

# REVIEWS

MARCH 7 - 16

by Steve Schneider

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENT COMPETITION - FEATURES

### *EvenHand*

Directed by Joseph Pierson

4 pm Saturday, March 8 at Enzian

7 pm Tuesday, March 11 at Park 3

Partnered policemen Ted Morning (Bill Sage) and Rob Francis (Bill Dawes) live lives of hum-drum routine, their professional attentions divided between a set series of recurring conflicts. When they're not breaking up a relentlessly fighting couple, the officers are rousting a teen dooper who Morning likes to detain and harass without ever arresting. Lunchtime entails a picnic stake-out outside a local crack house — more regularly scheduled harassment on the part of the easily amused San Lovisa force. Any time that's left over is devoted to the tracking down of a mysterious sociopath who likes to torment his neighbors with carelessly chucked beer cans and strategically placed possum carcasses.

... Morning is the embittered, cynical flatfoot who abuses his authority for his own amusement, causing the more idealistic Francis to shrink back in horror. Lesser actors would have us wondering how these two manage to even stand each other, but Sage and Dawes exhibit enough natural chemistry — and are similar enough physically — to be taken seriously as opposite sides of the same coin.

It isn't until the proverbial 11th hour that we realize how much has actually transpired in *EvenHand*, most all of it internal. The subtle evolution of the cops' relationship ends up being far more important than the film's failure to make good on the buddy-picture clichés from which it seems to have sprung. To lambaste the movie as dramatically inert is, ultimately, to argue for the reinstatement of those clichés. Instead, I'll just say that *EvenHand* goes to an unexpectedly satisfying place — if you have the patience to follow it there.