

Movie Review

'Blue City' is just plain awful

By **Matt Diedrich**
Reporter

The advertisements for "Blue City" say it's located "below Miami and above the law." They should have said it's beyond belief and beneath contempt.

"Blue City" is nothing more than a Caucasian version of "Beverly Hills Cop." It virtually matches the Eddie Murphy film scene-for-scene, creating one of the most blatant, shameless riffs of recent years.

It stars Eddie Murphy — I mean, Judd Nelson — as Billy Turner, a tough-talking guy who returns to his hometown after five years to find out his father, the mayor, has been murdered. Rumor has it a big-time hood named Kerch (Steven Berkoff — oops, I mean Scott Wilson) did it, but the police chief (Ronny Cox — I mean,

Paul Winfield) says he doesn't have enough evidence to make an arrest. So Billy decides to catch his father's killer on his own.

This, of course, involves things such as blowing up Kerch's car, tearing up his casino, and stealing some of his illegally-obtained funds. In between these scenes of mayhem, Billy barges in on Kerch's business meetings and says things like, "I've got your number." After a while Kerch decides to fight back. What follows is a predictable series of action scenes, culminating in the big final shootout at (where else?) Kerch's private mansion.

The embarrassing superficiality of "Blue City" is a big reason for its failure. Besides the obvious elements of "Beverly Hills Cop," "Blue City" borrows much of its look from "Miami Vice." Every few minutes, for instance, the action stops dead

to allow time for another music video, bringing whatever pace the movie might have established to a grinding halt.

There's an obligatory sex scene, an obligatory barroom brawl, even an obligatory nighttime motorcycle ride. The only thing missing is a story.

And that's writer-producer Walter Hill's fault. Hill has always excelled at making slick-looking action films but, with the exception of "48 Hrs.," has never invented enough of a story to go with them. His creativity has reached its nadir with "Blue City," which actually contains two sequences that Hill lifted directly from his last action picture, "Streets of Fire."

Hill isn't the only one who should be ashamed of himself, however. Judd Nelson, who was oh-so-great in "The Breakfast Club," is totally out of place here. He can talk tough with

the best of them, but when it comes to being tough — well, let's just say Clint Eastwood has nothing to worry about. Nelson has a few great smart-aleck remarks and even some nice displays of emotion, but as an action hero he's a bust.

You may wonder why I haven't yet mentioned Nelson's co-star, Ally Sheedy. That's because her role is so incidental and unnecessary that it hardly deserves mention. Sheedy plays Nelson's girlfriend Annie, who's always around to warn him about the big bad crime boss, or to do some detective work for him, or to comfort him in times of sorrow.

"Blue City" does have its good points. The visual style, the action, the music and even certain bits of dialogue are excellent. But watching an hour of "Miami Vice" yields the same result, and costs a lot less.

Opinion

By **Nancy Feigenbaum**
Staff Writer

I once took a class known to the student body as "prime-time psych." A bald version of Bob Barker lectured 2,500 of us in the university's largest auditorium, trailing a microphone cord and making liberal use of slides, films and other sleep-inducing materials.

Three mornings a week at 8 a.m., he would emcee a list of facts for us to copy in our notebooks. Not too fast.

It was a great course for exploring the capacity of short-term memory. One of the facts I still remember is about pigeons and people. Or maybe it was pelicans. In any case, it had something to do with birds.

People, he said, are just like birds on a telephone wire. They always sit far enough apart so no one bird infringes on another bird's space. I can appreciate the analogy, however unglamorous and elevators are a perfect example.

A person alone in an elevator does whatever he pleases. He stands in the middle, leans on a rail or checks his fly. The next person walks straight to a corner. The first guy moves to a corner, too, and neither one says anything.

When the next few people get on, everyone moves a little until equilibrium has been regained, then they stare at the numbers over the doors.

There's a good chance that if anyone says anything no one will answer.

One elevator in the language building of my old school gave everybody trouble. It was very small and very slow, so when six people rode at the same time, they were likely to be caught in intimate poses for several minutes at a time.

Every day at 30 seconds to noon, I would dash into the elevator and engross myself in the panel of numbers above the doors. This elevator didn't have any and people never got used to the elevator's deficiency. One day, someone with an astute

appreciation of human (and bird) psychology painted numbers on the metal panel.

The only thing worse than having to look at strangers in a small space is having to pretend you're not listening to them. People who have conversations on elevators deserve to be stuck between floors at closing time — with nothing to read.

Elevator conversations are always appropriate and usually whispered but even small sounds carry over a distance of two feet, subjecting the rest of the elevator to something like this:

Sweatshirt No. 1: "Did you hear the news about Carla?"

Sweatshirt No. 2: "Don't tell me. Not again!"

No. 1: "Uh huh, and this time at the laundromat."

No. 2 (rumaging in her purse for something): "You can't be serious. I thought she was over that."

No. 1: "Apparently not. It took the firemen all night to get her loose."

No. 2 (finding her lipstick

and putting some on as she speaks): "Well, I get off here. Say hi to Carla, will you?"

For all they knew, Carla was squeezed in at the back, blushing.

Another place for peculiar conversations is in bathrooms. Here the problem is one of selective deafness. I overheard this conversation in restroom at a college lecture hall.

"Is anyone in there?" asks a woman in line.

"I don't know," says the other person waiting. "I think it's empty."

The first person crouches at the stall door slightly, but not quite enough to learn anything.

They both shrug.

"What about that one?" asks the first one, pointing to the open door at the end.

"I think it's for handicapped people," the second one says.

The first one accepts this explanation and they both both continue waiting until someone emerges from the closed stall, where she'd been listening all along.