

Arts & Leisure

THE NEW SEASON / FILM

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New DVD releases, including
W. C. Fields, 'My New Gun'
and 'Dazed and Confused.'

J. Emilio Flores for The New York Times

MY NEW GUN (Columbia Tri-Star, Sept. 28) When Stacy Cochran's drier-than-vermouth suburban comedy "My New Gun" appeared in 1992, it seemed to augur a bright future for the then-nascent idea of independent filmmaking. In the 12 years since, legions of directors have spun out small movies laced with quirks (quirks having become easy substitutes for originality, brains and craftsmanship). But few indie movies of the recent past have the disarmingly gentle spark, or the understated wit, of "My New Gun." Diane Lane plays Debbie, a New Jersey housewife who's not actually bored — that would be too boring. Rather, she makes the best of the orderly life she shares with her passive-aggressively attentive doctor husband, Gerald (Stephen Collins). On a whim Gerald buys her a gun, despite (or maybe because of) her protestations. Her

neighbor, the protective, mysterious, soft-spoken Skippy (James LeGros), spirits the gun out of the house for reasons Debbie doesn't immediately understand. The nuttier their situation gets, the more the tacit sympathy between them grows: their dialogue is like Dada poetry, with extra beats to take the place of the things they don't dare say. Unlike so many comedies set in the suburbs, "My New Gun" — its serviceably lavish houses and roadside restaurants lovingly shot by Ed Lachman — is fueled by optimism and a sense of adventure. Ms. Cochran's movie, never the indie hit it should have been and at last available on DVD, suggests that the suburbs aren't nearly as stupid and lifeless as the movies usually make them out to be. People don't make the suburbs boring — filmmakers do. **STEPHANIE ZACHAREK**



I.R.S. Releasing

James LeGros and Diane Lane in Stacy Cochran's "My New Gun."