

DVDs this week

By Michael Giltz

The Royal Tenenbaums (\$29.99; Criterion)

The extras tagged onto most DVDs are anonymous fare. But after only three movies, director Wes Anderson is so clearly a talent for the ages that he can snag the legendary Albert Maysles to shoot some of the short interviews for this terrific comedy about a Glass-like family of misfit geniuses. Disney is often criticized as unable to sell offbeat, adult fare but it nurtured this baby to more than \$50 million at the box office. Like Woody Allen, Anderson can't be expected to ever gross much more than that for his strikingly individual work. Typically excellent Criterion packaging, though we miss co-writer Owen Wilson on the commentary track.



ANDERSON

Charlotte Gray (\$26.98; Warner Bros.)



CRUDUP IN 'GRAY'

Billy Crudup co-stars in yet another movie with an excellent pedigree (acclaimed novel; director Gillian Armstrong) and excellent cast (Cate Blanchett) that flops both critically and commercially. (You're better off reading the book.) Does Crudup's onstage electricity simply not translate into film? In an interview with Ron Howard, I mentioned that Crudup was one film away from being a star. He had praised Crudup's talent but still responded, "Do you think?" Which I believe is passive-aggressive Hollywood-ese for "That kid's had

his chances and it ain't gonna happen." But Crudup's been slyly charming in *Jesus's Son*, magnetic in *Almost Famous* and his breakdown in *Waking the Dead* is enough to convince anyone it's only a matter of time. Crudup ended the dreams of many of his fans when he started publicly dating Mary Louise Parker. Let's hold on to one more dream: Billy Crudup is one movie away from becoming a star.

The Educational Archives: Driver's Ed/On The Job (\$24.99 each; Fantoma)

Unlike, say *The Atomic Cafe*, these compilations of shorts and educational films don't simply cut and paste the highlights into an entertaining mishmash. Here you get actual, complete masterpieces like *The Last Prom*, *Joyride*, *The Bottle* and the *Throttle*, and *How To Keep a Job* in all their miserable glory. That's great since you can see how truly awful these shorts could be. But it's pretty tiring, too. Happily, no teacher is around to scold you when you get bored and jump to the next piece.

The Laramie Project (\$24.98; HBO)

I resisted this show when it came to New York as a theatrical project starring a cast of unknowns. It seemed too soon to turn the story of Matthew Shepherd's brutal slaying into a play. But the show — composed of dialogue taken from interviews with residents of Laramie — proved utterly compelling. So I eagerly awaited the HBO movie . . . only to be disappointed. I'm sure all the actors — Peter Fonda, Camryn Manheim, Christina Ricci, Laura Tierney and so on — participated with the best of intentions. But their presence throws the whole piece out of whack. You can't get caught up in the ramblings (whether damning or insightful) of a Laramie local when he's played by Joshua Jackson of "Dawson's Creek."



JACKSON

Captain Scarlet (\$79.95; A&E)

"Thunderbirds," the classic British puppetshow, is a cheeky, James Bond-like spy series. "Captain Scarlet" is the fatalistic followup that plays more like film noir. It shows our hero battling invisible aliens called the Mysterons. (They're not without sympathy, since we accidentally attacked them first.) Captain Scarlet is indestructible, thanks to an early run-in with the creatures when they took over his body: he can suffer tremendous pain, but never actually dies. This means many episodes end with him horribly mangled and vowing to continue the fight. "Are you alright?" asks a fellow agent at the end of one show. "No," moans a bleeding Captain Scarlet. "But I will be." Very grim, indeed.