

DVD, Blu-Ray Round Up, Jan. 7, 2009: ‘Bangkok Dangerous,’ ‘Disaster Movie,’ ‘Friday Night Lights,’ ‘Towelhead’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 7, 2009 - 12:51pm

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CHICAGO – The time has come for another round-up, a collection of DVD and Blu-Ray titles that may have missed the front page in the Best Buy circular but that might be worth your attention. The DVD Round-Up is back (check out the first edition [here](#) [16] and a few Blu-Ray Round-Ups [here](#) [17] and [here](#) [18]) with drama, comedy, TV, action, and even Hitler.

Nicolas Cage plays a killer in “Bangkok Dangerous,” Derek Luke a football player in “Friday Night Lights,” Aaron Eckhart a suburbanite in “Towelhead,” and Carmen Electra essentially herself in “Disaster Movie”. There’s something for everyone in the DVD Round-Up.

All of these titles were released on January 6th, 2009, unless otherwise noted.



“Bangkok Dangerous”

“*The Hitman Has Become the Target.*” Nicolas Cage stars in the remake of The Pang Brothers’ “Bangkok Dangerous,” a messy action film about Joe, a hired assassin caught in the middle of a hitman’s nightmare. He’s on one final assignment in Bangkok when the job takes a wild turn after Joe violates one of the most important rules of the game. The hunter becomes the hunted in another remake that’s not quite as good as the original, but should appeal to Cage fans and action junkies.

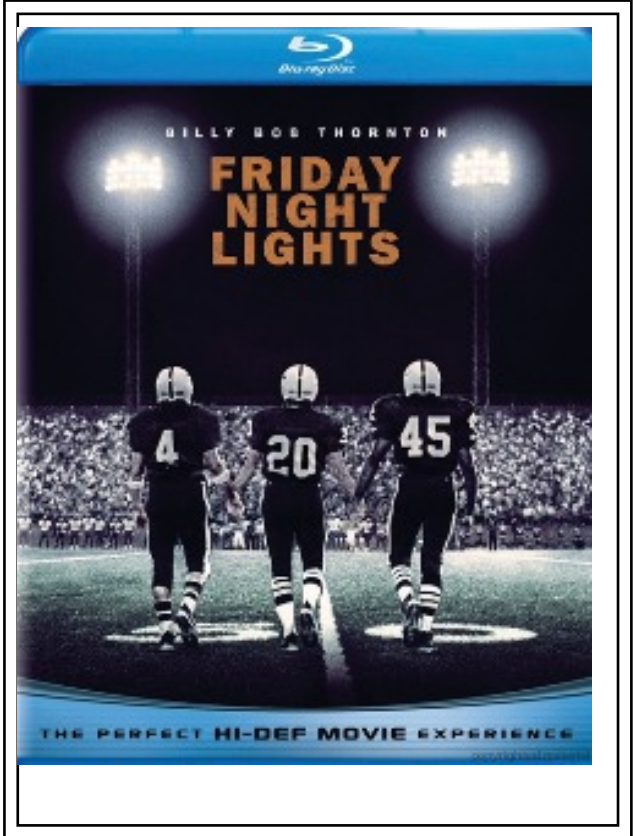
The DVD version of “Bangkok Dangerous” is presented in 1.78:1 anamorphic widescreen with a 5.1 Dolby Digital EX audio track and includes a digital copy of the film on a second disc. The first disc includes an alternated ending, “From Hong Kong to Bangkok: A Look at Hong Kong Cinema,” “Bangkok Dangerous: The Execution of the Film,” and the theatrical trailer.



“Disaster Movie: Cataclysmic Edition (Unrated)” (Blu-Ray)

“Lewd, Rewd, Crewd, Newd. Celebrate End Times!” Even the tagline is a little annoying. “Disaster Movie” comes from the same team that made the critically reviled “Date Movie,” “Epic Movie,” and “Meet the Spartans”. Yes, that means that they unleashed two Carmen Electra “comedies” in one year. When they release three, it’s a sign of the apocalypse. A plot recap of “Disaster Movie” seems almost like an oxymoron but this one purportedly sends up everyone’s favorite disaster flicks, pop culture icons and public figures with no-holds-barred humor. Hulk, Batman, Iron Man, Alvin and the Chipmunks, Hellboy, and Electra, all in one movie.

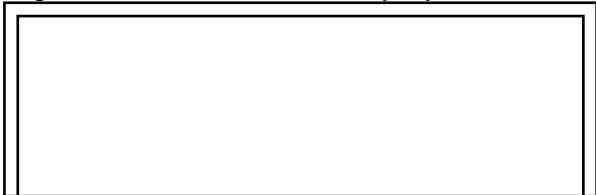
The Blu-Ray version of “Disaster Movie” is presented in 1080P High Definition with a 1.78:1 widescreen ratio and an English 7.1 DTS HD Master Audio track. Special features include BonusView Picture-in-Picture Cast & Crew Commentary, “Girl Fight,” “High School Musical” Sing-along, “I’m F#%king Matt Damon” Sing-along, “Sitting Down With a Stand-Up,” “G-Thang’s Tour,” “Straight From the Ladies,” “Who’s Spoofing Who,” “This Is How We Do It,” and the fascinating “MoLog,” a BD-Live feature which allows the user to insert and animate shapes, test, audio, and other graphics right into the film to share with other users.



“Friday Night Lights” (Blu-Ray)

Just in time for the college football season championship game, Universal has reached into their catalog and pulled out the underrated “Friday Night Lights” from director Peter Berg, based on H.G. Bissinger’s excellent non-fiction book about our country’s obsession with football. The movie is a bit different from the book, turning it into more of a rah-rah sports movie about a courageous high school football team’s fight to fulfill their destiny and live their dream. Starring Billy Bob Thornton, Derek Luke, Jay Hernandez, and Tim McGraw, “Friday Night Lights” is a must-own for any sports fan with a Blu-Ray player.

The Blu-Ray version of “Friday Night Lights” is presented in 1080P High Definition with a 2.35:1 widescreen ratio and an English DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1 track. Special features include BD-Live functionality, action-packed deleted scenes, “Peter Berg Discusses a Scene in the Movie,” “Player Cam,” “Tim McGraw: Off the Stage,” “The Story of the 1988 Permian Panthers,” “Gridiron Grads,” “Behind the Lights,” and a great feature commentary by director Berg and author Bissinger.

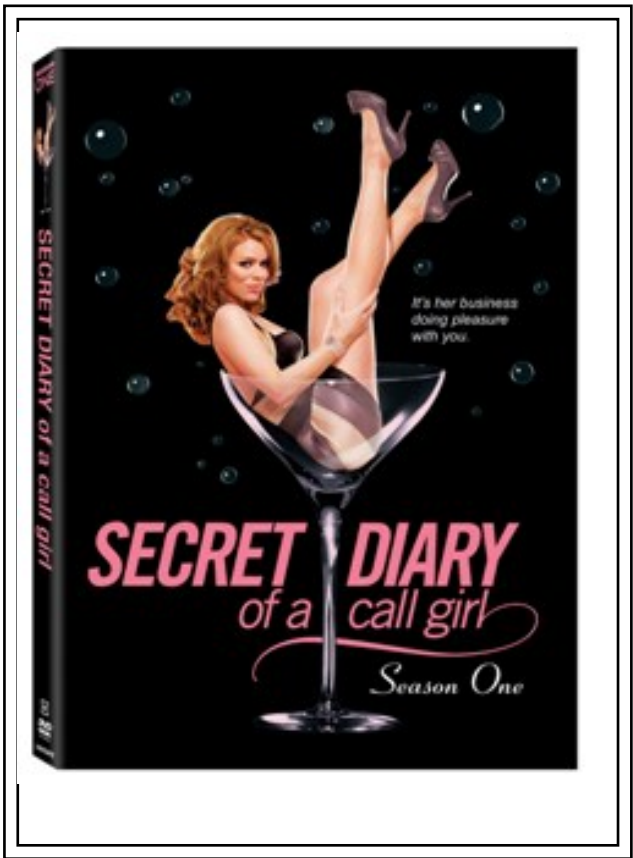




“The Plot to Kill Hitler”

If you can’t make it to see “Valkyrie” this week (or don’t want to after reading this [review](#) [19]), rent or buy “The Plot to Kill Hitler” instead. Brad Davis (“Midnight Express”) stars in the role played by Tom Cruise, Colonel von Stauffenberg, who led a campaign to kill Adolf Hltler in the waning days of WWII. Produced by the man who brought “Roots” to the small screen and directed by Lawrence Schiller (“The Executioner’s Song”), “The Plot to Kill Hitler” aired on TV almost exactly eighteen years ago.

The WB-released DVD for “The Plot to Kill Hitler,” clearly released to tie into audiences either in love with “Valkyrie” or looking for a different version of the same story, includes no special features and is presented in standard, full frame version, the way the film was originally broadcast. The audio is presented in Dolby Surround Stereo.



“Secret Diary of a Call Girl: Season One”

“It’s her business doing pleasure with you.” The first eight episodes of Showtime’s “The Secret Diary of a Call Girl” have been released on a two-disc set from Lionsgate Home Video. Inspired by the true-life adventures of a notorious escort, “The Secret Diary of a Call Girl” stars “Doctor Who”‘s Billie Piper as a high-class London escort. By day she’s the quiet, unassuming Hannah, but at night she becomes Belle, the city’s wildest and most successful lady of the night. “Call Girl” details a modern woman’s quest to juggle the normalcy of her daily life with the unusual nature of what she does for a living. The show is wildly uneven but the talented Piper does her best to keep it entertaining. Watch for more with our review of the season two premiere coming soon.

The DVD “set” for “Secret Diary of a Call Girl” is pretty disappointing with no commentaries or deleted scenes. The only special feature is a featurette titled “Billie Piper: Coming to America”. The episodes are presented in 16x9 widescreen with a 1.78:1 aspect ratio and a standard Dolby stereo track.





"Towelhead"

From the acclaimed writer of "American Beauty" and the creator of "Six Feet Under" and "True Blood," "Towelhead" features an incredible ensemble cast with great actors including Aaron Eckhart, Toni Collette, and Maria Bello in a controversial drama. Newcomer Summer Bishil plays a 13-year-old Arab-American struggling to cope in her boring Houston suburb. She's drawn to a boy in school. And to a hunky, married Army reservists neighbor. She's curious about sex and has no idea how to handle relationships. Everything about her life collides in a series of dramatic events in this coming-of-age story, which was released by Warner Brothers on December 30th, 2008. Critics were divided about "Towelhead," but it's an interesting, unique film from a talented writer and you shouldn't let it slip by with all of the more high-profile DVDs that have hit the market in the last few weeks.

The DVD for "Towelhead" looks very good (although a Blu-Ray edition would have been nice) with a widescreen transfer and an English Dolby Digital 5.1 audio track. The only featurette is called "Towelhead: A Community Discussion," in which director/screenwriter Alan Ball hosts 2 insightful panels on issues the film raises, one including co-stars Summer Bishil and Peter Macdissi, the other including the novel's original author Alicia Erian.



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