



**BALZAC AND THE LITTLE CHINESE SEAMSTRESS**

When you've got it, flaunt it, and Sijie Daie does. The Chinese novelist hired himself to direct this adaptation of his novel about two 1970s teen-agers put to hard labor in a remote mountain village to purge them of Western influences under Maoist doctrine. The daughter of the local tailor and a trunk full of banned books complicate the "re-education." Plays Aug. 13 to 15 at Guild Theatre.

—Lisa Bradshaw

**CATWOMAN**

Not the worst comic book movie ever filmed, *Catwoman* is still an embarrassment to all involved. Halle Berry saves the world from killer face cream (no, really) in this disjointed flick that makes the *Batman* television series seem restrained. Mildly diverting for the first half, it stumbles into camp for part two. Hissable and missable.

—Andy Mangels

**COLLATERAL**

Tom Cruise continues to flex his acting muscles in this smart, character-driven thriller from director Michael Mann (*Heat*, *The Insider*). He plays Vince, a ruthless hit man who enlists a distressed cabbie (Jamie Foxx) to drive him around Los Angeles on a one-night killing spree.

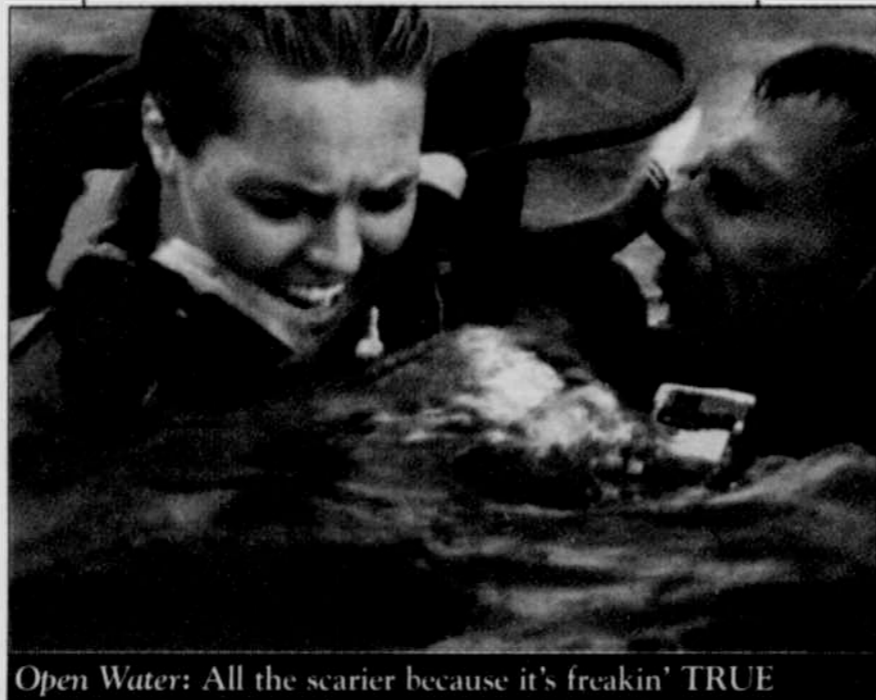
Beautifully shot but somewhat lazily edited, this is still a sure-fire cure for the summertime blockbuster blues.

—Jim Radosta

**HAROLD & KUMAR GO TO WHITE CASTLE**

John Cho and Kal Penn have the doobious distinction of starring in the first-ever Asian stoner flick, which—believe it or not—is actually pretty good. Director Danny Leiner (*Dude, Where's My Car?*) takes these slackers on a bizarre road trip that includes raccoon wrestling, skewered stereotypes and an unflattering cameo from *Doogie Howser, M.D.* himself, Neil Patrick Harris.

—JR



*Open Water*: All the scarier because it's freakin' TRUE

**I, ROBOT**

Taking the title of Isaac Asimov's famous tale (and little else), this film features Will Smith in another of his patented smart-ass, tough-detective roles, this time vs. excellent CGI robotic creations trying to take over the earth. Surprisingly, the movie doesn't suck as badly as one might expect, though the process by which the mystery is solved is badly contrived.

—AM

**METALLICA: SOME KIND OF MONSTER**

Documentarians Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky (*Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills*) have crafted an intimate behind-the-scenes look at the near-meltdown of one of heavy metal's biggest bands. We not only get a front-row seat to their creative process in the studio but also their intense sessions with a "performance enhancement coach." Who knew headbangers were so sensitive?

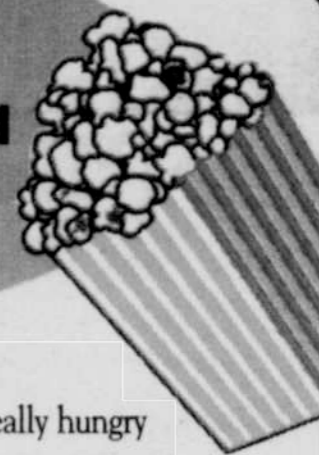
—JR

**OPEN WATER**

Enjoy the true story of a couple left adrift in the middle of the ocean after a scuba diving mix-up. There's one funny moment where the two lovebirds are bitterly fighting about their

**What's Popping?**

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



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

relationship at sea—the rest centers on the slow psychological torture of watching sharks casually eat them alive. A great date movie if your date is afraid of water, sharks or the existential poetry of imminent oceanic doom.

—Evan James

**THE STORY OF THE WEeping CAMEL**

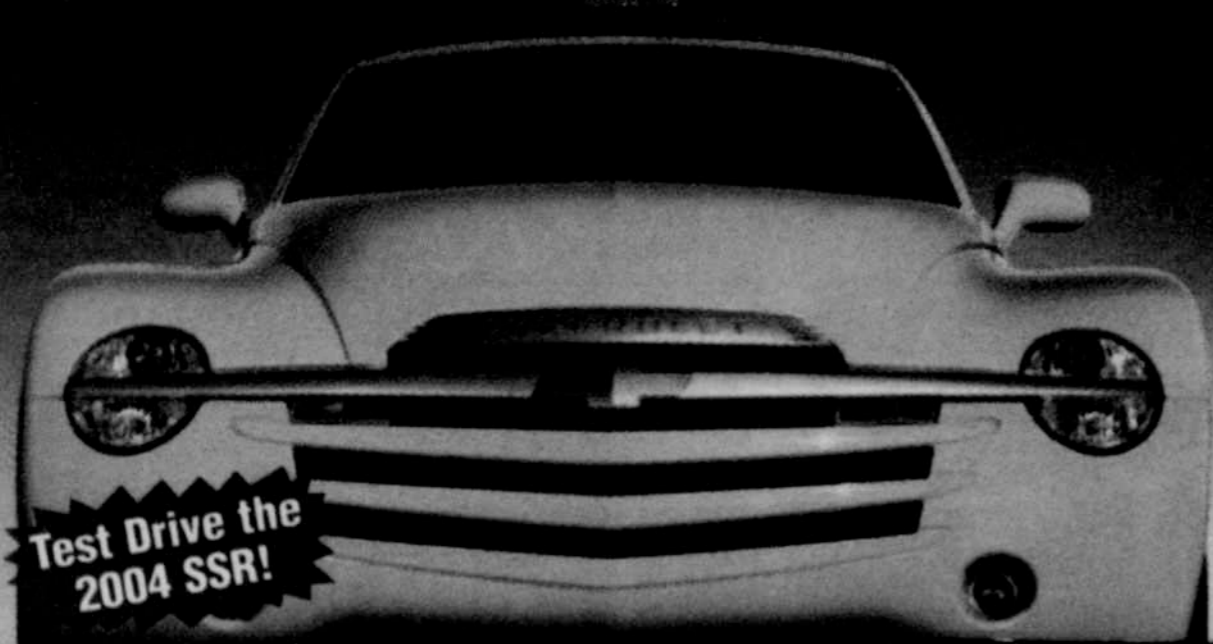
In Mongolia's Gobi Desert, a nomadic family helps with the delivery of a baby camel. The mother refuses to nurse the calf, and all attempts to bring the two together fail. Days pass, and the calf becomes weak despite being bottle-fed. At last, the family calls on tradition and hires a musician to play the Mongolian violin for mother and baby. The results of this brilliant and moving documentary will stun any viewer.

—Nadia Ali Maiwandi



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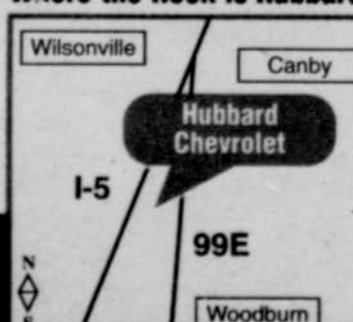
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