



WARNER BROTHERS

# Fuggetaboudit

*Analyze This* should sleep with the fishes

What would the Godfather have to say about all this? For five long years now, the last of the real-life Michael Corleones and Tony Montanas have suffered in silence, agonizing as their onscreen counterparts morphed from cold-hearted heavyweights to new-age crybabies. In Harold Ramis' sequel to *Analyze This*, the blubbing mobster archetype is worn painfully thin — even if you don't drive around in a sleek black Cadillac.

Also serving as co-writer, Ramis resurrected most of the original cast for 1999's *Analyze This*, including Billy Crystal as Ben Sobel, the self-medicating therapist, and Lisa Kudrow as Sobel's wife, who still seems a bit too virginal to be nuzzling so close to that blotchy gray beard. Also returning are Robert De Niro as Made Man/neurotic man-child Paul Vitti and Joe Viterelli as "Jelly," the guy whose double chin juts out farther than his belly.

In what might have started as an attempt to add a twist to the tough-guy gangster role, this recent manifestation has run its course. If you didn't see enough of De Niro's crow's feet in *Analyze This*, then surely Tony Soprano's irritated self-deprecations have provided you with enough of the tough-guy tearjerker thing. The need for another 100 minutes of this is about as urgent as Kudrow's need for another role as a ditzzy blond sidekick.

The movie begins in Sing-Sing prison with an attempt on Vitti's life. Suspecting correctly that his days of staying alive in the joint are numbered, Vitti plays cuckoo, and Sobel gets called in to verify the diagnosis. When the rubber-faced racketeer feigns catatonia, Sobel, suspecting shady motives, tries everything short of shock-treatment to elicit a response. The outtakes reveal that De Niro had a difficult time keeping a straight face during the filming of this scene. Released into Sobel's strict custody where he will be "safe, sober and gainfully employed," the former mob boss is not allowed to leave the premises without his therapist. The moments capturing the tension that develops between Kudrow, who is juggling funeral arrangements for Sobel's deceased father, and Vitti, the houseguest from hell who waltzes into a kitchen filled with mourning in-laws and proceeds to adjust his argyle bathrobe in full view of Aunt Golda, are perhaps the funniest in the film.

Vitti does make some cursory attempts at gainful employment. As an Audi salesman, his pitch is: "Whattaya need to consider? You've been breakin' my balls for about an hour asking me about every goddamn accessory in this car. Just buy it!" While a jewelry-store clerk: "What am I, Edison? That's the fluorescent light, it makes everything look yellow." And as a restaurant host, he informs a patron: "I only got two hands — I got the left and

Ben Sobel (Billy Crystal) and Paul Vitti (Robert De Niro) stick together in the sequel to Harold Ramis' 1999 film *Analyze This*.

the right. I can slap you with either one, now get outta here!" But before long, Vitti and his old cronies conjure up a plan to hijack a bullion-toting bank truck. When Sobel gets caught up in the action, he finds his own world unexpectedly hurtling toward that of his most-feared patient.

By the end, when the whole thing has unraveled into a big ball of blubbing bravado, the men have leaned on each others' leather- and tweed-clad shoulders, and the two grown men have gurgled into one another's necks. The film ends with doctor and patient exchanging pleasantries under the Brooklyn Bridge, having narrowly avoided felonious fates. Vitti gets the smug look on his lined face again and pays the frazzled therapist back for all his angst with a quintessential: "You're good, you. You ... you're very good." Eat your heart out, Don Corleone ... just don't forget the tissues.

— BRADY TEUFEL

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