

Government Issue
Live 1985/Flipside/
Music Video Distributors

By the mid-'80s many of Washington, D.C.'s first wave of hardcore punk units had all but disbanded. Minor Threat called it quits, Henry Garfield (Rollins) left S.O.A. and joined Black Flag, and Bad Brains migrated north to New York, leaving stalwarts Government Issue (or G.I. as we called 'em) to keep DC on the punk rock map. The band did so by releasing two of the best DC hardcore albums of all time, 1984's *Joyride* and 1985's *The Fun Just Never Ends*. Both records combined pure punk energy with the confidence and swagger of great rock-n-roll.

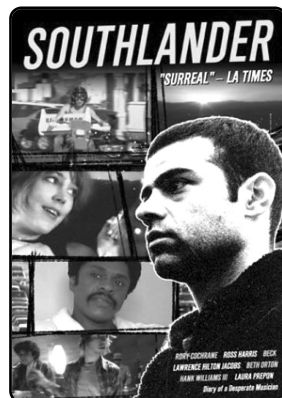
Live 1985 captures the band at their peak with two gigs from their 1985 tour of California. Concentrating on tunes from those two classic LPs, G.I. blaze through killer sets at Fender's Ballroom and The Olympic Auditorium. The born showmanship and quirky charisma of John Staab along with guitarist Tom Lyle's buzz saw riffs have the crowd going nuts for more. The group belts out such classics as "Mad At Myself," "Written Word," "Puppet On A String," and "Joyride" and while there is sadly no bonus material *Live 1985* is mandatory viewing for old and new punks alike.

Although Government Issue may not have reached the mythic proportions that contemporaries Minor Threat or Bad Brains have, anybody who caught the band in their prime can tell you they were every bit as legendary as this DVD proves.

—by Rick Kutner

Southlander
Music Video Distributors

From the goofy and surreal mind of Ross Harris (Billy the cockpit boy in *Airplane The Movie*, that's right) and director Steve Hanft comes *Southlander*, an L.A. indie flick with its flaky So. Cal fried sensibilities and hipster humor. The story centers around Rory Cochrane



(Dazed & Confused) who plays Chance, an out-of work keyboard player looking for the right gimmick to join a hot local band fronted by Beth Orton. Things start to happen for Chance when he stumbles upon a Mellotron that gives him that spaced-out unique sound the band is looking for. But to Chance's dismay the synthesizer is stolen from his car the very next day. The rest of the flick has Chance on a quest to find the stolen keyboard. On his long and winding journey he runs into an array of kooks, pimps, babes, and a general cast of L.A. weirdos who make for some interesting situations.

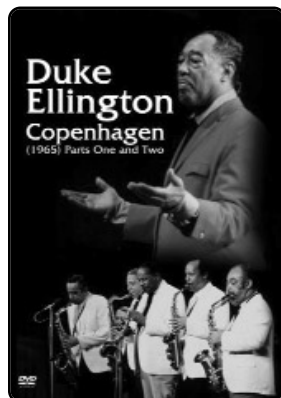
The cast includes: Beck (as a younger version of himself as Bek), Lone Skye, pro-skater Mark Gonzales, Royal Trux's Jennifer Herrema, Laura Prepon ("That '70s Show"), Richard Edson, Gregg Henry, Lawrence Hilton Jacobs ("Welcome Back Kotter"), and Hank Williams III. And while *Southlander* tends to drag after a while, the film does have some memorable moments, including Cochrane's character giving up more than a few bucks to the fat lady in order to get the prized Mellotron. Or when Lawrence Hilton Jacobs' character, '70's funk legend Motherchild finds time to play tennis and share his woman Snow Bunny with pal Richard Edson. Fans of *Repo Man* and *Slacker* will appreciate the film's quirky characters and slow pace. And like many a cult classic *Southlander* gets better by how packed your bowl is.

—by Rick Kutner

Duke Ellington: Copenhagen
1965—Parts One and Two/Image

A reputable time capsule of Duke Ellington and his fabulous band nearing the twilight of their years, the DVD release of their 1965 Copenhagen performance captures their sophistication and timeless style.

Separated into two sets, the show contains a wide variety of material, including the primal "Afro Bossa," the upbeat



"Perdido," and three excerpts from his "Black, Brown & Beige" suite. In true swing form, every soloist gets his due over the course of the concert. Ellington himself rarely takes the spotlight, except to be the great crowd pleaser—at one point he accidentally knocks over the screen of a mic and turns it into an opportunity to play a cute trick on the audience.

The camera focuses more on the band than Ellington and makes for more intriguing viewing than one would think. While all exceptionally talented, they were also a motley group. For example, Paul Gonsalves performs an excellent tenor solo halfway through the first set during "Blow By Blow," but manages to take a nap (with his horn in his mouth) during two songs in the second set. Other inspired solos include the end of the "Satin Doll/Sophisticated Lady" medley—at the end of which Harry Carney demonstrates his circular breathing on the baritone, holding an unending note.

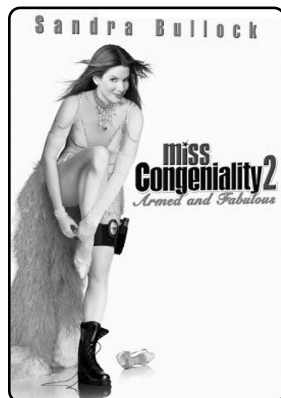
There are many highlights on this black and white presentation of the Duke Ellington Orchestra in Copenhagen. Perhaps the most notable, historically, is composer Billy Strayhorn taking over the piano duties on "Take the 'A' Train," his most famous work. Recommended for fans of jazz and swing.

—by Patrick Slevin

Miss Congeniality 2:
Armed And Fabulous/Warner Home Video

The first *Miss Congeniality*, a hilarious, tomboy-out-of-water adventure, was a surprisingly delightful romantic comedy, starring Sandra Bullock as Gracie Hart, an FBI agent undercover as a beauty pageant contestant. Though the original proved Bullock capable of handling humorous material, *Miss Congeniality 2: Armed And Fabulous* is simply dreadful.

Besides Sandra, four other actors have returned to reprise their roles, most notably,



William Shatner as pageant emcee Stan Fields, and Heather Burns as Miss USA, Cheryl Frasier. Also along for the ride again are Ernie Hudson as McDonald, Gracie's boss, and John DiResta as Agent Clonsky.

The only additions to the cast worth mentioning are Diederich Bader, as Joel, Gracie's flaming hair stylist, and Regina King as Sam Fuller, her inexplicably angry, African-American new partner. Most of the jokes, all of which fall flat, emanate either from Joel's effeminate nature or from Sam's butchy black b-word persona. However, both of these cardboard characters are one-trick ponies whose acts get tired after about two minutes.

This confusingly-scripted, sloppily-edited, opposite of absorbing story is set primarily in Las Vegas, where Stan and Heather are kidnapped near the start of the picture. Although our heroines never really generate a scintilla of chemistry, mismatched Grace and Sam put aside their differences in order to crack the case.

Overall, *Miss Congeniality 2* is an unlikely-buddy flick with a fatal flaw, namely buddies who truly appear to be ill at ease with each other from beginning to end. Don't hold your breath in anticipation of *Miss Congeniality 3*, for the promising franchise dies here.

Poor.

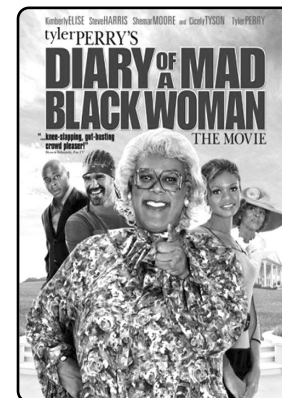
Running time: 115 minutes
DVD Extras: Deleted scenes and a theatrical trailer.

—by Kam Williams

Diary Of A Mad Black Woman/Lions Gate Films

Helen McCarter (Kimberly Elise) is booted out of her lavish, suburban Atlanta mansion by her conniving husband, Charles (Steve Harris) on the occasion of their 18th wedding anniversary. Adding insult to injury, the heartless attorney even introduces her to his long-hidden mistress, Brenda (Lisa Marcos).

Then, the shameless philanderer rubs more salt in his childless wife's fresh wounds by cal-



lously boasting about the two kids he's already secretly fathered with his pretty paramour. Reeling from all the revelations, Helen staggers out of the house, feeling fortunate to find a ready shoulder to lean on in Orlando (Shemar Moore), an unusually sensitive, handsome, moving man with a heart of gold and the patience of Job.

Suddenly homeless and cut off without a penny, she ventures back across the tracks to the inner-city neighborhood where she grew up. There, the humbled socialite is taken in by her pistol-packing, trash-talking grandmother, Madea (Tyler Perry).

Incensed by the blow-by-blow of Helen's humiliating ordeal, the family matriarch decides that her refined granddaughter had gone a little too quietly into the night. So, bent on vigilante vengeance, Madea drives her right back to the estate to confront her ex and his floozy.

This is the set-up of *Diary Of A Mad Black Woman*, a jarringly confusing dramedy which floats freely, back and forth, from mean-spirited slapstick to sappy love scenes to spoon-fed Bible lessons. What dooms *Diary* is Madea's boorish, bull in the china closet act, reminiscent of the sassy sister stereotype popularized by "Sanford and Son's" Aunt Esther. Loud and ignorant, Madea tends to trivialize every scene, her absence even overshadowing those she's not in.

Recommended only for the Born Again/gross-out jokes crowd, if such a demographic exists, a group which must be able to enjoy endless bodily function jokes with just as many Jesus references at every turn.

Fair.

Running time: 116 minutes
DVD Extras: Deleted scenes, director's and Tyler Perry commentaries, and a theatrical trailer.

—by Kam Williams

July 5th

- BRIDE & PREJUDICE/Disney
- DESPERADO/EL MARIACHI
Columbia Tristar
- FANTASTIC FOUR
Buena Vista
- GRATEFUL DEAD
TRUCKIN UP TO BUFFALO
Monterey
- HIDE AND SEEK/Fox
- OFFSPRING: COMPLETE
MUSIC COLLECTION/Sony
- POINT BLANK
Warner
- PROZAC NATION
Disney

July 12th

- THE BEST OF HE-MAN
AND THE MASTERS OF
THE UNIVERSE/BCI
- BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT
COLLECTION
MGM
- CRY BABY-
DIRECTOR'S CUT
Universal
- DODGEBALL:
UNRATED VERSION
Fox
- MILLION DOLLAR BABY
Warner
- TALES FROM THE CRYPT:
THE FIRST SEASON
Warner
- UNFAITHFULLY YOURS
Criterion
- WEEKEND AT BERNIE'S
MGM

July 19th

- CONSTANTINE
Warner
- DEAD LIKE ME:
THE COMPLETE
SECOND SEASON
MGM
- LAGUNA BEACH:
THE COMPLETE
FIRST SEASON
Paramount Home Video
- LOST IN SPACE/Fox
- MAN OF THE HOUSE
Columbia Tristar
- MICHAEL PALIN:
HIMALAYA/Warner
- SAVED BY THE BELL:
SEASON FIVE/Lions Gate
- ZODIAC KILLER
Lions Gate

July 26th

- REMINGTON STEELE:
SEASON ONE/Fox
- THE MARY TYLER MOORE
SHOW: COMPLETE SECOND
SEASON/Fox
- STAR TREK ENTERPRISE:
THE COMPLETE SECOND
SEASON/Paramount
- THE BRADY BUNCH:
THE COMPLETE SECOND
SEASON/Paramount
- GILLIGAN'S ISLAND:
THE COMPLETE THIRD
SEASON/Warner
- THE JERK: 26TH ANNIVERSARY
EDITION/Universal
- THE UPSIDE OF ANGER
New Line
- BENNY HILL:
THE NAUGHTY EARLY YEARS
— SET THREE/A&E