



**WNCC**  
WOKING'S NEW CINEMA CLUB

**JOHN CUSACK** **MINNIE DRIVER**

**ALAN ARKIN** and **DAN AYKROYD**

*"A delicious black comedy."* - The Daily Mail

John Cusack -- Martin Blank  
Minnie Driver -- Debi Newberry  
Dan Aykroyd -- Mr Grocer  
Alan Arkin -- Dr. Oatman

Directed By -- George Armitage  
Running Time: 108 minutes.

EVEN A HIT MAN DESERVES A SECOND SHOT.

## GROSSE POINTE **BLANK** 15

A hit man, a high school reunion and a girl he left behind... Thus begins the story of Martin (John Cusack): a highly paid, highly motivated hired assassin who wakes up one day and finds his life has no meaning.

As Martin searches for answers, he finds himself on a collision course with destiny: a course where every phone call brings a new twist, every message a new challenge, every invitation a new doorway.

Pulp Fiction wasn't the first film to investigate the comic possibilities of killing. Hollywood has often done that, if rarely with as much flair and sheer cheek as Tarantino. Now comes Grosse Pointe Blank, which has as its central character a yuppie professional killer who goes to a psychotherapist to find out why he's bored rather than disgusted with the process. He has no conscience but would quite like to find one.

Grosse Pointe Blank is a cool, ruthless, black comedy that completes the cultural domestication of a current folk hero, the professional hit man. The wry, self-contained John Cusack, the only person not to overact in *Con Air*, *Plays Blank*, a 28-year-old assassin, who combines business with leisure when he comes to Detroit to carry out a mob contract on a federal witness and attend a tenth anniversary gathering at his old school. Before going there he has amusing encounters with his secretary (Joan Cusack), a professional rival (Dan Aykroyd), who wants to organise an assassin's union and a shrink (Alan Arkin), who feels so threatened by his analysis that he neither bills him nor takes notes.

Blank, it transpires, left Detroit in a moment of moral panic on the day he graduated, fleeing an alcoholic father and jilting his girlfriend (Minnie Driver) on the eve of the school prom. He now wants to use this homecoming as the occasion to turn his life in a different direction.

Meanwhile, four assassins are after him for different reasons, one of them a former terrorist who is dispatched with a pen in the neck (a promotional gift martin had just received from an insurance broker) and his corpse disposed of in the school's incinerator. The final shoot-out is as extravagant as anything in a John Woo action movie. This subversive, highly enjoyable film invites us to identify with an unrepentant killer and manages to be simultaneously wild & cool.

Grosse Pointe Blank is touchingly effective, drawing an emotional centre from Cusack's journey towards redemption amidst his life of violence.

Trivia:

- The attempted killing of the bicycle messenger as he rides down the hill in the first scene is a reference to the "I want my two dollars" bike-riding paperboy who menaces Cusack's character in *Better Off Dead...* (1985).
- The attempted poisoning by string is a reference to *You Only Live Twice* (1967)

SIMON THOMAS



John Cusack in *Grosse Pointe Blank*, which he also co-scripted and co-produced.



Brother and sister, Chicago natives John and Joan Cusack were paired on-screen in Cameron Crowe's *Say Anything* ... where John's Lloyd Dobler (one of the few memorable names in recent film) proclaimed his love for lone Skye by holding a boom box over his head, letting the music roin over him. Joan played his sister, too busy raising a child for such theatrics. Apart, he explored incest issues with Anjelica Huston in *The Grifters* and was nearly mentored into extinction by Al Pacino in *City Hall*; she brought a quirky, addled normality to her roles in *Broadcast News*, *Working Girl*, and *In & Out*. Last year they were reunited in *Grosse Pointe Blank*, which John co-wrote, co-produced, and starred in, ploying a hip hit man attending a high-school reunion. Joan played his secretary, ably juggling his rubout schedule.

*From: 'Vanity Fair', July 1997.*

Letter From My Village (22/10/98)

20 reactions, average score 6.5

Comments

An interesting glimpse of another world.

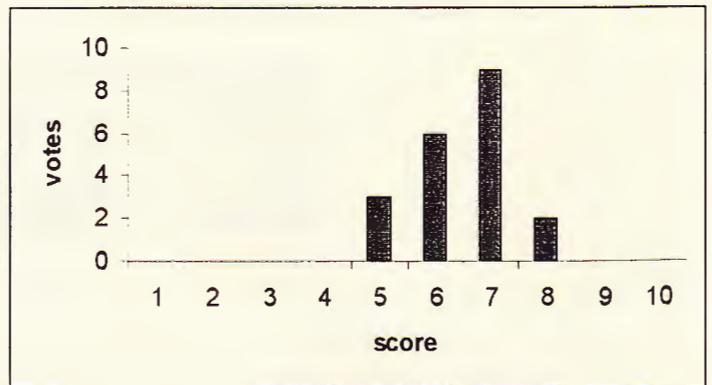
A hard life.... and it still goes on.

Fascinating but not quite blockbuster material.

Unexpectedly most interesting and enjoyable.

Very slow to begin with but quite sad in parts.

Interesting documentary which showed real community spirit.



# COMING NEXT

**26<sup>th</sup> November** - France's wittiest comedy for years, featuring Charles Berling and Fanny Ardant:

**RIDICULE [15]**, France, 1996. Directed by Patrice Leconte.

*Like 'Dangerous Liaisons', this heavily powdered and rouged period piece is set in the most excessive days of Louis XVI's reign, when an ability to engage in witty and insulting exchanges with members of the Court proves to be the only way that poor rural aristocrat (Berling) can gain an audience with the King.*

**12 CESAR (FRENCH OSCAR) NOMINATIONS - including Best Film, Best Director, Best Actor**

*"Sparkling Entertainment"*

Premiere

*"Dry, witty dialogue and piles of intrigue at the Court of Versailles"*

The Times

*"Elegant, engaging and moving; an exquisite indictment of a social world."*

Elle

## Ridicule <sup>15</sup>

*The perfect crime.*

From the director of  
MONSIEUR HIRE and THE HAIRDRESSER'S HUSBAND




**FANNY ARDANT**   
 **CHARLES BERLING**   
 **BERNARD GIRAudeau**   
 **JUDITH GODRECHE**   
 **JEAN ROCHEFORT**   
   


**Programme ends at 10.00 pm (approx)**

**COMING  
NEXT MONTH**

**10<sup>th</sup> December** - Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed star in the ultimate Christmas feel-good film:

**IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE [U]**, USA, 1946. Directed by Frank Capra.

*George Bailey, (Stewart), is a small-town banker, beset with financial problems and contemplating suicide on a snowy Christmas Eve. He is saved by Angel Clarence, who reprises George's blameless life and provides a glimpse of the less than rosy future for his family and friends should he carry out his threat.*

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