

DVD

What's the deal with 'Ed Wood'?

By Randy A. Salas
Star Tribune Staff Writer

It's as if infamous Hollywood screw-up Ed Wood cooked up this marketing scheme. After an 18-month delay, the \$29.99 DVD of Tim Burton's biopic about Hollywood's most eccentric B-movie director, "Ed Wood," has been, well, delayed again. But you can have it now for just \$45 to \$65 — plus shipping — judging from the latest winning bids on the Internet

auction site eBay. Buena Vista Home Entertainment originally planned to release the DVD on Aug. 13, 2002. But the disc was canceled shortly before, even though it had been manufactured and some U.S. copies had found their way overseas.

When Buena Vista rescheduled the DVD for last Tuesday, any unidentified obstacles to its release were believed to have been worked out. But in late January, it was canceled again. This time, though, copies already had been shipped to retailers, who unwittingly sold it before getting the recall notice.

Word spread quickly in Internet DVD forums. Fans of the film and eBay prospectors bolted to their local stores to snag any copies mistakenly placed on shelves.

Buena Vista has been coy about the reasons for the "Ed Wood" delay, saying through a spokesman that it had no official statement on the matter. Postponing a DVD is not uncommon, added the spokesman, who asked not to be identified. Buena Vista is merely awaiting "a more opportunistic window" to release it, he said.

While DVDs certainly do get rescheduled occasionally, it typically happens well before they've been made and shipped to stores. In-stock DVDs usually are pulled from shelves, or recalled, for a cited reason, such as a defect or because a studio's rights to produce the title have expired.

"It's not unprecedented that



Director Ed Wood, portrayed by Johnny Depp in the film "Ed Wood," was a man with a grand plan — and absolutely no clue how to execute it.

something like this has happened — although typically for DVDs already released — but this was more chaotic because the timing was bad," said Brian Lucas, a spokesman for Twin Cities-based Best Buy. "It was unfortunate that it happened while the DVD was going on the shelves."

Best Buy was one of many stores, including Borders and Blockbuster, where Internet users reported finding copies of "Ed Wood" for sale, if briefly. Lucas said it was inevitable that some Best Buy stores sold the DVD by mistake because of the late postponement.

"Our goal is to comply with re-

calls immediately, and we did the best we could under the circumstances," he said.

Whatever the reason for the recall, it doesn't appear to be due to a manufacturing defect. A copy of the DVD — procured for this write-up by a kind member of the Internet's Home Theater Forum, who bought it Wednesday at a Best Buy store in Texas — looks and plays fine.

The DVD is actually quite a dandy special edition. The 1994 movie — which stars Johnny Depp as the director who made what many consider the worst film of all time, "Plan 9 From Outer Space" — has an enhanced-widescreen

presentation and Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound. Extras are copious — an edited ensemble commentary that includes Burton and Oscar winner Martin Landau; several making-of featurettes; deleted scenes, including a hidden one; a music video, and more.

Buena Vista won't say when the DVD will come out or if its contents will change. But eBay awaits those who must have it now at prices that probably exceed what Wood spent on a day of filming.

ANOTHER LAST-MINUTE RECALL

Renowned director Ingmar Bergman and Ed Wood merit discussion on the same page only in the world's smallest film encyclopedia. But they're linked here because a Bergman DVD set also has been recalled at the last minute.

When review copies of the six-disc, extras-laden set "The Ingmar Bergman Collection" were sent out in advance, Gary Tooze of the exhaustive Web site DVD Beaver (<http://www.dvdbeaver.com>) found that two of the films — "Hour of the Wolf" and "Shame" — were misframed. Originally filmed and presented in a full-screen 1.37:1 ratio, the films were cropped for a 1.66:1 widescreen presentation on DVD.

After Tooze posted his findings on the Home Theater Forum, the Star Tribune asked MGM Home Entertainment for a response. It came at the end of the day Friday in an e-mail to the media: "MGM Home Entertainment will not be releasing the Ingmar Bergman DVD Collection on Tuesday, Feb. 10, due to transfer problems on two of the discs." It added that the corrected set, with both films properly framed, will be released on April 20.

But, as with "Ed Wood," stores already have copies of the defective set, and sales of it are inevitable. Don't bother with eBay on this one.

Call Randy A. Salas at 612-673-4542 or e-mail rasalas@startribune.com.

EXTRAS

TA-DA — IT'S ABBOTT AND COSTELLO

The movies of Bud Abbott and Lou Costello have tended to get the short end of the slapstick on DVD. With a few exceptions, little has been available, and most of that has consisted of public-domain titles with poor-quality presentations.

But that changes today with "The Best of Abbott and Costello, Volume 1" (Universal, \$24.98), a proper two-disc collection that contains eight of the great comedy duo's first nine films from the studio that made them. It begins with their co-star billing in 1940's "One Night in the Tropics," which offered a sampling of their famous "Who's on first?" routine, and then courses through their top-billed 1941 films "Buck Privates," "In the Navy," "Hold That Ghost" and "Keep 'Em Flying," and their 1942 follow-ups "Ride 'Em Cowboy," "Pardon My Sarong" and "Who Done It?"

The image quality is fine, about what one would expect from movies of this age (and better than previous DVDs). Extras are minimal — informative production notes and, except for "Pardon My Sarong," a trailer for each film.

But who needs extras when the price is so low, barely more than \$3 per flick? Those are almost 1940s prices.

The best news is that Universal already has announced the May 4 release of a second volume with eight more films and a tribute by Jerry Seinfeld.

Randy A. Salas



VIDEO BUSINESS' TOP SELLERS

1. Radio
2. Once Upon a Time in Mexico
3. Open Range
4. House of the Dead
5. Alice in Wonderland
6. Freddy vs. Jason
7. Cabin Fever
8. Pirates of the Caribbean
9. Underworld (widescreen)
10. American Wedding (unrated, widescreen)

In stores next week: "Blow-Up," "The Damned," "Death in Venice" and "Roswell" (first season),

Drivers are required to yield the right-of-way to city buses

By Karen Youso
Fixit Editor

Several times while I've been traveling in the right lane, a city bus pulling away from a curb has nearly hit my car. Don't buses have to yield to traffic like the rest of us?

No, you are required to yield to the bus. Under state law, vehicles in the right lane must yield the right-of-way to any transit bus attempting to enter that lane from a bus stop or shoulder as indicated by a flashing left-turn signal. Bus drivers, however, are trained to safely merge back into traffic, according to Bob Gibbons, a spokesman for Metro Transit.

How cloning works

How does cloning work? Would a human clone be identical to its mother?

FIXIT

To clone an animal, scientists take an unfertilized donor egg, remove its genetic information and replace it with the information from the animal to be cloned. The cell is subjected to electric shock, which causes it to start dividing, and then transferred into the womb of a surrogate mother.

But don't expect a human clone soon. Experts say that although cloning has worked with several animal species, the technology is not well understood. It's never been successfully applied to humans, and attempting to do so generally is illegal.

An article by BBC science editor Dr. David Whitehouse help explains why: "The vast majority of pregnancies involving clones have gone very badly. In most of them, the clone has died and in almost all of them the lives of the mother and clone have

been put at risk.

"In many cases, the clone grows abnormally large, often threatening to tear the womb, which can also become swollen with fluid. Almost all clone pregnancies spontaneously abort.

"Dolly the sheep, the first mammal clone, was the one success in 247 pregnancies. If a human clone is produced, the cost in human suffering and the trail of failures will be great.

"A human clone may be subject to the same physical problems as animal clones. Of the small number of animal clones that make it to term, most have severe abnormalities: malfunctioning livers, abnormal blood vessels, heart problems, underdeveloped lungs, diabetes, immune system deficiencies and possibly hidden genetic defects. Several cow clones had head deformities — none survived very long.

"On the genetic level, the clone would be 99.9 percent

identical to its parent, but it would not be a complete copy because some important genes would be contributed by the egg donor. These genes reside outside the nucleus.

"Also, the clone would be subject to different environmental factors and a different

upbringing to his/her genetic parent. This could result in a changed appearance and personality. If recent research on the human genome has taught us anything, it is that we are far more than just our genes."

— Send your questions to Fixit in

care of the Star Tribune, 425 Portland Av. S., Minneapolis, MN 55488, or call 612-673-9033, or e-mail fixit@startribune.com. Past columns are available at <http://www.startribune.com/fixit>. Sorry, Fixit cannot supply individual replies. Look for it on Wednesdays in the Home and Garden Section.

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What is generating your pain? The reason most treatments and therapies are short-term is because they only deal with the symptoms and not the cause of the pain.

The Formation of Scar Tissue

It's amazing that the major contributor to back and neck pain is often overlooked, underestimated and not treated properly. The major contributor to back and neck pain is...scar tissue

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www.pdrclinics.com

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