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May the Force be with us for a very long time

'The Force Awakens,' of course, has a double meaning, referring not only to the resurgence of the psychic powers present in some characters within the **Star Wars** universe, but also to the fact that, after a near-generational hibernation, the big screen special effects franchise is not only back, but likely here to stay for quite some time. As has been proven by both successful and unsuccessful franchises, the better it is, the more profitable it will be, so may the series amass untold profits for years to come.

4 minutes of deleted scenes are included on the second platter of the three-platter Walt Disney Home Video *Blu-ray + DVD + Digital HD* release, **Star Wars The Force Awakens** (UPC#786936849769, \$40). Most of those scenes were unneeded and were sensibly trimmed out for time, but the first scene offered, which lasts barely a half-minute, should have been left in the film. It would seem that, after having worked on it for so long, the filmmakers no longer realized that it would be necessary for viewers coming to the film for the first time, to better follow the arc that one of the heroes, who begins as a 'storm trooper' working for the bad guys, takes to his enlightenment. Without that sequence, you really have no idea what is going on with him until much later, and his activities become a slight distraction rather than part of the hyper-charged narrative flow, at least during the first time you see the film. But otherwise, the movie is almost flawless. It does have the same kinds of irritations that many of the **Star Wars** movies have had, presenting, for example, a spaceship that is about the size of Connecticut or something, but limiting the action inside of it to a single office building's worth of hallways and elevators. Otherwise, though, wow! Unfettered by the misguided hands of a creator that no one could stand up to, the film, which appears by itself on one BD platter and again on a DVD platter, gives committees a good name. It captures the spirit, the joy, the imagination, and the sheer what-we-love-about-the-movies pleasure that everyone felt the first time they saw a **Star Wars** film, and it is designed not only to delight fans who cherish the earlier films, but to invite a brand new generation to fall in love with the series for the same reasons.

Running 136 minutes, the 2015 movie is not about the spectacle of special effects, but about the excitements of serialized action and the emotional pull of characters who care for one another and who find a common interest in a shared morality. Nevertheless, the special effects are marvelous. Despite all of the outer space movies that have been produced since the first **Star Wars** films came out, and there have been some good ones, **The Force Awakens** is still dazzling with its WWII movie-inspired dogfights, its bemused imagining of alien creatures, intelligent and otherwise, its endearing robots, and its under-appreciated sense of historical scope—there are ruins of previous untold stories everywhere you turn. Of all the surprises—and the movie's ending can instill tears in those who have lived with **Star Wars** films for a long time—the very best moment comes somewhere in the middle, where one of the primary villains takes off his mask for the first time to reveal not a wizened, damaged being, but a Heathcliff-like dreamboat, whose damage is all on the inside. This isn't just great storytelling, it is great moviemaking; it is an understanding of how motion pictures utilize their unique artistic format to harness the infinite fluctuations of the human presence, and how that aspect to films is still critically valid, regardless of the pyrotechnics and fantasy decoration going on around it.

The BD presentation is total perfection. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, the picture is sharp and endlessly detailed. The 7.1-channel DTS sound has a rich bass, a crisp punch, and a totally immersive presence. There is an audio track that describes the action ("Han leads the way into a tavern full of odd aliens. A short hairy being with pointy ears scampers towards a gaming table. The gamblers wager on bouncing metallic balls. At the bar, a four-foot tall alien with leathery skin stacks cups on a tray,

and suddenly turns."), alternate French and Spanish audio tracks, and optional English, French and Spanish subtitles.

The DVD platter, which is also available as a separate release (UPC#786936849806, \$30), just has a 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track, although the sound is still rousing. The picture looks really good, as well, even if it can't quite achieve the brilliance of the BD. The DVD has the same language options as the BD, and no special features.

Along with the deleted scenes, the second BD platter has a terrific 69-minute production documentary that works its way chronologically through the film's creation, with one delightful highlight after another, and 42 minutes of additional material that didn't make the primary documentary, but are still full of wonderful details about the actors and the effects. Additionally, there is a 3-minute charity promotional piece.

Then we take Berlin

In the wee hours of the morning, a waitress who has to go to work soon, steps out of a club in Berlin where she has been dancing the night away, but flirts with several men who couldn't get in. Rather than going straight home to get some rest, she hangs out with them, and ends up liking one of the men so much that she's game for driving the getaway car when they go off to commit a robbery. And, naturally, things don't go entirely as planned. The film, however, goes exactly as planned, except for one moment when one of the actors drops a cigarette that is handed to him.

The tag line for **Victoria**, a German Films Adopt Films Blu-ray release (UPC#688713080740, \$35), which is plastered all over the jacket and the platter, says, "One city. One night. One take." 'Take,' of course, refers to the robbery, but it also refers—in an unusual promotional angle that draws attention to the filmmaking style being employed—to the fact that the 138-minute feature was shot without an edit. No hidden wipes, no sneaky blackouts, nothing. They start the film on the dance floor and 2 hours plus later, it is over. That's the reason the movie is taking place in the loneliest hours of the night, so there are no interruptions by curious or intrusive civilians. The film is cleverly constructed. As the protagonists drive or otherwise travel from one place to another, each destination is a little isolated and confined, so that dramatic business there can play out for a while until it is time to move on to the next location. But the film is more than simply a stunt. Its format manifests an incredible amount of suspense and excitement, especially since there is never a release from the tension. Additionally, the romance is believable, because you are with the waitress, impressively played by Laia Costa, without a break (two hours after starting the film, she lets loose a storm of tears), and so you can follow her emotional path on a minute level and see why she makes the sequential choices that she makes. If the film were edited, then you'd have to assume that some of her development occurred off screen, and you can argue that her emotional shift is not believable—people often fall in love in the movies way too fast, anyway—but when you're with her the entire time, you see every step and you don't question it. She's a foreigner and doesn't speak German (a lot of the film is in English, but there is subtitling for the German dialog, which cannot be suppressed), so she feels kind of alone and was clearly looking to make some sort of psychological connection with somebody that evening. What she got, however, was more than she bargained for. Directed by Sebastian Schipper, the 2015 feature may seem a little improvised or stalled at first, but that's only because the characters are getting to know one another. Once it gets up to speed, it is exhilarating, and you are riveted to its visceral experience until the end credits finally break the spell.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1. The color transfer is sharp and the 5.1-channel Dolby sound is fine. The audio is edited—there is a nice musical score by Nils Frahm that replaces the ambient sound at key moments—and directional effects are limited, but there is enough dimensionality to convey the film's late night atmosphere.

Supernatural action

A surprisingly complex and entertaining special effects extravaganza, **The Last Witch Hunter**, has been released by Lionsgate (UPC#031398234371, \$30). Although it feels like it might have been taken from a comic book series or a videogame, it is based upon an original screenplay, with plenty of wiggle room for sequels should its home video fortunes prove to be more beneficent than its boxoffice fate. The film may have been too complicated for mass audiences, but that is one of the central factors of its appeal, that you really have to pay attention to what is happening and follow the logic of the hero's efforts, without being distracted by the pyrotechnics. Vin Diesel stars as the immortal title character, who kind of works as a one-man witch police. Like the world of **Harry Potter**, covens are allowed to exist in modern society unbeknownst to regular mortals. When his mortal handler—the 36th one he has had through the ages—is murdered, he begins investigating the death, which leads him to discover that one of the witch queens that he originally defeated centuries earlier is planning a comeback. What he doesn't realize is that he is a key part of her plans. Michael Caine (it was Caine's presence in the trailers that motivated us to give the film a shot) and Elijah Wood co-star, with Rose Leslie as a young witch that Diesel's character befriends in spite of himself. While on a general structural template, the film has a steady series of big effect fights and battles, with the most elaborate at the finale, it serves that format quite effectively, using both wit and intelligence, so that if you aren't alienated by the genre in principle, you should have a good time.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The picture looks fine, and while fanciful, the effects are not distractingly artificial. The DTS sound is energetic and has a reasonably strong impact. There is an audio track that describes the action ("On a residential street, a young boy with puffed curly hair gets off a school bus. He looks around, then trudges down a sidewalk. He stops, noticing gummy bears on the ground. He picks up a green one, examining it. He looks down an alleyway, noticing a whole trail of gummy bears. He follows it. The trail opens into a sunny backyard. A tree filled with gummy bears grows in the center of it. The boy grins and runs up to the tree. He picks candy from between the leaves."), an alternate Spanish track, optional English and Spanish subtitles, a lively and engaging trailer, a good 30-minute collection of promotional featurettes, two deleted scenes running 6 minutes and sensibly trimmed, although they do add a bit more color to the feature, and a terrific 9-minute animated segment, narrated by Caine, that fills in the film's backstory.

The director, Breck Eisner, delivers an excellent commentary track, talking constantly about all aspects of the film's production, from the story development and the narrative to the performances, the shooting logistics (Pittsburgh for New York), the special effects in great detail, and many other topics that demonstrate just how thorough and extensive filmmakers must be to achieve what you take for granted on the screen. "We decided that we wanted to have his sword on fire. That then became a process of building many different swords. There was the metal sword, the actual metal sword, that we used for weight to left to do scenes when he wasn't close to another actor; there was the rubber sword for when they were close; there was a sword with just a handle, for when we put a digital blade on it; there was a half sword, for when he'd have half a blade on it, for when he'd get close to actors; and then we had to get into the swords that had fire. So we had one sword that had a cable, which we ran gas through, that he'd wear a canister of gas on his back and we'd actually light it on fire for scenes where he wasn't fighting another actor or he wasn't holding the sword in the wrong position that it would burn him. There was a sword that was wrapped in a cloth that we'd light on fire that would smoke and give us a different type of fire for certain scenes—darker scenes we didn't want as bright a fire, a different look of fire, or we couldn't trail a cable behind him, he couldn't wear the gas canister. And then there were multiple-length swords that were coated in red and orange flickering LED lights that created a lighting effect for the sword, and those we would use when he was fighting other people in a shot, or putting the sword in a place where it would burn him. We would then replace the LED sword with a flaming metal sword. So for every day that we were shooting with the sword, we had to have those dozen or so swords, multiple copies of each of those dozen or so ready to go, and make sure that we had the right one always working."

Hateful

Ultra Panavision 70 and Super Panavision 70 were widescreen cinematography formats that rivaled Cinerama and Todd-AO, and were most often employed in grand, big budget motion picture spectacles, intended to convey to the viewer an added level of opulence that justified the likely higher ticket price. Most of the films were terrific fun, not so much because they had extra wide and enormous images, but because the utilization of the format inspired the filmmakers to treat viewers to sequences that could fill such framing advantageously. It didn't have to be something like a chariot race, it could simply be a camera peering over a cliff to watch an umbrella blow down to the beach below, but the formats improved the movies in ways that often drive critics crazy. In a large theater with a grand sound system, a problematic or rote drama, if it had enough essential star power and at least a little artistry, became a mesmerizing spectacle and genuinely rewarding

entertainment. The quality of its intellectual content was raised by the visceral thrill of its presentation, and someone could argue until they were blue in the face that the film was a mediocre representation of the human condition. It didn't matter, because it was bigger than life.

It isn't necessary to go into too many details here, but Super Panavision 70 was sort of the little brother of the formats and Ultra Panavision 70 was the big brother. Ultra was a bit more expensive to set up and gave you slightly wider image, and there were only ten films that were made in that format, although all ten are grand spectacles and many of them are readily counted among everyone's favorite films (hey, we've always loved **The Hallelujah Trail**).

So, in 2015, Quentin Tarantino decided to make a western called **The Hateful Eight**, and what would be more natural for such a motion picture fanatic as Tarantino than to shoot an adventure set in the beauty and grandeur of old Wyoming in Ultra Panavision 70? And therefore he did...except that less than a half-hour of it was shot outdoors and the rest of the movie—we'll get to the actual running time in a moment—takes place in either the cramped quarters of a stagecoach cabin or the slightly more spacious but still confined interior of a stagecoach roadhouse, where the eight characters are waylaid by a blizzard and one or more of them, like the old **Twilight Zone** episode about the alien in the diner, are not who they claim to be. Now it is a separate tradition in widescreen filmmaking that the format be employed for small, tightly confined dramas, often drawn from stage works, as the filmmakers do everything in their power to enhance the visual stimulation of a work that was originally conceived and popularized through conversation alone. Tarantino, of course, is famous for his ability at creating conversation. When not talking a mile a minute himself, the dialog he creates is so renown that it infests the soundtrack albums of his movies, interrupting the music. But to scrape away the cobwebs and blow the dust off lenses that had been sitting in some closet in Panavision for more than half a century, just so he could shoot what in essence is a stageplay, albeit a Grand Guignol melodrama (more than one head is blown to smithereens, and that's not the grossest thing that happens), is a huge joke not just on the viewer, but on the history of motion pictures.

And both the The Weinstein Company Anchor Bay Entertainment Blu-ray release (UPC#013132638485, \$40) and DVD release (UPC#0131-32638478, \$30) are also jokes on whomever puts out the cash for them, because they are not replications of the original 70mm 'Road Show' presentation of the film. That version ran 187 minutes, while the version that is available on these home video releases is a replication of the 'general release' theatrical presentation, which only runs 167 minutes. We suspect that is why they are both accompanied by a paltry 13 minutes of promotional featurettes although, ironically, one of those featurettes is devoted to promoting the Road Show version of the movie rather than the one at hand. We would assume and certainly hold out hope that a fancier presentation of the movie will be released at some point down the road, once as many of these as possible have already been sold. The DVD has just 5.1-channel Dolby Digital, which is the logo that appears at the end of the movie's credits. The BD has a DTS track, although it is also confined to 5.1 channels and displays the same credit scroll. Perhaps that hoped-for presentation of the Road Show version, which was a genuine DTS presentation, will expand its audio parameters as well.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.73:1, and it does look gorgeous. The audio on the BD has a general dimensionality—the blizzard whirling around the roadhouse is ever present—and a decent kick here and there, with the audio on the DVD just a little less compelling. Ennio Morricone's musical score is a thrilling throwback to the confusions that occurred when other cultures started making westerns, and it fits perfectly in this regard. There is an alternate Spanish track and optional English and Spanish subtitles. The film is actually quite fun, with a witty script full of twists and flashbacks to keep you wondering what will happen next, and several enjoyable performances that make spending time with the otherwise dastardly characters well worthwhile, but not when it is missing 20 minutes of depth, color, drama, jelly beans and further wit.

What were they thinking?

Imagine you are the chief of production at a large movie studio. Would you green light a moderately expensive film about Nineteenth Century whalers? Bookended and periodically interrupted by the story of Herman Melville writing *Moby Dick*? How about when the whalers are stranded in lifeboats and reduced to cannibalism to stay alive? Did somebody really think

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that audiences were going to flock to something like that just because the trailer has some splashy action scenes? And doesn't anybody realize that whaling is no longer the romantic occupation it once was, and that the movie might just as well be an adventure about the heroic crew of a slaving ship for all of the moral recognition the heroes have about the slaughter they hope to achieve? Well, that was 2015 for you. Ron Howard decided to make a movie about, 'the events that inspired *Moby Dick*,' and sure enough, **In the Heart of the Sea** opened for the holiday season and pretty much disappeared by New Year's.

Warner Home Video has since issued the film as a *Blu-ray + DVD + Digital HD* (UPC#883929425921, \$36). Modern special effects do assure that the action scenes have the sort of spectacle that makes a trailer look promising. Running 122 minutes, Chris Hemsworth stars as the experienced first mate on a whaling ship that sets out from Nantucket with a snooty captain played by Benjamin Walker and eventually has the misfortune to run into a large and vindictive whale. Maybe one could still buy into such a film if it were legitimately literate—the telefilm version of *Moby Dick* (Oct 98) was terrific—but in that the tale is being told to Melville by an old man who was just a boy on the voyage and could not possibly have been witness to many of the key scenes being depicted, the film really isn't good enough to justify its existence. If you are a fanatic for movies about old sailing ships, then you will probably enjoy the feature, cannibalism, whale massacre and all. The performances are fine, the effects are thrilling and the movie's pace never hits the doldrums, even when the sailors are trapped in them. And the movie seems to have a lesson that hunting whales is probably not a good idea, even if pumping oil out of the ground isn't that much better. But the number of viewers who are going to seek the movie out, and are going to enjoy it when they find it, is probably fairly limited and hardly worth the effort the filmmakers endured to bring it to the screen.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The special effects are impressive, although the cinematography is rarely as awe-inspiring as the filmmakers seem to want it to be. The image transfer is crisp. The Dolby Atmos sound has strong directional effects and a reasonably good punch. There is an audio track that describes the action ("Head first through the blowhole, Thomas descends into the cavity, where slick blood coats the interior. He plops into the puddle of cloudy, yellow spermaceti, retching, the bucket lying at his feet."), alternate French, Spanish and Portuguese audio tracks, optional English, French, Spanish and Portuguese subtitles, 51 minutes of decent production featurettes, 43 minutes of deleted and extended scenes that we wouldn't have minded seeing left in the film, giving it more of an old-fashioned adventure format, although they do alter the dynamic between Hemsworth's character (he's nastier) and Walker's character (he's more magnanimous), and a really good 29-minute documentary about the true events that the film is based upon, including the exploration of a wrecked whaling ship that was also helmed by the captain of the ship depicted in the film.

The DVD included in the set is also available separately (UPC#883929425976, \$29), although the 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound is not as grand. The presentation has the same language options except for the Portuguese, and one of the lesser production featurettes, running 7 minutes.

The original **Point Break** (Aug 01) was a really stupid movie about surfers who robbed banks so they could otherwise live the life of surfers, and a hip FBI agent—hey, isn't that an oxymoron?—who goes undercover to join them and bonds a bit too fervently with the gang's leader. The film did have the star presence of two telegenic actors, and it is because of their involvement that the movie was not immediately and totally forgotten, but from a standpoint of logic, of dramatic integrity, and even of visceral action, the film was an utter flop.

So now, or again from 2015, there is a brand new **Point Break**, released by Warner Home Video as a *Blu-ray + DVD + Digital HD* (UPC# 883929455287, \$36). It has no charismatic stars, it has an even less logical plot, and no dramatic integrity whatsoever, but at least it goes for more than just surfing. Luke Bracey stars as a high school drop out who somehow made it into the FBI and is now running around the world chasing after extreme sports aficionados who are also pulling off Robin Hood-like capers in the same locales where they are doing their death-defying stunts. Naturally, he fits right in with them—the FBI never made him cut his hair or get rid of his tattoos—and is soon racing around the globe doing the sports stuff with them. When he finally manages to break up a caper—on a mountain road in the Alps—he shouts, "Freeze! FBI!" like he has the authority to do that anywhere, and when the bad guys get away because he has to make a choice and save innocent truck drivers from a landslide, his boss chastises him for losing them. At another point, he goes deep-breath diving with a young lady off of a yacht, in the middle of the night, but you can see them both perfectly no matter how far down they go. The film is completely ridiculous, and the sad thing is, the stunt performers who risked their lives to do the unique gags were pretty much wasting their time, since the film is fiction, and so casual viewers will assume that it is all computer graphics anyway.

The film's listed running time is 114 minutes, but the end credit scroll goes on for 15 of that, which is just as well, because sitting through the other part of the movie is practically an extreme sport in itself. The

presentation is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The image is crisp and colors are vivid. The DTS sound has a reasonable amount of energy and an adequate dimensionality. There are two audio tracks that describe the action, one in macho American ("Utah walks through a parking lot beside an apartment complex. Some skateboarders glide past. Dressed in an unbuttoned flannel shirt, with his blond hair pulled back in a study ponytail, Utah approaches weathered buildings covered in graffiti. A handful of tough looking guys stares him down as he passes. Utah walks by an abandoned car, flames lashing out from inside the abandoned vehicle.") and one in wussy British ("There are some young people hanging around by the apartment block. A couple of skateboarders roll past. Utah walks on. He crosses a wasteland and scans warily, as he approaches a rundown tunnel covered in graffiti. Several figures loiter beside a couple of tall pillars. They're watching a wrecked car blaze. Smoke and flames belch from the burning vehicle. Utah passes the flaming wreck nervously."), along with alternate French, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian audio tracks, optional English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian subtitles, two trailers, 8 minutes of brief promotional featurettes, and 8 minutes of deleted scenes that fill in unnecessary story details and add a couple of less spectacular stunts. The DVD included in the set is also available separately (UPC#883929455294, \$29) and has a dialed down 5.1-channel Dolby Digital audio track. Only the American descriptive audio track is included. The other language options have been retained, except for the Russian, and the deleted scenes are also carried over.

Women on the run

A female version of **The Defiant Ones**, sort of, the 1973 American-International Pictures pick up, **Black Mama, White Mama**, has been released as a terrific *Blu-ray + DVD* by Arrow Video (UPC#76013782-7498, \$30). Shot in the Philippines, Pam Grier and Margaret Markov are convicts who escape the bus while being transported to torture, and wind up crossing the countryside with a thick chain attached to their wrists. At one point, they mug a pair of nuns and put on the nuns' outfits, but how they get the sleeves on is never explained. Running 87 minutes, the first 20 minutes, set in the prison, are glorious, including a shower scene, a fight and a few other delights. Despite the limited expense of the production, there is some artistry to it as well. The female convicts have bright yellow and paler salmon pink outfits, which are carefully placed across the otherwise drab interiors like flowers in a garden, while the guards are all in olive green, like weeds.

Once the two escape, one wants to go one way, and the other wants to go in the opposite direction. They have another fight while chained to each other, but gradually learn the value of cooperation. At the end, they are 'friends,' although the precise spiritual growth that led to this change in the relationship must have happened mostly off screen. Grier doesn't get too many opportunities to stretch her acting skills, but she is always magnetic, choosing to look angry instead of bored. Tall and thin, Markov's blonde hair descends well past the lower edge of her back, and despite the aforementioned fight and several days of crawling through the jungle, the hair remains perfectly clean and meticulously brushed. Nevertheless, the film is reasonably entertaining, despite its obvious superficialities. Excellent use is made of the Philippine extras, their dental work often highlighted in engaging close-ups, and the film is kind of set in a political environment, as both gangsters and corrupt officials are attempting to capture the heroines, while a band of guerillas are trying to rescue them. There are also several bloody gunfights.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The color transfer is excellent and the image is spotless. You can sometimes identify different layers of makeup when the lighting is direct. The monophonic sound is fine. There are optional English subtitles, a trailer, a still frame collection of promotional materials ("Chicks in chains!"), a nice 14-minute interview with Markov, who talks about her entire career and her memories of the shoot, a great 16-minute interview with co-star Sid Haig, who talks about his career, the film and shares some amusing tales about the shooting conditions in the Philippines, and an older 15-minute interview with director Eddie Romero, who talks about his career and mentions the feature briefly. A DVD included in the set has the same special features.

Film historian Andrew Leavold supplies a commentary track, talking about the Philippine movie industry, the cast and the crew, and the film's story, such as it is. Sometimes he spends a bit too much time describing what is happening on the screen, and at one point he rather amusingly fails to recognize the zodiac sex position poster, which was a ubiquity in the Seventies, when it appears on a wall in an office, and talks about it as if it were something unusual. Most of the time, however, he shares what he has learned from years of interviewing many of the people in front of and behind the camera, and creates a fairly viable snapshot of what the industry was like during that brief, shining moment when women's prison movies shot in the Philippines became the rage, thanks in part to the economics involved. Despite the rather paltry accommodations (Haig recalls opening the door to his 'hotel' room once and seeing a rat drag a kitten out of the window), the locations were relatively near a major metropolis, everyone spoke English, and the journeymen were skilled and cheap. "One of the reasons why the Americans kept coming back was the ability of the local crews to crank out film after film on really low budgets [and a] very small time frame, and thus get maximum bang for minimum bucks."

Bogart and Bacall on Blu-ray

We knew it was coming, because we've seen the movie so many times we almost understand the plot. In **The Big Sleep**, released on Blu-ray by Warner Home Video as an *Archive Collection* title (UPC#888574379421, \$22), Louis Jean Heydt, playing a character named 'Joe Brody,' opens the door of his apartment after a tense standoff inside with Humphrey Bogart's detective hero, 'Philip Marlowe,' and is immediately shot by an unseen perpetrator on the other side of the door. On the BD, however, the gunshots—there are two—come out with such a piercing 'pow-pow' that we jumped from our seat. And who says Blu-ray is only for big new special effects movies? Obviously, the more you turn up the monophonic audio track the more background noise there is, but you can still raise the levels pretty high without creating a distraction, and it's well worth it when the guns go off.

Warner released an excellent DVD in Mar 00. The sound quality doesn't come close to what the BD has to offer, but the full screen black-and-white picture is pretty much interchangeable. The DVD looked fantastic, and so does the BD. The BD also replicates—on a single side—the DVD's dual presentation of the classic 1946 Howard Hawks feature, co-starring Lauren Bacall, Martha Vickers and a sizzling brunette Dorothy Malone, and the initial 1945 test cut, in which the film was not nearly as distinctive or as sexy as it ended up being. Also included, along with the trailer, is a new minute-long introduction to the alternate version. A featurette was included on the DVD that compared the two versions, and it also appears on the BD (you have to go to the right on the Menu, after selecting the alternate version), but on the BD, at 36 minutes, it is more than twice as long as the DVD's version, not only detailing the major changes, but also explaining why they were made (mostly to fix up Bacall's part). The regular version runs 114 minutes and the test cut runs 115 minutes. The regular version of the film has alternate French, German, Polish and two types of Spanish audio tracks, and both versions have English, French, German, Polish and two types of Spanish subtitles.

There is an error at the beginning of John Huston's 1948 **Key Largo**, another Warner *Archive* Blu-ray (UPC#888574379445, \$22). It is basically a deliberate error on the part of the filmmakers, because in those days, who knew from Blu-ray? Anyway, Bogart, a WWII vet, is on a bus riding to the hotel in the titular location, where he wants to pay his respects to the family of a fellow soldier who didn't make it back. A cop pulls the bus over, looking for a pair of delinquents who will figure in the story later in a minor way. There is a location shot of the cop car and the bus on the causeway in the Keys, and there is a shot of the bus being pulled over next to some palm trees that is genuinely outdoors. The background has a morning fog and general cloud cover, but on the crisp, spotless BD, you can see quite clearly in the background, the hills of Southern California amid the fog. It's on the DVD (Mar 00) too, but it doesn't catch your eye there like it does on the Blu-ray. In general, while the DVD looked great, there were fleeting speckles throughout the presentation and a mild grain in the image. The BD has nary a speckle, and the grain is smoothed out, so that it still conveys the texture of the original cinematography, but it does not magnify that texture improperly. The monophonic sound also has a deeper delivery that does not distort quite as rapidly as the volume rises.

Bogart and Bacall star with Edward G. Robinson, Lionel Barrymore and Claire Trevor (Jay Silverheels plays one of the delinquents). Based upon a stageplay, Robinson is a gangster waiting for some confederates at the hotel run by the family Bogart's character is visiting when a hurricane hits and puts everyone's plans on hold. The film can be off-putting at first because Bogart is not the squeaky clean superhero he is in **The Big Sleep**. His character, who rises to heroism at the end, is flawed and human, but once you absorb that, then the nitty-gritty of the drama, and the excitement of the storm effects, are utterly engrossing and wholly satisfying. Because it was worked out originally on the stage, the characters have complex psychologies, and the story's morality structure is equally complicated. Running 100 minutes, it is terrific entertainment from beginning to end. There are alternate French, Spanish, German and Polish audio tracks, optional English, French, Spanish, German, Czech and Polish subtitles, and a trailer.

Early Hoffman

Remastered a long time ago for 5.1 stereo, the DTS tracks for the Criterion Collection Blu-ray release of **The Graduate** (UPC#715515151-68212, \$40) and the MGM 20th Century Fox Blu-ray (UPC#027616077066, \$15), are glorious. The music is warm and smooth, and finely detailed, enhancing the film's dynamic blend of nostalgia and topicality, and preserving the freshness of its humor and insight. The colors are also preserved with perfection, and the image has just a slight softness at times, to reinforce its now antique setting. The 1967 feature remains a vibrantly entertaining classic, primarily due to its marvelous performances and its inspired, meticulously constructed narrative—about a cougar before there were cougars, and the aimless young man who pulls out of her grasp when he meets her daughter—but it also endures because of the innovative film style employed by Mike Nichols, which includes its pulled-from-the-popular-culture musical score, its aggressively freeform editing, and its innovative cinematography—the camera goes into a swimming pool and underwater, 'wearing a diver's mask.' No matter how often you see the film, seeing it again is not only a delight, but it unfailingly reveals a greater depth and

richness with every screening.

The film is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The colors on the Criterion presentation are more intense than the colors on the MGM version, but do not lose an iota of sharpness. On both, the image is spotless, but in a direct comparison, the MGM version is just a little bit paler. The MGM presentation has an alternate French track in mono, optional English and Spanish subtitles, and a trailer. The Criterion version does have optional English subtitles, if you can figure out how to activate them.

Criterion supplies two commentary tracks. One is the passable analytical talk that was given by film historian Howard Suber on Criterion's LD release (Jan 88). The other is an absolutely riveting conversation between Nichols and Steven Soderbergh, as they talk about everything from the inspirations of specific lines of dialog to working with the other cast and crew members and the reasoning behind not only the camera angles and choices, but the editing, as well. Nichols, for example, reveals that some of the apprehension expressed by Hoffman's character came directly from the skits Nichols himself used to perform with Elaine May. He shares many stories about working with Bancroft, whom he had dated some time earlier, and how everyone was a bit intimidated by her character on the set. He also wonders wistfully why he never worked with her again. He explains why he turned down Robert Redford. "I would talk to Redford about it. We were good friends because we'd done *Barefoot in the Park* together, which was my first Broadway play and his second. And we were shooting pool in my rented stone house and I said, 'I don't think so. I don't think this is your part.' And he said, 'Why?' and I said, 'Because I don't think you can play a loser.' And he said, 'What are you talking about? Of course I can play a loser.' I said, 'All right. How many times have you struck out with a girl?' And he said, 'What do you mean?' And I said, 'I rest my case.'" Soderbergh, for his part, provides a constantly insightful analysis of every scene and often grills Nichols until he gets to the very heart of how the ideas came together and who contributed what, and yet, at the same time, they also branch off to talk about how viewers react to characters, how good actors make you think about the people you know, and about the social impact a film can have. "To be an 'idiot rebel' is something that was true for a lot of people, but it was completely unfashionable. [The producer] made me go to college after college running this before it opened, and I don't think you can guess the thing that I heard the most from college students, was over and over and over and over—'Why isn't it about Vietnam?' Because that was the fashionable topic, that was the topic that showed what a serious person you were, and how deeply involved, and to make a movie that was for young people and was not about Vietnam actually affronted them. It's hard to remember that different times have different fashions."

Also featured on the Criterion BD is an excellent 38 minute interview with Hoffman, who shares many stories about the shoot and his early days in New York, along with a nice 25-minute conversation between a very elderly Buck Henry, who wrote the screenplay, and an equally geriatric Lawrence Turman, who was the producer, although both men still have vivid memories of creating the film; an excellent 26-minute deconstruction of the film's editing and profile of editor Sam O'Steen; a fascinating 16-minute interview with Nichols by Barbara Walters before he started shooting the film; a 5-minute interview with Paul Simon by Dick Cavett in which he explains that the song that was turned into *Mrs. Robinson* was originally titled 'Mrs. Roosevelt,' which lets the song's other lyrics make a lot more sense; 13 minutes of screen tests, some of which appeared on the LD, showing how hopeless the casting had seemed before they brought in Hoffman; and a 26-minute retrospective appreciation of the film. The 23-minute documentary and the trailer that appeared on the LD have been carried over.

Hoffman had several more mainstream hits in the late Sixties and the early Seventies, but he also exercised a penchant for nonconformity by appearing in several very offbeat productions. Although washed up American actors or struggling TV stars would occasionally pick up some cash by making films in Italy, and Hoffman himself had already been there before he became a household name, Hoffman's choice to do Pietro Germi's **Alfredo Alfredo**, available from Mya Entertainment, Belmondo Entertainment and eOne Entertainment (UPC#812592010752, \$25), in 1972 is still a bit peculiar.

The film is mostly a broad farce, although it dials down its exaggerations in the last act to explore the futility of divorce. Hoffman's character is a meek banker who falls in love with what can only be described as a severely bipolar pharmacy clerk, played by Stefania Sandrelli. One moment she's all over him, the next she's cold or petulant, and the more she bounces him around, the more hooked he becomes. Running 107 minutes, the first act of the film is about their courtship, the second act is about their marriage, and the third act is about Hoffman's character moving on to greener pastures. At first it seems like the film cannot translate out of its original culture, and Hoffman's performance seems limited to the puppy dog ties that thrust him into stardom in **The Graduate**. The measured way in which his character does mature during the course of the film, however, is proof that he was not goofing off, and, in fact, the entire film seems to mature along with him. Sandrelli's character also goes from being a kooky gal with a sublimated dominant streak to being an unhinged, raging mix of anger, frustration and resentment. Not everyone will embrace the film, but it does seem to achieve much of what it sets out to accomplish, advancing from a simplified lampoon of romance to a reasoned examination of the pros and cons of serial monogamy. The film's excesses are also softened by an appealing Carlo Rustichelli musical score.

The film's opening credits are presented in letterboxed format with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1, but the rest of the movie is cropped (amusingly, the back of the jacket lists the 1.85:1 in one place and the 1.33:1 in another). That said, the framing never feels unbalanced, and it does give you better close-ups of the stars. The color transfer looks fresh and the image is free of wear. Presented in mono with minimal distortion, there is both an Italian track—the person dubbing Hoffman is even credited in the end credit scroll—and an English language track, in which Hoffman does his own dubbing. Since there are no subtitles, the English track is readily preferable. A minute-long montage of promotional materials is also included.

Although parts of it may be a bit dumb, **Alfredo Alfredo** is at least conceptually entertaining. The same cannot be said for the film Hoffman made in 1971 for National General Pictures with Ulu Grosbard, which has a particularly obnoxious title, **Who Is Harry Kellerman and Why Is He Saving Those Terrible Things About Me?** Released on Blu-ray by CBS and Kino Lorber Incorporated (UPC#738329203764, \$30), Hoffman plays a successful but self-isolated songwriter who learns that all of his girlfriends and business associates are being contacted by a mysterious person who claims that Hoffman's character has spoken ill of each one. Jack Warden plays a shrink with a deliberately bad German accent. The film shifts between extensive dream and fantasy sequences, psychiatrist gags, and Hoffman's character trying to find someone who will hang out with him. There are also a few musical numbers, although it is a stretch to think this guy is successful if that is what his songs sound like. Hoffman tries to deliver what is expected of him, but no one really seems to know what that is, so he's as lost as the film is. Some of his physical slapstick is fairly good, but the rest is painful. The film tries to embrace the idiosyncratic spirit of the Sixties, but by 1971, even that was lost. Yet, as a reprieve, just as you are about to shoot yourself or, not having a gun handy, reach for the remote and eject the program, Barbara Harris appears and saves the 108-minute film's final half-hour. She basically plays a potential girlfriend that the mysterious caller (really not so mysterious, the identify is fairly obvious right away) hasn't reached yet, but her performance is so sweet that not only do you become more involved and accepting of the movie while she is on the screen, but even Hoffman's performance gains a focus and sense of purpose while she is there. If you make it to her entrance—which is iffy—you'll be able to make it to the end.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The color transfer looks fresh. The image is a bit grainy at times, but that seems to be part of the cinematography, and the transfer is admirable. The monophonic sound seems to have different volume levels for the music and the dialog, and we found ourselves constantly raising and lowering the audio as a result. There is no captioning.

The earlier film Hoffman made in Italy? That would be **Madigan's Millions**, which was picked up in a bargain basement sort of way by Troma Team Video (UPC#790357925599, \$15). Directed by 'Stanley Prager' (Giorgio Gentili), the film was shot in 1966—before **The Graduate**—although it was not released anywhere until 1968, after **The Graduate** was a big hit. Cesar Romero has top billing, but no dialog, and is gone from the 87-minute film by the 6-minute mark (and a third of that was the opening credits). He plays a gangster who dies with a hidden fortune, and Hoffman is a bumbling American Treasury agent who is sent to Rome to locate the loot. Elsa Martinelli co-stars. Although George Raft's name appears on the jacket, he is not in the film.

Like most Italian movies from that era, the film was shot without sound recording and then dubbed after the fact. It has an intentionally international design—while most of the movie is set in Rome, there are scenes that take place in 'Washington D.C.'—and while incidental dialog, such as conversations with street vendors, remain in Italian, the film is primarily and, for most scenes except a scattered few, logically, in English. The question would be, however, not when the movie was shot, but when it was dubbed. After you sit through the copious special features on Criterion's **Graduate**, you come away readily believing that the director, the screenwriters and the original novelist were the true authors of the film. But while you do see a few of Hoffman's physical mannerisms that would later find their way into **The Graduate**, what you hear more extensively are his vocal inflections, and how much those inflections go into defining his character. If he sat down for the dubbing after he did **The Graduate**, then sure, he went with what worked before, but if he dubbed the film before meeting Nichols, then a decent percentage of the film's authorship is his alone to claim, and Nichols' greatest accomplishment was to have found him and cast him in the role.

As for **Madigan's**, the narrative is rather bumbling itself, honing essentially to the same traditions of Italian comedy that spawned **Alfredo Alfredo**. One can easily, for example, picture Roberto Benigni in Hoffman's role. The characters do little more than run back and forth a lot, with the tension—i.e., the seriousness with which the villains confront the heroes—gradually increasing as the climax approaches. What makes the film fully worthwhile, however, is again Hoffman's command of slapstick and physical comedy. He may have just been picking up a paycheck like any struggling actor, but he doesn't hold back on the pratfalls or the broad gags, and the delight with which his character, who is very much a nerd, responds to the excitement occurring around him is far more contagious than it has any right to be. Yes, by any technical standards it's a bad film, but that doesn't mean that you won't have fun if your own standards are lax enough.

The full screen picture is mildly cropped, but looks comfortably composed. The color quality is adequate. The source material does have quite a few scratches and speckles, and is fairly grainy. The monophonic sound is also quite scratchy, and the dubbing is not as vividly miked as the work on **Alfredo Alfredo**. The musical score seems to lift from Henry Mancini at times, but those are its only interesting moments. There is no captioning. It's been a while since we've reviewed a Troma release, but we'll spare you the details. There are many promotional featurettes for other Troma releases, and there is an utterly obnoxious 7-minute 'introduction' to the film by Troma's Lloyd Kaufman. The only featurette worth noting is a very nice 3-minute interview with producer Sid Pink, although the interview is geared towards his career as a whole, and **Madigan's** is never mentioned.

Blaxploitation matters

Blaxploitation films are easy enough to dismiss. Most are poorly written, poorly acted, poorly filmed and poorly edited; or, at least, they seem that way to viewers accustomed to the general standards of filmmaking. There is a reason why, despite these shortcomings, fans cannot get enough of them, much in the way that fans gorge on bad horror films, bad softcore sex films and so on. It is a niche. But there is also a component that makes blaxploitation movies different from horror movies and the like, something that gives them a greater vitality—politics. Responding to market forces, blaxploitation films were initially created to speak to a component of society that was otherwise being ignored by Hollywood, and that is what has allowed them to endure. However stiff the acting was or however confused the story seemed, the characters were genuinely reflecting a culture that was common to one part of America and completely unknown—and therefore otherwise unreflected—to the other part. Nerdy film enthusiasts, in fact, learned pretty much everything they know about African-American culture from these films, but their importance is not in their camp factors but in how significantly, for a brief but important time, the films showed audiences that heroes didn't have to be white, didn't have to have smooth hair, and didn't have to speak television English. By and large, the market, and hence, the fad, subsided, as Hollywood, always open to making a buck, recognized that the partial integration of African-American culture into the various film formats did not alienate white audiences as it had decades earlier, and so could enhance the returns on a product without a downside. It's always about economics, which is why, even in 2015, there was still a brouhaha over the Oscars not having enough African-American nominees. There was just enough integration in Hollywood to kill the market for separation, but not enough to dampen the interests of the majority of the paying audiences, at least on larger budgeted projects.

The best and most enduring blaxploitation features were those that included a pronounced political component, the measure of which is how great the hue and cry would be if the racial casting in the film were completely reversed. For white audiences, the concept of 'equality' means an evenly balanced society, but for black audiences, it means tipping the scales in the other direction, with the idea being that eventually, down the road, the scale will find its equilibrium, but for now, it's got some compensatin' to do. Hence, even if the fistfights look awkward and the sets look cheap, if the hero in the movie gets the better of the establishment, really sticks it to them, it is a total thrill regardless of its shortcomings.

The 1972 MGM production, **Melinda**, released by Warner Home Video as an *Archive Collection* title (UPC#888574389574, \$22), is unusual in a couple of ways and quite standard in a couple of others. Calvin Lockhart stars as a radio deejay who picks up a girl in a bar and has a fling with her for a couple of days before something tragic happens. In essence, the first half-hour of the 109-minute feature is a romance, with love scenes by a fireplace (in Los Angeles, go figure) on a bear skin rug. The dynamics of the romance and its impact on other characters is intriguing, and the film, by taking its time, delves into an admirable intellectual cul-de-sac, as the characters talk about their feelings and the nature of commitment. Eventually, however, the film becomes a detective film, as Lockhart's character realizes he knew virtually nothing about the girl and attempts to find out who she really is, while gangsters—Paul Stevens plays her boss, a Chicago hood—continually cross up his actions. Fortunately, Lockhart's character knows martial arts—he's been training with Jim Kelly (!)—and so the traditional blaxploitation rhythms of violence and power kick in at just the right time to energize the film and carry it to its rather bloody conclusion. Rosalind Cash and Vonetta McGee co-star, with Cash giving an especially fine and striking performance, filling what on paper would be a glamour part (as the ex-wife of Lockhart's character) with a homegirl look that counters every Hollywood standard for such roles, especially in 1972 (it also doesn't hurt, however, that the costume designer was apparently saving money by not bothering to buy brassieres for anyone). Hence, it is Cash, rather than Lockhart, who really embodies the film's political beacon, as the movie channels the social frustrations of opaque oppression and random violence into a recognizable tale of good guys, bad guys, greed and corruption. It is to protect her as much as it is to avenge others that Lockhart's character beats the stuffing out of Stevens' character at the climax.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The colors are fresh and finely detailed, and wear is minimal. The monophonic sound is fine. There is a musical score by Jerry Butler and Jerry Peters, which sounds great but is not effectively applied. There is no captioning, and a faded trailer is included that pretty much shows you the whole film.

3D Jupiter

We reviewed the Wachowski siblings' enjoyable 2015 pulp fantasy, Jupiter Ascending, in Jun 15. In addition to the standard Blu-ray release, however, Warner Home Video has also issued a *Blu-ray 3D + Blu-ray + DVD + Digital HD* presentation (UPC# 883929388622, \$45). The BD and DVD platters are identical to the previous release. The 3D platter has the same audio options and subtitling options as the BD, along with an additional Thai audio track and eight additional Asian subtitling options, and no other special features. The 3D effects are somewhat inconsistent, usually surging when there is a plethora of special effects and subsiding when there is not. Running 127 minutes, there are still plenty of opportunities to feast on the film's imaginative designs in three dimensions, but there is no particular thematic enhancement to the format's application and limited thrills. The best moment is probably an extended sequence in which, as the characters discuss matters and are later attacked by the villains, there are bees buzzing about that you may yourself be tempted to swat at.

The naughty Thirties

Five pre-Production Code features with varying degrees of what would later become unacceptable content are gathered in the Warner Home Video *Archive Collection* release, Forbidden Hollywood Volume 9 (UPC#888574298920, \$41). The first three films are presented on individual platters, and the final two share a platter. All of the movies are black and white, and are in full screen format with passable monophonic sound and no captioning.

Opening to a 'city montage' like an experimental film, after a bookending prolog, the 1932 Warner Bros. *Big City Blues*, directed by Mervyn LeRoy, stars Eric Linden as a small town boy trying to find success in New York, and Joan Blondell as a sympathetic party girl who does her best to protect him from the sharks. He falls in with a bad cousin, however, who cons him into paying for a party in a fancy hotel suite, and then someone gets killed. One of the excitements in the 63-minute program is that Humphrey Bogart, who didn't even earn a spot in the billing, shows up at the party and has a reasonably substantial part. Not much really happens in the movie, but the young man does learn his lessons about the big city, and the movie's entertainment come from being able to share his joys and troubles from a safe distance. Blondell, as usual, is wonderful, and while the film remains relatively demure, there is still plenty of activity and conversation—the dialog is often highly engaging—that would not be doable a few years later. The picture looks terrific, with a sharp focus, rich contrasts and barely a blemish. A trailer is also featured.

William Dix is a hardened criminal working on a chain gang in the 1932 RKO Pictures *Hell's Highway*, directed by Rowland Brown. The prison conditions are scandalously bad, and he bristles about that, but his irritation turns to panic when his younger brother is brought in, and he does everything he can to protect the boy from the vicious guards and from the boy's own impulses to be tough like his older brother. There are the inevitable escapes and riots, and the real villains, the corrupt prison officials, eventually get their comeuppance. Dix's performance is the primary component of the film's entertainment, as he conveys the sense of a tough guy whose gotten into trouble, but still remains sympathetic. The prison stuff is typical of such films, but reasonably exciting, so the 62-minute film holds your attention well enough, and such a flagrant condemnation of the system would not have been possible on film a couple of years later, when censors began protecting audiences not only from sex, but from negative assessments of public institutions. It's funny how those two go together, isn't it? The picture is soft and old looking, but not badly damaged. Contrasts are a little weak, but workable.

Set in a kind of bizarre Southern town made up almost entirely of white sharecroppers, Richard Barthelmess stars in the 1932 First National production directed by Michael Curtiz, *The Cabin in the Cotton*, playing the son of one of those poor sharecroppers who is bright enough to go to school and learn accounting, earning a job with the wealthy landowner upon his return. The other sharecroppers have been stealing cotton and so on, and Barthelmess finds himself caught in the middle, his heart belonging to his roots, but his sense of responsibility belonging to his employer. Running 78 minutes, the film is a moderately effective social drama (one of those white sharecroppers gets lynched), but is more engaging as a steamy romance. Although he sort of has a girlfriend, played by Dorothy Jordan, a blonde Bette Davis plays the rich man's daughter, who seems to psychically understand what she has to do to protect her father's interests. This being before the imposition of the code, it is made very clear that she goes all the way with Barthelmess, to keep him in line, even though her attitude otherwise is a bit more reserved, giving her an opportunity to deliver the sort of immortal Davis line that makes not only the movie but the entire boxed set worthwhile—"I'd like to kiss you, but I just washed my hair." The picture is in quite good condition, with sharp contrasts. A trailer is included, which sells Davis' sizzle even though she's billed below Jordan.

The best and most entertaining film in the collection—even its flaws are fascinating—MGM's *When Ladies Meet* from 1933, directed by Harry Beaumont, stars Robert Montgomery, Myrna Loy, Ann Harding (who gets top billing for a key but secondary role), Frank Morgan and Alice Brady. Loy's character is an author that Montgomery's character has been

romancing, but she has fallen in love with her publisher. Inexplicably cast, Morgan plays the publisher, but it is such a weird choice that it still works in its own, perverse way. Harding is the publisher's wife and Brady is a daffy social matron who gets the laugh-out-loud lines.

Montgomery's character learns that Loy and Morgan's character's are planning a tryst at the country home of Brady's character, so he invites Harding's character, who is in the dark about everything and has never met Loy's character, to the house under the false pretense of playing a 'gag' on the others. Running 85 minutes, the first part of the film is generally setting everything up and is a typical drawing room romantic comedy from the Thirties, about people wealthier than most of us will ever be. Even if you are unnerved by the Morgan thing, you go along with it because the rest of the cast is appealing and some of the dialog is witty. Once everything gets set up for the fateful night at the country house, however, the film becomes riveting, with performances to match, and the tension gets so thick that even the comedy is funnier, as a release. Some of the humor, incidentally, is quaintly ribald. The picture looks reasonably good. The image is soft and darker areas of the screen lack detail, but outright flaws are minimal.

The final film in the collection, First National's 1934 *I'll Sell Anything*, has a naked statue in it, and essentially, the hero is a crook, which is why it has been included in the collection, but it is not all that risqué or enjoyable, except as a marathon star turn by Pat O'Brien in the lead role. The movie follows a format that has rarely appealed to us. The hero is a conman who gets conned by more sophisticated cons. You see it coming a mile away, so why he doesn't is irritating. But O'Brien is playing an auctioneer, who tricks people into paying way more for stuff than it's worth, and he is in high gear from first scene in the 70-minute film to the last. Directed by Robert Florey, there are often minimal cuts, too, so O'Brien just keeps going and going until you get exhausted watching him and wonder how he made it through the production. It is a very impressive performance in a rather unimpressive film. The picture is sharp and clear, with minimal wear, and a trailer has been included.

Those hills didn't look especially angry

Our eyes popped out of our head. We had just settled down with the 1959 Robert Aldrich MGM production, The Angry Hills, a Warner Home Video *Archive Collection* title (UPC#888574373979, \$22). Robert Mitchum stars as an American serviceman passing through Athens right before the start of WWII. To kill time before he catches a ride out of town, he goes to a nightclub with a friend, and there, as entertainment, singing no less, is a topless dancer. This is no four-frame clip or *Austin Powers*-style tease. This is pretty much 5 full minutes of her gyrating, emoting, and going over to Mitchum's table to flirt in all of her glory. While there is no mention of it on the jacket, the presentation is apparently the film's 'international version,' as that sort of thing was pretty much standard movie stuff in places like Sweden. You'd be hard pressed to find a scene like that in an American movie made in that era, however, outside of the peepshow circuit. Anyway, we'd have to say the film had our attention.

Mitchum's character is passed a list of names, misses his ride and is soon running around the countryside being chased by Nazis. After romancing Gia Scala for a while, he returns to Athens, or, more specifically, Piraeus, and hooks up with a double agent played by Elisabeth Mueller, who is also the girlfriend of the urbane Gestapo chief, played by Stanley Baker. Based upon a novel by Leon Uris, the film begins quite promisingly—even without the topless dancer—as a tale of intrigue and suspense, but it shifts gears a number of times, and the second half almost seems to become more interested in the soul of Baker's character than in Mitchum. Running 106 minutes, the general appeal of the locations and the stars sustains the movie's entertainment, but it never quite turns into what it promises to be, and it is only on multiple viewings, when you are better prepared for its metamorphosis, that Aldrich's hard edge begins to unify the film's disparate elements.

The black-and-white picture is letterboxed, with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback, and it looks gorgeous. The image is spotless, and contrasts are carefully defined. The monophonic sound is best held to a reasonable volume, and there is no captioning. A trailer is also included.

Love and war

The trailer included with the 1960 MGM feature, The Angel Wore Red, a Warner Home Video *Archive Collection* title (UPC#888574373962, \$22), steadfastly avoids mentioning that it is set during the Spanish Civil War, and it also avoids letting anyone know that the star, played by Dirk Bogarde, begins the film as a priest. He leaves the church because he is upset by its collusion with the Nationalists, and falls in love with a, well, a prostitute, played by Ava Gardner. The film takes an intriguingly neutral, a-pox-on-both-sides view of the war, since it is the Republicans who are terrorizing those who remain loyal to the church, although the Nationalists are hardly any more sympathetic when confronted by the inconvenience of refugees. The romance is also quite effective. It has no mushy, Hollywood overtones—he sleeps with her almost as soon as he quits the church—and yet remains true to its basic spiritual theme that the film intends to convey. Running 99 minutes, the stars are gorgeous and the film would probably be much less interesting without them—Joseph Cotton, with an eye patch, also has a major part, and

Vittorio De Sica has a somewhat smaller role—but the film's combination of intellectual conflict and wartime adventure is ultimately a satisfying entertainment when it is embodied by such compelling icons.

The black-and-white picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. Much of the film is set at night, but the image is reasonably clean and contrasts are effectively detailed. The monophonic sound is okay, and some of the war noises are quite haunting. There is no captioning.

A threerfer

A lurid 1957 depiction of a museum clerk who suffers from a multiple personality disorder, **Lizzie**, from MGM, has been released by Warner Home Video as an *Archive Collection* title (UPC#888574394059, \$22). To put matters in perspective, the somewhat more sober **Three Faces of Eve** (Dec 04) hit the theaters in December 1957, while **Lizzie** appeared in April of that year. Eleanor Parker, whose character has three distinct personalities, stars, with Joan Blondell doing a nice turn as her alcoholic aunt and Richard Boone, just like Lee J. Cobb in **Eve**, playing the psychiatrist who eventually cures her. Of particular note, when Parker is in her wild woman state and out picking up creepy guys at a bar, Johnny Mathis is playing there, too, performing *It's Not for Me to Say*, among other things. Anyway, through flashbacks activated by hypnosis, Boone's character gets to the root of the problem and eventually cures her. Based upon a Shirley Jackson story, there are a couple of chilling moments as Parker shifts from one personality to another, but these days the movie is more appealing for the general naiveté of its psychology lessons, and its exaggerated sense of risqué behavior, than it is as a truly compelling drama.

The presentation is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 (gotta get that whole triptych mirror into the frame) and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The black-and-white picture is in reasonably decent condition, with minimal wear. The monophonic sound is okay and Mathis sounds great. There is no captioning. A trailer, which censors the word, 'slut,' has also been included.

Enjoyable crime adventure

A highly enjoyable cat-and-mouse adventure, **Mexican Manhunt**, has been released by Warner Home Video as an *Archive Collection* title (UPC#888574374174, \$22). George Brent stars in the 1953 Allied Artists production as a crime writer traveling to Mexico to assist a reclusive mob witness who wants to return to the states. The gangsters are pretty much on his heels, and so most of the 71-minute film is about the cross-country race to get across the border, as Brent's character takes the witness and his daughter along the Mexican backroads, with the hitmen popping up at every turn. While the characters don't act logically all of the time—at least, they don't do what we would do—the film's momentum is pretty much irresistible, to the point where none of the film's flaws or shortcomings really matter. Even the readily expected twist in the finale turns out to have a very satisfying and less expected denouement. It's a great ride.

The full screen black-and-white picture is somewhat grainy, with scattered scratches and speckles, but is in serviceable condition. The monophonic sound is a little harsh in places, but tolerable—the gunshots aren't bad—and there is no captioning.

Durante vehicle

Mostly because of their rarity, every Jimmy Durante movie is worth savoring. **Strictly Dynamite** is a 1934 Durante vehicle produced by RKO Radio Pictures and released as a Warner Home Video *Archive Collection* title (UPC#883316338131, \$22). It opens with two numbers by the very young Mills Brothers, who were just beginning to master their harmonies, and then goes on to Durante and Lupe Velez as a radio act. The story doesn't make much sense, but Durante movies are rarely tethered to reality. Although his character is fabulously wealthy, he is unhappy with the jokes he's being given (and with Velez' character interfering with his act). He hires a new gag writer played by Norman Foster, who has much greater aspirations until he discovers the dough he can accumulate sinking to the lowest denominators. Things fall apart when Velez' character kind of nudges Foster's character away from his wife, and Durante's character doesn't get the quality of writing he was hoping for, but everything eventually works out. Eugene Pallette has an amusing turn as a 'hillbilly' singer, and Sterling Holloway is a phone operator adding to the chaos. Running 71 minutes, the film is not a great masterpiece, but it is fun just listening to Durante mangle the English language, and logic in general, and there is enough plot to string everything together.

The full screen black-and-white picture is a bit battered in spots, but tolerable, and the monophonic sound is adequate. There is no captioning.

The playing fields of Eaton

Shirley Eaton portrays a dominating vixen bent upon controlling the world with an army of women in two wacky films from the late Sixties, **The Million Eyes of Sumuru / The Girl from Rio**, a Blue Underground Blu-ray *Double Feature* (UPC#827058705998, \$30). Both films appear on the same platter and, produced by Harry Alan Towers, both are letterboxed, **Sumuru** with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, and **Rio** with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1. The color transfers on both look terrific. There are a few stray scratches on **Sumuru**, but **Rio** is pretty much spotless. The monophonic sound is clear and reasonably strong, for better or for worse (the samba music

in **Rio** isn't bad). There are optional English subtitles. We reviewed Blue Underground's DVD release of **The Girl from Rio** in Jul 04, which had the same nice picture and solid sound, although the BD does add subliminal improvements.

In the utterly incoherent 1967 **Sumuru**, Frankie Avalon and George Nader are sort of CIA agents, kind of assigned by a British Intelligence head, played by Wilfred Hyde-White, to investigate the abductions of various powerful figures. Running 79 minutes, the story jumps around without really making much sense, but it has genuine location footage from Rome and (mostly) Hong Kong, explosions and phony gun fights, really bad fake hand-to-hand combat, lots of nice looking women in skimpy clothing, Eaton whipping Nader before she decides to kiss him instead, and other folderol. Avalon often makes jokes like, 'Shouldn't I be singing a number here?' and zips around in a sports car, helping Nader at key moments. Klaus Kinski gives a cringe-inducing—but don't get us wrong, it captures the spirit of the film perfectly—performance as one of the leaders being targeted.

Directed by Lindsay Shonteff, **The Million Eyes of Sumuru** may be a complete mess, but it does achieve one seemingly impossible accomplishment—it makes Jess Franco's 1969 **The Girl from Rio** seem like a coherent and entertaining film. Shot on location, Eaton's character, again called 'Sumuru,' has established some kind of independent all-women country in the interior of Brazil, funding it by tricking wealthy men into visiting with their cash. Richard Wyler presents himself initially as a thief who has lifted a fortune in jewels, but he actually has other motives. An aging George Sanders is also on hand, as a gangster who wants a piece of the fortune. There is more flagrant nudity, and girls in heels stepping on guys, phony fistfights and gunfire, and there is a good helicopter battle at one point. Running 94 minutes, the film's narrative has a distinctive vector with a couple of adequate surprises, and Franco's sense of style trumps his instinct for padding scenes so that the film, while dumb, remains watchable and engaging if you enjoy such silliness, especially after being primed by the less consistent **Million Eyes of Sumuru**.

In both movies, Eaton is sort of reserved and stiff (her outfits are gorgeous), but that is what gives her character a kind of humorous edge, especially when she softens momentarily for the hero (in both movies), but then catches herself when he's less than responsive to her invitations. In the terrific 14-minute retrospective featurette, which also appeared on the **Rio** DVD, Eaton talks about how the films pretty much led to her deciding she'd had enough of the movie star shtick, but she was a game player and certainly contributes to whatever appeal the two films have. Also included are still frame sections of publicity materials for both films (**Rio**'s also appeared on the DVD) and a cute trailer for **Million Eyes of Sumuru**.

Eaton first gained attention by being painted in gold after betraying her character's boss to James Bond. Around the same time, she also made the 1964 Ivan Tors wildlife adventure for MGM, **Rhino!**, which has been released on DVD by Warner Home Video as an *Archive Collection* title (UPC#8885-74374181, \$22). Harry Guardino is a wicked poacher who agrees to act as a guide for a benevolent naturalist, played by Robert Culp, so he can nefariously capture some rare white rhinos for a client anxious to pay top dollar for the beasts. Eaton's character is a bush doctor and the girlfriend of Guardino's character, although she is not entirely aware of how deeply into the dark side he has drifted. Eaton's performance is an effective balancing act—she doesn't put up with her boyfriend's more irritating traits, but she still remains loyal to him in a pinch, thus again coming across as somewhat stoic, but ultimately more vulnerable than she lets on.

Running 91 minutes, the film mostly has the usual wildlife and indigenous native celebration footage woven into the kind of cat-and-mouse game that Guardino's character and Culp's character are playing with one another. At one point Culp really puts his hand into a live (although sedated—the animal sedators get major billing in the opening credits) lion's mouth, pretending to fix a problem with the lion's teeth, and there are a few other daring bits where not only the stuntmen, but the actors themselves get quite close to the animals. There is one bizarre fistfight between Guardino and Culp where it appears that most of the fight was shot at entirely different times for the two actors. It's not that they didn't trade blows, they weren't even on the set at the same time. But all told, the film would be rather useless were it not for its absolutely stunning climactic footage of real rhinoceroses—perhaps more views in a single shot of a species than even exists today—with horns so enormous and remarkable you readily understand why all of those idiots murdered the animals to the brink of extinction to get a piece of their phallic proboscises. We've seen our share of nature films, and we've been to zoos, but what you usually get in both places is one or two rhinos. Here, there are almost a dozen, and just seeing the prehistoric-like creatures cavort in their natural habitat in such numbers is more exciting than seeing a naked woman drenched in gold paint.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The colors are a bit light but workable, although, as with most such adventures, the quality and manner of the wildlife footage varies substantially from one cut to the next. The monophonic sound is stable and there is a Lalo Schifrin musical score that is terrific at times and not so good at other times. There is no captioning, and a trailer has been included.

Randy actors

Appearing before the American slasher craze of the Eighties, the 1972 British thriller, **The Flesh and Blood Show**, released as a *Redemption* Blu-ray by Kino Lorber Incorporated (UPC#738329126926, \$25), is most reminiscent of the Hammer psycho films of the Sixties. Like those features, it is meticulously plotted, so that there is a logical reason for every murder, but since it was made in the Seventies, there is also an enhanced amount of gore and substantial nudity, both female and male. The film is set in a theater on an ocean pier during the off season, where a group of young actors have been hired to stage an improvisational play. With no place to stay in town, they sleep in the theater and pair off fairly rapidly, which leads, as it would in the American films a few years later, to them being punished for their licentious behavior. Running 96 minutes, the film's narrative is relatively gratifying, in that everything is wrapped up effectively, and while from a stylistic perspective, it is a bit plodding, there are enough thrills and youthful naked people to make it worthwhile.

Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1, and presented in color, the next to the last reel, where the reason for the murders is revealed, although the murderer is not yet captured, is in black-and-white, but is offered in the Special Features in 3D. Running 10 minutes, there are two 3D options, the one that requires a 3D player, and the one where you just need red-blue glasses (if you're like us, you'll have plenty on hand—none are offered with the disc). Surprisingly, the red-blue option has better dimensional effects and a clearer image. On both, the picture is a bit murky in spots and loaded with speckles and scratches, but the 3D player presentation is almost useless, while the red-blue version is worth stopping the regular movie and switching over for that segment. The color portion of the film has reasonably fresh hues, but a lot of scratches and speckles as well. The monophonic sound is fairly strong, and there is no captioning. Along with raunchy trailers for five of director Pete Walker's films, including **Flesh and Blood Show**, there is a nice 12-minute interview with Walker, who talks about the film and his career as a whole.

Several Rages

An Eighties slasher film that is more fun now than it was in the Eighties, **Blood Rage**, has been issued on Blu-ray & DVD by Arrow Video (UPC#760137764496, \$40). The film is reasonably competent, and while it embraces many of the slasher clichés, it probably seemed like more of the same to the few viewers in 1987 who saw it, but the (big) hairstyles, the John Carpenter rip-off music, the fake scares and the gore all have strong nostalgic overtones that now make the film hard to resist, however stupid it may otherwise seem. The movie also features a genuinely fine performance by Louise Lasser, who plays the mother of twin boys, one of whom has been in a mental asylum for all of his adolescence, but has escaped on Thanksgiving and is heading home. What you know from the opening sequence, however, is that it is his brother who is the actual homicidal maniac, and the other twin's escape gives the brother an excuse (and alibi) to start killing again. Mark Soper does a reasonably good job, as well, playing the two brothers.

The film runs 82 minutes in a format that has unrestrained gore, but the second BD platter contains an R-rated rendition entitled *Nightmare at Shadow Woods*, which runs 79 minutes and has a few slightly different points of narrative emphasis. In that one of the goriest sequences in **Blood Rage**, depicting a body that is sliced into several pieces, was also one of the weakest when it came to the gore effects, its removal and the tweaks to the story actually make the film play a bit better. Most viewers will want the thrills of the gore, and several other gnarly shots that have been removed from *Shadow Woods* do deliver the goods, but if a viewer is just looking for general atmosphere and story, then *Shadow Woods* has its strengths. Also featured on the platter is an 85-minute version that combines material from both films, entitled *Slasher*, but in this case, the pacing of the original **Blood Rage** is preferable. The second platter also contains 27 minutes of silent outtakes, presumably representing pretty much everything else that was shot.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The color transfer generally looks nice. Hues sometimes seem light or washed out, but that appears to be more of a fault of the cinematography than of the generally meticulous transfer. The monophonic sound can be irritating if you aren't in the mood, but has a basic level of strength and no flaws that are not part of the film's original concepts. Both platters have optional English subtitles. The DVD included in the set is only a replication of the first platter, as the second platter, which only has the two other versions of the film, is exclusively on Blu-ray. The best special feature on the first platter is a 10-minute interview with producer Marianne Kanter, who also had to step in at one point and fill an important role when the hired actress didn't show up. Kanter provides the most honest recollections of the problems encountered with the shoot, including the difficulties between Lasser and director John Grissmer, which led him to withdraw from the production for a while, until no one could be found to replace him and he was persuaded to return. There is also a great 10-minute interview with Lasser herself, talking about her career and making the film, an 11-minute interview with Soper, a good 13-minute interview with makeup effects artist Ed French, an interesting 3-minute interview with supporting actor Ted Raimi who explains how he began his career with the film, never mentioning his previous work with his successful brother, and always a favorite feature, a 6-minute visit to the film's locations

several decades after the shoot. Also included is the 5-minute modified opening used for the VHS release and a good 5-minute montage of production photos.

There is an audio commentary featuring Grissmer and rights owner John Dalley, prompted by Arrow's Ewan Cant. Although they do go into some fascinating details on the litigation that occurred when the film's owners found it was being released on home video by an unlicensed distributor, and they discuss the challenge of using one actor to play twins, generally, the talk is not very good, as no one really prods Grissmer to go into detail. "This was a job I was hired to do. This was not a personal film, by any means. John Ford used the term, I think, 'A job of work,' and that's what this was. I was hired to do it. I thought it was a good job for the script that Marianne wanted." At first he just mumbles that working with Lasser was 'great,' although neat the end he finally elaborates a bit more. "Louise Lasser was a professional actress, and I found her to function that way, as such. She was not difficult to direct. She had her own conception of the scenes as they came along, and what she did like to do was discuss the scenes and intellectually break them down and analyze them, and talk through them, and that's essentially what she did. That was our rehearsal process, that's what she did in rehearsal. And once she had gone through that and knew exactly what she was going to do with each scene, then we would shoot them, she would stick to her analysis, and each take would be pretty much like the last take. She did not have trouble at all, or temperamental trouble or anything like that. I found her very professional. I would say she's more of an intellectual actress. She had to know exactly the breakdown as to what was happening with the character in the scene."

Where do we go from here?

In one of those coincidences that really make you wonder about the mechanics of existence, it was April Fool's Day when we watched the RLJ Entertainment Acorn Blu-ray release of the 2015 BBC miniseries, **And Then There Were None** (UPC#054961248193, \$35), and we could not have picked a more appropriate screening date had we been purposeful in our choice. When a property is as well trodden as what could possibly be the most famous book by the most famous contemporary author in the world, a fresh approach to the material is mandatory. Spread to two platters, the show's fresh approach is to be a literal adaptation of Agatha Christie's original novel, untempered by the usual (and, arguably, intelligently) Hollywood fixes. Running 177 minutes and accompanied by a relentlessly foreboding musical score, the three episodes are essentially dark, darker and darkest. The action is set on an island so small that when pictured in its entirety with a simple wide shot, a single white mansion sits prominently in its center. The characters, who include Charles Dance, Miranda Richardson, Sam Neill, and stars Maeve Dermody and Aiden Turner, along with Anna Maxwell Martin, Toby Stephens, Burn Gorman, Noah Taylor and Douglas Booth—ten little 'soldiers' as the politically correct revision has them—all have something nasty in their pasts, and since there is room in the running time for flashbacks and dreams, you get to see quite a bit of what is pressing upon their consciousnesses, as one of their number systematically does the others in. There are hints as to how the show is going to upend expectations—Dermody is demure, yes, but also curiously lascivious, and Turner is dashing, but doesn't seem too concerned that he's being accused of mass murder. At least the two actually get to fool around a bit under the sheets, something that would have been unthinkable in adaptations past. So anyway, the show works its way through the familiar plot as, one by one, the characters meet their ends, and you can probably spot the murderer if you are at all familiar with the material. As it goes along, it seems quite impressive. As we implied, it is adult and rather unflinching in its view of humanity's shortcomings. The cinematography, letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1, is worthy of a feature film and looks faultless on Blu-ray. The musical score may overdo it a little with its unwavering chords of dread, but the DTS audio track delivers that and all of the other noises (a wonderful thunderstorm rolls across the island one night) with a strong dimensionality. And so, after almost three hours, as you expect, the hero and heroine are the only two left standing, suspicious of one another and frantic to protect themselves and then, April Fools! Either you'll chuckle at the audacity of the filmmakers to end the show this way, or you'll take the Blu-ray out of the player, stomp on it, mash it, shoot it, and knife it, but one way or the other, **And Then There Were None** will get a rise out of you.

Along with optional English subtitles and a minute-long montage of promotional photos, there are 78 minutes of interviews with the cast and crew. They talk about the characters and the story and the specific production components, such as the costumes, but there is also quite a bit of discussion about Christie, and particularly how the darkness of the film's setting in 1939 segued so appropriately into the end of the world, as it were, with the onset of World War II.

Oh say can you see

America is a vast melting pot. People of different nationalities and races move here to live their lives in our bountiful land. Africans. Australians. South Americans. Russian spies. The 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment release, **The Americans Season One** (UPC#024543869061, \$30), is a four-platter set of a TV series originally broadcast in 2013, about a married couple living in the Washington D.C. area in the early Eighties who

run a travel agency and have two kids, and spend every spare moment they have conducting espionage for the Soviet Union. In some ways, the show is so ludicrous it is a satire, not that there weren't Russian spies doing all sorts of crazy things back then, but those spies probably didn't look like Matthew Rhys and Keri Russell, and likely did not have quite the white bread suburban family cover that these two have. Nor is it readily believable that the FBI agent played by Noah Emmerich, who is searching for them, unknowingly happens to move his family into the house right across the street, so they can have barbecues together and otherwise get to become friends. As a drama, however, the show settles into a comfortable suspense rhythm. Although the narrative continually advances, each of the thirteen 42-minute episodes has an individual story in which some piece of information has to be obtained or some other figure in their world has to be dealt with. When there are action scenes, they are quite arousing, and the actual drama of suspicion, compromise and betrayal is effectively sustained. But, while the show keeps a straight face at all times, its premise is highly satirical, using the dynamics of the different character relationships to explore the frailties of everything from love to patriotism. Both the husband and the wife characters readily sleep with other people as part of their assignments, but present the façade that they are true to one another to their children, while the bond that they have formed by having those children begins to tug on their ready acceptance of the infidelities. While such an arrangement is completely opposite of the idealized American family, it is perhaps less different on a case-by-case basis, and thus generates an elevated humor from suggesting that the flaws in their façade are not because of normal impulses or emotional problems, but because they aren't real Americans. History tells us that both the Russians and the Americans, during that era, were vastly overestimating one another's capabilities, and the show is true enough to the facts to reflect this, which also adds an element of refined amusement to the proceedings. So, the show is ridiculous, but as it utilizes its premise to explore the emotional conflicts of its characters from a relatively fresh perspective, essentially taking the cloak and dagger out of the shadowy, rain-glazed cobblestones of Europe and placing it in the brightly lit linoleum of American shopping malls and such, it is consistently intriguing and captivating.

Margo Martindale has a key supporting role as the couple's 'handler.' Each platter has a 'Play All' option. The picture is presented in letterboxed format only, with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The color transfer is fine. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound has an occasionally effective dimensionality. They don't go crazy with the Eighties music, but once in a while a choice number surges onto the soundtrack, and those gas-guzzling Eighties car engines sound wonderful. There is a Spanish track in standard stereo, optional English, French, Spanish and Portuguese subtitles, 4 minutes of bloopers, 12 minutes of interesting deleted scenes that include a strong but entirely verbal erotic sequence, and 25 minutes of good promotional featurettes that talk about the history of espionage and the Cold War in the Eighties (one of the reasons the show is set at that time is because the technology was more awkward—and cinematically 'friendly'). There is also a pretty good commentary track on one episode, featuring two of the show's creators, Joseph Weisberg and Joel Fields, along with Emmerich. They, too, talk about spycraft and so forth, but also about staging the show (which was actually shot in New York), the difference between making TV and making movies ("I compare it to sort of sketching in pencil to working in oil. There's not a lot of time to revisit and rework. You have to really trust your instincts and experience and sort of impulsively go with and roll with it and not be too precious. At first, I started out feeling somewhat resentful of that, I really liked to toil away and really try and hone, but there's a great freedom and trust. Some of the best work, I think, comes out of that space. It's a very different beast. I'm filming a movie now and I have to say part of it's wonderful and part of it feels like, 'Come on, guys, you gotta be able to move quicker than this.' You get use to the pace. It can get very tedious, a movie can be very dull. You spend a whole day shooting two pages. On the other hand, there is an opportunity for more microscopic work within a scene. [On TV,] you don't have time to explore as much."), and some of its compromises (they say that the most common question they get asked is how the wigs the characters are wearing for their disguises stay on during the wild sex scenes, and their answer is, 'secret Soviet wig technology').

With barely perceptible nicks and tucks (some of which show up on the deleted scenes), **The Americans The Complete Second Season** (UPC# 024543931904, \$30), from 2014, is a stronger and more satisfying show. The house still seems to get cleaned magically, and the kids don't have much of a social life, but there are stabs at making such points more realistic. The spy stuff all has the feel of verisimilitude, not that all of the adventures would have happened to the same spies, but the killings, the corruption, the sneaky business and the double crosses seem like they could easily be the hidden part of the headlines you do read. And the show's inspired cleverness of using a 'non-American' couple as a representation of America becomes cleverer and more powerful as the episodes advance. From a political perspective, the show is perfectly balanced. Sometimes the Russians are morally justified in their actions, sometimes the Americans are, and sometimes, each side is totally wrong. Both sides blunder forward without knowing what the other side is actually doing. Sometimes they figure it out, and sometimes they

don't. One of the improvements is the downplaying of overt political messages, since the genuine right and wrong of the character actions seep through anyway. The suspense is terrific and once in a while there is some good action, but the primary appeal of the show is its exploration of the two protagonists. It is clear they have feelings, it is clear that they have passions, and it is clearly that they are as confused by parenthood and marriage as everyone else is. It is not clear that they have souls, but that is the reason for the show, to find them.

Specifically, in **Second Season**, each child does something that the parents do not approve of, unaware of the blatant hypocrisy that occurs when the parents chastise them for 'keeping secrets.' The FBI agent finds that his relationship with his informant has become so sticky that he may be turning into an informant himself, and his own marriage is compromised in the process. There is also a cute introduction to the beginnings of the Internet, as the characters attempt to learn about and purloin 'Stealth' technology.

Again, thirteen episodes are spread to four platters, with the same picture and sound presentations. Along with an amusing 4-minute blooper reel, there are 6 minutes of deleted scenes that include stronger political statements than what made it into the show and 18 minutes of more informative production featurettes, which, among other things, speculate that there are still Russian agents living among us.

A little over halfway through **The Americans The Complete Third Season** (UPC#024543104575, \$40)—the beginning of the third platter—there are a series of three episodes that each contain a scene or sequence of scenes so compelling they are worthy of John Le Carré. And the scenes have nothing directly to do with spying. Indirectly, they are about spying, because that is what has placed the characters in these dramatic situations. But it is the drama itself—about betrayal and love, about death and evil, about parental responsibility and affection—that packs such a powerful punch no action scene or clever plot twist could ever come close to having the same impact. Indeed, the scenes are so magnificent they excuse any other shortcoming that the series has. Frank Langella is brought in to replace Martindale, for example, and the producers sort of wasted their money doing so, not because he isn't a good actor, but because they had to pay him so much money that they could only afford to do most of his scenes on one simple living room set. The sequences have a contrived feel because there is no secondary tension going on as there is in the scenes where they meet their handlers surreptitiously on the streets and so forth. A cheaper actor could have allowed the creators a greater flexibility of time to mix up the locations. But it doesn't matter. TV shows are allowed those sorts of compromises if they deliver in other ways, and that is what the show does, with great success. There is less action in the 2015 season, but once the premise really starts to take hold, going to the very core of the moral and spiritual foundations of the characters, the entertainment becomes overwhelmingly powerful. The show no longer feels like a satire.

One of the deleted scenes in **First Season**, incidentally, relates directly to the final, cliffhanger scene in **Third Season**. Another thirteen episodes are spread across four platters. The picture quality is consistent with the earlier seasons. The stereo mix is less compelling—there aren't as many distinctive car sounds as before, either—and there are no foreign language tracks. The Portuguese has been dropped from the subtitling options, as well. There are 7 minutes of mostly inconsequential deleted scenes and one 10-minute promotional featurette about one of the primary plot lines in the scenes, involving the couple's daughter, played with great promise by Holly Taylor.

Meanwhile, on the other coast...

Promoted as the 'prequel' to **The Walking Dead**, the 2015 spinoff, **Fear the Walking Dead The Complete First Season**, an Anchor Bay Entertainment release (UPC#013132638577, \$40), really only starts a couple of months, if that, before the first episode of **Walking Dead** began, and the last episode seems even closer in time to the beginning of the other. And the season only has six episodes, spread to two platters. Because it depicts the beginning of the zombie pandemic, there are fewer frights per minute, but there is little doubt that these will increase as the seasons progress. Set in Los Angeles (the other show started in Atlanta and has stayed in the East), the characters live in a suburb which becomes chained off and protected by the military, at least for a while. In a way, if **Walking Dead** was patterned after George Romero's **Night of the Living Dead**, then **Fear** is patterned after Romero's **The Crazies**, at least in a kind of general sense. But the appeal of the show is the same. The characters and their complicated domestic lives are established, and then explored through the unique lens of a slow moving apocalypse. More characters can be stirred in as others are eliminated. While there are fewer zombies in general, when a big group of them does finally appear, it is especially thrilling. One of the few complaints about the series initially was that not much happens, but, of course, that is not the case if you sit down to watch all of the episodes at once, and it is best to allow that much time, because once you get started, you're hooked.

Running a total of 297 minutes, each platter has a 'Play All' option. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The transfer looks great and the 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound is worth amplifying. There are optional English and Spanish subtitles, and 7 minutes of promotional pieces.

Student in London

A terrible film is supported by an equally bad transfer to DVD with the 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment Fox *Cinema Archives* release, **Joanna** (UPC#024543105084, \$20). A 1968 British exploitation feature, there is some nudity, but the plot is not fueled by eroticism. The film's promotional artwork, replicated on the jacket cover, is striking. It shows a topless model, wearing a man's tie, with the name of the film strategically blocking out the parts that impressionable eyes aren't allowed to see. As it turns out, while this artwork, which encouraged us to drop twenty bucks on the DVD and finally fulfill a minor adolescent fantasy of getting to see the movie, is highly effective, it actually has nothing whatsoever to do with the film itself. It is a poster that is hanging on a wall (without the film's title blocking its glories, so that's something) in an apartment and is glimpsed just briefly. The model in the image is not in the film. Genevieve Waite stars as an art student in London who moves from one boyfriend to another until the movie's 113 minutes are up. Individual scenes are barely coherent, and make little connective sense. She does have emotional experiences and learns a bit about art and life, but the story never achieves a viable momentum. Waite isn't particularly appealing—and nowhere near as attractive as the model in the poster—and isn't all that great of an actress, either. There is one famous movie star in the film, Donald Sutherland, and his performance is cringe-inducingly awful, as he plays a spoiled rich kid who takes his friends, including the heroine, on a little jaunt to Morocco. The film is full of pop fashions and attempts to imitate the New Wave impulsiveness of the Richard Lester films, but unlike most Sixties movies set in London, the feature leaves you glad you aren't there rather than making you wish you were.

And on top of everything else, the presentation is badly cropped, so you often feel like you are looking at the movie through a keyhole and missing what is going on outside the peripheral limits of your vision. What can be seen has occasionally faded colors, haze and some scratches and speckling. The monophonic sound isn't much better, and there is no captioning. A trailer is included.

DVD News

CRITERION UPDATE: Three versions of Terence Malick's **The New World** are being issued in the Criterion Collection release, the original 135-minute version of the film, the revised 150-minute version, and a new 172-minute version. Also included will be interviews with Colin Farrell and Q'orianka Kilcher; a program about the making of the film, featuring interviews with producer Sarah Green, production designer Jack Fisk, and costume designer Jacqueline West; *Making The New World*, a documentary shot during the production of the film in 2004, directed and edited by Austin Jack Lynch; and a program about the process of cutting **The New World** and its various versions, featuring interviews with editors Hank Corwin, Saar Klein, and Mark Yoshikawa. King Hu's **Touch of Zen** will include a documentary from 2012 about director Hu; interviews with actors Hsu Feng and Shih Chun; an interview with Ang Lee; and an interview with film scholar Tony Rayns. Alain Resnais' **Muriel, or The Time of Return** will have an excerpt from the 1980 documentary *Une approche d'Alain Resnais, révolutionnaire discret*; an excerpt from a 1969 interview with actor Delphine Seyrig; an interview with composer Hans Werner Henze from 1963; and an interview with film scholar François Thomas, author of *L'atelier d'Alain Resnais*. Resnais' **Night and Fog** will include an excerpt from a 1994 audio interview with Resnais; an interview with documentary filmmaker Joshua Oppenheimer; and *Face aux fantômes*, a 99-minute 2009 documentary featuring historian Sylvie Lindeperg that explores the French memory of the Holocaust and the controversy surrounding the film's release. Herk Harvey's **Carnival of Souls** will have a selected-scene audio commentary featuring Harvey and screenwriter John Clifford; an interview with comedian and writer Dana Gould; a video essay by film critic David Cairns; *The Movie That Wouldn't Die!*, a documentary on the 1989 reunion of the film's cast and crew; *The Carnival Tour*, a 2000 update on the film's locations; excerpts from movies made by the Centron Corporation, an industrial film company based in Lawrence, Kansas, that once employed Harvey and Clifford; deleted scenes; outtakes, accompanied by Gene Moore's organ score; and a history of the Saltair Resort in Salt Lake City, where key scenes in the film were shot. Arthur Hiller's **The In-Laws** will feature a commentary from 2003 that includes Hiller, Alan Arkin, Peter Falk, and writer Andrew Bergman; a new interview with Arkin; and *In Support of The In-Laws*, a new interview program featuring actors Ed Begley Jr., Nancy Dussault, James Hong, and David Paymer.

MORE VS.: Warner Home Video's **Batman vs. Superman** will be 30 minutes longer than the theatrical release.

POOL PLANS: 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment's **Deadpool** will have two commentary tracks, deleted scenes and more. **Eddie the Eagle** will have featurettes.

CELEBRATING LABYRINTH: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment's 30th Anniversary release of **Labyrinth** will have many featurettes and a commentary track. **The Brothers Grimsby** will have deleted scenes and featurettes. **Risen** will have a commentary, featurettes and deleted scenes. **The Mermaid** will have featurettes.

MASSACRE NOISE: Turbine Media Group is releasing the original **The Texas Chainsaw Massacre** in 4K with 13.1-channel sound.

DRAG DOC: A documentary about drag performances, **Dressed As a Girl**, is available at www.amazon.com

LATEST SILENTS: The latest silent film releases from Grapevine Video include **The Mollycoddle** (Douglas Fairbanks), **Way Down East**, **Another Man's Boots**, and **Corporal Kate**. Sound releases include **Breed of the West/Flying Lariats**, **Lonely Wives**, **Those We Love**, and **Son of Zorro**.

TWILIGHT UPDATE: The most recent Blu-rays released by Twilight Time include **Miss Sadie Thompson 3D**, **The Glory Guys**, **Tony Rome/Lady in Cement**, **Hardcore**, **The Most Beautiful Wife**, **Theatre of Blood**, **The Black Stallion Returns**, **The Russia House**, **Zelig**, and **The Gang's All Here**.

ARCHIVES UPDATE: The following titles were recently released by 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment as *Fox Cinema Archives* offerings—**On the Threshold of Space**, **Sierra Baron**, **Too Busy to Work**, and **You're My Everything**.

ARCHIVE UPDATE: The following titles were recently released as part of the *Warner Archive Collection*—**Blondie of the Follies**, **Bulldog Drummond Double Feature** (*Bulldog Drummond/Calling Bulldog Drummond*), **Cinema Exiles: From Hitler to Hollywood**, **Family Matters Season 6**, **The First Hundred Years**, **Forbidden Hollywood Volume 10** (*Guilty Hands*, *The Mouthpiece*, *Secrets of the French Police*, *The Match King*, *Ever in My Heart*), **Haunted Honeymoon**, **How the West Was Won Season 3**, **The Man and the Moment**, **Marianne**, **The New Adventures of Gilligan**, **Piccadilly Jim**, **Remember?**, **The Seventh Sin**, **Song of Russia**, **Susan Slept Here** (Blu-ray), **Suspicion** (Blu-ray), **Times Square Lady**, **Valley of the Kings**, **A Yank at Oxford**, and **Yellow Jack**.

NEW IN BLU: The following titles were recently released on Blu-ray—Jane's Got a Gun, Tumbledown (Anchor Bay); Star Wars The Force Awakens (Buena Vista); Dangerous Men, Dolemite, Sex Murder Art The Films of Jorg Buttgerit, What? (CAV); Death Becomes Her, Destroyer/Edge of Sanity, Grayeagle/Winterhawk, The Hallow, #Horror, Sssssss, A Tale of Two Cities, Village of the Damned, WWE Straight Outta Dudleyville, WWE US Championship Legacy of Greatness (Cinedigm); Brief Encounter, The Kennedy Films of Robert Drew & Associates, Only Angels Have Wings, Phoenix, A Whit Stillman Trilogy (Criterion); Haven Season 2 (eOne); Theory of Obscurity A Film about The Residents (Film Movement); Black Butler Season 3, Garo The Animation Season 1 V.1, Ghost in the Shell Arise the New Movie, Kamisama Kiss Season 2, Maken-ki! Season 2, Rage of Bahamut (Goldhil); Banshee Season 3, Silicon Valley Season 2, Veep Season 4 (HBO); The Ant and the Aardvark, CodeGirl, Cop, Crazylegs Crane, The Gallant Hour, The Holcroft Covenant, The Inspector, Journey to the Seventh Planet, Panic in the Year Zero, Perfect Obedience, The Purple Plain, Shadows in an Empty Room (Kino); Backtrack, Countdown, Misconduct, Mojave, Norm of the North, Standoff (Lionsgate); Drunk Stoned Brilliant Dead The Story of the National Lampoon, The Lady in the Car with the Glasses and the Gun (Magnolia); Cherry Tree, Love Is a Verb (MPI); Sibling Rivalry (Olive); River of Grass (Oscilloscope); Ken Burns Jackie Robinson (Paramount); The Lady in the Van, Son of Saul (Sony); The Revenant (Fox); Expanse Season 1, Fifty Shades of Black, The Forest, Heroes Reborn, Krampus, Ride Along 2 (Universal); Doctor Who Season 9, Justice League vs. Teen Titans (Warner)

NEW IN 4K: The following titles are being released in 4K—The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (Turbine), Labyrinth (Sony), Risen (Sony), Independence Day (Fox), Ghostbusters (Sony), and Ghostbusters II (Sony).

DVD and LD Ads

(All DVD and LD Ads are 50 cents a word. Deadline is 5 business days before the end of the month. Address all ads: DVD & LD Ads, The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter, PO Box 420, East Rockaway NY 11518-0420.)

We are happy to announce the availability of our latest book, *DVDs by Douglas Pratt*, as a .pdf file on CD-ROM for \$15.95, plus \$3 s&h (\$6 s&h overseas). It contains more than 14,000 reviews of DVDs and Blu-rays, including those that appeared in last month's issue. Current subscribers to The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter can receive a copy of the .pdf file via Internet download for \$7.95. Just write to The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter at PO Box 420, East Rockaway NY 11518, or email us at DPratt@DVDLaser.com, or fax a request to (516)594-9307.

BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE A complete collection of DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter back issues in PDF format, spanning from Sep 84 to last month, is available on two double-layer DVD-ROM platters for \$64.95, plus \$6 shipping (\$12 shipping overseas). Title indexes are included on each platter. Write to The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter at PO Box 420, East Rockaway NY 11518, or email us at DPratt@DVDLaser.com, or fax a request to (516)594-9307.

DO NOT THROW OUT YOUR LDs!: Want to get rid of your old LDs? We'll be happy to take them off your hands, and can help with the shipping expenses. Please contact DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter at PO Box 420, East Rockaway NY 11518, call (516)594-9304 or email us at DPratt@DVDLaser.com

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 A&E:

Manson's Lost Girls
→ Duck Dynasty

From Acorn:

Liberty of London
Suspects
Janet King
Very British Problems

19-2
Dominion Creek
Prisoner's Wives

A Place to Call Home Season 3
The Brokenwood

Mysteries Season 2
The Last Panthers

Life of Verdi
Detectorists

Season 2
Jack Irish Season 1

Eleventh Hour (Patrick Stewart)
Survival

From Alchemy:
Survival

From Anchor Bay:
Love Finds You in Valentine

The Spoils Before Dying
War & Peace The Miniseries

→ Against the Wild 2
Survive the Serengeti

→ Scream Season 1
→ Regression

→ Where to Invade Next
→ One More Time (Christopher Walken)

→ Walking Dead Season 6
From Breaking Glass:

→ Princess
From Broad Green:

Song of Lahore
From Buena Vista:

Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
Mickey's Sport-Y-Thon

The Finest Hours
Sofia The First The Secret Library

From CAV:
Symptoms

42nd Street Forever
The Peep Show Collection V.16

All Night at the Po-

No Trashy Lady Sorceress
Bad Bad Gang
→ Mutilations
→ Christina

From Cinedigm:
Pelican

Digimon Fusion Season 3
3 Little Pigs and the Magic Lamp

→ Beverly Lewis' The Reckoning
A Bone to Pick An Aurora

Teagarden Mystery
→ Camp Camp
→ Cop Rock

Complete Series
Dead 7
The Duckling Gets a Cookie!?

and More Stories by Mo Willems
→ The Funhouse Massacre

→ Ghosthunters Help I've Shrunk the Family

Hunting Season Independents Day
Izzy's Way Home

→ Joseph and Mary
→ Murder She Baked A Chocolate Chip Mystery

Red vs. Blue Seasons 11-13
→ RWBY Chibi

RWBY Volume 3
→ Singed Sealed and Delivered From Paris with Love

→ Sinister Squad Sisters Season 4
→ 2016 Stanley Cup Champions

WWE Eric Bischoff Sports
The Hoarder

From Image:
The Hoarder

From Inception:
→ Brutal

→ Blood Lust
From Indican:
On War

→ A Bit of Bad Luck
→ Starcrossed
→ Now Hiring

→ Romans
→ Assassins
→ Fatherhood 101

→ Guys and Girls Can't Be Friends
→ June Adrift

From Invincible:
Blood Orange

From Kino:
Love Battles

It's Hard Being Loved by Jerks
Arabian Nights

Prince Steele Justice
Assassination Solarbabies

The Manhattan Project
Candy

The Chase (1946)
Film Noir The Dark

Side of Cinema (A Bullet for Joey,
He Ran All the Way, Storm Fear, Witness to Murder)

The Perfume of the Lady in Black
For Men

Only/School for Sex
→ Bikes vs. Cars
→ Hieronymus

→ The Program
→ A Married Woman
→ City of Women

→ The Films of Maurice Pialat (Loulou, The Mouth Agape, Graduate First)
→ Mustang

From Film Buff:
Southbounders

From Film Chest:
Bloody Wednesday

From Film Movement:
Theory of Obscurity

A Film about the Residents
→ The Mirror
→ Theeb
→ Glassland
→ Ambrosia
→ Night Has Settles

From Flicker Alley:
Too Late for Tears

Woman on the Run
From Goldhil:
Evangelion Season 2

PsychoPass The Movie
→ Shonen Hollywood Holly Stage for 49 Season 1
→ The Boy and the Beast

From Green Apple:
The Drunk

From HBO:
Ballers Season 1

From Icarus:
Gabo: The Creation of Gabriel García Márquez

Biophilic Design
Shadows of Liberty

→ No Home Movie
From Image:
The Hoarder

From Inception:
→ Brutal
→ Blood Lust

From Indican:
On War
→ A Bit of Bad Luck
→ Starcrossed
→ Now Hiring
→ Romans
→ Assassins
→ Fatherhood 101
→ Guys and Girls Can't Be Friends
→ June Adrift

From Invincible:
Blood Orange

From Kino:
Love Battles
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Film Noir The Dark
Side of Cinema (A Bullet for Joey,
He Ran All the Way, Storm Fear, Witness to Murder)
The Perfume of the Lady in Black
For Men
Only/School for Sex
→ Bikes vs. Cars
→ Hieronymus

→ The Messenger
→ The Damned - Don't You Wish That We Were Dead

→ Buster Keaton The Shorts
Collection 1917-1923

From Lionsgate:
Hope Malena

Kingdom of Blood
The Final Battle

Remember Sniper Special Ops
The Choice

Imposter
Daltry Calhoun
Senseless

Orange Is the New Black Season 3
The Witch

Dirty Grandpa
The Confirmation

→ Cypher
→ eXiistenZ
→ Alpha & Omega

Dino Digs
→ Gods of Egypt
→ Touched with Fire

→ Get a Job
→ Casual Encounters

→ Alaskan Bush People Seasons 1 & 2
→ Sharkweek

Jawsome Encounters
→ Shaun the Sheep
The Farmer's Llamas

→ Toni Braxton Movie Event
→ 600 Miles

From Magnolia:
Synchronicity

My Golden Years
Gridlocked
The Wave

Viva A War
→ Creative Control

From Milestone:
Losing Ground

From Mill Creek:
Grimm's Fairy Tales

Eric Carle
Mary Higgins Clark:
The Queen of Suspense

10 Items or Less
Complete Series
Hammer Films

Collection V.2 (Creatures the World Forgot,
The Revenge of Frankenstein,
Maniac, Never Take Candy From a Stranger,
The Snorkel, and Die! Die! My Darling)

Oceans - World Beneath the Waves

Randolph Scott
Roundup Vol. 2 (Santa Fe,
Stranger Wore a Gun, Hangman's Knot, Man in the Saddle, The Nevedan, Desperadoes)

Dog House
Complete Series and Film

Doomsday (Blackout,

Meteor, & Pandemic)
Jungle Book Plus
Snow White, Alice in Wonderland,
Beauty and the Beast

→ Vampires
→ Mad about You Complete Series

→ Airwolf Complete Series
→ Knight Rider Season 1

→ Knight Rider Season 2
→ Miami Vice Season 1

→ Miami Vice Season 2
→ Making a Serial Killer

From Millennium:
Love Going to America

→ Rise
→ No Letting Go
→ Secret Past

→ The Carrier
→ Newcomer
→ ICE Agent

From Monarch:
All American Bikini Car Wash

Dusk
→ Crackerjack

From MPI:
Anesthesia

Emelie
→ A Perfect Day
→ Everything Will Be Fine

→ The Abandoned
→ Sacrifice

From Music Video Distributors:
Songwriters

Season 1
Janis Little Girl Blue

Johnny Winter With Dr. John "Live In Sweden 1987"

→ Hot Bot
→ Sci-Fi Babes
→ Girl Meets Girl

→ Teenage Swinger
→ Ray Harryhausen:
Special Effects Titan

→ Amateur Night At City Hall: The Story Of Frank L. Rizzo

→ Nikkatsu Diamond Guys Vol. 2
→ Suture

→ Return of The Killer Tomatoes
→ Louder Than Love - The Grande Ballroom Story

→ Die Fighting
→ Hired to Kill
→ Blood Bath

→ Killer Dames Two
Gothic Chillers by Emilio P. Miraglia (The Night Evelyn Came Out of the Grave, The Red Queen Kills Seven Times)

From Olive:
The Sum of Us

→ The Return of the Man Called Horse
→ I'll Take Sweden
→ The Private Affairs of Bel Ami

→ Appointment with

Crime
→ The Whoopee Boys
→ French Postcards
→ Zapped!

→ Rich Kids
→ Iphigenia
→ Legend of the Lost

→ The King and Four Queens
From Paramount:
Anomalisa

Alpha & Omega
Dino Digs
Beauty and the Beast Season 3

Bubble Guppies
Fun on the Farm
45 Years

House of Lies Season 4
The Jim Gaffigan Show Season 1

Kroll Show Season 3
→ Perry Mason The Case of the Grimacing Governor/The Case of the Jealous Jokester

→ Perry Mason The Case of the Telltale Talk Show Host/The Case of the Killer Kiss

→ Perry Mason The Case of the Wicked Wives/The Case of the Lethal Lifestyle

The Shannara Chronicles
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

Beyond the Known Universe
→ 13 Hours The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi

→ Workaholics Season 6
→ Zoolander 2

From Passion River:
Struggle

→ No No A Documentary
From Right Stuf:
Spotlight

Mobile Suit Zeta Gundam: A New Translation
Gundam Evolve

Gasaraki
El-Hazard: The Wanderers

→ Mobile Suit Gundam ZZ V.2
→ After War Gundam X V.2

From Samuel Goldwyn:
Hostile Border

From SISU:
Zubin Mehta Zubin and I

From Sony:
East Side Sushi

Coming Home
Hostile Border
The Driftless Area

Never Back Down
No Surrender
Pride + Prejudice + Zombies

Creative Control
Hyena Road
A Stand Up Guy

Southbound
→ Outsiders
Season 1
→ Risen

→ Pride and Prejudice and Zombies
→ Emma's Chance
→ Dear Eleanor
→ Underground Season 1

→ The Mermaid
→ No Men beyond This Point

From 20th Century Fox:
The League Season 7

A Royal Night Out
Joy
Strawberry Shortcake
Campberry Stories

→ The X-Files Event Series
→ Deadpool
→ Eddie the Eagle

From Universal:
The Adventures of Raggedy Ann & Andy Complete Collection

Frank Sinatra
Sinatra: London
Secret in Their Eyes

400 Days
Bob the Builder Construction Heroes!

Monster High Scaremaster Collection
Killjoys Season 1

Kindergarten Cop 2
The Boy Suits Season 5

Jarhead 3
The Siege
Resurrection

Curious George Garden Discoveries
American Girl Lea to the Rescue

The Land Before Time: Journey of the Brave
→ Darling (2015)
→ Race

→ Triple 9
→ Mr. Right
→ Nail Caesar!

→ The Young Messiah
→ Eye in the Sky
→ By the Sea

→ Emergency! Complete Series
→ Amazing Journey The Story of the Who

→ London Has Fallen
→ The Hollow Crown The Wars of the Roses

→ Back to the Future Animated Series Season 1
From Virgil:
Valley of Saints

Dislecksia The Movie
Sam Lenke's Time Machine

Long Shot The Kevin Laue Story
Banister Everest on the Track

Long Shot The Kevin Laue Story
→ I Know a Woman Like That

From Viz:
Pokemon The Series XY Kalos

Quest Set 1
→ Pokemon Johto

League Champions Complete Collection
From Warner:
→ Angie Tribeca Season 1

→ Batman vs. Superman
→ Call the Midwife Season 5

→ Cartoon Network Adventure Time Card Wars
→ Cartoon Network Steven Universe The Return V.2

→ DCI Banks Season 4
→ Death in Paradise Season 4

Doctor Who The Underwater Menace
Dolly Parton's Coat of Many Colors

→ 11.22.63
→ Finding Phil
→ How to Be Single

→ Ice Age Giants Woolly Mammoths
→ iZombie Season 2

The Last Ship Season 2
→ Lego Friends Always Together

Lego Scooby Haunted Hollywood
Major Crimes Season 4

→ Moone Boy Season 1
→ The 100 Season 3

→ Orphan Black Season 4
→ Prey Seasons 1 & 2

Rick and Morty Season 2
Rizzoli & Isles Season 6

Sesame Street Sing It Elmo
Shark

Silent War Battles
Beneath the Sea
→ Silent Witness Season 3

→ Supergirl
→ Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle Season 1

Teen Titans Go! Season 3
→ They Will Have to Kill Us First

→ Thirteen
→ Tom and Jerry Back to Oz

The Trail Let Go Let God
→ Wallander Season 4

Warcraft
From Well Go USA:
→ Rise of the Legend

→ Kill Your Friends
From Wolfe:
Henry Gamble's Birthday Party

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 Victoria p1
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Current Attractions

The following titles recently appeared for the first time:

About Scott (Breaking Glass)
 Addiction Incorporated (Virgil)
 All Hell Breaks Loose (CAV)
 All Mistakes Buried (Breaking Glass)
 And Then There Were None (Acorn)
 Andre Bocelli Cinema (Verve)*
 The Ant and the Aardvark (Kino)
 Antonia's Line (Film Movement)
 Assassin (Invincible)
 Backtrack (Lionsgate)
 Bad Hurt (Universal)
 Banshee Season 3 (HBO)
 The Beast Complete Mini-Series (Mill Creek)
 The Beverly Hillbillies Official Season 1 (Paramount)
 Blood Shot (Inception)*
 Boost (Millennium)*
 Bride of ReAnimator (MVD)
 Burning Bodhi (Monterey)
 Cabaret Desire (Breaking Glass)*
 Casual Season 1 (Lionsgate)
 Chaplains (Virgil)
 Cherry Tree (MPI)
 The Classic Science Fiction Ultimate Collection (Universal)
 CodeGirl (Kino)
 Cop (Kino)
 Crazylegs Crane (Kino)
 Creep (Sony)
 Crypt of the Living Dead/House of the Living Dead (CAV)*
 Curveball (Image)
 Dangerous Men (MVD)
 Daniel Tosh People Pleaser (Paramount)
 The Danish Girl (Universal)
 Dead Pigeon on Beethoven Street (Olive)
 Death Walks Twice: Two Films By Luciano Ercoli (MVD)
 Dillinger (MVD)
 Dinosaur Adventures (Warner)
 Dinotopia Complete Season (Mill Creek)
 Dirty Pretty Things (Lionsgate)
 Dixieland (MPI)
 The Doctor Blake Mysteries (Warner)
 A Dog Named Gucci (Paramount)
 Don Matteo Set 13 (MHz)
 Don Matteo Set 14 (MHz)
 Don Matteo Set 15 (MHz)
 The Driftless Area (Sony)
 Drunk Stoned Brilliant Dead The Story of National Lampoon (Magnolia)
 Episodes Season 4 (Paramount)

Exit 14 (Cinedigm)
 The Exorcism of Anna Ecklund (Millennium)
 The Expanse Season 1 (Universal)
 Father Brown Season 3 V.1 (Warner)
 Fifty Shades of Black (Universal)
 Finding Noah (Alchemy)
 Finding Samuel Lowe From Harlem to China (Virgil)
 Flight 7500 (Lionsgate)
 The Fool (Olive)
 The Forest (Universal)
 A French Village Season 3 (MHz)*
 From Parts Unknown Fight Like a Girl (eOne)
 Future Cop Complete Season (Mill Creek)
 Gakuen Alice Complete Collection (Right Stuff)
 The Gallant Hours (Kino)
 Gasaraki (Right Stuff)
 Ghost in the Shell Arise the New Movie (Goldhil)
 Goldie & Bear Best Fairytale Friends (Buena Vista)
 Gore Whore (MVD)*
 Grace and Frankie Season 1 (Lionsgate)
 The Great Hypnotist (Well Go USA)
 The Hallow (Cinedigm)
 #Horror (Cinedigm)
 Haven Season 1 (eOne)
 Heartland Season 6 (eOne)
 Heroes Reborn (Universal)
 The Holcroft Covenant (Kino)
 Hot in Cleveland Season 6 (Paramount)
 House of Lies Season 4 (Paramount)
 How to Change the World (Kino)
 Hunter (Atzical)
 Identicals (Sony)
 In the Beginning (Mill Creek)
 The Inspector (Kino)
 Inspector Rex Season 1 (MHz)*
 IP Man 3 (Well Go USA)
 Jack of Red Hearts (ARC)*
 Jane Got a Gun (Anchor Bay)
 Jeruzalem (Epic)*
 Journey to the Seventh Planet (Kino)
 Justice League vs. Teen Titans (Warner)
 Ken Burns Jackie Robinson (Paramount)
 The Kennedy Films of Robert Drew & Associates (Criterion)
 The Kingdom Of Zydeco (MVD)
 Krampus (Universal)
 The Lady in the Car with Glasses and a Gun (Magnolia)
 The Lady in the Van (Sony)
 Lamb (Sony)

Let's Learn STEM V.2 (Paramount)
 Little Feat Old Folks Boogie: Live in Concert 1977 (Video Music)*
 London Spy (Warner)
 Love Is a Verb (MPI)
 Magic User's Club OVA Series (Right Stuff)
 Magic User's Club TV Series (Right Stuff)
 The Major (Olive)
 The Masked Saint (Millennium)
 Matthew Barney: No Restraint (Kino)
 Me Jane and More Stories about Girl Power (Cinedigm)
 Medousa (CAV)
 Meet the Hitlers (Virgil)
 The Million Eyes of Sumuru (eOne)
 Misconduct (Lionsgate)
 Mobile Suit Zeta Gundam V.2 (Right Stuff)
 Mojave (Lionsgate)
 My All American (Universal)
 My Big Fat Greek Life Complete Season (Mill Creek)
 Naruto Shippuden V.26 (Viz)
 National Geographic Call of the Wild Explorer (Cinedigm)
 National Geographic Monster Fish Season 6 (Cinedigm)
 Natural Born Pranksters (Lionsgate)*
 The Nightingale (Kino)
 Norm of the North (Lionsgate)
 The Odd Couple Season 1 (Paramount)
 Of Men and War (Kino)
 One Piece Season 7 (Goldhil)
 Only Angels Have Wings (Criterion)
 Outlaw: Gangster VIP Collection (MVD)
 Panic in Year Zero (Kino)
 Paw Patrol/Bubble Guppies Collection (Paramount)
 Pay Back (Lionsgate)
 Perfect Obedience (Kino)
 Perscription Thugs (Anchor Bay)
 Phoenix (Criterion)
 Playing by Heart (Lionsgate)
 Pokemon Johto League Champions Complete Collection (Viz)
 Power Rangers Dino Charge Resurgence (Lionsgate)
 Pretty Little Liars Season 6 (Warner)
 The Primary Instinct (Kino)
 The Purple Plain (Kino)
 The Real Jungle Book Animals (Warner)
 The Revenant (Fox)
 Rhythm 'N' Bayous: A Road Map To Louisiana Music (MVD)
 Ride Along 2 (Universal)
 Riot Caged to Kill (Universal)

River of Grass (Oscilloscope)*
 Royal Pains Season 7 (Universal)
 Schramm (CAV)
 Sembéne (Kino)
 Sex Ed (Monarch)
 Shadows in an Empty Room (Kino)
 Silicon Valley Season 2 (HBO)
 Sisters Season 4 (Cinedigm)
 Slender (Universal)
 Son of Saul (Sony)
 Standoff (Lionsgate)
 Star Wars The Force Awakens (Buena Vista)
 Stealing Cars (Sony)
 Stolen Child (MVD)*
 Storefront Theatre Collection Volume 1 (CAV)*
 The Stuff (MVD)
 The Tell-Tale Heart (Millennium)
 That's Not Us (Strand)
 That's Sexploitation! (CAV)
 The Thorn (Mill Creek)
 Time Rush (Millennium)
 Try and Get Me (Olive)
 Tumbledown (Anchor Bay)
 Twinkle Toes Lights Up New York (Cinedigm)
 Unlikely Heroes (Olive)
 Unveiled (CAV)*
 Veep Season 4 (HBO)
 Vessel (Kino)
 The Von Trapp Family A Life of Music (Lionsgate)
 Wabbit Season Part 1 (Warner)
 What? (CAV)
 What Lola Wants (Anchor Bay)
 What's the Worst That Could Happen? (Olive)
 WWE Countdown (Lionsgate)
 WWE Straight Outta Dudleyville The Legacy of the Dudley Boyz (Cinedigm)
 WWE U.S. Championship Legacy of Greatness (Cinedigm)
 The Yank (Millennium)
 Yu-Gi-Oh GX Season 3 (Cinedigm)
 The Zero Boys (MVD)
 Zydeco Crossroads: A Tale Of Two Cities (MVD)

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