

DVDs this week

By Michael Giltz

The Man Who Wasn't There (\$26.98; USA)

I eagerly await every new Coen Brothers movie and I'm invariably let down. But every one of them is lovingly crafted with at least one or two elements that make it a must-see. On *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* it was the terrific roots music soundtrack. On this film noir about a barber (Billy Bob Thornton) with a can't-fail blackmail scheme, it's the gorgeous black-and-white cinematography by Roger Deakins. Deakins gets his own interview on the DVD and, best of all, his brilliant work is presented in a top-notch transfer.



COEN BROTHERS

The Deep End (\$29.98; Fox)

This critically acclaimed low-budget noir was made on a dime but has a stunningly beautiful look courtesy of cinematographer Giles Nuttgens (the entire movie is drenched in blue) and a brilliant, evocative score by Peter Nashel. Tilda Swinton stars as a mother who will do anything — anything! — to protect her gay son from blackmail. Swinton is marvelously determined, but the plot elements of this mystery don't hold up under examination.

Fatal Attraction (\$24.99; Paramount)



CLOSE

Glenn Close may have received an Oscar nomination for her performance as the date from hell (she lost to Cher in *Moonstruck*), but she still doesn't get enough credit for how creepily convincing her unbalanced character is portrayed. The movie was famously given a new ending when test audiences were unsatisfied with watching Close commit suicide — they wanted her to be killed, not just off herself. Director Adrian Lyne and the cast responded with a slasher-style ending and the box office exploded. That original ending is included here.

Husbands and Wives (\$24.95; Columbia TriStar)

Woody Allen's last truly great movie is a ferociously funny look at couples who break up and then pair off with newer, younger lovers. The hand-held camerawork freaked audience members at the time (there were complaints it might actually make viewers sick) but now seems almost a cliché since every TV drama does the same thing. Judy Davis is a particularly funny standout in a cast that includes Sydney Pollack, Liam Neeson, Mia Farrow and Allen. Watch it and keep hope — surely Allen can do it again.

Official NBC 2002 Olympic Winter Games Highlights (\$19.95; NBC)

A quickie two-hour clip job, this DVD sucks the life out of the Olympics by just showing highlights of all the events. Worse, you don't even get a sense of being there live, since a bland synthesized score underplays the action with voiceover from the usually dependable Bob Costas cutting in. Even the controversial pairs skating event, worthy of a full-length documentary of its own, is dispatched in about five minutes with all the drama of a hike-off. They should have included two DVDs jam-packed with events for at least six hours of viewing. NBC has the footage; what are they hoarding it for?

Ultimate Fights (\$19.98; Flix Mix)

Sure it's silly. But this one-hour compendium of fight scenes from the movies is goofily entertaining. Highlights include Jackie Chan (naturally) in both *Rumble in the Bronx* and *Legend of Drunken Master* and Jason Scott Lee in *Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story*. You can also see sword fights from *Blade*, gun battles from *Scarface* and fights-to-the-death from *Gladiator*. It will be rented from now until doomsday as long as there are teenagers hanging out on Saturday night with nothing to do.

The Man Who Bought Mustique (\$29.95; First Run Features)

A mildly amusing documentary about the dreadful Lord Glenconner, a Scottish blueblood who turned the island of Mustique into a hotspot for jetsetters but now finds himself relatively poor. He is reduced to barking out orders at the natives, petulantly ordering the filmmakers about and treating his sidekick of three decades as the lapdog the man surely is. Unpleasantly fascinating.