

DVD Review: Surprising Hit ‘Chronicle’ Cleverly Plays with Timeless Themes

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 18, 2012 - 1:18pm

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CHICAGO – With great power comes great responsibility. Since the invention of the written word, authors have been playing with the idea that power leads to problems as it is man’s inherent nature to use that power to satisfy his own needs. Superhero fiction is based on it (good guys use their power for good, villains use it for evil). A lot of sci-fi is based on it. And the smash hit “Chronicle” (over \$120 million worldwide with 10% of that as its budget), recently released on DVD and Blu-ray, cleverly plays with these themes in a way that feels new. The DVD offers nothing notable in terms of special features so one should probably expect a special edition to be released to coincide with the in-production “Chronicle 2.”

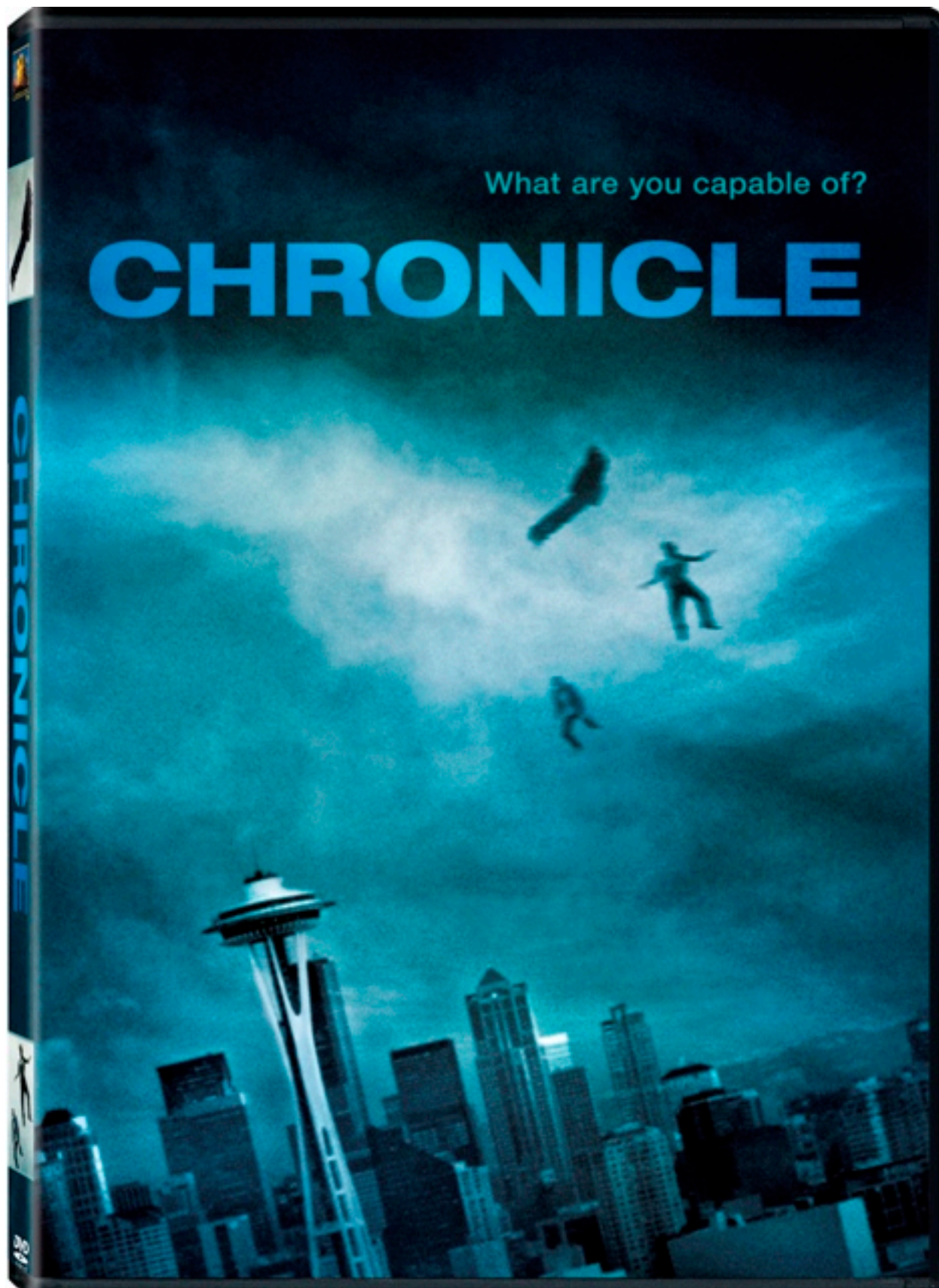


DVD Rating: **3.5/5.0**

“Chronicle” is Andrew Detmer’s (Dane DeHaan) story. It is the tale of the abused, bullied, shy kid who becomes the center of the universe after achieving superpowers with his cousin/friend Matt (Alex Russell) and the most popular kid at school (Michael B. Jordan). The trio finds something under the ground outside a rave and I love that the “something” is beautifully unexplained as we only know what Andrew and his friends would know as the film is told not only from their perspective but from the cameras they carry. Yes, “Chronicle” is another “found footage” film, however director Josh Trank cleverly plays with the format by finding a way to incorporate tracking shots through Andrew’s telekinetic ability to move the camera as he desires. (He also brilliantly uses set cameras, especially in the final act as the film transitions from cop car dashboard cams to helicopters to security cameras and more).

“Chronicle” takes old themes and injects clever new life into them. However, I do think there’s a slightly stronger, slightly darker version of the film that could have been made. DeHaan (from “In Treatment”) is stellar but Russell is less effective. And while the film sets up truly dark times to come, the movie never really goes where it could have gone given the arc of a bully who gains God-like powers. Still, there’s a lot to like here in this streamlined crowd-pleaser, further proof that as special effects become cheaper and easier to use they can become a storytelling tool for voices who could never afford them in the past.

Sadly, the DVD for “Chronicle” kind of sucks. The transfer is OK but the special features are non-existent on DVD. There’s no commentary, no deleted scenes — those are available on a Blu-ray but we weren’t sent that for review and so we can only cover what we received. The movie is a clever joy. The DVD is lackluster.



Chronicle was released on Blu-ray and DVD on May 15, 2012

Photo credit: Fox

Synopsis:

Clear your thoughts for a “mesmerizing mind-bender” (Rolling Stone) that’ll blow you away! Seen through the lens of a troubled teen’s video camera, yet filled with eye-popping action and jaw-dropping special effects, Chronicle is as real as it gets. When three ordinary high school friends make an extraordinary discovery, they acquire amazing abilities beyond their understanding. But as their powers develop, so do their darker sides. Fun, harmless pranks soon lead to much riskier activities as the boys’ “gifts” - and their lives - spin dangerously out of control!

Special Features:

- o Pre-Viz Materials
- o Camera Test

“Chronicle” stars Dane DeHaan, Alex Russell, and Michael B. Jordan. It was written by Max Landis and directed by Josh Trank. It was released on Blu-ray and DVD on May 15, 2012.



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