

## A sturdy, well-crafted movie

By DAVID ELLIOTT Movie Critic

B lessed is the film that claims its own ground. So blessed be John Turturro's "Mac," a vital story that pumps the juices of the heart rather than the usual Hollywood cola.

First begun as a script by actor Turturro 13 years ago, then briefly turned into a play by him and Brandon Cole, "Mac" comes to screens

script provides
the foundation
for a solid

as one of the most impressive directing debuts of this film era.
From the opening shots of a man at work on con-

for a solid
directing debut

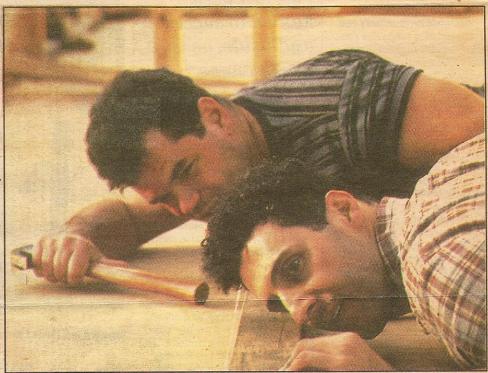
From the opening shots of a man at work on construction, his skills and tools bluntly forging

ahead in rain and mud, we know that "Mac" is at home. The movie, though not purely autobiographical, is dedicated to Turturro's late father, a carpenter, and the film draws on Turturro's youth in which he worked on his dad's jobs.

Turturro plays Mac, one of three sons whose father dies in 1954, leaving a snug Queens bungalow, a widow (whom we never see, but hear, like the mother in "The King of Comedy") and a legacy of hard work done with obsessive craft care. At the wake each son hears his father as deep memories crowd 'round the bier, and each feels a grip of responsibility not to be shirked, at least not while Mac hustles the dream of the brothers working together.

Handsome brother Bruno (Carl Capotorto) is an aspiring artist, excited by the Greenwich Village life incarnated by his "beatnik" lover, Oona (Ellen Barkin, in a funny sketch of a performance). He buys into Mac's dream only hazily.

Vico, played by the beefy and



## MOVIE REVIEW

"Mac"

Rated R. Opens tomorrow, Hillerest Ginemas COVE THEATRE

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very engaging Michael Badalucco (whose soft-pedal reactions often have a touch of genius), fancies himself a romancer: "Behind this weight there's magnetism." He doesn't quite hear Mac's call to the higher carpentry, though loyalty holds him in place for a while.

This really constructed film is about how Mac caries his ambition from carpentry, where his perfectionism and brooding Italian temper soon get him in trouble with the

shady foreman Polowski (Olek Krupa), to being a building contractor, boss of a team including his brothers

After an almost fatal error, he gets his break to build a small tract of suburban homes, and that's when the control freak in Mac tightens like a vise, and the pressures rise with the houses.

The story, so neatly 1954 yet never swoony about nostalgia, is a brisk layering of effective scenes, with moods that work both in fast change and steady turnover. Turturro, star of "Barton Fink" and a key presence in other films, gives to each actor fine openings — including Katherine Borowitz as Mac's patient, brainy wife, her long

Michael
Badalucco (left)
and John
Turturro are
brothers who
start their own
business in
"Mac," a story of
the struggle to
uphold family
tradition in
changing times.

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