

# Excellent performances can't save 'Cookie'



**CNS**  
Peter Falk and Emily Lloyd star as a quirky father-daughter team who manage to outsmart both the mob and the law in the movie "Cookie." Despite some notable performances, this film "has little or no substance," says the U.S. Catholic Conference, which gives it a classification of A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

By Judith Trojan  
Catholic News Service

**NEW YORK** — Director Susan Seidelman ("Desperately Seeking Susan") often focuses on young female heroes struggling with identity crises. Seidelman's latest comedy, "Cookie" (Warner Bros.), follows the transformation of 18-year-old Carmela Maria Angelina Theresa Voltecki (Emily Lloyd), a.k.a. "Cookie," from an alienated adolescent into a street-smart Mafia princess who saves her mobster father's life and unifies her offbeat family. faces his sleazy former partner Carmine (Michael V. Gazzo), who is out to cheat and kill him, and unethical district attorney Segretto (Bob Gunton), whose political ambitions lead him to set Dino up for parole violation. But Cookie, the feisty illegitimate daughter he's never really cared to know, is the most immediate thorn in his side.

At first, the cocky antagonism between Dino and his daughter threatens his parole and unhinges Cookie's overwrought, unmarried mom Lenore (Dianne Wiest), who loves Dino madly despite their 13-year separation. The film, written by Nora Eph-

ron ("When Harry Met Sally...") and Alice Arlen ("Silkwood"), tracks the slow evolution of this quirky father-daughter team from combatants to cohorts. In the end, Dino owes Cookie his life and wins the chance to live a clean if anonymous life in the federal witness protection program with Lenore.

As Cookie concocts a far-fetched strategy to upset Carmine's treachery and Segretto's parole-smashing plot, few audience members will miss the fact that the denouement makes no sense at all. But what the film lacks in reality-based entertainment, it picks up in the colorful character turns of Falk, Lloyd, Wiest and Brenda Vaccaro, who plays Dino's loud-mouthed wife Bunny, the proprietress of Bunny's Bark Place. To make ends meet, Bunny re-grooms stolen dogs and dresses them up for weddings and funerals. Vaccaro could win supporting actress kudos for this riotous role.

Lionel Stander and Gazzo ("The Godfather II") also win points with their gravel-voiced mobster impersonations; and a low-key Jerry Lewis shows up to good

effect in last season's "Wiseguy" costume as a crooked Atlantic City real estate developer. But the performances, Mafia jokes and comical repartee between father and daughter cannot hide the fact that, in the end, "Cookie" is a piece of forgettable fluff that has little or no substance as a satire of mob life or as an insightful look at an offbeat father-daughter relationship.

Due to much profanity and a cavalier attitude toward murder and adultery, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

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Chief Justice William Rehnquist  
July 3, 1989



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