

MOVING PICTURES



Steven Seagal plays Brooklyn cop Gino Felino in Warner Bros. action-thriller "Out for Justice."

'Turtles' tops at box office

By Dan Greenberg
special writer

Only two new films opened this week as the system continues to milk the current box-office hits. The first, "Heaven and Earth" (PG-13) is listed as a Japanese samurai epic while the second, "Out for Justice" (R), stars Steven Seagal in a story about a cop and a drug lord. How imaginative!

Through the end of March — the latest figures available — "Ninja Turtles" had grossed more than \$46 million in its first two weeks while "Home Alone" is well passed the \$250 million mark. "Silence of the Lambs" now shows \$90 million in the till after 1½ months. It seems that sadism pays well.

Everybody loves a winner and Oscars continue to attract viewers. The seven that "Dances With Wolves" brought home continues to translate into \$1 million dollars a day. Considering that "Dances With Wolves" has been playing for 147 days, that's quite some total for a film they said never would.

"Ghost" is still playing at around 200 screens around the country although its Oscar aren't helping too much since the video cassette appeared March 21.

This year's domestic box office — that's all the tickets sold in the United States and Canada — continues to show significant gains over last year in every category. Number of tickets sold are up 17 percent over 1990 with box office dollars at \$1.6 billion, which is almost 18 percent more than 1990's near record total. Of course, average ticket price is up as well, to nearly \$4.90.

Add TV, cable, videotape and overseas rentals plus all those T-shirts and toys, and it doesn't look like the recession has struck the movie business. Some might suggest that the entertainment business rises during a mild recession since the urge to escape bad times leads to the box office. There's also more leisure time available when work schedules are trimmed.

STILL PLAYING:

"Awakenings" (B, PG-13, 121 minutes).

Robin Williams and Robert De Niro as doctor and catatonic patient call to mind too many other films. The doctor's special care and sensitivity lead to temporary recovery but film lacks spark expected from these talented actors.

"Cadence" (C+, PG-13, 95 minutes).

Unrealistic, clichéd story about an unruly soldier (Charlie Sheen) in the stockade.

"Career Opportunities" (F, PG-13).

The night-shift at a Target Store is Jim's last chance. Whoopie!

"Class Action" (C R, 100 minutes).

Father-daughter attorneys, Gene Hackman and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, are in a jam.

"Dance" (A, PG-13, 180 minutes).

Kevin Costner's efficient ode to the American frontier during and after the Civil War.

"Defending Your Life" (C, PG, 95 minutes).

Unsatisfactory romance in the afterlife as Albert Brooks defends his life and falls in love with Meryl Streep.

"The Doors" (C, R, 135 minutes).

Oliver Stone's overly long, repetitious story of Jim Morrison and rock group The Doors. Excessive attention to Morrison's drug, booze and sex problems are neither attractive nor entertaining. Doubtful, as well,

Vegas lounge pianist (John Goodman) is in line for British throne in delightful comedy.

"The Long Walk Home" (A-, PG, 95 minutes).

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Grading the movies

A+	Top marks - sure to please
A	Close behind - excellent
A-	Still in running for top honors
B+	Pretty good stuff, not perfect
B	Good
B-	Good but notable deficiencies
C+	Just a cut above average
C	Mediocre
C-	Not so hot and slipping fast
D+	The very best of the poor stuff
D	Poor
D-	It doesn't get much worse
F	Truly awful
Z	Reserved for the colossally bad
*	No advanced screening

that it will serve as a cautionary lesson.

"The Five Heartbeats" (A-, PG-13).

Good entertainment and excellent music in story of fictitious black singing group.

"GoodFellas" (B+, R, 145 minutes).

Martin Scorsese's intense, compelling saga of three mobsters returns after receiving a half dozen Oscar nominations. Despite good acting and fine technical values, the film is to be condemned for glorifying vicious and violent gangsters.

"Guilty by Suspicion" (A, PG-13, 100 minutes).

Robert De Niro's superb performance energizes this blend of fact and fiction describing the terrible pain anti-communist hysteria inflicted on Hollywood in the '50s.

"The Hard Way" (B, R, 105 minutes).

James Woods as tough cop doing comedy doesn't match Michael J. Fox's excellent spoof of movies and movie people in this entertaining, unusual buddy film.

"Home Alone" (B-, PG, 100 minutes).

Engaging comedy about young boy (Macaulay Culkin) left at home by accident.

"If Looks Could Kill" (C+, PG-13).

High school student flunks French but winds up living the life of James Bond.

"King Ralph" (B, PG-13, 95 minutes).

ALTERNATIVE VIEWING

Strong women at Maple

By John Monaghan
special writer

For the female protagonists in "Le Femme Nikita" and "The Nasty Girl," the choices they face are literally between life and death. These two foreign offerings, both major hits in Europe last year, are currently on-screen at the Maple Theatre.

In Luc Besson's stylish new thriller, Nikita (Anne Parillaud) is a young hellion and Death Row inmate who wakes from a supposedly lethal injection to find herself groggy but

alive in a dormitory room. Serve France as a secret agent, she is told, or really be put to death.

The resulting film mixes "Pygmalion" and "The Girl From U.N.C.L.E." with disappointing results. It takes almost an hour for Nikita to undergo the laborious physical and psychological reorientation which could easily have been excapulated in a montage.

The real action starts when Nikita, placed back in society, begins to fulfill her secret assignments. She may be cooking dinner, sleeping, or

making love when the phone call arrives, asking for her code name "Josephine."

Director Besson ("The Big Blue") is a master of style over substance who works best in raucous action scenes. He does achieve considerable suspense when Nikita has to assassinate someone from the bathroom window while her impatient husband waits in the other.

MOMENTS LIKE these stick with

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SCREEN SCENE

DETROIT FILM THEATRE, 5200 Woodward, Detroit. Call 832-2730 for information. (\$5)

"Superstar: The Life and Times of Andy Warhol" (USA — 1990), 7 and 9:30 p.m. April 19-20 and 4 and 7 p.m. April 21. The new documentary look at the influential pop artist includes rare interviews and vintage clips with Dennis Hopper, Viva, Roy Lichtenstein, Keith Haring, Liza Minnelli and Shelley Long. (\$5/auditorium)

"Girl in Room 20" (USA — 1946) and "Vanities" (USA — 1946), 1 p.m.

April 18, 19 and 21. Two more vintage black films highlight the afternoon series. The "Girl in Room 20" leaves her Texas home to become a Big Band singer in New York City. "Vanities" is a musical short that features impersonator Charles Keith and singer "Little Audrey" Armstrong. (\$3.50/recital hall)

HENRY FORD CENTENNIAL LIBRARY, 13671 Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. Call 943-2330 for information. (free)

"Call Me Genius" (Britain —

1961), 7 p.m. April 15. British comedian Tony Hancock and reliable George Sanders star in this oddball comedy about a London office clerk who becomes a mad painter in Paris.

LIVONIA MALL, Seven Mile and Middlebelt roads, Livonia. Call 476-1166 for information. (free)

"Some Came Running" (USA — 1958), 10 a.m. April 16. In this adaptation of a James Jones novel, life and love weave melodramatically

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VIDEO VIEWING

By Dan Greenberg
special writer

It is not by accident that the First Amendment is number one on the Bill of Rights. Its prominence is directly proportional to the importance of Freedom of Speech, something Thomas Jefferson clearly recognized.

As long as the American people can speak out freely and ask the right questions, tyranny will never succeed in this country. By protecting everyone's right to speak, no matter how much we might disagree with someone or other, we protect all.

But there is a question. Are there

any limitations to Freedom of Speech?

That's the question asked — and answered quite eloquently it should be noted — in a new video available from Academy Entertainment on April 25.

"Skokie" (1981, color, PG, 121 minutes) and its all-star cast recount the prolonged First Amendment struggle between an American Nazi group, the American Civil Liberties Union, the village of Skokie, Ill., a Chicago suburb, the Jewish Defense League and Jewish Holocaust survivors, a large number of whom lived in Skokie in the late '70s when Chicago Nazis decided to stage a march there.

Danny Kaye plays Max Feldman, a concentration camp survivor who witnessed the murder of much of his family by the Nazis. To him American neo-Nazis marching in his hometown wearing the Swastika is abhorrent. This time Feldman is prepared to stand and fight alongside the Jewish Defense League.

THE LATTER is the radical group founded in that era by the recently murdered Rabbi Kahane who preached, among other things, that never again should Jews stand passively when attacked as they had during Hitler's reign of terror.

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How to win at the numbers game.



The game is newspaper advertising — and the rules are changing. Rates are up in the Detroit News and Free Press. Suburban circulation is down. And all around town, advertisers are wondering what numbers to trust — and where to place their media dollars. What should you do?



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