

# SarZ's Media Virus

*Slightly Contagious Film Reviews For The Average Joe*

By **BRANDON SARZYNSKI**  
Staff Reporter  
BSS177@PSU.EDU

## The Ringer



**The Details:** Fox Searchlight Pictures presents a film starring Johnny Knoxville and Brian Cox, written by Ricky Blitt and directed by Barry W. Blaustein. The film has a running time of 94 minutes and is rated PG-13 for crude and sexual humor, language and some drug references.

**The Low Down:** In order to help a friend out of a bad situation Steve Barker (Johnny Knoxville) is forced into rigging the Special Olympics.

**The Dirty:** Even though this film sounds like a rip off of a South Park episode it isn't. Two words: fun... and um, yeah... Make that one word. Although this film is no contender for any type of award, it is still a fun film.

Johnny Knoxville does a great job of keeping the laughs coming, not to mention the great supporting cast. What we have here is the classic

comedy formula with some new situation specific jokes.

This is a film that shows Special Olympic athletes in a positive light. Not to mention as great comedians themselves.

I think this is the movie's strong point. It gives us an insight into the lives of the physically and mentally challenged, and it shows us this in such a way that it may actually help break down some walls for people in real life. Letting us all know that regardless of handicap we are all just people.

Some of the film does drag a bit in places, especially at the beginning of the film. But once you arrive at the meat and potatoes, the film sails along smoothly.

The film also has some issues with storyline. It does seem to follow the formula set down by just about any Adam Sandler movie.

Guy wants to help a friend or loved one, guy does something out of the ordinary to help the situation, guy falls in love with girl, guy saves the day, gets the girl, and all is happy. In other words, it's very predictable, but still enjoyable.

I recommend seeing this film; either in the theater or at home, on your couch, when it comes out on DVD. Nothing ground breaking here, just a little bit of fun humor.

Official film website: [www.foxsearchlight.com/theringer](http://www.foxsearchlight.com/theringer)



## The Family Stone



**The Details:** Fox 2000 Pictures presents a film starring Claire Danes, Diane Keaton, Sarah Jessica Parker, and Luke Wilson, written and directed by Thomas Bezucha. The film has a running time of 102 minutes and is rated PG-13 for some sexual content including dialogue, and drug references.

**The Low Down:** A man brings home his new girlfriend for Christmas to meet his family for the first time, only to find out they don't like her.

**The Dirty:** Is it over yet? How about now? Seriously, who allowed this garbage to be made, and how on earth could someone tell me this is a good movie? Maybe it is a movie that appeals strictly to the women of the world. I will never honestly know.

But for some reason everyone I mention the film to says, "Oh I heard that was a good movie." To which I quickly reply, "I think they must have been talking about kidney stones, not the Family Stone, because I would rather have those than ever watch this film again."

Not only was the story overly predictable but it was also overly unbearable. How unbearable you ask? Well it was so bad I had to get up halfway through the film and take a break from watching it. Yeah, this movie made me get up, leave the theater and go look at movie posters for about 15 minutes.

Let me tell you, that was the best part of this film. Heck the previews weren't even all that great. When I returned from my adventure to the lobby there was no need to ask what I had missed, because everything I predicted had come to fruition.

The acting was horrible, the plot even worse, and the whole setting of the film just made me contemplate suicide. In no way shape or form did this film grab my attention, make me question life or love, or do anything other than make me feel that I was stuck on a long road trip listening to elevator music. At no point is the film exciting, engaging, enticing or anything of that nature.

Overall it is a failed attempt at comedy, drama, romance, or any other genre that this film thought might be a good idea to throw in for good measure. If your significant other wants to go see this film break up with them, you'll save yourself eight bucks and an hour and forty minutes of sheer boredom. Avoid like the plague!

Official film website: [www.thefamilystonemovie.com](http://www.thefamilystonemovie.com)



## Walk the Line



**The Details:** Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation presents a film starring Joaquin Phoenix and Reese Witherspoon, written by Gill Dennis and James Mangold, based off of books by Johnny Cash, and Patrick Carr, and directed by Barry W. Blaustein. The film has a running time of 136 minutes and is rated PG-13 for some language, thematic material and depiction of drug dependency.

**The Low Down:** A retelling of music legend Johnny Cash's life, from his early days in Arkansas to his rise to fame.

**The Dirty:** The first thing that a biopic needs in order to be interesting is to follow the life of someone who was interesting, and after seeing this film, I must say, I never thought Johnny Cash's life could be so amazing. From his sad beginnings, through his midlife turmoil, and on through his second revival, Johnny Cash's life is awe inspiring. It is truly an amazing

story and it was told so perfectly that it truly deserves any awards that it may win.

The acting, the script, the directing, the cinematography, and any other aspect you can think of was damn near perfect. Joaquin Phoenix and Reese Witherspoon make an amazing showing of their talents. A true chemistry exists between them, and it is beyond enjoyable to watch. The fact that they were even able to sing the songs themselves, and sound amazing doing so, was even more of a treat. I can't lie, I thought it was a horrible idea to not use Johnny Cash's original recordings, but somehow they proved me wrong. After a while you actually start to believe that they really are Johnny Cash and June Carter.

There is hardly anything I would change about this film, although it does get slow at parts, but they are few and far between. The story is truly engaging, the acting is far above and beyond what I thought it could be, and what you end up with is just a truly beautiful piece of film work. This is one of the rare films that you can just get lost in and forget that you are watching a movie. If you can find it in theaters rush out and see it as soon as possible!

Official film website: [www.walkthelinemovie.com](http://www.walkthelinemovie.com)  
I also recommend checking out the website, it is extremely well done and entertaining.



## 2006 Golden Globes

By **BRANDON SARZYNSKI**  
Staff Reporter  
BSS177@PSU.EDU

Every year, as a pit stop to the Oscars and the Emmys, there is an award show, hosted by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, known as the Golden Globes.

The Golden Globes are viewed by most as a prediction of what will happen in March when the Academy Awards are held in Hollywood, Cali.

On Jan. 16, the 63rd annual Golden Globe awards were held in Hollywood California, with more than 45 top stars presenting the awards. The awards are not only awarded to outstanding films, but also television programs.

In the world of film, Philip Seymour Hoffman won Best Actor in a Drama for *Capote*, while Felicity Huffman won Best Actress in a Drama for *Transamerica*. Joaquin Phoenix and Reese Witherspoon walked away with Best Actor and Actress for *Walk the Line*, which also won Best Picture, Musical or Comedy.

For Best Supporting Actor and Actress in a Supporting Role the awards were given to George Clooney for *Syriana* and Rachel Weisz for *The Constant Gardener*. *Brokeback Mountain*, the controversial film about two homosexual cowboys, received awards for Best Dramatic Picture, Best Director (Ang Lee), Best Screenplay (Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana), and Best Original Song (*A Love That Will Never Grow Old*, by Gustavo Santaolalla and Bernie Taupin).

In television, *Lost* walked away with Best Dramatic Television Series while *Desperate Housewives* wound up with Best Comedy Series. Steve Carell won Best Actor in a Comedy Series for *The Office*, and Best Actress went to Mary-Louise Parker for *Weeds*.

Geena Davis received Best Performance by an Actress in a Dramatic Series for *Commander in Chief*, and Hugh Laurie received Best Actor for *House, M.D.*

The awards listed here are just a few of the awards presented, for a complete listing of annual awards, visit <http://www.hfpa.org>.

## IMDB.com's new DVD releases

Brandon Sarzynski for the Capital Times



January 24, 2006

### Flightplan

A claustrophobic, Hitchcockian thriller. A bereaved woman and her daughter are flying from Berlin to America. At 30,000 feet, the child vanishes and nobody admits she was ever on the plane.



January 24, 2006

### The Fog

A quiet seaside town is engulfed by a thick fog precisely one century after a boat sunk just off the coast under mysterious circumstances.



January 24, 2006

### Thumbsucker

Justin throws himself and everyone around him into chaos when he attempts to break free from his addiction to his thumb.



January 31, 2006

### Corpse Bride

When a shy groom practices his wedding vows in the inadvertent presence of a deceased woman. She rises from the grave assuming he has married her.



January 31, 2006

### In Her Shoes

Follows the story of Maggie, the consummate party girl and her numerous clashes with her head-on-straight sister, Rose.



## American Wasteland raises the bar

By **MATTHEW MAHONEY**  
Staff Reporter  
MLM5039@PSU.EDU

Ollies, grinds and kickflips. When any gamer hears these three words they automatically associate them with the Tony Hawk series of games.

The latest installment in this series, American Wasteland, is the finest of them all.

Unlike the Madden football series, where the newest year brings only an improvement in graphics and team rosters, American Wasteland brings vast improvements and impressive game play.

Like all Tony Hawk games this one has the classic arcade mode and create-a-skater modes, all of which are as great as the first game but improved with vast levels that are highly detailed and expanded. In addition to the classic mode is a new and improved story mode.

Story mode is one aspect of the game that is recommended to be done first. In doing the story mode all the levels get unlocked for free skate mode. Story mode is also the best place for training if this is your first attempt at the series.

Before any more highlights of this latest and greatest from Activision can be divulged a look at the roots of this series is in order.

The very first game was Tony Hawk's Pro Skater. It featured only what we now know as the classic arcade mode and had only half of the tricks. As the game developed and changed with every installment certain features became available.

All of those features, like programming in your favorite specials and combo adding points, have made it to this latest installment. Improvements include new tricks, BMX riding and the ever infamously advertised no loading times.

The addition of BMX riding is a huge augment to the game play. Not only does it add on to the number of missions that you have available but it also forces you to change your play style in order to maximize the game's potential.

Controlling the BMX is much different than skating around and it is recommended that you either start that segment of the game very early or very late.

Differences in controls aside the BMX missions are incredibly fun. As with the skating portion, if you start the BMX portion on story mode it makes it easier.

The no loading time that has been the main stay of their advertising campaign is true to every word. Once you enter free skate mode or story mode the load times disappear.

The passages between areas act as their own loading phase, but there is no pause or stoppage in game play.

The passages in between are also a free skate area. There are no regulations on how long your character can be there, what you can do there or even if you want to turn around and go back the way you came.

The no load times between areas only keeps you more and more interested and makes it nigh on impossible to break away from the game.

Customization is also the name of the game in American Wasteland. Even from the very beginning in story mode your character is forced into being customized exactly the way you want.

Everything from hair to shoes is changeable about your character. Deck customizations and extra gear like packs, hats and shades are all available selections.

Don't worry about your character locked in with a certain appearance either. Customization changes can

happen at any time in the game.

This installment in the series is also the first that supports Xbox Live in addition to PS Online. Now people can free skate together all over the world or they can work together on missions dating all the way back to the original Tony Hawk: Pro Skater.

In the end this game satisfies all types of players. If you are looking for some quick action play, this game has it.

If you are looking for hours of satisfying and enjoyable entertainment then pick up a copy of this one. The game play is smooth and easy to learn. The music in the game is great and really sets the pace. The music flows just as smooth as the graphics from one level to the next thanks to the no load time.

This game easily rates a 4.5 out of 5. The only problem with it is the repetitive nature of the classic arcade mode. In short, buy it.