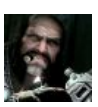




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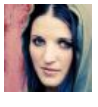
[Xbox Live DLC:  
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January 3, 2012 at  
5:22 pm



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[Singer-Songwriter  
Beth Whitney Is A  
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January 3, 2012 at  
3:52 am

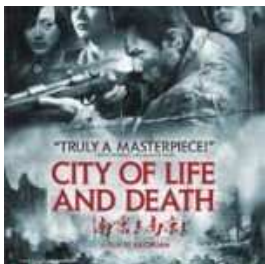


## Digital Week – December 18th



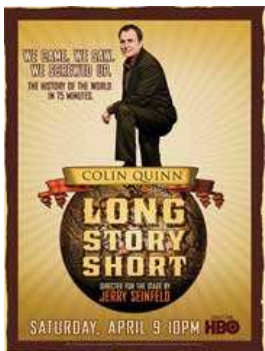
By [Kevin Filipski](#) | December 19, 2011 at 1:28 am | [0 Comments](#) | [Features & Interviews](#) | Tags: [City of Life and Death](#), [Colin Quinn: Long Story Short](#), [Die Liebe der Danae and La Traviata](#), [Fright Night](#), [Meet Me in St. Louis](#), [Mr. Popper's Penguins](#), [Portlandia: Season One](#), [Rapt and The Robber](#), [Rise of the Planet of the Apes](#)

### Blu-rays of the Week



**City of Life and Death (Kino Lorber)**

Atrocities committed by the Japanese occupiers during 1937's Rape of Nanking, recreated in director Lu Chuan's startlingly matter-of-fact docudrama, are given a horrible immediacy. Shot in exquisite black and white—which looks extremely impressive on Blu-ray—the film, which only rarely falls into sentimentality, is a tough, unblinking study of inhumanity...and humanity. The lone extra is The Making of Life and Death, an absorbing, nearly two-hour documentary chronicling how director Lu Chuan created such an emotional experience.



**Colin Quinn: Long Story Short (VSC)**

Comic Quinn's one-man Broadway show is a funny world history overview that, in a mere 75 minutes, chronicles a long line of bad guys from ancient times to Jersey Shore. Slickly directed by Jerry Seinfeld, the performance epitomizes Quinn's gruff comedic outlook that takes equal shots at Julius Caesar and Snooki, with everyone in between. The hi-def image is sharp; extras include Quinn and Seinfeld's commentary and a short making-of.

### [Digital Week – January 1st](#)

December 31, 2011 at 2:45 pm

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### Latest News



#### ['Paranormal Activity 4' Sequel In The Works](#)

January 3, 2012 at 6:57 pm



#### [Converge Begins Writing New Album](#)

January 3, 2012 at 3:52 pm





### Die Liebe der Danae and La Traviata (Arthaus Musik)

Two of opera's most demanding title roles are on display. Verdi's *La Traviata* is enacted by the wondrous Swedish soprano Marlis Petersen, who brings appropriate dramatic color to this pinpoint sharp 2011 staging from Graz, Austria. German soprano Manuela Uhl, tackling the torturous title role of Strauss' *Die Liebe der Danae*, has a shimmering tone in this fantastical new staging from Berlin. The visuals and audio for both operas are spectacular; each contains a short backstage bonus featurette.



### Fright Night (Dreamworks)

For those for whom the *Twilight* series is too sappy, this tongue-in-cheek scarefest stars Colin Farrell as the new neighbor next door who happens to be a vampire. It's as dopey as it sounds, even with some cleverness early as the teens figure out what's going on while adults stay blissfully ignorant until it's too late. Still, despite lots of blood and would-be stylishness, the movie has nothing on vintage splatter movies of the late 70s/early 80s. There's a first-rate Blu-ray image throughout; extras include deleted/extended scenes, bloopers, music video and featurettes.



### Meet Me in St. Louis (Warners)

Judy Garland shines in this timeless tale of family ties, directed by her future husband Vicente Minnelli with a light touch he rarely was capable of. Although considered a holiday film—hence its mid-December Blu-ray release—it takes place during all four seasons; a wonderful song list comprises the title song, “The Trolley Song” and “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas,” which has become a seasonal perennial. The original's dazzling colors have been recaptured on Blu-ray; Warner's typically stuffed hi-def release features a 40-page book, a CD sampler with Garland's four soundtrack tunes, Liza Minnelli intro and audio commentary.



### [Weekend Nachos East Coast Tour](#)

January 3, 2012 at 3:10 pm

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January 3, 2012 at 3:52 am

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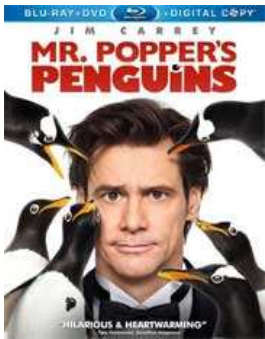
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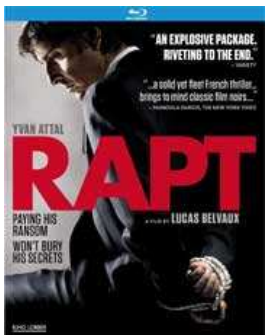
#### Mr. Popper's Penguins (Fox)

A mugging Jim Carrey stars in this plodding, occasionally amusing fantasy based on a charming 1938 children's book about a businessman whose present of six penguins sends his life in an upper-crust Park Avenue apartment into upheaval. The penguins—real but looking digitized—are adorable and there's nice use of Manhattan locations like Tavern on the Green and Central Park, but too much Carrey cutesiness makes for predictable comedy. The movie looks good in hi-def; extras include an animated short, gear reel, deleted scenes and making-of featurettes.



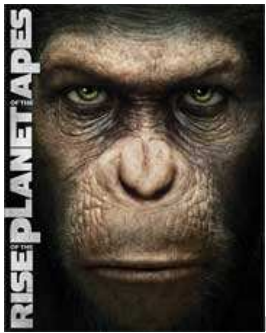
#### Portlandia: Season One (MVD)

Another entry in the “not as clever as it think it is” category, this series shows a bunch of stereotyped green liberals in Portland: too bad creators Fred Armisten and Carrie Brownstein are too wooden to portray so many different characters. There are fun cameos by Aimee Mann, Sarah MacLachlan and Gus van Sant, and there are passing funny glances at tree-huggers but not enough to sustain each episode. The show looks decent on Blu-ray; extras include bloopers, extended/deleted scenes, and Armisten and Brownstein's commentary.



#### Rapt and The Robber (Kino Lorber)

These thrillers come from opposite angles: Lucas Belvaux's Rapt follows the kidnapping of a Parisian millionaire who must adjust to life after he's freed, while Benjamin Heisenberg's The Robber follows a just-released prisoner who returns to bank heists with ultimately tragic results. Both films have moments of excitement, but there are large plot holes, especially in The Robber, where the Viennese police are the most inept organization ever. Both films look terrific on Blu-ray; unfortunately, there are no extras.



#### **Rise of the Planet of the Apes (Fox)**

This fancy reboot of the Apes franchise is an unhappy dud, despite earnest performances by James Franco as the human hero and Frieda Pinto as his beautiful sidekick. The problem is that the apes were more real with simple makeup in the original five films: now, even with amazing trickery and wizardly special effects, we get digitized but fake-looking apes, despite Andy Serkis' effective emoting. The script is ridiculously overwrought, and the digital effects—which this film abounds in—look unreal on Blu-ray, thanks to its improved sharpness and clarity. Extras include director/writers' audio commentary, 11 deleted scenes and features about the film's making, effects and music.



#### **The Rocketeer (Disney)**

Joe Johnston's action-adventure flopped in theaters in 1990, and this 20th anniversary release shows that it has not improved with age. Bill Campbell has zero charisma as the hero, Jennifer Connolly is merely a gorgeous decoration, the insipid story involves Nazis amongst Hollywood's elite, and the jet-pack effects are not much to write home about. The movie looks a little too soft on Blu-ray; interestingly—and unfortunately—there are no extras on what should have been a special edition.



#### **The Simpsons: Season 14 (Fox)**

The 22 episodes from the 2002-3 season are an incredibly uneven lot, starting with the annual "Treehouse of Horror" episode, which careens wildly from black-comic hilarity to wincingly awful jokes. There's the usual plethora of guest voices, too (including musicians Tom petty, Tony Bennett, Blink 182 and even Mick Jagger and Keith Richards), which always helps. The show looks far better on Blu-ray than it does in syndicated reruns, of course; the creators' commentary on each episode is a must-listen, and other extras include 300th episode featurette, Matt Groening intro, deleted scenes and bonus "Treehouse" episodes.





#### **Tanner Hall (Anchor Bay)**

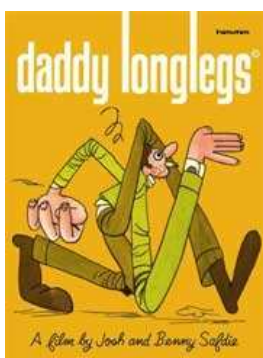
This is an ungainly, sometimes unpleasant hybrid of school-shenanigan comedy and coming-of-age tale that's neither fish nor fowl—it tries to be farcical, then gently satirical, then serious, and ends up being not much of anything. A decent cast is highlighted by Amy Sedaris' too-brief appearance. The movie looks OK on Blu-ray; the lone extra is a commentary by writers-directors Francesca Gregorini and Tatiana von Furstenberg..

#### **DVDs of the Week**



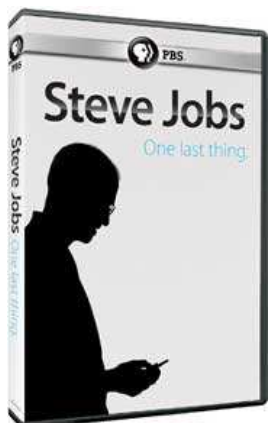
#### **The Black Power Mix Tape 1967-1975 (IFC)**

This fascinating compendium of footage shot by Swedish television journalist crews during the Black Power movement of the late 60s/early 70s has been meticulously constructed by writer-director Goran Hugo Olsson, displaying a powerful dramatic and narrative arc that references many of the era's famous events, from Martin Luther King's murder to the Attica prison riots. The valuable testimonies of people from Stokely Carmichael to Angela Davis are included in this historically important document; extras include interviews with Davis, Shirley Chisholm and others, and featurettes.



#### **Daddy Longlegs (Zeitgeist)**

This alternately fascinating and stultifying study of a divorced dad with two young boys whose staggering immaturity is supposedly mitigated by his unique way of looking at the world has moments of insight, but not enough to watch him for 95 minutes. Ronald Bronstein is excellent as the father, but after awhile he begins to feel inauthentic, despite the fact that he's based on writers-directors Josh and Benny Safdie's own dad. Extras include deleted scenes, a making-of featurette and a rehearsal test film.



### Steve Jobs: One Last Thing (PBS)

This 60-minute PBS special about the late Apple founder takes the measure of the man as a visionary, colleague and competitor, not skimping on his less attractive side, such as his feud with Bill Gates (who comes off fairly well here) and petty egotism when it came to movie studio Pixar's success. But there is also a sense of admiration and awe for Jobs, who transformed the computer age into familiar and useable for everyone, for better or worse. It would have interesting to hear more about his indebtedness to the Beatles beyond simply him quoting a McCartney lyric while sharing a stage with Gates, though.

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