

DVD Select: 'Borat' is a hilarious put-on

by Robert J. Hawkins

While the "Borat - Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan" (Fox, 3 stars) arrives on DVD with five extended or deleted scenes, a tour montage and deleted footage montage - there is one scene you won't see here.

That would be the acceptance speech by Sacha Baron Cohen at the annual Golden Globes dinner not long ago.

'BORAT' - At a Roanoke, Va., rodeo, Borat mangles the National Anthem -- and the rodeo fans aren't happy about it. CNS Photo courtesy of 20th Century Fox.

Cohen managed to add a whole new layer of offensiveness atop the multilayered - like flaky layers of filo pastry - offensiveness of the movie.

I laughed so hard I almost ... well never mind.

In most eloquent terms, Cohen talked to the horrified Globes audience about the infamous nude wrestling scene with his porky producer and confessed that he might not be there that night were it not for a very old pocket of air that kept him from suffocating ... well, you had to be there.

Face it. The guy makes Sarah Silverman look like a prude and a nun.

If you haven't seen the movie you've surely figured out by now that it has something to offend everybody - and more.

Cohen portrays Borat Sagdiyev, a journalist from the culturally and socially backward Kazakhstan. OK, maybe in real life Kazakhstan isn't that backward. But how else is he going to make kiss-your-sister-the-prostitute jokes? Or something like that.

Borat and his chubby producer Azamat Bagatov (Ken Davitian) come to the United States to shoot a documentary. As they crass the country (yes, I mean crass) Borat and Azamat mix it up with the locals - drunken college misogynists, rednecked patriotic yahoos, Southern racists and the like. Like his Ali G character, Cohen murders the language to his own advantage while casting light upon the foibles of others. In other words, he lets people make themselves look stupid for your amusement.

Along the way, Borat becomes obsessed with the actress Pamela Anderson and plunges straight toward Los Angeles. Somewhere he picks up a bear, has a falling out with his producer that leads to the infamous wrestling scene and falls for an abundant black woman in Memphis (Luenell).

Oh and then it just gets crazier. And more offensive. And why are we laughing again?

ALSO THIS WEEK

"Fast Food Nation" (Fox, 2 1/2 stars) I've got to admit it, building a fictional movie around a muckraking expose on the fast-food industry is a gutsy move. And I can't say that director Richard Linklater was completely up to the task.

"Fast Food Nation" not only has a story to tell, but a point of view to get across. The inspiration is the book of the same name by Eric Schlosser, whose contention is that while fast-food burgers may taste really good they are at the end of a long and disreputable supply chain that includes illegal immigrants, unsanitary meat processing, warehoused stock animals injected with hormones and antibiotics, massive pollution streams, minimum-wage labor slaves and suburban mediocrity.

The movie follows a group of illegal immigrants from their treacherous border crossing to their jobs at a meat processing factory in Colorado. Into the same town comes Don Henderson (Greg Kinnear) a marketing executive for the Mickey's Burgers restaurant chain, here to investigate reports of fecal matter showing up in "The Big One" burgers processed at the local plant. In the local Mickey's burger joint we're introduced to the minimum-wage teens who work there and in one case, finds good reason to rebel.

The movie moves at a glacial pace and always seems on the menacing edge of tragedy. There are long and righteous scenes on the failings of fast-food society that border on tedium. It is a fictionalized account with a documentary feel.

What is unforgettable is the actual film footage of work inside a meat processing plant. It is enough to turn you into a vegetarian.

Bruce Willis, Kris Kristofferson, Avril Lavigne, Esai Morales, Wilmer Valderrama, Luis Guzman, Ethan Hawke and Patricia Arquette are among the name actors with small parts who share the spotlight with a distinguished cast of fairly unknowns.

"Confetti" (Fox, 1 star) A movie made to look like a reality TV series about three couples competing for the right to have their wedding underwritten by a bridal magazine. And it is British, so 60 percent of the jokes land flat on their back.

Also, for the kids: A new VeggieTales movie, "Moe and the Big Exit."

IT CAME FROM TV

Season one of "Sabrina, the Teenage Witch"; season one of "Hawaii Five-O"; season two of "Stargate Atlantis"

FROM THE VAULTS

"Peter Pan" (Disney, 3 stars) Disney brings back one of its most beloved animated features after extensive digital restoration. The extras include deleted songs, games, an alternate opening, Walt Disney's own words on Peter Pan, and much more.

"The Full Monty: The Fully Exposed Edition" (Fox) The beloved English movie of out-of-work blokes who fall upon an idea that would restore their self esteem, gain them some money and a few laughs. Really good stuff.

"The Revenge of the Nerds: The Atomic Wedgie Edition" (Fox) Features all four films in the geek-fest comedy underdog series.

DVD RATINGS

4 stars: Don't miss: rent it/buy it

3 stars: Worth the risk: rent it

2 stars: On the tipping point: if nothing else is available

1 star: Don't bother: wait until it's in the \$1 bin

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