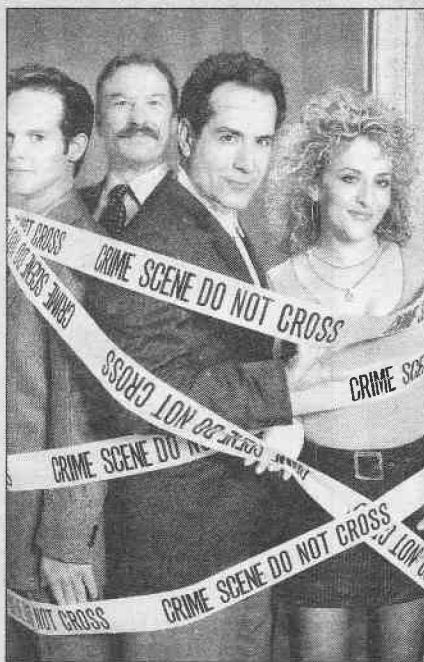


This week's DVDs

By MICHAEL GILTZ

**Monk:
Season
Two**

★★★

Universal, \$59.98

Here's a mystery no one has solved yet: the disappearance of actress Bitty Schram after three years on the series "Monk." Fans of her character, Sharona, can take solace with the appearance of the complete second season from this Emmy-winning comic series about a detective with obsessive compulsive disorder. Also out: "MI-5: Volume Two" (BBC Video, \$79.98), the U.K.'s answer to "24."

The Village

★★★

Buena Vista, \$29.99

Deride his "Twilight Zone" surprises if you must, but director M. Night Shyamalan has a gift for creating images pregnant with portent. "The Village" would have been far more interesting by telling its secrets upfront. But a fine cast (led by Joaquin Phoenix and Bryce Dallas Howard) does its best and no one since Hitchcock can make an empty field seem more menacing. Modest extras, including deleted scenes and a diary by Howard.

Silver City

★★★

Columbia TriStar, \$24.96

It's clear director John Sayles has the respect of his fellow artists: year after year, actors line up to be in his films. His pointed political satire "Silver City" features Chris Cooper, Kris Kristofferson, Richard Dreyfuss, Miguel Ferrer, Thora Birch, Daryl Hannah, Maria Bello, Tim Roth and Mary Kay Place — enough talent to make even Robert Altman get a little jealous.

Fighting Elegy

★★½

Criterion, \$29.95

This 1966 Japanese B-movie about a teen boy lusting after a prim girl proves one thing at

least: casting actors in their 20s to play teenagers wasn't just an American fad from the '50s through "Grease" — it apparently happened all over the world. Far more typical of director Seijun Suzuki is the violent, over-the-top 1963 yakuza picture "Youth of the Beast" (Criterion, \$29.95).

**Gilligan's Island:
Second
Season/Hercules:
Season Five**

★★½ each

Warner Bros., \$39.98/
Anchor Bay, \$69.98

The reality spin on "Gilligan's Island" was a surprising hit. But if you want to put your brain on hold for a few hours, stick with the slapstick original or better yet, Kevin Sorbo battling mythic creatures in "Hercules."