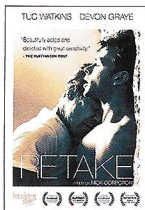


performance makes the historically-based sections of the film engrossing, but Kraume unfortunately adds an entirely fictitious subplot about Bauer's favorite young aide (Ronald Zehrfeld), a closeted homosexual like Bauer, who becomes involved with a transvestite singer at a gay club and is blackmailed by Bauer's foes into turning on his boss. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

Retake ★★

Breaking Glass, 99 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.99

What begins as an intriguing mystery becomes a somewhat monotonous road movie, albeit one that features a pair of sharply contrasting protagonists. Jonathan (Tuc Watkins) is a middle-aged gay man who picks up youthful street hustler Adam (Devon Graye) in San Francisco and offers him a lot of money to role-play the part of someone named "Brandon," a former lover of Jonathan's. The deal is not purely about sex but rather the recreation of a road trip to the Grand Canyon that Jonathan took with the absent Brandon. Jonathan insists on Adam's complete immersion in the part, including knowing Brandon's favorite book, style of cologne, wardrobe, sunglasses, and more. But Adam is a buoyant guy whose energy can't be easily suppressed, and time and again he throws off Jonathan's script. Co-writer and director Nick Corporon's *Retake* essentially pits an implacable force against a seemingly immovable object, but while that sounds like a solid idea for a story, much of the film is actually a rather drab succession of scenes set in bars, motel rooms, and a car interior—dull backdrops that dampen the more interesting internal dramas. Optional. (T. Keogh)

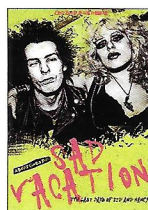


for her brassy "domestic goddess" routine, as well as the years that her sitcom *Roseanne* was a hot item, depicting a struggling, working-class family. But the days of cultural relevance appear to be long behind her in this contemporary portrait, and while she does voice genuine, populist anger about the U.S. government turning its back on ordinary people, there is nothing suggesting authenticity in her proposed political career. If Barr's campaign was simply ironic or a naked bid for pop culture attention, one might find a few laughs here, but this is simply a pointless ride through craziness. Not recommended. (T. Keogh)

Sad Vacation: The Last Days of Sid and Nancy ★★

MVD, 94 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.95

It's possible to be of two minds about this grisly, dark documentary. On one hand, filmmaker Danny Garcia effectively reconstructs the events some four decades earlier surrounding former Sex Pistols' bassist Sid Vicious's relationship with doomed groupie Nancy Spungen. But regardless of one's feelings about the early years of the seminal British punk band and its revered if jinxed role in the movement, it's impossible not to see Vicious as a briefly iconic figure who had little to offer following the band's breakup. *Sad Vacation* gives viewers no reason to believe that there is anything particularly interesting in the story of Vicious's drug-addled and aggressive final days as he shared opiates and mutilation pacts with obnoxious, would-be starmaker Spungen. Garcia interviews others who were on the scene as the pair lost themselves in a black hole at the Chelsea Hotel in New York, leading to Spungen's murder in 1978 and Vicious's lethal drug overdose the following year. Yes, some of the old unbelievable conspiracy theories re-emerge about another possible killer, and there are minor details about Spungen's determination to merge her destiny with that of one or another rock star, as well as truly damning stories about Vicious being intimidating and brutal to innocent people. But none of the surviving Pistols participate in this film that offers little in the way of fresh insights. Optional. (T. Keogh)



Roseanne for President ★

MPI, 97 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.98

Comedian-actress Roseanne Barr threw her hat in the ring during the 2012 presidential election as a Green Party candidate, squaring off against eventual nominee Jill Stein. Filmmaker Eric Weinrib's documentary follows Barr's serious if ill-considered and ultimately bizarre campaign, which seems to have mainly consisted of her Skyped appearances at poorly-attended rallies organized by one desperate volunteer staffer. The film uselessly tracks Barr's daily routines folding laundry and smoking a lot of marijuana, but becomes slightly more compelling while she awaits word from TV executives about whether there is interest in a new show in which she would star. For those too young to remember, the film serves up an overview of Barr's earlier success on TV as a standup comic who was given high marks



Train to Busan ★★

Well Go USA, 118 min., in Korean w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.98, Blu-ray: \$29.98

You could call this South Korean zombie thriller *Zombies on a Train* but that would reduce this fine survival drama to a mere gimmick. The story begins in the busy modern world of Seoul, where a workaholic divorced

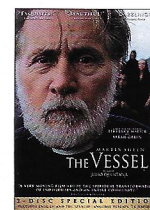


dad (Gong Yoo) is finally shamed into taking his neglected young daughter back to her mother by train. They leave just as some kind of viral outbreak turns people into voracious, single-minded zombies—the rapid-moving kind—and an infected victim climbs aboard the train. It's a classic set-up: ordinary folks in an extraordinary situation where character is put to the test as the infection spreads and the survivors become separated. There are carloads of classic archetypes on the journey: a working class guy with his pregnant wife, elderly sisters, a high school baseball team, a teenage couple, and a corporate fat cat ready to sacrifice anyone standing in the way of his survival. Filmmaker Yeon Sang-ho makes superb use of the restricted quarters of the train while also adding a few of his own flourishes to zombie conventions in this clever, fast-moving horror thriller. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

The Vessel ★★1/2

Outsider Pictures, 86 min., PG-13, DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99

This debut by writer-director Julio Quintana serves up an earnest parable of redemption that is unfortunately hobbled by heavy-handed religious symbolism. Its impact is also diluted by the performance of Lucas Quintana (the filmmaker's brother) in the central role of Leo, a young man in a coastal village that 10 years earlier suffered unimaginable tragedy when a tidal wave engulfed the local school and killed 46 students. Since the disaster, all of the women have remained in mourning and refused to bear children, despite the advice of their priest (Martin Sheen) that they should try to move on. Leo, who narrates much of the film in a bland emotionless voice, docilely cares for his mentally disturbed mother while ruminating on her preference for his brother, who died in the long-ago catastrophe. But after Leo and a friend drown in an accident and the former miraculously comes back to life three hours later, Leo becomes a Christ-like figure for the townspeople, a sign from God that they should embrace life again too—especially after he builds a ramshackle boat from the debris of the destroyed schoolhouse. A subplot also finds Leo rekindling a romance with a girl he always loved from afar. *The Vessel* is notable for some striking visuals and a committed performance from Sheen, but its obvious sincerity can't quite overcome the script's rickety construction and Quintana's drab turn as Leo. Still, this should be considered a strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)



The Well ★★

Kino Lorber, 80 min., in Spanish w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.99

A mildly interesting if tonally and narratively redundant drama from Mexico, writ-