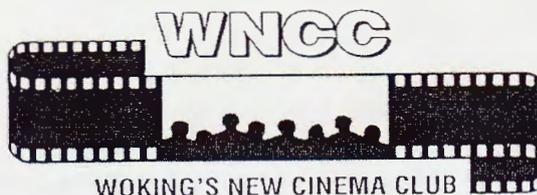


# The Main Feature



Issue Number 18 - 12<sup>th</sup> June 2008

## The Departed

18 Usa/2006/151 mins

|                   |       |                                |
|-------------------|-------|--------------------------------|
| Leonardo DiCaprio | ...   | Billy Costigan                 |
| Matt Damon...     | Colin |                                |
| Jack Nicholson    | ...   | Costello                       |
| Mark Wahlberg     | ...   | Dignam                         |
| Martin Sheen      | ...   | Queenan                        |
| Ray Winstone      | ...   | Mr. French                     |
| Vera Farmiga      | ...   | Madolyn                        |
| Anthony Anderson  | ...   | Brown                          |
| Alec Baldwin      | ...   | Ellerby                        |
| Kevin Corrigan    | ...   | Cousin Sean                    |
| James Badge Dale  | ...   | Barrigan                       |
| David O'Hara      | ...   | Fitzy (as David Patrick 'Hara) |
| Mark Rolston      | ...   | Delahunt                       |
| Robert Wahlberg   | ...   | Lazio - FBI                    |

Director:

Martin Scorsese

Writers (WGA):

William Monahan (screenplay)

Siu Fai Mak (2002 screenplay Mou gaan dou)



### The Departed

*The Departed* is a perfect example of why remakes shouldn't be dismissed out of hand. Director Martin Scorsese and screenwriter William Monahan have taken the B-grade Hong Kong crime flick *Infernal Affairs* and re-imagined it as an American epic tragedy. The original film was gritty and entertaining; the new version is a masterpiece.

In making *The Departed*, Scorsese has retained the essential plot structure of *Infernal Affairs* but has transformed the movie into something truly his own. Characters are better defined and situations are given an opportunity to breathe. None of this is done at the cost of pacing; *The Departed* is as suspenseful as anything the director has previously achieved. This movie deserves mention alongside Scorsese's most celebrated movies: *Taxi Driver*, *Raging Bull*, *Goodfellas*, and *The Age Of Innocence*.

The film has a clever premise at its core: In the police department, there is a spy working for a gang leader. And in the gang leader's crew, there's a spy working for the police department. Early on, both sides know they've been infiltrated, and each side is looking for the mole in its organisation. Each mole is looking for the other mole, and that's the story.

The rest is window dressing, but very good dressing. We begin with Jack Nicholson as Costello, an Irish mob boss in Boston, seducing a neighborhood boy into his gang by buying him comic books and groceries. Scorsese playfully shoots Nicholson in the shadows for these first few scenes. In one, he is just a silhouette, while everyone else is in the light. The message is clear: This is the devil, the spirit of mayhem, the agent of destruction, a monster. He is also a fun character to watch. Nicholson doesn't sleepwalk through this one, but responds with a psychologically detailed portrait of an old, twisted murderer.

Years later, the little boy that Costello took an interest in has grown up to become an ambitious young police investigator, Sullivan (Matt Damon), the picture of clean-cut competence and dependability. Another young Boston officer, rougher around the edges, has a harder time making his way. Costigan (Leonardo DiCaprio) reluctantly agrees to go undercover and become part of the Costello gang.

Issues of masculinity, race, class, masculinity, Catholic guilt, and masculinity tend to come up a bit in Scorsese's oeuvre, and this film is no exception. While Sullivan and Costigan circle each other, their own roles as not just criminal and cop, but as affluent white male and poor Irish thug come to the fore.

Costello's casual racism (it takes less than five minutes for him to tell us what he has against black people) underscores the mistrust that permeates not just his world, but the cops' as well. An encounter with a bunch of Chinese gangsters takes this to nationalistic levels, with Costello raging on about how we do business "in this country." Like Daniel Day-Lewis in *Gangs Of New York*, he's not just a sociopath, he's a patriotic sociopath.

On-screen talent pools don't get much deeper than this one, with A-list actors like Martin Sheen, Mark Wahlberg, and Alec Baldwin accepting supporting roles. Leonardo DiCaprio and Matt Damon prove two crucial things: they are not interchangeable and, when pushed by someone who can direct actors, they can give riveting performances. DiCaprio has displayed growth in each of his appearances for Scorsese, and this is by far the best work he has done in his career. Jack Nicholson is in top form, providing a diabolical villain who can deliver a monologue with unparalleled verve. Up-and-coming actress Vera Farmiga and British tough guy Ray Winstone round out a cast that, if not perfect, is close to it.

Enjoyable for its twists and turns, its smart dialogue and fine acting, *The Departed* is equally satisfying for its unflinching exploration of good, evil, and the place where the two almost become one. The film's portrayal of violence and explicit corruption effectively tossed a fascinating salad of human morality. We may not be touched by such violence in our daily lives, but we most assuredly do make moral and human choices that are comparable – if lower key – to those made here.

*The Departed* is the rare Hollywood feature that appears to have been made by someone who actually understands the language of film, who can do things with light and shadows, with camera positioning, with sound and music, to create feelings. That's to say nothing of Scorsese's knack for drawing pitch-perfect performances from his actors, as already noted. This is an excellent film, a throwback to the grittier, more substantial crime dramas of the '70s, and a reminder that movies can have weight to them and still be enjoyable as entertainment.

Suzi Olohan

## BBC NEWS

Obituary: Sydney Pollack

Oscar-winning director, producer and actor Sydney Pollack attracted box office success together with critical acclaim throughout his distinguished 50-year career.

His biggest achievement came with the 1985 drama *Out of Africa*, starring Meryl Streep and Robert Redford, for which he collected the Academy Award for best director.

He had received his first best director nomination for *They Shoot Horses Don't They?* back in 1969. Pollack was involved in blockbuster films throughout his career, producing and acting in Oscar-nominated legal thriller *Michael Clayton* last year.

But in August 2007, he withdrew from his latest project – political drama *Recount* – because of the cancer that eventually led to his death at 73.

Born on 1 July 1934, Pollack moved to New York to try his luck as an actor after graduating from high school. He studied under legendary acting coach Sanford Meisner before securing acting jobs on television. It was a different time in the '70s – films didn't have to make as much money

In 1961, he began to work as a director of television shows and, four years later, directed Sidney Poitier and Anne Bancroft in *The Slender Thread*. He continued to work with Hollywood's finest in the next decade. In *Jeremiah Johnson*, released in 1972, Pollack directed Redford, who also appeared with Barbra Streisand in the romantic drama *The Way We Were* a year later.

Pollack would later hail the 1970s as a golden era for making films. "It was a different time in the '70s – films didn't have to make as much money," he said in 2003. "Audiences want to feel something intense, quickly – without wasting time."

Pollack's biggest triumph came in 1985 with *Out of Africa*, which won seven Oscars and a further four nominations. The film tells the story of a Danish baroness, played by Streep, who falls in love with Redford's adventurer in colonial Kenya.

Pollack was also shortlisted for best director for 1982's *Tootsie*, starring Dustin Hoffman as a cross-dressing actor. Pollack played Hoffman's agent in the film.

In the 1990s, he mainly worked as an executive producer but also produced and directed the box office smash *The Firm*, starring Tom Cruise. He received his final Oscar nomination, for best film, for last year's release *Michael Clayton*.

Pollack's final film as a director was *Sketches of Frank Gehry*, a documentary about the famous architect. Every time I am directing, I question why in God's name I'm doing it again. The movie was made by Mirage, the production company Pollack set up with UK film-maker Anthony Minghella.

Pollack's determination to tackle social issues, coupled with his political and romantic sensibilities, made his films some of the most respected of the late-1960s through to the 1980s.

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# Reactions to ....

The Page Turner – 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008

Score 0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
 Votes ~    ~    ~    ~    1    4    8    18    11    4    ~

Total Votes - 46    Average Score – 7.0    Position in Season – 8<sup>th</sup>

| Film                     | Score | Position              |
|--------------------------|-------|-----------------------|
| The Lives of Others      | 8.23  | 1 <sup>st</sup>       |
| The Painted Veil         | 8.09  | 2 <sup>nd</sup>       |
| Little Miss Sunshine     | 7.886 | 3 <sup>rd</sup>       |
| Notes on a Scandal       | 7.73  | Joint 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| Last King of Scotland    | 7.73  | 4 <sup>th</sup>       |
| Jour de Fete             | 7.26  | 5 <sup>th</sup>       |
| Away from Her            | 7.2   | 6 <sup>th</sup>       |
| Volver                   | 7.06  | 7 <sup>th</sup>       |
| The Page Turner          | 7.0   | 8 <sup>th</sup>       |
| Belleville Rendezvous    | 6.97  | 9 <sup>th</sup>       |
| Pans Labyrinth           | 6.88  | 10 <sup>th</sup>      |
| The Prestige             | 6.86  | 11 <sup>th</sup>      |
| Offside                  | 6.56  | 12 <sup>th</sup>      |
| L'Enfant                 | 6.37  | 13 <sup>th</sup>      |
| Consequences of Love     | 6.24  | 14 <sup>th</sup>      |
| Belle et la Bette        | 5.97  | 15 <sup>th</sup>      |
| Black Cat, White Cat     | 5.74  | 16 <sup>th</sup>      |
| The Day I became a Woman | 5.72  | 17 <sup>th</sup>      |

## Next Time



11<sup>th</sup> September 2008

### Atonement

Torn apart by betrayal. Separated by war. Bound by love. A multi award winning film starring Keira Knightley and James McAvoy

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