

## ● REALLY BIG SHOW

# Boomtown

## Three sides to a story



Donny Wahlberg (right) and Mykelti Williamson are partners in the innovative new cop series with all sorts of angles.

**Boomtown**  
Sunday, 10 p.m., NBC

**E**VERYONE agrees: the fractured, "Rashomon"-like crime drama "Boomtown" is the best new show of the season. But is that a good thing or a bad thing?

"The ash heap of history is littered with the bodies of the best new show of the season," says creator Graham Yost, who wrote the much-imitated action flick "Speed" and worked on the HBO miniseries "Band of Brothers."

"But at least it gives us a shot."

One person, at least, is certain to come out unscathed. With his leading role as Det. Joel Sears, Donnie Wahlberg graduates from the new kid on the block to leading man.

"There's something about Donnie that just draws you in," says Yost, who wrote

the role with Wahlberg in mind.

"It's not just a gift," says Wahlberg, who is married with two children. "It shows you've really earned respect."

The 33-year-old Boston native—who broke through in Hollywood's mind with his haunted turn in "The Sixth Sense"—is making the most of that respect by trusting his instincts when it comes to the suggestive, fractured scripts.

"In the pilot, there's a scene where I'm interrogating a guy who's accused of shooting a six-year-old kid," says Wahlberg. "My character is supposed to be really sharp. But he's got a six-year-old kid and I've got a nine-year-old and a one-year-old."

"I started to think about how I would feel if some guy came in all cocky after shooting a six-year-old kid and in one take I just snapped. And that was the take they used."

Wahlberg has always been lucky to work with the best: his second role, after all, was in Ron Howard's "Ransom" starring with Mel Gibson. But it wasn't until he completely set aside music and focused on acting that Wahlberg began to make the most of his talent.

Now, after rising to overwhelming fame as a teenage pop idol in New Kids on the Block and shepherding his younger brother Mark into the music industry (and eventual superstardom), Wahlberg is finally comfortable with what he's accomplishing.

"I went to the dentist last week," says Wahlberg, "and when it asked for occupation, I put actor down." He laughs.

"I thought about it for a second: I never put singer; I'd put entertainer or musician. But I thought about it and put actor and I felt good about it." —Michael Giltz