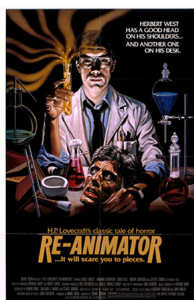
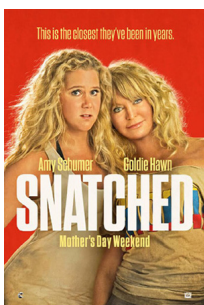
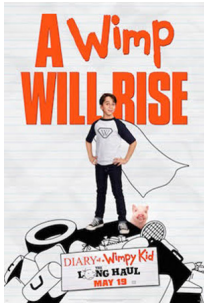


DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for Aug. 11, 2017

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Thursday, 10 August 2017 23:57





It's time for another look at highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. There's a great mix here that includes big summer releases as well as small, independent fare. Looks like there's something for everyone. 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!

11:55 - A Marine returns home after serving his term, but finds his gritty and violent past catching up with him. This independent drama follows the lead's attempts to redeem himself over the course of a day and find a way to avoid hostility and tragedy. The picture didn't get the widest of releases, but response was actually very positive. While downbeat, many mentioned that this grim film effectively displays how difficult it is for people to escape their lot in life. The cast includes Victor Almanzar, Elizabeth Rodriguez, David Sayles, Julia Styles and John Leguizamo.

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul - The fourth film in this children's series (based on the books) features an entirely new cast. This time out, the lead character and his family set out on a road trip to visit their grandmother for her 90th birthday. Things go completely haywire and the clan end up getting themselves into all sorts of strange situations. Reaction from critics was absolutely awful, generating the worst reviews of any film in the franchise. They felt that while younger audiences may still enjoy it, the cast was let down by a dull script filled with little more than scatological humor. It stars Jason Drucker, Alicia Silverstone, Tom Everett Scott and Charlie Wright.

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The Dinner - This small drama involves an incredibly awkward and tension-filled trip to a restaurant. Two estranged brothers from different social classes get together to try to fathom and deal with a horrible crime their two sons committed together. Write-ups were completely split on this effort. About half called it nasty and unpleasant film that was overstuffed and difficult to endure. The others complimented it for the same reason and commented that the performances and different approach to the material made it fascinating. It features Richard Gere, Laura Linney, Steve Coogan, Rebecca Hall, Chloe Sevigny and Charlie Plummer.

The Exception - Set in Holland during World War II, a German soldier is sent to ingratiate himself into the house of a high ranking official and uncover a spy hidden somewhere in the household. When he falls for a staff member during his investigation, he's forced into choosing between love or country. Notices were quite decent for this effort. A few found the story too melodramatic to involve them, but the majority were impressed by the actors and found that the movie effectively built up drama and anxiety. The cast includes Lily James, Jai Courtney, Christopher Plummer and Eddie Marsan.

The Hunter's Prayer - An assassin is given the task of taking a hit out on a young woman whose family had previously been eliminated. But when it's time to pull the trigger, the lead realizes that he can't do it. Instead, he decides to help the lady find the party responsible in order to take revenge. Reviews were fairly middling for this action picture, with more negative than positive ones posted. The main complaint seemed to be that the story was too routine before eventually becoming preposterous. Those who enjoyed it suggested it was a passable B-movie and a reasonable rental. This one stars Sam Worthington, Odeya Rush, Allen Leech and Amy Landecker.

King Arthur: Legend of the Sword - The legend gets a big-budget update in this period action flick. It follows the young Arthur as he discovers the sword Excalibur and uses it to stop his power-hungry uncle (who may have had something to do with the death of his father). Critics weren't very impressed with this version of the story. A few gave it a pass as a fun popcorn flick, but most wrote that it was overstuffed and that the emphasis on snappy banter wasn't a good fit for a period film. Now audiences can judge for themselves. Charlie Hunnam, Astrid Berges-Frisbey, Jude Law, Djimon Hounsou, Eric Bana and Aiden Gillen headline.

Kung Fu Yoga - Here's another Jackie Chan vehicle that only received a limited release in North America. This time out, the actor plays an archeology professor who leads a small group on their travels from Tibet to Dubai to India in order to find a lost treasure. Reaction from the press was very mixed. Some reviews called it astonishingly bad, while a few believed that while not on the level of previous works, the stunts were impressive. Others suggested it was a

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sweet, fast-paced lark. Probably depends on how forgiving you are of what is likely a very sketchy, minimal screenplay. It also features Disha Patani, Aarif Rahman, Amyra Dastur, Sonu Sood and Eric Tsang.

Ripped - This low-budget, independent comedy involves a pair of stoners who take a very powerful hit in 1986 and fall asleep for 30 years (not unlike Rip Van Winkle). Upon reawakening, they have to adapt to the modern world and find new lives for themselves. Notices were very poor, suggesting that while the funny cast may have managed to eke out a chuckle or two from the sub-par screenplay, it still didn't work. They found the final product sloppily put together and lacking the low-key charm of a Cheech & Chong picture. The cast includes Russell Peters, Faizon Love, Alex Meneses and Kyle Massey.

Snatched - A woman's exotic vacation plans go completely awry when her boyfriend dumps her. Not wanting the trip to go to waste, she invites her mother. It isn't long before the two get themselves embroiled in all sorts of trouble with criminals and must escape from the jungle. Reviews weren't very strong for this comedy. There were a handful of critics who liked the interplay between the leads and appreciated both the movie's quick pace and anything-for-a-laugh approach. However, more thought that the cast were trying too hard and found the end results unfunny. It stars Amy Schumer, Goldie Hawn, Joan Cusack, Ike Barinholtz, Wanda Sykes and Christopher Meloni.

The Transfiguration - In this independent drama, a troubled teen obsessed with vampires befriends an alienated girl. Together a bond begins to form, but the lead's fantasy and reality begin to blur together in an unhealthy way, leading to grave danger for the pair. This little picture earned solid notices and a fair bit of praise. A few commented that it was too understated, but most called it a unique and interesting take on the coming-of-age formula with some social commentary squeezed in for good measure. It features Eric Ruffin and Chloe Levine.

Undercover Grandpa - I'm not quite sure how this movie happened. This star-studded family feature involves a teen who finally lands a date with the girl of his dreams, only to find out that she has been kidnapped. He asks his man-of-action grandpa to help him save her and the elder acquiesces, bringing his army pals out of retirement to take down the bad guys. There aren't many reviews available, but the ones that have popped up are really terrible, calling it a waste of a talented cast. It stars James Caan, Jessica Walter, Lou Gossett Jr., Paul Sorvino, Kenneth Welsh and Dylan Everett.

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Wolves - In this independent drama, a talented teenage basketball player is about to be recruited by a high end post-secondary school. Unfortunately, the deal may be rescinded because of his temperamental, alcoholic father who struggles with gambling addiction. The boy must navigate difficult waters to make the most of his potential. It didn't get much of a response from critics. They enjoyed the performances, but most disliked the movie, calling the material predictable and routine. The cast includes Michael Shannon, Carla Gugino and Taylor John Smith.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST!

This may read as familiar, but a couple of weeks back Arrow Video were set to release *Re-Animator* (1985). Unfortunately, an unforeseen delay prevented that from happening, but now it's here receiving a "limited edition" Blu-ray treatment. Based on the work of author H.P. Lovecraft, it 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 trends 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 curious releases as well. Known for their *Mystery Science Theater 3000* releases, the company are putting out a spin-off of sorts to the original series. *Cinematic Titanic: The Complete Collection* comes from original *MST3K* creator Joel Hodgson and four other original cast members/writers providing jokes to some not-so-great-movies. There are 12 films included on the DVDs, like *The Wasp Woman* (1959), *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians* (1964) and many others. The box set also includes a couple of featurettes on the group.

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But that's not all. They're also bringing *Teen Wolf* (1985) to Blu-ray in a Collector's Edition. It's about a teen who experiences some stranger-than-normal pubescent changes; most notably, he realizes that he is a werewolf. Michael J. Fox stars in this unexpected smash hit. The disc includes a new transfer from the original film interpositive, a two-plus hour documentary on the making-of the movie and promotional materials.

And yes, they have *Teen Wolf Too* (1987) arriving as a Collector's Edition Blu-ray as well. Jason Bateman took over the lead role in this follow-up as a werewolf/university student trying to navigate adulthood. This release includes numerous interviews with crew members and a still gallery. I'll be honest... neither of the movies are particularly strong or speak to me personally, but they have a huge nostalgic following for many in my age group. They'll no doubt enjoy these discs.

Kino are also delivering a couple of fun, perhaps unintentionally amusing movies on Blu-ray starring Elvis Presley. *Clambake* (1967) is really, really corny. It stars the King as a rich oil baron who trades places with a poorly paid water-ski instructor at a resort, all to determine if women like him for his personality or his wealth. This one is really cheesy and the musical numbers (including the title track) are particularly weak, which in some respects makes it a fun, bad-movie-night kind of feature. They've also got the critically derided *Frankie and Johnny* (1966), which features Elvis as a Mississippi river boat performer.

Shriek Show have the exploitation film. *Tenement: Game of Survival* (1985) arriving on Blu-ray. It's about a gang of thugs who are reported on by residents of a NYC tenement. When they get released they go on the rampage, locking the building up and terrorizing the residents. It's known for being outrageously violent and so over-the-top that many enjoy it for its ridiculous elements. I've never seen it, so I can't comment on it.

On a completely different note, *The Breaking Point* (1950) is hitting Blu-ray shelves thanks to Criterion. It's a film-noir from Michael Curtiz (*The Adventures of Robin Hood*

,
Casablanca

,
Mildred Pierce

,
White Christmas

and many others) about a cash-strapped boat captain who has to take on a job with some

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underworld figures to make ends meet. It has been given a new 2K restoration, interviews with a film historian about its importance as well as an analysis of director Curtiz's techniques and other bonuses.

Finally, Cult Epics are releasing the French black comedy *The Flesh* (1991) on Blu-ray. Apparently, it has numerous extras included on the release as well.

YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

Here are some titles that the kids might enjoy.

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul

Lego DC Superhero Girls: Brain Drain

The Little Prince: The New Mission

My Little Pony: Equestria Girls: Magical Movie Night

Power Rangers: Operation Overdrive: The Complete Series

Room on the Broom (Note: this is a great little short film that's well worth your while)

Star Stuff: Carl Sagan and the Mysteries of the Cosmos... and More Space Adventures
(Schoolastic)

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ON THE TUBE!

And you'll find all of the TV releases listed below. Enjoy!

Animal Fight Night: Season 5 (National Geographic)

Blindspot: Season 2

Master of the Shadowless Kick: Wong Kei-Ying DC (HBO Asia Cable-movie)

Master of the Drunken Fist: Beggar So (HBO Asia Cable-movie)

Porridge: The Complete Series

Power Rangers: Operation Overdrive: The Complete Series

By Glenn Kay

For the Sun