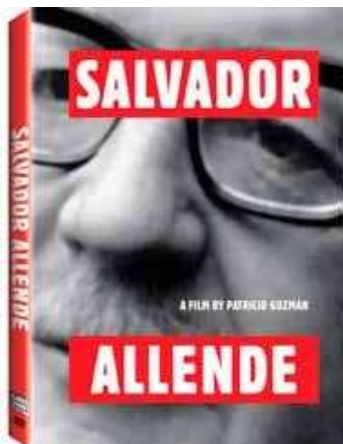


news coverage of the event, interviews with Nelson's remaining family, friends, and neighbors — a rather wince-inducing gallery of burnouts and (once and current) tweakers, the sorts of folks who wear merchandise procured with "Camel Cash" — and a selection of archived material that provides extensive political and socioeconomic context to the meth-laden burgh of Clairemont. As with Eugene Jarecki's provocative portion of the recent documentary *Freakonomics*, this film draws some interesting and startling lines of correlation. At under an hour, *Cul De Sac* is a trim, grim portrait of underclass despair, and a reminder that as industry moves on, the communities they leave behind have a tendency to slide away into the twilight. Bonus features come by way of a 12-page insert booklet, with a pair of essays by Christian Parenti and Ian Olds, the movie's editor.



If one craves something weirder still, and gets a kick out of various kitschy presentations of cultures and eras gone by, *Smokin': Classic Cigarette Commercials* might be a nice DVD. Just what it sounds like, this 70-minute collection of jingle-laden ads, back before Big Tobacco was banned from advertising on television in 1971, charts how shrewd marketing agencies understood cultural blind and weak spots, exploiting them to make cigs appear cool and even safe.

A more traditional documentary arrives in the form of *Salvador Allende*, director Patricio Guzmán's superlative look at the Chilean president overthrown by CIA-assisted coup in 1973. Leftist revolutionary or reformist democrat? Trending toward the intimate, Guzmán's stirring portrait provides a history not often taught in American schools, but doesn't pretend to lay out all the answers for viewers.



The Scent of Green Papaya

Is something from further East more your flavor? Director Tran Anh Hung's Academy Award-nominated *The Scent of Green Papaya*, starring Tran Nu Yen-Khe, is a seductive, rapturously photographed tale of first love's bloom, set in 1951 Saigon. The plotting is fairly simple, charting a service girl's attraction to a handsome pianist on whom she has nursed a crush since childhood. Locating the world's quotidian beauty like only a film can, Hung's film looks gorgeous on Blu-ray, presented in a letterboxed 1.66:1, and newly re-mastered in HD. Released via Lorber Films, the Blu-ray comes with a short, clip-heavy behind-the-scenes featurette, a photograph gallery, and the movie's theatrical trailer.

Coming as it does *after* the nuptials of Kate Middleton and Prince William, the release date of *British Royal Weddings of the 20th Century* makes little sense. But no matter: if there's a market for collectible dishware, toilet-seat covers, and other tchotchkes then surely this DVD containing over three hours of amazing newsreel and other archive footage will find rapturous embrace from dedicated watchers of the British monarchy. From 1919's wedding between Princess Patricia and Commander Alexander Ramsay up through 1999's marriage between Prince Edward and Sophie Rhys-Jones (and, yes, inclusive of Prince Charles' 1981

extravaganza with the late Diana Spencer), this full-frame, region-free disc provides a comprehensive overview of all the majestic splendour (yes, with that extra "u," so you know it's classy) that tax-exempt lords and ladies can enjoy.

Finally, three hours of a possibly more scurrilous figure arrives in the form of *Julian Assange: A Modern Day Hero?*, a bloated documentary portrait of the controversial Australian journalist, publisher, and Internet activist. Hastily assembled and lacking the vision of more painstakingly constructed throughline, this title nonetheless scores points for at least trying to separate fact from myth as it relates to both Assange the man and the overall mission of his organization, WikiLeaks, and some of those who most ardently support him. There are no supplemental bonus features, alas... unless they're perhaps encrypted, and somehow unlocked only via some special cookie-enabled tracking. Ahh, crap, I have to go... someone is at my door. **h**



Julian Assange: A Modern Day Hero?