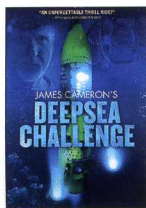


natural lead performances by non-actors, this is recommended. (T. Keogh)

James Cameron's Deepsea Challenge

★★★1/2
Millennium, 91 min., PG,
DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray/DVD
Combo: \$24.99



As director of the two highest grossing movies ever (*Titanic* and *Avatar*), James Cameron has the clout and wealth to pursue both of his dreams: exploring the ocean floor and the fantasy realms inside his head. *James Cameron's Deepsea Challenge* chronicles Cameron's record-making trip to Challenger Deep, the deepest known spot on Earth. Cameron is a

and Kaltenbrunner and her fellow climbers also speak at length during interviews. Highly recommended. (T. Keogh)

Kill the Messenger ★★★

Universal, 112 min., R, DVD:
\$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo:
\$34.98, Feb. 10



Based on the true story of an investigative reporter at the *San Jose Mercury News*, this suspenseful political thriller follows the trials and tribulations of truth-seeking whistleblower Gary Webb (Jeremy Renner), whose 1996 discovery of the CIA's covert role in arming the Nicaraguan Contras and spreading urban addiction to

crack cocaine so alarmed government officials that they made him the target of a virulent smear campaign. While working for a small California newspaper, Webb is contacted by the seductive girlfriend (Paz Vega) of a drug trafficker. She's furious that the government seized her boyfriend's property before he went to trial and, after he was acquitted, refused to give it back. She wants Webb to expose this heinous practice and, as enticement, she gives Webb a transcript of the Grand Jury testimony of a major drug smuggler (Yul Vazquez) recruited by the DEA. When Webb tracks down the drug kingpin (Andy García) in prison in Managua, he learns the truth—but it's off-the-record. As Webb pursues one unsubstantiated insinua-

lent... Ekvimishvili infuses
ching soul of old Russia deep
film's bones, the anger
olent, yet fragile
ndence in its face."

Sharkey,
les Times

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Ebiri,
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IN BLOOM

Directed by NANA EKVTIMISHVILI and SIMON GROSS

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K2: Siren of the Himalayas ★★★1/2

First Run, 75 min., not rated,
DVD: \$24.95



Filmmaker Dave Ohlson's extraordinary documentary follows a 2009 expedition to reach the peak of K2—the world's tallest mountain—in commemoration of the centennial anniversary of a 1909 attempt by Italian climbers. The contemporary international team features some of the world's most experienced climbers, including former National Geographic "Explorer of the Year" Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner. Ohlson points out that, as of 2009, only 302 people had successfully reached K2's summit (and of those, 31 died during descent). So it's no wonder that the team's efforts become increasingly difficult and deadly, especially during a final push toward a summit that seems so close, yet so far away. Ohlson is there for every step of the way, at one point even giving us a seemingly impossible viewpoint from the highest terrestrial heights. The 2009 footage is interspersed with archival photographs and narrated journal entries from the 1909 climb,

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