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Cranky and cold? Cheer up - you could be GG Allin's dad

By AL KRATINA, The Gazette February 27, 2009

February is not my favourite month. This deep into winter, cold weather combines with vitamin-D deficiency to make me both irritable and addle-brained, like Oscar the Grouch with late-stage rabies. So, in an effort to cheer myself up, I compiled a list of recently released DVDs guaranteed to raise spirits. Which I promptly saved on a laptop and left on the métro, along with three screenplays and an impressive collection of gothic pin-ups from SuicideGirls.com. Naturally, my mood has transformed from a testy funk to the sort of foulness that might coalesce into a shadow army and invade a small European principality. February blues, you have become my nemesis. And here are the tools I will use to defeat you.

His Name Was Jason (2009 - www.anchorbayentertainment.com)

Some find tension easily released through the catharsis of violent horror films. Of course, too much catharsis and you end up on grainy closed-circuit television footage carrying an assault rifle, so play it safe and watch this fun documentary on the Friday the 13th series.

The Bird with the Crystal Plumage (1970 - [www.](http://www.blue-underground.com)

[blue-underground.com](http://www.blue-underground.com)) This prototypical giallo, or pulpy Italian murder mystery, always provides an energizing adrenalin rush, as my mind deduces the types of pills director Dario Argento must have popped when he decided his stylish debut made narrative sense.

Hell on Wheels (2007 - www.indiepixfilms.com) Apparently, sports raise endorphin levels. They also seemingly raise hemlines and choler, judging from this charming, wild doc about a female roller derby team in Texas.

Epitaph (2007 - [www.](http://www.tlareleasing.com)

[tlareleasing.com](http://www.tlareleasing.com)) Nothing trumps a bad mood like love. Except for death. That beats both of them, essentially pulling out a table saw during a game of rock paper scissors. Thankfully, this spooky, beautiful South Korean film about a haunted hospital contains a little bit of love and a whole lot of death.

Baccano! (2009 - [www.](http://www.funimation.com)

[funimation.com](http://www.funimation.com)) If you're unsure as to which film genres might raise your spirits, why not try all of them? This Japanese anime blends mob movies, alchemy and steampunk in a delirious mix of pulp fiction styles, all swirling together like Froot Loops soaked in absinthe.

The Whole Shootin' Match (1978 - www.watchmakerfilms.com)

Apparently, this independent film about two blue-collar Texans and their endless scheming inspired Robert Redford to create the Sundance Film Institute. Sadly, its countless imitations introduced the phrase "lovable loser" into the same film-review lexicon that includes "edge-of-your-seat thrill ride" and "lush period piece."

The New Americans (2003 - www.facets.org) In following the lives of various immigrants, this documentary explores the American experience from an outsider's perspective. Use it as an uplifting reminder of the beauty of the American dream, provided you stop the disc before the dream turns into a nightmare of packing meat in Kansas.

The Best of GG Allin and the Murder Junkies (2009 - www.mvdb2b.com) I'm invariably cheered by good music. Too bad the late, legendary punk icon GG Allin didn't make any. Instead, he smeared himself in mess during visual representations of Tourette's syndrome. This collection of live performances is proof that the corporation running Marilyn Manson didn't invent shock rock; they just got it on MTV.

Otto; or, Up with Dead People (2008 - www.strandreleasing.com)

If all else fails, just make yourself more miserable, by watching this moody, symbolic and occasionally explicit film from Canadian director Bruce LaBruce. Dubbed the first "gay zombie movie," it's as dark, distressing and blackly humorous as a poetry reading in a mental asylum. Or a particularly depressing Suicide Girls pin-up.

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