



ANGER MANAGEMENT

Nobody escapes unscathed from this disaster: gay lawyers, lesbian porn stars, trans prostitutes, fat people, even fat felines! But the biggest victims are audience members anticipating a coherent comedy starring Adam Sandler and Jack Nicholson as, respectively, yet another bland loose canon and his beret-wearing therapist.

—Jim Radosta

BETTER LUCK TOMORROW

Like its cult hit *Election*, this new release from MTV Films possesses effective surreal imagery and the conspicuous (yet legitimate) message that once you act on a decision, you can't go back. Co-writer and director Justin Lin (*Shopping for Fangs*) portrays everyday racism and suburban boredom through Ben (Parry Shen), a brilliant Asian teen-ager who has everything except that elusive cool quality he finds when he and three friends begin engaging in theft, drug dealing and various "deals." The sophisticated knowledge of technology and distinct absence of parents highlight the lack of direction and search for excitement of this growing population of privileged and apathetic youth.

—Lisa Bradshaw

HOLES

Stanley Yelnats (Shia LaBeouf) is sent to a camp for troubled teens in this touching film based on the best-selling novel by Louis

Sachar. The kids aren't cookie-cutter caricatures, the adults (Sigourney Weaver, Jon Voight, Patricia Arquette) don't phone in their performances, and the plot is complex and revelatory. The best children's adventure since *The Goonies*.

—JR

MORVERN CALLAR

Samantha Morton is captivating as a young Scottish woman (whose unusual name gives the film, and the book on which it was based, its title) who claims her boyfriend's novel as her own after his suicide. Director Lynne Ramsay (*Ratcatcher*) indulges our visual and aural senses in a way unique to contemporary cinema; without contrived sleekness, she singles out the beauty and strangeness in every image and circumstance. It's exhilarating.

—Christopher McQuain

PHONE BOOTH

It's doing gangbusters at the box office, but that doesn't make this psychological thriller from gay director Joel Schumacher (*Flawless, A Time to Kill*) any better. Colin Farrell plays a New York promotions professional who gets stuck in a phone booth at the mercy of a nearby sniper, who has specifically chosen him based on his "sins." (Think *Seven* on a street corner.) Also in shooting range is the victim's wife and stereotypical calm, understanding cop (a wasted Forest Whitaker). A great idea is blown with a weak script and the constant nagging feeling that at the very beginning of the phone conversation, anyone would have just hung up and walked away.

—LB

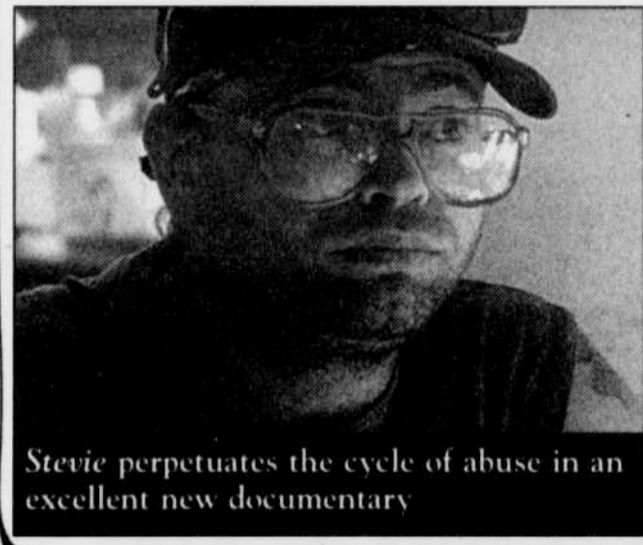
SPUN

Crystal meth junkies snort, inject and twitch throughout this Eugene-set film by Swedish director Jonas Åkerlund, whose manic style puts the audience directly into the head of an addict. The performers chew the scenery with delight—especially Deborah Harry as a kick-ass dyke and Eric Roberts as a toupeed chicken hawk—but the thread holding the whole story together soon wears thin.

—JR

STEVIE

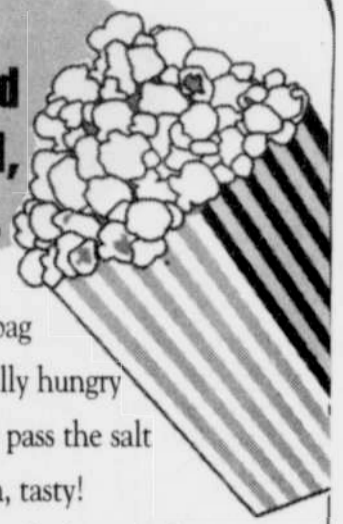
Steve James (*Hoop Dreams*) just wanted to revisit the titular subject years after mentoring him in the Big Brothers-Big Sisters program. But his raw, balanced, engrossing documentary quickly takes on a life of its own, examining the cycle of abuse, the



Stevie perpetuates the cycle of abuse in an excellent new documentary

What's Poppin'?

What's popped and what's flopped, in a theater near you.



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

flaws of social work and even the exploitive nature of films like this one. If you never bought into the bullshit drama and manipulative editing of reality television, welcome to the real world.

—JR

VIEW FROM THE TOP

Gwyneth Paltrow slums it in this appallingly unfunny, uninspiring tale of upwardly mobile stewardesses with hearts of gold and brains of lead. Mike Myers falls flat as a cross-eyed instructor, Candice Bergen follows up her embarrassing turn as a ball-busting mayor in *Sweet Home Alabama* with a ridiculous portrayal of the world's most famous flight attendant-turned-motivational speaker, and Joshua Malina hits every wrong note as a nelly queen who makes predictably "snappy" comebacks about warm nuts and circumcised Europeans.

—JR



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