

Clint Eastwood Moseys Into the Sunset in 'Cry Macho'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on September 17, 2021 - 3:56pm

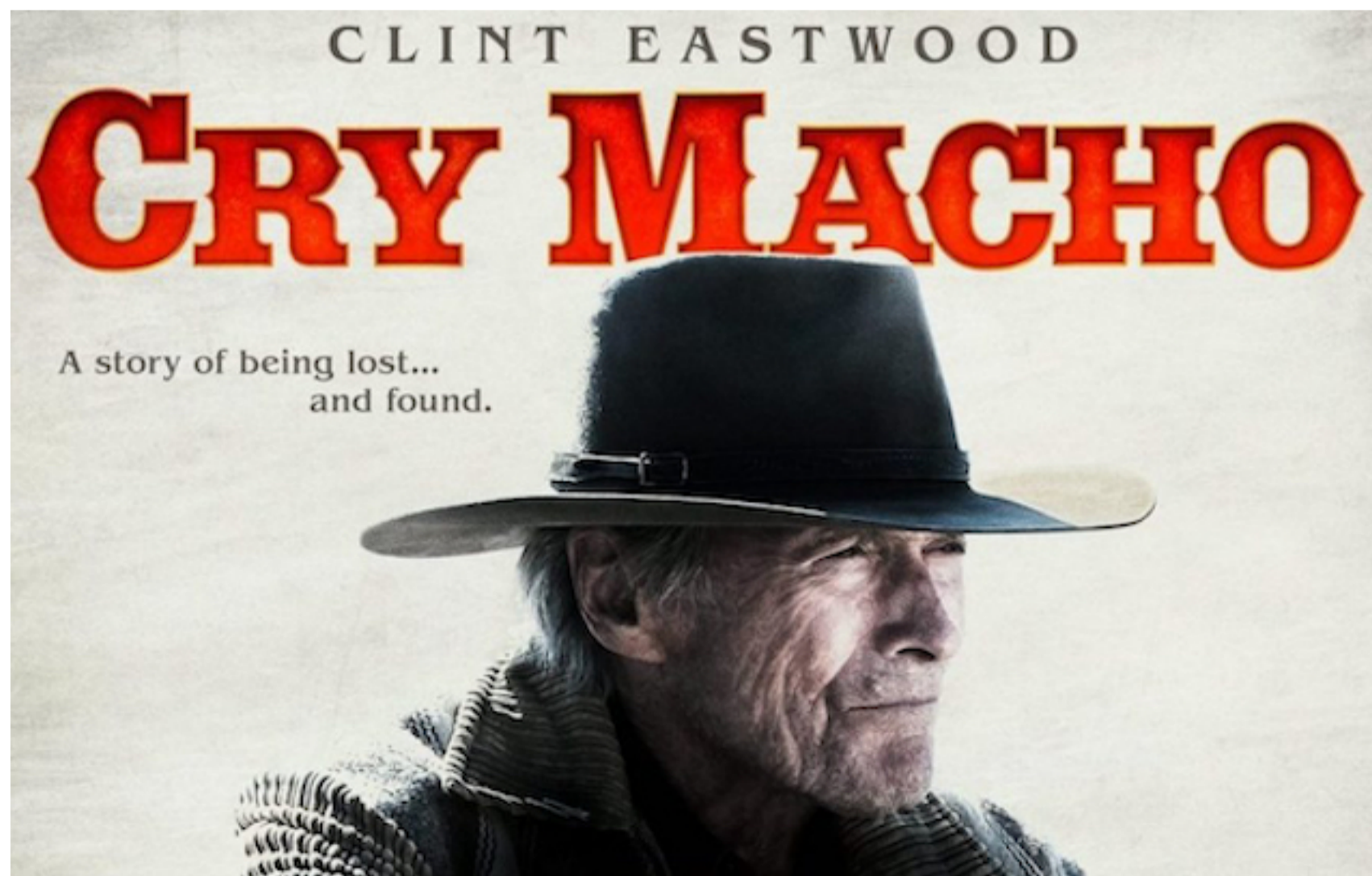
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Rating: **3.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Clint Eastwood's return to the western is an amiable-but-relatively-minor mosey south of the border. The 91-year-old doesn't embarrass himself, but this small stakes story is far from Clint's finest hour. In "Cry Macho" Eastwood is a former rodeo cowboy and horse trainer named Mike who has run into hard times after a devastating heartbreak.

So when his old boss Polk (Dwight Yoakim) asks Mike for one last favor, he takes the job. Eastwood's character heads down into Mexico – circa 1979 – to track down Polk's teenage son Rafa (Eduardo Minett), who had been living with his mother and is now out on the streets. Mike's job is to find the boy, convince him to get in the car, travel back to border, and bring him to Texas.



Cry Macho

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

In the span of time that it takes to knock back a Cerveza, Mike is able to find the boy at a cock fight. After a few quick words, the boy decides to come along and hops in the truck with his trusty chicken named Macho. But the boy's mom (Fernanda Urrejola) isn't ready to let him go so

easily. In one of the film's many flights of fancy, deferring to Clint's star power, she first tries to seduce this wrinkled old ranch hand. When he rebuffs the attempt, she sends a henchman to follow them and stop the boy from getting out of Mexico.

The boy is built up to be a pure wild child – who distrusts any authority figure – and has learned life lessons on the streets to escape an abusive relationship at home. However, in his depiction on screen, all he has to see is that glint in Clint's eye and he changes on a dime to a street smart but ultimately good kid. He also has a his trusty chicken, which gets old gringo Mike out of more than one scrape, as they encounter thieves, thugs, the Federales, and the aforementioned incompetent henchman, who seems to have been imported from a broad 1980's studio comedy.

Clint as a director is still near the top of his game. The film is filled with simple beauty and makes the most of its western landscape full of Mexican towns, campfires, and wild horses ... but in the service of a story that is relatively minor and takes its sweet time getting there. The film is agreeably short, clocking in at just an hour and 40 minutes, yet it still feels terribly padded. While stranded in a wayward Mexican town with their car on the fritz, Clint earns some cash breaking and training wild horses, and turns into an elderly Doctor Dolittle, seemingly healing every animal in town. There's also time for a bit of romance with a Mexican grandmother (Natalia Traven) who owns a restaurant and takes care of her orphaned granddaughters.



Clint Eastwood and Eduardo Minetti in 'Cry Macho'

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

Up through 2008's "Gran Torino," Clint Eastwood credibly looked like he could still kick the ass of an opponent half his age. In "Cry Macho" he's still throwing punches, but it takes a certain suspension of disbelief that he doesn't get his ass kicked, even if it is Clint. He looks frailer but still seems to get around fairly well, and his star power enables the audience to go along to a point, but maybe not this much.

While the plot is what sets Clint, the boy and his chicken out on the road, this film isn't really about the destination. It's about the journey. The film's strongest elements are its images. An image of Clint laying down by the campfire to sleep under the stars, has more understated grace and beauty than anything in the dialogue. In essence, die-hard Clint fans will find something to like. But if you're new to his work, I wouldn't start here because this journey is of the eminently skippable variety.

"Cry Macho" is in theaters and on HBO MAX (one month) starting September 17th. Featuring Clint Eastwood, Dwight Yoakam, Eduardo Minetti, Fernanda Urrejola and Natalia Traven. Screenplay adapted by N. Richard Nash (from his novel) and Nick Schenk. Directed by Clint Eastwood. Rated "PG-13"



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