

## Sea of Love ★★★

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**Year of Release:** 1989

Review by Randy Parker

**Country:** USA

**Verdict:** See It

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Thanks in large part to an intelligent script and a talented cast, *Sea of Love* breathes new life into a tired genre: the serial murder thriller.

Al Pacino plays a 40-something New York detective going through a mid-life crisis. To complicate matters, he's also in the midst of investigating a series of gruesome homicides. One of the suspects is a sexually-charged single mother, played by Ellen Barkin. And what do you know: before you can say *Jagged Edge*, they're immersed in a passionate love affair.

*Sea of Love* easily absorbs you into a web of psychological intrigue. Barkin is truly enigmatic but not at the cost of her character's authenticity. The movie takes great joy in playing mind games with you, and it keeps you guessing as to whether Barkin is in fact the killer. As usual, Barkin brings to the screen her own unique brand of sexual energy. She's as alluring and ravishing as ever, and her performance is outstanding.

For the first time this decade, Pacino has a role worthy of his talents. His character is on one hand sensitive and vulnerable and on the other alcohol-

ic and self-destructive. The high strung detective is no saint, but at the same time he's a decent bloke if you get past his rough edges. Pacino's strong performance should allow him to reclaim his stature as one of Hollywood's premier leading men. John Goodman of the hit TV sitcom "Roseanne" plays Pacino's partner, bringing to the role considerable charm and charisma.

The individual whom we should really thank for this highly entertaining and superbly crafted thriller is screenwriter Richard Price. He furnishes the movie with a rich mixture of mystery, character, erotic tension, and, most surprisingly, laughs—big ones. Sure the writer commits a few errors and stumbles a little at the end, but in the balance his dialogue and story line are right on the mark.

I guess *Sea of Love* is fairly suspenseful since the capacity crowd jumped at least three times. But I wouldn't really know because I was so busy trying to outguess the movie and solve the mystery that I barely noticed the suspense. Did she do it or didn't she?