Weeds and Nolte capture realism of the criminal’s life

By RICARDO RODRIGUEZ

Weeds tells the story of the Barbed Wire Theatre acting troupe, composed completely of ex-convicts, as it tours the country performing its play, The Cage. The film is based on fact—its characters and story were incorporated from several actual prison drama groups, one of which really did tour the US, as well as Europe.

The film’s beginning revolves around Lee Umstetter (Nick Nolte), a convict with a life sentence. Seeing himself rot away, Lee Umstetter (Nick Nolte), a convict with a life sentence. Looking for release of Umstetter, and

Lee Umstetter’s character is explored. Lee Umstetter’s character is explored. Lee Umstetter's prison, whom have finished serving their time, and

As each troupe member goes through actual prison drama groups, one of which

The Cage, as performed by the ex-convicts, is an understandably amateurish but a seemingly frank account of prison life. The fact that Umstetter has "borrowed" much of his play from an unknown French convict writer is a key element in the movie—Umstetter must decide whether to change the play, or be accused of "doing his thing," stealing.

All the actors perform well, particularly Nick Nolte. One actor, J.J. Johnson, who plays Lazarus, is an ex-convict in real life. Racial stereotypes are dealt with in a respectable manner, but flaws still exist. Easily noticed is the fact that the warden from Umstetter’s prison, who is seen in a positive light, is white. By contrast, the warden at the prison where a riot breaks out (as a result of the play) is too preachy, rather mean, and black. Whether or not the wardens are modeled after actual ones is unclear.

In any event, Weeds is a good film. It feels authentic, and it breaks stereotypes skillfully. Offering a new perspective on ex-convicts and prison, it is highly recommended.

By MARK ROMAN

DIZZY GILLESPIE QUINTET
Thursday, October 22.

Dizzy Gillespie, one of the elder statesmen of jazz and founding fathers of bebop, joked and clowned with reporters. And one other, although he had the guts and courage to live his dream.

Dizzy Gillespie would hear none of the latter and shouted reporters for suggesting such things.

One man, from the depth of a gritty prison cell, had the guts and courage to change his life and to live his dream.

Nick Nolte as Lee Umstetter in Weeds.

Happy 70th Birthday, Dizzy Gillespie!!

Dizzy Gillespie Quintet at Nightstage.

"Jazz," proclaimed Dizzy Gillespie on the occasion of his 70th birthday, "is bigger and healthier than it ever was." As part of their second anniversary celebration, Nightstage at Cambridge presented Dizzy Gillespie in concert on his birthday last week. At a press conference held before the show, Dizzy answered a barrage of questions from local and national music press, nagsy begging for nos-

November 10, 1987

ARThUR ANDERSEN & Co.
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Nick Nolte in Weeds.

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American and South American sounds, and the rock and jazz scenes are all going to come together."

"In fifteen or twenty years, you'll be hearing all of these styles together, but each one will keep its own character. You won't be able to put any label on it. I hope I'm around for it, because I'll be something completely different."

At the first show of the evening, it was business as usual for the Dizzy Gillespie Quintet. With the opening note of "Gilles-

One man, from the depth of a gritty prison cell, had the guts and courage to change his life and to live his dream.

"Dizzy Gillespie, one of the elder statesmen of jazz and founding fathers of bebop, joked and clowned with reporters, answered questions on a variety of topics, and reassured those present that he hadn't lost any of his strength. "I can still hit all of those upper registers," he said, "I just can't stay up there as long as I used to."

Dizzy went on to give views on the current music scene, praising rock-and-roll artists "because they have both the rhythm and blues tradition and the rock-and-roll tradition."

He went on to predict a unification of music in the Western Hemisphere, saying, "the Cuban sound, and the Latin

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