

Time on your hands? Check out new video releases

By Lucas J. Gutman
Emerald Contributor

For those nights when a good movie sounds like the best way to spend a couple of hours, here's a review list of some of the most recently released videos:

★ 1/2

The Perfect Weapon

He slices, he dices, he chops, he socks — yes, it's Jeff Speakman. The generic hero for the '90s and the latest attempt by a studio to create a Steven Seagal clone. Stop me if you've heard this before. Believe me, you have. Speakman plays the master of the newest form of kung fu, whatever that may be today. His old master gets killed by an Asian gang and it is up to Speakman to stop the nasty thugs. The rest is a forgettable blur. But hey, let's face it, you don't rent this movie expecting *The Last Emperor*.

★★★

The Doors

This is an odd, eerie, compelling and consistently disturbing journey through the mind and life of a seriously flawed genius — Jim Morrison. Val Kilmer is absolutely chilling in his dead-on performance of the tortured soul who related to others through his poetry — poetry that was often set to music. Although director Oliver Stone is obliged to tell the story of the band's rise to fame, the focus of the movie is aimed squarely at Morrison. There is little attention or credit given to the other members of the band who are often portrayed as people who got in Morrison's way. The hallucinogenic quality that the film has in the theater will probably be diminished on video. Although long-winded and ponderous at times, it is fascinating to watch.

★★ 1/2

Waiting For the Light

Shirley MacLaine is perfectly cast as the eccentric aunt who moves in with Teri Garr and her children to bring some magic into the small town they reside in. Although firmly rooted in the conventions of a sweet family movie, both Garr and MacLaine bring enough substance to their characters that they make the film interesting. In order to get a mean neighbor to lighten up, MacLaine and the kids rig a ghost in his orchard so that the kids can eat from the trees. He misinterprets the ghost as an angel and creates a stir in the town bringing tabloids from all around. There's not much edge to the material, but it is an entertaining bit of fluff.

★★★

La Femme Nikita

The first hour and fifteen minutes are so slick and dangerous that it's like being sliced with a thin, hot blade. It's a sharp and fast film. At the end,

it's obvious the filmmakers are looking for a way out, but overall, it works. Anne Parillaud stars as the violently explosive woman who is kidnapped by a French spy organization after her talent for killing is noticed when she takes out a multitude of cops, court reporters and innocent bystanders. After an unknown amount of time, she is brainwashed to the point that she is sent out to commit homi-

cide for reasons she is not told against people she does not know. The great tension in this movie comes when she falls in love and tries to keep her life as a killing machine a secret from her lover. Although it could be considered a feminist film, it's also a kind of thinking person's *Terminator*, featuring a woman who has more control over her world than most men or women.

★★★ 1/2

Rescuers Down Under

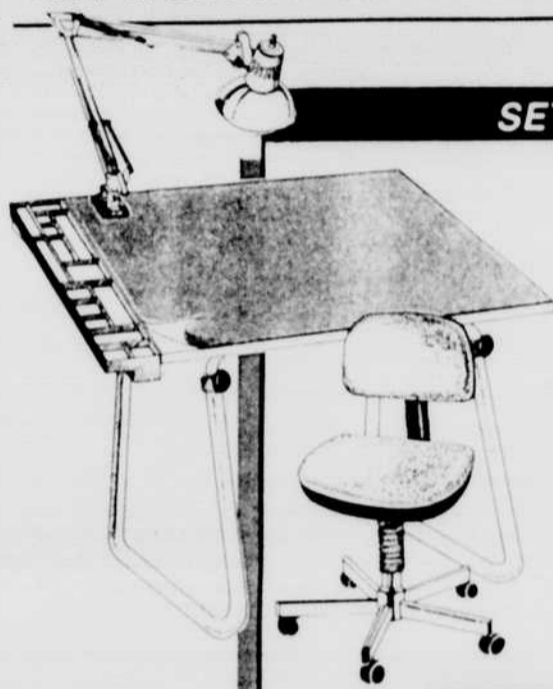
Disney has recently made afternoon cartoons worth watching again, featuring adventurous stories and characters with depth. This is along those lines, with the added bonus of animation that rivals the best Disney feature films. The aerial shots are breathtaking, quite a feat for something that is essentially a string of drawings. The stars of

the original *Rescuers*, Eva Gabor and Bob Newhart, are reunited as Bianca and Bernard. They answer the call of a little Australian boy who has been kidnapped by an evil poacher bent on capturing a rare eagle. The action is fast and the dialogue is witty. Kids and adults will both find plenty to enjoy in this feature which was unfairly overlooked in its theatrical release.

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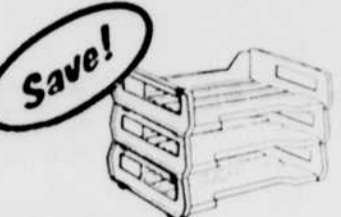
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