

# Hooch is the star but Turner has charm

## Entertainment

Tom Hanks has a remarkable ability to take already seen movie plots and turn them into something worth watching. He did it last year with *Big*. This time he challenges the dog-cop picture, most recently done in *K-9* with James Belushi, and comes out a winner. Turner and Hooch doesn't give us anything new at all, but it certainly has a charm worth viewing.

Scott Turner (Hanks) is a hygiene-obsessed neat freak, (just watch him floss his teeth); this is quickly established during the

opening credits. Turner is a police investigator in Cypress Beach, a small northern California town. He's working his last week, on his way to Sacramento, and intends to leave his successor with an impeccable filing system. After all, what else is there to do - nothing ever happens in Cypress Beach.

Turner and David Stuart (Reginald Veljohnson), investigator in training, go about the routine one more time: part of this involves dropping by on Amos Reed, an old man who lives on the

waterfront with his mangy dog Hooch.

Our introduction to Hooch is a wonderful moment; the dog is heard first, ominous music plays (is Turner on his way to his death...), and finally the dog comes crashing through the door, in slow motion, jowls flapping, spit flying, nose flat and one of the ugliest faces ever seen on screen. He brings Turner down (he likes you son, he didn't even break the skin), sending the muffin-bribe flying and David into hysterics.

Soon after this Reed is murdered and Hooch witnesses the event. Turner is a good investigator first and feels duty bound to keep the dog alive as a witness. Of course he is the only person who will have him; after all Hooch likes him!

And so Hooch becomes Turner's partner at home and at work. This is an invitation to disaster, because Hooch is simply every nightmare come true about the worst house guest or flat-mate you could have. There is nothing this dog can't do, nothing he can't destroy. He's simply wonderful at being awful.

The movie follows the investigation and the blossoming love affair between Turner and the town vet, Emily Carson (Mare Winningham). Hooch is in love with her dog, a lovely collie. The plot is pretty predictable, and you know who's behind the dirty deeds long before Turner does. However, the charm of the movie lies not in the action but in the acting.

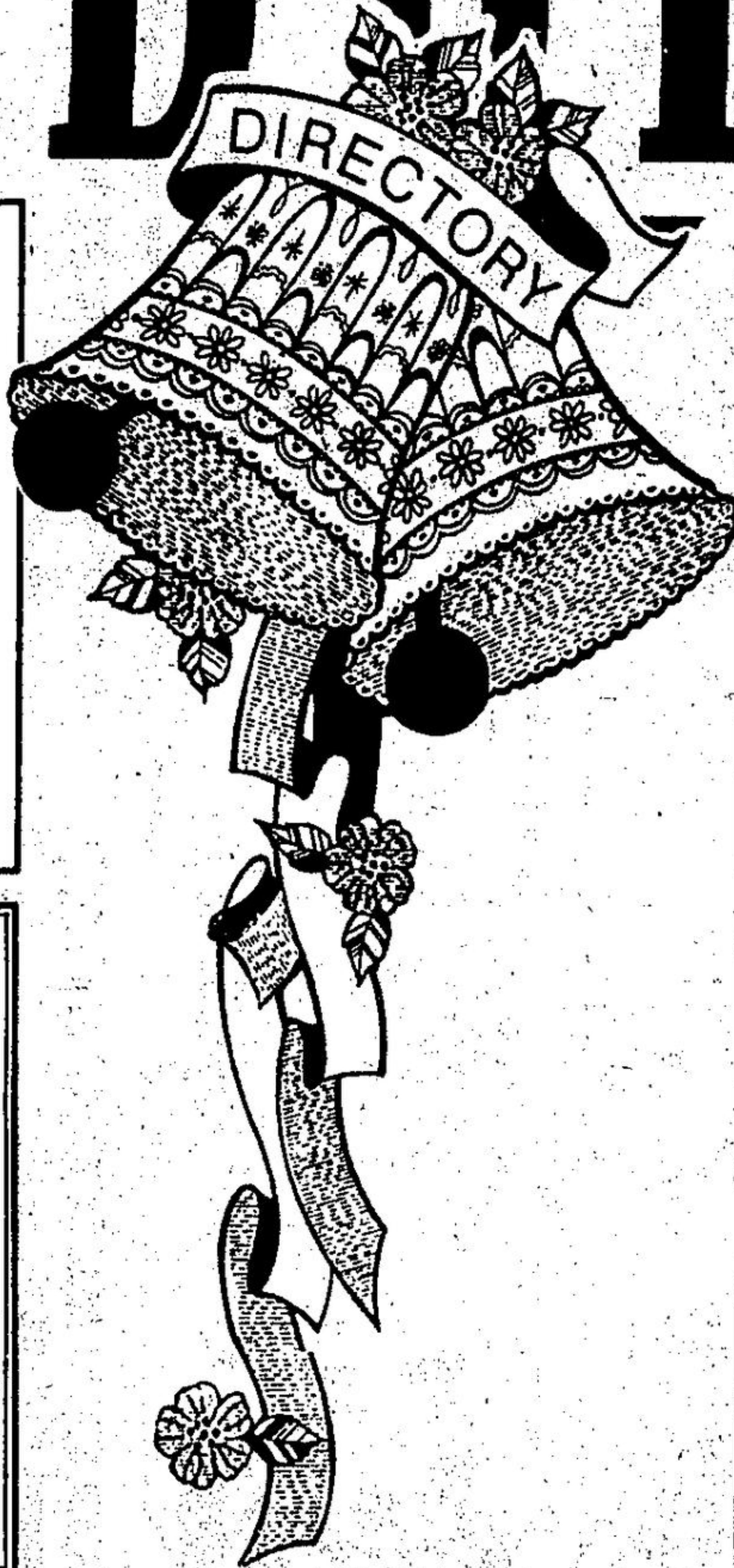
Hanks offers a little gen of a portrait in Turner; the guy is a freak

on one level, but a very nice person at the same time. It's not easy to make someone so compulsive seem real and likeable, but Hanks does it.

Mare Winningham is charming as the vet, a woman with a mind of her own, willing to go for what she wants. Reginald Veljohnson (he was the cop on the ground in *Die Hard*) is a joy as David, a detective who just wants peace and quiet, not murder and not to be vacuumed as he eats. Craig T. Nelson is very good as Chief Hyde, Turner's seemingly easy-going boss.

But the star of the film is certainly Beasley, a.k.a. Hooch. He's just the best thing on screen, whatever his breed. Few actors can say so much with their nose. This should be the beginning of a long career for Beasley.

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