



8 WOMEN

A fabulous cast of buxom French women fill the rural 1950s mansion of Marcel and Gaby (Catherine Deneuve). But when the beloved (or is he?) patriarch is murdered, which of the eight resident babes is responsible? Sapphism abounds in director François Ozon's *Water Drops on Burning Rocks* pastiche of colorful musical scores, dark comedy and back-stabbing accusations. Although Ozon continues his habit of inserting inappropriate material for the genre, anticipating Deneuve getting it on with her gorgeous foil (Fanny Ardant) is worth the price of the ticket.

—Lisa Bradshaw

HEAVEN

Heaven is hell. Cate Blanchett certainly looks good as a bald-headed bomber, and her puppy-eyed boytoy Giovanni Ribisi is equally fetching. But they're trapped in a ponderous movie that tries vainly to inject pathos into its tired tale of lovers on the lam. Blanchett completists and fans of Euro-angst are *Heaven's* only hope.

—Gary Morris

IGBY GOES DOWN

A sort of counterculture coming-of-age story about a juvenile delinquent (Kieran Culkin, channeling Robert Downey Jr.) and a bunch of other unique, complex characters who come in and out of his messed-up life: his caustic mother (Susan Sarandon), despicable brother (Ryan

Phillippe), JAP girlfriend (Claire Danes) and questionable mentor (Jeff Goldblum). An incredible debut for writer/director Burr Steers.

—Jim Radosta

MOONLIGHT MILE

A young woman's murder leaves her fiancé (Jake Gyllenhaal) in the painful position of helping her parents (Dustin Hoffman and Susan Sarandon) grieve while beginning the inevitable process of detachment. Unfortunately, the touching moments are outnumbered by vague dialogue, awkward silences, unrealistic situations, a tedious realty subplot and a nauseating courtroom scene.

—JR

RED DRAGON

The Hannibal Lecter franchise miraculously is redeemed thanks to director Brett Ratner (*The Family Man*), producer Dino De Laurentiis (*Barbarella*) and a stellar cast, including Ralph Fiennes' terrifying performance as the titular serial killer. Sure, some of the Profiling 101 dialogue seems awfully familiar, but if you consider this is a prequel, technically all that stuff we learned in *The Silence of the Lambs* has yet to happen.

—JR

THE RULES OF ATTRACTION

James Van Der Beek proves he might have

a career after *Dawson's Creek* goes off the air in this satire about horny college students—including the impossibly gorgeous Ian Somerhalder (*Life as a House*) as a gay hottie—based on the Bret Easton Ellis novel. Writer/director Roger Avary (*Killing Zoe*) creatively interlocks all of the characters and isn't afraid to blend smart dialogue, candid sex and disturbing violence.

—JR



Maggie Gyllenhaal makes another clerical error in *Secretary*

boundaries of the professional. As she learns

SECRETARY

Finally—a movie about B/D/S/M that doesn't play it for comic relief or as a freaky perversion (such as the recent awful queer film festival offering *Luster*). Maggie Gyllenhaal and the constantly underrated James Spader are Oscar-worthy as a secretary and boss respectively crossing the

- ☁ dud, bottom of the bag
- ☁☁ only if you're really hungry
- ☁☁☁ good effort, pass the salt
- ☁☁☁☁ mmmm, tasty!
- ☁☁☁☁☁ get the big tub o' corn

to do it right, he struggles with notions of the immoral. You'll keep waiting for the film to screw it all up, but it never does.

—LB

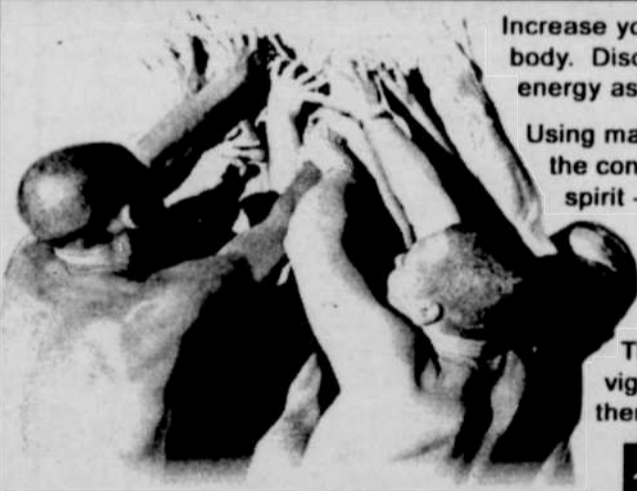
WHITE OLEANDER

A teen girl (Alison Lohman) enters the ridiculous foster care system after her murderous mom (Michelle Pfeiffer) goes to jail. Surprisingly unsentimental for an Oprah Book Club adaptation, director Peter Kosminsky's film is filled with memorable characters and strong performances, especially Robin Wright Penn and Renée Zellweger as two flawed guardians. How refreshing to see a chick flick that isn't polluted by Hollywood fakes like Sandra Bullock and Ashley Judd!

—JR



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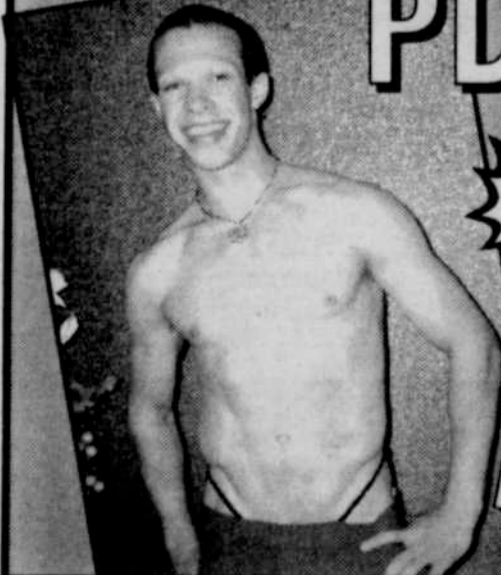
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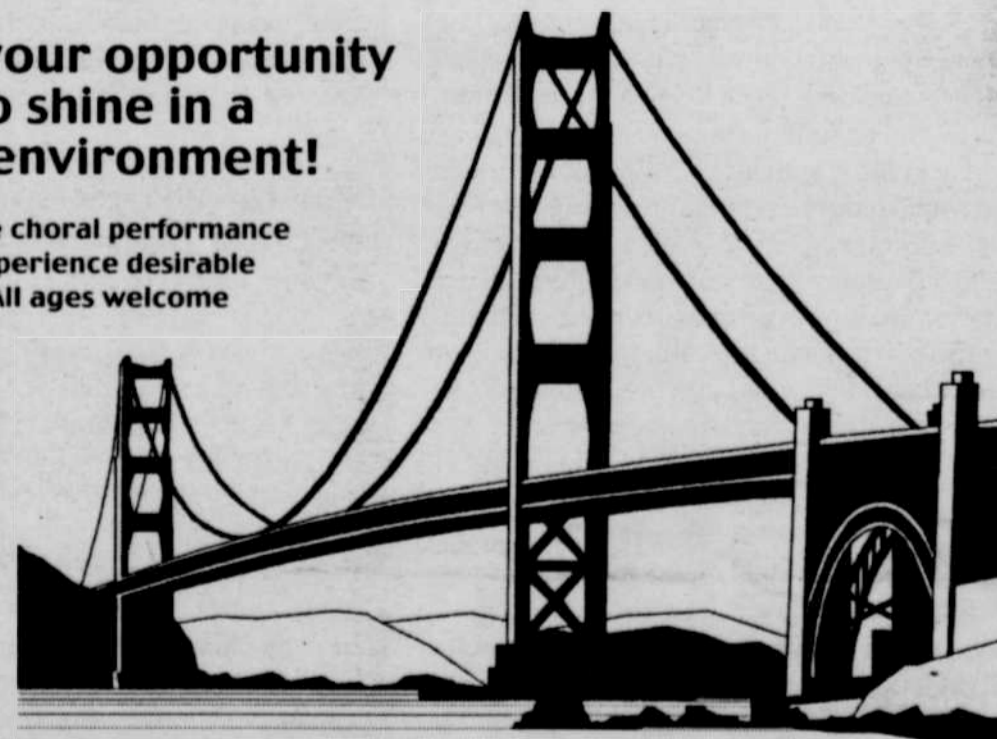
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