

DVD Roundup



Diary of a Mad Black Woman ★★

Lion's Gate
Cathartic comedy with serious issues. With its smash gospel and R&B soundtrack, *Diary* is the screen adaptation of actor-writer Tyler Perry's hit play. After being jilted by her wealthy husband (Steve Harris), Helen (Kimberly Elise) sets out to prove she's not "just another bitter black woman." The feel-good love story is a showcase for Perry in multiple roles, including grandmother Madea, a gun-toting Mrs. Doubtfire who hollers, "Call the po-po, ho!" and promises to attend church "as soon as you get a smoking section."



Lou Reed - Spanish Fly: Live in Spain ★★★

Sanctuary
Reed plays his hits, sports a tan. In front of adoring masses at 2004's Benicàssim Festival, Reed charges into a performance gilded with hits. A cello infuses the Velvet Underground classic "Venus in Furs" with its brooding drone. Reed goes full-on feedback freak on "Romeo Had Juliette," and "Perfect Day" is near-perfect. But in awkward PC revisionism, Reed omits the word *colored* when describing the doo-doo-ing girls of "Walk on the Wild Side."



Kool Keith - Global Enlightenment Part 1 ★★★

MVD

MC-philosopher subverts wack paradigm

Hall-of-fame MC Kool Keith (a.k.a. Dr. Octagon, a.k.a. Black Elvis) leads this well-shot walking tour of New York. "I don't sit in an SUV and talk about 'I live in the streets,'" Keith says, popping into Popeyes for some corn to remind him "how corny other rappers are." Whether commenting on the superiority of seltzer to Hawaiian Punch or the corruptive influence of music marketing, Keith is as funny as Woody Allen and as provoking as Naomi Klein.

for the heroic ham-jinks of *Ghostbusters*.

the lie that "war is a noble porno."

P.R.



Radio Free Haiti

The story of slain broadcaster-activist Jean Dominique. By Peter Relic



The Agronomist ★★★★★

Directed by Jonathan Demme / New Line

Imagine living in a country run by a brutal dictatorship where your only access to the truth comes from a maverick radio station and you are imagining life in Haiti. Enter *The Agronomist*, a soul-searing documentary about Jean Dominique, operator of the island nation's oldest free radio station, Radio Haiti Inter. In the 1980s and '90s, with Haiti a hell of CIA-sponsored violence, he was exiled to New York, where interviews conducted by director Jonathan Demme (*The Silence of the Lambs*) captured Dominique's unflinching determination to speak truth to power. After Dominique's assassination in 2000 in Port-au-Prince (where he had returned Radio Haiti Inter to the air), Demme assembled this extraordinary depiction in a country ravaged by fascist regimes and U.S. intervention. *The Agronomist* integrates footage of everything from peasant uprisings and the death of dictator François Duvalier to Dominique, in one of his final broadcasts, evoking Shakespeare: "The truth will always make the devil's face blush." It's the truth—as spoken by Dominique—that makes *The Agronomist* a film you will never forget.

Q&A: TIM ROBBINS

Embedded

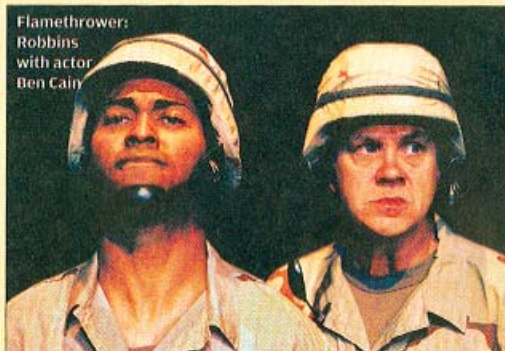
Robbins takes on Bush, his lackeys and timid journalists. Tim Robbins may seem like a dilettante politico who opposes the Iraq War and President Bush. But with *Embedded*, Robbins has proved he can put his money where his mouth is. The play, now on DVD exclusively through Netflix, irreverently takes on the

Bush administration's invasion of Iraq, the embedded journalists reporting the war there and the Pfc. Jessica Lynch media shit storm. We allowed Robbins another chance to defend himself before the neocons freak out. Why did you write *Embedded*? It's a lot to ask a kid to sacrifice his life for his country. For that kid to be lied to when asked to serve should

be called into question on the front page of the newspapers, but it isn't. Then how do Bush and his crew get away with it? One of the things they don't want people thinking about is that part of the philosophy behind neoconservatism is that, as an empire, it's OK to lie.

How will conservatives react? The feedback from Republicans who saw the play was generally positive. They said to the actors, "I loved the play. I don't agree with your politics, but good for you for doing it, because that's what it means to be an American." I hope we don't have an overt political message with *Embedded*. I think it'll raise questions, but I don't like message stuff.

Why do you think big summer blockbusters typically avoid political messages? I would hate to live in a world where everything was an independent film. Sometimes you've just got to go eat popcorn. KEVIN O'DONNELL



Flamethrower: Robbins with actor Ben Cally



The Killers
Boys in Makeup
Rock the World

Norman Mailer
The Last Buccaneer
Looks Back

The New Virgin Army
Life Among the Young
and the Sexless

Summer Concert Guide
THE WHITE STRIPES, DYLAN
GREEN DAY, WEEZER, BECK
Plus 35 Other Shows Not to Miss

Jessica Alba
The Booty & Soul
of America's
Hottest Starlet

COLDPLAY
FOO FIGHTERS
CHUCK PALAHNIUK
BEYOND THE IPOD