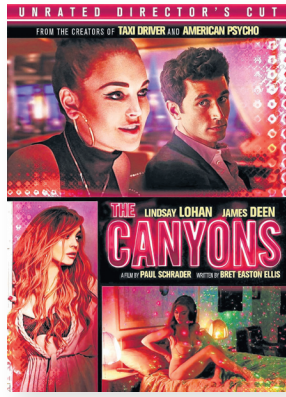


HOME VIDEO REVIEWS *Mark Voger***The Canyons**
\$24.98 (DVD), MPI

"The Canyons" is sexy. The way "Fifty Shades of Grey" is sexy. If your taste in carnal media tends toward the vanilla, the movie might seem shocking, revelatory, pulse-quickening. Otherwise, you might view "The Canyons" as what happens when a 67-year-old director coaxes a 27-year-old actress — neither of them A-listers at this point — to take off her clothes and simulate sex on camera, with a real-life porn star as her leading man.

Shots of derelict movie houses lend "The Canyons" fleeting moments of possibility. So does a brief speech given by Lindsay Lohan as Tara, a lost Angeleno living with a pervy, manipulative trust-fund brat (James Deen).

"Do you really like movies?" Tara asks a girlfriend over lunch. "When's the last time you went to see a movie in the theater?"

For a moment, you wonder if writer Bret Easton Ellis and director Paul Schrader aren't onto something. "The Canyons" is about romantic failings at the bottom rung of the film industry — no-names who will trade sexual favors for a role in a slasher movie. Is a deeper statement being made about millennial disengagement in the age of instant gratification?

Nah.

Slurring, puffy Lohan looks uninterested and sometimes ill. The nearly nonexistent story might as well be cornstarch. More compelling, no doubt, is the real-life drama behind this movie.

**Here's Edie:
The Edie Adams
Television Collection**
\$45.95 (DVD),
Ediad Productions

You sometimes wonder what made Marilyn Monroe the epitome of sex appeal ... what made Lucille Ball a fearless clown ... why Anna Maria Alberghetti could sing like a bird.

Then you come across one Edie Adams, who combined the best qualities of all three.

It's beyond dispute that Adams was a knockout on a par with Monroe. Her come-hither catchphrase for Muriel — "Why don't you pick one up and smoke it some time?" — sold a lot of cigars in the 1960s.

But Adams was more than a looker; her comedy gifts and especially her singing deserve rediscovery via this set, which presents all 21 of her 1962-64 variety specials for the first time since they originally aired.

It's a find, a treasure trove, because "The Edie Adams Television Collection" makes clear the songstress' knack for attracting heavy hitters as guest stars — musical giants who didn't do just *any* TV show.

Duke Ellington looks supercool at 63, leading his orchestra with easy grace. Then Adams saunters over, hops on his piano — and she and Duke start swingin'. Her duet with Hoagy Carmichael is comical and casual. Her turn with Eddie Fisher, taped in Las Vegas, is a show-stopper.

Other musical guests include Count Basie, Bobby Darin, Sammy Davis Jr., Johnny Mathis, Lionel Hampton, Al Hirt and André Previn.

As for the funny, Adams' impression of Monroe (four months before the actress' death) is scathing and spot-on, and she out-Mermans Ethel Merman in a hilarious parody.

Adams holds her own alongside such comedians as Bob Hope, Rowan and Martin (pre-"Laugh-In"), Buddy Hackett, Louis Nye, Alan Sues and Dick Shawn.

The black-and-white programs are of varying video and audio quality. They include Adams' Muriel commercials — big productions in themselves.

Be advised that the shows are old-school stuff; Adams' final special aired a mere month after the Beatles debuted on "The Ed Sullivan Show."

Extras include 19 songs from the 1950s shows of Adams' late husband, Ernie Kovacs (who was killed in a 1962 car accident), and a Muriel promotional film.

**Breaking Bad:
The Final Season**
\$65.99 (Blu-ray/digital
copy), Sony Pictures

Spoilers follow.

I couldn't get "Baby Blue" by Badfinger out of my head after watching the "Breaking Bad" finale. The face of Walter White (Bryan Cranston), with its sad smile, as he savored his final stroll through a meth lab, patting a gas mask with reverence, just kind of broke my heart.

Sure, this guy was a turd. He would kidnap his own baby daughter for leverage; he'd order, or execute, hits; he'd watch as a partner's girlfriend dies of an overdose; he'd flood New Mexico and the world with primo dope that transforms people into dangerous criminals; he'd lie like a rug.

But darn it, he was *our* turd.

Some thought "Baby Blue" was a reference to the trademark tint of Walt's unique brand of ultra-pure meth, but I believe it all comes down to the song's opening lyric: "Guess I got what I deserve."

When the cops finally close in, that sad smile still lingers on Walt's face.

There have been complaints that the final half-season of AMC's crime drama "Breaking Bad" — starring Cranston in the role of a lifetime as a chemistry teacher with cancer who transforms into a meth czar — was a bit too pat. I agree that here and there, some plot points were more convenient than organic. If I were the crew of Uncle Jack (Michael Bowen), I would never have opened the gate and allowed Walt to drive into my compound.

No one spotted

See also a gag alternate ending in which Cranston awakes as his old "Malcolm in the Middle" character Hal beside Jane Kaczmarek, as his "Malcolm" TV wife Lois. (Get it? Recycling Bob Newhart's onetime meta finale?) You see, it was all Hal's nightmare.

And, sometimes, ours.

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