

CINEMA

Streetwise

A film by Martin Bell. Mary Ellen Mark and Cheryl McCall; directed by Martin Bell.

Tiny has been a prostitute for over a year. She is 14 and had her first period three months ago. Rat is an undersized 17-year-old boy living in an abandoned hotel with his partner/mentor/buddy Jack, an older fellow who taught him to "dumpster dive" and live off the streets. DeWayne, 16, panhandles on the streets and visits his last surviving family member, his father, in jail.

These and six other kids are the subjects of *Streetwise*, a riveting documentary on the street urchins of Seattle, children and teens on their own in downtown Seattle, surviving through street smarts and scams.

Streetwise began as an article

REVIEW

for *Life* magazine. Staff writer Cheryl McCall and photographer Mary Ellen Mark researched an article on runaway children in April, 1983, and returned a few months later with a small film crew, led by British filmmaker/cinematographer Martin Bell, to put the personalities and their experiences on celluloid. After two months, the filmmakers took the 56 hours of film footage and 26 hours of interviews and pared them down to 92 minutes of character study and lifestyle exploration.

These kids are streetwise survivors, youngsters forced to grow up fast yet still children at heart. Taking a break from begging in the street, Rat and DeWayne will playfully wrestle around, and



Streetwise "Rat" at home in the streets of Seattle.

Tiny, after loading up on make-up, will put on her roller skates and start off down the corridor of Rat's hotel, her miniature puppy yapping behind.

Some of the older street kids have already been assimilated too well. While one might hope that Rat and Tiny might escape their predicaments, people like Shadow, an 18-year-old "play-boy," or Lulu, a 19-year-old lesbian who patrols the streets as the self appointed protector of the runaways, are too much a part of the streets to ever leave. Patty and Munchkin are a street couple whose disregard of outside help or the outside world will prevent any chance their social worker has of getting them off the streets.

It's a terrifying world Bell and company present in *Streetwise*, terrifying because the kids in it treat it so matter-of-factly. Their existence is not all their doing either. Though a few of the kids are simply middle class teens trying to rebel from a humdrum suburban existence, most of the street kids are really escaping from intolerable situations. Some

are from abusive homes, some from broken families, some have literally been rejected by their parents. Those kids who still keep in touch with their parents aren't a whole lot better off. Tiny's mother says that her forays into prostitution are "just a phase she's going through." DeWayne's father lectures his kid on growing up decent while serving a sentence for theft and arson (he's a two-time loser). Thirteen-year-old Shellie has a mother that resents her because Shellie's father raped her as a child.

As brutal as the street is, it is more home to these kids than their families ever were. The street is their home and the relationships they find provide the trust and love they never received at home.

Streetwise is a powerful film that captures the children and their lives in an unobtrusive, slick style that allows the actions to stand on their own and the children to speak for themselves. It chronicles an aspect of life that America would rather ignore, and for that it is invaluable.

—Sean Axmaker

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NOW showing

Back to the Future: A boy trips back to the past, and meets the teenagers who'll become his parents. West 11th (342-4142) and Springfield Quad (726-9073).

The Black Cauldron: Sword and sorcery stuff from Disney's animation studio. It's been a long time. Walt. West 11th (342-4142) and Springfield Quad (726-9073).

The Bride: Dr. Frankenstein creates a mate for his monster, then wants her affections for himself. Sting is Doc. Jennifer Beals plays the lovely bride. McDonald (344-4343).

Cocoon: Old people become young again through contact with benevolent aliens. Stars Maureen Stapleton (*Reds*), Hume Cronyn (*World According to Garp*), Don Ameche and Jessica Tandy. Directed by Ron Howard (*Splash*). Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Emerald Forest: Cultures collide as a man searches the Amazon jungle for his long lost son. Based on a true story. Directed by John Boorman (*Excalibur*, *Deliverance*). With *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*. Mayflower (345-1022).

E.T.: Steve Spielberg's lovable, mega-money-making alien finds a temporary home in suburban America. At the Oakway (342-5351).

Fright Night: Roddy McDowall goes hunting for a vampire, in case you haven't had enough. With *Weird Science*. Cinema World (342-6536).

Lifeforce: Science-fiction ghouls on the loose. Directed by Tobe Hooper (*Polyester*). With *Rambo—First Blood Part II*. Fine Arts (747-2201).

Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome: This is Mel Gibson's third film as Australia's postapocalyptic hero. Eternal rock star Tina Turner provides the challenge. Be ready for lots of violent action. With *Emerald Forest*. Mayflower (345-1022).

My Science Project: Another teen sci-fi comedy. This time a high school boy builds something from extraterrestrial junk. Cinema World (342-6536).

Pee-wee's Big Adventure: TV nerd Pee-wee Herman stumbles onto the silver screen, where he's out to recover stolen goods. Valley River Twin (686-8633).

Pumping Iron II: The Women: A fascinating documentary of the female bodybuilding championship. Women as they are not often seen; goals that are not often desired. At its heart, a re-examination of femininity. Shows at the Bijou (686-2458).

Rambo—First Blood Part II: If you liked *Code of Silence*, you'll love *Rambo*. This film picks up where *First Blood* left off—that is, with Sylvester Stallone in prison for shooting apart a whole town. The government hires Rambo to go to Vietnam and get proof of POW's. With *Lifeforce* at Fine Arts (747-2201).

Real Genius: A brilliant college prankster gets even with a nasty professor. A mind is a terrible thing to waste. Valley River Twin (686-8633).

Return of the Living Dead: Punk rockers rise from the grave. Guess they couldn't rest with that soundtrack playing. West 11th (342-4142).

The Rocky Horror Picture Show: The King of the kinky cult musicals plays Eugene for the umpteenth time. Late show through Saturday at the Bijou (686-2458).

Silverado: A real Western, for Pete's sake, with touches of humor and tenderness. Written and directed by Lawrence Kasdan (*The Big Chill*), and featuring a fine cast. At Cinema World (342-6536).

Streetwise: An exceptional documentary of run-away and thrown-away children surviving by any means on the streets of Seattle. Note: This film opens the 1985 Eugene International Film Festival at Cinema 7 (687-0733).

Summer Rental: John Candy and family have a stressful vacation at the beach. Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Volunteers: Tom Hanks and John Candy, Hollywood's busiest comic actors, escape to Thailand via the Peace Corps. Cinema World (342-6536).

Weird Science: The "perfect woman" is created by two teenage boys. Experts, I suppose. With *Fright Night* at Cinema World (342-6536).

Year of the Dragon: Mystery and ultra-violence amidst New York City's oriental mafia. Director Michael Cimino (*The Deer Hunter*) is hoping for a comeback after his disastrous *Heaven's Gate*. —Michael Sussman

CINEMA 7 presents the
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AUGUST 16-22
STREETWISE
Directors: Martin Bell, Mary Ellen Mark, Cheryl McCall (USA 1984) 35 mm 92 min.
Shows: Fri. thru Sun. 7:30 & 9:30 pm; Mon. thru Thur. 7:00 & 8:50 pm; Sun. matinee 4:30 pm.
To open the Festival we are pleased to present the critically acclaimed *STREETWISE*. 1984 Oscar nominee—Best Documentary. *STREETWISE* is an extraordinary movie about runaway, abused and abandoned children on the streets of downtown Seattle. Incredibly moving and frank, we meet and learn about young people in this shadow culture, whose toughness and resiliency impress us, even as their stories break our hearts. CINEMA 21
"STREETWISE, one of the finest documentary films ever made." Siskel & Ebert, AT THE MOVIES

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