

Blu-Ray Round Up, Feb. 17, 2009: 'Amadeus,' 'Boondock Saints,' 'A History of Violence'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on February 17, 2009 - 4:04pm

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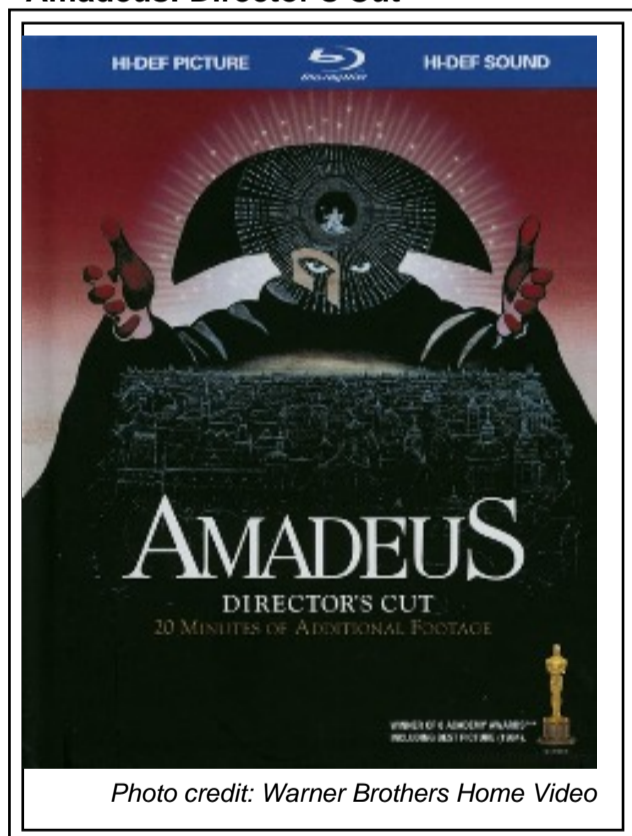
CHICAGO – A Best Picture winner that looks nowhere near as old as many of the films that came out a quarter-century ago with it, a recent masterpiece from David Cronenberg that probably should have been more recognized by Oscar, and a little film that was never on the Academy's radar but has developed an insanely huge and loyal cult following.

Last week, Warner Brothers released a wonderful new edition of Milos Forman's "Amadeus," New Line brought "A History of Violence" out of the catalog and gave it the HD treatment, and Fox delivered "Boondock Saints" to the legions of cult fans who adore it.

Honestly, we often include titles in the Blu-Ray Round Up that we can't wholeheartedly get behind as recommended purchase items. All three of this week's title would make great additions to anyone's collection. Don't call it a Round Up. Call it a shopping list.

All three of these titles were released on February 10th, 2009.

"Amadeus: Director's Cut"



What more can possibly be written about one of the great Milos Forman's best films, an eight-time Oscar winner (including Best Picture) and one of the most accomplished films of the '80s? You already know that "Amadeus" is movie greatness, so let's focus on the Blu-Ray release. Warner Brothers doesn't skimp, packaging the film in a beautiful cardboard case with a booklet about the making of the film and the history of Mozart. They also include a special CD compilation of highlights of the Mozart catalog with an insert that provides a little bit of history on the eight chosen pieces and the version of the film released on Blu-Ray includes twenty minutes of scenes not seen in its original release.

As for the film itself, "Amadeus" remains a screen triumph, as sumptuous period epic, as soaring celebration of the music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and as the winner of 8 Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Actor, Director, and Adapted Screenplay. In 1781 Vienna, court composer Antonio Salieri (Abraham) is maddened with envy after discovering that the divine musical gifts he desires for himself have been bestowed on the bawdy, impish Mozart (Tom Hulce), whom he plots to destroy by any means necessary.

"Amadeus: Director's Cut" is presented in 1080p High Definition 16x9 with a 2.40:1 aspect ratio and accompanied by an English Dolby TrueHD 5.1 track, Dolby Digital 5.1 track, and DD 5.1 tracks in French, Spanish, German, and Italian.

Special features include the aforementioned CD, commentary by director Milos Forman and writer Peter Shaffer, "The Making of Amadeus" documentary, and the film's theatrical trailer.

"The Boondock Saints"

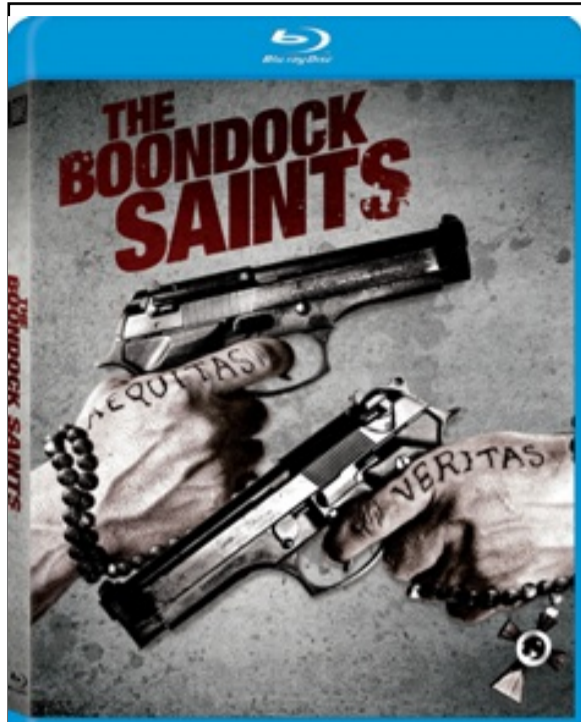


Photo credit: Fox Home Video

Troy Duffy's "Boondock Saints" has to be one of the most surprising cult phenomena of the last several years. Barely noticed on its initial release in 2000, the film grossed just over \$30k on the five screens that saw fit to play it theatrically. Shocking everyone, "Boondock Saints" became an enormous hit on DVD. The film that critics had mostly ignored or derided (19% on Rotten Tomatoes) became a cult hit by fans who adored it (7.8 user rating on IMDB). The buzz was huge enough to actually support the financing of a sequel. "All Saints Day" is currently in post-production, making "Boondock Saints" one of the least theatrically successful films in history to ever get a sequel.

Heart-pounding and graphic, this action-packed film pits FBI agent Paul Smecker (Willem Dafoe) against a pair of Irish brothers (Sean Patrick Flanery and Norman Reedus) out to rid the world of evil - starting with the Russian mob. But as the brothers brutally take on Boston's underworld, Smecker finds himself torn between busting the vigilantes...and joining them.

"The Boondock Saints" is presented in 1080p High Definition with a widescreen ratio of 2.35:1 and accompanied by an English 5.1 DTS-HD Master Audio track. Spanish subtitles are the only foreign language option available.

Special features include the extended director's cut of the film, audio commentary by writer/director Troy Duffy on the theatrical cut, audio commentary by actor Billy Connolly on the theatrical cut, outtakes, deleted scenes, and the script for "The Boondock Saints".

"A History of Violence"



Photo credit: New Line Home Video

One of the best movies of the last several years, David Cronenberg's "A History of Violence" is a fantastic drama, a movie that has lost none of its riveting power in the time since its release and now comes home in a beautiful Blu-Ray edition. With a fantastic commentary by one of my favorite directors and interesting special features about the differences between the international version and US versions of the film, "A History of Violence" is already a prized part of my collection. Make it one of yours too.

Likable family man and small town diner owner Tom Stall (Viggo Mortensen) is living his life, minding his own business. Then an act of heroism puts him on all the news channels, and certain people take notice - Made men from Philly who are dead sure Stall is the ex-mob

assassin they want to find and whack. Mistaken identity? Or is Tom actually a stone-cold killer? Director David Cronenberg ("The Fly," "Eastern Promises") ramps up the tension in a fierce, convulsive, thought-provoking thriller that also stars Maria Bello, Ed Harris, and William Hurt (an Academy Award nominee and Los Angeles and New York Film Critics Award winner for his powerful performance).

"A History of Violence" is presented in 1080p High Definition 16x9 with a 1.85:1 aspect ratio and accompanied by an English Dolby TrueHD 5.1 track and Dolby Digital 5.1 track. The lack of other language tracks is surprising and the only foreign language subtitle track is in Spanish.

Special features include a fantastic commentary by Cronenberg, a riveting deleted scene called "Scene 44" and a mini-featurette about its production called "The Unmaking of Scene 44," "Acts of Violence" minidocumentary gallery, the brief "Violence's History: United States Version vs. International Version," and "Too Commercial For Cannes". It's a short but excellent collection of special features.



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