



MIAMI VICE

I'd have to go back to the Tom Cruise racing vehicle *Days of Thunder* for a movie so drunk on its own machismo as this, Michael Mann's adaptation of the TV series that sent America into a frenzy of pastel colors and unstructured jackets in the mid 1980s. Mann was billed as the executive producer of the series, but on the basis of his work as the writer and director of this feature he can't have been much of a guiding light: None of the show's virtues are to be found in this posing, humorless bullet fest. It's especially disappointing because even if he had a different take on the characters of Crockett and Tubbs, Mann's work in films has generally been consistently intelligent. This is nothing but hack work, albeit buffed to a glossy Hollywood

sheen. And while there's no law that says actors in this kind of remake have to resemble their predecessors, there are limits: Whoever thought that Colin Farrell was an adequate stand-in for Don Johnson was probably also responsible for the mullet haircut he wears throughout the film. Thank god there's no chance this will affect 2006 fashions the way the show did 20 years ago.

—m. faust



CAVITE

Named for the city in the Philippines where most of it takes place, *Cavite* is essentially a two-character drama in which one character is never seen. Adam is a young man who was born in the Philippines but raised in San Diego. Returning to his native country for his father's funeral, he arrives at the airport and his mother and sister (who still live here) are not there to meet him. The ringing of a cell phone that has been snuck into his bag holds the answer: They are being held hostage by the terrorist group Abu Sayyaf, who claim responsibility for the death of Adam's politically active father and will kill them as well if Adam doesn't follow their instructions. For awhile, the demands posed by the mocking voice seem intended only to make Adam

get in touch with the suffering of his native land, guiding him through the slums and squatter towns and chastising his failure to speak Tagalog and worship Allah. But the voice does have a goal for the young man, one that will force him to make a difficult moral decision.

Cavite is the product of two Filipino-American filmmakers, Neill Dela Llana and Ian Gamazon, working with the most minimal of resources: two hand-held cameras and a pair of plane tickets to the Philippines, with editing and post-production funded by the sale of the cameras on eBay after their return. Unable to find an actress willing to travel with them, they re-wrote the main character so that he could be played by Gamazon. That his acting skills are minimal doesn't much hurt a film whose primary appeal is its documentary nature, a portrait of life at the bottom of a society where fundamentalist terrorism is a very real threat.

—m. faust



LEONARD COHEN: I'M YOUR MAN

The promoter Hal Willner has made a specialty of organizing tribute concerts, organizing eclectic bunches of performers to interpret music by a single writer or similar connection. (One of my favorites was *Stay Awake*, a late 1980s collection of covers of songs from Walt Disney movies, including Tom Waits' memorably scary version of "Heigh Ho" from *Snow White*.) This film is built around such a concert staged in Sydney, Australia in early 2005 devoted to the work of Montreal-born novelist/poet/songwriter Leonard Cohen. The guest list is less varied than that on the Cohen tribute album that came out in the early 1990s: Close to half the performers are related to each other (Rufus and Martha Wainwright, their mother and aunt the McGarrigle Sisters, mother and son Linda and Teddy Thompson). Cohen's distinctive sepulchral croon is not easily imitated, and no one here chooses to, though it's a lack that renders some of the tunes a bit colorless. There are a few stand-outs (notably Antony, of Antony and the Johnsons, lending his eerie, quivering falsetto to the perfectly suited "If It Be Your Will") and a few disappointments (it's a sad surprise to see that Cohen's work is so poorly suited to Nick Cave), with the bulk at least respectably performed. More intriguing are segments in which the 71-year-old Cohen himself is interviewed, discussing his life from his childhood in Montreal through his 1990s stay at a Buddhist monastery. At once elegant, reflective and quietly self-mocking, he is his own best interpreter even when not singing, and it's a shame this film doesn't simply let him speak at more length.

—m. faust

CELEBRATING
TWENTY FIVE
YEARS

Jim's
STEAKOUT

OPEN 7 DAYS
A WEEK
TIL 5AM

2180 Sheridan
873.0300

3336 Sheridan
836.3636

194 Allen
886.2222

92 Chippewa
854.6666

3094 Main
838.6666

938 Elmwood
885.2900

NOW OPEN

2565 Delaware
(corner of Avery)
877.7500

BUFFALO'S
BEST STEAK
HOAGY
THANK YOU
ARTVOICE READERS