

# DVD Debris

BY DAVID FEAR



## SXSW LIVE 2007

SHOUT FACTORY (2007)

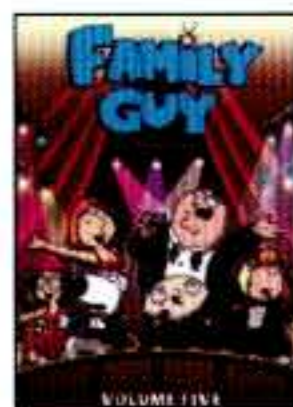
Watching these performances from this year's music-industry hoedown is exactly like being there: Sample a song from a random act and then move onto the next band. (For the true "journalist" experience, don't fast-forward through the groups you hate. Just drink overpriced beer and suffer.) And like the shindig, the disc's grab-bag aesthetic provides surprises: Who knew that Aqualung's copycat Coldplay-meets-Bono vibe actually sounds great live, or that the giddiness of seeing the Polyphonic Spree in a club could translate to a small screen? It also confirms what we've always suspected—Bowling for Soup's "1985" is officially the worst song ever.



## TAXI DRIVER: COLLECTOR'S EDITION

SONY PICTURES (1976)

Someday, a real rain will come and wash all the scum off the streets. But hey, until that happens, shave your head into a Mohawk and grab this collector's edition of Martin Scorsese's parable of urban decay. The abundance of extras—with commentaries, making-of docs and new interviews galore—justifies dropping bucks for this two-disc set, even if you have the film memorized or are really, really busy planning to shoot a political figure in order to impress a 12-year-old prostitute. There may not be a better '70s movie. And for the last time: Yes, Travis, we *are* talking to you.



## FAMILY GUY: SEASON 5

20TH CENTURY FOX (2006)

*The Simpsons* may have the legacy, and *South Park* may be a sharper social satire, but if you demand more pop-culture non sequiturs per capita in your animated TV comedies, you turn on *Family Guy*. (It's also the only one to feature an angry pointing monkey, which is always a plus.) The show's fifth season has its share of highlights, including a perfect send-up of pro-abstinence Christian groups and the greatest cartoon roller-boogie musical sequence of all time. Creator Seth MacFarlane & Co.'s commentaries are all solid gold, but hey, Fox: What's up with only including a scant 13 episodes? Shenanigans!



## CRUISING

WARNER HOME VIDEO (1980)

Once upon a time, somebody thought that dressing Al Pacino like the leather-man from the Village People and having him play an undercover cop who fakes being gay (or is he faking?) to catch a serial killer was a surefire idea for a hit. Finally available on DVD, William "The Exorcist" Friedkin's controversial fetish-thriller is one of those films that you simply can't believe got made. Once you do see it, you'll know why it's now gone from being a pariah to a camp cult classic. We dare you to start dropping "hips or lips" into everyday conversations.



## ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN: DANCING HORSES

MVD VISUAL (2007)

It's a crime how good Ian McCulloch's voice still sounds all these years later. I mean, he's like 110 years old. What gives? When the perpetually sunglassesed singer starts hitting those full-throated yells during this 2005 concert at Shepherds Bush, it's like freakin' 1985 all over again. (Don't even think about it, Bowling for

Soup!) And when he and guitarist Will Sergeant bust out old chestnuts like "The Killing Moon," you can just picture the graying audience members remembering their own personal days of Creepers and roses. Granted, the band does ruin "Rescue." But hey, no one's perfect. Not even Bunnymen.



## CINEMA 16: EUROPEAN SHORT FILMS

CINEMA 16 (2007)

Ever wonder what kind of movies your favorite internationally renowned filmmakers made prior to becoming, like, internationally renowned? This collection of early shorts from well-known Euro-directors provides some fascinating backstories to a few big-shot careers: Both Christopher Nolan's "Doodlebug" and Lars von Trier's student film "Nocturne" offer clues as to where they were headed artistically, while you'd never guess from watching Ridley Scott's "Boy and Bicycle" that he'd eventually end up making flashy blockbusters about aliens and gladiators. Best of the bunch is Juan Solanas's "The Man Without a Head," an absurd nugget about, well...take a guess, Ichabod.



## THE OFFICE: SEASON 3

UNIVERSAL (2007)

Most workplaces suck, but trust us: They don't suck as bad as the Scranton Dunder-Mifflin paper office. Many sitcoms about workplaces also suck. Surprisingly, this American version of the devastatingly funny British TV show does not suck at all; in fact, this season proves it's the greatest cringe-comedy series to ever grace a network schedule. (It also introduced the phrase "gay witch hunt" into our vocabulary.) There's not a single dud among the 24 episodes here, and the 3 hours (!) of deleted scenes are all as oh-my-god amazing as what made the cut. PS: Steve Carell *is* God.



## STRANGER THAN PARADISE

CRITERION (1984)

Like a downtown-hipster *Waiting for Godot*, Jim Jarmusch's brilliant, deader-than-deadpan comedy makes much ado about nothing and comes out a masterpiece. Two Lower East Side sad sacks and a Hungarian cousin search for answers to a question no one has bothered to ask them. It doesn't matter where they go—Delancey St., Cleveland, Florida—because everyone knows this is nowhere. Never mind the fact that the film is ground zero for the Amerindie and mumblecore revolutions; behold, the birth of contemporary stonefaced irony! Criterion has even thrown in the Holy Grail of Jarmuschian bonuses: his long-unavailable 1980 debut, *Permanent Vacation*. Yay.



## HOT FUZZ

UNIVERSAL (2007)

From the good folks who brought you the killer zom-com *Shaun of the Dead* comes this fanboy dismantling of the supercop genre, in which London's most dedicated police officer is relocated to the U.K.'s quietest small town. We quote the trailer: "Guns! Action! Explosions! Swans!" What makes it work is Edgar Wright and Simon Pegg's obvious affection for the high-octane, he-man action flick; they may be the only people who love the sight of a man jumping through the air, dual glocks a-blazin', more than us. And Paddy Considine's bushy, Selleck-esque moustache deserves some sort of facial-hair Oscar. Genius.