

'Young Guns II' starts out slowly, but ends with bang

By Mark Munn
Staff Reporter

Those lawless desperadoes are back in "Young Guns II," director Geoff Murphy's follow-up to 1988's "Young Guns." The film brings back the three surviving "Regulators," Billy the Kid (Emilio Estevez), Josiah "Doc" Scurlock (Kiefer Sutherland) and Chavez y Chavez (Lou Diamond Phillips).

Joining the gang are a fourteen-and-a-half year-old orphan named Tom O'Folliard (Balthazar Getty), the Kid's crazy pal Arkansas Dave Rudabaugh (Christian Slater) and a soft-spoken farmer named Hendry William French (Alan Ruck).

The movie is a recollection of a portion of Billy's life, as told to a 1920s reporter by an aging William H. Bonney--a.k.a. Billy the Kid. The Kid still is seeking a full pardon from the governor for his crimes.

The setting for the story is once again, Lincoln County, New Mexico Territory, around 1878. The area has changed since the Regulators last rode its trails. Corrupt politicians and ruthless cattle kings are now governing the territory.

One of Billy's old friends, Pat Garrett (William Peterson), is appointed sheriff of Lincoln County and hired to track down and kill his long-time pal. This leads the Kid and his Regulators down a perfidious trail toward Old Mexico and freedom.

But Billy's unbounded ego won't allow him to leave the New Mexico Territory. He knew he would be "just another gringo" if he went south. Instead, he constantly leads his gang into near-death adventures.

The Kid is brought in and sentenced to be hanged. Of course he escapes with the help of a beautiful seductress. He meets up with his nearly dead, loyal friend Chavez and the now uninterested farmer, Hendry French. Billy suggests they head for Canada, but Chavez must meet his

"spirit horse."

Once again, Garrett tracks down the Kid, this time shooting him in the back. Or does he?

"Young Guns II" starts slow, but ends with a bang. Emilio Estevez's "old man" voice gets a bit annoying at times, but overall, he makes for a very convincing Billy the Kid. He brings out Billy's sense of humor which other actors in the past could not see.

It's hard to distinguish between the good guys and the bad guys in this

movie. Billy's charismatic, headstrong personality makes him seem to be the hero.

Don't forget about Mr. Lyracist himself, the new king of rock 'n' roll, pretty-boy Jon Bon Jovi, who plays the theme song to the movie. Gee, that made the whole movie worthwhile for me.

"Young Guns II" is a must see in a field of forgettable flicks. With plenty of action, sensuality, disloyalty, loyalty, youth, corruption and Jon Bon Jovi, what more could you want?



Above: From left, Kiefer Sutherland, Alan Ruck, Emilio Estevez, Lou Diamond Phillips, Balthazar Getty and Christian Slater.

Below: Estevez returns as the charismatic outlaw Billy the Kid in "Young Guns II."



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