

The shooting of Marvin Gaye

By and large, the Cineflix MVDvisual **Final 24** series, about the last days of selected celebrities, hasn't interested us much, but the one title that did catch our attention was **Marvin Gaye – Final 24: His Final Hours** (UPC#760137498797, \$15). The untimely deaths of most celebrities are rather thoroughly deconstructed in the headlines following their demise, but although Gaye's death was 'sensational,' having been shot by his own father, the circumstances that led to the shooting were less widely publicized, perhaps in part because having been killed in 1984, the round-the-clock cable news cycle hadn't entirely geared up to steam yet. But perhaps it was Spike Lee's clever integration of the incident, with Samuel L. Jackson's character, in the superb **Jungle Fever** that really kindled our curiosity. In any case, thanks to MVD, we now have the answers we were looking for.

Running 52 minutes, the program, expectedly, integrates a full biographical portrait of Gaye with the tacky '24 hour' countdown gimmick, cutting back and forth between the events of the final day and the life of the successful but troubled singer leading up to that day. There are no music clips, although the program does have a cheesy stereophonic musical score with a serviceable dimensionality. There are archival clips of Gaye, interviews with several relatives and friends who were on the scene when he was killed, and there is a 'dramatic re-enactment' of the incident itself, so that the documentary, at times, cuts between archival clips of the real Gaye and shots of a similar looking actor, which can be disorienting despite its utility in telling a clear story. It's really surprising, on the other hand, that somebody hasn't made a full-fledged movie about Gaye's life yet, although the odds are reasonably high that it will happen someday. There are just too many interesting facets to the story not to try to capitalize on it. We will save the details of what actually happened to those who are curious enough to look it up on their own, but the one thing we were surprised to learn, although we shouldn't have been, was how deeply disturbed the father was. The two really should never have been living in the same house together.

The picture is presented in letterboxed format only, with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The archival footage is often grainy, but the interviews are reasonably sharp. There is no captioning.