



"Windtalkers" (\$26.98, MGM)
"Scooby-Doo" (\$26.98, Warner Bros.)
"Casino Royale" (\$19.98, MGM)

John Woo: go home! This isn't American jingoism. In Hong Kong, Woo delivered classics like "The Killer" and "Hard-Boiled." But his work in America has been disastrous. "Face-Off" is decent, but everything else has been dreadful, from "Hard Target" and "Broken Arrow" to "Mission: Impossible 2." And now "Windtalkers," a stillborn WWII drama that actually seems inept. So leave, already. "Scooby-Doo" is also a bomb, but you knew that. "Casino Royale" is an overstuffed Bond spoof whose only redeeming feature is the groovy, speaker-rattling score by Burt Bacharach.

"Law & Order: The First Year" (\$79.98, Universal)

A little-known law was passed during Mayor David Dinkins' tenure: every New York-based actor *must* appear in a on "Law & Order" at least once. So one of the delights of the first season of this impeccable crime drama is catching glimpses of stage and screen talent like Samuel L. Jackson, John Spencer of "The West Wing," Ron Rifkin, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Christine Baranski, William H. Macy, Cynthia Nixon, Philip Bosco, Courtney B. Vance, and many others.

"I Spy" Box Sets No. 2 and No. 3 (\$59.99 each, Image)

The upcoming Eddie Murphy/Owen Wilson remake seems to have little in common with the original series except the name. But this landmark show starring Bill Cosby and Robert Culp was a groundbreaker: It gave a black actor the lead in a drama and was filmed all over the world, an exotic angle mimicked by "The Saint" and many others.

"Insomnia" (\$26.98, Warner Bros.)

This fine drama about an exhausted cop (Al Pacino) trying to track down a killer is nothing but good news. Director Christopher Nolan proves "Memento" wasn't a fluke. Robin Williams shows his desire to break out of cloying roles can pay off. And Hilary Swank gives her first good screen performance since winning the Oscar for "Boys Don't Cry." Well done and a huge sigh of relief for all involved.

"American Idol" (\$19.99, Ventura)

Do we still care? Not really. But if we did, this mere two-hour recap wouldn't do the trick. With hundreds of hours of footage available, this should have been a two- or three-disc set jam-packed with scenes from the entire run of the show. For example, we should at least get to follow each performance of the ten finalists from beginning to end. Instead, we get basically the final episode with a few extra bits thrown in.

"A Nous La Liberte" & "Under the Roofs of Paris" (\$29.95, Criterion)
"8 1/2" (\$19.99, Image)

Rene Clair's greatest films are the merest of trifles — delicious, sophisticated treats like "A Nous La Liberte," which contains a hilarious view of workers and mechanized factories so "inspiring" to Charlie Chaplin that Clair felt obliged to sue after "Modern Times" came out.

"8 1/2," by contrast, is Fellini's ode to moviemaking, and it's an eight-course meal followed by a three-layered cake dripping with frosting. Yes, it has moments that are as great as any movie. But by the end, you'll feel stuffed, exhausted and even a little nauseous. This Image print is a great, inexpensive option for those who just want the movie.

"First Works" (\$24.95, Rhino)
"Get a Life Vol. 2" (\$19.95, Rhino)

"First Works" is a very low-budget compilation of unrevealing chats with major directors like Spike Lee, Martin Scorsese and Oliver Stone. Robert Kline produced, directed and narrated the pieces and why Rhino agreed to put it out, I can't imagine. Disappointing in a different way is "Get a Life." It's great to have four more episodes of Chris Elliot's oddball sitcom, but Rhino should get a clue and do it properly: release the whole show at once in a boxed set, not a few episodes at a time.