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1961 • *Yojimbo (Yojimbo)*

pr: Kurosawa Prod./Toho; orig. sc: Ryuzo Kikushima and Kurosawa; 'scope ph: Kazuo Miyagawa; music: Masaru Sato; cast: Toshiro Mifune, Eijiro Tono, Tatsuya Nakadai, Isuzu Yamada, Daisuke Kato et al. Almost hard-boiled Western in samurai guise, and Kurosawa at his best. Two gangs are fighting for control of a feudal period town when a super-swordsman masterless samurai arrives. Basing himself in a drinking stall to view the action, he forces a showdown in which the two sides wipe each other out by selling his services to both of them. Softhearted touches as the hero reunites a woman kept as collateral with her husband and baby and sends a farm boy back to his parents. Brutal humor largely centered on a coffinmaker and his wares and a variety of other caricatures. *KJ #2*; Venice Film Festival Best Actor (Mifune). (FC, AB)