sight gags, but nonetheless is a streamlined number of lowbrow references, pratfalls, and The film is merely a vehicle for the staggering (Anna Nicole Smith), and a scheme to neutralize the festivities at the Academy Awards. Terrorist (Fred Ward), his buxom accomplice plot, as transparent as ever, centers around a Jane Spencer-Drebin (Priscilla Presley). The Nielsen reprises his role as the inept Lt. Frank Drebin, but he has retired from Police Squad. The abduction of Dan Marino (as a mascot. The abduction of Dan Marino (as the Miami Dolphins) so that he can bring Christmas to everyone. His plan is full of funny scenes, most dominated by Larry, but there are also serious moments. Both sides of the spectrum are acted well by the whole cast. —Kamal Swamidoss.

Ace Ventura: Pet Detective

Daniel Day-Lewis offers a riveting portrayal of a young man named Gerry Conlon who is convicted, along with friends and family, of an IRA bombing of a British pub in 1974. The film does address the grave injustice that the British government dealt the Conlons, but it uses the relationship in prison between Gerry and his father Guiseppe (an excellent Pete Postlethwaite) to carry the film's message of hope and redemption. Director Jim Sheridan's pro-Irish bias provides an effective retaliation against England's tendency to make Ireland a scapegoat for the IRA's actions. And Emma Thompson gives a solid performance as the lawyer who struggles to bring freedom to the Conlons. Quite simply, it ranks as one of the best films of 1993. —Scott Andresen. Loews Somerset

Naked Gun 33 1/3: The Final Insult

From what was promised to be the final chapter in an unapologetic trilogy, this film was anticipated as a letdown but proved every bit as enjoyable as the first Naked Gun. Leslie Nielsen restricts his role as the inept Lt. Frank Drebin, but he has retired from Police Squad to domestic bliss with his ex-con-mother-in-law, Jane Spencer-Drebin (Priscilla Presley). The plot, as transparent as ever, centers around a terrorist (Fred Ward), his buxom accomplice (Anna Nicole Smith), and a scheme to neutralize the festivities at the Academy Awards. Through all these trials, the movie still succeeds as a comedy, full of crazy details and witty one-liners. The actors' wonderful performances, as well as insightful writing by Helen Childress and directing by Ben Stiller, make this a very entertaining movie. —Gretchen Koot. Cleveland Circle

The Ref

It isn't The Fugitive, but The Ref does okay in its efforts. Dennis Leary plays a man running from the law in this comedy by Ted Demme. After goofing up a burglary, Leary's character takes Caroline and Lloyd Chasseur (Judy Davis and Kevin Spacey) hostage while waiting for his escape. The film covers two hours of Leary's attempts to stay on top of his predicament, despite visits from the couple's son and various in-laws. The film is full of funny scenes, most dominated by Larry, but there are also serious moments. Both sides of the spectrum are acted well by the whole cast. —Kamal Swamidoss. Loews Copley Place

Schindler's List

Director Steven Spielberg triumphs in this historical drama about Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson), who was responsible for saving the lives of more than a thousand Jews during the Holocaust. Shot almost entirely in black and white, the film takes you to the Poland of the late 30s and early 40s. Neeson is great, carefully portraying the slow change from a man who only cares about money to one who cares only about saving lives. Ben Kingsley perfectly plays Itzhak Stern, Schindler's Jewish accountant who cunningly sidesteps Nazi officials. Ralph Fiennes portrays the unsparing-ly loyal Amon Goeth, the Commandant of the Nazi labor camp. Through Fiennes, the audience is able to witness the hatred, brutality, and widespread death. Overall the movie is incredibly powerful, and brings to light one of the darkest periods of human history. —Patrick Mahoney. Loews Copley Place

Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas

The animation of this film is incredible, as are the characters, though sadly this level of excellence is not matched in the writing or the music. Set in a land where each holiday has its own world, Nightmare gives the account of Jack Skellington, the leader of Halloweentown. Timed of expecting Halloween each year to the "real" world, Jack decides instead to bring Christmas to everyone. His plan includes kidnapping "Santa Claus" so he himself may deliver all the toys made for him by the ghosts and goblins in Halloweentown. Unfortunately, his good intentions do not translate into a successful Christmas. The most striking feature of the film is the impeccably animated. The movements of the extremely lack originality. Despite the flaws, this remains a fun film overall. —JMA. ESPC Fri-

What's Eating Gilbert Grape

Bolstered by excellent performances by Leonardo DiCaprio, who received a Golden Globe nomination for his role, and Johnny Depp, this film may be the most honest and original film of the year. Gilbert Grape (Depp) is plagued through much of the film by a nagging ambivalence to the problems in his life. The ways in which he eventually confronts these problems, however, are so subtly rendered that the story can never be accused of plot manipulation or cliche. —SD. Loews Nickelodeon

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