

## What to Watch: Sept. 17-23, 2013 – TV Edition

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 17, 2013 - 10:12pm

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CHICAGO – This time of year is so rich with Blu-ray and DVD releases of last year’s television seasons that we thought we’d break out the latest ones into their own special edition of What to Watch. Stay tuned for a movie-specific one later in the week that includes “World War Z,” “The East,” “All is Bright,” and more, but this is just for you TV junkies. Pick your faves from the recently-released seasons of television on Blu-ray, DVD, and streaming platforms. Most of these are new to Blu-ray and DVD today, September 17, 2013. If I had to rank them in order of preference, here’s how it would go...



Bates Motel: Season One

*Photo credit: Universal*

### “Bates Motel: Season One”

Claire Danes is very likely to win another Emmy on Sunday for her stellar work on Showtime’s “Homeland” but my vote would go to Vera Farmiga, a stunning talent in film who has brought her skill to the “Psycho” franchise and felt like she’s always been a part of it. As Norma Bates, Farmiga perfectly balances vulnerability and insanity, making clear how she’s the tree from which the classic character of Norman Bates would fall. The Blu-ray is strong with an UltraViolet versions and deleted scenes. As much as any 2013 new show, I can’t wait to see

what they do in 2014.

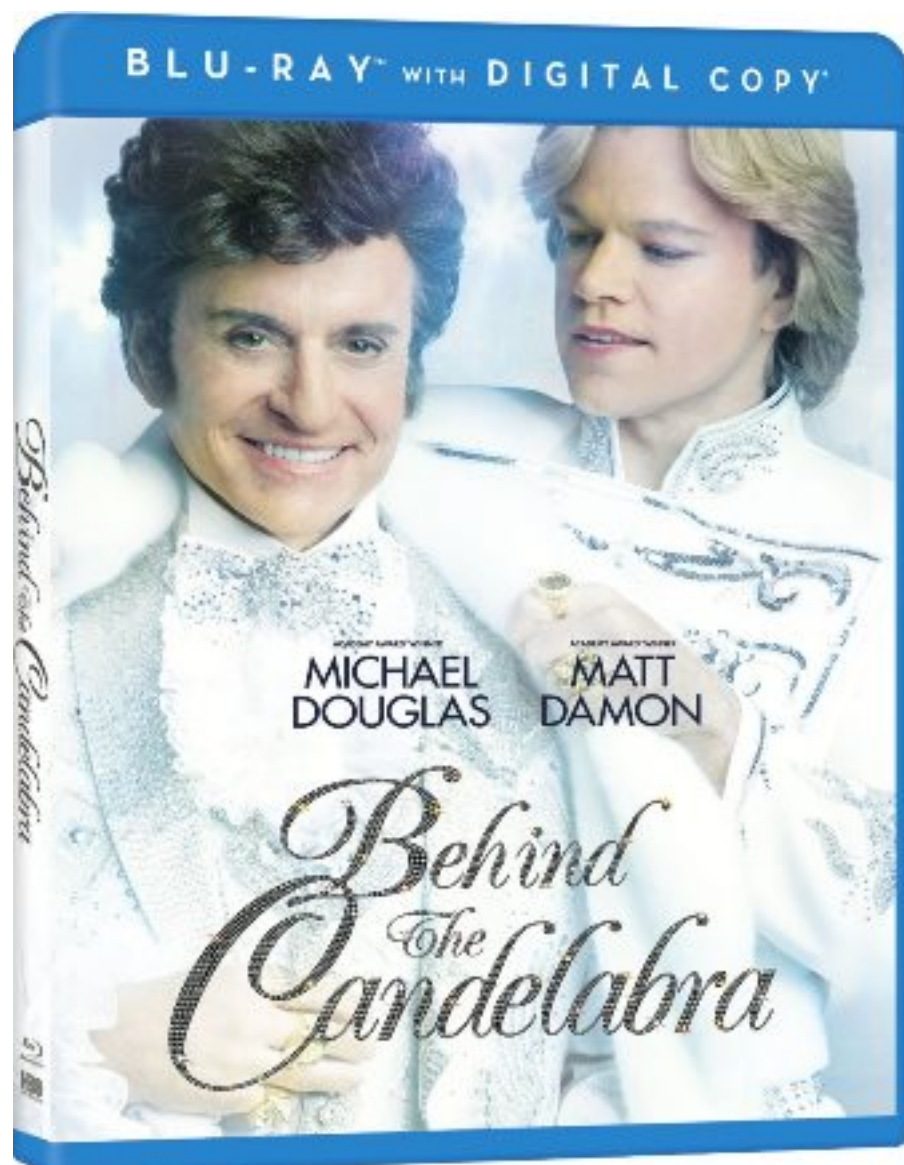
From my [review](#) [22]: *“The first half hour of “Bates Motel” is a joy for this Hitchcock fan. Just getting back into the world, seeing how good Farmiga & Highmore are at roles that other actors would have fumbled, catching all the cues and references to a film that I know very well — I just enjoyed it. As the plotting gets more intense, it becomes easier to see mistakes being made, although I think they are all mistakes that could be fixed in just a few weeks. “Bates Motel” is a good show now and could be a great one soon.”*

Special Features:

o Deleted Scenes

o Paley Center Panel Discussion With The Cast And Creative Team

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Vudu, Amazon Instant, iTunes



Behind the Candelabra

Photo credit: HBO

### “Behind the Candelabra”

Steven Soderberg’s last film is another likely Emmy winner (there are a few in here) for Best Movie/Mini-Series and Best Actor, among possible others. It would make Liberace proud to know that the film about him is primarily a performance piece, allowing Michael Douglas and Matt Damon to show off their incredible talents. The former is likely to win the Emmy, although the latter arguably deserves it more. Either way, this is a great telefilm, a movie that would have played in theaters as recently as five years ago, according to its creator, but now has a life thanks to HBO and their Blu-ray/DVD department. It’s a “wonderful” final note for Soderbergh.

From my [review](#) [23]: *“If this is Soderbergh’s last film, he is going out with what is, ultimately, a performance piece for two actors whose careers he helped define. Michael Douglas certainly had a career pre-Soderbergh but he has been in three Soderbergh films, including arguably his most acclaimed (“Traffic”), and recently welled up at Cannes when discussing the importance of this role to the next phase of his post-cancer career, while Matt Damon has been in a whopping seven Soderbergh flicks. Liberace always liked to end with a show-stopper, something the crowd wouldn’t forget. No one will forget “Behind the Candelabra.”*”

Special Features:

o The Making of Behind the Candelabra

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Vudu, HBO Go, Amazon Instant, iTunes



Adventure Time: Jake the Dad

*Photo credit: Cartoon Network*

#### **“Adventure Time: Jake the Dad”**

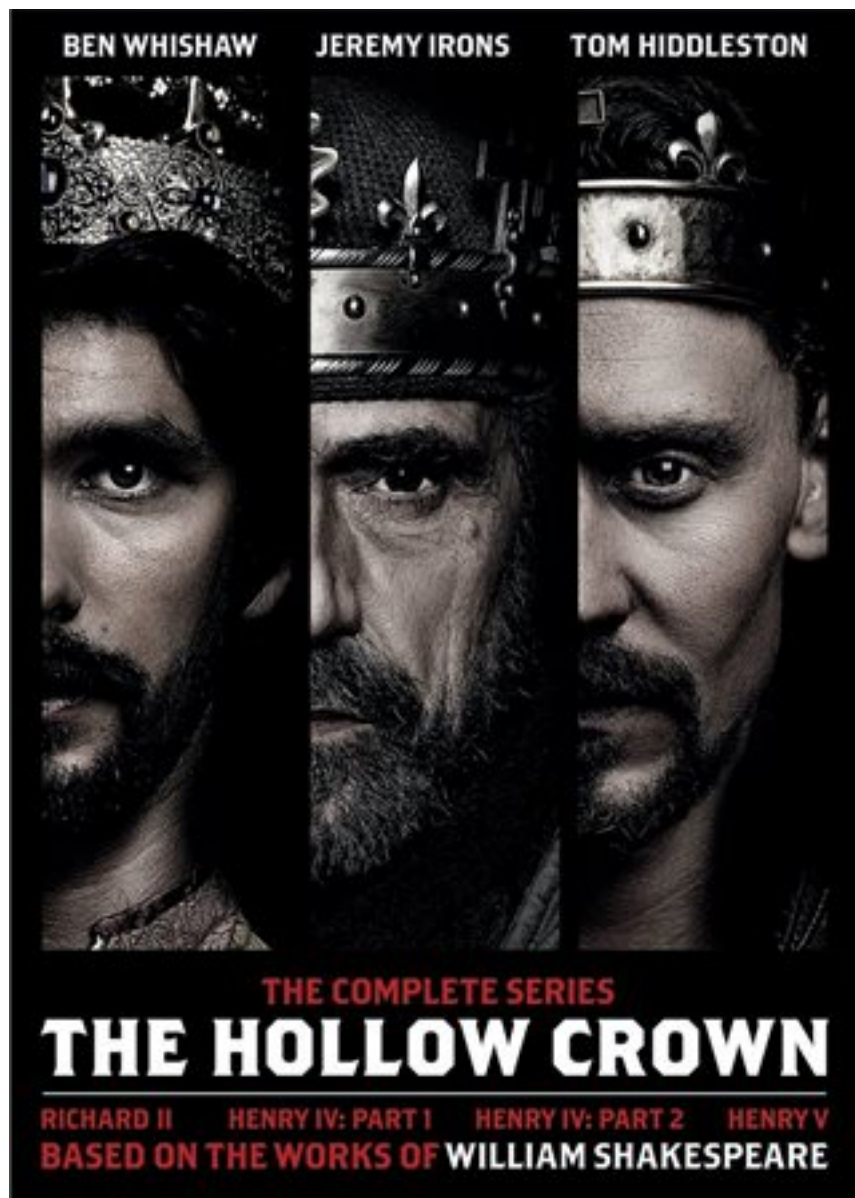
Oh how I love “Adventure Time.” Cartoon Network and Warner Bros. have been releasing the series in odd incarnations, sort of sampler sets, often accompanied by physical collectibles. Here’s another, a collection of fifteen episodes that includes a Jake hat. I plan to wear mine on Halloween. Seriously, “Adventure Time” is one of the smartest, funniest, and straight-up entertaining shows on TV right now. It’s the best animated show currently on the air. Get it for your kids but don’t be surprised if you enjoy it more.

#### **Special Features:**

- o Jake Hat
- o Little Did You Know

**Where to Watch:** DVD, Amazon Instant, iTunes





The Hollow Crown

Photo credit: Universal

### “The Hollow Crown”

From “Adventure Time” to Shakespeare — no one can say that What to Watch doesn’t offer you variety. This series actually starts running on PBS this Friday but you can get a jump on your educated friends by watching the whole thing now. Executive Producer Sam Mendes adapts four of the Bard’s historical dramas — “Richard II,” “Henry IV” (both parts), and “Henry V.” Ben Whishaw, Jeremy Irons, and Tom Hiddleston star in the three adaptations, respectively, and the supporting cast is filled out with legends like Patrick Stewart, Julie Walters, John Hurt, and many more.

#### Special Features:

- o The Making Richard II, Henry IV, and Henry V
- o The Making of a King

Where to Watch: DVD, Vudu, Amazon Instant, iTunes



Homeland: The Complete Second Season

Photo credit: Fox

### “Homeland: The Complete Second Season”

I agree with most people who think that the second season of “Homeland” got a bit spotty in terms of logic but there’s still SO much to like here that it’s hard to believe it’s this far down the list of this week’s What to Watch. It’s more indicative of the high amount of quality releases this week than anything else. Gaps in narrative logic aside, this is one of the most well-performed shows on television, including Claire Danes & Mandy Patinkin, both of whom I expect to win Emmys this Sunday. And Damian Lewis could easily make it a hat trick. See what all the buzz is about before the show returns to Showtime on September 29th for what promises to be an interesting third season.

From my [review](#) [24]: *“In many ways, a show like “Homeland” needs to just slightly turn, taking the characters in a new direction that doesn’t feel like a reboot entirely. “The Sopranos” second season, “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” second season, “The X-Files” second season, “LOST” second season — they took what worked in season one and built on them in ways that felt both new and of a whole with the first season. “Homeland” starts with such creative fire, passion, and drive that it looks likely to do the same.”*

#### Special Features:

- o The Border: A Prologue to Season Three
- o A Super 8 Film Diary From Damian Lewis
- o Return To The homeland: Filming In Israel
- o Deleted Scenes
- o The Choice: The Making Of The Season Finale

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Vudu, Amazon Instant



Grimm: Season Two

Photo credit: Universal

### “Grimm: Season Two”

“Grimm” is often written off as little more than Friday night escapism but this is one of my favorites of the shows that have loyal audiences but get no press at all. You don’t see articles about “Grimm” and it’s certainly not one of the best shows on TV but it’s solid, entertaining fare that is much harder to pull off as successfully as this program does week in and week out. Following in the lineage of “The X-Files” more than “Once Upon a Time,” “Grimm” is a good time.

From my [review](#) [25]: “*And it’s strong fantasy storytelling. Both episodes fly by in terms of pacing and, most importantly, Giuntoli is the confident lead that he really wasn’t until a few months into the first season. This is fun, clever, well-made action drama. And it’s a perfect transition — a Hollywood blockbuster-esque show to end the dismal summer network TV season and serve as a bloody appetizer for the promising fall one.*”

#### Special Features:

- o Grimm Guide: Explore The Creatures Of Grimm With This Interactive Guide
- o Extended Episodes
- o Deleted Scenes
- o Gag Reel
- o Grimm: Myths, Monsters & Legends
- o Grimm: Creatures And Chaos
- o Bad Hair Day Webisodes
- o Monroe’s Best Moments

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Vudu, Amazon Instant, iTunes





Nashville: The Complete First Season

Photo credit: ABC Studios/Lionsgate

### “Nashville: The Complete First Season”

Connie Britton rules but “Nashville” is just OK. While ABC’s “Scandal” was quietly building a massive following, their hope for soap opera glory in “Nashville” struggled to find an audience. For some, it even qualified as a bubble show in that it wouldn’t have been stunning if it hadn’t been renewed. I’m not surprised that ABC wants to get behind this show, one that fits perfectly in their rotation. Maybe it will grow into a better show in season two (a la “Scandal”). If it does, you’ll wish you had seen season one. Do your research now.

From my [review](#) [26]: *“Like a band who gets better to match their lead singer, I think every element of “Nashville” will rise to match the performance of Ms. Britton. It’s not a show for everyone. You need to have a passing interest in the music industry, be able to tolerate country tunes, and respond to soap opera plotting. But for what it is, “Nashville” works. It’s a tune that doesn’t break the mold but fits squarely in it. And sometimes those make for the most memorable hits.”*

#### Special Features:

- o Nashville Comes to Nashville
- o On the Record: B-Side
- o Stellas Go On “Tour”
- o Bloopers
- o Deleted Scenes

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Vudu, Amazon Instant, iTunes



Arrow: The Complete First Season

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

### “Arrow: The Complete First Season”

Ah, the CW. One hero exits stage left in “Smallville” and another enters stage right in the entertaining “Arrow,” a show that has a similar narrative energy and engaging lead. It should help the program find a growing audience for season two that the Blu-ray release is a beauty with WB-caliber HD transfers and a very solid collection of special features. Very few programs got the chance at a sophomore season this year as the 2012-13 freshman crop was a hideous one. I’m glad “Arrow” is getting a chance to grow.

From my [review](#) [27]: “*The plotting of “Arrow” is what makes it most effective. There’s an excellent balance of questions and answers in the premiere as we get to know these characters and watch the plot threads start to dangle.*”

#### Special Features:

- o Arrow Comes Alive!
- o Arrow: Fight School/Stunt School
- o Arrow: Cast and Creative Team At The 2013 Paleyfest
- o Unaired Scenes
- o Gag Reel

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Vudu, iTunes





The Mentalist: Season Five  
Photo credit: Warner Bros.

“The Mentalist: Season Five”

I used to dig “The Mentalist” but the writers got too lazy around season three and even star Simon Baker seemed uninterested in his own character to the degree that he often lost his accent. It’s become a modest procedural, a show that never quite lived up to its potential. However, if you disagree and remain a bigger fan than me, you probably want to keep up with Patrick Jane & Red John. You can do so now on DVD.

Special Features:

- o The Artistry Of Action: From Script To Screen
- o Arresting Excitement: Keeping It Real With The CBI

Where to Watch: DVD, Vudu, iTunes



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