



FRANCIS DUHAMEL

Robin Williams

★ ★ ★ **Cadillac Man**

*Litchfield Cinemas, Oaks Six East*

Robin Williams is a marvelous stand-up comedian. He is also a fine actor. Unfortunately, when movie studios have called on Williams, they often want Robin the stand-up comic — someone who can improvise and “act funny” and maybe just save a poorly conceived project.

So his film career has been divided between roles for Wil-

liams the actor, such as *The World According To Garp*, and less interesting projects for Williams the comedian, such as *The Survivors* and *Club Paradise*.

They only recently have begun tailoring roles to his particular talent, roles in which Williams' rapid-fire improvisation makes sense. First came *Good Morning, Vietnam*, in which he sashayed through a relatively serious Vietnam drama with his manic, hilarious portrayal of a deejay who doesn't like being told what to do.

Now comes *Cadillac Man*, another movie in which his bright, witty one-liners merge well with the role of a fast-talking car salesman. Williams plays Joey O'Brien, a huckster who would peddle a car to a widow on the way to her husband's funeral.

Joey is estranged from his wife, which isn't too much of a problem since he has two girlfriends and a slick, greasy charm. The story begins oddly as we're introduced to Joey and all his friends at the car dealership. The script slogs

through these set-ups with a lot of voice-overs from Joey (always a bad sign) and some predictable gags.

However, the women in Joey's life are invariably amusing, especially Joy Munchack (played by Fran Drescher), a very rich, very bored and very married woman with a high-pitched squeal and an obnoxious little dog that yaps constantly. And all these set-ups — Joey's loving but sharp-tongued mother, a mobster friend who has loaned him \$20,000 and that dog — pay off beautifully when *Cadillac Man* kicks into high gear.

That occurs when Larry (Tim Robbins), the dim-witted and insanely jealous husband of a co-worker of Joey's, makes an appearance. Larry bursts onto the lot during a big sale. Brandishing a huge semi-automatic weapon and a pack of explosives, Larry demands to know who his wife is sleeping with.

What follows is a tense but extremely funny hostage situation. Joey finds himself pretending to be the philanderer, just to protect

his friends and calm down Larry's rage. Director Roger Donaldson — never the best of talents — ably balances the comedy and drama.

It works quite well and Williams is hilarious as he and Robbins careen through some brilliant moments. Forcing a hostage-taker to talk on the phone with the mother of one of his captives, which Joey does to Larry, is inspired and

funny. It's only one of several lunatic touches.

*Cadillac Man*'s hostage-scene set piece is the main focus of an otherwise static movie. But the laughs are well worth the slow set-up. My only regret is they didn't shoot the damn dog.

BY MICHAEL GILTZ

ratings based on four-star scale

**Center (372-5347)** *Back to the Future III* (opens Thurs), *Mountains of the Moon*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*

**Cinema N Drafthouse (376-6843)** *Joe Versus the Volcano*

**Litchfield Cinemas (336-0408)** *Bird on a Wire*, *Cadillac Man*, *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Ernest Goes to Jail*, *The Hunt for Red October*, *My Left Foot*, *Tales from the Dark Side*, *Vital Signs*

**Oaks Four West (331-8118)** *Bird on a Wire*, *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*, *The Hunt For Red October*, *Tales from the Darkside*

**Oaks Six East (331-8818)** *Back to the Future III*, *Firebirds* (both open Fri), *Cadillac Man*, *Space Invaders*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *Wild Orchid*, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (midnight Fri, Sat)

**Plaza (378-2434)** *Firebirds* (opens Fri), *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Ernest Goes to Jail*

**Royal Park (373-4277)** *The Gods Must Be Crazy II*, *Pretty Woman*, *Hard to Kill* (\$1), *Joe Versus the Volcano* (\$1)