

BONES: THE COMPLETE SECOND SEASON

Fox Home Entertainment

I was glad to learn the quirky; standout characters of Bones would live to see a second season--one that indeed delved into their lives. To start, Dr. Brennan (Emily Deschanel) must adjust to a new boss, Dr. Camille Saroyan (Tamara Taylor), who has the people skills Brennan lacks as well as a previous relationship with Special Agent Seeley Booth (David Boreanaz.). Saroyan works more closely with Brennan and her team than did Dr. Goodman (the departed Jonathan Adams). Adding to Brennan's worries is the sudden appearance of her fugitive father (played with heart and menace by Ryan O'Neal).

Meanwhile, Brennan's friends face challenges of their own. Midway through the season, Booth is suspended for firing his weapon without cause and forced into multiple sessions with an FBI psychiatrist (Stephen Fry). While Booth is away, Brennan is assisted (and romanced) by a new FBI contact (Eddie McClintock). Romance also blossoms between Jack Hodgins and Angela Montenegro (T.J. Thyne and Michaela Conlin). Even youthful genius Zach Addy (Eric Millegan) does some growing up, earning his first Ph.D.

This may seem a lot of change for one season, but most of the change occurs organically. The show's crime element remains compelling and fast-paced, the tension only heightened as viewers come to care more about the characters.

The second season set includes all 21 aired episodes on 6 discs, two audio commentaries, two behind-the-scenes featurettes, deleted scenes, and a gag reel.

Gerald So**Boston Legal Season Three**

Fox Home Entertainment

DENNY CRANE!!! I love Denny Crane. I also love everyone else on this show. David Kelly is either a direct hit or a major miss with me, and with Boston Legal he's definitely hit this one out of the park. He manages to create a show that is funny, sarcastic, political and dramatic. It's not overtly deep drama, just enough to keep you watching, so it doesn't get bogged down like some night time soaps do (ER, NYPD Blue) It's just damn good entertainment.

This season has great guest stars including a wonderful performance from Delta Burke, who is normally not a favorite of mine, though here she shined. We also see some cast additions which work well for the show. My favorite is the on again off again romance Denny has with a dwarf. Continuing plot lines add to the shows depth, but you can definitely enjoy each episode on it's own as well. This season has it all, marriage, romance, babies, men in drag. And as always the end of each episode with Spader and Shatner is always my favorite.

What do I want more of on TV? DENNY CRANE!!!!

Jon

BUBBA HO-TEP: HAIL TO THE KING EDITION

MGM/Fox Home Entertainment

Quick summary:

A cranky, elderly Elvis (Bruce Campbell) joins forces with black JFK (Ozzie Davis) to battle a redneck mummy in a Texas nursing home. Are you still with me? Good because this is a delightful B movie with pluck, charm and a lively sense of spirit.

Elvis is spending his days sitting in a nursing home in East Texas. He is cranky and with good reason. Everyone thinks he is an Elvis

impersonator named Sebastian and, to make matters worse, he has a growth on his ...junk.

As the days go by, an alarming number of residents are dying in their sleep. Now while this does not sound unusual, Elvis is attacked by a very large (and very plastic) beetle (aka scarab). After dispatching the pesky bug, Elvis realizes something is amiss. He talks with a crackpot that thinks he is JFK. Of course everyone thinks he is nuts for saying he is Elvis so maybe he is telling the truth (JFK has a pretty good explanation) after all.

Years ago, some robbers stole the contents of an Egyptian museum display. Their truck overturned and ended up in a Texas swamp. The mummy, whose tomb was part of the exhibit, rose up and has been feeding off of the souls of the elderly ever since. He has also started wearing the native garb (cowboy hat among other things). Naturally Elvis and JFK decide they cannot allow this to continue! Somebody must stand up for the weak upon which the mummy is preying.

Bubba Ho-Tep was a favorite on the festival circuit and quickly developed a cult following. And with good reason: It is a damn good movie.

While the humor is certainly there, it is played very straightforward. At no point does this come across as a big joke. They took the job of filming this tale very seriously and it raises the quality of the film above that of a cheese ball flick.

For extras, we are treated to two commentary tracks, one with writer/director Don Coscarelli and Bruce Campbell and **the other with Bruce in character as the King**. While both are entertaining and worth checking out, listening to the King is awesome.

There are also some deleted scenes, featurettes, and a few other things including author Joe Lansdale reading from the story this is based on. The deleted scenes are honestly nothing to get excited about and can easily be skipped over. The featurettes are fairly interesting and give us a look into the making of a low budget film. A lot of creativity and energy goes into doing more with less.

On top of all this, the packaging is very cool. This DVD comes in a white faux leather (or maybe real leather...I am not sure) jumpsuit slipcase. A slipcase worthy of the King!

Bottom line: If you have a sense of humor, you shall likely be entertaining and enjoy the absurd, Bubba will deliver the goods and actually stand up to repeated viewings.

Jeremy

DEATH PROOF

Weinstein/Genius

Three gals out on the town for a little fun run into Mike (Kurt Russell), a grizzled, yet charming, stunt man. He offers one of the lasses (McGowan) a ride home. Alas, she never makes it there. Mike's car, a jacked up Dodge Charger, is Death Proof...if you are the driver.

Later, Mike runs into another group of ladies. But this group, taking a break from working on a film set, is not as helpless. This bunch features stuntwoman Zoe (played convincingly by stuntwoman Zoe Bell), who proclaims, "There's no point to living in America unless you drive a Dodge Challenger."

Not surprisingly, she happens to drive one. Accompanied by Abernathy (Rosario Dawson) and Kim (Tracie Thoms), Zoe soon finds herself in one of the coolest, craziest car duels in the history of films. *Death Proof* does indeed have the aforementioned car duel, but it also has some really great dialogue. The racy, frank banter among the girls is first rate. Zoe Bell is a hoot and Kurt Russell does a great job as our villain.

Extras:

Here, we get a look behind the casting decisions (Introducing Zoe Bell, Kurt Russell As Stuntman Mike, Finding Quentin's Gals and The Guys Of Death Proof) as well as the stunts that are a vital part

of *Death Proof*. While each of these could easily be a puff piece, Tarantino's enthusiasm makes them interesting and engaging. We find that virtually every casting choice was made for a reason. And while this energy, combined with details and factoids from Tarantino's geek-like encyclopedic knowledge of cinema, make the extras more interesting, QT's propensity to ramble on can occasionally be a bit much. It might have been helpful to have somebody around to occasionally cut him off (perhaps with a stun gun?).

Odds are pretty good that there will eventually be a massive DVD combo pack of *Death Proof* and *Planet Terror* together. Between the two, *Death Proof* stands on its own better than *Planet Terror*. A very fun B flick with cool cars, hot chicks and a genuinely badass villain.

Jeremy

DELIVERANCE: 35TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Warner Home Video

These two lines are from a scene that left all male viewers rocking back and forth in a fetal position, and vowing never to enter the woods again. But to reduce *Deliverance* to that one scene would be akin to reducing *The Graduate* to Mrs. Robinson.

In 1972, director John Boorman headed into the wilds of Georgia to make a film from James Dickey's best-selling novel *Deliverance*. He had a piddly budget and two of his four principals were making their big screen debut. The shoot was fairly quick, with everyone doing his or her own stunts (despite not having insurance).

The resulting film is one of the best action/adventure genre to date. A film that still stands the test of time after 35 years.

Four buddies from the cities get together for a canoeing trip. Once they get there, they encounter some less than friendly locals. The conflict escalates to the level where none of them get away completely intact.

Boorman does an excellent job of pacing. The film starts out at a rather relaxed pace and slowly builds. Once we hit the second half, it has you by the throat and does not let go until the bitter end.

Deliverance is best known for one particularly brutal (especially for men) scene. But while all know that scene, many have long forgotten (or in the case of younger folk, never having known) just how good a movie this is.

The bonus features are strong, with a four part look at the making of the film. These featurettes offer up comments by Director John Boorman, Christopher Dickey (son of the original novel's author), all four leads (Burt Reynolds, Jon Voight, Ned Beatty and Ronny Cox) as well as some from other cast members and crew. These total out around an hour and give us a nice look into the challenges of filming in the woods of northern Georgia.

Also included is a new commentary track from the director. This is interesting as it also talks about the issues they faced making it on a shoestring budget completely on location in the middle of nowhere.

But the extras are not the reason to buy this; the reason to buy it is that you are getting a true classic. One you will almost certainly want to watch again and again.

Jeremy

DISTURBIA

Paramount Home Entertainment

Disturbia is *Rear Window* with teens. Does this mean it's a bad film? No, it's pretty well done. Shia LaBeouf (*Transformers*) plays an appealing dour as Kale, who, not quite his usual self after the death of his father, whacks a Spanish Teacher getting slapped under house arrest (in place of Jimmy Stewart's broken leg).

The Grace Kelly part is played by Sarah Roemer. As a kindness to Ms. Roemer I will not compare them. Suffice it to say she comes off most of the time as a recent graduate of Madonna's School for Sluts. When she is allowed to act, as in her garage scene with David Morse, she is more than good. I blame the Director, D.J. Caruso, who in the specials displays an age about equal with his young stars. Stick to storytelling D.J. you do that well. Throttle back on the titillation.

As to the above-mentioned David Morse, I am about to warble his praises yet again. He has found a niche in villainy and is outrageously good. His performance alone makes this well worth viewing. No ranting. No histrionics. Yet so chilling you feel you may wet yourself. This guy is maybe the best I've ever seen.

It is a little disconcerting to see Trinity of *The Matrix* (Carrie-Ann Moss) as someone's mother, but she carries it off quite nicely. A word about Hollyweird happy endings; Stop. I dare not elaborate, but if you see it you'll know. The David Morse character is not a fool and this oversight would make him one.

The Specials are standard fare. The commentary by Director and young stars has its moments with the complexity of movie magic. There are deleted scenes, outtakes, serial pursuit trivia pop-up quiz and a music video.

Not a bad slant on an old classic.

Lee Crawford

FACE/OFF: SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S EDITION

Fox Home Entertainment

Face/Off stars John Travolta as Sean Archer, a driven FBI agent whose son was killed by Castor Troy (Nicholas Cage), a terrorist that now lies in a coma.

Sean is now trying to find a bomb that is hidden in L.A. The FBI is looking for some way to infiltrate Troy's crew of McNasties when an unusual plan is hatched: Using a rather unusual procedure, Sean will assume the face of Castor. He will then assume his identity and join the gang.

Now nothing in life is easy so of course there are complications.

Troy wakes up and assumes Sean's identity. So Sean is hanging out with Troy's crew, Troy is hanging with...Sean's wife and daughter.

Travolta always seems to have fun when playing the main scumbag and this is no different. And this is a good thing since Nicholas Cage as a good gut generally makes me drowsy...and this is no exception.

Face/Off was John Woo's second Hollywood flick. While better than *Broken Arrow*, *Face/Off* does have a similar feel. The fights are very stylish and there are enough explosions for five films, but too much of a good thing is possible and I found myself becoming numb to the many gunfights that were seemingly choreographed by the Joffrey Ballet Company.

Many times, a film is repackaged as a "special edition" or "collector's edition" with three or four eight-minute featurettes and little more. This is not the case here, as *Face/Off* is chocked full of nifty stuff.

There are seven deleted/alternate scenes with optional commentary. Honestly none of these are going to wow you too much. Nothing is here that would have added anything to the film. We are also treated to a five part series entitled *The Light and the Dark: Making Face/Off*. These clock in at a total of just over one hour and gives us a look behind the film with storyboards, breakdowns of special effects and interviews with cast and crew.

Another is John Woo in pictures, this is a twenty some minute documentary about Mr. Woo. Nothing here that his hardcore fans won't know but it does do a decent job of summing up his career. And Last but not least we get a pair of commentaries. One with Woo and John Woo and co-writers Michael Colleary and Mike

Verb, the other with just the two writers. Both are good enough, the one with Woo obviously is a broader look at the making while other focuses more on the story and the characters.

Overall, Face/Off is entertaining if you are simply looking for an action flick with novel twist (the changing of personas). Woo has never been a favorite of mine, and I am pretty sure that Nicholas Cage sold his soul (or at least his acting skills) to the devil for Leaving Las Vegas, but I enjoyed Face/off more than most of the bombastic action flicks that roll off the Hollywood assembly line today.

Jeremy

THE FUGITIVE: SEASON ONE, VOLUME ONE

Paramount Home Entertainment

Originally airing in Sept of 1963 I obviously didn't see this show when it premiered. It is one of the most memorable shows ever broadcast and TV Guide rated it in it's top 40 of all time. Volume 1 from Season one weighs in at 760 minutes and is unforgettable television.

Dr. Richard Kimble (David Janssen) has been accused of killing his wife. On the way to prison and Death Row the train crashes and he escapes putting him on the run for his life and the real killer. And unlike OJ Simpson, we know Dr. Kimble didn't do it. And when Kimble sets out to find the killer we know he's not just going golfing. Kimble is convinced a one armed man seen leaving the murder site is the one responsible and he is obsessed with finding him and clearing himself. At the same time Lt Philip Gerard (Barry Morse) is obsessed with capturing Kimble.

While on the run from town to town we see Kimble get involved with other people's lives, some times positively sometimes not. So while each episode is its own little story, they all have the constant subplot of Kimble clearing his name.

Black and white with a very noir feel this is great viewing and is a lot of fun to watch. There are also plenty of guest stars some easier to recognize than others. A youngish Brian Keith is here looking not to different than his appearance as Mike Hammer from the 50's television pilot, and a young Bill Mummy also pops up in this first set. Great TV and a wonderful addition to any DVD collection.

Jon

MIDSOMER MURDERS: SERIES 9

Acorn Media

Midsomer Murders is based on the work of mystery author Caroline Graham. Midsomer County apparently is home to more vile homicidal lunatics than all five boroughs of New York combined. Now before you start to conjure images of a lawless frontier land, let me say that Midsomer country looks much like any other rural county in England. It is full of small towns and villages. The folks tend their gardens and chat after church.

Sadly, they also kill off one another at an alarming rate. Not since Cabot Cove (Murder She Wrote...I would like to note for the record that I had to look it up, I have no MSW knowledge in my brain.) has there been a more dangerous peaceful, quaint community.

This series could easily be tossed in with Murder, She Wrote and others of that nature, but that would be a huge mistake. This series has a bit of a gleam in its eye. It is as though they know the county has way too many murders and murderers. They realize this is pretty ridiculous, but are cool with it. At times, Detective Barnaby's (John Nettles) reaction to another body is more of a "Ah, I was wondering when that would turn up" than real surprise. It is Detective Sergeant Scott that is left to express dismay at the bloodthirsty ruffians that populate this seemingly peaceful county.

The humor is dry; droll might be a better term but it is also fairly smart. The mysteries are just clever enough to keep you guessing. As I said, it would be a huge mistake to clump this in with all of the usual cozy mysteries. There is simply too much life in this one. For extras, we get next to nothing. There is a text bio on author Caroline Graham (whose books the series is based on). This set upholds the nice traditions that have been established by the previous series (aka seasons) and will be enjoyed by those that are fans of the series, as well as anyone looking for a bit of fun with a little (or a lot) of murder thrown in.

Jeremy

PRIME SUSPECT: THE FINAL ACT

Acorn Media

The creators are declaring this to be the final *Prime Suspect*. The show set the bar fairly high with its previous seasons so I could not help but be concerned that it might go out on a whimper instead of a bang.

My fears were unfounded.

The Final Act delivers on a number of levels. The story crime itself is solid, though pretty standard fare, but the characters are outstanding. Every episode of PS has been as much about the struggles of DS Tennison (Helen Mirren) as it has been about the mystery. While past PS shows have focused on the challenges of being a on woman in a very sexist police force (and the toll her dedication, to her job, takes on her private life), this time around the issues are of a more personal nature.

Jane's father is dying. While he has come to terms with his fate, she is not ready to accept it. While she struggles with this, Jane spends considerable time reflecting upon her relationship with her father. But as dark as that is, it can't hold a candle to a far bigger issue: Jane's growing alcohol problem. It consumes her personal life and is clearly affecting her job performance.

While realism has always been a big part of PS, the show portrays her alcoholism in a way that will hit home to anyone that has ever had his or her lives touched by this brutal disease.

For extras, we are treated to a 45-minute documentary that looks at the entire series. It is a very nice piece that appears to be designed to give reflection on the characters and how they, and the show, have evolved over the years.

Overall, this is a tour de force that sends a show that is already thought of as one the best crime series on a very high note.

REBUS SET 2

Acorn Media

This is the second set of Rebus with Ken Stott in the role, and the third overall. This set contains four stories, each based on a Rankin novel. The tales range from a campus-killing spree (A question of Blood) to a murderer whose identity lies hidden within the codes of a book (The Black Book).

The BBC has done a solid job of bringing the world of John Rebus to life. The characters have all of the edges and layers from the books, which allow the actors to make them more than simply part of the background. A very refreshing change from much of the police programs that litter the U.S. airwaves.

Edinburgh is looks just the way the books portray it. The cinematography does a nice job of capturing the gritty side, which adds to the stories. Rankin has always made the city an intrile part of his work.

While Stott is not exactly what I image Rebus to look like, he is closer than John Hannah was. He has more of the weariness and roughness than are so well known to Rankin fans. I don't know than

he completely won me over, but he does a good enough job for me to accept him in the role.

For extras, we get *Rebus: Behind the Scenes*, a 40some minute look at the creation and production of the series. A solid and interesting piece.

Overall, these will satisfy fans of both Rankin as well as those that are simply looking for entertaining crime dramas.

Jeremy

The Unit Season 2

Fox Home Entertainment

The Unit season one introduced us to an elite group of fighting men and the women they love. We see both sides of serving your country in a group that is top secret. Season two is much of the same, and for my money that's a good thing. Executive producers David Mamet and Shawn Ryan based this series on a book about the real Delta Force, and as such it's full of action.

The missions are always different and always interesting; from an evac during a hurricane to undercover work and stopping arms dealers the Unit handles all sorts of threats to our country. On the flip side we see the wives dealing with being out of the loop on the exact nature of the work and dealing with things on the home front. It apparent that these men don't get rich and an ongoing theme is how to make ends meet. Molly, Jonas' wife once again is in need of money and takes a job recruiting men to join a private `world security force. You know at some point it's going to go wrong for someone and she'll feel bad. I have no sympathy for this character that keeps making dumb mistakes, but the rest of the crew is great. They are loyal to each other and their mission. It's called a military drama and that's an apt description. It's also hard to stop watching. Put me in the line with the die hard fans.

Jon