

VD REVIEWS, BY AMY LONGSDORF

Amateur Night' shines a light on Frank Rizzo

Amateur Night at City Hall: The Story of Frank L. Rizzo (2016, MVD, unrated, \$30) Mayor Rizzo was well into his second term as Philly mayor when he participated in filmmaker Robert Mugge and Heidi Trumbert's fascinating 1978 documentary, which is available unedited on VD for the first time. The film digs up into Rizzo's tenure as a policeman, then police commissioner, making note of his officers' habit of arresting people simply because Rizzo didn't like their looks. The politician's uneasy relationship with the city's African-American community is also explored. So how did Rizzo rise so far so fast? He courted the press in his early days, always placing himself at the center of important events. "Amateur Night" chronicles the life of a man who, depending on your politics, either kept Philly safe from crime or trampled on citizens' rights in his quest for power.

Extras: none.
Criminal (2016, Lionsgate, R, \$30) Here's a movie so luridly far-fetched that it stretches the bonds of reality and that it hurtles along with so much confidence that it winds up being a devilishly entertaining actioner. Kevin Costner stars as Jericho Stewart, a psychopath who's drafted by a CIA chief (Gary Oldman) into a freaky experiment. The movie, with help from a neuroscientist (Amy Lee-Jones), injects into Jericho's consciousness the memories of a recently assassinated CIA agent (Ryan Reynolds). Director Ariel Vromann makes the outlandish premise fly while keeping the action scenes blissfully free from digital gimmicks. Best of all, Costner proves he's very good at being very bad.

Extras: music video, deleted scenes and featurettes.

The Boss (2016, Universal, R, \$30) Melissa McCarthy vehicle feels slapdash and disjointed, but she's so funny, finding humor in bra straps, self-tanners and sofa beds, that you'll follow her anywhere. McCarthy stars as investment guru Michelle Darnell, who, following a stint in prison, is forced to room with her former assistant (Kristen Bell). The plot is a shambles and poor Peter Onorati delivers a career-worst performance as Melissa's rival/lover. But McCarthy (who co-wrote the script with husband Ben Falcone, who directs) is so fortlessly hilarious that the filmmaking hardly matters.

Extras: unrated edition of the film, deleted scenes, gag reel and featurettes.

Born to Be Blue (2016, IFC, R, \$25) The best of a batch of recent musician opics, this portrait of jazz trumpeter Miles Davis (the West Windsor Township-raised Ethan Hawke) unravels a story given by a fascinating dilemma: Can you sacrifice too much for your art? Boonended by Davis's appearances at Birdland, the action tracks his recovery from a vicious beating, his decision to kick heroin and his romance with a rugging actress (Carmen Ejogo). *Born to Be Blue* wouldn't work without a strong central performance and Davis digs deep, nailing both Davis's effidence and his desire to one of the all-time jazz greats.

Extras: deleted scenes and featurette.

The Invitation (2016, DraftHouse, unrated, \$35) Logan Marshall-Green stars as a grieving father who reluctantly agrees to attend a party thrown in the Hollywood hills by his ex-wife (Tammy Blanchard) and her new husband (Miel Huisman). From the get-go, something feels off about the evening, thanks to weird guests and the vaguely sinister, slow-burn blather that Blanchard and Huisman keep spouting. Even as it gives goosebumps, "The Invitation" asks you realize that trying to run from sorrow is almost never a good idea.

Extras: featurettes.

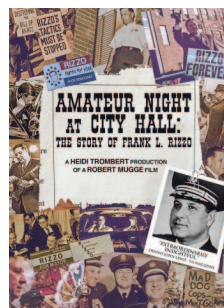
Green Room (2016, Lionsgate, R, \$20) Step down from writer-director Jeremy Saulnier's terrific "Blue Ruin" from last year, this backwoods thriller stars the late Anton Yelchin and Alia Shawkat as members of a punk-rock band who witness a murder in a dingy, Neo-Nazi club. Rather improbably, the club's owner (Patrick Stewart) decides to imprison the musicians and kill them off one by one. The punks fight back, turning the movie into a carnage-fest involving guns, box-cutters, knives and other pain-inducing weapons. It's got a lot of atmosphere but not much of a human element.

Extras: Saulnier commentary and featurette.

My Golden Days (2016, Magnolia, R, \$5) For his prequel to "My Sex Life... or How I Got into an Argument," acclaimed French filmmaker Arnaud Desplechin teams with Mathieu Amalric for an uneven but lovely meditation on identity and romance. As he is about to leave a lover in Tajikistan, an anthropologist (Paul Amalric) remembers three pivotal events in his life. While the first two segments move swiftly through Paul's traumatic childhood in France and a student trip to Russia, the final sequence, set during his university years, takes its sweet time paying tribute to Esther (Lou Roycollinet), Paul's first love. While not without boring patches, "Golden Days" offers a warm glow.

Extras: featurettes.

The Pack (2016, Shout Factory, unrated,



ed, \$25) First-time director Nick Robertson keeps things suspenseful and creepy for the first few scenes of this when-mature-fights-back horror shocker set on an isolated sheep ranch in the Australian outback. But once a pack of wild dogs begin jumping through the windows to maul the members of the farming family (Jack Campbell, Anna Lise Phillips), "The Pack" turns silly. It doesn't help that Robertson shoots the whole nighttime home-invasion sequence in dark shades of murk.

Extras: featurettes.

I Am Wrath (2016, Lionsgate, R, \$20) After his wife is killed in what seems to be a mugging gone bad, a former CIA agent named Stanley Hill (John Travolta) decides to take the law into his own hands. Not surprisingly, Stanley uncovers a conspiracy involving crooked cops and corrupt government officials. Yes, you've seen it all before in movies like "Death Wish" and "Man on Fire," but director Chuck Russell has a knack for both pacing and the staging of fight scenes. "Wrath" also relies heavily on the crackerjack chemistry between Travolta and pal Christopher Meloni, who's so handy with a knife he deserves an action franchise of his own.

Extras: commentary by Russell.

The New World (2005, Criterion, PG-13, \$30) Terrence Malick's movie about British explorer John Smith (Colin Farrell) and his romance with Pocahontas (Q'orianka Kilcher) was very underrated when it premiered a decade ago. Now, thanks to a stunning 4K restoration, it looks more stunning than ever before. This gorgeous package includes not only Malick's preferred 172-minute director's cut but the superior 153-minute version that played in theaters and a 135-minute cut. Set against a backdrop of natural wonders such as fennel fields and untouched rivers, the film is the powerful tale of two cultures clashing, with many natives, including Pocahontas, caught in the middle.

Extras: featurettes.

Susan Slept Here (1954, Warner Archive, unrated, \$20) Filmmaker Frank Tashlin ("Bachelor Flat") never met an innuendo he didn't like and this frothy comedy from the mid-1950s is full of strange overtones. But for all its nudgy-wink-wink suggestiveness, it is the rather chaste tale of a 17-year-old delinquent (Debbie Reynolds) who sparks with a middle-aged screenwriter (Dick Powell) on Christmas Eve. He eventually marries her to save her from prison only to wind up falling in love with her. Now on Blu-ray, this rom-com is practically a showcase for the wonders of Technicolor.

Extras: none.

The Crush (1993, Shout Factory, R, \$28) Just try and resist this over-the-top thriller about a teenager (Alicia Silverstone) who develops an obsession with a journalist (Cary Elwes) living in her parents' guesthouse. You can pretty much guess every twist and turn but there's plenty of suspense generated by wondering how far Silverstone will go to get what she wants.

Extras: featurettes and new commentary by writer-director Alan Shapiro.

Panic in Needle Park (1971, Twilight Time, R, \$30) Even before "The Godfather," Al Pacino was a powerhouse. If you need proof, check out this addiction saga about a heroin pusher who falls in love with a homeless runaway (Kitty Winn). Now on Blu-ray, "Panic" has only improved with age thanks to director Jerry Schatzberg's insistence of locating the humanity of his characters, no matter how drug-addled or dingy.

Extras: recently discovered original score by Ned Rorem.

Person of Interest: The Complete Fifth and Final Season (2016, Warner, \$40) The CBS series goes out with a bang thanks to a final, shortened 13-episode season that's chock-full of excitement. Highlights of the final season include simulations of a world without the Machine and the resolution of the on-again-off-again relationship between Finch (Michael Emerson) and Reese (Jim Caviezel).

Extras: featurettes.