

# THE DVD LASER DISC NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER  
2025  
Issue #493

\$5.00

Forty-first Anniversary Issue

PO Box 382, Glen Cove, NY 11542-0382 • (212) 242-3324 • DVDLaser.com

## Old trucks with dynamite—what could go wrong?

Henri-Georges Clouzot's magnificent 1953 adventure film, **The Wages of Fear** (*La Salaire de la Peur*), certifies his standing as one of France's greatest filmmakers, especially with the superb Criterion Collection two-platter 4K Blu-ray release (UPC#715515310512, \$50). Based upon a novel by Georges Arnaud, the film is immediately relatable—four men in two decrepit trucks must transport liquid nitroglycerin across 300 miles of rough terrain to reach an oil derrick blowout. The movie runs 153 minutes and spends an entire hour getting to know the men before the final 90 minutes give over to their harrowing journey. That first hour is set in a remote Venezuelan village that is home to a makeshift oil company headquarters. The film is about the unemployed—foreign nationals who lost their jobs with the company for whatever reasons and do not have enough money to leave, so they hang around in a local bar desperate for whatever labor they can get or meals they can hustle—and its examination within the group of alpha male dynamics, an hierarchy that gets turned on its head once the men are in the cabs of the trucks, making their way across the bumpy roads. It is because the personalities and souls of the characters, both in the truck and the ones they leave behind, are so intricately and thoroughly developed that the movie can then take you on its captivating thrill ride and hold you riveted every step of the way. It is not just the superficial choices the characters will make about operating the trucks, but the inner emotional constructs that are guiding those choices. Hence, you hold our breath not just watching how they maneuver around obstacles and react to problems, but why. Yves Montand, Charles Vanel, Peter Van Eyck and Folco Lulli star, with Véra Clouzot and William Tubbs.

The black-and-white picture is in a squared full screen format, and it looks terrific. The image is sharp, contrasts are carefully designed, and the image is free of wear. The monophonic sound is also solid and clean. The film is mostly in French, with optional English subtitles. The picture on the standard Blu-ray still looks great, although it is grainier and not quite as effective as the 4K presentation. The standard BD included in the set also contains two trailers, a good 8-minute piece about the effort that went into the film's restoration, a 5-minute interview with Montand about his career, a 10-minute appreciation of Clouzot's career, an excellent 22-minute interview with assistant director Michel Romanoff, who shares his memories from each phase of the lengthy shoot (amazingly, the entire film was shot in France), a fascinating 12-minute piece about the massive trimming that the film underwent for its original American theatrical release, and a terrific 53-minute overview of Clouzot's career with many wonderful interviews and tantalizing clips. The special features do not start up where they left off if playback is terminated.

We say this every time we review the film, but William Friedkin dynamited his own career with his 1977 Universal Pictures and Paramount remake of **Wages of Fear**, **Sorcerer**. It was the first film he'd made after **The Exorcist**, which had followed his Oscar-winning **The French Connection**, but who in their right mind would okay marketing a film called **Sorcerer** immediately after the same director had made **The Exorcist** if the movie has nothing to do with the supernatural? To make matters worse, the first shot in the film is a stone face of a demon. It was an unforced error, like the one Montand's character commits at the end of **Wages of Fear**, and Friedkin's career never really recovered. That said, however, and ill conceived title aside, it is an outstanding film. Running 122 minutes (again, the trucks do not start up until the second hour begins), not only does it come close to achieving the spiritual and emotional depth of the original, but the addition of color and advanced filmmaking technology enables it to create even more harrowing and engrossing sequences. Although there is less exploration of the power dynamics between the men, there is a substantially updated and palpable texture to their environment. Set this time in the jungles of Central America, one sequence in particular, where the aging trucks, carrying aging dynamite, must cross a flimsy ropes supported bridge during a pounding storm, has to be one of the greatest logistical and technical accomplishments in motion picture history, particularly as it was staged and executed without the advantages of computer effects. Roy Scheider, Bruno Cremer, Francisco Rabal and an actor known as 'Amidou' star. Joe Spinell is also featured.

Warner Bros. and Criterion have released **Sorcerer** as a three-platter 4K Blu-ray (UPC#715515314619, \$50). Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1, this time the differences between the 4K presentation and the standard Blu-ray are more ambiguous. The standard BD has brighter, more discernible colors, but it can also look over-saturated at times, while the 4K, although it can seem nearly black and white in some shots with depressed lighting, still has recognizable hues and is otherwise smoother and better detailed. Although when you jump back and forth between the two versions, the standard BD seems better, when you actually play the film, the 4K presentation is more involving. On both, the 5.1-channel DTS sound has an older mix, but provides a very satisfying dimensionality. As with Warner's previous Blu-ray (Jun 11), the film's Overture has not been included. Warner's presentation was letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1, losing picture information on the sides of the image in comparison to the Criterion versions, and adding nothing to the top or bottom. The Warner image is even more colorful than the Criterion standard Blu-ray, and is preferable in some scenes, but too colorful in others. The film is mostly in English, with optional English subtitles (the second, default option, translates just the other languages).

The third platter is a standard Blu-ray containing special features. While the film itself starts up where it left off if playback is terminated on the other two platters, the supplements do not. Along with a trailer, there are 6 minutes of silent behind-the-scenes home movies of the opening sequence shot in New Jersey; a good 28-minute discussion of Friedkin's career and the film's brilliance by Friedkin associate James Gray and film critic Sean Fennessey; a rewarding 36 minutes of intermixed audio-only interviews with screenwriter Walon Green and editor Bud Smith about the production and the film's fate; a marvelous 77-minute interview with Friedkin from 2015 with Nicolas Winding Refn specifically about the film as Friedkin ponders his intentions, the film's failures and shares details about the shoot (the first half of the talk is outstanding, the second half gets a little more convoluted as Friedkin resists some of Refn's attempts to make him self-reflect); and a selective 107-minute documentary about Friedkin's career, **Friedkin Uncut**, which includes lengthy interview clips with Friedkin himself, as well as with actors who have worked with him and film luminaries who have a positive opinion of his specific films. For the movies that are covered, the piece is rewarding and entertaining—as the title suggests, Friedkin does not mince words—and will certainly send the viewer off wishing to revisit a title or too, but throughout the program, the utter absence of mentioning several major Friedkin titles is both noticeable and baffling.

## Once upon a time in Manchuria

Billed as an 'Oriental Western,' Jee-woon Kim's 2008 **The Good the Bad the Weird**, released as an impressive two-platter 4K Blu-ray by Arrow Video (UPC#760137182207, \$60), consists of almost constant action. The unrelenting 2 hours of chases and gunfights will be numbing to some viewers, but one man's numb is another man's high, and with the crisp precision of the 4K image and equally sharp 7.1-channel DTS sound, you can't get much higher. Set in the Thirties in Manchuria, the three primary characters are Korean, a thief played by Kang-ho Song (reminiscent at times of John Belushi), a bandit played by Byung-hun Lee (who has sort of a Prince thing going, with his dark hair hanging over one of his eyes) and a bounty hunter played by ultra-handsome Woo-song Jung, who are not only competing against one another but trying to outrun both the Japanese military and Chinese gangsters and outlaws to reach the supposed treasure indicated on a sought after map. There are jeeps and motorcycles involved in the chases, but there are plenty of horses, and the film is as much an homage to Spaghetti westerns as it is beholden to its own spirit of period adventure. But mostly it is wild, elaborate chases, and elaborate chantey town gunfights. Since many different parties want the map and the treasure, it becomes a bit confusing keeping track of who is who and who is working for whom when loyalties shift, collaborations are formed, but as an encouragement to watch the movie twice (it plays a lot better the second time through, when you know what to expect and what to look for), two versions of the film are presented on the 4K platter, the **International Version**, which runs 130 minutes, and the **Korean Version**, which runs 135 minutes (and does not get the 'Oriental Western' billing). Both versions are in Korean, with optional English subtitles.

## Once upon a Time (Continued)

It is best to watch the *International Version* first, as sort of an executive summary. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, the picture is vivid and flawless from beginning to end, with noises coming from all over the place. It begins with a train robbery that goes awry because more than one group is robbing the train or following some other agenda that places them in the center of the action. Song's character gets away with the map, and a lot of what happens next involves the different parties chasing him to get it for themselves, with the action settling in a huge conglomeration of makeshift buildings and markets, which are teeming and vibrant at first and pretty much obliterated by the time the story moves elsewhere. Don't get us wrong, the characters do converse with one another and you do get to know their personalities and dreams, but such interludes are fleeting. As the film makes its way to the end, there is another enormous and impressively staged sequence where different groups of individuals, including a contingent of Japanese army personnel with artillery, are chasing Song's character across a flat, barren landscape. And the finale is a direct imitation of the film's namesake, with the three main characters facing off in a three-way duel at the site of the treasure. It is after the finale, however, that the *Korean Version*, which had otherwise just added a couple of more characters to the confusion (and interrupting the flow of a scene or two to do so), improves upon the *International Version*, explaining the fate of each character in more detail, despite still leaving a number of dangling plot points and other oddities (including an inexplicable sequence where secondary characters apparently see an ocean beach). Nevertheless, it is the film's entertaining momentum, underscored by the lively performances, that makes it so irresistible, with the striking sharpness of the 4K image magnifying that irresistibility a hundredfold.

In addition to a minute-long introduction by Kim, there are three commentary tracks. Kim talks on the *International Version* with Song, Lee and Jung about their characters, their performances, the story (they try to explain that the beach thing is a mirage, but it is a stretch) and the rigors of the shoot. They also share many anecdotes about their experiences, such as when they staged the scene where Lee's character keeps shooting the hat of Song's character out of his grasp. "This is a Western trope." "Right, and we repeat it to subvert it." "But one of our younger crewmembers who had never seen a Western wouldn't stop laughing at that. So, when I asked him why, he said, 'The hat keeps running away.' I felt a real generational gap there."

Kim then joins cinematographer Mo-gae Lee, lighting man Seung-cheol O and production designer Hwa-sung Cho on the *Korean Version*, going over the elaborate logistics that were required to put the film together ("While you were filming in [Manchuria], it took more than four months to build the [shanty town] set. The actual construction took less than that, but weather delays allowed me to keep refining it. With more time, we were able to deliver a better final product with much more detail. I mean, adding artistic details is one thing, but naturally weathering things by having them exposed to rain, wind and sun over time makes them definitely more interesting visually."), their admirations for their accomplishments in specific scenes, how they wish they could have done other scenes differently, and the specific challenge and inspired accomplishment of lighting each sequence. "The truth is, most audiences that watch films primarily focus on the actors' performances. They might say an actor really brought a character to life, but lighting also plays a crucial role in shaping a character through its angle, intensity and so on."

Film critics Pierce Conran and James Marsh give another talk over the *International Version*, speaking about all sorts of stuff, including trains in movies, trains in Korean movies, the Korean film industry, the careers of the filmmakers and the cast members, the dynamics of individual scenes, the constitution of an Eastern western and why it was popular ("One of the many motivations for setting a film in this setting, in this Manchurian period, is that it gives the filmmakers a freedom to talk about issues. You can raise issues and problems and social commentary and what have you, and probably say more than you could making a film back home. I think this is one of the attractions of this kind of movie back in the late Sixties and early Seventies. Because it was a lot more stringent what you could talk about in Korean movies, certainly if they were set in Korea. Set it outside of the boundaries of Korea, out beyond the borders, particularly in a pre-designated, recognized lawless state being run by the Japanese, for example, then anything goes and you can pretty much say whatever you want and you can have characters that are sort of heroic yet slightly immoral or amoral or what have you. And that's something you see cropping up in [Korean] movies again today is that, yes, crime can happen and you can have [Korean] speaking characters doing bad things, as long as they don't do them in [Korea]. I think that's one of the motivations for the popularity of these kinds of movies, the freedom it gives you to set them outside of Korea.") and the many references within the film to Sergio Leone, *Road Warrior* and other features.

It is worth noting that even after essentially watching the film five times in two days, it never becomes the least bit tiresome and remains delightful from beginning to end.

The second platter is a standard Blu-ray holding extensive special features. There are 44 minutes of energetic but completely misguided deleted scenes. It is baffling as to why Kim even shot many of them, but he does attempt to explain his thinking on the commentary that accompanies them. Additionally, there is a minute-long clip of a scene with music that Kim subsequently chose to remove, a 12-minute embellished ending that adds a little bit more to the ending in the *Korean Version*, and four alternate endings each lasting 2 minutes, which offer different and less satisfying conclusions.

An excellent, comprehensive 90-minute production documentary systematically shows how the film was staged and what went on during the shoot ("When I watch the 'Making-ofs' for Hollywood movies, each cut seems to be perfectly calculated. With *The Good the Bad the Weird*, you can pretty much assume that what you see are the real-life situations."). Additionally, there is another 29 minutes of a great behind-the-scenes views of how a number of the

film's crazy sequences were shot; a good 26-minute talk by Kim from 2025 that reiterates some of the anecdotes and explanations he shared in the commentaries but also summarizes what he wanted to accomplish and how he executed different sequences; another enjoyable 19-minute chat with Kim and the three stars from 2008 and a total of 12 minutes of promotional interviews with each one; a decent 15-minute interview with stunt coordinator Doo-hong Jung from 2025 about staging the primary action sequences and working with Kim; an interesting 10-minute piece on the film's production designs and costumes (although there is no indication as to why Song is wearing anachronistic boots); an enlightening 14-minute piece about the preparations that went into the production before shooting started; a very good 11-minute piece on the film's sound (since there aren't too many Korean westerns, the sound designer had to come up with a lot of new noises) including the breakdown of a scene to demonstrate the different layers of sound being added to a sequence; a pair of brief promotional featurettes running a total of 4 minutes; and a 3-minute clip of the film's debut at Cannes (which is in the 90-minute piece, too).

## The crossroads of a million private lives

We reviewed Typecast's DVD release of Youssef Chahine's amazing 1958 *Cairo Station* (*Bab el Hadid*) in Jan 10. We were blown away by the film's unexpected virtuosity, as well as its surprisingly steamy sexual atmosphere. Even though the DVD presentation was riddled with scratches, speckles and splices, you could see that there was clearly a masterpiece playing out beneath the distractions. Now The Criterion Collection has released a pristine Blu-ray (UPC#715515317511, \$40) and indeed, the film's brilliance is readily available for all to see. Presented in a squared, full screen format, the black-and-white image is free of any wear whatsoever. Contrasts are crisply detailed, and the film's textures are vivid. Even the monophonic sound is clear and solid. The film is in Arabic with optional English subtitles.

Running a brisk 76 minutes, the film depicts the comings and goings in the primary railroad hub in Cairo on a hot summer's day, depicting little stories in every crowd scene while weaving larger dramas in and out of the hustle and bustle. The central focus of the narrative is on those who work at the station—the baggage handlers, newspaper hawkers and women who sell cool beverages out of buckets that they lug back and forth, gathering the empties after the customers have finished their drinks—although the passengers also play a part here and there, and the trains themselves seem alive, supporting the human parasites that swarm around them and often narrowly avoiding them as they speed across the rails. One of the baggage handlers is trying to organize a union to break the hold of the boss that controls the business, while his fiancée, one of the refreshment sellers, is constantly being chased by the police at the behest of a refreshment stand owner. She is also the focus of an obsession by a crippled news hawker (played by Chahine), whose papers, incidentally, are headlining the story of a body that was found in a trunk at another train station on the line. The film is superbly directed, often amid genuine crowds of passengers going about their business, and cuts effortlessly between its plots and subplots, most of which are resolved by the day's end. In movies that are set aboard a train, the train's movement is often used symbolically as a representation of the plot's forward momentum. Here, it is the sheer energy exhibited by the locomotives as they stop and go that underscores the emotions of the characters.

There is an excellent 25-minute collection of retrospective interviews analyzing the film's artistry and recalling its disastrous initial theatrical reception by Egyptian audiences (it took 20 years to be recognized as one of Egypt's greatest films); a nice 11-minute talk by Chahine in front of an American audience in 1998 about filmmaking and civilization; and a rewarding 28-minute analysis of the film, Chahine's career and Egyptian cinema. Also featured is a lovely 24-minute documentary profile of Cairo Chahine made in 1991 for French television that also appeared on the Typecast DVD, *Cairo As Seen by Chahine*, intermingling shots of the city with staged and quasi-staged depictions of different people who live there. It is accompanied by a 6-minute introduction. None of the special features start up where they left off if playback is terminated.

## Our Forty-first Anniversary!

Welcome to our *Forty-first Anniversary Issue* and the beginning of our forty-second year of publication! Our deepest thanks to all of our readers for their continued support and favor. Additionally, thank you to the many people in the home video industry who have gone out of their way to support our efforts. Your faith in us is greatly appreciated. Thank you also to everyone at GMPC for always printing the Newsletter in a timely and efficient fashion. Thank you as well for the wonderful generosity of Terence Tran, Wolfgang Puhl, Bruce Ayres, Mark McElligott, John Jacobsen, Robert Puddister, Rudy Romero, and Richard Rubenstein.

As you might be aware, we compile all of our DVD and BD reviews into a single source book, *DVDs*, which is now up to its hundred-seventy-ninth iteration and is available on CD-ROM or as a .pdf file that can be downloaded from the Internet. Feel free to contact us for more details. You can also find it in Kindle format on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), or at [www.kobo.com](http://www.kobo.com), though not with the same freshly updated content—more than 17,000 reviews—that we offer directly.

The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter is published during the first week of every month. Subscription prices are \$47.50 for one year or \$75 for two. Beyond the U.S.: \$70 for one year or \$130 for two. MC, VISA, Disc. & Amex: Provide acct# and expir. date. PAYPAL: [DVDLaserdisc@gmail.com](mailto:DVDLaserdisc@gmail.com). Address all letters: To the Editor, The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter, PO Box 382, Glen Cove NY 11542 or e-mail to [DVDLaser@rocketmail.com](mailto:DVDLaser@rocketmail.com). Letters may be edited for length. All contents are copyright 2025 The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter and may not be copied or reprinted without written consent. ISSN 0749-5250

The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter is edited and published by Douglas Pratt



## Femmes fatale, Chinese style

Three Shaw Bros. films from the late Sixties with prominent female characters are presented on the terrific two-platter Blu-ray set from Eureka!, **Martial Law Lo Wei's Wuxia World** (UPC#760137187042, \$40). Along with directing, Lo, ever the ham, also has a supporting part in each film. All of the monophonic Mandarin films are supported by optional English subtitles and are letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1.

The title character in Lo's 1968 *The Black Butterfly* is a stealthy thief dressed in a bright purple ninja outfit who robs from the rich and distributes the loot to the poor. Fooling everyone on the screen and no one watching the screen, wardrobe choice alone should indicate the thief's gender, but the victims and the beneficiaries are clueless. That is just the beginning of the highly entertaining 111-minute production. Not even her father, a retired martial arts master running a tavern that sits on the water at the end of a long pier, knows she is the one everyone is looking for, and the handsome young court official assigned to solve the robberies and immediately smitten with the attractive waitress doesn't figure it out, either. The father is also in the dark because it was the local wino who surreptitiously taught her fighting skills. The villains are especially irritated by the robberies and commit one of their own, stealing an important seal from the court and demanding a monetary ransom equal to what was stolen from them in return. Thus, along with the stimulating robberies, the beginning of the film is taken up by brief and flashy martial arts engagements—particularly when the thief is close to being caught—which then become more involved and more elaborate as the movie progresses so that in the final act, the heroine, her father, the wino, the handsome court officer and the other workers at the tavern who had been training with the father in their spare time attack the castle that the villains operate and face off against their hordes of variously skilled fighters. Even the splashes of blood become more prominent as the finale approaches. Hence, the film has time enough to develop plenty of engaging characters while steadily increasing the scale and consequence of the battles. Under Lo's skilled execution, the captivating entertainment is masterfully paced, accelerating from beginning to end. Lisa Chiao Chiao stars, with Hua Yueh and Feng Tien.

The picture is flawless, with smooth, finely detailed hues and accurate fleshtones. The image is so consistently vivid that it is hard to differentiate the soundstage shots from the location shots. The sound also has great clarity, adding to the impact of the clashing swords and Chu Jen Wang's drum-happy musical score. Hong Kong film enthusiasts Mike Leeder and Arne Venema provide a serviceable commentary track. Right off the bat they point out the influence of the Japanese *Shinobi* series (see page 4) and then take a deep dive into Lo's career, since he also appears in an early scene. They also speak about the other members of the cast, dissect a couple of the fights (feeling that the sequences are somewhat slow paced), and chat about the film's locations (they love the tavern on the dock) and Hong Kong culture, including a discussion about rice wine.

Angela Yu Chien plays a deadly femme fatale in the 1968 *Death Valley*. She arranges the death of her own uncle, and then attempts to get two good guys to fight one another so she can eliminate them as well and have the inheritance to herself. Fortunately, the two, played by Yueh and Hung-lieh Chen, cross paths before she gets an opportunity to start playing them and they form a bond of their own, which is ultimately stronger than her feminine wiles. Meanwhile, there are plenty of great fight sequences (with some decent bloodletting) throughout the 99-minute feature, along with psychological intrigue and many nicely framed image designs.

The picture does not look quite as good as *Black Butterfly*—fleshtones look too orange, especially on the earlier reels—but it is free of damage and still finely detailed. The sound is terrific again, especially during the sword fights. At one point, composer Fu-Ling Wang taps into The Ventures's *Walk Don't Run* for a (surprisingly nude) love scene. While we felt the film was the weakest of the three movies in the set (although it is still terrific), Leeder and Venema, in supplying their commentary, not only praise it as the best movie in the group, but feel it may well be Lo's best film of all. They talk about how the industry was changing at the time—how the actors were gradually giving way to performers with martial arts training (once fans got a taste of the good stuff it was hard to go back), and how the cinematography, editing and so on was being adjusted to amplify the realism and viciousness of the fighting. "In the last film, many of our heroes more or less survive. No one ever looked like they were in..." "...Any sense of danger. Now you can see the action directors were being listened to." In addition to dissecting the fights and the drama, they also chat about some of the locations and other aspects of life in Hong Kong.

The second platter holds just one film, but it is a campy masterpiece, *Vengeance of a Snow Girl* from 1971. Running 123 minutes, the film has many marvelous and inventive fight sequences, but more importantly, while sustaining the pace and intrigue of a good martial arts feature, it also has an exceptional and even rare amount of emotional development and exchange. It is not just about two characters falling in love. The entire film is about the real meaning of love and commitment, and the moral precepts to the foundation for that state. It may be a melodrama with a heightened sense of camp, but it brings great depth to both the emotional and moral conflicts the characters face, while adding complexity and unique innovation to the fight scenes. And on top of all of that, regardless of how good the first two films looked on the other platter, *Snow Girl* has far and away the best image transfer. Not only is there a greater sense of chromatic balance and contrast in the image compositions than there is in the other films, but every frame, indoor and outdoor, has porcelain sheen, thus magnifying the enhanced designs to an even greater level of aesthetic excitement.

Li Ching is the heroine, a masterful swordsman who has been crippled since she was a child and has vowed revenge upon the men who killed her parents and were responsible for her condition. One of her mesmerizing jade canes doubles as a sword. When the men gather for a celebration, she sees the opportunity to dispatch all of them at once, but fails. One of the men had urged his companions not to murder the parents, and his son meets the heroine and falls in love with her. Since she is honorable, she only has a beef with his father, and the father accepts that she still wants to fight him and may not win in her condition. He explains to her how she can cure her lifeless legs first, and the son,

totally smitten, insists on accompanying her on the long journey to obtain the cure, even though she has vowed to kill the father upon her return. Naturally, over the course of the adventure that takes up the movie's second half, she starts to open up her feelings. The film is not perfect. Along with occasional narrative conveniences, the ending is a typical Shaw Bros. 'time to wrap things up' conclusion, but none of that really matters because the fights have been so plentiful and entertaining throughout (Sammo Hung is seen briefly as a henchman to one of the villains) and because the souls of the characters are so well explicated. The film feels like it is more than just another martial arts action feature, and it is that sense of gratification imparted to the viewer, aided by the gorgeous transfer, that makes the entire experience of its entertainment so exceptionally satisfying.

A 20-minute appreciation of the film is included on the platter (the volume levels for the film clips are higher than the volume level for the narration). There is also a third Leeder and Venema commentary, which is also the best of the three. There are fewer digressions as they focus on the cast and the characters, as well as Lo's career (it was his last film at Shaw Bros.; they do repeat some of the information they shared on the other tracks), and the various technical aspects of the production, to which they bring their personal experiences.

"The wire work is amazing. I like the way she's flying around, and you can hurt yourself if you don't do that right."

"Well, that's something that people often forget, is it's not just the people pulling the wire. You've got to get used to it so you know how to balance, how to hold yourself so that you're not going 'Waehh!' and just staggering around every time you get pulled or land."

"I tried it once, and I was like, 'Whoa, this is not what I thought it was going to be.' It's bizarrely disorienting."

"Especially as Hong Kong wirework. Like in America you'll have your vest, with like multiple wires on it. Hong Kong is like they'll pin you just on your hip or something, so it's very interesting. You have to learn it, because you have to learn how to balance."

"And if you don't learn it, you can get really, really hurt."

"The wires, back in the Hong Kong days, because we didn't have the special effects, they're really thin and people would like paint over them with marking pens. But the wires would snap, the piano wires."

"You also can't be too hefty, which is maybe why you don't see Sammo on too many wires."

## Choreographed gore

The machinations of death as only Hollywood can present them are on display in the sixth installment of the marvelous and unique New Line Cinema horror series, **Final Destination Bloodlines**, a New Line Home Entertainment WB SDS Studio Distribution Services Blu-ray (UPC#883929835690, \$28). Presenting elaborately choreographed fatal accidents almost as if they were musical numbers, the 2025 feature, directed by Adam Stein and Zach Lipovsky, devises a moderately fresh and definitely viable narrative—the heroine, played by Kaitlyn Santa Juana, not only decodes the pattern that the deaths have been following, but believes she has uncovered a way to circumvent inevitability—which is more than sufficient when combined with the latest advances in special effects magic to bedazzle the viewer in splashy blood and guts. Most of the deaths involve either squeezing body parts until they pop like zits, or piercing bodies with large, sharp objects. Sometimes, both of these things happen simultaneously, but whatever the means by which an attractive, appealing or even irritating character is dispatched, nothing in their lives quite becomes them like the spectacle of leaving it. More certain than either death or taxes is the likelihood that **Final Destination Bloodlines** will not be nominated for an Oscar, but in terms of production designs, the film holds its own with any major feature of more serious intent in how it looks and how its bits and pieces come together (only then to get blown asunder). Compositionally, the film is captivating, and running 110 minutes, it pulls the viewer along in giddy delight from its magnificent opening sequence (all the more engaging if you have ever yourself been to the Space Needle, Montreal Tower or a similar high tower restaurant) to its final one-two punchline. The movie delivers on every expectation you have for it, and so far as the series is concerned, it will definitely have an afterlife.

The film does not start up where it left off if playback is terminated. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The image is clear and slick, and the gore is finely detailed. The Dolby Atmos sound is reasonably rambunctious and smooth. There is an audio track that describes the action ("The spring in the vending machine bursts through the glass, whizzes by the doctor and strikes Bobby's forehead. From the hallway, the others sprint in the direction of the scream and witness the spring boring through Bobby's skull like a corkscrew. His body falls to the floor."), alternate French and Spanish audio tracks, optional English, French and Spanish subtitles, a passable 6-minute promotional documentary, a great 7-minute production featurette depicting how several of the elaborate death sequences were accomplished, and a terrific 5-minute piece about the late Tony Todd, whose character provided an arc through the entire series that was cleverly wrapped up in **Bloodlines**.

Stein and Lipovsky supply a very good commentary track, explaining how the film was conceived to undermine expectations, discussing the movie's specific thematic designs ("You can see a shelf behind there is circular. We really worked with Rachel O'Toole, our production designer, to put as many circles in the film as possible. We had this idea of 'circles kill.' Circles are involved in almost every death in the movie, and so there's a lot of circular designs throughout the whole film.") "It's kind of a metaphor for how the movie is structured.", going over the film's links to the previous movies (including another lovely tribute to Todd), and delving into wonderful details about how various sequences were staged and executed. "When we actually killed Howard, Makeup Effects made an incredibly detailed version of his head, with all the insides of a head as well, so that we could actually mow it down with a lawnmower for some of the inside shots of how it grinds down his head."

## Picking Daisies

In our review of the Criterion Collection's *Eclipse Series* DVD release, **Pearls of the Czech New Wave** (Nov 12), we allowed as to how Věra Chytilová's 1966 **Daisies** was an ideal inclusion in the set because its lack of widespread popularity made it an unlikely title to attract individual investment. But then, a funny thing happened, and you can bet your bottom dollar that the dissemination of the *Eclipse* set had a lot to do with it. When the most recent Sight and Sound poll of the greatest films ever made came out, **Daisies** was on the list. That is what has been so exciting about home video over the years, the ways that deserving but obscure films have been able to break out of their limited theatrical availability and penetrate the consciousness of film fans wherever a television screen is available. Completing the circle and certifying that it will never fall back into obscurity, Criterion has now released the effervescent film on Blu-ray (UPC#715515278713, \$40).

The movie is a true non-linear oddity, owing as much to Czech animation classics as it does to the **New Wave** social freedoms in its depiction of two young women essentially discovering and enjoying life. Jitka Cerhová and Ivana Karbanová, calling to mind Anna Karina and Carol Burnett respectively, hang out in a room, go out to dinners with older dates, and frolic about in the outdoors, among other things. In its determined irreverence, the film calls to mind *Girls Just Want to Have Fun*, and like the song, it is utterly addicting. The film is in Czech and you'll probably want to activate the optional English subtitles the first time through, just to understand that you aren't missing something, but after that, by all means, turn them off. The sound and the images bombard the viewer constantly, and any distraction from Chytilová's original conception undercuts the giddy delight that is inherent in every moment the film unspools. While the most predominantly recurring images in the film involve the pair eating or playing with food (don't watch the movie on an empty stomach), the film has no compunction about including a quick montage of padlocks and other far afield images, from fashion to war, in its constantly metamorphosing collage. At one point, the two are cutting pictures and other things with scissors and the image itself becomes broken into pieces as it depicts their actions. Running 76 minutes, **Daisies** is the ultimate peripatetic cinematic adventure, and although it appears entirely nonsensical, it is definitely worth having in one's collection, to share with young and old alike.

The DVD looked terrific, but the Blu-ray is a substantial improvement anyway. In comparison, the DVD's image is very grainy and occasionally worn, while the BD looks immaculate. The film switches from color to black-and-white to monochromatic tints (the latter shifting from one hue to another within a shot), and while the colors on the DVD were fresh and the contrasts in the black-and-white footage were well defined, the hues are even fresher and the image is smoother and sharper on the BD. Additionally, the monophonic sound is also crisper and stronger.

Two additional Chytilová films have been included. Both are from 1962 and are in a squared full screen format, in black-and-white. *A Bagful of Fleas* is set in a textile factory dormitory for college-age girls. The film is deftly staged, so that even though it stays very tight on the characters, you always have a strong sense of what is going on in the rest of the room. One of the girls is a bit of a troublemaker—like **Daisies**, the film is about the irrepressible female spirit—and much of the 45-minute film just appears to be about the hijinks that go on in the dorm room and the frustration the girls all have with their jobs and their lives. But then, the final act, as it were, switches to a collective worker's meeting, where her compatriots and the older workers have to decide how to punish her for her behavior. Not only does that final scene nail it, but it places the entire film in an enlightened perspective, simultaneously depicting what society can and cannot accomplish, and how removed the social structure of the textile plant is from an environment that would allow the women to mature and blossom—in other words, the collective good, in this case, is not so great for the individuals in that collective. In the 43-minute *Ceiling*, a young fashion model becomes dissatisfied with her lifestyle. The film is set in a city and men figure more prominently in the course of the drama (which anticipates John Schlesinger's 1965 **Darling**). It is an excellent film, exploring the different corners of her world, the pressures she feels from those around her and the growing distaste she has for everyone and everything. While it may seem succinct, it could easily qualify as a feature. Both movies, incidentally, continue the food motif.

Also included is a spellbinding 55-minute documentary collection of interviews with the elderly Chytilová compiled in 2004, which also contains film clips and many home movies. She talks about her career, her family and her life, as well as her love for making movies, even as it interfered with her marriage and raising her children (her son, who is apparently a filmmaker, is nevertheless camera shy, and it is clear from the clips that her daughter was also irritated at times that the camera was always 'on'). There are so many highlights in the piece that we could spend a whole page listing them, but our two favorites are the look of defiant satisfaction she gives as she is called upon to receive a Czech Film Lifetime Achievement Award (after having been ignored by the body for decades), and her dog laying bent at a perpendicular angle in the corner of the coach behind the chair where she is talking to an interviewer. The dog is motionless, with his legs stuck straight up in the air, and it's a big dog.

Also featured is a 9-minute appreciation of the film and Chytilová, and a 27-minute appreciation of Chytilová intercut with an overview of the Czech New Wave. Both pieces are informative, but are even more worthwhile for the opportunity to revisit (again and again) clips from **Daisies**.

Film historian Daniel Bird prompts Peter Hames, who has written extensively about the film and about the Czech New Wave, on a commentary track. The

talk provides some basic information about the era and the conditions under which Chytilová and her collaborators were working. Despite a long familiarity with the film, however, Hames often comes up short on insight. In the film's last major sequence, the two women enter an empty banquet hall where a table is laid out with an elaborate meal. The music playing as they first enter the room is the dirge from *Twilight of the Gods*, but Hames takes no notice of it. The women proceed to have a food fight, breaking plates and making a complete mess of things. Covered with food, they retire from the room and then return in makeshift dresses made of newspapers, and try their best to clean up the damage they have caused, putting the pieces of the plates in a rough alliance with how the original plates were placed. Again, while offering some interpretations of how the girls are rebelling against the state, Hames takes no notice of their outfits or how their actions at the end are a succinct metaphor for the way that the press re-interprets reality. Clearly there is more scholarship regarding the film that needs to be done, and perhaps another gender should be involved.

"There seems to be this obsession with consumption of food."

"I think the conventional sort of reply to that is that women's role is—and certainly this would be true in Czechoslovakia and probably many other places at that time—very much concerned with food. I'm always amazed by the degree to which declared feminists also concerned with food accept their role as providers, and therefore revolt involving food is fairly crucial. I think food is very important to women [he literally chuckles] not only because it affects their appearance, but also because it is something which they are expected to provide for men or family or whatever, so it's an obvious sort of target, or an obvious metaphor for the condition that women might want to revolt against. So it would use food as a method of reaction, I think. What was the other thing? Flowers, or flowers again. I mean, the wreath of daisies and so on, if I can use the term, 'wreath.' Girls are supposed to be pretty as flowers, aren't they?"

## Re-enter the ninja

Battles with horses, spears and explosions, wrapped in mist in black-and-white widescreen images from cinematographer Senkichiō Takeda, and paced to the music of the legendary Akira Ifukube, set the scene for Raizō Ichikawa to return (and then disappear again into the mist) as the ultra stealthy ninja hero in Tokuzō Tanaka's 1964 *Shinobi No Mono 4: Siege*, the first entry in the terrific Radiance films two-platter three-movie set, **Shinobi Siege / Return of the Mist Saizo / The Last Iga Spy**, also known as *Shinobi Vol 2* (UPC#760137187011, \$65). We reviewed the first Radiance trio of the Daiei Ichikawa ninja thrillers in May 24. *Siege* follows chronologically, as the films are inspired by real events in the late Sixteenth and early Seventeenth Centuries. Ichikawa's character is forever on the losing side, trying to help leaders that he believes in stem the inevitability of conquest by stronger, more bloodthirsty lords. The 87-minute film does not have any of the exceedingly clever plot turns that the first couple of films had, but even as it simply plays out—after the failure of an initial battle, Ichikawa's character is sent to spy on the bad lord and ascertain what he intends to do next; he also tries to assassinate the lord, and is caught—it is witty, quick moving and wholly engaging. It helps, of course, that the cinematography is so adeptly composed. Even expository scenes are transfixing because of how the characters are framed within the play of light and dark, so that when the action suddenly bursts out of nowhere, and the darts and ninja stars start flying across the screen, it is just that much extra pleasure added to an already appealing historical drama.

The second film on the platter, *Shinobi No Mono 5: Return of Mist Saizo*, from 1964, has a different director, Kazuo Ikehiro, and a different cinematographer and composer, but it begins exactly where *Siege* concludes, and actually, a little bit before that, since it includes a quick montage of moments from *Siege* before showing what happens next. Indeed, the two films work even better as a single two-part movie than they do separately. *Return of Mist Saizo* eschews battles for stealthy singular confrontations. Ichikawa's character and his lord arrive on an island and try to organize clans that can stand up to the shogun. There is extended intrigue about the manufacturing of a rifle that can shoot three rounds before reloading, but it is the final third of the 91-minute film, when Ichikawa's character attempts to single-handedly assassinate the shogun within his fortress, that is the most transfixing of all. Most of it is depicted in silence or near silence. With impressive acrobatic feats, the hero circumvents the traps constructed in the castle for interlopers, and makes his way to the shogun's chamber. Again, it is the compositional use of the light and dark areas of the screen, simplified but in other ways elevated by the absence of color, that makes the film so intellectually thrilling. On the one hand, it is sheer entertainment—not much different from today's superhero movies—but on the other hand, it is so elegantly executed that its beauty becomes as entertaining as its action.

Each of those two films has a subsidiary female character that the hero demonstrates a protective affection for, even though he is ostensibly immune to emotional entanglement. Inexplicably, at the opening of the 1965 *Shinobi No Mono 6: The Last Iga Spy*, directed by Kazuo Mori, he has a young son and an adopted daughter who is actually a princess he is guarding. After that prolog, however, the film advances to the mid-Seventeenth Century, with Ichikawa playing the grown son and Kaoru Yachigusa as the princess, who was separated from Ichikawa's character as a child and has also obtained high level ninja skills. The two inevitably cross paths as Ichikawa's character attempts to stir up a few lords, hoping to overthrow the relatively stable government in power. The film takes more concentration than the earlier two features to follow the plotting and betrayals—perhaps a second viewing will be necessary to sort it all out—but there are plenty of punctuations with ninja action to embellish the drama. Running 89 minutes, the film is in some ways a reset for the series, but its atmosphere and artistry are unhindered by the alterations and it is a highly enjoyable effort that naturally leaves the viewer wanting even more.



The entertainment on all three films is enhanced all the more by the beauty of the image and sound transfers. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, the picture quality on each movie is immaculate—finely detailed and free of wear. You also get a wonderful look at the fascinating structures within the architecture of a period Japanese dwelling—particularly the crawl spaces below and the rafters above, which is where ninjas conduct much of their business. Periodically, a face or a portion of the image just beyond the focal point of the lens will look vaguely softer and have less detail or texture, but that is simply a limitation of the production budget and available technology. The monophonic sound is also gratifyingly clear and clean. You do hear the whir of the camera in some conversational sequences, but in compensation, you also hear every subtle sound effect and environment noise. Sometimes, shifts in the background sounds are the first indication that a fight is about to erupt (the sound on *Last Iga Spy* has a bit more noise, but is still admirable). The films are in Japanese with optional English subtitles.

On the first platter, Japanese film expert Tom Mes speaks over 49 minutes of clips from *Siege*, talking about the historical background for the series, the history of ninja movies, the history of the series in particular, the backgrounds of Ichikawa and other artists involved in the film, and a portrait of the Japanese film market and in particular, the 'B' movies produced by Daiei. "One of the visual characteristics of the Daiei house style in general is its use of shadow. There is a style there that has been referred to as, 'expressionist,' 'expressionistic,' where the contrast is quite high, particularly with black-and-white films, you get this high-contrast image, as we see here. It's a very moody, very beautiful shot and scene." Also featured is a very good 24-minute piece that analyzes the visual imagery of the films even further, before concluding with a thumbnail analysis of Ichikawa's career and the artists who contributed to each film (since each movie has a different director, each has a different style); and a cute (and fully notated) 4-minute montage of Ichikawa's changing appearances in the films across his career.

The second platter has a decent 18-minute history of ninja films and how the *Shinobi No Mono* series compares to reality, and a 12-minute film that summarizes the historical foundation for the stories and explains aspects of their plots.

### Rent a body

A reworking of John Frankenheimer's *Seconds* (Jan 14), the 2025 action romance, *Self/Less*, a Universal Pictures Home Entertainment Blu-ray (UPC#840418323267, \$20), is ostensibly about a wealthy real estate magnate who is dying and pays to have his mind transplanted into the body of a younger, healthier man. The shady organization that does the transfer, however, does not inform him entirely of what the process entails, so not only does he start stalking the estranged daughter that he left most of his fortune to, he also starts investigating the life of the man whose body he has inherited, discovering that both a wife and a little girl have been left behind. He then attempts to save them when the organization tries to clean up the mess it has made. Ryan Reynolds stars, with Ben Kingsley supposedly inhabiting his body, although there is little indication that the actors collaborated very much on selling the gimmick. Kingsley only appears in the 117-minute film's initial scenes, and he delivers a striking performance, but ultimately that is kind of to the film's detriment, since Reynolds is unable to carry that particular baton. That said, as a basic, imaginative thriller, the film is both thoughtful and exciting, with plenty of great fights and chases, some nice glimpses of luxury and a solidly conceived love story providing its foundation. Directed by Tarsem Singh, the film makes particularly good use of its New Orleans locations. Natalie Martinez, Victor Garber, Matthew Goode and Michelle Dockery costar.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The image quality is fine. The 5.1-channel DTS sound is adequate but not exceptional. There are optional English, French and Spanish subtitles and 16 minutes of reasonably decent production and promotional featurettes. Singh also supplies a commentary track, explaining the decisions he was faced with in each scene and what happened during the shoot. "I think on this day Ryan's wife had come to visit him, and we finished up because it always happens when people's partners come, they want to go home. They move so wonderfully and quickly, I wish it'd happen more often."

"By the way, in the forest, when they were running, I always wanted it to be not clear. Our girl is going to get so tired, and I told them, just go get me a blow-up doll that she can run with, so they got one sort of blow up doll, and when the girl was running, because the little girl's time was gone, I just said, 'Go and find me a dwarf.' And he was so fantastic. We were sitting in the van with the whole crew and this guy, this dwarf walks in with a beard, dressed as a schoolgirl. Everybody stopped talking, and he goes, 'I'll be entertainment for tonight.' Everybody loved him and then in the end, we had all that carrying and everything between the dwarf and the blow-up doll."

### Blaxploitation romance and murder

Abundantly drenched in designs and attitude from 1972, the MGM Blaxploitation murder thriller, *Melinda*, released as a Warner Bros. *Warner WB Archive Collection* Blu-ray (UPC#840418329009, \$25), is a wonderful time capsule that taps not only into nostalgia, but into the psychology of the day and how the belief that Black power could succeed was itself a corporate illusion designed to keep it at bay. Directed by Hugh A. Robertson, the first third of the film is a charming and sexy romance. Calvin Lockhart is an egotistical disc jockey that meets an attractive woman sitting by herself in a nightclub—why she chose that nightclub considering what she was running away from is never explained—who gradually gets under his skin by taking her time to fall for him. The film sells the romance really well, and so it is devastating to everyone in the movie and out of it

when he comes home and finds her murdered and his apartment ransacked. He then proceeds to track down her murderers—good thing he is also friends with a martial arts instructor played by Jim Kelly—and after a suitable number of action sequences and mafia intrigue, confronts them. There is a narrative ellipsis at one point, where he has an advantage over the bad guys and then suddenly, they have the upper hand, but it was necessary to keep the 109-minute feature moving along and it is easy enough to go with the flow. The problem is that at the end, while Lockhart's character thoroughly beats up the primary villain and his henchmen, most of them aren't really dead, and considering they are all just part of an organization, what is to stop them from coming back for revenge? It is an ostensible happy ending that isn't really going to last, and that pretty much reflected all of the dreams the Sixties and early Seventies held. Nevertheless, the cluttered set designs and wild, sometimes ridiculous outfits are enough to bring delight to viewers pining for the past (Lockhart's character also drives a Corvette convertible which he always parks on the streets of Los Angeles, top down, without a second thought), while the plot and the action have a viable momentum to justify the endeavor. Rosalind Cash, Vionetta McGee, Rockne Tarkington (who can be seen in the altogether despite the flying bubbles when he jumps out of a bath) and Paul Stevens costar.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The color transfer looks terrific—Lockhart's makeup is awkwardly detailed in some of the earlier scenes, especially when his costars aren't nearly as painted over—and the monophonic sound is exceptionally clean, sporting a marvelous soul-themed musical score from Jerry Butler and Jerry Peters. There are optional English subtitles and a faded trailer.

### Holding thine ear close to the hollow ground

Partially shot in Verona (embellished with second rate CGI), a 2025 musical version of the Shakespeare play with a happy ending, *Juliet & Romeo*, has been slipped onto a DVD by Universal Pictures Home Entertainment (UPC#840418328613, \$20) with little fanfare. No, the film, written and directed by Timothy Scott Bogart, isn't very good by Shakespearean standards, but it is a musical, and musicals by their nature have a lower bar to reach since the singing and dancing already discourage one from taking the proceedings seriously. Although Shakespearean phrases are sprinkled throughout the tale—rarely in their traditional positions—the dialog usually has a modern vernacular to match the tone of its songs, even though otherwise, the characters are dressed in, well, older clothing. Running the needed 123 minutes to fit everything in, it seems highly probable that sensible film enthusiasts will dismiss the film as sodden-witted, but we have come to praise *Juliet & Romeo*, not to bury it. For one thing, Bogart knows both the text and its historical context. The rivalries between the Capulets and Montagues are superseded by the presence of the prince and a greater rivalry in Rome between the Pope and what was at the time the local warlord. More specifically, Bogart comes up with a few legitimate insights, such as suggesting that Romeo's first love, Rosaline, was a prostitute. Some of his other story juggling is more convoluted, but it eventually gets the viewer to the same destination that Shakespeare arrived at. For another thing, the performances are generally quite appealing. Clara Rugaard is especially good as Juliet and Jamie Ward is fully adequate as Romeo. They genuinely convey youthful, mutual love and desire. Better known stars are spread around in support, including none other than Derek Jacobi, along with Rupert Everett, Rebel Wilson, Rupert Graves, Dan Fogler and Jason Isaacs. And finally, did we mention? It is a musical. Evan Kidd Bogart wrote the songs, or one song with a bunch of different tweaks. The music sounds contemporary and catchy, and when presented in synchronization with body movement, a.k.a. dancing, it is fully mesmerizing. A recent and popular Broadway musical also took a reworking of the Shakespeare story and set it to appropriate contemporary Top Ten numbers, and while Bogart's songs are original, that still seems like what he was aiming for. If you are a teenage girl you will probably think the film is bussin', but others with open minds will also be charmed by its efforts.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The image has a general softness that does not aid the CGI vistas, but colors are bright and faces are reasonably sharp. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound has a passable dimensionality.

There are optional English, French and Spanish subtitles, 20 minutes of enjoyable deleted scenes, 3 minutes of typical bloopers, a good 4-minute clip of the dynamic screen test for Rugaard and Ward, and a passable 11-minute promotional featurette.

The Bogarts provide a workable commentary track, talking about the cast, the staging and the challenges they faced during the shoot. "This is like day one or two. We always knew we wanted the kids not just to do the fight the way they did but we wanted them to do the swordfight as real as possible. So we had them fighting with rubber swords. We had ordered proper rubber swords that looked like the right swords, and they didn't come in time. And so here we are, shooting this, and all we had were these awful, stunt toy swords that they had crazy wrapped tinfoil around, that they glued and couldn't get them off, and I had no choice but to shoot the scene with them holding rubber swords with tinfoil and I had to go back in and replace all the swords in visual effects. Which is crazy, but as a result, look at them swinging their swords. Like these kids are into it, but they are playing with toy swords. So there's no danger with them, but it comes off so real, because I refused to say, 'Let's use stunt people with it,' and I think as a result this scene culminates in such beautiful and tragic way, and I just think it feels so real."

### Working in Mumbai

A leisurely tale about the lives of two Malayali nurses sharing a flat in Mumbai and working in the same hospital, the 2024 **All We Imagine As Light**, has been released as a Janus Films Sideshow Criterion Channel Blu-ray (UPC#715515316415, \$30). Directed by Payal Kapadia, the highly honored film begins almost as a documentary, exploring aspects of city life, before settling on its principal characters, an older woman whose husband has been away for several years working in Europe, and a younger woman who wants to keep her Muslim boyfriend a secret from everyone, but at the same time is desperate to be alone with him. In the final act of the film, the two nurses help a coworker move to a small seaside village in Southwest India (where the Malayali hail from) and reflect upon their lives once they are done unloading boxes and have time to enjoy their surroundings. Running 118 minutes, the film takes an almost poetic view of their environment and daily routines, and the cultural limitations placed upon them as females. You get to know the characters really well, along with a vivid feel for their environment. What the film actually accomplishes, however, is less discernible. There are blurs between the imaginations of the characters and what they are really experiencing, and small pieces of story that are left dangling. The film amounts to a selection of memorable, highly textured sketches, which some viewers will fully appreciate while others will find less substantial beneath the décor.

The picture has an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1 and the image transfer is fresh. The 5.1-channel DTS sound has a worthwhile dimensionality that adds to the movie's realities and sense of place. The film is in a number of languages, including Hindi and Malayalam, and has optional English subtitles. Along with a trailer, there is a good 18-minute talk by Kapadia about how she became a moviemaker and what her intentions were with the film (inspired by movies from the West, she ended up deciding to shoot during Monsoon season to capture a specific atmosphere, because her original desire was not possible. "I said, 'Ahh, I need to shoot Mumbai in 'magic hour,'" but there's no 'magic hour' in Mumbai. It's precisely 3 minutes." She also points out a few references in the film to **La Dolce Vita**. The talk does not start up where it left off if playback is terminated.

### 4K Things

We reviewed the Warner Bros. Blu-ray release of John Lee Hancock's Los Angeles crime thriller, **The Little Things**, in Jun 21. WB Home Entertainment has now released a 4K UltraHD Blu-ray (UPC#840418-328224, \$28). The previous release was already immaculate. Denzel Washington and Rami Malek are detectives investigating serial killings, and in the second half, Jared Leto shows up in a marvelously creepy performance as the primary suspect. The stars (all Oscar veterans) are terrific, and the 128-minute film is a wonderful, moody adventure through the underside of humanity, with a terrific twist in the final scene. The Blu-ray was already perfection, so what the 4K presentation adds is subliminal at most. The image is more detailed, and the Dolby Atmos sound is more elaborate, but only on subtle levels than can barely be perceived even when toggling back and forth between the two presentations. Nevertheless, beyond the terrific fun of watching the actors do their thing, the film's primary appeal is the way in which it transports you into its world, and with the 4K playback, the immersion is total. If you don't have the movie yet, it is definitely the preferred choice. Along with a trailer and optional English subtitles, 17 minutes of promotional featurettes are carried over from the Blu-ray.

### Episodic medical drama

An episodic MGM medical drama from 1938, **The Citadel**, has been released by Warner Bros. as a *Warner WB Archive Collection* Blu-ray (UPC#840418327517, \$25). Set in Britain, Robert Donat, who only sports his signature mustache during the final half hour of the 112-minute film, plays a doctor who starts his career in a Welsh mining town, where his investigations into lung diseases place him at odds with the powers that be. He meets his wife, a school teacher played by Rosalind Russell, and they end up moving to London, where they struggle for a while until Donat's character meets an old school buddy, played by a young and frisky Rex Harrison, and gets on a medical fast track, over charging rich people for pointless procedures, until his conscience finally gets the better of him. Ralph Richardson has a showy supporting role. Directed by King Vidor, the film's individual episodes are engaging, especially if you enjoy medical stories (Donat's character saves an infant that was assumed to be stillborn!), but not enough has been done to wrangle the bestseller the movie was based upon into a single coherent effort, and so characters come and go, the romance between the two leads, which is supposed to be the thread that holds the plot together, often gets placed on the backburner, and while Donat's character does find his roots again, the film concludes by just leaving the viewer to assume that everything is going to be better with him. Plus, based upon what viewers know today about medicine, the practitioners of the time are barely better than shamans.

The squared full screen black-and-white picture is in good condition. The image is always smooth and clean, and contrasts are well defined. There is one sequence that has a number of hidden splices, making the sequence look like it is several decades early anticipating New Wave jump cuts, but otherwise the source material is in decent shape, and the monophonic sound is okay. There are optional English subtitles, a trailer, a black-and-

white 1938 Warner *Looney Tunes* cartoon, *The Daffy Doc*, running 7 minutes and previously included on several other Warner releases, in which the Duck adversely assists a doctor in surgery and then tries to make Porky Pig a patient, and two enjoyable 1938 MGM black-and-white *An Historical Mystery* shorts directed by Jacques Tourneur, the 10-minute *The Ship That Died* about the Mary Celeste, depicted with actors but told entirely with voiceover narration, and the 11-minute *Strange Glory*, about a woman who had Lincoln's ear and claimed to be responsible for conceiving one of Ulysses Grant's most consequential strategic moves, using the Tennessee River to split up the South.

### Settle back with the right blend

If watching movies isn't a pleasure, why bother? Pleasure in cinema can come in many forms, including some that cannot be anticipated, and one place where the unexpected begins is with movies that clearly aren't going to be very good. You have probably never seen the 1950 Warner Bros. production, **Bright Leaf**, before, even though it was directed by Michael Curtiz and stars Gary Cooper, Lauren Bacall, Patricia Neal and Jack Carson. It can't possibly be a good film, or you would have seen it before now. By the same token, however, you have probably seen all of the great Warner Bros. movies from the Forties, or many of them, plenty of times, and so to sit back in an afternoon for 110 minutes with the artists that made those movies and to see something entirely fresh and at least a little bit different is an immense pleasure in and of itself, regardless of the film's actual quality.

Released by Warner as a *Warner WB Archive Collection* Blu-ray (UPC#840418328972, \$25), the film is based upon a typical bestseller about fortunes gained and fortunes lost, this time, somewhat uniquely, in the tobacco business. Set in the last decade of the Nineteenth Century, Cooper's character, whose father was ruined by a tobacco magnate played by Donald Crisp, gets his revenge by developing a machine that can mass produce cigarettes. Bacall and Carson play his backers, and Neal is the daughter of Crisp's character. Bacall's character has a 'boarding house for women' which looks very much like a place that men like to visit all of the time and pay to do so. She pines for Cooper's character, while Cooper's character pines for Neal's character. It doesn't matter that Bacall's performance is bad, Cooper is awkward, Neal is nasty and Carson is just Carson, or that not even Curtiz seems to be trying very hard when it comes to visual imagery and dramatic depth (although it has supposedly been in the family for more than a century, there are no portraits, and in fact no decoration whatsoever, above the stairwell of the mansion Crisp resides in). The pleasure lasts as the melodrama works its way through the decade. Maybe you won't discover gold watching it, but the film is fresh from the start, and what do you want—great drama or good fun?

The squared full screen black-and-white picture is impeccable, which also adds to the springtime freshness the viewing experience provides, and the monophonic sound is fine. There are optional English subtitles, and two color 7-minute Warner *Merrie Melodies* Bugs Bunny cartoons, the 1950 *Hillbilly Hare* (the rabbit steps into the middle of feud between two bearded guys who pause their animosity to focus on getting rid of him) and the 1949 *Bunker Hill Bunny* (Yosemite Sam is a Redcoat and Bugs is a Yankee, period slapstick ensues).

### Sunbelt thriller

A 2024 Sunbelt thriller from Saban Films set in a small New Mexican town, **Desert Dawn**, has been released on Blu-ray by Well Go USA Entertainment (UPC#810348038371, \$32). Kellan Lutz is a lawman with a troubled history who returns from Los Angeles to become a sheriff in his hometown. His first case is to investigate an apparent suicide. He uncovers a bundle of money and pretty soon the town is filled with competing gangsters who want to the cash back. Directed by Marty Murray, you can spot the main bad guy right away, there are a couple of glaring plot holes (how did they find out where the body is buried?) and some of the performances are rather stiff, but it has a nice mix of intrigue and gunfights, and it has atmosphere. You can almost smell the sand.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, and the color transfer looks okay. The image is purposely dusty at times, but the night scenes are clear and the picture is sharp. The 5.1-channel DTS sound has a passable dimensionality. There are optional English subtitles, and a trailer.

### Mad about MAD

The first movie reviews we ever read were the MAD Magazine film satires, and we still consider them an intrinsic component of film theory as we understand it, both in the need to juxtapose the small details with the greater overview, and in the understanding that no matter how accepted or admired a motion picture may be (or how good looking its stars), there is another perspective to every accolade (and flaws in the stars' perfections). Now that MAD Magazine has been, for all intents and purposes, dead for several years, a complete documentary of its irreverent existence has been produced, one that still has the opportunity to showcase many of the original creators (augmented with a wealth of archival interviews with those who are no longer around), **When We Went MAD! The Unauthorized Story of MAD Magazine**, a Gravititas Ventures Blu-ray (UPC#810097779327, \$22).



Running 107 minutes, the 2025 film does not follow a strict chronological structure but it does generally work its way through the magazine's history, from its beginnings as a niche market filler when its creators had maxed out on making horror comics, to its rise (in a smaller scale, but essentially following the same arc as *Playboy*) in popularity as the Baby Boom generation became old enough to read, until it hit its maximum popularity in the early Seventies, and then experienced a gradual decline in circulation until the Internet and YouTube eventually did it in. Of course, a great deal of the story profiles (touchingly) the magazine's creator, William F. Gaines, a gregarious entrepreneur who had inherited a staid, failing publishing house from his father in the late Forties and brought it back to life with the aforementioned horror comics and then with MAD. Substantial profiles of the specific editors, as well as the major writers and artists are also interwoven with specific coverage the magazine's various components—its sidebar gags, its most popular series (such as the movie satires), its back page folding gag, its 'Alfred E. Newman' mascot and so on—and plentiful interviews with artists who were influenced by or otherwise appreciated the publication, including Quentin Tarantino, Bryan Cranston, Judd Apatow, Howie Mandel and others. The film is both a wonderful nostalgic journey and a delightful comedic sampler, and it is a clear demonstration that while time may have passed the magazine by, its humor nevertheless remains free of time's constraints (even its jokes that required a specific knowledge of New York City culture) and always will.

You will want to keep your remote in your hand, because every time a page from the magazine's past flashes on the screen, the most compelling inclination is to hit 'Pause' and read what you can see of it before moving on to the next. It is very hard to resist. Fortunately, the picture, letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1, is bright and sharp, so even the smallest text and drawings are fully legible on a decent sized screen. There is a lively musical score that receives due dimensionality on the 5.1-channel DTS track, and there are optional English subtitles.

### August Special Edition: Gamera and other big monsters

Our Aug 25 Special Edition featured a complete collection of the Japanese Gamera films and several other movies featuring especially big monsters and is available for free as a PDF file for download, which can be requested by writing Special Edition at DVDLaser@rocketmail.com. You can also sign up to get each month's Special Edition as a PDF file if you have a regular snail mail subscription, by writing the same email address. Those who already have an email subscription receive them automatically. If you have no access to a computer and want a hard copy, we unfortunately have to charge \$10 to cover our expenses for each individual Edition (\$15 outside of the U.S.). Please write to Special Edition %The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter, PO Box 382, Glen Cove NY 11542, and include a check or credit card details.

The reviews featured include the Arrow Video **Gamera The Complete Collection** Blu-ray (UPC#760137365983, \$180), Arrow's **Gamera: The Showa Era** Blu-ray (UPC#760137441083, \$100) and **Gamera: The Heisei Era** Blu-ray (UPC#760137441182, \$100), along with Mill Creek Entertainment's **Gamera: Gamera Guardian of the Universe / Gamera 2 Attack of the Legion** Blu-ray (UPC#683904630179, \$30), Universal Studios Home Entertainment's Blu-ray, **King Kong vs Godzilla** (UPC#025192231612, \$15), Universal's DVD & Blu-ray releases, **Jurassic World Fallen Kingdom** (UPC#191329002469, \$17) and **Jurassic World Dominion** (UPC#191329223420, \$23), as well as Universals single DVD releases of **Fallen Kingdom** (UPC#191329002445, \$15) and **Dominion** (UPC#191329152959, \$20), Well Go USA Entertainment's Blu-ray **The Jurassic Games Extinction** (UPC#810348038975, \$32), VCI Entertainment's Blu-ray **Gorgo** (UPC#089859900822, \$20), Shout! Factory's Blu-ray **Tarantula** (UPC#826663188639, \$28), and Sony Pictures Home Entertainment's Blu-ray **Monster Hunter** (UPC#043396573727, \$20).

### DVD News

**CRITERION CORNER:** The Criterion Collection has at last resurrected its wonderful Eclipse Series collections of somewhat more obscure films, and this time they will be issued on Blu-ray. The initial Blu-ray Eclipse title will be **Abbas Kiarostami Early Shorts and Features** and will contain seventeen short and longer films from 1970 to 1989 (in fact, at least one a year through 1984). Criterion is also finally issuing a 4K presentation of Stanley Kubrick's **Eyes Wide Shut**, which will have interviews with cinematographer Larry Smith, photographer and second-unit director Lisa Leone, and Kubrick archivist Georgina Orgill; an interview with Kubrick's wife, Christiane Kubrick; *Never Just a Dream* (2019), featuring interviews with producer Jan Harlan, Kubrick's daughter Katharina Kubrick and Anthony Frewin, Kubrick's personal assistant; *Lost Kubrick: The Unfinished Films of Stanley Kubrick* (2007); *Kubrick Remembered* (2014), featuring interviews with Todd Field, Leelee Sobieski and Steven Spielberg; Kubrick's 1998 acceptance speech for the Directors Guild of America's D. W. Griffith Award; and a press conference from 1999, featuring Harlan, Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman. Luis Buñuel's **El** will be in 4K and will come with a video essay on Buñuel by scholar Jordi Xifra; an appreciation by Guillermo del Toro; an interview with Buñuel from 1981 by writer Jean-Claude Carrière; and panel discussion from 2009, moderated by filmmaker José Luis Garci. Howard Hughes's **Hell's Angels** will be in 4K and will include an interview with Robert Legato, the visual-effects supervisor for the Hughes biopic **The Aviator**, on the groundbreaking aerial visuals of **Hell's Angels**; an interview with critic Farran Smith Nehme about Jean Harlow; and outtakes and rushes

from the film, with commentary by Harlow biographer David Stenn. Reginald Hudlin's **House Party** will be in 4K and will feature a commentary with Hudlin; a conversation featuring Hudlin, producer Warrington Hudlin, and film scholar Racquel Gates; a cast reunion featuring B-Fine, Bowlegged Lou, and the Legend Paul Anthony of Full Force, Tisha Campbell, AJ Johnson, Christopher "Play" Martin, Daryl "Chill" Mitchell, and Christopher "Kid" Reid; and *House Party (1983)*, the student short by Hudlin on which his feature is based. Les Blank's Werner Herzog profile, **Burden of Dreams**, will be in 4K and will come with a commentary featuring Blank, Herzog and editor and sound recordist Maureen Gosling; an interview with Herzog; *Werner Herzog Eats His Shoe* (1980), a short film by Blank; deleted scenes; and behind-the-scenes photos taken by Gosling.

**NEW IN BLU:** The following titles have recently been released on Blu-ray—*Garbage Night*, *Garbage Night 2*, *Clutch Ditch 59*, *Clutch Ditch 60*, *Clutch Ditch 61*, *Clutch Ditch 62*, *Clutch Ditch 63*, *Clutch Ditch 64*, *Mysterious Warrior*, *Westside Nightmare (Acid Bath)*; *Teenage Gang Debs (AGFA)*; *Sharksplottation*, *Slaxx (AMD)*; *The King of Kings (Angel)*; *Bring Her Back*, *Friendship (A24)*; *Anniversary*, *A Cool Fish*, *Strangers When We Meet*, *70 80 90*, *Zombies Double Feature Attack of the Zombies / Return of the Corn Zombies (Bayview)*; *Consumed*, *Stockholm Bloodbath (Brainstorm)*; *The Heatwave Lasted Four Days (Canadian)*; *Shaw Brothers Classics V.7 (Cinedigm)*; *The Burmese Harp*, *Cairo Station*, *Compensation*, *A Confucian Confusion / Mahjong Two Films by Edward Yang*, *Fires on the Plain*, *Saving Face*, *Shoeshine*, *Vermiglio (Criterion)*; *The Beast and the Vixens*, *The Golden Triangle*, *Ride a Wild Stud (Dark Force)*; *The Tragedy of Man (Deaf Crocodile)*; *The Only Ones (Desktop)*; *Satan's Bed/Scare Their Pants Off (Distribpix)*; *Ebony & Ivory (Drafthouse)*; *Watch The Come for Blood (ETR)*; *Tales from the Void (Exchange)*; *The Amazing Mr. X*, *The Capture*, *The Class of '74*, *Invasion U.S.A./Rocket Attack U.S.A.*, *Patterns*, *Warm Water under a Red Bridge (Film Masters)*; *Eureka*, *Nature and Nurture Three Films by Naomi Kawase*, *Route 1/USA (Film Movement)*; *Chaplin's Essanay Comedies 1915 (Flicker Alley)*; *Stream (Fuzz on the Lens)*; *Blood Dolls*, *Creepozoids*, *Slave Girls from Beyond Infinity (Full Moon)*; *Cosmic Dawn*, *Rather (Giant)*; *I Can See You (Glass Eye)*; *Day of a Lion*, *Killstreak*, *Lynden*, *The Scars of Our Hands*, *The Rooster*, *Treading Water (Gravitas)*; *Blue in the Face*, *Coneheads*, *The Farmer's Daughter*, *Film Noir Dark Side of Cinema XXVI*, *Frankenstein's Bloody Terror*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Gung Ho*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Lords of Discipline*, *The Medium*, *Only the River Flows*, *Pre-Code Classics Confessions of a Co-Ed / Ladies of the Big House*, *Repossessed*, *Save the Tiger*, *Scoop*, *Self Driver*, *Smoke*, *The Two Jakes*, *Undisputed*, *The Vengeance of Dr. Mabuse (Kino)*; *Bhumika The Role*, *Bloody Anniversary*, *Buddha Mil Gaya*, *Chhote Sarkar*, *Do Raaste*, *The Evil Rises*, *Grave Men*, *Hadh Kar Di Aapne*, *Main Tulsi Tere Aangan Ki*, *Rajaji*, *Roti*, *Saath Saath*, *Son*, *Static Codes (Leomark)*; *Freaky Tales (Lionsgate)*; *Ultraman Decker D Complete Series & Movie (Mill Creek)*; *Ghostlight*, *We Are What We Are (MPI)*; *Finis Terrae*, *The Ghost of Peter Sellers*, *High Tension Four Films by Lamberto Bava*, *His Motorcycle Her Island*, *The Maiden*, *Martial Law Lo Wei's Wuxia World*, *Maskhead*, *Negatives*, *The Odd Job*, *Perpetrator*, *Shinobi V.2*, *Tenants*, *Through and Through (MVD)*; *The Universal Theory (Oscilloscope)*; *Matlock Season 1*, *1923 A Yellowstone Origin Story Season 2 (Paramount)*; *Lips of Blood*, *The Night of the Hunted*, *Out of the Clouds*, *The Rainbow Jacket*, *Saraband for Dead Lovers (Powerhouse)*; *Amarosa*, *Bam!*, *Bizarria!*, *Bomber Boys*, *Cara*, *Elite Force – B.R.I.*, *Fight to Live*, *A Final Exorcism*, *4 Halloween*, *Goin' Ape 1&2*, *Lucky*, *Normal*, *100 Candles Game The Last Possession*, *Reboot*, *Suprema*, *They're Outside*, *The Wheel of Heaven*, *When the Sun Stands Still (Rising Sun)*; *Twisted Issues (Saturn's Core)*; *The Boys Season 2*, *The House of Sand*, *Karate Kid Legends (Sony)*; *Hell's Bells*, *Sexsquat Return to Blood Stool Creek Double Feature (SRS)*; *Psycho Beach Party (Strand)*; *Emergency! Complete Series*, *How to Train Your Dragon (Universal)*; *Fight or Flight (Vertical)*; *The Accountant 2*, *The Ant Bully*, *Being There*, *Get Carter*, *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*, *Hall Pass*, *The Hard Way*, *How to Be Single*, *The Huckleberry Hound Show Complete Series*, *Inkheart*, *Intruder in the Dust*, *7 Women*, *That Midnight Kiss*, *The Unholy Trinity (Warner)*; *Against the Spread*, *Baby Assassins 3*, *Barron's Cove*, *In Vitro*, *Invincible Swordsman*, *Resurrection Road*, *Whisper of the Witch (Well Go)*; *25 Cats from Qatar (Whole Grain)*; *Sordid Lives (Wolfe)*; *They Call Her Death (Yellow Veil)*; *Beneath the Blue (Ytinfini)*

**NEW IN 3D:** The following title has recently been released in 3D format—*Frankenstein's Bloody Terror (Kino)*

**NEW IN 4K:** The following titles have recently been released in 4K format—*Bring Her Back (A24)*; *Master and Commander The Far Side of the World (Buena Vista)*; *The Card Player*, *The Rage*, *Carrie 2*, *Mac and Me*, *Yongary Monster from the Deep (CAV)*; *Blaxploitation Classics V.2*, *City on Fire*, *Deathstalker/Deathstalker II*, *Sleepaway Camp II*, *Sleepaway Camp III*, *World Trade Center (Cinedigm)*; *The Burmese Harp*, *Fires on the Plain*, *Shoeshine (Criterion)*; *Coneheads*, *Convoy*, *Happy Gilmore*, *The Rundown*, *The Two Jakes*, *Undisputed*, *Xanadu (Kino)*; *Poseidon*, *Citizen Toxie The Toxic Avenger Part IV*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre The Beginning*, *The Toxic Avenger*, *The Toxic Avengers Part II*, *The Toxic Avenger Part III (MVD)*; *Better Off Dead*, *Sunset Boulevard (Paramount)*; *Lips of Blood*, *The Night of the Hunted*, *Saraband for Dead Lovers (Powerhouse)*; *Karate Kid Legends*, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, *Sense and Sensibility (Sony)*; *Casper*, *Erin Brockovich*, *The 40 Year Old Virgin*, *Harvey*, *How to Train Your Dragon*, *Meet the Parents*, *Straight Outta Compton (Universal)*; *Pavements (Utopia)*; *The Accountant 2*, *The Conjuring*, *Get Carter (Warner)*

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## Current Attractions

*The following titles recently appeared for the first time:*

A la Sambre de los Muelles (Shoreline)\*  
The Accountant 2 (Warner)  
Against the Spread (Well Go)  
Alice in Wonderland Season 2 (Dreamscape)  
Alien Shark (Green Planet)\*  
Amarosa (Rising Sun)\*  
The Amazing Mr. X (Film Masters)  
Anantha A Man from Earth Story (MVD)  
Andy Warhol's Factory People (Canamedia)  
Art Detectives (AMD)  
Bam! (Rising Sun)\*  
Barron's Cove (Well Go)  
Batman Bad Blood (Warner)\*  
Beneath the Polar Sun (Green Planet)\*  
Between the Lights (Freestyle)  
Beyond Trainspotting The World of Irvine Welsh (MVD)  
Bizarrria! (Rising Sun)\*  
Bloodstorm (One Tree)  
Bloody Anniversary (Leomark)  
Boardwalk Winter (BMG)  
Bomber Boys (Rising Sun)\*  
The Boys Season 4 (Sony)  
Breathing In (Cineverse)\*  
Bring Her Back (A24)\*  
Buried on Shine Mountain (Green Apple)\*  
Cairo Station (Criterion)  
Call of the Blackbird (Random)\*  
Cara (Rising Sun)\*  
Caregiving (Paramount)  
Chicago Fire Season 13 (Universal)\*  
Chicago Med Season 10 (Universal)\*  
Christmas Holidae (Green Apple)\*  
The Clown Chainsaw Massacre (Socal)  
The Company We Keep (Random)\*  
The Compass (Leomark)  
Compensation (Criterion)  
Consumed (Brainstorm)  
Cosmic Dawn (Giant)  
Crown of Shadow (High Fliers)  
Dark Match (AMD)  
Dark Mind (MVD)  
Day of a Lion (Gravitas)  
Deadly Ruphoria (Green Apple)\*  
Death Cult (Wownow)  
Death Valley Season 1 (Warner)  
Delegation (Kino)  
Desert Racer (Cardinal)  
A Discovery of Witches Complete Series (AMD)  
Ebony & Ivory (Drafthouse)\*  
Edgar G. Ulmer Collection V.1 (Alpha)\*  
Elite Force – B.R.I. (Rising Sun)\*  
Eternal (MPI)  
The Evil Rises (Leomark)  
F.L.Y. (Breaking Glass)  
Faith Wins (Green Apple)\*

Fear Cabin The Last Weekend of Summer (MVD)  
Fight or Flight (Vertical)  
Fight to Live (Rising Sun)\*  
A Final Exorcism (Rising Sun)\*  
48 Hours and 1 Minute (Random)\*  
Found Footage of Fear Digital Terror (Socal)  
4 Halloween (Rising Sun)\*  
A Game in the Woods (Jinga)  
Garbage Night (Acid Bath)\*  
Garbage Night 2 (Acid Bath)\*  
Glitch Ditch 59 (Acid Bath)\*  
Glitch Ditch 60 (Acid Bath)\*  
Glitch Ditch 61 (Acid Bath)\*  
Glitch Ditch 62 (Acid Bath)\*  
Glitch Ditch 63 (Acid Bath)\*  
Glitch Ditch 64 (Acid Bath)\*  
Goin' Ape 1&2 (Rising Sun)\*  
A Good Girl's Guide to Murder (Warner)  
Grave Men (Leomark)  
Greatest Mysteries of Ancient Egypt, The Sphinx, Tutankhamun (360)  
The Gullspång Miracle (Film Movement)  
Hallmark Channel 6-Movie Collection (Cinedigm)  
His Motorbike Her Island (MVD)  
History Kids The Korean War (Wonderscape)\*  
The Hole in the Wall (Alpha)\*  
How to Train Your Dragon (Universal)  
I Curse This Land (Deskpop)  
If Not for His Grace (Green Apple)\*  
In Vitro (Well Go)\*  
Invasion U.S.A./Rocket Attack U.S.A. (Film Masters)  
Invincible Swordsman (Well Go)\*  
Invisible Cop (Wownow)  
Just the Two of Us (Music Box)  
Karate Kid Legends (Sony)  
Kids Can (Green Apple)\*  
Killstreak (Gravitas)  
The King of Kings (Angel)  
Kung Fu Masters Zodiac Way Evil Genius (Wownow)  
The Last Anniversary (AMD)  
The Last Mixtape (Freestyle)  
League of Thrones (Wownow)  
Locked (Paramount)  
The Long Hollywood Night (Deskpop)  
Lords of the Dragon (Wownow)  
Lost Country (MVD)  
Lucky (Rising Sun)\*  
Lynden (Gravitas)\*  
Match Made (Random)\*  
Matlock Season 1 (Paramount)  
Maybe Man Season 1 (BMG)  
Me Three (Cineverse)\*  
Meeting with Pol Pot (Strand)  
Modern Day Disciples

(Green Apple)\*  
Mother Goose's Scary Tales (Wownow)  
Muay Thai (Wownow)  
Mysterious Warrior (Acid Bath)\*  
NCIS Origins Season 1 (Paramount)  
NCIS Sydney Season 2 (Paramount)  
Neighborhood Watch (Image)  
Nenets vs. Gas: Siberia's Last Nomadic Herders in Jeopardy (Green Apple)\*  
1923 A Yellowstone Origin Story Season 2 (Paramount)  
Normal (Rising Sun)\*  
Off the Line (Random)\*  
100 Candles Game The Last Possession (Rising Sun)\*  
One Last Prayer (Green Apple)\*  
The Only Ones (Deskpop)  
Patterns (Film Masters)  
Perfectly Single (Green Planet)\*  
Plaga (Leomark)  
Pre-Code Double Feature Carnival Lady / Hell in a Circus (Alpha)\*  
Pre-Code Double Feature Morals for Women / Sister to Judas (Alpha)\*  
Rather (Giant)  
Reboot (Rising Sun)\*  
Renaissance The Blood and the Beauty (Warner)  
Rent Free (Kino)  
Resurrection Road (Well Go)  
Right before Your Eyes (Green Apple)\*  
Ron Jeremy Life after the Buffet (Shoreline)\*  
The Rooster (Gravitas)  
Rubaru (Green Apple)\*  
The Scars of Our Hands (Gravitas)  
Science Kids Safari Animals (Wonderscape)\*  
Second Chance (BMG)  
Secuestada (Green Apple)\*  
Shikun (Kino)  
Shoeshine (Criterion)  
Simple Minds Everything Is Possible (Kino)  
Single Out Season 3 (Kino)  
Sisters of Ukraine (Freestyle)  
So This Is College (Reel Vault)  
Son (Leomark)  
Sovereign (Universal)  
Static Codes (Leomark)  
Suprema (Rising Sun)\*  
The Switch Up (Green Planet)\*  
They're Outside (Rising Sun)\*  
Thouple (Dekkoo)  
Treading Water (Gravitas)  
25 Cats from Qatar (Whole Grain)  
Una Cita Para Navidad (Green Apple)\*  
The Unholy Trinity (Warner)  
The Universal Theory (Oscilloscope)  
Vermiglio (Criterion)  
Walka! (7 Palms)\*  
Westside Nightmare (Acid Bath)\*  
What Lives Here (MVD)  
The Wheel of Heaven (Rising Sun)\*  
When the Sun Stands Still (Rising Sun)\*  
Whisper of the Witch (Well

Go)\*  
The White Outlaw (Alpha)\*  
White Wanderer (BMG)  
Wisper Season 1 (Dreamscape)  
Wolf and Dog (Indiepix)  
You Season 4 (Warner)  
Zenithal (MPI)

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

## Coming Attractions

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

**From Alpha:**  
→ The Love Gamble  
→ Darling Daughters/ Mother and Son  
→ Manhattan Tower/ Docks of San Francisco  
→ Probation/Framed  
→ The Studio Murder Mystery  
**From Alta California:**  
→ The Unexpecteds  
**From AMD:**  
Clown in a Cornfield  
Dark Winds Season 3  
The Brokenwood Mysteries Season 11  
→ The Walking Dead Dead City Season 2  
→ Dangerous Animals  
→ The Last Drive-In with Joe Bob Briggs  
**From Angel:**  
→ The Last Rodeo  
→ Sketch  
**From Ariztical:**  
→ Dead in Love  
**From Bayview:**  
→ So Much So Fast  
→ Troublesome Creek A Midwestern  
**From Big Choice:**  
→ Big Helium Dog  
**From BMG:**  
Stan the Man  
The Loved & Lost Christmas Romance at the Roanoke Ranch  
→ The Wildman of Shaggy Creek  
→ A Christmas Carol  
→ Revolution of the Heart  
The Dorothy Day Story  
**From Borderline:**  
→ Screamityville  
**From Burning Bulb:**  
→ Huskies  
→ Mont Foster  
→ Unsound  
**From Cinedigm:**  
Sesame Street Elmo's Happy Halloween Party  
Hallmark Channel 6-Movie Fall Collection (Falling Together,

Falling for You, Notes of Autumn, Sweet Autumn, Pumpkin Everything, Under the Autumn Moon)  
Autumn at Apple Hill / Haunted Wedding  
→ Countdown to Christmas 9-Movie Collection  
→ Hallmark Hunks 9-Movie Collection  
→ The Whitest Kids U' Know Complete Series  
→ Scarygirl  
→ When Calls the Heart Elite Collection (36 platters)

**From Classicflix:**

The Unexpected Complete Series V.1

**From Creative Alley:**

What Lives Here

**From Criterion:**

Flow

The Shrouds

→ Ei

→ Burden of Dreams

→ Misericordia

**From Decal:**

The Ritual (Al Pacino)

**From DeskPop:**

Uranus Attacks

→ Romeo and Benvolio

→ Apocalypse Death Party

**From Dreamscape:**

A Very Country Wedding

All Aboard for Love

The Broken Ones

Ernest & Celestine Winter Tales

Fat Legs

The Gods

Last of the Big Tuskers

The Shroud Face to Face

The Sunset Six

Tailgate

This Is Christmas

When I Was Your Age Season 1

**From Film Masters:**

Tarzan of the Apes

**From Film Movement:**

Block Pass

→ Dial M for Maya

→ Niki

**From Firerock:**

The Artist & The Astronaut

From First Line:

→ Vintage Vengeance

Spaghetti V.1 The Man from Oklahoma / Gatling Gun

**From First Run:**

→ E.1027 – Eileen Gray and the House By the Sea

**From Freestyle:**

A Spartan Dream

→ Revolution

→ Finding Lucinda

→ Unholy Communication

**From Gemini:**

The Jester from Transylvania

**From Giant:**

Rebel (Sylvester Stallone)

**From Gravitas:**

→ Third Wheel

**From Ideas:**

→ Raphael A Portrait

**From IDS:**

→ Burn All My Letters

**From Indiepix:**

Dial M for Maya

**From Jinga:**

Darklands

**From Kino:**

Blur to the End

Hiding Out

A Photographic Memory

The Jolly Monkey

Summer Solstice

The Jewish Nazi?

Night of the Juggler

→ Unicorns

→ The Lake Trilogy

→ Jurassic Reborn

**From Leomark:**

→ Sorority of the Damned

**From Lionsgate:**

→ Ballerina

**From Magenta:**

Bride Hard

**From Magnolia:**

→ 40 Acres

**From Music Box:**

→ When Fall Is Coming

**From MVD:**

Sidekicks

Dakota

Best Christmas Movies

Ever

Santos Contra Hombres

Infernales

The John Wayne Gacy Murders

Tulsa Terrors

Hotel

→ Raw Meat

→ Tenacious D: The Complete Masterworks Vol. 3

→ The Buster Keaton Show (9 episodes)

→ Tulsa Terrors The Story of the Made-for-Home Video Movie Business

→ School in the Crosshairs

→ Weeds

→ Mirror Life Modern

Zombies

**From Neon:**

→ The Life of Chuck

**From One Little:**

→ Cornucopia Live

**From Oscilloscope:**

→ Vulcanizadora

→ The Taste of Mango

**From Paramount:**

NCIS Season 22

Paw Patrol Fire Rescue

Unforgotten Season 6

Professor T Season 4

The Marlow Murder Club Season 2

Watson Season 1

→ Fire Country Season 3

→ Atomic People

→ Mission Impossible The Final Reckoning

**From Pop:**

More More More Andrea

True Collection (Devils Due, Meatball, Sweet Wet Lips)

**From Random:**

→ The Womb

**From Reel Vault:**

King Kung Fu

Pointed Heels

→ The Love Trap

**From Sony:**

→ 28 Years Later

**From SRS:**

Venus Die-trap

The Door of Sin

→ The Devil's Music

**From Strand:**

Wild Diamond

**From STX:**

→ The Best of Enemies

→ Second Act

→ Ugly Dolls

→ Hustlers

→ Poms

→ Countdown

→ The Gentlemen

→ 21 Bridges

→ Brahm's The Boy II

→ Playmobil The Movie

**From Universal:**

M3gan 2.0

Chucky Complete Series (6 platters)

→ Jurassic World Rebirth

→ The Bad Guys 2

**From Vertical:**

Ice Road: Vengeance (Liam Neeson)

Guns Up

→ Osiris

**From Warner:**

Aztec Batman Clash of Empires

Ben 10 Complete Collection (41 platters)

→ Dave Chappelle Killin' Them Softly

→ George & Mandy's First Marriage Season 1

→ La Femme Nikita Complete Series (27 platters)

The Last of Us Season

→ A Man Apart

→ Outrageous

→ Return to Paradise Season 1

Rick and Morty Season 8

→ Robot Chicken Complete Series (24 platters)

→ Spenser for Hire Complete Series (16 platters)

→ Superman

The White Lotus Season 3

**From Well Go USA:**

Ghost Killer

→ Lookout

**From Wonderscape:**

Cosmic Dawn The Untold Story of the James Webb Space

Telephone

**From Wownow:**

The History of Trick or Treating

All Hallows' Eve Inferno

→ Kung Fu Masters Zodiac Way Iron Hammer Iron Man

→ Kung Fu Masters Zodiac Way Hand in Hand

→ Kung Fu Masters Zodiac Way Kung Fu Academy

→ Untouchable

**From X4:**

Danny Goes Aum

→ Sick-Amour A Love Story

→ Timi

→ Please Respond

→ Bury Me Twice

→ Elegy

→ My False Vacuum

**From Ytiniini:**

Eye of the Dolphin