

## This week's DVDs

By MICHAEL GILTZ


**The Ren & Stimpy Show  
— First and  
Second  
Seasons**

★★★★

Paramount; \$38.99

Happy, happy, joy, joy! One of the most perverse, goofy and downright hilarious cartoons arrives on DVD. Creator John Kricfalusi was fired after season two (shame on you, Nickelodeon), so this is the only “R&S” you’ll ever need. The worthy extras: a banned episode, commentary by John K, storyboards and pencil tests.

**The Day After  
Tomorrow**

★

Fox; \$29.98

A disaster film that’s a disaster? How appropriate. Not even Dennis Quaid and the disarming Jake Gyllenhaal can inject smarts into this bit of nonsense about an instant climate change ravaging North America. One amusing moment shows U.S. citizens streaming across the border to Mexico, but the rest is brain dead. The extras — including commentary tracks and some deleted scenes — are remarkably sparse for a special-effects flick.

**The Battle of Algiers**

★★★★

Criterion; \$49.95

Director Gillo Pontecorvo’s blistering, classic 1966 drama — shot like a documentary — captures the insurgency of Algiers against French occupiers so convincingly that militaries around the world have studied it for years. Suicide bombings, struggles to tell friend from foe, torture in the name of good — it’s all here. The remarkable extras on this three-disc set include seven substantial films (nearly five hours in total), including a making-of the film, a history of the actual Algerian struggle and much more.

**Taxi First Season/The  
Wire First Season**

★★★★ each

Paramount/HBO; \$38.99/\$99.98

An instant top 10 hit, “Taxi” has always been more of a quiet, critic’s favorite than a popular juggernaut. It’s a marvelous ensemble about New York cabbies that endures because

Everett Collection



the characters are so human. Another quiet success: “The Wire” on HBO, which demands repeated viewing. Neither has extras and

neither needs them.

**The Nutty Professor  
Special Edition**

★★★

Paramount; \$14.99

It’s a happy day indeed for the French, since Jerry Lewis’ 1963 masterpiece about a meek professor who becomes a suave ladies’ man is out on DVD with commentary by Lewis, two solid shorts and archival material. It’s one of 10 Lewis films coming out on DVD today (including 1960’s “The Bellboy” and 1964’s “The Disorderly Orderly”), so Lewis fans should be sure to buy a lot of popcorn and unplug the phone.