

DVD Review: ‘Green Lantern: First Flight’ Falls Short of DC Universe Standard

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on August 3, 2009 - 11:36am

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CHICAGO – The DC Universe brand of straight-to-DVD titles has worked its way through Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, and the Justice League and settled on Green Lantern, never a favorite character of this old school superhero fan and the first real misfire in the DC Universe line.

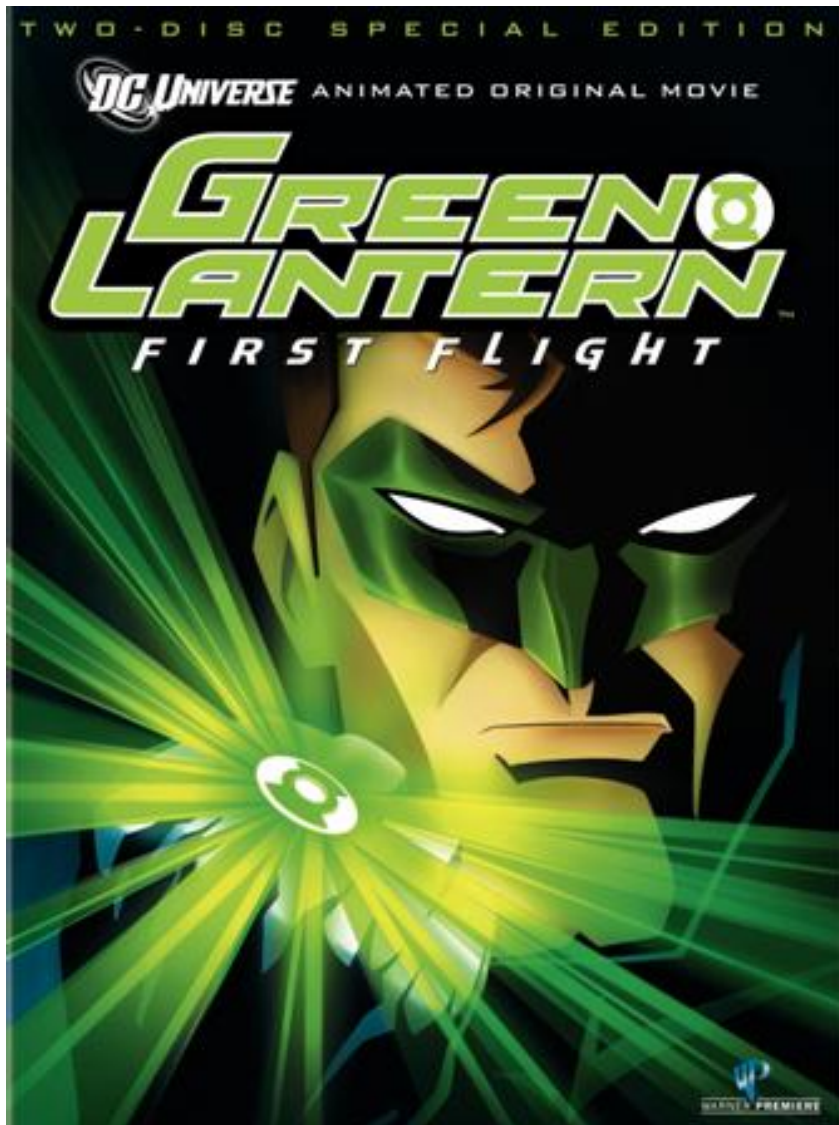


In 2007, Warner Brothers and DC started releasing a series of PG-13 animated, full-length feature films with a surprisingly artistically successful franchise of films. “Superman: Doomsday” started the line, followed by the excellent “Justice League: The New Frontier” (easily the best of the franchise to date) and very good “Batman: Gotham Knight” in 2008. This year has given us the so-so “Wonder Woman” and now the very disappointing “Green Lantern: First Flight,” a release that not only falls below the franchise standard in film quality but DVD presentation as well.



Green Lantern: First Flight was released on DVD on July 28th, 2009.
Photo credit: Warner Bros.

Why the franchise decided to go back to a Green Lantern origin story is something I’ll never understand but if “First Flight” had any chance of working they needed to imbue the tale with the same kind of modern unpredictability seen in “Gotham Knight” or even a bit in “Wonder Woman”. Sadly, “Green Lantern: First Flight” is the most by-the-numbers, boring DC Universe film to date, feeling the most like something that would air on Saturday mornings in the ’90s instead of an animated movie of feature film quality.



Green Lantern: First Flight was released on DVD on July 28th, 2009.

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

Written by DC Comics animation collaborator Alan Burnett and directed by “Wonder Woman”’s Lauren Montgomery, “First Flight” tells the story of Hal Jordan (Christopher Meloni) as the first human inducted into the Green Lantern Corps. After the death of Abin Sur, Jordan is recruited into the Corps and partnered with senior officer Sinestro (Victor Garber).

It turns out that Sinestro has been working with the evil Kanjar Ro (Kurtwood Smith) to overthrow the Guardians and their Green Lantern Corps by harnessing the only element able to take down the yellow element, the only part of the color spectrum than can defeat the green energy.

Can the new recruit stop Sinestro in time? Tricia Helfer, Michael Madsen, Juliet Landau, and John Larroquette provide additional voice work.

To be blunt, “Green Lantern: First Flight” is too old-fashioned and dull to be interesting to adult or even teenage audiences in 2009. The hero is square-jawed and flawless, the villain is obvious, and the twists and turns are nearly non-existent. Even the voice work is uninspired. Meloni and Helfer are boring when compared to Keri Russell and Nathan Fillion of “Wonder Woman”.

In one of the special features on the second disc of the DVD, writer Geoff Johns expertly explains what he likes about writing Green Lantern accompanied by images from the recent incarnation of the book, including amazing imagery from the legendary Dave Gibbons. It’s an interesting commentary on the film itself. There is more emotion, pathos, and drama in those still images than the entirety of the film on the first disc.



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Photo credit: Warner Bros.

Past DC Universe titles have included excellent documentaries about the characters and detailed information about the films. “First Flight” is disappointing as both a film and a DVD. The first disc plays largely like an extended trailer for the rest of the franchise. Trailers for all other DC

Universe films are included, as is a look at the upcoming “Superman/Batman: Public Enemies” and a look behind the scenes of “Blackest Night,” the epic DC Comics super hero event in which the dead rise.

You’ll have to move to disc two to find out anything about Green Lantern or “First Flight” and even that material is thin. The aforementioned “Behind the Story with Geoff Johns” is easily the best feature, but it’s about the extent of it. The great Bruce Timm picks two bonus cartoons for fans and there’s a “Duck Dodgers” cartoon, but the collection of extras on “First Flight” feels easily the most like filler of any DC Universe title.

The next title in the DC Universe will find the franchise back in superstar mode, bringing “Superman/Batman: Public Enemies” to life this Fall. Hopefully, the series can find its footing again.

‘Green Lantern: First Flight’ is released by Warner Bros. Home Video and features voice work by Christopher Meloni, Victor Garber, Tricia Helfer, Michael Madsen, John Larroquette, Kurtwood Smith, and Larry Drake. It was written by Alan Burnett and directed by Lauren Montgomery. It was released on July 28th, 2009. It is rated PG-13.



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