

## NYC Noir

**D**eadline at Dawn. No Way to Treat a Lady. Killer's Kiss. Film noir is a tough racket, and who better to stand toe-to-toe with the Film Forum retrospective (11/18–1/12) than director **John Dahl**? He's given a critically acclaimed jolt to the genre with *Red Rock West* (1993) and his current hit *The Last Seduction*, which features Linda Fiorentino as the kind of dame who would give even Barbara Stanwyck pause. "I haven't seen half these movies," admits Dahl as he scans a list of the 62 movies in the series. "I always thought the title *I Wake Up Screaming* (12/6 and 12/7) was hilarious; I just loved the absurdity of it. I finally rented the movie about two years ago." How was it? "It's good. I hate to say this about *noir*, but I think a lot of times you have to go through a lot of them before you find one that you really like. Some of them don't really stand up because, remember, these were really low-budget movies that Hollywood was putting together quite quickly. *Sorry, Wrong Number* (12/6 and 12/7), though, has got to be one of my favorite *noir* movies. It's got great tension and Barbara Stanwyck is terrific. That one really holds up to the test of time." So do the cynical edges and happily amoral attitudes of *noir's* most memorable characters, such as the sycophantic publicist played by Tony Curtis in *Sweet Smell of Success* (11/18–11/24), the first film in the series.



"Most of us don't have that much malice in our hearts," says Dahl. "I think it's always shocking, the depths that people will go to, the brutality that individuals will inflict. That's part of the appeal of these movies. For me, anyway." MICHAEL GILTZ