

"CADDYSHACK"

RODNEY DANGERFIELD --

SHOPPING AROUND IN THE YOUTH MARKET

Rodney Dangerfield still can't get over his inclusion -- with Chevy Chase, Ted Knight and Bill Murray -- among the comic co-stars of "Caddyshack."

"I'm told it's a youth market picture and these guys are all very popular with the kids," he says. "So what am I doing here?"

The answer may have been provided by a critic who recently wrote that "Rodney Dangerfield is so far out, he's in." Confirmation was provided by the 1978 Harvard graduating class which invited him to serve as its commencement speaker.

"I don't know the first thing about existentialism," he told the graduates in his familiar growl. "But I think it could be my bag."

In "Caddyshack," an Orion Pictures comedy for release through Warner Bros., he takes a few divots out of the country-club set as a loud-mouthed land-developer who gate-crashes a snooty golf course.

His bizarre behavior is matched only by his golf gear, including a golf bag equipped with a beer tap, radar screen

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and hi-fi stereo system. When he takes out his putter on the first green, his opponents are shocked to discover that it's been fitted with a Norden bomb sight.

He took the role, he says, because he wanted to "hang around with some class guys, for a change" and because he enjoyed the script, co-authored by producer Douglas Kenney, director Harold Ramis (who co-wrote "Animal House") and "Saturday Night Live" scripter Brian Doyle-Murray.

But he had problems, he admits, adjusting to a "day job." After filming a "Caddyshack" golf match which involved hiking across the 140 acres of the Rolling Hills Golf Course, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, he wearily asked:

"You mean people actually do this for fun? When they could be sitting in an air-conditioned bar, boozing it up?" His basset eyes rolled heavenward in wonder. "I'm in serious danger of catching good health."

Dangerfield has spent much of his life in saloons, most recently the one he opened in mid-Manhattan which became a mecca for celebrities ranging from Johnny Carson and Bob Hope to Joe Namath and the members of Led Zeppelin.

It was there that he suffered the ultimate putdown in his lifelong search -- like a wayward Diogenes -- for some modicum of respect.

"I was about to go on stage when this beautiful girl tapped me on the shoulder and asked, 'Mr. Dangerfield, could I have your autograph and some more butter?'"

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But it was, at least, a more respectable reception than he often receives during a long, uphill struggle through the comedy ranks, under the name of Jack Roy.

"I played one club that was so far out in the sticks, my act was reviewed in Field and Stream," he recalls. "The parking lot was full of ox-carts."

Now, he headlines the top nighteries in Vegas, Tahoe and Reno, where his appearances invariably draw a youthful crowd, and where he is apt to commiserate on the generation gap between them.

"When I was your age, I was very, very romantic," he told one such audience. "Then I got older and eating replaced sex. You should see my apartment. I've got a mirror over the kitchen table."

Will Dangerfield make any more movies, following his whack at the world of golf in "Caddyshack?"

"Yeah," he replied, "I think I'd like to do a vampire picture next. They're not supposed to go out in the sun, either."

"Caddyshack," a Jon Peters production for Orion Pictures release through Warner Bros., stars Chevy Chase, Rodney Dangerfield, Ted Knight, Michael O'Keefe and Bill Murray as Carl. Produced by Douglas Kenney with Jon Peters serving as executive producer. the film was directed by Harold Ramis and written by Brian Doyle-Murray Harold Ramis, Douglas Kenney. Original songs are by Kenny Loggins, with music composed by Johnny Mandel.