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Godzilla never gets old

The special effects may be old fashioned, but they not only look magnificent on the Criterion Collection two-platter 4K Blu-ray release of the 1989 Toho production, **Godzilla vs. Biollante** (UPC#715515311014, \$50), they are so superbly executed that the film is as delightful and entertaining as any movie with more sophisticated effects. The film's craftsmanship is outstanding. The cameras placements and lenses are always ideally chosen to convey the heft and realism of the models, puppets and lumbering rubber suits, and aided by manipulated film speeds, the editing lingers just long enough to convey each shot before moving on to the next. Earlier Godzilla movies were sometimes bogged down by repetitive sequences and images, but **Biollante**, directed by Kazuki Omori, never is. From its beginning to its conclusion, the 104-minute film is brisk and thrilling.

Using a piece of the monster's flesh that was dislodged in battle, a scientist merges Godzilla's DNA with a plant, hoping to develop a defense against the monster, but instead, the plant gets a mind of its own, and enough mobility to threaten mankind or, at least, the island of Japan. Spies working for a Middle Eastern government are also trying to grab the formula, leading to several gun battles, fights and chases. Meanwhile, Godzilla is psychically aroused by the plant's presence, and goes on a rampage. There is also a splendid third character, a remote controlled **Thunderbirds**-style flying weapon that not only holds missiles, but exposes a diamond-based mirror that flashes Godzilla's atomic breath right back at him. At the same time, various earnest humans, including a young woman with psychic powers of her own, react to what is happening and plan the tactics of each confrontation between the human equipment and the monsters. The environmental symbolism of the monster dichotomy and human meddling is present, but not browbeating. Aided by the subliminal satisfactions that the 4K processing and the flawless image transfer provide, the film places you in the middle of battling toys and no matter how old you are or how sophisticated your tastes may be, you never want to leave the video playground.

Instead, you just want to turn up the sound. The 5.0-channel DTS audio track has wonderful separation effects. Even when the common Godzilla musical themes—which do kick in by themselves at the right moments—pop up instead with Eighties electronic disco variations, the audio is so pure and crisp that you don't mind in the least. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. Although the 4K presentation rouses the child within you regardless of how deeply buried that child may be, even the image on the standard Blu-ray included in the set looks fantastic and is transporting. The film is in Japanese with optional English subtitles (interestingly, the pronoun used to identify Godzilla in the translation is 'it' rather than 'him').

Cult film expert Samm Deighan provides an excellent commentary track on both platters, going over the legacies of the cast and crew but concentrating primarily on the film's production ("Among diehard Godzilla fans, I think there is a lot of well deserved recognition, and even reverence, for the actors who play Godzilla. It is extremely challenging work to move around in these heavy suits."), its meanings and its place in the arcs of Godzilla films. Not only does she compare it to a wide range of other features, such as the 1986 musical remake of **Little Shop of Horrors** (which definitely crosses one's mind as one is watching Biollante in action), but the specific allusions included in the film to earlier Godzilla iterations and actions. "If you're a passionate Godzilla fan, it's lovely to recognize so many of these nods to the series as a whole, and I do think this was made to please existing Godzilla fans, as well as attracting a newer, younger audience."

The film starts up where it left off on both platters if playback is terminated, but the supplements on the standard Blu-ray do not. They include a terrific 49-minute Japanese production documentary that features deleted scenes and a lot of behind-the-scenes footage, such as the delineation of when Godzilla is a guy in a suit and when he is animatronic, how elaborate the construction is of the buildings he knocks over and so on ("The crewmembers running off-screen with Biollante was a spectacle in itself."); a lovely 3-minute piece looking at some of the developmental models for Biollante and for the flying battle craft; 7 minutes of really nice unused silent effects footage; five marvelous Japanese TV commercials promoting the film and toy giveaways; and seven Japanese trailers.

"I guess it's time for my generation to step aside," a character who has been overseeing the fight against the monster tells a younger companion at one point near the end of **Godzilla vs. Biollante**. "From now on, it's up to you guys." Yes, you can't keep making the same Godzilla movies over and over with different

monsters, and so a fresh generation of filmmakers came up with fresh ways to revisit the thrills. Hideaki Anno and Shinji Higuchi's unique 2016 Godzilla origin tale set in contemporary times, **Shin Godzilla**, is available on Blu-ray from Funimation Entertainment (UPC#704400103889, \$20).

Running a breathless 120 minutes, the film is about the Japanese government and bureaucracy coping with the attack on Tokyo of a fire-breathing lizard monster that has never been seen before (a scientist gives him the English name, 'Godzilla,' but the Japanese adapt it as 'Gojira'), and the heart of the film is not its fantasy elements, but its examination of political dynamics during a crisis. That is not to say that there aren't a plethora of wonderful effects. The model work is outstanding. It never doesn't look like a genuine, modern city, even as the buildings topple. Much of it is shot in a found footage/news broadcast/video monitor manner reminiscent of **Cloverfield**, where you just get glimpses of what is going on, and it is enthralling. The politicians and bureaucrats argue, speculate, shirk from committing to what ought to be done, and make important decisions on the fly as a plan is gradually researched and hammered out (while the Americans are breathing down their necks, just salivating over the opportunity to nuke the monster in the middle of Tokyo). It is only the creature effects that come up short, because they are still stuck in the rubber suited past while the rest of the film feels so advanced. The monster is literally out of place, but because everything else works so well, most viewers will not let that imperfection spoil the otherwise penetrating and rousing entertainment.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The image is sharp and colors are fresh. Even scenes set in the dark are clearly delineated. The Dolby Atmos sound is not overly forceful, but sustains a worthwhile dimensionality. The film is in Japanese with optional English subtitles, and that is how we preferred watching it, even though the constant character chatter means that the subtitles are ever present, as are additional subtitles at the top the screen, identifying the government divisions and personnel participating in each scene. Others, however, may want to revert to the alternate English language track, which isn't bad, even though the film's verisimilitude is compromised and you miss the transitions where the characters are actually speaking English in the original version. Also featured is a 33-minute table discussion and appreciation of the film (in English) by Funimation personnel, who speak enthusiastically about the monster design innovations in the film (which we had found wanting) and discuss their favorite aspects of the entire Godzilla series.

4K Kiss

In case you've forgotten how much fun Renny Harlin's 1996 New Line Cinema action thriller, **The Long Kiss Goodnight**, could be, now is a great time to find out with the Warner Bros. Arrow Video two-platter 4K Blu-ray release (UPC#760137172888, \$50). A blend of fantastical action scenes, enjoyable performances and slap-your-knee one-liners, the 4K image and Dolby Atmos sound provide the ideal delivery method for the film's engagingly ridiculous entertainments. While the sound pounds on you from every which way, the sharp, smooth, precisely colored image pulls you into every carefully staged and edited moment so that you feel both the delight and the excitement of each action gag and stunt. And to top it all off, it's a Christmas movie. Featuring Samuel L. Jackson and Brian Cox, who were great supporting stars in the Nineties but are outright legends today, the film isn't just like unwrapping a present, it is like Santa Claus, full of good cheer, leaping out at you from the fireplace.

Geena Davis, having parlayed her Oscar win into a moment in the winter sun as a action star, plays a housewife busily preparing for Christmas with her family after awakening on a beach a decade earlier pregnant and without memories. She married a nice guy, because who wouldn't marry Geena Davis, regardless—even the director did—and settled into a small Pennsylvania town, having hired an inexpensive private detective, played by Jackson, to find out who she really is. And then, with the holidays fast approaching, her past shows up right before Jackson's character does, and some knocking around begins to dislodge the soot from her chimney. Turns out she's an expert assassin. Her former boss, attempting to restore his agency's budget, is planning a phony terrorist attack and her resurrected interference is now the only flaw in the diabolical plan. Well, there are plenty of other flaws, but who has time to notice them? Running 120 minutes, the film speeds along with equal amounts of action and wit, the wit holding your attention while the action massages your home theater equipment in all the right ways.

Kiss (Continued)

G.D. Spradlin gets to play the president for a couple of scenes, and David Morse also co-stars. The film may be spoofing Hollywood, action movies, Americana, and its even own existence (facetiousness aside, the film did effectively anticipate 9/11 as only Hollywood screenwriters could), but it manages the teetering balance between keeping a viewer engaged and pushing to the precipitous edge of that engagement, and that is why the precision of the 4K delivery makes that edge all the more sheer. You forget everything except that you're having a great time. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. There are optional English subtitles, a trailer and more than three hundred photos and images of memorabilia in still frame.

Film expert Walter Chaw supplies a commentary, speaking extensively about the talents and experiences of the cast and the crew, while also going over the film's production history and boxoffice disappointment, the complete history of the collaboration between Harlin and Davis, and the film's entertainment dynamics—he points out in one instance how the film's road movie structure and the by-play between Davis and Jackson makes it reminiscent of *It Happened One Night*. He also goes into detail about how, when the film was made, the concept of a female action hero was still somewhat exotic and he describes Harlin's concepts for a sequel, which he hopes will still manifest some day.

A second track features film enthusiasts Joshua Conkel and Drusilla Adeline in a chatty track that combines trivia about the film with insights on how the movie is perceived today (to a certain generation, the Nineties are viewed with the same sense of tranquility that a previous generation viewed the Fifties), how it builds on various action tropes, its narrative dynamics and the appeal of the stars. "This movie is such a very interesting, like, marker for [Jackson's] career and Geena Davis's career, because this is 2 years after *Pulp Fiction*. This is his second major starring role post *Pulp Fiction*, with *A Time to Kill*, and he wouldn't have his first truly lead starring role until right after this, with *187*. This was like the beginning of 'Sam Jackson, Matinee Idol' and the end of 'Geena Davis, Screen Icon,' which is kind of a beautiful ships-in-the-night moment, because I'm glad they got to, like, have such a great, fun movie, that's like truly on the back of the two of them the entire time, but it's also insane because Samuel L. Jackson is 8 years older than Geena Davis, and he's been working well before her and has continued to have a very large, massive career significantly past, and it's really disappointing. I mean she's cited her drop off following this movie mixed with the reception of *Cutthroat Island*, but also with her turning forty. She was thirty-six when this movie was made." "Yeah, that's a very real thing for women."

The second platter is a standard Blu-ray containing a stocking's worth of additional features. Of greatest interest are the 3 minutes of alternate action sequences for two scenes. If you thought the filmmakers were testing the limit before, you will see in both segments how they had actually gone over the edge and decided to pull back. The stunts are fantastic, but yeah, the audience would never have bought them. For the BD, however, they are the perfect Boxing Day present, and one, where Davis does a double Axel on ice skates over the hood of a car while shooting the driver and passenger, will be lodged in your memory no matter how many times you get hit on your head.

Also featured are 8 minutes of great behind-the-scenes footage of the stars doing various stunts; a 6-minute promotional featurette; 6 minutes of promotional interviews with Harlin and the stars; a 12-minute talk by make-up man Gordon J. Smith, who goes into interesting details about the challenges of prosthetic enhancements and matching stunt doubles to stars, and speaks with some bitterness about not being recognized for his contributions to the technology; a good 9-minute interview with stuntman Steve Davidson, who deconstructs quite a few of the film's action gags; a 16-minute interview with Yvonne Zima, now grown up, who plays Davis's young daughter in the film, sharing her memories about the shoot and working with Davis; and three thematic explorations of the film that run 72 minutes in total, offering a multitude of arguments, some a great deal more engaging than others, as to why the film should be taken seriously as treatise on the depiction of women in modern Hollywood action features.

Corneau-copia

StudioCanal and Radiance Films have released three terrific French crime films directed by Alain Corneau on Blu-ray, ***Hardboiled: Three Pulp Thrillers by Alain Corneau*** (UPC#760137174455, \$70). Each film comes on a separate platter, and all three are in French with optional English subtitles.

Running 136 minutes, *Choice of Arms*, also known as *Le Choix des Armes*, has a wonderful, linear narrative, supported by an all-star cast, that is utterly captivating from beginning to end. Yves Montand is a retired gangster who owns a horse farm with his wife, played by Catherine Deneuve, whom he dotes upon. Gérard Depardieu is a not entirely bright but combustible escaped convict who, through a series of very logical but tragic occurrences, ends up crossing paths with them and destroying their lives. Despite the frustration in seeing a greater perspective on the action than the individual characters can see, the 1981 film is continually thrilling and engaging, moving from one briskly paced sequence to the next, supported by a fantastic jazz score from Philippe Sarde, performed by Ron Carter (you also get a snippet of Led Zeppelin at one point, which is rare to come across in any film). If the movie's joys seem to unravel in the third act, even if you love the actors, such are the consequences of criminal behavior, but it is ultimately redeemed by an unexpectedly perfect ending, one that, like Sarde's music, lingers with you well after the film concludes, and definitely invites you back for repeated viewings.

The performances are outstanding—Jean Rougerie, Gérard Lanvin, Jean-Claude Dauphin, Christian Marquand and Michel Galabru are also featured—and the film is exquisite from every perspective. The two-channel Dolby stereo sound, one of France's first, has smooth tones and an enchanting dimensionality. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and the transfer is spotless, with accurate, vivid fleshtones that enable you to savor the close-ups Corneau shares of each star. Along with a trailer, there is a basic 3-minute introduction, a good 22-minute promotional featurette with lots of behind-the-scenes footage and interviews, an additional 18 minutes of interviews with Corneau and the cast from the set (Deneuve has

a very interesting reflection on getting to know the other members of the cast and the crew, and all three stars get into an elaborate discussion as only the French could about their masculine and feminine sides), and a very nice 24-minute profile of Montand.

Montand also stars in *Police Python 357* from 1975, a clever remake of ***The Big Clock*** that is also reminiscent of ***Infernal Affairs*** and ***The Departed***. He plays a quick shooting police detective (a Python is a French version of a Magnum—the film opens with Montand's character making his own bullets) who falls in love with a photographer played by Stefania Sandrelli. Sandrelli's character, however, is in a secret relationship with his boss, played by François Périer, and when she breaks it off, the boss murders her in a fit of rage. Périer's character is aware of the other lover but does not know who he is, and presses Montand's character to find him in order to blame the murder on him. Montand's character does not know who the first lover is, but is searching for him because he knows the lover is the murderer. While that part of the 126-minute film is going on, the movie is spellbinding. The final act, however, gets a bit ridiculous in ways that are nevertheless best left to be discovered, although basically, Montand's character turns into self-pitying mush for a while, until he finally snaps out of it at the very end for a spectacular action sequence. On the whole, the film is still reasonably satisfying, particularly if one looks at its romanticism as a representative French component, but it lacks the operatic perfection that *Choice of Arms* achieves.

Simone Signoret also has a significant part, as Périer's invalid wife. The presentation has an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1. The image has a sort of gritty tone, but the transfer is solid and colors are fresh. The monophonic sound is strong, and there is a transfixing musical score by Georges Delerue. Along with a trailer, there is a great 6-minute collection of interviews with Corneau during the production and an interesting 15-minute overview of all three films and the popularity of hardboiled detective fiction in France after the war.

Film historian Mike White provides a workable commentary track, reacting to the film as it advances (he also has problems with the last act), going over the details of the other adaptations of the story and comparing them to the film at hand, and talking about the careers of the cast and the crew.

The first and most famous publishing line of imported crime fiction that appeared in France after the war was an imprint known as 'Série Noire,' and *Série Noire* is the venerable title Corneau gave to his 1979 adaptation of one such book, the Jim Thompson novel, *A Hell of a Woman*. A blend of bleak nihilism and wild humor, Patrick Dewaere delivers an exhausting, full-throttle performance from the first frame to the last. It is one of the most remarkable performances in the history of cinema. He is in every scene of the 115-minute film and he is in high gear the entire time, not just talking to himself when no one else is around, but dancing, play acting, banging himself and practicing his sorrowful boxing skills. It is the comedic nature of his character's stupidity that prevents him from seeming shrill and irritating, even though he never lets up. He plays a hapless and seedy door-to-door salesman, crossing paths during one call with a teenage girl, played by Marie Trintignant (just a few years later, she would become the near-middle aged eponymous heroine of Claude Chabrol's *Betty*), who wants him to kill her aunt and take the aunt's squirreled away cash. He sets up an elaborate murder plot and amazingly, it works. His estranged wife, played by Myriam Boyer, subsequently shows up, and he is suddenly flush with both wealth and women, until it all fizzles. Bernard Blier plays his sleazy boss. The film will either seem enormously depressing or funny as all get out (there is one genuine laugh aloud moment), or both, but it is definitely a unique creation, showcasing an amazingly talented actor who holds nothing back (in more than one scene, his character physically harms himself on purpose) for the sake of his art.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1. Even more so than *Police Python 357*, the setting is dreary and grungy, and the cinematography matches it, although the transfer is clearly sharp and accurate. The monophonic sound is in decent shape and the musical score is made up of terrific French pop tunes, emanating from the radio and so on. There is a fascinating 53-minute retrospective documentary about making the film and accommodating Dewaere's impulses; intercut 2002 interviews with Corneau ("Real violence is raw and it's not interesting on film. It's animalistic and has no expression. But someone as sweet as Patrick can show violence as suffering.") and Trintignant running a total of 29 minutes; 11 minutes of promotional interviews shot in Cannes with Corneau and the stars; and an excellent 30-minute summary of Thompson's career and the films that were spawned from his work.

One of the best adaptations of Thompson's writing, ***The Grifters***, was directed by Stephen Frears in 1990 and has been released as a two-platter 4K Blu-ray by Miramax Films, Paramount and The Criterion Collection (UPC#715515307819, \$50). John Cusack stars as a small time con artist working simple scams in modern day Los Angeles, Annette Bening is his girlfriend, who is pressuring him into trying something grander, and Anjelica Huston is his mother, who stops by after a long absence, much to the displeasure of Bening's character. Running 111 minutes, the film isn't really about confidence scams—although the viewer is treated to several during the course of the film—but rather about characters who live on the edge of the law and how different their lifestyles and choices are from the rest of us. The performances are marvelous and the film's blend of crime and dangerous personalities is pretty much irresistible, even as the fates of the characters begin to disintegrate.

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We reviewed a Miramax DVD in Apr 03, which looked fine, but the Blu-rays are much nicer, especially when it comes to Elmer Bernstein's fantastic musical score. The two-channel DTS track on the standard BD included in the set sounds sharp and finely detailed, while the delivery on the 4K presentation has an even smoother and more forceful presence. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1, the picture is nicer on the 4K presentation as well. The colors are a little darker and blander than on the standard Blu-ray, but the image is substantially less grainy and its solidity is a great deal more satisfying. The commentary that appeared on the DVD featuring Frears, Cusack, Huston and screenwriter Donald Westlake has been carried over on both platters. Additionally, the standard platter has a trailer, an 8-minute piece on Thompson and a 16-minute retrospective documentary, all of which also appeared on the DVD, along with a fresh and very thoughtful 20-minute interview with Bening and 75 minutes of retrospective interviews with Frears and other members of the production crew. Another advantage of the special features is that you get to bask for another couple of hours in Bernstein's music. On both platters, the film starts up where it left off if playback is terminated, but on the standard BD, the special features do not.

Intelligent thrill ride

A serial killer who randomly rear ends his victims on isolated streets and then stabs them when they get out of their cars makes the mistake of trying to kill a gangster. Wounded, the gangster survives, and a cop who is starting to suspect the killer's presence behind several murders pieces together what happened, forming an uneasy bond with the gangster in the marvelous 2019 Korean crime thriller, **The Gangster The Cop The Devil**, a Well Go USA Entertainment Blu-ray (UPC#810348031280, \$30). Written and directed by Won Tae Lee, the narrative is continually clever and surprising, while also exploring just exactly how much morality, if any, separates each of the three characters. The performances are wonderful and the action is wild, frantic and exhilarating. When a rival group attempts to assassinate the gangster (for good reason, he killed their boss), it is just he and the cop holding off and incapacitating about two-dozen attackers. Running 110 minutes, the film begins with the high expectations presented by its title, and it never disappoints, taking the viewer on an intelligent but fully visceral thrill ride that few crime films succeed in delivering so effectively.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The film's colors are slick and evocative, and the transfer is solidly delivered. The 5.1-channel DTS sound is terrific, accentuating Young Uk Jo's pulsating musical score and adding to the general tension and excitement of the film at every turn. The movie is in Korean with optional English subtitles and comes with three trailers and a 4-minute promotional featurette.

Masterful adventure

The indelible image of Claudette Colbert heaving a grenade at her attackers is just one of the many joyful pleasures from the superbly crafted 1952 British adventure film, produced by the Rank Organization and distributed by United Artists, **Outpost in Maylay**, an Amazon MGM Blu-ray release (UPC#840418317389, \$20). Jack Hawkins is the owner of a rubber plantation in what we now call Kuala Lumpur, and Colbert is his wife, coping with the nationalist fighters they refer to as 'bandits' besieging their estate. Fortunately, the local British military establishment is there to help (at one point, Hawkins's character stops by to borrow a machine gun for his veranda). Directed by Ken Annakin, it may be true that neither Hawkins nor Colbert ever left Pinewood Studios, not to mention cinematographer Geoffrey Unsworth, but the extensive location footage, with an elaborate use of doubles, is masterfully blended with the studio footage, and Albert Whitlock was among the special effects technicians making the explosions and fires look much bigger than they probably were. Running 88 minutes, there is a reasonably decent romance of reconciliation between the two leads, an effectively detailed look at how a rubber plantation operates and what life is like there and in the local population center, and there is action galore, right down to a wonderful sequence in which a mongoose takes on a cobra, protecting the couple's son, who is hanging for dear life from a pipe running to a toilet.

Although the film may be celebrating British imperialism, it is everything you could wish for in matinee escapism, and that goes double for the gorgeous, squared full screen black-and-white Blu-ray. The image is crisp and spotless, with smooth, vivid contrasts, and the monophonic sound is solidly delivered. There are optional English subtitles.

Nice Guys finishes in 4K

An ideal candidate for a 4K presentation, Shane Black's 2016 **The Nice Guys** has a smooth glossy picture and an energetic 5.1-channel DTS soundtrack that enhances both the action and the comedy on the Warner Bros. 4K UltraHD Blu-ray release (UPC#840418321621, \$25). Set satirically in 1979 Los Angeles, Ryan Gosling and Russell Crowe are private detectives who team up, after beating on each other a little, to locate a missing witness to the murder of a porn actress. Shane's greatest embellishment to the film is the casting of Angourie Rice as the teenage daughter of Gosling's widowed character. Not only does she provide the ideal counterpoint to the two similarly dolty men, but she supplies a refreshing perspective to the entire 116-minute film, which is otherwise embroiled in the expected seedy mayhem of hired killers and porn producers. The action scenes are inventive and comical (Gosling's character and a killer played by Keith David are battling near the edge of a hotel penthouse and both go flying over the railing—David

goes splat on the cement while Gosling simultaneously splashes into the hotel's pool), and the smooth crispness of the image and sound sharpen every amusing retort (or, in the case of Rice, grimace). The story could have used a couple of more rewrites to tighten everything together, sure, but even as it stands, the film is a great deal of fun, the performances are gung-ho (Gosling channels Lou Costello for one inebriated sequence) and while the characters may have difficulty hitting the targets they are aiming at, the disc is sure-fire entertainment.

Kim Basinger co-stars. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. There are optional English subtitles and two adequate promotional featurettes running a total of 12 minutes.

And an Oscar goes to...

Although he painted himself into a corner and couldn't get out, writer/director Jesse Eisenberg's **A Real Pain**, a Searchlight Pictures Blu-ray (UPC#043396641914, \$41), is still so wonderfully entertaining, funny and touching that he pretty much gets a free pass for the movie's shortcomings. Eisenberg and Oscar-winner Kieran Culkin star as cousins—one introverted and the other extroverted—who go on a week's tour together to Poland after the passing of their mutual grandmother, who had been through the Holocaust. It is a small tour group—an unrecognizable Jennifer Grey is one of the co-stars—and all of them bond to some extent as the tour advances, but of course the primary focus of the 90-minute feature is upon the relationship between the two cousins and what each one brings out in the other. We have pointed out in the past how incredible Culkin's comedic timing can be, and Eisenberg gives him a fantastic amount of terrific material to utilize his unique skills. The film has many laugh aloud moments, and that is enough to validate its entertainment. Culkin's character, however, had undergone a nervous breakdown before the start of the story, and Eisenberg just chooses to end with him undergoing another one, and his own character disengaging again from caring about it. Technically, it concludes the film, but it is a shame nobody could come up with something that matched the inventive satisfaction the rest of the film provides.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The color transfer is bright and the image is sharp. The 5.1-channel DTS sound has a workable dimensionality but no showy moments. There is an audio track that describes the action ("At the top, they climb a ladder. On the roof smoking the joint, David sits on a low wall and exhales as he gazes up at the night sky. Wearing a scarf as a headband, Benji stares off."), alternate French, Spanish, and German audio tracks, twelve subtitled options including English, and a 20-minute promotional documentary with Eisenberg explaining what parts of the story are based upon his own family and experiences, how Culkin's improvisations improved the impact of the film substantially, and his insightful recollections of the individual locations where he was shooting.

Riegart rules

Peter Riegiert never gave a bad performance, but he was never better than he was in Joan Micklin Silver's 1988 Warner Bros. romantic comedy, **Crossing Delancey**, which has been released as a two-platter 4K Blu-ray by Warner Bros. Home Entertainment and The Criterion Collection (UPC#715515309417, \$50). His timing is perfect, his cadence is perfect, his inflections are perfect, his stance is perfect, his movements are perfect and his expressions are perfect. Amy Irving, who gives a fine performance as well, is the centerpiece of the film, a bookstore clerk who has a contemporary Manhattan life (even the size of her apartment is believable, because it is rent controlled) mostly anchored to the store and its literary soirees. Jeroen Krabbé is an established author who is putting the moves on her, and she is flattered by the attention. But her grandmother, played by Reizl Bozyk, who lives in a much older and ethnic Manhattan neighborhood, sets her up with the owner of a local pickle store, played by Riegiert, and the 97-minute film is about how the two click with one another after the inevitable starts and stops endemic to Manhattan traffic. Sylvia Miles plays a matchmaker. The film has the atmosphere of a sophisticated New Yorker cartoon, and would be alienating to those who are apprehensive about living in the big city, but Riegiert sells the charms of adult romance so well that he melts the hearts of even the most resistant viewers. The film is a delight by any measure.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and has a natural softness that is otherwise smooth and accurately colored, although the 4K image is darker than the standard Blu-ray platter included in the set. While the standard BD looks a bit grainier as a result, the brighter hues and fleshtones add to a viewer's subliminal response to the faces of the actors in key scenes, and is ultimately more uplifting. On both, there is a very basic stereo mix that does wonders with Serge Prokofiev's *Lieutenant Kijé Suite* when Silver applies it at a couple of appropriate moments. There are optional English subtitles. On both platters, the film starts where it left off if playback is terminated, but the special features on the standard BD player do not. Included in the features are a trailer; a really good 23-minute audio-only talk by Silver from 1988 after a screening of the film in which she goes over how the movie was gestated, talks frankly about how the studios believe that Jewish material is not marketable, and describes the serendipity of casting; and a terrific 30-minute collection of intercut talks with Irving, Riegiert ("I've never been more propositioned in my life, from that character.") and screenwriter Susan Sandler, in which they all talk about working with Silver, her approach to making the film, and how ideal it was to shoot on location. Also, reading between the lines: It was Irving's connection to Steven Spielberg that got the film made.

Gene Hackman thrillers

The late Gene Hackman stars in Arthur Penn's 1975 Sunbelt noir from Warner Bros., **Night Moves**, a film whose reputation has grown over the years to the point where it has now entered the Criterion Collection as a two-platter 4K Blu-ray (UPC#715515311212, \$50). Hackman plays a private investigator in Los Angeles, hired to find a runaway teenage girl. He tracks her to the Florida Keys and becomes involved with the couple who are looking after her. Then a dead body shows up in the water. Quite memorably, Melanie Griffith plays the runaway. James Woods, Jennifer Warren, Susan Clark and Kenneth Mars co-star. In terms of timing and logic, the story sort of falls apart if you examine it too closely, but its character portraits keep the viewer engaged, and none more so than Hackman's, whose character is learning about himself as much as he is piecing together what is happening. It is a wonderful, rich performance and is sufficient to keep a viewer entranced with the 100-minute film's mysteries and discoveries from beginning to end.

The film opens at the twilight of dawn, with Hackman driving a car through the streets of L.A., and on the standard Blu-ray platter included in the set, you vividly feel that gradual encroachment of the sunlight, delineating every color. On the 4K presentation, however, everything is just grey, and it sort of stays grey throughout the film, from the fleshtones to anything not shot in the brightest sunlight. The tradeoff is that the image on the standard BD looks grainy and slightly soft, as did the previous Warner Blu-ray we reviewed in Nov 17, while the picture on the 4K image is solid and sharper. Still, the 4K's image is clearly not what cinematographer Bruce Surtees intended, and it is an irritation that detracts from the performances and their attendant pleasures. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The monophonic sound is strong and there is an appealing jazz score by Michael Small.

Matthew Asprey Gear wrote a book about the making of the film, and shares his extensive research on the production, the novelist and screenwriter Alan Sharp, Penn (whose instinct would have created a better ending if he had been allowed to pursue it) and the cast in an insightful commentary track on both platters, where he also talks about everything from Travis McGee to the enthusiasm for ambiguous endings in the Seventies. In addition to the movie's detailed history, he also provides a deft analysis of its components ("One of the film's most compelling aspects is its complex female characters. None of the three central women conform neatly to generic conventions, and much of the drama unfolds as [Hackman's character] struggles to understand each of them."). While he goes over the blossoming of detective movies in the Seventies that were clearly influenced by detective movies from the Forties, he somehow leaves out **The Late Show** (...and **The Man with Bogart's Face**, although that is more understandable), but it is a comprehensive and informative talk.

The Blu-ray platter holds the trailer and 9-minute production featurette that appeared on Warner's previous BD, along with a thoughtful 19-minute promotional interview from 1975 with Penn; a 5-minute excerpt from a longer talk with Penn from 1995 in which he specifically talks about the film as a transitional point in his life; and a 17-minute audio-only talk from 2024 about the film from Warren, explaining what attracted her to the character, recalling her thoughts about her co-workers, describing the physical challenges of the part (she had some work underwater that she did rather than a stunt double because the double chickened out), and sharing her thoughts about the film's marketing.

Hackman teamed up with Penn again a decade later to make an entertaining and satisfying action drama that has not tickled the retro-critical fancy the way that **Night Moves** has and was never mentioned in any of the numerous obituaries for Hackman that we read or saw on the TV, the 1985 Warner Bros. production, **Target**, a Paramount Kino Lorber Kino Studio Classics Blu-ray (UPC#738329266127, \$25). Ideally cast, Hackman plays a hardware store manager and Matt Dillon is his post-teenage son, who has eschewed college to become a mechanic. Gale Hunnicutt plays the wife and mother, who leaves on an organized tour to Europe and hopes that her time away will give the father and son an opportunity to bond. Instead, she is kidnapped, and Dillon's character discovers that his father has substantially more in his past and his skill set than he has let on. Unlike **Night Moves**, the film does not have the advantage of Dede Allen's editing, and some of the storytelling is sloppy—at the end, a minor hero is killed but the main characters pass him by without checking on him. Nevertheless, what is wonderful about the movie is that the story does play out as a typical and dependable espionage thriller—indeed, the actor cast as the villain has appeared as such so often you spot him as soon as his name appears in the credits—while the emotional ride between Hackman and Dillon's characters, in the face of substantial stress and more than a little mistrust, is a unique, masterfully performed (Dillon steps up his game in Hackman's presence) and surprisingly rich dramatic exchange that extends throughout the 117-minute feature. The normality and essential underlying love of their characters has a realism that is uncommon in drama. Perhaps critics want to see characters sink lower and darker than the characters in the film need or want to go (it has been suggested that the movie would be better if Dillon's character had killed somebody), but for anyone who just wants to sit back and enjoy a film that has both excitement and substance—and, not to mention, great movie star appeal—the film completely fills the bill.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1. You really don't want to watch it after **Night Moves**—watching it first is better—because while the colors and fleshtones are very accurate, the image is soft at times and is speckled here and there, as well. There is a 5.1-channel DTS soundtrack, but the directional mix is rudimentary and doesn't add all that much to the entertainment. There are optional English subtitles and a trailer. Additionally, there is a commentary track featuring film experts Bryan Reesman and Max Evry, who share plenty of research about the production and the backgrounds of the cast and the crew. They often speak disparagingly about the film itself and point out its weaknesses and inconsistencies, and they also ponder how far Penn has fallen from grace over the years. On the whole, however, the talk is filled with informative backgrounds and enlightening details. The pair also mention something that Gear never discloses—Penn shot **Night Moves** in 1973, but then waited until Griffith became of age a year later before recording her nude scenes (we always assumed it was a body double, but apparently it wasn't).

A pair of Chang action films

The ensemble cast who were first gathered in Cheh Chang's *The Five Venoms* (Jan 22) for Shaw Bros., Meng Lo, Philip Kwok, Sheng Chiang, Feng Lu and Chien Sun, are re-united in two more Chang Shaw Bros. features combined on a single Blu-ray platter by Celestial Pictures and Eureka!, **The Daredevils & Ode to Gallantry Two Venom Mob Films** (UPC#760137174233, \$40). The actors play different characters in each movie, but the films were cashing in on their collective popularity. Both films are letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The picture transfers are impeccable, with sharp details, bright hues and accurate fleshtones. Both have strong monophonic audio tracks and both are in Mandarin with optional English subtitles. Also featured is a very good 20-minute overview of the films, the cast and how the features were attempting to fill the gap left by the death of Bruce Lee, before Jackie Chan's comedic athleticism took over the market.

Indeed, the 1979 *The Daredevils* anticipates Chan's style. A young man who seeks revenge after an army unit assassinates his father enlists the help of several street acrobats. The film is set in the early Twentieth Century, although the one automobile that appears does not seem to belong in the same time frame as the rest of the film. No matter. There are plenty of guns, and Chang never shies away from depicting how useless kung fu is against them, but when the villains do not have immediate access to them, the heroes do plenty of damage kicking and punching their way through fights. Running 105 minutes, the ruse that the heroes use to trap the villains takes up most of the narrative and is fairly entertaining, while Chang's usual male bonding undercurrent is busy with its many teases. As befits the acrobatic characters, the fights include many tumbles, summersaults, trapeze moves and coordinated handoffs. The final and lengthy contretemps in an enclosed warehouse full of boxes and ropes is especially elaborate and creatively choreographed, capping the film's action and drama effectively.

While the transfer is terrific, the camera lenses distort or blur the image now and then. The musical score, by Eddie Wang, is very appealing in a hip Seventies sort of way. An alternate English language track in mono is also available, along with two commentary tracks.

The track featuring Chinese film experts Frank Djeng and Michael Worth has some odd playback problems for the first 45 minutes, as if it is only coming through on a rear channel or something, but is otherwise fairly rewarding, as they talk at length about the 'Venom' actors and about Chang, as well as reacting to Chang's direction and the action choreography. "This fight scene here is probably my favorite use of a nunchaku in a fight scene, in terms of how it's used in the choreography. I mean, I'm a Bruce Lee fan till the ends of my life. [In Lee's films] it's great, but where Bruce would take this sort of simplicity of a nunchaku and pause it with his facial expressions—there's a lot of pausing with Bruce, and 'Look me in the eye,' and he makes the hit, hit, hit, hit, hit, come back to him—you know, you watch this and here the dexterity and the use of it is through so many different ranges of combat. I mean it really to me just sort of becomes one of my favorite nunchaku fights."

Hong Kong film enthusiasts Mike Leeder and Arne Venema supply a second enthusiastic track, pointing out the film's strengths ("Look at this choreography." "You're looking, that's fifteen to twenty movements minimum before a cut, and you're doing take after take after take. This is not a padded floor. This is not a thing. Of course, there's some padding in specific places, but a lot of it's real.") while also digressing into stories about what was happening at the Shaw Bros. studios during the time the film was made (they point out that rather than making office buildings, the movie studios would build their administrative exteriors and even their interiors in such a way that the locations could be dressed or even used as is for film shoots), talking about other features made by the cast and the crew, and explaining in detail why the image warps in places because of the lenses being used by the filmmakers (after wisecracking, "I dropped acid for a moment").

The plot of the 1981 *Ode to Gallantry* is Shakespearean in its complications, although patient viewers will see that all of its confusions are readily explained by the end. A young and destitute man wandering into town finds himself in the middle of a confrontation between several factions before he is whisked away by a wizard who then tries to kill him. He is rescued by one of the factions that wants to use him as a sacrifice, and suddenly, people start recognizing him, although he has no idea who they are or who they are saying he is. The confusions are very witty and while there is a terrific fight at the end, there really aren't that many fights before that, although there are constant fight-like moves during the conversations, with the 87-minute movie getting by almost entirely by the brisk energy of the story and the appeal of the performances. Unlike *Daredevils*, there are also several significant female parts, and the film is easily the more entertaining of the two.

The image is free of camera flaws and looks terrific from beginning to end. The sound is exceptionally good, with a very strong and clear bass. There are another pair of commentaries.

The Djeng and Worth talk does not have the playback problem that the talk on *Daredevils* has. Although there is one somewhat lengthy gap in their talk, they cover the basics on the backgrounds of the characters, go over the novel the film was based upon and how it has been adapted, and discuss the martial arts being employed. They also point out specific cinematic details. "You watch this shot at the dinner table you'll notice that this candle keeps getting used as a geography, sort of reference for it. It's in every shot so you can always kind of keep in mind, like [Yasujiro] Ozu used to do that with a teapot in the center of the table. You kind of keep it as a reference to where everybody is in reference to each other."

Leeder and Venema also have another entertaining talk, comparing the Venom Mob actors to the Brat Pack, going over the backgrounds of many of the cast and crew members, and discussing the plot and, for Chang, its lighthearted nature. "The film does a good job of going, 'Okay, there's these two different characters. One's really evil,' but it's an obvious thing, what's going on, kind of, but it keeps it fun, and that shows what a good director he is."

Strolling in Venice

Danny Huston's voice sounds more like his father's with each passing year, and he should really start doing some serious voice acting, because he has an exceptionally rich tone and distinctive coloring that evokes both the present and the past. Huston appears for about a minute in the opening of the 2024 adaptation of Ernest Hemingway's **Across the River and into the Trees**, a Level 33 Entertainment DVD (UPC#840418319130, \$15), and we emphasize this because at one point several decades previously, his father, John Huston, was very intent upon shooting the material, but couldn't quite work out the financing despite a comprehensive promotional effort suggesting it was a done deal. Since the story turns out to be about the spiritual bridge between a father and a son, it seems only proper to bring it up. The film has finally been directed by Paula Ortiz and stars Liev Schreiber, sporting a Hemingwayesque beard, as a US Army officer in Venice on leave immediately after WWII, who meets a young contessa, played by Matilda De Angelis, as she is doing her best to stall an arranged marriage. The bulk of the 107-minute film is the walks they take around Venice at night in period clothing, against period décor, set to period music, and the conversations they have about life. That in itself is utterly transporting. There are also a couple of subplots—Schreiber's character appears to be attempting to determine the location nearby where a group of partisans were massacred during the war; and he has a bad heart condition that his driver, played by Josh Hutcherson, keeps pestering him about—but it is really just fans of literature or quiet beauty who will enjoy the leisurely and lovingly rendered film. The performances are wonderful, the dialog has its Hemingway moments and is engaging in a relaxed sort of way, and most people, including Hemingway, can never get enough of Venice.

The picture is presented in a squared full screen format, except for the final scene, which suddenly expands to a letterboxed widescreen image with an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. Apparently, this is intentional, since the framing on the full screen images never looks tight or oddly composed. The image is smooth and colors are fresh, underscoring the film's visual attractions. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound has a very pleasant surround presence. There are optional English subtitles.

Early Wilder

Quirky romantic comedies were practically a genre in the Sixties as audiences sought love amid the breakdown of social traditions and stabilities. Gene Wilder scored a billing above the title in his rapidly accelerating stardom for the 1970 **Quackster Fortune Has a Cousin in The Bronx**, and it is a film that has endured thanks to Wilder's presence, overcoming its oddball title and subdued aspirations. Set in Dublin, Wilder's character lives with his parents and gathers horse manure for a living, selling it for fertilizer. He meets an American grad student played by Margot Kidder, and charms her, while a crisis arises when Dublin passes a law eliminating horse-drawn delivery wagons from the increasingly busy streets. Directed by Waris Hussein, it is a sweet film that nails its ending, so that you come away from it happy despite the emotional ups and downs it has taken you through, and it has been released on Blu-ray by VCI Entertainment and MVDVisual (UPC#08985908828, \$25).

The picture has an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1. A reel-change mark appears, and there is one other brief but large splotch on the image. Otherwise the presentation looks terrific, with bright hues and accurate fleshtones. The film was shot under low budget conditions and is intended to appear dreary in places, but the image is sharp and smooth. We reviewed a VCI DVD in Nov 99 that had lighter colors and more dirt. The monophonic sound is more problematic. There is nothing overtly distracting about it, but it is best kept to a modest volume to prevent distortion in the dialog. Heavy Irish accents are kept to a minimum and there are optional English subtitles. Along with a trailer, there is a commentary by film enthusiast Robert Kelly, who reads from Wilder's biography and supplies a few other details about the production. Pointing out that the film does not present the normally verdant Ireland one usually sees in the movies, he finds the dismal neighborhoods where Wilder's character lives to be charming nevertheless. "I love that nobody's wearing colors. This is great. Brown, dark blue, grey. There's not a red, there's not a yellow, there's no fun colors anywhere." He identifies many of the cast members and goes into more detail about Kidder, but he has less to say about Hussein other than to reel off his biography. He also talks about movies that had extra-long titles in the Sixties, although he somehow misses **Dr. Strangelove or How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the Bomb**.

If it's Goya, it's got to be good

Anthony Franciosa was not the greatest actor ever captured on celluloid, but he was a wonderful movie star, both on the big screen and on the TV. His ability to communicate his own personality and charismatic presence superseded a need to create perfection in his emotional conveyance. So long as he got the general idea across of what his character was thinking and feeling, he had only to be himself to keep an eager fan bemused, contented and even enthralled. Similarly, Ava Gardner was first and foremost a movie star, and only secondarily an actress. Her sexuality emanated from the aura of maturity that she projected from the moment the camera turned upon her, so as she grew older she landed some meaty roles and delivered them with exquisite flair, but she was always riveting in a part because of the way she commanded not just the screen, but the space around her at all times, regardless of her age or the age of her character.

In the critically dismissed but totally wonderful 1959 Titanus Production released through United Artists and now issued on Blu-ray by Amazon Studios and MGM, **The Naked Maja** (UPC#840418306406, \$20), Franciosa plays the painter Francisco Goya, and Gardner is a fictional aristocrat from the

Spanish court who becomes his lover and model for the painting that the film is named after (and thus, enables the movie to display its nudity in widescreen during the opening credits and get away with it, although the rest of the time, it only shows up in long shots). Directed by Henry Koster, the film was shot in Italy but that is still Europe and the locations are great. Even greater is the star power generated by the two leads, whether they are on the screen separately or together. Like all dutiful biographical dramas, the film dribbles out just enough history to validate its romance. You do learn something about what Napoleon was up to in Spain, and retain a general idea, certainly, of who Goya was and where he was coming from, while the rest is sheer movie bliss. The romance is enhanced by the costumes, the music and how much you already love the two stars. The drama is the engine that enables the film to carry a viewer along for 113 minutes. After all, it's about Goya, so it's got to be good.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. There is one shot where the colors become overly yellow, as if another color hadn't been added properly to the mix, but that is a very brief anomaly and otherwise, the color transfer looks super, with bright hues and accurate fleshtones. The image is sharp (not enough to make out details in the titular painting at a distance, but sharp enough) and free of wear. The monophonic sound is fine and the musical score incorporates every Spanish motif imaginable. There are optional English subtitles.

Philatelic fools

An embittered, wealthy publisher hires a criminal mastermind, by tempting him with a rare stamp, to devise a foolproof murder in the 1956 British production distributed by United Artists and released on Blu-ray by MGM, **"Lady of Vengeance"** (UPC#840418317365, \$20). The film will seem utterly silly for most of its unfolding, unless you are into rare stamps (yet not into them enough to cringe at how they are being handled). Some of the dialog is inspired—a young woman romancing a jazz trombonist tells him that his music, "Makes champagne out of my blood,"—and it does have one great plot twist that makes the 75-minute running time well worth spending, although it ought to have a second twist (implying the car was sabotaged) to seal the deal, and it does not. Directed by Burt Balaban, Dennis O'Keefe and Anton Diffring (you'll recognize him—he often played German officers in war films, such as **Where Eagles Dare**) star. Contrary to a notation on the jacket cover (which also gets the running time wrong), the black-and-white picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The source material is a little soft at times, but is free of overt wear, and overall the presentation looks reasonably nice. The monophonic sound is adequate and there are optional English subtitles.

Corman's first production

An octopus the size of an SUV with a light bulb in its head painted to look like an eye is the **Monster from the Ocean Floor**, a 1956 Roger Corman production directed by Wyott Ordung and released on Blu-ray by Kit Parker Films and Film Masters as a *Special Edition* (UPC#840418319048, \$25). Anne Kimbell is an American tourist vacationing in a vaguely Hispanic Pacific coastal community, which has seen a rash of odd disappearances during full moons, ever since atomic testing started. Kimbell's character is persuaded that something dwelling in the water is causing the problems. Stuart Wade is a hunky oceanographer with a really cool, pedal driven personal submarine, who doesn't believe that she's seen something but is obviously going to stick around anyway since she's in her bathing suit a lot. Dick Pinner is also featured, popping up a suit and tie from behind a rock at the beach in one scene after Kimbell and Wade have been sitting in front of it for quite a while. You get less than 2 minutes of footage of the monster in the 64-minute film, but lots of footage of the submarine zipping around underwater, and plenty of footage of the nearly middle-aged Kimbell, lounging about and working on her tan. The film does not amount to much, but its mere existence is a celebratory tribute to the thrills and joys of inexpensive filmmaking.

The squared full screen black-and-white picture is in nice condition, with reasonably sharp contrasts and minimal wear. The monophonic sound is dullish but clear. There are optional English subtitles, two trailers, a two-minute montage of memorabilia, a good 14-minute profile of puppetmaster Bob Baker (who worked on the film early in his career) and a nice 9-minute interview with Corman, who describes his earliest efforts creating creatures, coming up with marketing and getting into his filmmaking groove. He also explains that if he hadn't secured access to the submarine, there wouldn't have been a movie.

Fifties movie expert Tom Weaver provides an excellent commentary track, supported by separate optional subtitling, including audio clips from an interview he conducted with Corman. Additionally, Weaver has his usual readings by voice actors of interviews with others involved with the film. The movie was essentially Corman's first foray into picture making, and Weaver argues that it set the stage and enthusiasm for everything that came afterwards. Because it was his first time, Corman has vivid memories of every aspect of his time working on it, and Weaver supplements that with extensive research to provide a thorough and vivid description of the film's creation. Was it worth the effort? Despite the many negative comments about the film that have circulated over the years, Weaver certainly seems to think it was. "One of the best things about this movie is that the whole thing was shot outdoors. Yeah, the sound is kinda lousy throughout as a result of this, but all the exterior shooting gives it a mood that more than makes up for it. Nothing will ever put a dent in my admiration for Hollywood major studio moviemaking, but you know what I like about **Monster from the Ocean Floor**? Funny as this will sound, just the crudity of it. It's all outdoors. It's all on location. There are no scenes with actors on a process stage with the ocean rear-projected behind them. It creates a mood and atmosphere I like."

Sweet Eel

A very sweet tale about a paroled murderer who opens a barbershop, **The Eel**, has been released on Blu-ray by Radiance Films (UPC#760137174431, \$40). Directed by Shohei Imamura, Kôji Yakusho (who would go on to star in **Perfect Days**) has the central role in the 1997 feature, setting up his shop on a somewhat isolated road next to an extensive marsh after he is released from prison, where he and a local boat builder go fishing for eels at night. He helps a woman with a troubled past and she comes to work for him, turning his venture into a moderate success until complications from the pasts of both characters disrupt their lives. There are two versions of the film presented on the disc, the 117-minute *Theatrical Version* and a 134-minute *Director's Cut*. While the story is presented in its entirety on the *Theatrical Version* (there is also a vague, slippery hint that Yakusho's character may be completely insane), it is the *Director's Cut* that is the true gem, adding 17 minutes of lyrical moments that do not propel the plot but add greatly to the texture, atmosphere and resonance of the film, so that it becomes not just a story but a film to be savored and revisited, like returning to a favorite fishing spot.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The color transfer looks sharp and the image is smooth. The monophonic sound is clear and the film is in Japanese with optional English subtitles. Along with a trailer, there is a good 28-minute talk by Tony Rayns about Yamura, the cast and the film; a 19-minute interview with screenwriter Daisuke Tengan (Imamura's son), talking about the research he did (many ex-cons learn barbering in prison), the arguments he had with his father during its composition, and how the characters tick; and a very interesting piece on 1997 being a watershed year for Japanese movies, and why that happened.

The Paris dating scene

Black-and-white Paris in the very early Seventies is the immediately riveting appeal of Jean Eustache's 1972 **The Mother and the Whore**, released on a two-platter 4K Blu-ray set by The Criterion Collection (UPC#715515307512, \$50). Indeed, the title could just as easily refer to Paris as it refers to the dichotomy of its two female characters, the owner of a boutique played by Bernadette Lafont and a nurse played by Françoise Lebrun (or it could refer to the complicated personality of either character). Jean-Pierre Léaud's character, who has no discernible source of income, is living with Lafont's character when he meets Lebrun's character, but since the two have somewhat of an open relationship, the romances become a three-way. The film runs a daunting 239 minutes, but it is hard to believe that it could not have been better edited. In one of the supplements it is suggested that this gives the film, "time to breathe," but it would be in danger of hyperventilation if it did not move so slowly. Although Léaud has an aspect of self-awareness that seems present in nearly all of his roles in the mid-Sixties and beyond (he was better suited for comedies than for dramas), the performances never become tiresome or redundant, despite the lingering shots on the actors pretending to sip their liquor, finish their cigarettes or otherwise lounge casually. What the running time does do, in addition to letting the film accumulate textures, is allow for an extended introduction to Léaud's character, who is initially pining after yet another, earlier girlfriend, and chats up a couple of others before honing in on Lebrun's character. Indeed, Paris itself, and its correlative social symbolism (be it politics, philosophy or even film studies), kind of falls by the wayside in the movie's second half, as the attention shifts more to just depicting the three characters in one apartment. Hence, the film is about people in their twenties, who think they are living their lives when what they are really doing is sorting out their lives for when they actually become adults. Although the movie is not a comedy, it is because of this, the fact that it is in black-and-white, and the way it contains groundbreaking dialog on matters of intimacy and sex, that it reminded us most of all of Kevin Smith's **Clerks**.

While the image on the standard Blu-ray looks great—there is a softness at times inherent in the verité manner in which it was shot, but otherwise, the presentation is smooth and contrasts are clearly delineated—the image on the 4K presentation is even sharper and more gripping. The monophonic sound is clear—you can hear the camera whirring from time to time—and vivid. The film is in French with optional English subtitles and picks up where it left off if playback is terminated on both platters. The special features on the standard BD do not, and include a trailer; a thoughtful 33-minute discussion about the film that explores both its idiomatic Frenchness and what it means to the rest of the world; a sweet 14-minute retrospective interview with Lebrun; a terrific 11-minute report from its 1973 success at Cannes that includes interviews with Eustache and the three stars; and a 17-minute piece on the film's restoration, which provides details on how the film has been saved but also suggest—and this would be, once again in the history of film, where Criterion comes into play—that the film had fallen by the wayside and will only now gain its true, permanent place in the cinematic pantheon.

Two sets of Inserts

Richard Dreyfuss's name rightly appears above the title in John Byrum's 1975 **Inserts**, since he is in every scene in the single-set 117-minute United Artists feature, which appears to take place in real time. Set in the very early Thirties on the ground floor of a moderately spacious but decaying Hollywood home (in the background, jackhammers can be heard, since the neighborhood has been condemned to make way for an anachronistic freeway), Dreyfuss is a once famous silent film director who is making a living shooting porno films and executing that living by drinking all day long. In the first half of the film he is trying to shoot one such concoction in his living room, with a strung out tootsie played in eye-opening fashion by former child star Veronica Cartwright (this was before her breakthrough performance in **Alien**) and Stephen Davies. In the second half, his producer, played by Bob Hoskins (before any of his breakthrough roles) and the producer's companion, played by Jessica Harper, show up, interrupting the shoot, and after a bit, three of the characters leave and it is just Dreyfuss and Harper for most of the third act, seducing one another in an effort to fill in the missing parts of the unfinished film.

The script, which was written by Byrum, is absolutely terrible, but the performances are excellent nonetheless. The film is a prime example of why good actors end up in bad movies, because each of the five characters have substantial dialog that they

can sink their teeth into (the moment where Harper does sink her teeth into Dreyfuss's thigh notwithstanding). On a scene-by-scene basis, the parts must have looked tempting indeed, with lots of juicy back-and-forth byplay, subject matter that nudges against the boundaries of respectability, and fully outlined personalities just waiting to be embodied. For Dreyfuss, who is also listed as a producer, the film is an actor's dream, although he never really varies his normal manic intensity. For Hoskins, his enthusiastic entrepreneurial bossiness is a slam dunk. Davies has the most challenging part, his character constantly making a fool of himself, and he pulls it off with a reasonable amount of well-timed humor. Cartwright and Harper bring the only real pleasure the film can offer, however, through the complex maturity they convey in counterpoint to the single-minded men, and the fact that their smiles are prettier.

It is only when you step back and see how the movie actually plays out that you realize the drama is way too obsessed with the idea of filmmaking—something that is pretty much of no interest to anyone other than filmmakers themselves and a few kooks like us—and much too artificial in its premise and execution to be anything other than an exercise in showing off. The nudity is pointedly lacking in either eroticism or humor, and in underscoring the desperation of the characters, its presence ends up underscoring the desperation of the film as a whole.

The film has been released on Blu-ray by Amazon Studios and MGM (UPC#840418309186, \$20). Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1, the colors are a bit murky, the image is a little soft and speckles pop up now and then. The monophonic sound has a slight feedback in a couple of places but is otherwise adequately presented. There are optional English subtitles. 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment and MGM released the film previously on Blu-ray through Twilight Time (UPC#811956021229), and that transfer is much nicer, with brighter, sharper colors. The speckles are still there and what was murky on the other BD is more of a pronounced grain on this one, but with crisper fleshtones and more engaging details, the presentation is more appealing. The audio track is also somewhat stronger, and comes with a second option where the sound effects and incidental music have been isolated. The disc also has optional English subtitles, and two trailers.

Child murderer

The last name of the Ukrainian child murderer played by Malcolm McDowell is 'Evilenko,' so the 2004 film's title, and the title of the two-platter 4K UltraHD Blu-ray from Unerthed Films separates the first half and the second half of the name with red letters and white letters, something that is best replicated, if color is unavailable, with capitalization: **EVILENKO** (UPC#760137166603, \$55). Shot in Kiev and set when Ukraine was still part of the Soviet Union, which is when the events depicted actually occurred, the film runs 111 minutes—the last 4 minutes are Exit Music featuring Angelo Badalamenti's haunting feature song—but the first 20 minutes, Badalamenti's music aside, are so disturbing you may not get even through those 20 minutes before ejecting the disc. The sequence, which shows McDowell's character getting a taste for raping and killing youngsters, presented in an almost 'how to' level of detail, does the film a disservice, because the remainder of the movie steps back from that discomfort to just throw a little blood around here and there, and is instead an engrossing procedural. Marton Csokas is the cop who eventually tracks the killer down after a spree of fifty-five victims, including a psychotherapist, nicely played by Ronald Pickup, who solves the case first but makes the mistake of exposing himself to danger in the process. While the end title cards explain what happened to McDowell's character, they say nothing about Csokas's character, who puts his entire career and marriage on the line to solve the case, and it would have been nice to learn if things worked out for him after such diligence. Directed by David Grieco, the Kiev locations are terrific and the drama is absorbing, but the film is one of those movies about a serial killer that teeters into the horror of the killer's actions and is not for squeamish viewers who are just looking for some clock-ticking thrills. McDowell's performance is truly unnerving, but this is one instance where someone rather less believable—Peter Lorre, perhaps?—might have been easier to take.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The transfer is fresh and spotless, making the grungy, deteriorated locations look both immediate and even perversely glossy. The 4K presentation is especially smooth, but the standard BD included in the set doesn't look bad at all, and it is only the intensity of the smoothness that separates the two. The same is true of the 5.1-channel DTS sound, which has a good directional mix and delicate separations.

McDowell and Grieco provide a commentary track on both platters. There are gaps in the talk, but they speak about working with the other actors, the challenges of individual scenes and other aspects of the production. Grieco admits the opening section of the film is difficult to take. "This is a very hard scene. I remember that the producer said to me, 'Cut the scene. Please cut this scene. At the very beginning, a scene like this is impossible.' But I wanted to keep this scene, because I wanted to start strong, the film. To make understand what the film is about."

McDowell explains how he approached playing such a horrific role. "The reason that I decided to play it from the outside-in is because then, at the end of the day, when you take your costume off, you can go and have dinner and you're not emotionally involved in killing children, you know, you just take the character off you with the clothes, and that was the only way I could possibly play the part and keep any kind of sanity. Interestingly, I think what happens, it becomes more about mental health than anything else. I must say that it's a performance that I am actually very proud of. It's a hard sell. He's such a despicable character."

The standard BD platter has a number of other supplementary features, including a trailer, a minute-long montage of promotional photos, 81 minutes of interviews with the English and Italian cast and the crew, included Badalamenti, another 69-minute interview with McDowell and Grieco, and a 27-minute promotional documentary that includes more interviews and lots of fascinating footage from the trial of the real individual McDowell's character is based upon.

Conan in 4K

No room is available to publish our entire reviews of the Arrow Video two-platter 4K Blu-ray release of John Milius's **Conan the Barbarian** (UPC#760137141556, \$60), Arrow's standard two-platter Blu-ray (UPC#760137141563, \$50), Arrow's release of the Richard Fleischer sequel, **Conan the Destroyer** in a single-platter 4K Blu-ray (UPC#760137141570, \$60), Arrow's standard single-platter Blu-ray release of that title (UPC#760137141587, \$50), Arrow's combined three-platter 4K Blu-ray release, **The Conan Chronicles Conan the Barbarian Conan the Destroyer** (UPC#760137141594, \$90) or Arrow's three-platter standard Blu-ray release (UPC#760137141600, \$80), so we have chosen instead to publish the review for free on our Substack page (<https://dvdlaserdisc.substack.com/p/the-dvd-laser-disc-newsletter-special-671>) and have also made it available for free as a PDF file for download, which can be requested by writing Conan Review at DVDLaser@rocketmail.com. You can also sign up to get each month's Special Editions (yes, it is now a monthly thing) as a PDF file if you have a regular snail mail subscription, by writing the same email address. Those who already have an email subscription will receive them automatically. If you have no access to a computer and want a hard copy, we unfortunately have to charge \$10 to cover our expenses for each individual Edition (\$15 outside of the U.S.). Please write to Conan Review %The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter, PO Box 382, Glen Cove NY 11542, and include a check or credit card details. The review also includes a review of Warner Home Video's Blu-ray release of Milius's **Big Wednesday** (UPC#888574644826, \$22), Warner's Blu-ray release of Fleischer's **Sovlent Green** (UPC#883929174126, \$20) and Twilight Time's Blu-ray release of Fleischer's **Che!** (UPC#811956020109). The reviews have also been incorporated in our PDF format compilation book available on CD-ROM, *DVDs*, for \$24.95 plus \$4 shipping (\$15 outside of the U.S.). Write to DVDs, The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter, PO Box 382, Glen Cove NY 11542.

DVD News

CRITERION CORNER: The Criterion Collection is issuing William Friedkin's **Sorcerer** in 4K format with *Friedkin Uncut* (2018), a documentary by Francesco Zippel featuring interviews with Friedkin, screenwriter Walon Green, Wes Anderson, Francis Ford Coppola, and Quentin Tarantino, and others; a conversation between filmmaker James Gray and film critic Sean Fennessey; audio interviews with Green and editor Bud Smith, from the collection of Giulia D'Agnoletto Vallan, author of *William Friedkin* (2003); a conversation from 2015 between Friedkin and Nicolas Winding Refn; and behind-the-scenes footage of Friedkin on set. François Girard's **Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould** will be in 4K and will include a commentary featuring Girard and co-writer and actor Don McKellar; a conversation between Girard and Atom Egoyan; *Glenn Gould: Off the Record* and *Glenn Gould: On the Record*, companion programs from 1959 produced for Canadian television; and interviews with actor Colm Feore and producer Niv Fichman. Mitchell Leisen's **Midnight** will include a commentary featuring author and film critic Michael Koresky; a program featuring audio excerpts of a 1969 interview with Leisen; and a *Lux Radio Theatre* adaptation of the film from 1940. Charlotte Zwerin's **Thelonious Monk Straight, No Chaser** will feature an interview with T. S. Monk, son of Thelonious Monk and a program about Zwerin and the making of the film featuring interviews with writer Michael Schulman, assistant editor Bernadine Colish, and Zwerin's nieces Lisa and Laura Tesone. Sidney Lumet's **The Wiz** will be in 4K format and come with a commentary featuring scholars Michael B. Gillespie and Alfred L. Martin, and interviews with director Sidney Lumet and actor Diana Ross. Terry Gilliam's **Brazil** will be in 4K and will include a commentary by Gilliam; *What Is Brazil?*, Rob Hedden's on-set documentary; *The Production Notebook*, a collection of interviews and video essays, featuring a trove of **Brazil**-iana from Gilliam's personal collection; *The Battle of Brazil*, a documentary about the film's contentious release, hosted by Jack Mathews and based on his book of the same name; and the *Love Conquers All* version of the film, the studio's 94-minute, happy-ending cut, with commentary by Brazil expert David Morgan. Paul Schrader's **Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters** will be in 4K format and will have two alternate English narrations, including one by Roy Scheider; a commentary featuring Schrader and producer Alan Poul; a program on the making of the film featuring Bailey, producers Tom Luddy and Mata Yamamoto, Philip Glass, and production designer Eiko Ishioka; a program on Yukio Mishima featuring his biographer, John Nathan, and Donald Richie; an audio interview with co-screenwriter Chieko Schrader; an interview excerpt from 1966 featuring Mishima talking about writing; and *The Strange Case of Yukio Mishima*, a 1985 documentary.

NEW IN BLU: The following titles were recently released on Blu-ray—Glitch Ditch 37, Glitch Ditch 38, Glitch Ditch 39, Glitch Ditch 40, (Acid Bath); Satan War (AGFA); Influencer, Levels, The Strings (AMD); The Special People (Art); Babygirl, The Brutalist (A24); Life Hotel (Bayview); Scarred Hearts / Uppercase Print (Big World); Brunswick Dance Club, Wolf (Bounty); New Life (Brainstorm); Moana 2 (Buena Vista); Houwood Season 1 (Burning Bulb); Hookers on Davie, Keanu & Co. (Canadian); Nova Seed (Cartuna); The Carpenter, Curse of the Devil / Demon Witch Child / The Vampires Night Orgy, Disembodied, Fear in the Philippines The Complete Blood Island Films, Go Fish, The Hungry Snake Woman, Joyride, The Killer Is Not Alone, The Mansion of Madness, The Possession of Joel Delaney, The

Seventh Curse / Witch from Nepal, Street Demon, The Terrornauts, Tokugawa Sex Ban, Virtuosity, White Cannibal Queen (CAV); The First Slam Dunk, Shaw Bros. Collection V.6 (Cinedigm); Choose Me, Crossing Delancey, Godzilla vs. Biollante, Night Moves, Performance, The Wages of Fear, A Woman in Paris (Criterion); The Unwanted Undead Adventurer Complete Series (Crunchy Roll); The Golden Fern, Kin-dza-dza, The Mysterious Castle of the Carpathians, The Outcasts, Prague Nights, Zerograd (Deaf Crocodile); Hard Truths, 2073 (Decal); Huckle, Thunder (Dekalog); Gimp Pimp, Slasher Fetish 2 (Die Star); To Die Alone (Distribution Solution); TT Isle of Man 2024 Review (Duke); Videoman (ETR); Amateur on Plastic (Factory 25); Truth Be Told Complete Series (Fifth Season); Her Body, Joseph Campbell and the Power of the Myth with Bill Moyers, Mapantsula, Once Were Warriors, The Sales Girl, Two Faces of Tai Kato, Vive L'Amour (Film Movement); Behind the Door / Below the Surface (Flicker Alley); Death Streamer (Full Moon); Adult Best Friends, Butterfly in a Blizzard, Death 4 Dinner, Endless Calls for Fame The Story of the New Rising Sons, Hal King, Kindred, Merkel, Ramona at Midlife, Sarogeto, There's a Zombie Outside (Gravitas); Blades in the Darkness, Can't Let It Go, God Save the Queens, Little Girl Blue, Once Again For the Very First Time (Indican); Weekend in Taipei (Ketchup); Are You Being Served? The Movie, Best Defense, The Black Tulip, Bobbie Jo and the Outlaw, College Confidential, The Conqueror, Crawlspace, Cry The Beloved Country, Diary of a Chambermaid, Film Noir The Dark Side of Cinema XXIV, Frances, The Glass Web, The Godsend, Gunner, Half a Chance, Hi-Jack Highway, Ho!, In Custody / The Proprietor Two Films by Ismail Merchant, Losing Ground, Noble House, Rose, Summer Rental, The Tenth Victim, Two-Way Stretch (Kino); Crazy Broke Asians, Skinford The Curse, Treasures of Terror V.3, The UFOs of Soesterberg (Leomark); I Am a Ghost, The Shade (Level 33); Den of Thieves 2 Pantera (Lionsgate); Deliver Us, Ernest Cole Lost and Found, Joyride, The Last Circus (Magnolia); Samurai Fiction (Media Blasters); Documentary Now! Complete Series (Mill Creek); The Astronaut Lovers, Autoerotic, The Canyons, 4:44 Last Day on Earth, Memoir of a Snail, Smiley Face (MPI); An Amorous Woman of Tang Dynasty, The Cat, The Daredevils & Ode to Gallantry Two Venom Mob Films, Deep Blue Sea, Dinner with Leatherface, Dinosaur Valley Girls, Eat the Night, Eating Mrs. Campbell, The Emperor Jones, EVILenko, Furious, Hokuriku Proxy War, Hong Kong Hong Kong, Iced, Inglorious Basterds, The Lady Assassin, The Lady Is the Boss, The Mask of Satan, 100 Tears, Quackser Fortune Has a Cousin in the Bronx, Play It Cool, Standing on the Shoulders of Kitties The Bubbles and the Shitrockers Story, Thong Girls, Trick or Treat (MVD); Olga Knows Best? (My Crazy Life); Omar and Cedric If This Ever Gets Weird, Wildcat (Oscilloscope); All Creatures Great & Small Season 5, Gladiator II, September 5, Star Trek Lower Decks Complete Series, Star Trek Lower Decks Final Season, Tulsa King Season 2 (Paramount); Harlequin, Thirst (Powerhouse); Abduction The Harvesting, Among the Willows, The Avenger, Crocodylus Mating Season, Funny Cow, Kat and the Band, Legacy, McCartney Now and Then, Meet the Firm Revenge in Rio, Most Horrible Things, Otherlife, Overkill, Parable, Patriot A Nation at War, Roadkill, Safe House, Thine Ears Shall Bleed, The Witch Game (Rising Sun); The Count of Monte Cristo (Samuel Goldwyn); Rot (Saturn's Core); Bon Voyage, Character, Imaginary Heroes, Kraven the Hunter, Monsieur Ibrahim, Respiro (Sony); Strange Things Happen at the Weird House 2 (Sterling); Side Effects May Vary (Tempe); Nosferatu, Wolf Man (Universal); Not an Artist (Utopia); The Order (Vertical); Deadly Obsession The Films of Bill Reeves (VHSitfest); Clocking the T (Visible); Asia, Bandits, Body of Lies / Edge of Darkness / Pride and Glory, Doctor Who Sylvester McCoy Season 2, Earth II, Firewall, The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, Ghost Ship, Hit Man, Inserts, The Lord of the Rings The War of the Rohirrim, The Magilla Gorilla Show Complete Series, Monogram Matinee V.1, The Naked Maja, Outpost in Malaya, The Penguin Season 1, Red One, Rumor Has It, Sadie McKee, The Time Traveler's Wife, Tom & Jerry Meet Sherlock Holmes, Waiting for the Light, Yes Man (Warner); Abigail, Customs Frontline, Devils Stay, Eye for an Eye 2 Blind Vengeance, The Gangster The Cop The Devil, Laws of Man, 100 Yards, Operation Undead, The Tiger (Well Go); In Flames (Yellow Veil); Big Foot, Celestial Deceptions UFO Crash Evidence & Cover Up, Dye Hard, Have a Nice Trip Micro vs. Macro-Dosing for Healing, How to Clear a Cluttered Mind, In Their Words Stories of Alien Contact, Mysteries of the Southern Wild, Psychelics and Medicine, The Secret Cup, Shadow Operations UFO Crash Retrieval Evidence & Cover-Up, Superconscious The Power Within, Who They Are (Zapruderflix)

NEW IN 3D: The following title was recently released in 3D format—The Glass Web

NEW IN 4K: The following titles were recently released in 4K format—The Brutalist (A24), Moana 2 (Buena Vista); Hookers on Davie (Canadian); Deranged Confessions of a Necrophile, Disembodied, Forbidden World, Thieves Like Us, Virtuosity (CAV); The First Slam Dunk, Humanoids from the Deep, Night of the Creeps, Tommy (Cinedigm); Cronos, Choose Me, Crossing Delancey, Drugstore Cowboy, Godzilla vs. Biollante, Performance, Night Moves, Thief, The Wages of Fear (Criterion); Akira (Crunchy Roll); Body Parts, The General's Daughter, Graveyard Shift, Peril & Distress Endless Night and Picture Mommy Dead, Uncle Buck (Kino); Den of Thieves 2 Pantera (Lionsgate); Pinocchio 964 (Media Blasters); The Image (Melusine); Antiviral, Deep Blue Sea, Delicatessen, Don't Torture a Duckling, EVILenko, Trick or Treat, Venom (MVD); Black Sheep, Gladiator II, Tommy Boy (Paramount); Harlequin, Thirst (Powerhouse); Kraven the Hunter, My Girl, Panic Room (Sony); Nosferatu, Wolf Man (Universal); Amadeus, Constantine, The Last of Us Season 1, The Lord of the Rings The War of the Rohirrim, Paddington 2, The Penguin Season 1, Red One (Warner)

An index to the reviews contained in this issue

BDs	The Daredevils & Ode to Gallantry	Hardboiled: Three Pulp Thrillers by Alain Corneau	The Mother and the Whore 4K (Série Noire) p2
Big Wednesday p7	Two Venom Mob Films p4	Inserts p6	Shin Godzilla p1
Che! p7	The Eel p6	"Lady of Vengeance" p5	Soylent Green p7
(Choice of Arms) p2	EVILenko 4K p6	(Le Choix des Armes) p2	Target p4
The Conan Chronicles Conan the Barbarian Conan the Destroyer 4K p7	The Gangster The Cop The Devil p3	The Long Kiss Goodnight 4K p1	DVDs
Conan the Barbarian 4K p7	Godzilla vs. Biollante 4K p1	Monster from the Ocean Floor p5	Across the River and into the Trees p5
Conan the Destroyer 4K p7	The Grifters 4K p2		A Real Pain p3
Crossing Delancy 4K p3			

Current Attractions

The following titles recently appeared for the first time:

Abduction The Harvesting (Rising Sun)
All Creatures Great & Small Season 5 (Paramount)
Altered Reality (Vision)
Ambrogio The Last Vampire (X4)*
Among the Willows (Rising Sun)
Angels Fallen Warriors of Peace (Uncork'd)
Apocalypse Love Story (BMG)
Asia (Warner)*
The Astronaut Lovers (MFI)
The Avenger (Rising Sun)*
Behind That Curtain (Alpha)*
The Bell System Science Series Collection (Alpha)*
Bigfoot Isn't Real (Zapruderfix)
A Bold Voyage (X4)*
Brunswick Dance Club (Bounty)
Butch Cassidy's Forgotten Outlaw (X4)*
Butterfly in a Blizzard (Gravitas)*
Can't Let It Go (Indican)*
Captain Scarlett (Digicom)*
Camal Mayhem (Alpha)*
Carville Winning Is Everything Stupid (Kino)
Celestial Deceptions
Aliens Entities & Apparitions (Zapruderfix)
Cooking the T (Visible)*
The Count of Monte Cristo (The Count of Monte Cristo)
The Covenant (Uncork'd)*
Crazy Broke Asians (Leomark)
Creators The Past (X4)*
Crimetime Freefall (Cinedigm)*
Crocodylus Mating Season (Rising Sun)
Customs Frontline (Well Go)
Cuthroat The Race to Save Yellowstone (X4)*
The Dance of Life (Alpha)*
Death 4 Dinner (Gravitas)*
Death Streamer (Full Moon)
The Demonologist (Uncork'd)*
Den of Thieves 2 Pantera (Lionsgate)
Devil's Five (Random)*
Devils Stay (Well Go)
Dinner with Leatherface (MVD)*
Discreet (Uncork'd)*
The Distance between Us (X4)*
The Dogmatics A Documentary (Leomark)
Don't Get Eaten (Freestyle)
Drag Me to Fest Tales from the Italian Horror (Rustblade)
Drained (Level 33)
The Dwelling (Uncork'd)*
Dye Hard (Zapruderfix)
An Easter Bloom / The Blessing Bracelet (Cinedigm)

Easter under Wraps / Home by Spring / Tulips in Spring (Cinedigm)*
Eat the Night (MVD)
The 11th Patient (Uncork'd)*
Elmo's World Elmo Loves to Giggle (Cinedigm)
Endless Calls for Fame The Story of the New Rising Sons (Gravitas)*
Ernest Cole Lost and Found (Magnolia)
Every Little Thing (Kino)
Ex-Husbands (Kino)
Eye for an Eye 2 Blind Vengeance (Well Go)
Faces of Schlock / Bleeding Through (Alpha)*
Feeling Randy (Breaking Glass)*
Files on JFK (Bruder)
The Final Possession (SRS)
The Four Feathers (Alpha)*
Fraser 2023 Season 2 (Paramount)
Funny Cow (Rising Sun)
Funny Woman Season 2 (Paramount)*
The Gateway (Uncork'd)*
Gimp Pimp & The Saxophone Samurai (Die Star)*
The Girl Who Wore Yellow Lace (SRS)
Gladiator II (Paramount)
Gladiators (Kino)
Glitch Ditch 37 (Acid Bath)*
Glitch Ditch 38 (Acid Bath)*
Glitch Ditch 39 (Acid Bath)*
Glitch Ditch 40 (Acid Bath)*
God Save the Queens (Indican)*
The Grand Son (Uncork'd)*
Great Migrations A People on the Move (Paramount)
Gunner (Kino)
Guns of Redemption (Cinedigm)
Hank's Christmas Wish 2: The Nutcracker (BMG)
Have a Nice Trip: Micro vs. Macro-Dosing for Healing (Zapruderfix)
Head over Heels (Cinedigm)*
History Kids Abraham Lincoln (Wonderscape)
Houwood Season 1 (Burning Bulb)
How to Clear a Cluttered Mind (Zapruderfix)
The Imposter (Random)
In Their Words Stories of Alien Contact (Zapruderfix)
Inserts (Warner)*
It Watches (Uncork'd)
It's a Doll's World (BMG)
Johnny Guesome (Uncork'd)
Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth with Bill Moyers (Film Movement)
Kat and the Band (Rising Sun)
Ken Burns The Statue of Liberty (Paramount)
Ken Burns Thomas Jefferson (Paramount)
The Klezmer Project (Kino)
Kraven the Hunter (Sony)
Lake George (Magnolia)
Landing Lake (Uncork'd)
Laws of Man (Well Go)
Legacy (Rising Sun)*
The Lighthouse

(Uncork'd)*
Limbo (Uncork'd)*
Little Bites (AMD)*
The Lord of the Rings The War of the Rohirrim (Warner)*
Lost Joy (Freestyle)*
Lost on a Mountain in Maine (Breaking Glass)*
Lost Tombs of Notre Dame (Paramount)
Lulu and the Electric Dreamboat (Distribution Solutions)*
The Man with the Iron Heart (Paramount)
Marcello Mio (Strand)
Maul Dogs (Uncork'd)
McCartney Now and Then (Rising Sun)
Meet the Firm Revenge in Rio (Rising Sun)*
Merkel (Gravitas)*
Meth Gator (Kino)
Moana 2 (Buena Vista)
Mobile Homes (Uncork'd)
Monster High Season 2 (Paramount)*
Morning Show Mysteries Complete Movie Collection (Cinedigm)
Most Horrible Things (Rising Sun)*
Mother, Couch (Film Movement)
The Mother of All Lies (Film Movement)*
Mr. Show Complete Collection (Warner)
Murder Anyone? (Uncork'd)*
Muriel and Joyce Get a Boat (X4)*
Mysteries of the Southern Wild (Zapruderfix)
The Naked Maja (Warner)*
Night of Wrath (Deskpop)*
Nosferatu (Universal)*
The Nursery (Uncork'd)*
Olga Knows Best? (My Crazy Life)*
Once Again (For the First Time) (Indican)*
Operation Undead (Well Go)*
Othello (Rising Sun)*
The Ouija Exorcism (Uncork'd)
Outpost in Malaya (Warner)*
Overkill (Rising Sun)
Parable (Rising Sun)*
Patriot A Nation at War (Rising Sun)*
Paw Patrol Air Rescue (Paramount)
PBS Kids Every Day Is Earth Day (Paramount)
Playground (Uncork'd)
Pomegranate (Freestyle)*
The Possession Diaries (Uncork'd)*
Preacher's Kid (Warner)*
Prodigy (Uncork'd)
Quackser Fortune Has a Cousin in the Bronx (MVD)
Quantum Leap Season 2 (Universal)
Ravenswood (Uncork'd)
The Real West (Cinedigm)
Reaper (Uncork'd)
Rebound (Uncork'd)
Red One (Warner)
Resistance They Fought Back (Paramount)
The Road to Elat (Kino)*
Roadkill (Rising Sun)*
Rock & Roll The Movie (Uncork'd)
The Room Next Door (Sony)

Safe House (Alpha)*
The Saturday Night Kid (Alpha)*
The Secret Cup (Zapruderfix)
Seeds (Uncork'd)
The Session Man Nicki Hopkins (Alan Ferguson)*
Shadow Operations UFO Crash Evidence & Cover Up (Zapruderfix)
Shameless Complete Series (Warner)
Silencio (Uncork'd)
Skinford The Curse (Leomark)
Slasher Fetish 2 (Die Star)*
Sleepers (Deskpop)
The Smurfs Season 1 (Paramount)*
Social Studies Kids Telling the Difference between Rules and Laws (Wonderscape)
Soldier of War (Uncork'd)
Southern Pride (Uncork'd)
St. Bernard Syndicate (Uncork'd)*
Standing on the Shoulders of Kibbles The Bubbles and the Shitrocks Story (MVD)
Star Trek The Lower Decks Final Season (Paramount)
The Stress Is Killing Me (Freestyle)*
Superconsciousness The Power Within (Zapruderfix)
Survive (Samuel Goldwyn)*
The Twyn Two (Uncork'd)*
There's a Zombie Outside (Gravitas)*
Thine Ears Shall Bleed (Rising Sun)
This Is Our Home (Uncork'd)*
This Place (Freestyle)*
Time Rewind (BMG)
Timestalker (Level 33)
To Die Alone (Distribution Solutions)*
Topper (Deskpop)
Treasures of Terror V.3 (Leomark)
Trick or Treat (MVD)
TT Isle of Man 2024 Review (Duke)
Tulsa King Season 2 (Paramount)
The UFOs of Soesterberg (Leomark)*
UnBroken (Kino)
Uncle Scazo's Toxic and Terrifying TV Hour (SRS)
Voices in the Deep (Burning Bulb)*
Waiting for the Light (Warner)*
War of the Ninja Monsters Jaron vs Gaura (SRS)
Warden (Freestyle)*
Weekend in Taipei (Ketchup)*
Welcome Danger (Reel Vault)*
Who They Are (Zapruderfix)
Wildcat (Oscilloscope)*
The Witch Game (Rising Sun)*
Wolf (Bounty)
Wolf Man (Universal)
A Woman of Paris (Criterion)
Women Talking (Warner)
Women Who Run Hollywood (Kino)

*Did not appear on last month's *Coming Attractions* listing

Coming Attractions

The following select DVD titles are promised for the near future. How many of them will show up is never a certainty. Logical subdivisions appear unmarked within each division. Titles which did not appear on last month's list are marked with an arrow (→) and are added to the bottom of subdivisions so that the longest awaited titles appear at the top within each grouping:

From AMD:

Dalgiesch Season 3

→ Lovely Molly

→ Bloody Axe Wound

→ Mayfair Witches Season 2

→ Foyle's War Complete Series (29 platters)

→ Inspector Ellis Season 1

From BMG:

→ The Colonizer

→ Was Once a Hero

→ Taken down

From Brainstorm:

→ Some Other Woman

From Breaking Glass:

→ Butcher's Bluff

From Bruder:

→ Files on JFK

→ Santa's Second Wife

From Buena Vista:

Mufasa The Lion King A Complete Unknown

From Burning Bulb:

→ The Final Contestant

→ Ronnie's Quest

From Cinedigm:

For the Love of the Game 6-Movie Collection

Junebug / His & Hers

The Cases of Mystery Lane 2-Movie Collection

→ The Lost Valentine / The Magic of Ordinary Days / The Valley of Light

→ Panda Bear in Africa

→ The Heiress and the Handyman / Finding Love in Mountain View

→ Mystery 101 6-Movie Collection

→ Branching Out / Romance in Style / Mid-Love Crisis

From Cineverse:

→ The Last Sharknado It's about Time

From Classicflix:

→ The Proud Rebel

From Criterion:

Anora Room 666/Room 999

From Decal:

→ The Comeback Trail

→ McVeigh

→ Presence

From Deskpop:

→ Good Earth

From Die Star:

→ The Knight Knife

From Dreamscape:

First Lady

Heidi Season 1 V.1

King of Glory

Tashi Season 1

20th Century Icon The Kennedy Curse

From Film Movement:

→ The Art of Nothing

→ Artie Shaw: Time Is All You've Got

→ Tarpon

From First Run:

Trinity

Without Arrows

→ Final Vows

From Freestyle:

→ When the Ringlights Dim

→ Seneca On the Creation of Earthquakes

From Full Moon:

The Young Seducers 1-3

From Gravitas:

→ Shiver Me Timbers

→ Lilies Not for Me

→ Desert Fiends

→ Relative Control

→ Man Goes on Rant

→ Vitalik An Ethereum Story

→ Call of the Void

→ A Lion's Game

From Indiepix:

→ Body Odyssey

From ITN:

→ Hidden

From JLTV:

→ Remembering the Catskills

From Ketchup:

→ The Day the Earth Blew Up A Looney Tunes Movie

From Kino:

World Series Champs

The 2023 World Series (Texas Rangers)

Liza A Truly Terrific Absolutely True Story

UnBroken

Aum The Cult at the End of the World

There's Still Tomorrow

Ape x Mecha Ape

New World Order

The Sidewalks of Bangkok

Mogwai If the Stars Had a Sound

The Art of Crime

Seasons 6 & 7

→ Janis Ian: Breaking Silence

→ The Empire

→ American Delivery

→ 24 Hours to D-Day

→ Las Tres Sisters

→ Dianne Warren Relentless

→ Fallen

→ Being Maria

From Leomark:

→ Neon Sky

From Lionsgate:

Flight Risk

→ The Unbreakable Boy

→ Knox Goes Away

→ Rookie Blue Complete Series (22 platters)

→ Talk to Me

→ Retribution

→ Bitten Complete

Series (10 platters)

→ The Night They Came Home

From Magnolia:

Night Call

→ The Quiet Ones

From Mill Creek:

→ Green and Gold

→ No Address

→ Solitude

From Moikai:

→ Michael Smith Mike's Box

From MPI:

Get Away

→ The Bearded Mermaid

→ Born for You

→ Kidnapping Inc.

→ Dead on the Vine

→ Late Night with the Devil

From Music Box:

Good Bad Things

From MVD:

Motorpsycho

Russ Meyer's Up!

→ Lead Belly: The Man Who Invented Rock & Roll

→ The Bikini Carwash Company Bubble Feature

→ Tunnel Vision

→ Juice / Daddy Dearest

→ The Beast Hand

→ Costa Rican Summer

→ Rock Bottom

From My Way:

Hanukkah

From Ocean Avenue:

The Way

From Oscilloscope:

Wildcat

→ The Vourdalak

From Paramount:

Big Cats Small World

Sonic the Hedgehog 3

What Are UFOs?

→ Women of World War II

→ Lioness Season 2

→ Landman Season 1

→ Wolf Hall The Mirror and the Light

→ PBS Kids Let's Go on a Trip

→ Dino Birds

→ Museum Alive with David Attenborough

→ Egypt's Tombs of Amun

→ Pompeii's Secret Underworld

→ Forgotten Hero

Walter White and the NAACP

→ Marie Antoinette Season 2

→ Miss Austen

→ Yellowstone Season 5 V.2

From Quiver:

→ Cleaner

From Random:

→ On the Wing

From Rising Sun:

→ Live Fast Live Free

→ Macbeth

→ Love Yourself Today

From Soli Deo:

→ Brothers after War

From Sony:

One of Them Days

→ Paddington in Peru

→ I'm Still Here

→ Outlander Season 7

From SRS:

Amityville Backrooms

From Strand:

→ Viet and Nam

From Synergetic:

→ The Hand

From 360:

→ Cassettes Go Hi-Fi / Amplify / Analog

→ Pluto The Dwarf Planet

→ The Best of the Sound & Vision Film Festival V.1

→ Greatest Mysteries of Ancient Egypt / Great Mysteries of the Sphinx / Great Mysteries of Tutankhamun

From Tuff Gong:

Marley

From Universal:

Dog Man

Love Hurts

Valiant One

→ Heart Eyes

→ Last Breath

→ My Dead Friend Zoe

→ The VeggieTales Show Complete Series (3 platters)

→ Hysteria! Season 1

From Virgil:

→ Fish War

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