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American Reel (2003/MVD Visual DVD)

Picture: B- Sound: C
Extras: B Film: B+

James Lee Springer (the late David Carradine, **Kill Bill**) after 20 years of singing on stage and in pubs getting a second chance to make his dream come true; to produce a # 1 hit song and a record. That's if he can sign a contract which he can agree with the music executive producers. As he goes from one company to the next, he remembers why didn't sign with them 20 years ago, will he finally sign or will history repeat itself?

American Reel (2003) has James finally, possibly gaining the recognition he once lost, to have his song be No. 1 on the music charts and to have his talent and music recognized. However, what he doesn't want is for the music executives to turn into some kind of super pop idol image to make money off his image instead of his music. After passing up that first chance to become famous 20 years ago has this opportunity for what will be one last time. While his friend/agent is trying to find the right company to sign with, he reminds him fame and chances like this don't come often and not to make the same mistake he did before, but is fame and fortune worth being something you are not?

This film represents quite the reality drama of what musicians and artists have to go through, in the pursuit of either fame or fortune, there is no not dealing with the music industry and the people who run it. It tells a tale of how those in the music industry often do not have what the musician or artist has in mind, they only care how to make more money than the enjoyment of the art or for the desires of the fans and how the American music industry is this incorporate beast. That makes it one of Carradine's most underrated later films and it is nice to have it on DVD. Mariel Hemmingway also stars.

The image looks good, but I wish the sound was a little better, yet it is a watchable enough combination. Extras include interviews with David Carradine, co-star Michael Maloney, song soundtrack, and photo gallery.

- Ricky Chiang



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