

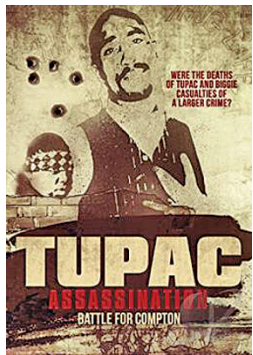
NEW RELEASES

THE LATEST DVD, BLU RAY & VOD RELEASES

By John Moore

TUPAC ASSASSINATION: BATTLE FOR COMPTON (MVD Visual)

Twenty years after Biggie and Tupac were gunned down 6 months apart from each other, the shootings still hold plenty of allure. Tupac Assassination: Battle For Compton is just the latest documentary about one or both of the notorious killings that tries to suss out the competing conspiracies. In this, the third in a series of Assassination docs, the filmmaker interviews a slew of local and federal law enforcement officers laying out the theory that the musicians were killed by a shadowy group named "The Machine." Despite some pretty impressive sleuthing, you likely won't leave this doc with a clear understanding of exactly what happened.



LONDON TOWN (IFC Films)

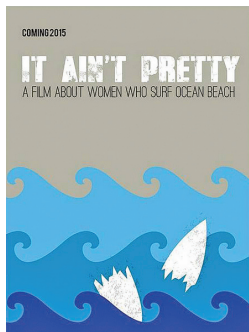
Clash singer Joe Strummer, played here admirably enough by Jonathan Rhys Meyers, has a peripheral role in this fictional take of a 15-year discovering punk music and learning to cope with an estranged mom and a single dad who ends up in the hospital, but the

spirit of Strummer is all over this movie. Teenager Shay (played brilliantly by Daniel Huttleston) hears the music of Clash at a crucial point in his life and embraces the fearlessness and rebelliousness of punk rock in the face of some pretty grown up challenges. A few clichés try and drag the movie down, but overall an enjoyable story with a fantastic soundtrack.



IT AIN'T PRETTY (Candy Factory Films)

The idea for this doc is pretty compelling: the challenges and sexism faced by female big wave surfers in Northern California and their ultimate triumphs. But it takes director Dayla Soul way too long to set up the premise that she almost loses the viewer in the process. If you're able to stick with it though, the payoff is worth it. Soul spent three years living in the Bay Area gaining the trust of the women profiled here. The film ultimately does a great job of shattering stereotypes and painting a portrait of a group of close knit surfers who overcome big obstacles (mental and physical) to pursue a sport they love.



Station Control

WOMEN OF A CERTAIN AGE

BY BENJAMIN CARR

THE PHRASE "WOMEN OF A certain age" is rarely intended as a compliment, particularly in show business. The stories you most often see aren't about women - and are rarely if ever about more than one woman at a time. The Golden Age of Television that we are currently enjoying, more often than not, has been a boys' club of antiheroes and scoundrels. Signs suggest though, that the tide may be turning. The newest shows even dare to examine female friendships and relationships past age 40. The new stories available to these women put them a step ahead of other desperate housewives or golden girls.

Recent shows, including Netflix's *Grace and Frankie* and the excellent *One Day at a Time* reboot, have acknowledged that experience and age benefit women storytelling by giving them more memories to draw from and more hardships to face.

THE GOOD FIGHT (CBS)

The new CBS All Access drama, available through the CBS app, is a spinoff of their hit series *The Good Wife*. One year after that series ended with a startling slap, Tony and Emmy winner Christine Baranski returns to her role as liberal powerhouse attorney Diane Lockhart. Disgusted with the possibility of living under President Trump, Diane spends the opening moments of the new series planning her retirement and moving to a villa in Provence. She's done with the firm she founded, walking away from her philandering husband and intending to enjoy her massive wealth.

Naturally, just when she thought she was out, Diane gets pulled back in. Her retirement money disappears in a Ponzi scheme run by some of her closest friends. Her goddaughter Maya, a new attorney played by *Game of Thrones* star Rose Leslie, is implicated within that scandal. And both women come together as their lives are falling apart to find new jobs and a new purpose - just like *The Good Wife* herself once had to.

The Good Fight though does not rest comfortably upon the old show's shoulders. The only firm that will hire Diane is a predominantly African American firm, considering her a diversity hire. While the original show would occasionally focus on issues of race, here those issues take center stage. Actors like Cush Jumbo, Delroy Lindo and Erica Tazel play the old guard, and their characters expose Diane to just how privileged her existence has been.

FEUD: BETTE AND JOAN (FX)

Producer Ryan Murphy's behind-the-scenes look at the making of *What*



Ever Happened to Baby Jane? is a well-constructed, interesting slice of Hollywood gossip that explores through a perverse bit of history what happens after actresses reach their sell-by date. Oscar winners Jessica Lange and Susan Sarandon play Hollywood legends Joan Crawford and Bette Davis who notoriously clashed on the set of their only collaboration in this FX drama.

Lange and Sarandon though are not performing campy imitations of the great stars. They find their vulnerability and humanity; the two women doing all they can to survive an industry that wants to discard them. Surprisingly, *Feud* is not the delicious, campy bitchfest suggested in its ads. It's fun is more subdued and takes the stars out of the heavens and puts them next to you so that you can see their pain.

Along the way, you start to see how the two women are being manipulated into clashing. Lange is superb in this, playing Joan as more wounded than monstrous and Sarandon is a good fit for Bette, a person whom it cannot be easy to play.

BIG LITTLE LIES (HBO)

This HBO adaptation of Liane Moriarty's excellent book stars Reese Witherspoon, Nicole Kidman and Shailene Woodley as moms navigating envy and entanglement in an upscale California neighborhood. The show is a bit of a whodunit, telling you only that a school fundraiser has ended in a murder, and then it flashes back a couple months to show you how it all happened.

Witherspoon takes center stage early in the show as Madeline, a take-charge gossip who finds the other mothers in their group uptight and pretentious. Sensing a kindred spirit, she quickly takes the new single mom Jane (Woodley) under her wing. This relationship is quickly cemented when Jane's young son is accused of bullying. Elsewhere, Kidman's character Celeste is coping with a difficult, painful secret. Her husband beats her, and she wants out of her seemingly perfect marriage even though she blames herself for the abuse.

This show is quality binge-watching, with new secrets emerging during every episode, and the actresses are at the top of their game with this material.



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