

# VIDEO VIEWING

By Dan Greenberg  
special writer

MPI Home Video has built a reputation (and a library) of newsworthy, historical titles and recently released the Oscar-winning Vietnam war documentary "Hearts and Minds" to complement their shelf of titles on the Vietnam War and annual presentations for the '60s and '70s. On May 22, MPI published a rather slick catalog in conjunction with ABC News offering almost 100 videos which originally aired on ABC News. The programs are priced from \$10 to \$25 with most of them at \$15 or \$20. They run from 30 to 150 minutes and looking through the catalog recalls the top headlines of the past decade.

The '60s were, indeed, filled with "Great TV News Stories," the title of one category of programs offered. While this catalog is devoted to stories of the '80s, there are a few ear-

er ones, including the Kennedy-Nixon debates, "Racing for the Moon: America's Glory Days in Space" and a program about Watergate.

"Schwarzkopf: How the War Was Won" leads the list of current titles and a good number of top "Nightline" programs are also available.

WEDNESDAY, MPI also is releasing a couple of unusual "classics" — "Mondo Cane" (1964, color, NR, 105 minutes) and "Witchcraft Through the Ages" (1922, black and white, NR, 85 minutes). The latter always had a pretty raucy, whispered reputation, most probably created by people who had never seen the film.

"Mondo Cane," on the other hand, blatantly proclaimed its outrageous imagery and delighted in shocking viewers of the '60s, a slightly less affected crowd than today's jaded viewers.

As so often turns out to be the case, while both are interesting, nei-

ther seem particularly shocking these days. Time has dulled the impact of their sensationalism although in the '60s, as American culture opened up under the dramatic onslaught of the civil rights, consumer and feminist movements, "Mondo Cane's" attempts to assault viewers' senses by depicting bizarre customs around the world was fairly spectacular.

What was, and still is, interesting about this film is its ironic juxtapositions of habits. The conclusion drawn from the oriental dog meat market and sauteed insects served in an upscale Manhattan restaurant is that people are pretty much people the world round and only the names have been changed to protect innocent sinners.

Despite our technology and protests to the contrary, "civilized" industrial culture isn't as far from the jungle as our egos claim.

"WITCHCRAFT Through the Ages" is a fairly spectacular filmic achievement for the early '20s in Sweden. Obviously originally a silent film, this particular release has a William Burroughs narration and an enjoyable but sometimes inappropriate musical accompaniment led by jazz violinist Jean-Luc Ponty.

The film purports to be a documentary depicting its title subject but concentrates primarily on the Middle Ages with an extended dramatization designed to indict the Inquisition, as well it might.

In addition to some fine special effects — witches flying and devils corrupting — the film unintentionally draws the parallel between the Inquisition and the methods of any authority out to enforce orthodoxy, religious, political or cultural. It makes no difference which. Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

## Under the stars



The sounds of the '70s will come to life at the new Pine Knob when Don Henley, principal songwriter and founder of the rock group Eagles of the '70s, will perform with Susanna Hoffa, formerly of the Bangles, Tuesday, June 11. Tickets are available at The Palace of Auburn Hills box office and Ticketmaster outlets.

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We're constantly digging up horror stories.

If you had walked by a certain yard on the afternoon of August 25th, you might have heard the ground crying. That was the day a man walked into his backyard, dug a hole, and buried six puppies alive. Unable to stop him, a young neighbor girl looked on in horror. Luckily, her mother was also looking on.

She quickly called a Michigan Humane Society Investigator.

When he arrived, the cruelty investigator found the mother of the puppies chained and lying protectively on a fresh patch of soil. Her sensitive ears could easily hear the cries of her puppies eighteen inches below her. What she couldn't figure out was how to help them. The MHS cruelty investigator got into the dog pen and dug the puppies out with his bare hands.

Today five of those puppies are alive. And there's no clearer picture than this photo of what your contributions to the Michigan Humane Society accomplish. Your contributions help us feed and shelter the victims of animal abuse. Your contributions find them homes. And your contributions allow us to keep cruelty investigators on staff, so caring neighbors have someone to call.

In this season of giving, please find it in your heart to give what you can, large or small to the Michigan Humane Society. Because your contributions are the only reason stories like this have happy endings.

\$15  \$25  \$50  \$100  other \_\_\_\_\_

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