

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for July 28, 2017

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It's time for another look at Blu-rays and DVDs coming your way. There are some big movies to choose from this week as well as some interesting independent fare. So, if you can't make it out to the movies this week, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

BIG NEW RELEASES!

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Black Butterfly - Based on a hit French thriller called (appropriately enough) *Papillon Noir*, this remake involves a struggling screenwriter who heads out to a mountain cabin to work on a new project. He offers a drifter a place to stay for the night, but tension soon arises between the pair and events spiral out of control. It doesn't help that several murders have been reported in the area. Notices for this independent production were split right down the middle. Half complained that the movie lost its way in its final half with some silly and nonsensical plot twists, while the others called it a well-acted and pulpy little B-movie thriller. It stars Antonio Banderas, Jonathan Rhys Meyers, Piper Perabo and Abel Ferrara (yep, the filmmaker).

The Boss Baby - This animated comedy involves a seven-year-old who becomes a little jealous of a new arrival in the family... a baby brother. The business suit-wearing new addition isn't warmly welcomed, but the two must patch up their differences and join forces to take on a sinister scheme that will put pets in control of the entire world. This one also divided the press. Some thought it was jumbled, tonally uneven and didn't make the most of its premise. An equal amount complimented its humorous, throwback style and impressive animation. The voice cast includes Alec Baldwin, Steve Buscemi, Jimmy Kimmel and Lisa Kudrow.

The Final Master - A martial arts master decides he'd like to open a school and pass down the teachings of his master in this period Hong Kong action flick. Unfortunately, he soon learns that other institutions aren't as enthusiastic, meaning that he will have to send an apprentice to face off against other masters to prove himself worthy. Reaction was decent and the film earned more recommendations than pans. A few thought the story was needlessly complicated and overly serious, but more were impressed by the incredible fight scenes and unique approach to the well-worn subject matter. It features Fan Liao and Jia Song.

Ghost in the Shell - The famous Japanese anime movie gets a Hollywood remake in this live-action sci-fi picture. It involves a cyber-enhanced soldier who hunts down the world's most dangerous criminals. Assigned to stop a criminal mastermind hacking into the brains of citizens, she soon uncovers a conspiracy that endangers her own existence. Like many other releases this week, this one also split critics. Some criticized it for being good-looking but dramatically flat and less than involving. The remainder said that while it didn't match its source material, it was visually dynamic and housed some interesting themes under the surface. It stars Scarlett Johansson, Pilou Asbaek, "Beat" Takashi Kitano and Juliette Binoche.

Gifted - This drama involves a single father struggling to raise his young daughter in Florida. When she's revealed to be a math prodigy, her mother reenters the picture and fights the dad for custody of the youngster, threatening to separate them. Reviews were pretty solid for the picture. A few thought it was formulaic and felt that the mom was too one-note, but the majority

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were positive. They found the lead performances exceptional and empathetic, resulting in a sweet and effective little film. The cast includes Chris Evans, McKenna Grace, Lindsay Duncan, Octavia Spenser and Jenny Slate.

Unforgettable - An angry ex-wife goes absolutely mental in this thriller and decides to target the new fiancé of her ex-husband. Angry that this new woman has also befriended her daughter, the woman set out to destroy her life, leading to an inevitable confrontation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the press ended up panning this effort. A scant few called it trashy fun but most described it as very forgettable. They stated that the film was full of preposterous tropes and unbelievable scenarios. They also wrote that it wasted the talents of its stars. It features Rosario Dawson, Katherine Heigl, Geoff Stults, Whitney Cummings and Cheryl Ladd.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST!

Arrow Video have a horror classic getting a “limited edition” Blu-ray treatment. Based on the work of author H.P. Lovecraft, *Re-Animator* (1985) is a fun horror flick with a pitch black sense of humor, about a young medical student who teams with a mad doctor working on a serum for life. Unfortunately, the compound tends to drive the corpses they inject it with mad. Craziness follows as the two get themselves into all sorts of trouble, and even meet some competition from another undead doctor at the institute. In addition to a 4K restoration featuring two different cuts of the movie, the 2-disc package includes multiple audio commentaries, a full documentary on the making of the film, interviews with director Stuart Gordon, as well as with the writer, producer and composer. There’s also an extended interview with co-star Barbara Crampton, deleted and extended scenes and promotional spots. There’s also a new collector’s booklet included. It’s one of the best horror flicks of its era and this release comes highly recommended.

Shout! Factory have some fun stuff too. This includes the Blu-ray box set called *Billy Jack: The Complete Collection*

. It contains four films featuring the drive-in action hero, including

The Born Losers

(1968),

Billy Jack

(1971),

The Trial of Billy Jack

(1974) and

Billy Jack Goes to Washington

(1977). In addition to the high definition transfers, the set includes 2 commentaries with

director/star Tom Laughlin on every film (the second track features extras guests), still galleries

and theatrical trailers.

They also have a Blu-ray of *Scorchy* (1976), starring Connie Stevens as a sultry agent who goes undercover to take down a drug ring. Just so you know, this version features a slightly altered soundtracks (guess all of the music clearances couldn't be obtained). Also from Shout! Factory is the "Collector's Edition" of

Slither (2006). This horror/comedy about alien slugs taking over a small town by infecting its residents has a very recognizable cast and comes from writer/director James Gunn, who would later find success with the *Guardi*

ans of the Galaxy

series. This release includes tons of features including a new commentary with Gunn as well as co-stars Nathan Fillion and Michael Rooker. Don't worry, the previously recorded commentary from an earlier release is also included. There are also deleted and extended scenes, a ton of featurettes on the making-of the movie and plenty of other bonuses.

Criterion has the great Albert Brooks comedy *Lost in America* (1985) on Blu-ray. It's about a husband and wife who decide to quit their jobs, buy a Winnebago and travel the country. It doesn't go as smoothly as hoped. This edition includes a new 2K restoration of the feature, a new conversation with Brooks, recently recorded interviews with co-star Julie Haggerty, producer James L. Brooks and others. The trailer is also included.

And there's more. Kino are putting out the Oscar-winning crime comedy/drama *Prizzi's Honor* (1985). It features Jack Nicholson and Kathleen Turner as hired killers who end up having to target each other. They're also releasing the Meryl Streep drama

Silkwood

(1985), in which she plays an employee at a nuclear facility who becomes concerned that she and others are being exposed to radiation.

Finally, Blue Underground are giving the disturbing horror picture *The Stendahl Syndrome* (1996) the Blu-ray treatment. It's been transferred from the original camera negatives and arrives with a new film historian commentary as well as new interviews with most of the cast and crew.

YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

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Here are the week's biggest kid-friendly releases.

The Boss Baby

Lego Scooby-Doo! Blowout Beach Bash

Minnie's Happy Helpers

ON THE TUBE!

Are here are the latest TV titles arriving on disc.

Anne Morrow Lindbergh - You'll Have the Sky (PBS)

Border Patrol: Season 3 (National Geographic)

Diff'rent Strokes: Season 6

Duck Dynasty: Season 11 - The Final Season

Emerald City: Season 1

Frontline: American Patriot (PBS)

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Girls: Season 6

Last Days of Jesus (PBS)

Police Story: Season 2

Pretty Little Liars: Season 7 - The Final Season

Primal Survivor: Season 2

Weekend in Havana (PBS)

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