

Willis' transformation into alcoholic cop thorough

16 BLOCKS

Starring Bruce Willis, Mos Def and David Morse

In theatres now

Bloated, deeply lined, scraggly bearded, downhearted — that's Mr. Willis when we meet him as Jack Mosley.

The transformation from rock-jawed action hero to struggling alcoholic cop is thorough and convincing from the way his shoulders droop to his look of loss.

He plays a pale and sweaty New York detective whose growing sense of uselessness has made him the shadow of his former self.



Anne Brodie

On Movies

He was a dedicated and effective member of the city's detective force, but life's events have worn him down and he's not fighting

back.

He has been drinking on the job and his long overnight shift is finished.

It's 8 a.m. and his boss asks him to accompany a felon from jail to the courthouse, a distance of about 16 blocks.

Mosley's in rough shape — he's drunk way too much and looks as though he's about to have a heart attack. But he agrees.

His charge is Eddie Bunker (Mr. Def), but he knows nothing about him and certainly doesn't care because he just doesn't care. Bunker's just a witness who needs to testify in a case.

Off they go, knowing they have 118 minutes to get 16 blocks.

Well, something's rotten in Denmark. And, the Lower East Side.

Mosley stops en route for a bottle, leaving the prisoner alone in the car.

When he returns, there's a gunman leaning in trying to cap the witness.

They escape and find shelter in a bar.

Out of nowhere appears his former partner Nugent (Mr. Morse) and a band of toughs who make it sickeningly clear Mosley and Bunker are about to die.

The prisoner is the only eyewitness to the brutal murder of an innocent young man, committed and covered up by six police officers.

In one revelatory moment, Mosley finds his soul. He springs back to life, to save the life of his charge.

It's 8.20 a.m.

This suspense thriller offers lots of goose bumps and twists and turns, heightened by the confined space of the journey, a kind of *Phonebooth* on wheels.

While it lacks some originality, *16 Blocks* does a decent job of creating rolling tension with a nice payoff.

Mr. Willis remains a magnetic force and Mr. Def is a delightful surprise, a sunny character genuinely befuddled by the events, but always sure in his heart that things will turn out for the best.

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