

YOUTH IN REVOLT

■ Michael Cera has made a career out of playing sensitive, awkward teens, yet in *Youth in Revolt* he proves he can also be kind of a bad ass. Based on the novel by C.D. Payne, Cera plays an assuming and socially awkward nerd who develops a second personality as a moustachioed shit-disturber named François Dillinger in order to win the girl of his dreams. Funny, smart and brilliantly written, the film is - as its title implies - a much needed revolt against Hollywood's typical, fart-joke heavy teen comedies.



INVICTUS

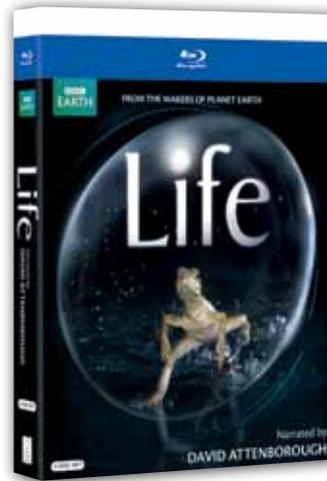
■ Set in the wake of Nelson Mandela's post-apartheid rise to power, *Invictus* follows the true story of the South African rugby team's attempt to win the world cup - an act which also served as a symbolic reunification for the troubled nation. Despite solid performances from both Matt Damon and Morgan Freeman, as well as the intriguing historical premise and inspired direction from Clint Eastwood, *Invictus* tries to do too much, too quickly and ultimately falls flat as both a sports film and a polemic on South Africa's racially charged past.

LIFE



PARTY DOWN: SEASON 1

■ There are few television series that capture the zeitgeist of being an underpaid and undervalued wage slave. Thankfully there's *Party Down*, a series created by Paul Rudd and Rob Thomas (of *Veronica Mars* fame), a show which follows a group of misanthropic wannabes working for an LA-based catering company. Smart, hilarious, insightful and entirely character-driven, *Party Down* may just be one of the underappreciated shows on television, following a bunch of schmucks forced to live in a world of pretentious hosts, party streamers and pâté.

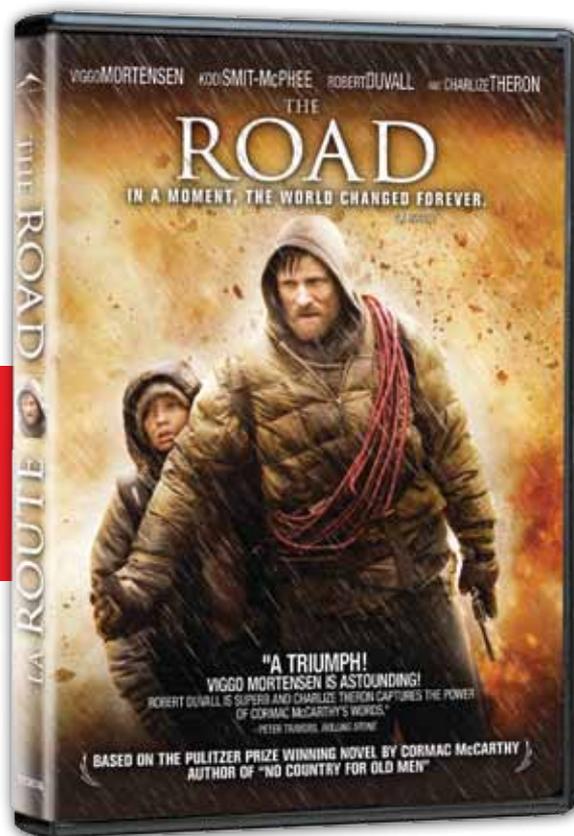


■ Sure, the invention of Blu-Ray has created an annoying subculture of video geeks and given new meaning to the term 'close-up' when it comes to the porn industry, but if there was ever a legitimate reason for owning a Blu-Ray player it's BBC's *Life*. Narrated by legendary conservationist Sir David Attenborough, the film was shot over 3000 days, on every continent on the Earth, showing the world in breathtaking detail - from the smallest insect to the largest predators. Think of it as a high-def biology class without the boring lecture notes.



THE BOOK OF ELI

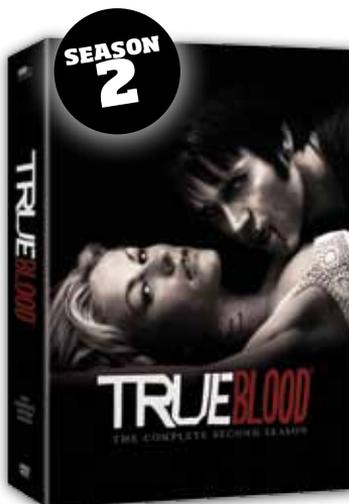
■ It's the end of the world as we know it in the Book of Eli, a post-apocalyptic action flick from the Hughes Brothers. The film stars Denzel Washington as a prophetic ass kicker wandering a burned out wasteland and joining forces with a radioactive-looking Mila Kunis to safeguard a sacred text. Visually, the film is well-shot, but unfortunately the plot mushroomclouds into the ridiculous thanks to a heaping dose of pseudo-religious babble. If nothing else, Denzel gives a solid action performance, laying down a number of vicious, Road Warrior-style Bible thumpings.



THE ROAD

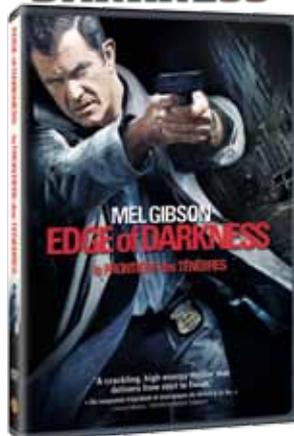
■ Based on Cormac McCarthy's Pulitzer Prize winning novel, The Road is probably one of the most depressing films you'll ever see. Yet in the capable hands of director John Hillcoat, it's also one of the most powerful. The film follows a father (played by Viggo Mortensen) and his son, who travel along a lone highway in a post-apocalyptic world filled only with ash and sadistic roving gangs. Dark, haunting and incredibly moving, The Road is a film which is as beautifully shot as it is tragic, truly doing justice to McCarthy's epic tale of hope and survival.

TRUE BLOOD



■ Yes, the Twilight saga and legions of twelve-year old girls may have sucked the pop cultural mystique right out of vampires. Fortunately, there's HBO's True Blood, a show which features blood suckers as the nasty, vicious, non-glittery fang bangers they really are. Season 2 also proves why True Blood is one of the best shows in HBO's roster, with episodes that are creepy, hilarious and gory, not to mention having enough girl-on-vamp action to make a teen Twihard's head explode.

EDGE OF DARKNESS



■ It's been a long time coming, but Mad Mel is back on the big screen. Edge of Darkness, however, is hardly a return to form for everyone's favourite mentally unbalanced actor-cum-director. Instead, the film is a narcoleptic thriller which follows a Boston cop whose daughter is gunned down outside his home. Plotwise it hits all the familiar beats, with an obligatory conspiracy, car chases, shootouts and lines of dialogue delivered with gritted-teeth. Unfortunately the film is a forgettable thriller which proves that Gibson really is - in the immortal words of Detective Roger Murtaugh - getting too old for this shit.