

'Booty Call' debuts at No. 4; Rosewood holds on to No. 10

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES - Mob movie "Donnie Brasco" knocked off "Star Wars" but couldn't touch "The Empire Strikes Back," which again had the top box office earnings for the weekend with \$12.6 million in ticket sales.

"Donnie Brasco," starring Al Pacino and Johnny Depp, grossed \$11.2 million in its opening to knock "Star Wars" out of second place, according to estimates released Sunday.

The first episode of the George Lucas space trilogy earned \$7 million, according to Exhibitor Relations Co., Inc. "Donnie Brasco" had the best per-screen average of the top 10 films at \$7,452.

Audiences for "Empire" and "Star Wars" dropped 43 percent and 37 percent respectively over the previous weekend. Those dips are within the range expected for new films, let alone re-releases.

The perils of Luke Skywalker and friends have aged well - and lucratively. "Star Wars," first released in 1977, has grossed \$447.9 million domestically when its refurbished re-release is counted.

"Empire" has taken in \$262.4 million theatrically since it debuted in 1980.

The weekend's only other major film debut was "Booty Call," a raunchy dating comedy that finished fourth with \$6.4 million.

Clint Eastwood's White



Tommy Davidson & Jamie Foxx star in BOOTY CALL

House murder thriller, "Absolute Power," was fifth with \$5.7 million, followed by "Dante's Peak." The volcano disaster film had \$5.1 million.

Next in line were "Vegas Vacation" with \$4.5 million, "Fools Rush In" at \$3.7 million and "Marvin's Room," which grossed \$3.5 million.

"Rosewood," in 10th place, grossed \$2.8 million, a drop of just 11 percent from the previous weekend. The movie about the destruction of a black Florida town in the 1920s has had generally good reviews.

Though out of the top 10, "Jerry Maguire" continued to amass cash with \$2.6 million for a 12-week take of \$135.1 million. Two Oscar-nominated independents, "The English Patient" and "Shine," grossed \$2.2 million and \$2.1 million, respectively.

Several films opened in limited release. "Smilla's Sense of

Snow," a thriller with Julia Ormond, had \$100,000 in ticket sales and the gambling drama "Hard Eight" had \$61,000.

Final weekend box office figures were to be released Monday.

The top 10 films from Friday through Sunday:

1. "The Empire Strikes Back," \$12.6 million.
2. "Donnie Brasco," \$11.2 million.
3. "Star Wars," \$7 million.
4. "Booty Call," \$6.4 million.
5. "Absolute Power," \$5.7 million.
6. "Dante's Peak," \$5.1 million.
7. "Vegas Vacation," \$4.5 million.
8. "Fools Rush In," \$3.7 million.
9. "Marvin's Room," \$3.5 million.
10. "Rosewood," \$2.8 million.

Movie shows north's part in slave trade

By Janet Kerlin
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PROVIDENCE, R.I. - Rhode Island might seem an odd place for Steven Spielberg to make a film about a 19th-century slave rebellion, but the nation's smallest state had a big role in the U.S. slave trade.

Rhode Island merchants controlled between 60 and 90 percent of the American trade in African slaves throughout most of the 18th century, according to Jay Coughtry, who explored the state's slave trade in his book "The Notorious Triangle."

Ship owners sent vessels mostly from Newport and Bristol, but also Warren and Providence, to the west coast of Africa and brought slaves to

the United States, West Indies and Cuba.

More than 100,000 Africans were taken aboard 934 Rhode Island vessels between 1725 to

1807, said Coughtry, who researched shipping documents for his book and teaches at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

More ships made the voyage, but documents likely have been destroyed by embarrassed family members of ship captains and others, Coughtry said Wednesday.

"The owners, the family members, had actually razored out the signatures of the family member. That's a telling sign. Northerners, New Englanders, don't want that stigma of any association of slavery because (New Englanders) turn out to be the most vocal abolitionists," Coughtry said.

Newport was the largest slave trading city in the 13 colonies, with the highest numbers of ships engaged in the business, said Bob Weisbord, history professor at the University of Rhode Island.

Still, Rhode Island's slave trading history isn't well known and isn't required in its public schools.

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Thursday, March 13 at 6:00 pm

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Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center
600 East Fourth Street

Please call 336-7600 to register for the Workshop or 336-2247 to speak at the Public Hearing.

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