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Join us each week as Rob Hunter takes a look at new DVD releases and gives his highly unqualified opinion as to which titles are worth BUYing, which are better off as RENTals, and which should be AVOIDed at all costs. And remember, these listings and category placements are meant as informational conversation starters only. But you can still tell Hunter how wrong he is in the comment section below.

There are three DVDs worth Buying this week including the dark, modern noir of the *Red Riding* trilogy, the very funny spy spoof, *OSS 117: Lost In Rio*, and the complete series run of *Thriller*, but there's also several flicks worth Renting including *Harry Brown*, *Flashforward*, *Tormented*, and yes, *The Vampire Diaries*.

See all of this week's relevant DVD releases after the jump...

Click on any of the titles below to magically head over to Amazon.com and pick up the DVD. And don't forget to check out Neil Miller's hilariously titled [This Week In Blu-ray](#) for reviews on the latest high definition Blu-ray releases!

DVDs I'D BUY



OSS 117: Lost In Rio

Pitch: Imagine *Austin Powers* minus the fantastical super villain but with a racist lead character, nudity, and people talking in French...

Why Buy? France's top secret agent heads to Brazil on the trail of a Nazi war criminal, and along the way he upsets and insults people of every race, creed, and religion. Jean Dujardin absolutely nails the role of the egotistical, ignorant, and aloof spy as he gleefully embraces the film's politically incorrect and often outrageous sense of humor. Asian assassins, hippies, masked wrestlers, fingers in the ass, and highly insensitive behavior runs rampant. Very smart and very funny.

Extra Features? Making of, blooper reel, deleted scenes

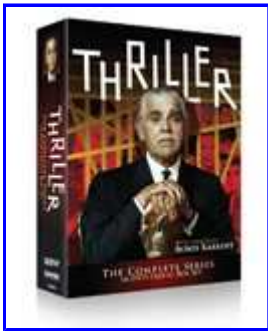


Red Riding

Pitch: The big bad wolf sets up shop in England...

Why Buy? Three films from three different directors telling one dark and disturbing tale of murder, assault, corruption, misplaced heroics, and innocence lost. This trilogy was filmed for British TV and they put to shame many theatrical crime films. A brilliant cast including Andrew Garfield, Paddy Considine, David Morrissey, Rebecca Hall, Sean Bean, and others help bring life to this grim and violent tale. It's not for everyone as things are exceedingly bleak throughout with only rare glimpses into the light, but fans of twisted plots, cover-ups, and film noir will find much to love here.

Extra Features? TV spots, interview, deleted scenes, making of



Thriller: The Complete Series

Pitch: Let Boris Karloff take you by the hand...

Why Buy? NBC's mystery/horror anthology show from the early sixties is hit and miss (like all anthology shows), but there are enough really good episodes to make the set worthwhile. They really don't make shows like this anymore, but once upon a time they were all the rage. The show consists of single, stand-alone stories about con-men, mysterious women, murder, betrayal, and once in a while a bit of the supernatural. Like many similar shows this one features stories based on the work of authors like Robert Bloch and Charles Beaumont, and while *Thriller* will never be as well known as *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* or *The Twilight Zone* it's a solid show with more winners than duds.

Extra Features? Commentaries

DVDs I'D RENT



Flashforward: The Complete Series

Pitch: If only the producers could have looked six months into the future of the show...

Why Rent? Everyone in the world simultaneously passes out for two minutes, and when they awaken it's with memories of a glimpse into their lives six months in the future. What caused it? What does it portend? And will Harold ever find the courage to ask out his dream girl? ABC made a bold attempt to recapture the *Lost* magic with a truly engaging premise, a solid and large cast of characters, and a storyline that demands to be watched consecutively, but there just weren't enough viewers to keep it going after one season. The show wisely wrapped up many of the bigger plot threads by the finale, so even though some questions remain the season is still a complete, interesting, and well produced thriller.

Extra Features? Featurettes, interviews, bloopers, deleted scenes, commentary

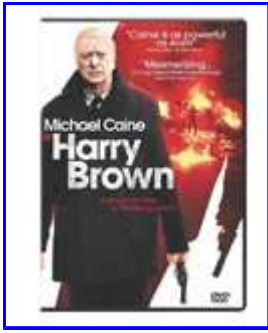


French Film

Pitch: Apparently the title *Frogs* was already in use...

Why Rent? A couple stuck in the doldrums of a decade-long relationship and another couple threatened by the temptation of an outside love find themselves looking for help from a French director known for his supposedly romantic films. Fools. This is a light but smart romantic comedy from the UK (that's right, it's in English!) starring a handful of recognizable faces from British film and TV, and it's legitimately funny too. It successfully pokes fun at the French, the British, and our ideas of romance and love as well. Romantic comedies populated by real people instead of cartoon characters is a rarity, so give this one a try.

Extra Features? Trailer



Harry Brown

Pitch: Jolly good vigilante he is eh gov'nuh (and yes, my attempts at actually speaking "English" are even worse)...

Why Rent? Harry Brown lives a quiet life in London until one of his old buddies is killed by street thugs. Harry decides to respond accordingly and starts cleaning up the streets with his own brand of old-school retribution. You won't find much new here in the tale of an ex-military man taking out the garbage, but it's Michael Caine people. Caine as a bad-ass is bad-ass. Emily Mortimer is always welcome as well, but you watch this as a call back to the Charles Bronson or Chuck Norris movies of the eighties... weak but innocent people are assaulted and killed by some truly evil (and over the top) bad guys, and only Caine can stop them. What's not to love about that?

Extra Features? Commentary, deleted scenes

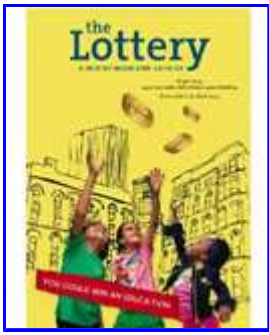


Leonard Cohen: Bird On a Wire

Pitch: The curvature of her breasts indeed...

Why Rent? Leonard Cohen's 1972 tour across Europe is documented, warts and all, and provides a mix of songs, interviews, and backstage shenanigans. Cohen has been around for a while but many people only know him for one or two songs of his that have ended up on soundtracks. And by many people I mean me. This film gives a pretty interesting insight into the touring life of a popular, intelligent, and conflicted performer. Watching him and his crew deal with audio equipment failures, unhappy concertgoers,

Extra Features? None



The Lottery

Pitch: Congrats, America, on leaving our children's education and future up to chance...

Why Rent? Every year in NYC a special lottery is held to determine which children will get the chance at a dream. Only a small fraction of the thousands of applicants can be accepted into a special charter school system where the kids are all but guaranteed the opportunities, attention, and hope that the public system can rarely afford. Parents dream about it and the results speak for themselves, but there are organized efforts to stop schools like these for reasons usually associated with ignorance and greed. For all the hope and heartbreak in this doc, the scene where one of the charter school administrators faces down a committee before a hostile audience is an eye-opening lesson in frustration and futility. It shouldn't be like this, people.

Extra Features? Q&A, deleted scenes, interviews



Made For Each Other

Pitch: In case you were wondering what ever happened to the Masterson brothers from *That 70's Show* and *Malcolm In the Middle*...

Why Rent? A newly married man cheats on his wife, but guilt leads him to arrange for her to cheat as well. Complications ensue. This odd little comedy is a bit fractured in its style, but it still manages enough laughs to make it worth a watch. The Masterson brothers both entertain, as does Patrick Warburton, but I'd be remiss if I didn't mention a high degree of sex appeal in the form of Lauren German. She speaks with an extremely weird accent, but she's incredibly easy on the eyes too.

Extra Features? Trailer, behind the scenes, deleted scenes, featurette

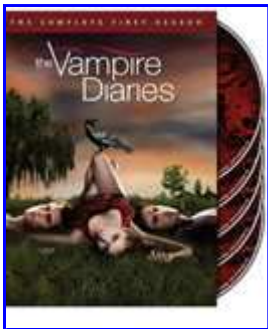


Tormented

Pitch: This is what happens when you bully a fat, British kid...

Why Rent? A bullied teen kills himself, and soon the punks who harassed him are being stalked and killed. This British horror film has an element of dark humor about it, but that doesn't mean it skimps on the gore. There are some very cool and bloody kills here. The message beneath it all about the evils of bullying (as well as indifference) is well done too. What doesn't work as well is the ending, but it's not about the destination it's about the journey. Right?

Extra Features? Behind the scenes, trailer



The Vampire Diaries: The Complete First Season

Pitch: These vampires don't sparkle, but they sure do brood...

Why Rent? Two sexy brothers return home to Mystic Falls, one good and one bad, and soon the population begins dying. Because these brothers aren't just sexy... they're sexy vampires. Using the 'judge a book by its cover' principle this CW show should be shit. It's based on a series of young adult novels, aimed squarely at the tweener audience, focused on a dreamy romance that can never be... I fully expected it to suck, and the lead girl is a skinny waste, but the show is actually pretty solid. Kevin Williamson (*Scream*) is on-board behind the scenes, the story actually goes in some interesting and unexpected directions (silly witch crap aside), and Ian Somerhalder is hilarious as the evil brother. Hilarious and sexy...

Extra Features? Featurettes, deleted scenes, commentary, gag reel

DVDs I'D AVOID



Marmaduke

Pitch: Watching two hours of Scrappy Doo is preferable to this crime against caninity...

Why Avoid? Owen Wilson voices Marmaduke.

Extra Features? Featurettes, deleted scenes



The Middle: Season One

Pitch: Finally, a sitcom for the rest of you...

Why Avoid? The mother from *Everybody Loves Raymond* and the janitor from *Scrubs* have “comedic” adventures in Indiana with their three kids and a stack of unpaid and overdue bills. Blah blah comedy is subjective, but this is my column and this show isn’t funny. Everyone tries extremely hard, too hard, to get a laugh, and very little of it works. And that very little is usually named Atticus Shaffer. He’s almost enough to warrant a Rent recommendation. Almost.

Extra Features? Featurettes, deleted scenes, gag reel

Also out this week, but I haven’t seen it and review material was unavailable:

9th Company

Beatdown

Carnivorous

Dear Pyongyang

Girls On the Road

Point Of Terror

Sons Of Anarchy: Season Two

Tyler Perry’s Why Did I Get Married Too?

In the interest of full disclosure, I received review copies of the following DVDs for this week's column:

Flashforward: The Complete Series

French Film

Leonard Cohen: Bird On a Wire

The Lottery

Made For Each Other

The Middle: Season One

OSS 117: Lost In Rio


Red Riding

Tormented

The Vampire Diaries: The Complete First Season

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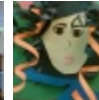
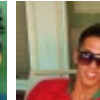



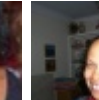
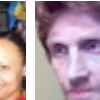


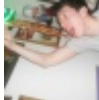








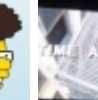
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[Kangaroo Be Stoned](#) 6 days ago

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Lucky!

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Cole_Abaius ★ 6 days ago

Thriller is such an underrated show. I imagine that box set is something only true fans would buy (at almost 100 dollars), but everyone should go rent a season or 3 and give it a shot. You're right - more to love than to groan about.

Also, it's great to see Friedberg and Seltzer are branching out to foreign films.

Like Reply



Dom 6 days ago

I just watched the entire Red Riding trilogy on blu-ray and I'm just speechless. These films not only put our american made for T.V movies to shame but our theatrical ones as well. While the ending left a bit to be desired and some characters that were supposed to be important weren't given enough screen time to really make an impact, the overall story of corruption and depravity is one for the ages.

The films themselves are just beautifully shot as well, especially the first and third films. The third in particular, having a shot near the end that's absolutely beautiful and haunting as you literally feel like your seeing a little bit of light at the end of the dark and grimy tunnel. Seriously, this is a crime story of epic proportions and should not be missed. A+

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