

# These *Newton Boys*' actions get no reactions

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Features Editor

God bless those lovable Newton brothers. They may be felons, but good felons—they never killed anyone, though they may have punched and pistol-whipped a few. Bank robbers haven't been so cute and non-threatening since tan and toothy Redford and Newman, who made a much better stick-'em-up movie.

As in any criminal-as-hero western, the morality of *The Newton Boys* is iffy. The poor Texas Newtons never forget their roots, and only steal from the big banks who exploited them (even before Willis Newton, played by Matthew McConaughey, strikes it rich, he drops three of his four coins in the coffer of some performing orphans.) The two brothers, Willis and Dock (Vincent D'onofrio), that have done jail time by 1919, when the movie begins, are the wise and respected ones. Of the other two, Jess (Ethan Hawke) is a punk and a drunk (although awfully lovable—he receives the lightest sentence at the end, as a credit to

his gregarious demeanor), and Joe (Skeet Ulrich) is young, inexperienced, and too much molded by his Baptist father. The brothers lovably wonder when next Dock will break out of jail, and when he does he lives as high and wild as the rest of them, never fearing the descent of his jailers, who never appear.

Then again, the law of *The Newton Boys* is awfully evil. The most corrupt cops and bankers are the nicest guys. The Newtons justify their robbing with the facts that the banks are insured and nobody gets killed. Of course, the suffering of any big business will be handed down to its customers. Much is made of how the Newton-struck banks bilk their insurance companies; less is made of how these banks step up rates on the farmers they serve.

A few details distract from the events. Joe and Jess make money breaking horses rodeo-style, which reminds one of how H. Ross Perot used to tie a green horse to a tree and one of its legs to its body, which, after a few hours of balancing on three legs,

would leave it docile as a dog to riding. One supposes that these Newtons are hard-working, if not very resourceful. The film chooses to reduce most of the actual bank-robbing to a montage while dwelling on more dull Newton life, like posing for photos and driving. The Newtons hide from a search plane in a cornfield in broad daylight with their getaway car—how they arrived there is mysterious, since they'd have to cut a swath of corn with their car to get it there. The only serious violence (there is another episode, but not even the soundtrack takes it seriously) happens to Dock, and though the brothers manage to find a doctor for him they can't find a damp towel to clean up his very yecchy face. Julianne Margulies is endearing and glamorous as Louise, who, unfortunately, is written as a total weenie who returns time and again to Willis, and is saddled with a conveniently disappearing, reappearing son. The Willis-Louise love story is small, but not small enough.

The film's only saving graces are its actors and its basis in real

life. All four brothers and Dwight Yoakam as a nicely performed, helpful chemist are right on and unwavering in their accents. McConaughey wins his audience, Hawke improves his range and credibility to a viewer like me, Ulrich demonstrates he's more than a Depp look-alike (though he may have Depp's gifts), and D'onofrio, a talented and seasoned character actor, waits for the masculinity back-

lash to follow the DiCaprio rush. The closing credits roll over footage from a Newton documentary and a visit by little Joe Newton in 1980 to the Johnny Carson show. All Newtons lived past the age of 77, and Willis made it to 90, gleefully without remorse or shame until the end.

Also worth noting is that Durham, NC's Bad Livers write and perform most of the music.



Clockwise from left: Matthew McConaughey, Vincent D'onofrio, Ethan Hawke and Skeet Ulrich.

## 'Get on the Bus' to D.C.

OFFICE OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES  
AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

GET ON THE BUS and CRUISE TO LEADERSHIP SUCCESS! The North Carolina Association of Women in Education is coordinating a delegation of NC Women students to take a bus to the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders at Georgetown University in Washington D.C., June 4-6, 1998. The group will take the bus there and back. Accommodations and meals will be on the campus of Georgetown University. This will be an excellent opportunity for a Meredith student to attend a conference with nationally recognized women leaders from across the United States, and the student will be able to network with women leaders from all across our state.

Meredith College will be sponsoring scholarships for six students to attend the conference. The total cost for the conference will be no more than \$350 per

person. This amount includes transportation, lodging and most meals. The scholarships are worth \$300 each. All scholarship recipients will be responsible for contributing the remaining \$50, along with any additional spending money.

Applications may be picked up beginning Thursday, April 2, 1998 in the Office of Student Activities, 202 Cate Center and at the Information Desk. The application deadline is Friday, April 17 at 5:00 p.m. Applications should be turned in to the Office of Student Activities and Leadership Development. Call this office at X8338 with any questions.

NOTE: Interviews will be held for finalists the week of April 20, 1998. All finalists will be called to set up an interview during that week.

This trip is sponsored by the Creative Ideas Fund of Meredith College.

## To All Meredith Students:

Sophomore Class is having a  
Boxer Shorts Sale this Week!  
This pretty red-plaid flannel  
shorts have pockets and  
drawstring.

They also say:

"Meredith College"

\$9.00

Any ?s Call Leta Jo x7571 or Aida x7769