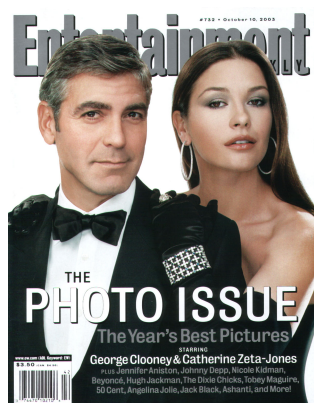


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+ Movies



WASHINGTON'S CHIEF OF POLICE TAKES THE FLORIDA HEAT

OUT OF TIME

Denzel Washington, Eva Mendes, Sanaa Lathan, Dean Cain
PG-13, 105 mins. (MGM)

Secrets and lies
conspire in a sleek,
sexy crime thriller

Denzel Washington has played noble, and he has played evil, but *Out of Time*, Carl Franklin's entertainingly deft sleight-of-hand thriller, invites us to watch him in a new mode—squirming with anxiety—and the sweat of high pressure looks good on him. Set on the sleepy tropical island of Banyan Key, Fla., just down the coconut grove from Miami, this is one of those genuine Hitchcockian contraptions in which the hero may not be guilty, but he's not quite innocent, either. In the act of escaping the predicament fate has laid out for him, he's forced to confront—and pay for—his sins.

means raiding a police safe that holds \$480,000 in confiscated drug money. Whitlock isn't stealing the cash, just borrowing it. Since he's doing it to help save a life, who could really blame him?

Washington, in cocksure-lothario mode, woos the audience as effortlessly as he does his costar. It's fun to see him go nose to nose with Cain, boastfully flaunting his adultery even as he denies it. Washington is so commanding in these scenes that it never occurs to you he's playing a sucker. It would be unfair to give away much of what happens in *Out of Time*, but suffice it to say that Whitlock ends up investigating a twisted thicket of foul play. He then realizes that the clues have all been set up to point to him. The audience knows he's being framed, but with the inquiry under way, he has to lie with such split-second frantic cunning that he has the *aura* of a guilty man—

trying to fake a cool facade as he's quietly juggling technical tools (computer, cell phone, fax machine) to make sure his name doesn't pop up on incriminating phone records, seeing the actor at his peak. He has to look mellow for his role as cops and, at the same time, vovous enough to show *us* what he's really thinking, and it's the balancing act that lends the film its hum of tension. *Out of Time* has its routine elements, but Franklin, as a director, has a decade failing to live up to the promise of *One False Move*, a 1992 sleeper. The wait is over. Pleased to report, is now

B+ —Owen Gleiberman

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