that will make you think. If you don't like to think, don't go see it. This is incredible film with an important message — one that you can learn from.



UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Harvey Keitel, Mekhi Phifer and John Turturro star in Spike Lee's latest film, "Clockers," about the death of a drug dealer, or "clocker."

Cats out of the bag in Idaho

Associated Press

LAVA HOT SPRINGS, Idaho — The elementary school was closed and dozens of law enforcement officers scrambled to stop lions, tigers and crossbred cats today after they escaped from a private wild animal compound.

"There's been 11 and possibly 12 (animals) killed and we know that three are still loose," said a Bannock County sheriff's dispatcher, who would not give her name. She said officials were hedging on the numbers because there were reports that "a few more" of the big cats had escaped today.

She said the owners of the privately owned compound, called Ligertown, were attacked by at least one of the cats after they escaped about 9:30 p.m.

Wednesday. "Liger" is a term for a cross between a lion and a tiger.

The owners, Robert Fieber and Doti Martin, were treated for minor injuries at Pocatello Regional Medical Center. They had tangled with authorities in past years over their wild animal holdings. No other injuries were reported.

The compound is located just outside the southeastern Idaho town of about 420 people, 28 miles southeast of Pocatello.

About 50 sheriff's deputies from surrounding counties, SWAT teams, Idaho Department of Fish and Game officers and Idaho State Police troopers were on the scene.

A helicopter equipped with a heat-

sensing device was being used to help search for the cats, which one deputy said appeared to weigh between 450 and 550 pounds.

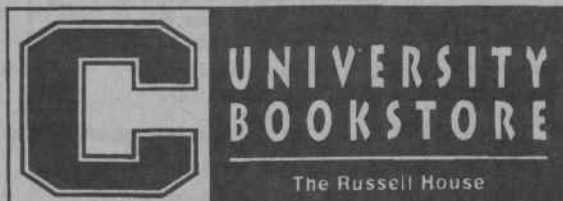
"They're full-grown lions," the dispatcher said.

Late this morning, a large male lion could be seen perched atop a shack within the compound, roaring loud enough to be heard a quarter-mile away. Two females were with him. Two sharpshooters were in place atop a van nearby, but their guns were not raised.

Lava Elementary School, with about 140 students, was closed this morning.

"We want to keep everybody inside as much as possible," the dispatcher said.

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