

time, I liked "Protocol," "Sealed Orders," "Aide Memoire," and "Cultural Exchange" (in that order). Retief is the James Bond of a space age Diplomacy Corps. Unfortunately, he is completely unappreciated by his superiors. Nice, light, humorous reading. +1

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THE MERCENARY by Jerry Pournelle (Chapters 13 - 22): (If you have the time I highly recommend the whole book!) The first section of the book covers the problems of Earth which lead to the abandonment of several colonies prior to their ability to survive without help from Earth. The Grand Admiral Lermontov of the Navy does what he can unofficially when he can to help the colonies survive. The second section covers Colonel John Cristian Falkenberg III's first military action as a mercenary when he is unjustly cashiered as a political favor to a corrupt Senator. Lermontov does like it but bows to political necessity, and sends what unofficial help he can. The last section of the book (Chapters 13-22) cover Colonel Falkenberg's last military action as a mercenary. Some of the best military science fiction around. +2

BERSERKER by Fred Saberhagen ("Without a Thought"): (If you have the time, I liked "Peacemaker" better than "Without a Thought," but it didn't fit our topic of discussion as well as "Without a Thought.") So far the stories are interesting (sorry, I didn't manage to finish the collection before needing to give Evelyn the selections). I did not find it as gripping as THE MERCENARY, nor as amusing as RETIEF: ENVOY TO NEW WORLDS, but it is still what I call a good read. The stories I've read have interesting twists and I enjoy the irony in them. +1

2. The Lincroft branch of the Mt. Holz library has received the following donations:

Asimov, Isaac	Robots and Empire
Asprin, Robert	Thieves' World
Bear, Greg	Eon
Clarke, Arthur C.	Imperial Earth
Donaldson, Stephen R.	Lord Foul's Bane
Donaldson, Stephen R.	The Illearth War
Donaldson, Stephen R.	The One Tree
Donaldson, Stephen R.	The Power That Preserves

Donaldson, Stephen R.	White Gold Wielder
Donaldson, Stephen R.	The Wounded Land
LeGuin, Ursula K.	The Dispossessed
LeGuin, Ursula K.	The Left Hand of Darkness
McCaffrey, Anne	Killishandra
McKillip, Patricia	Harpist in the Wind
McKillip, Patricia	Heir of Sea and Fire
McKillip, Patricia	The Riddle-Master of Hed
Saberhagen, Fred	The First Book of Swords
Saberhagen, Fred	The Second Book of Swords
Saberhagen, Fred	The Third Book of Swords
Springer, Nancy	The Silver Sun
Springer, Nancy	The White Hart

3. This issue includes a review of THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS. For fans of Bond the following may be of interest. While looking in the "25th Anniversary of James Bond" issue of VARIETY, I ran into some

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interesting facts:

- In the 50's, after the TV show CLIMAX did an hour adaption of CASINO ROYALE, Fleming decided that Bond could be the hero of a TV show. He wrote a number of stories as scenarios for the proposed show, and since it never came off. He adapted the scenarios into short stories and they were published in FOR YOUR EYES ONLY. The stories in specific were "Risico," "From a View to a Kill," and "For Your Eyes Only."
- Undaunted, Fleming decided to try to create another TV series for NBC. It was to be called "Commander Jamaica" and was to be filmed in Jamaica. NBC turned thumbs down, eventually. Fleming had to decide what to do with his 28-page plot treatment of a story in which Commander Jamaica fights an oriental villain named "Dr. No."
- Ian Fleming did not create the character Blofeld, nor the organization SPECTRE. Both were created by Kevin McClory in a screenplay JAMES BOND, SECRET AGENT that McClory worked on with Fleming in 1958. It wasn't filmed and McClory more or less forgot about it. Fleming adapted the story into

THUNDERBALL, which was to be the first Bond novel filmed until McClory heard the plot and sued Fleming. Instead DR. NO was filmed. The court case went on for two years and McClory was awarded the rights to film THUNDERBALL. He was unable to film it, so allowed the movie we know by that name to be made. He did retain the rights to film his own version of the story and eventually did as NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN. After DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER, McClory was also awarded the rights to the character Blofeld and SPECTRE. Neither name has appeared in the series since, but the visualization of Blofeld as the bald man, seems to still belong to Eon pictures, hence they could get away with putting him, unnamed, in the opening to FOR YOUR EYES ONLY.

Mark Leeper
MT 3E-433 957-5619
...mtgzz!leeper

WINTER'S DAUGHTER by Charles Whitmore
Timescape, 1984, ISBN 0-671-49984-X, \$14.95.
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper
Copyright 1987 Evelyn C. Leeper

There are a lot of post-nuclear-holocaust books these days, but no others like this one. Face it, how many novels of any genre are written in the style of a Scandinavian saga?

This book was recommended at Readercon. The person recommending it talked about its lack of commercial success, which he attributed to the fact that readers who picked it up didn't realize they were reading a modern Scandinavian saga, and felt the style too episodic and terse. By the way, I call this style Scandinavian for lack of a better term. Most of the sagas known today in this country are Icelandic, yet this book could not be called Icelandic. Calling it a "Viking saga" doesn't seem right either. All in all, "Scandinavian saga" seems the most neutral term.

Divided into three major sections, the story covers the life of Signe Ragnhilds-datter and her family in the years following Ragnarok, a.k.a. the Twilight of the Gods, a.k.a. World War III. Signe was born in Africa shortly after the war, to a Norwegian mother and an American father who were there when war broke out. Africa was spared most of the destruction and aftermath of the war, but Europeans and Americans were looked upon with distrust and her early life was not easy. Eventually she and her children leave Africa and travel to America and eventually to their home in Norway. The episodes average between one and two pages each. You could think of it as learning about someone's experiences by looking at individual snapshots from a scrapbook or by hearing them describe isolated incidents. It's very much the way the movies work, yet in novel form, most readers find it awkward and stilted.

The introduction, like the introduction to Margaret Atwood's H_a_n_d_m_a_i_d'_s_T_a_l_e, is written from the perspective of a scholar of the novel's future. In this case, the writer talks about how the style of this novel makes it more accessible to the readers of his present, a comment which can only seem ironic in view of the novel's apparent inaccessibility to the readers of ours.

The episodic nature of the story allows Whitmore to cover a lot of time and territory in a couple of hundred pages. He can give us glimpses into many different aspects of post-holocaust society: the enclaves that are set up, the reinstatement of trade and international relationships, the attitudes of people towards strangers. He shows us sketches; we need to fill in the details. In spite of this, the characters come alive. They have depth and seem very real, not the caricatures you might expect from the terse style. Whitmore manages to avoid being harpooned by the limitations of his medium. Even though I have not read a lot of Scandinavian sagas, I found this book enjoyable and would recommend it. If you have some background knowledge of sagas, you will probably appreciate this even more.

TIME AFTER TIME by Allen Appel
Dell, 1987 (1985c), ISBN 0-440-59116-3, \$6.95.
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper
Copyright 1987 Evelyn C. Leeper

Alex Balfour has been blacking out and having strange dreams about the Romanovs, the Bolsheviks, and Rasputin. Or are they dreams? When he wakes up with mud on his shoes and Rasputin's coat on his back, he begins to have his doubts.

This book is a mixed bag. The time travel aspect is not, shall we say, entirely new. Appel describes time travel accomplished without mechanisms; just as John Carter "wishes" himself to Mars, so is Balfour "wished" to Russia. But is he doing the wishing? Certainly the clues to the mystery, if mystery it is, are all laid out for the reader.

The historical accuracy I am suspicious of. I cannot believe that the Okhrana would be as benign as Appel portrays them. Of course, it wouldn't do to have his main character killed off halfway through the novel, but still.... He also fails to convey the chaos of the times, at least as compared with, say, R_e_d_s. Rasputin serves no purpose but to give the reader something familiar to latch onto from that period. The Cossacks seem very stereotyped.

What is the most annoying, though, is Appel's tendency to turn a historical novel into a cookbook. Several times in the first half, he lapses into passages such as:

He ran the knife under the skin of a chicken breast, pulled it out at the top, then stripped the breast down. He severed the small tendon at the top of the meat, ran his thumb into the pockets between the two fillets, and cut the large one free. With two more quick cuts he removed the small fillet....

He put a cup of rice in a pan and added a cup and a half of chicken broth and a half a cup of the white wine he would use in the sauce and ultimately drink with the finished meal. He brought the mixture to a boil, let it bubble for a minute, then covered it and turned it to simmer. He now had exactly seventeen minutes to finish the rest of the meal....

He turned on the fire under an iron skillet and put in a tablespoon of butter and a couple of tablespoons of olive oil. He floured the breasts and placed them gently in the pan when the oil and the butter stopped foaming. He filled a pot with water for the asparagus....

He turned over the chicken. A brown crust had formed. He pressed down on the thickest part of the breast with his fork. The meat should have exactly the same feel as the fleshy part of his thumb....

The chicken was done. He put it on an overproof plate and put it into the warm oven. He tossed the asparagus into the pan [sic] of rapidly boiling water. Into the pan in which he had fried the chicken, he put a half a cup of white wine and a half a cup of chicken broth. He turned up the fire, scraping the pan as the liquid foamed....

When the wine and the chicken broth had been reduced to around half, he took the asparagus out of their pan and threw them into the sauce. He checked the rice. Done. He put the rice on a serving dish, added the chicken from the oven, then poured the wine sauce with the asparagus over the whole thing.

Now, could you cook a meal from that or what? Perhaps Appel was making some subtle joke on the fact that one of the reasons for the Russian Revolution was that the peasants were starving while the nobility ate at lavish banquets, but I doubt it.

Happily, Appel leaves off from this tendency (though he slips back into it briefly in a description of how to make hot coffee in a prison cell with no cooking facilities). He does have the ability to convey emotion, as in his simple description of Balfour's reaction to a hot bath after spending a couple of months in prison: "Once, in college, he'd gone to bed with two women at the same time. That had been great, one of life's treasured memories. It didn't hold a candle to this."

Towards the end, all is explained and the loose ends dealt with a moderately satisfactory way. Appel does not really come to terms with the implications of changing history, and that may be disappointing to people who are looking for that based on the book's blurb. This book has apparently gained much acclaim in mainstream literary circles (including _ T _ h _ e _ N _ e _ w _ Y _ o _ r _ k _ T _ i _ m _ e _ s _ B _ o _ o _ k

_ R_ e_ v_ i_ e_ w, which is quoted extensively
on the front and back covers and the first page). My reaction as a
science fiction reader is much the same as my reaction to Margaret
Atwood's _ T_ h_ e_ H_ a_ n_ d_ m_ a_ i_ d'_ s_ T_ a_ l_ e: it is interesting not for what it
says but
for how it says it, not for bringing new and original ideas to the field
but for bringing a new perspective to old ideas. I think it is
important to read science fiction novels written "outside the ghetto,"
not (as some might think) to put on an aura of culture, but to look at a
field we know from an outsider's perspective. And looking at things
differently is, after all, what most of science fiction is about.

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(This book should not be confused with Karl Alexander's book _ T_ i_ m_ e
_ a_ f_ t_ e_ r_ T_ i_ m_ e (or the movie of the same name based on it). That one was
about H. G. Wells traveling _ f_ o_ r_ w_ a_ r_ d in time to catch Jack the Ripper.
Nor is it related to the 1986 John Gielgud movie _ T_ i_ m_ e_ a_ f_ t_ e_ r_ T_ i_ m_ e which
has nothing to do with science fiction. Nor is it Jack Finney's _ T_ i_ m_ e
_ a_ n_ d_ A_ g_ a_ i_ n, which was made into _ S_ o_ m_ e_ w_ h_ e_ r_ e_ i_ n
_ T_ i_ m_ e. Do you get the
feeling that there's a shocking shortage of time travel titles?)

THE UNTOUCHABLES by Eliot Ness with Oscar Fraley
Pocket Books, 1987, \$3.50.
A book review by Mark R. Leeper

One _ N _ a _ t _ i _ o _ n _ a _ l _ L _ a _ m _ p _ o _ o _ n once had a satire of military book club ads. of the World War II books offered was _ G _ e _ t _ G _ r _ a _ z _ i _ n _ s _ k _ y. The teaser read, "Why the entire Japanese Imperial Navy was out to 'get Grazinsky,'" by Ensign Oswald Grazinsky. I may have the name wrong but the idea is you can blow yourself up to heroic proportions if you are telling the story, and perhaps if you have a little bit of paranoia. I thought of Ensign

Grazinsky several times while reading _ T_ h_ e_ U_ n_ t_ o_ u_ c_ h_ a_ b_ l_ e_ s, the story of how

Eliot Ness (with some help from his friends) became, by Ness's own account, the terror of Al Capone's criminal empire. The truth seems to be that Ness was something of a thorn in Capone's side but not a whole lot more than that. The newspapers wanted a hero and picked Ness. Even by Ness's own telling of the story, he didn't bring Capone down, though the TV show and the film claimed that he did.

The book, by Eliot Ness and Oscar Fraley, tells Ness's version of the story of how he got the idea of how to pull together a reasonably effective team of incorruptible police and raided a fair number of bootlegging distilleries around Chicago. Ness implies, without actually saying it, that he was instrumental in drying up Chicago. Late in the book he starts saying things like, "Beer was practically non-existent in Chicago when we struck our greatest blow at the syndicate by uncovering a gigantic alcohol plant worth a quarter of a million dollars and turning out twenty thousand gallons a day." It is an impressive statement, but according to Carl Sifakis's _ E_ n_ c_ y_ c_ l_ o_ p_ e_ d_ i_ a_ o_ f

_ A_ m_ e_ r_ i_ c_ a_ n
_ C_ r_ i_ m_ e, Chicago was never really dried up and certainly not by Ness.

Provided you take what Ness has to say with more than a grain of salt, the book itself is the episodic but enjoyable story of Ness's war on the beer barons. It is light and fast reading intended to entertain more than to edify. Ness writes on the level of "I did this, so they retaliated by doing that. But I countered them by doing such-and-such." You know very little about Ness when it is all over, but you get to see a little of what fighting crime was like in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Ness has a flamboyant style of crime-fighting that often included grand-standing plays like smashing trucks through the doors of suspected distilleries. The book has its share of vendettas by the mob and Ness's counter-strikes. For those who liked the TV series or the film, the book is worth a try, though it is really not much like either other version.

THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS
A film review by Mark R. Leeper
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Capsule review: Bond is back--really back--after a wait of twenty years.

Pretty close to a quarter of a century ago the first James Bond film blazed (at times literally) across the screen. It presented a lithe young Bond played, of course, by Sean Connery. It was popular, so a second one was made to give the audiences more. As each successive film was a smash the producers kept trying to give the audiences the same, only more: the same actors, bigger, more powerful, and more fanciful villains with bigger plans, and more bizarre henchmen. There were, however, problems with this approach. The actors eventually got too old for their roles. Lois Maxwell as Moneypenny went from being sexy to matronly.

Audiences did not seem to like George Lazenby, so when Connery finally left the series they replaced him with an already-popular Roger Moore, two years older than Connery. Moore started out almost too old to play Bond and the succeeding years made matters worse. On top of that, Moore was never right to play Bond. Ian Fleming's superspy is a thug who, when the occasion called for it, had nice manners. Moore was a fop who, when the occasion called for it could dirty his hands. He simply did not work in the part. It was clear that the series was in trouble when he took the role in L_i_v_e_a_n_d_L_e_t_D_i_e. It had one of the weakest Bond plots. Also, perhaps in retaliation for a nasty comment Bond makes about the Beatles in G_o_l_d_f_i_n_g_e_r, Paul McCartney wrote one of the worst of the Bond title songs. (It had the dubious distinction of having duplicate redundant words in one of its lines: "I_n this ever-changing world i_n which we live i_n.")

Meanwhile, the ever-escalating villains started going in for total world destruction with henchmen that became impossible to kill. By M_o_o_n_r_a_k_e_r, the series had become a silly comic book that was turning audiences off. Something had to be done. It was. F_o_r_Y_o_u_r_E_y_e_s
O_n_l_y
started as silly as any Bond film, but after the first third it straightened out and had a very plausible villain. O_c_t_o_p_u_s_s_y, too, had a reasonable Cold War plot. The last Moore film, A_V_i_e_w_t_o_a_K_i_l_l, tried to capture some of the spirit of the more successful Bond films, apparently reframing the plot of G_o_l_d_f_i_n_g_e_r (The number of parallels are too great to be coincidence.) The film was not the complete mess it is usually considered to be by Bond fans, but it was well below average for the series.

The series has long been in need of an overhaul, and with the choice of a new Bond we also got a new M, a new Moneypenny, and a new feel with a younger and more vital Bond. Through an unrecognized stroke of luck for the producers, Pierce Brosnan, the first choice for Bond,

tradition, too handsome and insufficiently thug-like. Dalton has a hard, flinty look rather than being pretty. As such, he looks the part of Bond the most of any Bond in the series.

Other characters of interest include John Rhys-Davies as a perennial friendly-foe Pushkin. Pushkin is played with some fun by Rhys-Davies--veteran of S h o g u n, R a i d e r s o f t h e L o s t A r k, and V i c t o r V i c t o r i a. Until now the foe has been General Gogol, who shows up

for only one quick shot at the end of this outing, but his background has been given to Pushkin and Rhys-Davies will probably be the continuing character from this point on. Bond's new girl is Kara Milovy (played by Maryam d'Abo, who looks like a stretched version of Rosanna Arquette). She is a little less ditzy than most of the Bond women, though well below the standard set by Carole Bouquet as Melina in F o r Y o u r E y e s O n l y. One wonders how the public would react if there wasn't a love interest ready to drop into bed with Bond in just one of the films.

The plot of T h e L i v i n g D a y l i g h t s is more complex than previous Bond

films. The long-dead organization that Fleming used to call SMERSH has apparently been revived and in the midst of attempts to bring detente between the British and the Soviets, suddenly SMERSH is murdering double-O agents. Why? It has something to do with a defecting Soviet dignitary, an American arms dealer, and obscure goings-on in Czechoslovakia, Tangiers, and Afghanistan.

Oh, there are some of those irritating plugs for products, including a winery and an electronics firm to whom I will not give more publicity by naming here. And the producers have not entirely abandoned the silliness of the Moore Bond films. There are a few silly weapons, one more to use in a car chase, and one silly ski chase using a non-standard toboggan. but for the most part they have been able to keep their tongues out of their cheeks. Which is a quaint way of saying that this is the Bond film the fans have been waiting for a very long time.

T h e L i v i n g D a y l i g h t s may be the best Bond film since F r o m R u s s i a w i t h

_ L_ o_ v_ e. Rate it a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

My ranking of the Broccoli-produced films, best to worst (and subject to some change) is:

1. _ F_ r_ o_ m_ R_ u_ s_ s_ i_ a_ w_ i_ t_ h_ L_ o_ v_ e
2. _ T_ h_ u_ n_ d_ e_ r_ b_ a_ l_ l
3. _ T_ h_ e_ L_ i_ v_ i_ n_ g_ D_ a_ y_ l_ i_ g_ h_ t_ s
4. _ D_ r_ _ N_ o
5. _ G_ o_ l_ d_ f_ i_ n_ g_ e_ r
6. _ F_ o_ r_ Y_ o_ u_ r_ E_ y_ e_ s_ O_ n_ l_ y
7. _ Y_ o_ u_ O_ n_ l_ y_ L_ i_ v_ e_ T_ w_ i_ c_ e
8. _ T_ h_ e_ S_ p_ y_ W_ h_ o_ L_ o_ v_ e_ d_ M_ e
9. _ O_ n_ H_ e_ r_ M_ a_ j_ e_ s_ t_ y'_ s_ S_ e_ c_ r_ e_ t
- _ S_ e_ r_ v_ i_ c_ e
10. _ O_ c_ t_ o_ p_ u_ s_ s_ y
11. _ D_ i_ a_ m_ o_ n_ d_ s_ A_ r_ e_ F_ o_ r_ e_ v_ e_ r
12. _ T_ h_ e_ M_ a_ n_ w_ i_ t_ h_ t_ h_ e_ G_ o_ l_ d_ e_ n_ G_ u_ n
13. _ A_ V_ i_ e_ w_ t_ o_ a_ K_ i_ l_ l
14. _ M_ o_ o_ n_ r_ a_ k_ e_ r
15. _ L_ i_ v_ e_ a_ n_ d_ L_ e_ t_ D_ i_ e

STAKEOUT

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

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Capsule review: John Badham's third or fourth police film is his best to date. Comedy-drama has a policeman on a stakeout falling in love with the woman he is supposed to be watching. There have been a lot of police films out of late; my guess is that someone who knows police work would think this one is head and shoulders above the rest.

There are all kinds of police films coming out this year. The more notable among them are _ T_ h_ e_ U_ n_ t_ o_ u_ c_ h_ a_ b_ l_ e_ s_ ,
_ B_ e_ v_ e_ r_ l_ y_ H_ i_ l_ l_ s_ C_ o_ p_ s_ I_ I_ , _ L_ e_ t_ h_ a_ l_ ,
_ W_ e_ a_ p_ o_ n_ , and _ D_ r_ a_ g_ n_ e_ t. The newest addition to the list is John Badham's
_ S_ t_ a_ k_ e_ o_ u_ t. _ S_ t_ a_ k_ e_ o_ u_ t is unlikely to earn at the boxoffice anything
like
those four films, yet of the four, only _ T_ h_ e_ U_ n_ t_ o_ u_ c_ h_ a_ b_ l_ e_ s may be a
better

film. To begin with, S_t_a_k_e_o_u_t is about three-dimensional characters.

T_h_e_U_n_t_o_u_c_h_a_b_l_e_s had at least an interesting character in Elliot Ness.

They go downhill from there to D_r_a_g_n_e_t, whose main character is not so much a character as a voice impression over a smirk masquerading as a character. Which had believable situations? None of the four really,

but S_t_a_k_e_o_u_t does. There are, perhaps, other virtues that makes T_h_e

U_n_t_o_u_c_h_a_b_l_e_s a better film in general, but as a police film S_t_a_k_e_o_u_t is

probably the best thing we have seen since some of the better films based on Joseph Wambaugh's novels. And with so many police films coming out, that is saying quite a bit.

Chris Leece (played by Richard Dreyfus) and Bill Reimers (played by Emilio Estevez) are the kind of cops you rarely see a film about. They are neither supercops nor complete screw-ups. They are just average men trying to do a job. They pull an assignment that no cop really wants to get--a dull stakeout spending nights watching the house of the former girlfriend of a sociopath who has recently escaped from prison. It's a dull, stupid job just watching a house, so they keep themselves occupied by joking with each other and fighting a practical joke war with the two cops on the day shift. None of the humor is forced or unrealistic and it comes from the personalities of the characters rather than being forced into the plot. Complications set in as Leece gets closer to the girlfriend than police rules allow and eventually finds himself falling in love with her.

John Badham is an unpredictable director. Some of his films work

as well as the clever TV-movie I_s_n'_t_I_t_S_h_o_c_k_i_n_g?,

S_a_t_u_r_d_a_y_N_i_g_h_t_F_e_v_e_r,

and W_h_o_s_e_L_i_f_e_I_s_I_t_A_n_y_w_a_y?. He can also turn out tripe like W_a_r_G_a_m_e_s

and B_l_u_e_T_h_u_n_d_e_r. The latter is a police film whose weakest points are just where S_t_a_k_e_o_u_t is strongest--its credibility and its human characters. S_t_a_k_e_o_u_t throws in a little more action than it needs, but if you like the genre of police films, this is the one to see. Give it a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

ADVENTURES IN BABYSITTING
A film review by Mark R. Leeper
Copyright 1987 Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: In spite of the title, this is a fairly enjoyable summer film that the adults in the audience seemed to appreciate as much as the younger viewers. Spielberg writer Chris Columbus has not directed before but shows talent.

Back in the 50s and 60s, society seemed safe and simple. With the exception of a few crime and juvenile delinquent films it seemed that if you simply behaved yourself you would lead a calm and placid existence. As we perceive society getting weirder, we see more films of people doing normal things that wind them up in the middle of real chaos, particularly over a single night. In I_n_t_o_t_h_e_N_i_g_h_t a man who is simply at the wrong airport parking slot at the wrong moment finds not only his night but his whole life turned inside out as a result. Well, that's not too different from N_o_r_t_h_b_y_N_o_r_t_h_w_e_s_t after the main character runs across the wrong people (in this case, criminals). The classic "night of pure chaos" film is A_f_t_e_r_H_o_u_r_s. There aren't even dangerous criminals in A_f_t_e_r_H_o_u_r_s; it is mostly paranoia and just the general weirdness of people that creates all the danger.

Well, of late Hollywood has been doing films in all kinds of popular sub-genres, but with teen-age main characters instead of the usual adults. The newest "night of chaos" film has three teenagers and an adolescent going through a night of chaos in Chicago. Chris Parker (played by Elisabeth Shue, who was also in T_h_e_K_a_r_a_t_e_K_i_d) is baby-sitting for Sara (played by Maia Brewton) when a friend who desperately needs a ride calls her. Against her better judgement she packs Sara, Sara's older brother Brad (played by Keith Coogan, formerly of T_h_e_W_a_l_t_o_n_s), and his friend Daryl Coopersmith (played by Anthony Rapp) into her mother's station wagon and heads for the city. Add one flat tire and one weirdo with a tow truck and the film is off and running. What follows is a lot of fun and adventures nowhere nearly as puerile as the regrettable title might indicate.

This film is the directorial debut of Chris Columbus, who wrote the screenplays for three Steven-Spielberg-produced films: G_r_e_m_l_i_n_s, T_h_e_G_o_o_n_i_e_s and Y_o_u_n_g_S_h_e_r_l_o_c_k H_o_l_m_e_s. Columbus gets his young cast to act and turns out a fluff film, but good fluff. Rate it a low +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

