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DVDs THIS WEEK

By Michael Giltz



"BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER": COMPLETE FOURTH SEASON

The triple blow of no more Angel (he got his own show), a new setting at college, and a weak story line about a secret government project to tame demons keeps "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" (\$59.98, Fox) at less than its peak. But that's still better than most series. Besides, it contains "Hush," the nearly silent creepfest that is the single best show of the entire series. Includes commentary tracks on six episodes, a Spike overview and three shooting scripts.

"FRIDA"

Even if you don't know the first thing about Frida Kahlo, it's easy to predict the plot twists in this utterly conventional artist biopic (\$29.99, Miramax) starring **Salma Hayek**. You know Frida will marry another free spirit in Diego Rivera, who will warn her that he will love her but can't be faithful. She of course will say it doesn't matter and then yell and scream when he really does sleep around. It's all very passionate and unrevealing, with only a few off-beat touches by director **Julie Taymor**. A second disc crammed with extras — a **Bill Moyers** interview with Taymor, lots of featurettes on the making of the film, etc. — shows it truly was a labor of love.

"OLD SCHOOL": UNRATED EDITION "TEARS OF THE SUN"

Here are two movies that start off better than you expect and then settle for less. "Old School" (\$26.99, Universal) is a very funny comedy in its first half hour, a worthy sequel to director **Todd Phillips'** genial "Road Trip." Sadly, the comic ideas run out long before the finale of this flick about middle-aged men starting a fraternity. Lots of tedious deleted scenes are included, along with the promising idea of a 20-minute spoof of "Inside the Actors Studio" that proves just as dull as the real thing. "Tears" has **Bruce Willis** sternly trying to lead some Navy SEALs into deepest Africa to rescue a doctor when the country she's in is rocked by rebellion (\$27.94, Columbia TriStar). Mildly diverting for a while, it ends up a routine chase picture. The only surprise is that he and the lovely doctor never even kiss.

"ONCE UPON A TIME IN AMERICA" "THE RIGHT STUFF"

Director Sergio Leone is best known for his silly spaghetti Westerns. But this somber, 1984 gangster flick starring **Robert De Niro** and **James Woods** (\$26.99, Warner Bros.) may well be his masterpiece. Famously ruined by studio meddling on its U.S. release, it's now available in a complete, magisterial version almost four hours long, with commentary from critic **Richard Schickel** and excerpts from a Leone documentary. Even better is 1983's "The Right Stuff" (\$26.99, Warner Bros.), **Philip Kaufman's** thrilling look at the space race. It's a classic and is presented with all the extras (making-of featurettes) it deserves.

"GIANT" "ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES"

George Stevens' 1956 soap-opera look at Texas oilmen is a stodgy classic of its own, with **Rock Hudson** and **Elizabeth Taylor** going along until **James Dean** swoops in from another universe entirely and eats up the screen with his magnetic, complex portrayal of a poor boy who strikes it rich (\$26.99, Warner Bros.). Twelve extra minutes of footage doesn't make 1991's "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (\$26.99; Warner Bros.) any more watchable today than it was on release. The key reason to check it out is a commentary track featuring **Kevin Costner** and director **Kevin Reynolds**, who famously feuded on this and "Waterworld." Bygones are bygones apparently, with Costner admitting he had a "dumb-ass" accent that never worked and insisting they'd love to work together again but no one will touch them.

Next Tuesday:

Demi Moore's new boyfriend **Ashton Kutcher's** surprise comedy hit "Just Married"; cop drama "Narc," which served as a comeback for **Ray Liotta** and **Jason Patric**; the classic ghostly comedy "Topper" and — if you want to see more dead people — the first season of TV's "The Dead Zone."