

Issue #7 December 2001

Cambridge

Movie

News

Free!

In This Issue:

Coming Attractions!

Reviews!

Holiday Shopping Guide!

*Everything a good
movie fan needs!*

Letter from the Editor

Greetings All,

It's December and we are in the time of dreams for cinema. Two of the most eagerly awaited movies are here or will be soon. Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone is still doing exceptionally well and in a few weeks the first Lord of the Rings movie comes out. And if the presales are any indication then it will do extremely good it's first weekend as well.

The question will be how well it does on its second weekend. H. Potter is doing well because it is a good movie (see review on page 4) but it also benefits from a young core audience. The young adults who will go over and over to see a film. Lord of the Rings, however, appeals to an older group of fans who may not have the desire to go see a movie eight times.

Of course it really shouldn't be a competition between the two. We have two excellent stories in the fantasy genre, one that is usually badly represented. A lot of fans will go to see both. At this time we can also see the various Oscar contenders coming out. Will Smith's Ali and Halle Berry in Monster's Ball have excellent early views about them. And right now The Man Who Wasn't There is a critical success.

It should also be noted that this time is also good for the theaters, as every major chain is trying to claw its way back from Bankruptcy. The theaters need the repeat business and movies that stay around for a few weeks.

The nature of the money-sharing agreement between the studios and the theater chains means that generally a majority of the proceeds go to the studios at first, then as the movie stays in release the majority of the ticket sales go to the theaters.

But this summer almost all of the major releases dropped a stunning 50% within one week. Lara Croft, Planet of the Apes, American Pie II...all dropped significantly. With this winter's big hits, perhaps they can pull this around.

Look for this column in next issue for retrospective of 2001 as well as what we can look forward to in 2002.

This issue we have the coming attractions, tons of reviews and the first annual Shopping Guide for Cambridge movie fans. Where to go and what prices to expect are all included.

Have fun and remember..when you're loading up on all the ultra-cool things you can always just say that you're being patriotic.

Next issue we'll have 2001 year in review, as well as what we can look forward to in 2002.

So until next time have fun at the movies, tip your concessionist and for heaven's sake don't talk during the movie.

The Trailer: The Ring

Plot: American remake of 1998 Japanese film (itself inspired by a 1996 Japanese TV film) about a journalist investigating a mysterious videotape. Rumors profess anyone who watches the entire thing..dies.

Probable Release Date: 2002

Coming Attractions

December is a very active month for new movies. Several films are coming out in limited release to qualify for the Oscars. I have not listed the ones only opening in New York and LA. Others may open here and have been listed.

As always film releases are subject to change at the last minute. Be sure to check your local listings before heading off to the theater.

Theater

12/07

Oceans 11

12/14

Not Another Teen Movie
Vanilla Sky

12/19

Lord of the Rings

12/21

Accidental Spy
Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius
Joe Somebody
The Majestic
How High

12/25

A Beautiful Mind
Ali
Imposter

12/26

Black Hawk Down
I am Sam

Video

12/04

American Outlaws
Ghosts of Mars
Pearl Harbor
Summer Catch

12/11

The Circle
Hedwig and the Angry Itch
Jurassic Park III
Lost and Delirious
Rush Hour 2
The Score

12/18

Moulin Rouge
Princess Diaries
Scary Movie 2

12/26

Evolution
Two Can Play at That Game

DVD

12/04

Almost Famous Untitled: Bootleg Cut: Director's Edition
American Outlaws
Babylon 5: In the Beginning/The Gathering

(Continued on page 7)

"I thought you were tied up!"
"That is because you are stupid."
The Mask of Zorro (1998)

Reviews

As always my staff and I have set forth to find cinema in all it's forms and determine whether it is to be sought out or to be avoided at all costs. It's a rough job but somehow we manage to make it through.

The following are the results of the latest viewings. Read and enjoy.

Movies

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

Fantasy [PG]

A young orphan, badly treated by a his Aunt and Uncle (and a hopelessly spoiled cousin) gets invited to a very special school. Turns out the young man is a wizard, and a surprisingly powerful one at that.

Thus begins the story of Harry Potter, a student at a wizard college who must deal with having magical power, jealous classmates and the fact that everybody knows who he is ~before~ he arrives.

But thanks to abilities from his parents (a bank vault full of gold, the fact that his father was a superior athlete, and a few mysterious presents that arrive throughout the film) and a strong streak of courage help him cope with all the problems.

The story revolves Harry's first year at the college. Even as he sorts out who he is nefarious forces are at work to not only steal part of Harry's inheritance, but also deal the young wizard a good deal of harm.

Who exactly is trying to harm him and all the parts of the story have a good amount of depth to them, including a few twists and turns. This helps significantly as at the beginning of the film there are a few problems (like why is the professor of the "Combating Dark Arts" so pathetic?) that do get answered later on.

The movie is a good mix of drama, humor, fantasy and coming-of-age elements. While the comedy does get a little low-brow at times it usually works pretty well. The action sequences are especially well done, including a magical game played on broomsticks (that is just as rough as UK soccer and rugby matches) and a huge magical chess game with very active pieces.

The movie is a little long, but considering the anytime this much care is taken to preserve the material from a book will have that consequence. Definately a movie worth seeing and good for both children and adults.

The One

Science Fiction/Action [PG-13]

Jet Li's newest action movie takes the premise that there are hundreds of other dimensions out there, each with it's own Earth and it's own version of you and me. There are slight differences between them, in some it's Bush that's president, others have Gore. The thing is one of these universes has developed the technology to travel between them. The problem is that they have also discovered that if you kill one of your other selves the lifeforce/energy of that person splits among the survivors. Thus, if you kill all of your otherselves you could become a god. Of course you might also explode or destroy all the universes, but that's not going to stop the bad guy right?

Jet Li plays two versions of himself, one a cop "Gabe" and the other a corrupted dimensional cop "Yulaw". They are the last two, and the corrupt cop is gunning for our hero. We also have two other dimensional cops who have come to our world in order to prevent Yulaw from becoming the One. The film plays well with plenty of fights and nifty

(Continued on page 5)

"Alright, you primitive screwheads, listen up: THIS... is my BOOM STICK!"
Army of Darkness (1993)

Reviews

(Continued from page 4)

special effects. It doesn't break any new ground, but it is a lot of fun. The plot is as linear as they come, with very little depth. Acting is pretty much what you expect in a martial arts film.

Still, well worth seeing on a matinee or video rental.

Trivia: The director, James Wong also did the "Space: Above and Beyond" TV series and gave a few of the actors from there cameos in this film. (playing different characters)

DVD

Tomb Raider

Action [PG-13]

Ahhh, the joy of video-game movies. You have to capture the action and excitement of a game, include the large cast of characters and enemies but have very little in the way of story or plot to work with.

That is the cliché, and Tomb Raider lives up to it. We follow the adventures of Lara Croft as she journeys all over the planet to gain the pieces of the Triangle of Light before the nasty Illuminati assemble it for their own ends. Along the way Ms. Croft and her friends uncover some of the secrets of her deceased father and Lara must decide just what she wants to do once the Triangle is re-assembled.

The action scenes work well with some very quick fights in the house as well as a fight against giant



stone statues in an ancient temple. Angelina Jolie looks great as Lara, and the director uses that as much as he can. Beyond the fight scenes the movie has very little going for it. The acting is decent but the characters feel under-used. A few more scenes, or even just actions by them would have been wonderful.

So as long as you're just looking to turn off your brain and have some fun then this disc is worth having. It is well stocked with extras including a LOT of behind-the-scenes information (including Angelina Jolie's physical training, cast/crew interviews, special effects documentaries). There are four deleted scenes included, but they do not add much. The DVD includes Websites, a music video and director's commentary as well.

So, worth it if you're a fan of silly action movies, but not a must-buy for everyone else.

Shrek

Comedy [G]

Review by Robert Rosenthal

The question is not whether you should buy the "Shrek DVD, but where is the nearest store. If you are an aficionado of DVD extra features, then you will be in seventh heaven. Well at least one of the top 10 heavens. This DVD is packed, and what's more, it also includes the movie "Shrek."

For those who have not seen this computer-animated phenomenon, what the heck are you doing reading this review in an independent newszine? Seriously, you need to examine your priorities. For those few who have missed out, or only now due to the lifting

(Continued on page 6)

"I don't want to upset you too much, but at the moment you have an excellent chance of being hanged."

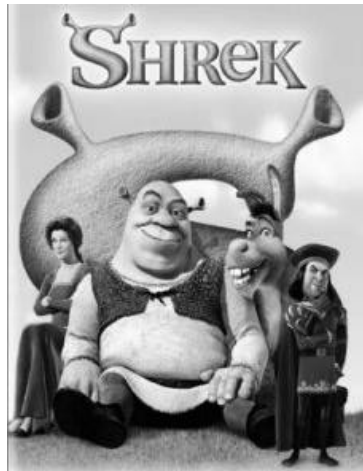
The Caine Mutiny (1954)

Reviews

(Continued from page 5)

of Taliban restrictions are getting around to this movie, let me give you a quick rundown.

Shrek is DreamWorks computer animated feature film running a fully enjoyable 1 hour 33 minutes. The plot is a not-so-commonplace buddy picture with the buddies being an irascible Ogre voiced by Mike Myers and a pesky Donkey brilliantly voiced by Eddie Murphy. Cameron Diaz voices the princess proving once again she is not just a pretty face, but a voice as well. If that isn't enough you have John Lithgow as the villainous prince.



The main source of amusement comes from the interplay between the characters along with jibes of well-known fairy tale creations. There are some clever albeit less than sophisticated jokes as Shrek prepares for a normal day at the beginning of the film.

All right. You've already seen the film, so why get the DVD? If you saw the film then you know why. It's great. Regardless of your age and the time we live in, you will enjoy this for years to come. So what else do you want? Regardless of whether you want it or not, the folks at DreamWorks thought they would sweeten the pot by offering you more anyways. The DVD also includes the following features:

2 Disc set:

Disc 1 – Shrek Movie - Full Frame

- Revoice studio – Redub one of 12 scenes on your computer. (Sure to be a hit and touted as DVD first)
- Game Swamp - 15 hours? of games. (Not very sophisticated but nice for the under 8 crowd).
- Shrek's Music Room – Music videos – Smash Mouth, Baha Men... (Enjoyable and worth watching)
- Favorite Scene Selection – Because we can't be bothered to click twice they now give us FAVORITE scene selection as well as normal scene selection.

Disc 2 – Shrek Movie – Wide screen

- Filmmakers commentary
- The Tech of Shrek – Interesting short on the science behind the animation.
- Storyboard of deleted scenes – Mildly interesting
- Technical goofs – 1st minute is nice, but once you've seen one puffy donkey...
- Intl. Dubbing featurette – What you'd expect
- Character design – How to draw characters. Nice for kids and frustrated artists with time on their hands.
- Hints for Shrek X-Box. – I don't have an X-Box, so I couldn't tell you.

I believe this to be a classic. If for no other reason than it does not dumb down its content to appeal to any specific group. Its lighthearted and even when it pokes fun at Dreamworks well known rival is not

(Continued on page 7)

"I'm not a crook. I'm ambitious. There's a difference!"

Mars Attacks! (1996)

Coming Attractions, Reviews

(Continued from page 3)

DVD Continued

12/04

Bill&Ted's Excellent Adventure
 Bill&Ted's Bogus Journey
 Dirty Rotten Scoundrels: Special Edition
 Ghosts of Mars
 Pearl Harbor
 Summer Catch
 Twin Peaks: The First Season

12/11

Bram Stoker's Dracula: Superbit collection
 Druids
 Gattaca: Superbit collection
 Headwig and the Angry Itch
 Jurassic Park III
 Mists of Avalon
 Patriot: Superbit
 Rush Hour 2
 The Score
 Star Trek Original Series #39 and #40

12/18

Hamlet
 Moulin Rouge
 Princess Diaries
 Scary Movie 2
 Scent of the Green Papaya

12/26

Evolution
 Two Can Play That Game

mean spirited. It plays well and appeals to the kid in all of us. I, for one, plan on watching it again just about the time you finish reading this.

Internet

Sweet Release (Sistole Diastole)

(atomfilms.shockwave.com)

Drama [NR]

In Sweet Release we get to see an extended family's picnic. As various couples pair off to wander about the gardens various secrets and events take place. We get to see a Nun questioning her choice, with a surprising answer. A hunchbacked cousin tries diligently to express his love for a cousin, and succeeds in a way he hadn't expected. The cousin of course has her own secrets.

While all of that is happening we can see the two married couples: one coming together in love, and the other almost splitting up.

It's a series of stories that show all the various parts of love and secrecy, and what can happen when emotions finally come to the surface. While this short is a little sappy (all the stories do wrap up very nicely) it is well worth watching. Also several prominent Mexican actors take part in the short, including Salma Hayek as the nun.

So if you want to see a slightly strange Mexican family, double-click on this film.

CounterReview

Disagree with any of the reviews here? Wish to point out something that was missed? Then write a response and send it in! It will get it's own spiffy "CounterReview" banner and everything when it is printed.

Send your CounterReviews to the Editor at cdkboston@earthlink.net

"To a New Yorker like you, a hero is some sort of weird sandwich, not some nut that takes on three tigers."

Kelly's Heroes (1970)

o i g ide

Greetings holiday shoppers! Cambridge is a wonderful place for a movie buff, or for someone trying to shop for one. We have Theaters, rental chains big and small and tons of little shops around to help you out. In this guide I present several gift-giving options as well as some suggestions on where to get them. I do not do a “buy this” for specific items because each fan tends to have his or her own unique tastes. Some would love a silver-framed poster of *Dude Where’s My Car?* and others would, for some reason, think that’s tacky. I’ll leave the individual gifts to you. But for where to go and what to look for you have this wonderful article to help out.

Of course as you’re one of my readers I’m certain that you have already finished all of your shopping and are merely reading this for entertainment. But if you are more like the humble Editor of this magazine and usually wait until midnight on December 23 to do all of your shopping then read on.

Want to go to the movies?

The joy of theater tickets

Any movie buff knows that there is nothing like seeing a movie on the big screen in a dark theater. And usually it helps to have a bucket of popcorn and a bucket of soda with you as well.

Buying tickets to specific shows generally are not the best way to go with gifts, although they may work if you are giving the presents within a very short time frame from purchase. But for the rest of time you will want to give Gift Certificates. That gives the receiver full choice for movie and time.

For a single person you’re going to want to give at least \$10 for a show, \$15 if you want to ensure

popcorn and soda. For couples you’ll want to give 30\$ with an additional \$10 per person.

Cambridge Locations

Loews Theaters (Fresh Pond, Harvard Square) sells Gift Certificates in \$5 increments. They also have a holiday package with five \$5 certificates and a contest ticket for \$25.

Landmark Theaters (Kendall Square) sells gift certificates in \$10 increments.

Giving great stuff, but only for a few days.

Rentals as a gift.

While going to the theater can be a real treat, sometimes you just want to stay home and avoid the talking kids and sticky floors. Luckily there are plenty of rental stores in the Cambridge area to help give this gift. Again giving gift certificates from a rental store allows full choice of time and theme for the recipient. Almost all stores have both VHS and DVD , and of course a full selection in just about every genre you can think of.

Rentals range from \$2 to \$5 per video. Cambridge Locations

Blockbuster Video sells gift cards in \$5, 10, 15, 20,25 and 50 denominations.

Hollywood Video sells Gift Certificates for any amount, and also sell coupon books for \$57.70. The book has 20 coupons, each worth one rental.

City Video sells coupon books for \$39.95 and has 10 coupons worth one free rental each. The coupons may also be purchased separately.

(Continued on page 9)

*“I have come here to kick ass and chew bubblegum.
And I’m all out of bubblegum.”*
They Live (1988)

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(Continued from page 8)

Spinning Discs of Wonders.

DVD giving

If you want to give your special someone something physical, as opposed to the certificates then a DVD is a very good idea. They have the best quality of video and audio, as well as lasting a long time. Of course discs have a price of \$15-\$35 and the selection, while improving, still has some notable gaps in it. Overall, probably the best way to go if you don't mind spending a bit of money.

Cambridge Locations

There are a ton of places to go for Discs. (see sidebar on page 11 for some title comparisons) If you're looking primarily at price I would suggest one of the chain stores, such as **Best Buy** or **Circuit City**. They buy in bulk and can discount heavily. The selection has some gaps and staff may not be able to help you as well as you'd like however. If you want a lot of help from the staff check out **Suncoast** movie store, after all movies are all they sell. If you're looking at music DVDs then check out **Newbury Comics** for the best advice. (and they have significantly improved their movie selection as well) For a good mix of staff, selection and price then you should check out **Tower Records** or **HMV Records**. Both stores have a surprisingly good selection of titles at decent prices.

Of course don't forget some of the niche stores such as **Tokyo Kid** at the Garage, a great place for Anime and Asian martial arts DVDs.

Spinning Discs of Used Wonders.

DVD giving on a budget

Wow! DVDs are great gifts, but y'know Bobby Joe just isn't worth \$35 for one movie. What should I do?

Well, you can always go for used discs. DVDs have a long lasting value so the quality does not suffer even if it's been "previously viewed". While the case may be slightly damaged going used is a cheap way to go. Prices generally go from \$9 to \$15 depending on the title rarity.

Cambridge Locations

Blockbuster is a good place to go for previously viewed films, especially recent releases. (this goes double for VHS movies) Remember they advertise heavily on the New Releases being available and will buy 25 copies of Rambo XVII, and three months down the road 23 of those copies will be in the bin marked off.

CD Spins is a good all-around used disc store. The DVD selection is pretty good, with reasonable prices. Also you can check out the soundtracks at the same time. It's also strong in staff knowledge and atmosphere.

Newbury Comics has been drastically improving their Used DVD section over the last couple of months and can now boast one of the best selections in the city. Prices are reasonable as well.

(Continued on page 10)

"Would you guys please hurry up, I'm breaking like 20 major laws right now."
Sixteen Candles (1984)

o i g ide

(Continued from page 9)

Making sure the VCR has a friend.

Giving Videotapes

Okay, so what if your gift reciever doesn't have a DVD player? Or wants something that's not out on Disc? (the Star Wars trilogy perhaps) That's when you go for you're old standby, MR. Videotape. Everything and anything is out on tape and just about everyplace sells it. Also thanks competition from other sources videotapes are pretty cheap, ranging from \$10 to \$20 for a new movie.

Cambridge Locations

For Tapes both **HMV** and **Tower** have good selections and prices although **Suncoast** seems to have a bit better selection in some areas, such as TV programs.

Again, the video rental stores are great for getting previewed movies cheap. But with tapes you may have a notable quality loss. Keep the receipt.

Ooooooh, pretty pictures.

Posters, press kits and cells.

Being a Movie buff is more than just a sizable movie collection and possessing an encyclopedic knowledge of Monty Python quotes. You must also plaster your walls with images of moves as well! Movie posters, press kits and other still images is a great gift if you want something different, but still interesting. Prices range from \$10 to \$35 depending on size and rarity.

Cambridge Locations

There is an excellent poster store in Harvard Square called **Pix Poster Cellar** (www.pixposters.com). They have more posters than is healthy for mere mortals.

They're not dolls, they're Action Figures.

Toys and figures

Yes, the Reservoir Dogs figure does have a removable ear. There are some amazing figures out there showing various figures in cinema, from Leatherface to the shark from Jaws. They're a little on the expensive side, but are definitely worth it.

Cambridge Locations

Check out **Newbury Comics**, **Suncoast** and **Tower Records** for the best selections of the very detailed figurines. You're certain to find at least one Ash with his chainsaw.

And remember, if all else fails, then go down to **Toys R Us** and pick up some movie-themed Lego kits. Nobody can resist those.

Hopefully you have figured out where you want to go now for your last minute presents. Movies can be a great gift for a reasonable price and won't break your back hauling the family's presents from under the tree.

Until next year have a good time at the stores, and remember your favorite Editor if you accidentally bought too many gifts and need to get rid of one. Happy Holidays!

*“How far down does this ship go?”
“Oh, she'll go all the way to the bottom if we don't stop her.”
U-571 (2000)*

Com ari g e ores

Okay, so you think you know where you want to go. But what store really has the greatest DVD selection and prices? I decided to test several area stores, along with a few websites. I chose four movies to be my guide. If they had the movie in stock, the price is listed below. If they didn't have it..well, then they get the egg on the face.

The four movies I went with are:

Planet of the Apes (2001) to represent the new releases. It was out for only two weeks when I did the checking so I expected all the stores to have it.

Woman on Top, to represent a run-of-the-mill disc. It is also relatively famous for being ridiculously over-priced when it was first released. I expected some stores to have it, and was truly curious to see if the price had come down.

To represent classic films I chose Citizen Kane. After all, how can you go wrong with that? Expectations were high that they would all have it.

And last I chose Seven Samurai Criterion Collection to represent Foreign films. It's a classic, a great DVD and relatively common enough that they all should have had it.

So how did they fare?

	Planet of the Apes	Woman on Top	Citizen Kane	Seven Samurai
Best Buy	\$22.99	Out of Stock	\$24.99	\$34.99
Tower Records	\$22.99	Out of Stock	\$19.99-24.99 ¹	Out of Stock
Suncoast Movies	\$22.99	Out of Stock	\$29.99	\$39.99
Amazon.com	\$22.95	\$19.98 ²	\$22.48	\$33.49
DVDexpress.com	\$20.24	\$27.99	\$22.49	\$35.96

¹ Tower had one disc labeled \$19.99 and one labeled \$24.99.

² Amazon had this disc listed in the pre-release section, and this price represents a re-release with a lower price. Please note prices do not include Sales Tax or Shipping/Handling.

As you can see the stores were surprisingly close with Best Buy slightly ahead in the prices. Although Tower did sneak through with the low-priced Citizen Kane.

Woman on Top turned out to be a bad choice. Only one website had it available and none of the stores (to be fair I did see a copy at HMV records in Harvard Sq. but they weren't in this competition)

Seven Samurai surprisingly didn't show up on DVD Express but did show up at three of the stores. And it also gave Suncoast the dubious honor of having the most expensive item of the survey.

Although it is not reflected in the chart, Tower Records deserves special mention as it's store had the easiest browsing experience with their display racks being neat and orderly. Best Buy had the best prices but had confusing displays and a serious problem with movies migrating (probably picked up by customers and then put down in the wrong place). It was rather strange to be at Best Buy and seeing Erotic Survivor in three different places on the racks.

Online Amazon wins in selection, but DVD Express snuck in some good deals. Please note that some websites (Amazon included) will modify prices for certain customers based on shopping habits. As such I cannot guarantee the exact same prices on different visits.

"Why don't you kiss her instead of talking her to death?"

"You wan't me to kiss her, huh?"

"Ah, youth is wasted on the wrong people!"

It's a Wonderful Life (1946)

Next Issue, Submissions

Next Issue

Ahh, January 2002. Next issue we'll have a look at the amazing and turbulent year 2001 as well as a look at what we can expect for 2002.

And of course we'll have all the reviews, coming attractions and other tidbits that movie buffs need. See you in thirty days!

Submit something!

I'm always looking for help in putting this magazine out. So if you have any opinions, views, interesting facts or long ramblings please send them to me

Right now this is a free zine, so no payments are offered. Other than the nice warm fuzzy feeling that you'll get to see your name in print.

Send any submissions to:

Cambridge Movie News
C/o Chris DeKalb
1 McLean Place
Apt. 3
Cambridge MA
02140

Or email:

Cdkboston@earthlink.net

What I'm looking for:

Reviews.

Current or recently released films. Please include the genre and the rating, along with your thoughts about how good the film was. Anything that was in release 4-6 weeks before the publication month are fair game. In the review please have a little bit more than "it was neat", and try for about three paragraphs.

Videos and DVDs, write down a brief description of the movie, and if it's a DVD please include the special features, or lack there-of. With DVD reviews the "recent release" rule is greatly relaxed. New stuff, is nice, but there is plenty of other releases to talk about.

TV films, Internet films. Reviews of this sort are also appreciated. Please include the source (website, or network) of the broadcast.

Columns, articles. If you want to write on something long, I would love to see your work. An article will hopefully fill an entire page or more. If you want to cover a topic every month, then you're a columnist. Write a page every month and figure out a name for your wonderful new feature.

Right now I'm looking for the following columnists: Anime and Behind-the-scenes/Filmmaking. Suggestions for others are always appreciated.

Artwork of theaters and other cinema affects would also be useful.

Negative Clippings:

With the the recent release of Army of Darkness: Bootleg Edition there are now 5 releases of the movie on DVD.
They are:

First Release (Theatrical ending, few extras)
Special Edition/Limited Edition (2-discs, extras)
New Standard (original ending, few extras)
Director's Cut (original ending, extras)
Bootleg Edtion(original ending, new extras)