

Figuring out plot heightens action of Norris' latest

Chuck Norris, of the flying feet and flying fuls, is Texas Ranger J.J. McQuade, known as "Long Wolf McQuade" (PG). About all use know for sure is that he is after gun smugglers. Everything else in this movie fils together haphazardly, like a cullection of snippers from stock scenes at a B-movie festival. There is the bad guy (David Carradine) who does everything but wirl his mustache and tie the heroine to the railroad tracks. There is the bad guy sglifferied (Barbara Carrera), who leads the ranger on and sets him or. There is the ranger's commanding officer (R.G. Armstrong), who telis him he can't keep bending the laws and he can't continue to work alone. Finally, there is the well-intentioned but unwanted partner (Robert Beltran).

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THE FEDS ALSO get involved in this case, and McQuade ends up with still another partner (Loon Isaac Kennedy). By now we expect a clours of "The Star-Spagied Banner" on the soundtrack as the WASP ranger with the holg of a Hispanic and a black Federal algent goes after the smugglers.

One thing this democratically arranged trio demonstrates is that one single ethnic or racial group has the monopoly on atupidity. These three officers, along with other rangers and Federal agents, generally manage to muck things up.

This might lead one to think that the script isn't so fair-minded after all, when it shows the good guys as a bunch of dim bulbs, but the bad guys also have their moments of non compositentis. One incident that stands out is when they kidnap McQuade's daughter and take her to their desert hideout where the veapons are stored, and take her to their desert hideout where the veapons are stored, and take her to their desert hideout where the veapons are stored. Since the one thing they don't want is McQuade to discover the hideout, why do they do the one thing that guarantees that McQuade in the rack them down of the occasional pithy remark such as, "Trouble never takes a vacation." Perhaps there is more than one level of meaning to this movie. Consider, for example, the insistence of McQuade on working alone. Maybe McQuade is a sensitive fellow who is trying to cover up the fact that no one wants to work with him.

THERE ARE GOOD reasons to support this theory. McQuade wears the sweatlest, grunglest clothes; drives the dirtiest, most battered station wagon and lives in a house that could be classified among the 10 most hazardous waste sites in the country. This movie seems to equate maniliness with smelliness, bad habits and a refigerator stocked only with beer. McQuade, incidentally, is separated from his wife (Sharon Farrell), who probably regards his absence with a sigh of relief, not to mention a lungful of air.

"Lone Wolf McQuade" can only be recommended for die-hard martial arts fans who will put up with anything in order to see a few scenes of hand-to-hand, foot-to-foot combat. These scenes, by the way, have been orchestratad with sound effects which suggest each man has been struck by a howitzer, not a hand.



Films held over

Burt Lancaster stars as the occentric head of a Texas oil company who attempts to buy a quaint Scotlish fishing village in "Local Hero." Also in the cast are Peter Riegeri, Fullon McKay and Dennis Lawson. (Below) Cilo Goldsmith is Barbara, who becames a very special gift, in "The Gift." Venice, the city of romance, is the setting for the film, which also stars Pierre Mondy and Claudia Cardinale. Both movies are being held over exclusively at the Maple Theatre in Birmingham.



what's at the movies

BAD BOYS (R). Violent film of teen-agers in prison, with strong performance by Sean Penn, the spaced-out surfer from "Fast Times at Ridgemont High."

BETRAYAL (R). Jeremy Irons, Ben Kingsley and Patricia Hodge are caught up in emotional triangle in movie scripted by Harold Pinter.

riner.

GANDHI (PG). Epic film about Mahatma Gandhi, political and
spiritual leader who led movement for Indian independence
from Britain. Magnificent performance by Ben Kingsley as
Gandhi.

Gandhl.
THE GIFT (R). Bedroom farce with Pierre Mondy as a retired, married banker whose quiet life is changed by an unusual gift — an international beauty.
HIGH ROAD TO CIIINA (PG). Action, romance and adventure as Tom Selleck and Bess Armstrong make their way across the orient in a race against time.
LOCAL IEERO (PG). Citles go flying in this wry film about a Texas oil company that wants to buy out a quaint Scottish fishing village. Directed by Bill Forsyth ("Gregory's Girl'). Burt Lancaster is featured in east.

JOYSTICKS (R). Contemporary comedy starring Joe Don Baker, Leif Green and Jim Greenleaf.

Leif Green and Jim Greenleaf.

LONE WOLF MeQUADE (R), Martial arts (heavy on martial, light on arts) action with Chuck Norris as Texas Ranger after gun smugglers. He likes to work solo, and it's too bad the plot won't tet him because every time be opens his mouth this movie becomes an unintentional comedy.

MAX DUGAN RETURNS (PG) Marsha Mason, Neil Simon, Donald Sutherland and Jason Robards combine talents in story of teacher who struggles to support her young son, then receives big-money gifts from ex-convict father.

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THE OUTSIDERS (PG). C. Thomas Howell, Matt Dillon and Raif
Macchio star in adaptation of S.E. Hinton's classic about conflict between poor and rich boys in Tulsa of 1986.

PIAF, THE EARLY YEARS (PG). Traces the singer's early years, from the streets and brothels of Pigalle through her startling rise to stardom, based on biography by her half-sister, Simone Berteaut.

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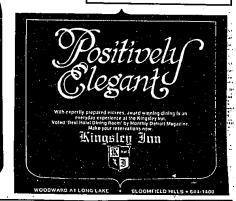
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