

Blu-Ray Review: 'Captain America: The First Avenger' Just Misses Target

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on November 1, 2011 - 2:42pm

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CHICAGO – Even the name makes it sound like a prequel. There are definitely elements of Joe Johnston's "Captain America: The First Avenger" that work and the film is certainly worth a rental and certainly better than "Green Lantern" (although nowhere near the entertainment value of "X-Men: First Class") but I can't shake the feeling that this blockbuster won't stand the test of time on its own. It's an introduction to next year's "The Avengers," a way to get the character into the modern Marvel vernacular, that gets less interesting as it goes along. It is very likely that both Joss Whedon's film and the inevitable sequel to this one will be superior pieces of entertainment but this "First" chapter is a bit of a disappointment.



Blu-Ray Rating: **3.0/5.0**

It doesn't help my overall impression of "Captain America: The First Avenger" that the Blu-ray release is a lackluster offering from Paramount. Once again, we have a series of featurettes — six to be exact — that run no more than 11 minutes, and several are much shorter than that. Who wants to watch mini-featurettes? Just bundle them all into one feature and fans will be much happier. If you're going to watch one, check out the piece on the origin of the comic icon and learn that Red Skull exists because of the cherry on top of a hot fudge sundae. That's a fun bit of trivia, but it doesn't make the stupid presentation of this behind-the-scenes material easier to bear.



Captain America: The First Avenger was released on Blu-ray and DVD on October 25th, 2011

Photo credit: Paramount

Throughout the special features on "Captain America," there are annoying elements. The latest "Marvel One-Shot" turns Clark Gregg's Agent Coulson into an action hero who stops a robbery in the goofy "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Thor's Hammer." Well, not that funny. "The Assembly Begins" is obviously about "The Avengers" but features hardly any footage from it. They do know there's a preview out there now that could have been included instead of scenes from "Iron Man" and "Thor," right? And the deleted scenes are mostly worthless, as evidenced by the most lackluster commentary over them that I think I've ever heard — "Um, yeah, OK, here's a deleted scene." There is a curious one that explains how Bucky got captured and a longer version of the ending that gives Nick Fury more screen time...always a good thing.



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Photo credit: Paramount

What about the movie itself? I like Chris Evans. I always have. He's an engaging, charismatic lead and a perfect choice for Steve Rogers, the man who would become Captain America. Joe Johnston's ("Jurassic Park III") film chronicles his origin story from strong-willed runt to genetically-enhanced superhero. Along the way, he changes the course of WWII by defeating the legendary Red Skull (Hugo Weaving). The film is an old-fashioned slice of entertainment, the kind of action/adventure that would fit well in the world of the serial adventures that actually played during WWII. It's about undeniably good guys taking down undeniably bad guys and I enjoyed the nostalgic angle of the storytelling. Critics who fell for the film clearly did so because of that old-fashioned adventure spirit, one that allows the film to stand apart from rock-music-driven and choppy-edited modern superhero fare.

While I respect the attempt at nostalgia, "Captain America" gets less interesting as it goes along. As character actors like Tommy Lee Jones and Stanley Tucci fade into the background and it becomes about America toppling evil yet again, I realized that this is nothing but set-up for what I expect will be a more complex and engaging "The Avengers" and inevitable "Captain America 2." There's nothing wrong with a tasty appetizer, but we should expect full meals when we buy a film like "Captain America," not just the precursor to one.

Synopsis:

Captain America leads the fight for freedom in the action-packed blockbuster starring Chris Evans as the ultimate weapon against evil! When a terrifying force threatens everyone across the globe, the world's greatest soldier wages war on the evil HYDRA organization, led by the villainous Red Skull (Hugo Weaving, The Matrix). Critics and audiences alike salute Captain America: The First Avenger as "pure excitement, pure action, and pure fun!" (Bryan Erdy, CBS-TV/Movie Planet)

Special Features:

- o Marvel One-Shot: A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Thor's Hammer
- o The Assembly Begins
- o 6 Featurettes
- o Deleted Scenes
- o Commentary by Director Joe Johnston, Director of Photography Shelly Johnson and Editor Jeffrey
- o Digital Copy Of Feature Film

"Captain America: The First Avenger" stars Chris Evans, Hayley Atwell, Stanley Tucci, Tommy Lee Jones, Derek Luke, and Hugo Weaving. It was written by Christopher Markus & Stephen McFeely and directed by Joe Johnston. It was released on Blu-ray and DVD on October

25th, 2011.



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