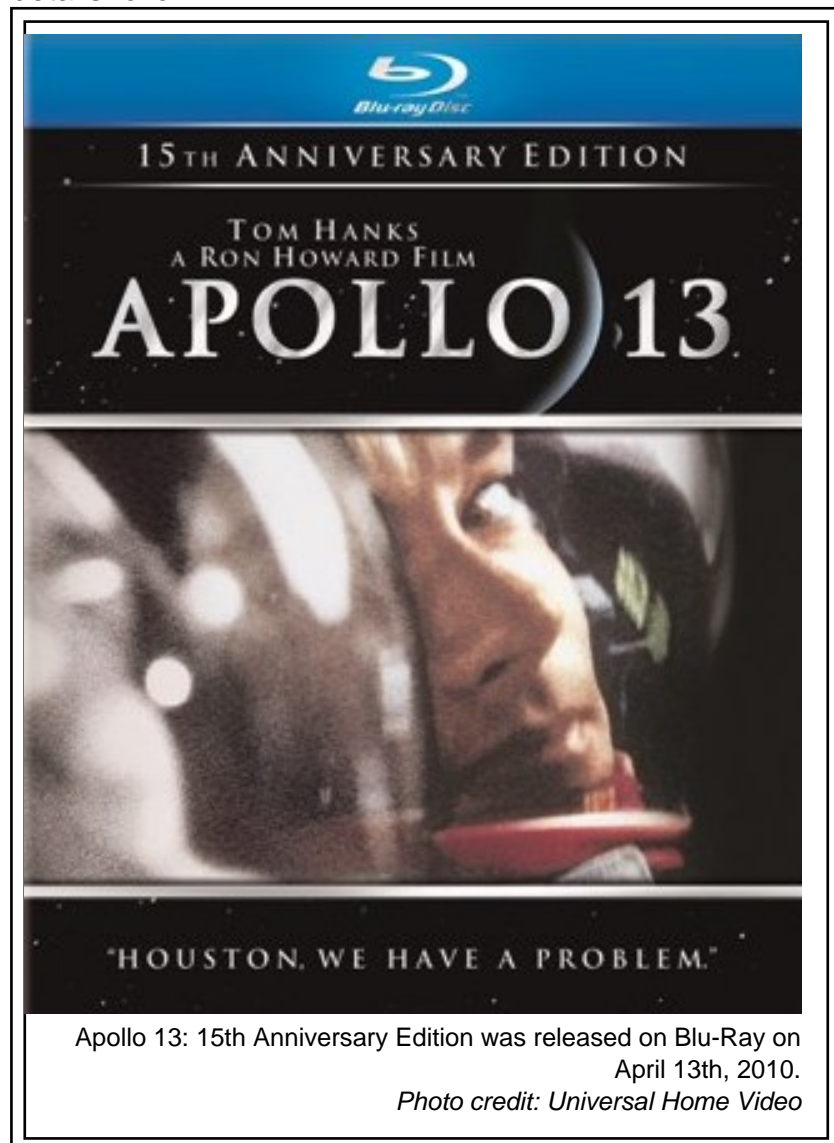


Blu-Ray Review: Universal Catalog Titles ‘Apollo 13,’ ‘Dune,’ ‘Traffic’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 13, 2010 - 2:03pm

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CHICAGO – Universal Home Video is releasing an impressive wave of catalog titles in HD for the first time this month and we have a preview of them just for you, including a great 15th Anniversary Edition of “Apollo 13,” and HD transfers of four movies that have little in common but the studio that released them: “Dune,” “The Jackal,” “Out of Africa,” and “Traffic”. Mini-reviews, synopses, tech specs, and special features details follow.



“Apollo 13: 15th Anniversary Edition”

Ron Howard’s best film is a perfect fit for Blu-ray in that its a film that needs to immerse you in quality audio to be most effective. The most powerful moments of “Apollo 13” transport the audience into that capsule with the astronauts fighting to make it back to solid ground and the Academy Award-winning sound design is spectacular. (The film also won the Oscar for Editing.) Loaded with special features and enhanced with U-Control functionality, the 15th Anniversary Edition of “Apollo 13” is the best catalog title of the month. It’s one of those releases you would have assumed was on Blu-ray already. Pick it up now that it’s finally available.

Synopsis: “Nominated for nine Academy Awards®, including Best Picture, Apollo 13 blasts off onto Blu-ray™ Hi-Def for the first time ever with Blu-ray™ exclusive bonus features. Produced by Academy Award® winner Brian Grazer and directed by Oscar® winner Ron Howard, Apollo 13 stars two-time Academy Award® winner Tom Hanks, Kevin Bacon, Bill Paxton, Gary Sinise and Ed Harris in the inspiring and riveting story of the real-life space flight that gripped a nation and changed the world.”

Tech Specs: 1080p High Definition Widescreen 2.35:1; English DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1

Special Features:

- o U-Control: The Apollo Era
- o U-Control: Tech-Splanations
- o BD-Live Access With Social Blu
- o Lost Moon: The Triumph of Apollo 13
- o Conquering Space: The Moon and Beyond
- o Lucky 13: The Astronaut’s Story
- o My Scenes
- o Feature Commentary with Director Ron Howard
- o Feature Commentary with Jim and Marilyn Lovell
- o pocket BLU



Dune will be released on Blu-Ray on April 27th, 2010.
Photo credit: Universal Home Video

“Dune”

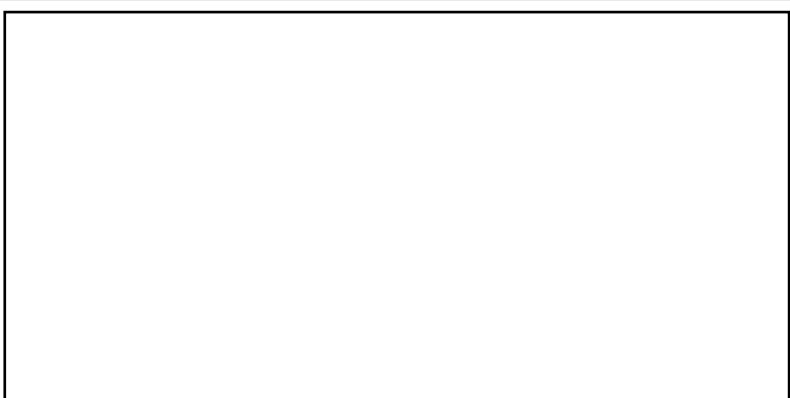
Certainly not David Lynch’s best work, “Dune” is still a major cult classic. I recently let drop in a group of film critics that it was coming out on Blu-ray and they practically pre-ordered right then and there. And yet a lot of people still consider “Dune” a critical and commercial failure. I see both sides of the argument. “Dune” is certainly a flawed film but it’s also a daring, unusual one that has some truly memorable moments. And it’s greatly enhanced by HD video and audio. It seems a bit odd to me that this is the first David Lynch film released on Blu-ray but you have to start somewhere.

Synopsis: “Dazzling special effects, unforgettable images and powerful performances highlight David Lynch’s stunning film version of Frank Herbert’s classic science-fiction epic about an intergalactic warrior’s messianic rise. Starring Kyle MacLachlan, José Ferrer, Max von Sydow, Oscar® winner Linda Hunt and Sting, Dune is the ultimate adventure experience that goes beyond the imagination.”

Tech Specs: 1080p High Definition Widescreen 2.35:1; English DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1

Special Features:

- o Deleted Scenes with an Introduction by Raffaella De Laurentiis
- o Designing Dune
- o Dune FX
- o Dune Models & Miniatures
- o Dune Wardrobe Design





The Jackal will be released on Blu-Ray on April 27th, 2010.
Photo credit: Universal Home Video

“The Jackal”

Does anyone feel strongly about “The Jackal”? I know that action films do well on Blu-ray and DVD but I’m constantly amazed by what makes it to the format in advance of more notable titles. To be blunt, “The Jackal” was mediocre in 1997 and is arguably more so nowadays in the post-Bourne era when we’ve seen how good international action thrillers can be. For true Willis, Gere, or '90s action fans only.

Synopsis: “Bruce Willis is a ruthless assassin, known only as The Jackal, who has been hired to eliminate someone at the very top of the U.S. government. In order to track down this cold-blooded killer and prevent the hit, the FBI’s Deputy Director (Sidney Poitier) and a Russian intelligence officer (Diane Venora) enlist the aid of an imprisoned Irish terrorist (Richard Gere). These unlikely allies enter a global race against the clock to stop the mysterious mercenary before he can complete his deadly assignment.”

Tech Specs: 1080p High Definition Widescreen 2.35:1; English DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1

Special Features:

- o DVD Combo Version
- o My Scenes
- o The Making of The Jackal
- o Feature Commentary with Director Michael Caton-Jones



Out of Africa: 25th Anniversary Edition will be released on Blu-Ray on April 27th, 2010.

Photo credit: Universal Home Video

“Out of Africa: 25th Anniversary Edition”

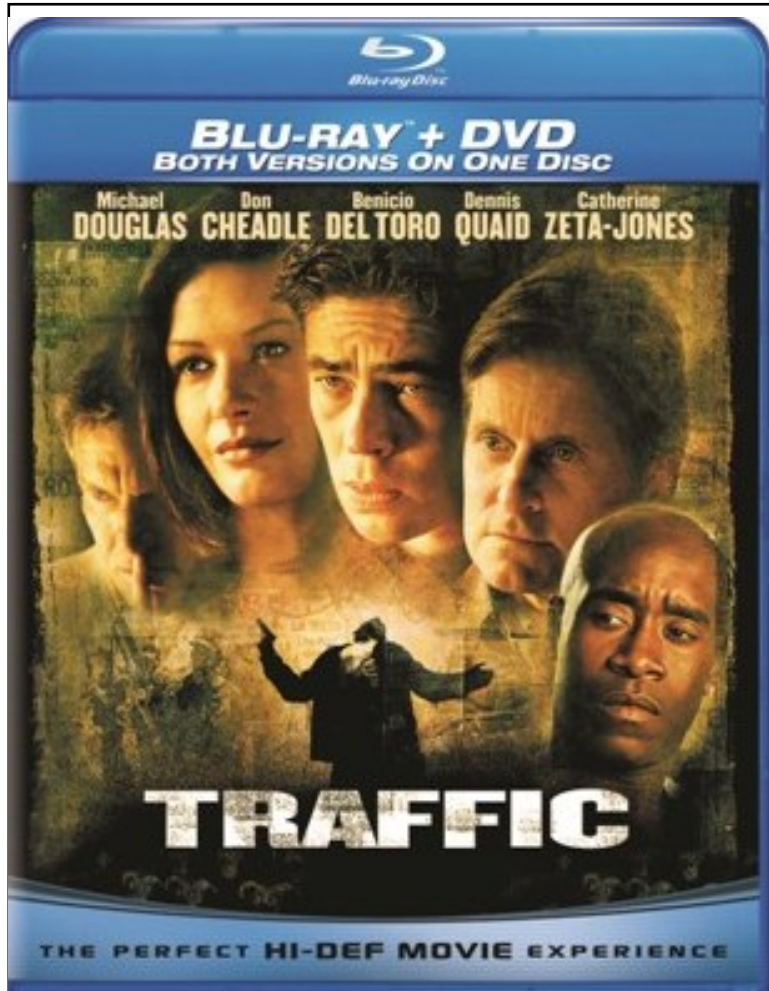
It’s been a quarter-century since Sydney Pollack’s epic film took home an amazing 7 Academy Awards including Best Picture of 1985. The film has held up decently. I think people seeing it for the first time will be surprised that it ran away with SO many Oscars and probably didn’t deserve quite that much acclaim. “Out of Africa” was ’80s star power times two with a pair of the most beloved, respected actors in Hollywood in Meryl Streep and Robert Redford. If it were released now, I don’t think it would land SEVEN Oscars but it’s still a good film and worth inclusion for any drama movie collector. The special features are a bit scant for an “Anniversary Edition,” but the luscious cinematography is effective in 1080p.

Synopsis: “Winner of 7 Academy Awards®, including Best Picture, Out of Africa is a cinematic masterpiece filled with breathtaking passion and majestic imagery. Robert Redford and Meryl Streep star in the fascinating true story of a woman who travels to Kenya to be with her cold husband and falls in love with a mysterious adventurer. Directed by Sydney Pollack, this epic tale of love, loss and self-discovery amid the stunning vistas of the African continent is an unparalleled filmmaking achievement.”

Tech Specs: 1080p High Definition Widescreen 1.85:1; English DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1

Special Features:

- o DVD Combo Version
- o A Song of Africa
- o My Scenes
- o Feature Commentary with Director Sydney Pollack



Traffic will be released on Blu-Ray on April 27th, 2010.

Photo credit: Universal Home Video

“Traffic”

One of Steven Soderbergh’s best films and the drama that should have won the Oscar for Best Picture ten years ago (sorry, “Gladiator” fans) has had several DVD incarnations and a lesser one has made its way to Blu-ray. There’s a Criterion standard version of this great film that includes three commentary tracks and another complete disc of supplements, but none of that material is available on the Universal release, which is practically “bare bones”. “Traffic” is one of the best films of the ’00s, so you should include it in your collection, but consider picking up the Criterion standard edition to compliment this HD one.

Synopsis: “Winner of four Academy Awards®, including Best Director, Traffic is “an astonishing experience!” (Jeffrey Lyons, WNBC-TV). It’s the high-stakes, high-risk world of the drug trade as seen through a well-blended mix of interrelated stories: a Mexican policeman (Benicio Del Toro) finds himself and his partner caught in an often deadly web of corruption; a pair of DEA agents (Don Cheadle and Luis Guzmán) work undercover in a sordid and dangerous part of San Diego; a wealthy drug baron living in upscale, suburban America is arrested and learns how quickly his unknowing and pampered wife (Catherine Zeta-Jones) takes over his business; and the U.S. President’s new drug czar (Michael Douglas) must deal with his increasingly drug-addicted teenage daughter.”

Tech Specs: 1080p High Definition Widescreen 1.85:1; English DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1

Special Features:

- o DVD Combo Version
- o 24 Deleted Scenes

- o Inside Traffic
- o My Scenes



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