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DVD RELEASES

SWASTIKA
ODEON, £17.60

ANYTHING FOR HER
METRODOME, £15.65



MAN or monster? That's one of the most frequent questions film-makers dealing with the rise of Hitler have had to ask themselves. Humanise him and you risk serving up a trite explanation for the horrors he committed against the world. Treating him like the Devil risks transforming him into a symbol that undermines mankind's sickening capacity for evil. When the documentary *Swastika* was first screened at the Cannes film festival in 1973 it caused such outrage that the screening had to be stopped. The reason? It was made up of archive footage of Hitler engaging in banal, normal, everyday activities such as playing with children on a holiday retreat – footage that showed a human side difficult to reconcile with his unspeakable crimes.

That was the point, of course. Directed by Philippe Mora – a Jewish film-maker whose father had been in the French Resistance – and produced by David Puttnam, it was a brave, subtle attempt to explain the unexplainable, to show how easily a nation succumbed to the leadership of a madman. Emerging from a failed attempt to adapt Nazi architect Albert Speer's book *Inside the Third Reich*, it was the first film to really attempt to examine the rise of Hitler from the German perspective. Much of the footage, particularly the colour film shot by Eva Braun, is commonplace now, frequently popping up in television documentaries, but what remains striking and unsettling about *Swastika* is the context it provides. Seventy years on from

the outbreak of the Second World War, its portrait of the normality behind the madness remains thoroughly chilling.



Anything for Her is another Gallic Hitchcock-style thriller clearly attempting to replicate the surprise success of 2007 French hit *Tell No One*. Unlike that film, however, it never succeeds in suspending our disbelief long enough to buy into its heightened, preposterous premise about a schoolteacher (Vincent Lindon) who is determined to spring his wife (Diane Kruger) from prison after she's convicted for a murder she claims she didn't commit. Setting the action over three years, writer/director Fred Cavayé can't keep things moving fast enough to prevent plot holes emerging, starting with his early reveal of Lisa's innocence – a development that makes her conviction flimsy as Harrison Ford's in *The Fugitive*.
ALISTAIR HARKNESS