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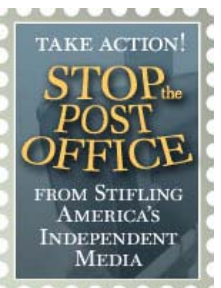
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## THE CRIBS

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## U2

### The DVD Collector's Box

(MVD) Rated: N/A  
US release date: 5 June 2007

by **Mike Schiller**

PopMatters Multimedia Editor  
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*U2: The DVD Collector's Box* didn't have a chance, quite frankly. For starters, there is not a single piece of new, current content in it. This "collector's" box consists entirely of two unauthorized documentary DVDs that have been previously released, *recently* released, neither of which are out of print. *Bono: God's Favorite Son* is a 2004 release that concentrates on the ever present, constantly open mouthpiece of the band, while *U2: An Unforgettable Journey* is a 2003 retrospective on the career of the band to that point. To be fair, it offers the two documentaries at about a \$10 discount, but any fan of the band that's frenzied enough to shell out the dough for this particular *Collector's Box* probably has those two DVDs, already.

So that leaves the question: What exactly is collectible about this *Collector's Box*? As near as I can tell, the one unique thing about *U2: The DVD Collector's Box* is... (wait for it)...the box. The flimsy, disposable, fugly, gray, recycled picture-laden box.

There is not a "collector" in the entire world who, deep down, wants this. This is the sort of thing that completists buy for the sake of having. Even such enthusiasts will ultimately come away from the purchase feeling a little dirty.

The content of the documentaries doesn't help a whole lot, either.

*U2: An Unforgettable Journey* is an amalgam of stock footage and interviews with people that, generally, nobody has ever heard of, talking about either the grand statements of the band or their own incidental part in the band's history. Most hilarious in this latter respect is the fellow who takes obvious great pride in the fact that he put together a high school festival-style concert that U2 just happened to play at (but didn't quite headline, losing out to bands like the inimitable Rat Salad).

Most interesting about the documentary are the theories about the future, theories that usually center around the fact that U2 was going to have to retreat into a folksy, introspective band because their tremendous success would suffocate their ambitions for the future; the fact that since *An Unforgettable Journey* was made, U2 released one of the biggest, grandest, most stadium-ready albums of their career in *How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb* (2004) lends a humorous air of irony to these newly re-released sentiments.

Perhaps most out of place, regrettably, is the music—as an unauthorized documentary, no actual U2 music could actually be used. As such, there is a sort of faux-U2 series of relaxing loops that play in the background of the documentary, in a failed attempt at lending a "U2 feel" to the proceedings. Hard as the filmmakers tried, however, the obvious lack of sounds that actually came from the band is both glaring and damning.



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More interesting, actually, is the Bono documentary, despite its idol-worshipping title *God's Favorite Son*. For one, the concentration on the person of Bono makes the lack of interesting music far less awkward; the biography of a single person tends to fare much better without music than that of a band. Interestingly enough, however, the insights as to the origins of the band are actually far more profound on Bono's half of the *DVD Collector's Box* as well.

Interviews with the boys' schoolteachers in the early days of the band when they called themselves "Feedback" actually lend some insight as to what they went through and the environment in which they were formed; not that it sounds as though there was a lot of strife or hardship for any of them, but they sound like driven little chaps. The reminder that, once upon a time, U2 was "Larry Mullen's band" is always an amusing one as well. As it progresses, *God's Favorite Son* goes downhill, as the reliance on stock footage and industry-specific talking heads increases, and lots of flowery language serves to circle around an obvious point for a few minutes before actually reaching that point. These are the types of moments that mar both *God's Favorite Son* and *An Unforgettable Journey*, giving both documentaries the tedious air of a household chore.

And the extras? Oh, the extras! Each DVD has a text (text!) discography of its subject, and a quiz. The quizzes are fun once, but they're all of 15 questions, and once they're done, there's no reason to go back to them.

*U2: The DVD Collector's Box* won't be bought for the sake of unearthing revelation, or for entertainment; it'll be bought for the sake of, well, *collecting*. As a few pieces of plastic in a "collectible" box that'll sit on somebody's shelf between the new age tribute to U2 album and a pair of Bono's shades tossed into the audience during the PopMart tour, it'll work just fine. As entertainment, however, it is sadly lacking, and surpassed in informational value by plenty of other band-specific documentaries, not to mention just about every book written on the band. Knowing all this, if you choose to buy it anyway, well...you deserve what you get.

RATING: **3** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

— 18 July 2007

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