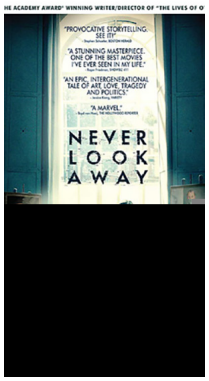

DANE COOK LEVI MILLER
AMERICAN EXIT


APOLLO 11


One Girl's Voice Breaks the Silence of History
ASHES IN THE SNOW


BIRDS OF PASSAGE


T-REX
THE JURASSIC DEAD


"PROVOCATIVE STORYTELLING. SEE IT!"
"A STUNNING MASTERPIECE. ONE OF THE BEST MOVIES I'VE EVER SEEN IN MY LIFE."
"AN EPIC, INTERGENERATIONAL TALE OF ART, LOVE, TRAGEDY AND POLITICS."
"A MARVEL."
NEVER LOOK AWAY


ROBIN WILLIAMS
WOODY HARRELSON
HOLLY HUNTER
IN AN ICE COLD BLACK COMEDY
THE BIG WHITE


"THE YEAR'S BEST FILM."
HOUSE OF GAMES
Nothing Is as It Seems.

Wow, it's another busy edition of new release highlights on Blu-ray and DVD. In fact, there's something interesting from just about every genre imaginable this time out. 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!

American Exit - Based loosely on a true-story, this film involves a cash-strapped father who decides to steal a million-dollar painting from an art dealer who has ties to criminal organizations. The lead heads out to the desert with his rebellious teenage son in order to avoid detection and try to repair their relationship. However, the pair soon find themselves in the middle of nowhere, and being hunted by the dealer's henchmen. There are no reviews for the feature. Dane Cook, Levi Miller, Udo Kier and Claire van der Boom headline the film.

Apollo 11 - The Apollo 11 mission to the moon is the focus of this documentary. Filmmakers reportedly spent great effort in cleaning up archival and never-before-seen footage from the mission, hoping to present the events that unfolded 50 years ago in a new light, and display the heroism of astronauts Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins in their trip to the moon. The overwhelming majority of critics wrote that the movie was an incredible tribute and stated that the footage was incredible and truly captured what it must have felt like to have been present with the NASA team and astronauts.

Ashes in the Snow - Set during WWII, this feature follows a 16 year-old artist living in Russia with her family. The clan is deported to Siberia as Stalin begins to dismantle the region and is forced into surviving a series of gulags. The youngster attempts to use her art as a means to depict the horrors inflicted upon her family. Critics were mixed about the final results. A group found it genuine in its intentions and appreciated the cinematography and technical skills on display. Slightly more complained that the story's attempts to juggle genocide with a girl's attempts to create art didn't mix well on the big screen. It stars Bel Powley, Martin Wallström, Lisa Loven Kongsli and Sophie Cookson.

Backdraft 2 - Anyone out there feel like the original 1991 firefighter drama *Backdraft* left too many unanswered plot threads and questions? I'm pretty sure no one believed that to be the case, but you're getting a direct-to-disc sequel anyway. This follow-up in title only tells the story of a Chicago F.D. investigator hunting down an arms dealer who sets fires to distract authorities

from his nefarious activities. This title has not yet been seen or reviewed by anyone. The cast includes Donald Sutherland, William Baldwin, Joe Anderson and Alastair Mackenzie.

Birds of Passage - This multinational, multi-language drama is set in the ‘60s and ‘70s and chronicles the early days of the drug trade in Colombia. Specifically, it follows the Wayuu indigenous peoples and one man’s attempts to make a better life for himself and members of his family by joining an organization (against the wishes of others within the group). Danger escalates for all as he strays deeper into the violent industry. Reaction towards the film was incredibly strong. It features José Acosta, Carmiña Martínez and Natalia Reyes.

Cold Pursuit - A snowplow driver is dismayed when he and his wife discover that their son has died from a forced heroin overdose. After his spouse has a breakdown and leaves him, the furious lead lashes out, using roguish tactics to start a gang war between crime factions to get his revenge. No doubt some heavies find themselves veering too close to his snowplow. At the end of the day, this remake of a 2014 Norwegian thriller called *In Order of Disappearance* impressed reviewers. It stars Liam Neeson, Emmy Rossum, Laura Dern and Tom Bateman.

Fighting with My Family - Loosely based on the life story of WWE star Paige, this comedy follows a young woman and her brother as they audition to become professional wrestlers. When she’s chosen over her sibling, the new recruit must not only make the transition into a strange new world, but also deal with the concerns of other family members. Response towards this feature was positive; the general consensus was that the movie was heartwarming and funny. Critics also noted that you didn’t have to be a wrestling fan to enjoy it. The movie features Florence Pugh, Nick Frost, Lena Headey, Jack Lowden and Dwayne Johnson.

Happy Death Day 2U - This sequel to the 2017 horror film continues the story of its protagonist, who has now moved on from the events of the first movie. When the protagonist’s new roommate suddenly tells her that he is experiencing exactly what she did in the previous flick (repeating the same day over and over and being murdered by a masked killer), she decides to help him and stop the madman. The follow-up received reasonable notices. Most complimented it as being a decent genre flick that tries to add a few elements to the recipe. The cast includes Jessica Rothe, Ruby Modine and Israel Broussard.

The Jurassic Dead - This low-budget B-movie involves a crazed scientist who, after prophesying that the end of the world is near, decides to hurry the process along himself by

creating a serum and bringing a monstrous creation called a Z-Rex to life (a zombie T-Rex that also turns victims into the undead). As the oversized creature goes on the rampage, a group of soldiers and college kids team up to stop the threat to humanity. There aren't a lot of reviews out there for this independent effort and the ones that have appeared online aren't the most complimentary. It features Matt Block, Cooper Elliott and Ben Johnson.

Never Grow Old - An undertaker suddenly begins to make a great living when violent crooks arrive in his home town and begin gunning down their various enemies. While his business initially improves, the lead begins to become concerned for his family and other associates, when the killers start turning their attention toward his close relations. This independent western earned excellent notices. A tiny contingent didn't care for the violent and mean characters. However, almost all others thought this dark and revisionist take on the outlaw flick was extremely well-acted, had some interesting insight, and delivered the gun-slinging goods. It stars John Cusack, Emile Hirsch and Antonia Campbell-Hughes.

Never Look Away - Very loosely inspired by a true story, this foreign-language drama involves a young man who escapes East Germany and finds a new home in West Germany. While his life improves, he still suffers distress from his time under Nazi forces. The hero decides to deal with his issues by creating incredible works of art that end up representing the traumas of his generation. The movie was nominated for two Oscars at the Academy Awards, including Best Foreign-Language film and Best Cinematography. Critics were generally impressed by the feature. A group did criticize it for being slow and overlong, but most found it unique, fascinating and difficult to forget. The cast includes Tom Schilling, Sebastian Koch and Paula Beer.

Triple Threat - When a billionaire's daughter threatens to take down a big crime syndicate, the bad guys decide to take out a contract on her. A group of down-and-out mercenaries tries to protect her, leading to several confrontations that feature martial arts mayhem. Notices were good, but not exceptional for this kung-fu take on *The Expendables*. Those who gave it a pass stated that all of the performers were exceptional fighters and, even if it wasn't as grand as intended, it still delivered some solid fight sequences. It stars Tony Jaa, Tiger Hu Chen, Iko Uwais, Scott Adkins, Celina Jade, Michael Jai White and JeeJa Yanin.

Blasts from the Past!

It's an incredibly busy week for great older releases as well. Arrow Academy is putting out a Blu-ray of the excellent thriller, *The Big Clock* (1948). It's about a magazine empire tycoon who

murders someone at the office and tries to pin it on a lowly office worker (played by Ray Milland), who must then prove his innocence and evade capture in the building. This release includes a high definition transfer from the original film elements, a film scholar commentary, a newly created analysis of the movie, a piece on co-star Charles Laughton, a radio dramatization of the movie, and publicity materials.

Arrow Video also has *Yakuza Law* (1969) on Blu-ray. This title moves across three different periods in Japanese history and tells stories about the various methods the Yakuza used to torture enemies. The release includes a film critic commentary, a vintage interview with the film's director and an image gallery.

MVD Visual is putting out Blu-rays of the Mark Dacascos action-thriller, *Boogie Boy* (1998). This Special Edition arrives with a new, director-approved 4K transfer from the original camera negative, a 92-minute making-of documentary, photo gallery and trailer. They've also got a Blu-ray of the dark comedy,
The Big White
(2005). This effort involves an Alaskan man who finds a dead body and tries to use it to claim his long-lost brother's life insurance policy. The movie looks interesting and has an all-star cast including Robin Williams, Giovanni Ribisi, Holly Hunter, Woody Harrelson, Tim Blake Nelson and many others. The disc includes a variety of promotional materials.

The American Genre Film Archive (AGFA) takes great pride in restoring and releasing out-of-print and hard-to-come-by little films. This week, they're putting out a Blu-ray double feature called *Wakaliwood Supa Action Volume 1: Who Killed Captain Alex?* (2010) & *Bad Black*
(2016). It includes two outrageous and over-the-top Ugandan action films that are said to be incredibly entertaining. Special features include director commentaries, welcome videos for 14 countries, music videos, interviews and news clips, trailers and commercials, behind-the-scenes featurettes, fan videos and other bonuses. Looks like a great opportunity to check out some B-movies from another part of the world.

On a completely different note, Criterion has some Blu-ray releases of its own. You can now pick up the dark and disturbing home invasion flick *Funny Games* (1997), from director Michael Haneke (*Amour*, *The White Ribber* , *Cac he*).
It comes with new 2K digital restoration supervised by Haneke, new English subtitles. You'll also get new interviews with Haneke and actor Arno Frisch, as well as a talk with film historian

Alexander Horwath on the picture. The Blu-ray also includes the a press conference from the 1997 Cannes Film Festival featuring Haneke and actors Susanne Lothar and Ulrich Mühe and the original trailer.

Criterion is also distributing *House of Games* (1987) on Blu-ray. This title is from Pulitzer Prize-winner David Mamet (*Oleanna*, *Heist*, *Spartan* , *Redbelt*) and follows a therapist who gets into the world of con artists. The movie's digital transfer has been supervised by the film's cinematographer and the release comes with a 2007 commentary with Mamet and co-star Ricky Jay, interviews with actors Lindsay Crouse and Joe Mantegna, a short documentary on the production and storyboard from a scene not used in the film.

And there's more! The Cohen Film Collection is releasing *Buster Keaton Collection Volume 1 - The General* (1926) & *Steamboat Bill Jr.* (1928), a Blu-ray featuring two of the silent film star's greatest comedies. It also comes with a couple of extras in the form of a piece on the legacy of Keaton, reflections on the films, and trailers.

Shout! Factory has plenty of good stuff as well. The first title is the *The Chosen* (1977) aka *Holocaust 2000* starring Kirk Douglas. This UK/Italy co-production was a knock-off of sorts of *The Omen* , and features a dad who finds out that his son is the Antichrist and is going to cause the end of the world. There were actually two versions of the movie released with two different endings (depending on what part of the world you happened to live in), and this Blu-ray has both the US and international cuts. Watch your heads, people!

They also have the Graham Greene novel adaptation, *This Gun for Hire* (1942). It's a classic hard-boiled thriller starring Veronica Lake and Robert Preston. The Blu-ray for this movie comes with a 4K scan from the original film elements, a film historian commentary, and publicity materials.

Kino also has a few titles of note. *The Bedroom Window* (1987) was a thriller inspired by

Hitchcock that starred, oddly enough, Steve Guttenberg (
Police Academy
) as a man whose life becomes complicated after the woman he's having an affair with witnesses a murder from his bedroom window. It also stars Isabelle Huppert and Elizabeth McGovern. The disc includes a film historian commentary and trailer.

Kino also has a Special Edition Blu-ray of the well-regarded social satire, *The Landlord* (1970). This release has new interviews with star Beau Bridges, co-star Lee Grant, and producer Norman Jewison, and includes a trailer as well.

In the thriller/horror vein, Kino is also giving us a Special Edition of the killer ape movie, *Link* (1986). This one involves a grad student (Elisabeth Shue) who ends up on the estate of a zoology professor (Terence Stamp), along with some primates. One of them, an orangutan, begins to terrorize them. The movie arrives on Blu-ray with a new 4K restoration, a film historian commentary, audio interview with director Richard Franklin (
Road Games
,
Psycho II
,
Cloak & Dagger
), deleted workprint scenes in SD, a Jerry Goldsmith demo of the Link theme, and multiple trailers.

Mill Creek is adding to its catalog of budget-friendly Blu-ray releases. This week, it's a re-release of the killer snake flick, *Anaconda* (1997). More interestingly, it's also putting out a Blu-ray of the Faye Dunaway/Tommy Lee Jones thriller,
Eyes of Laura Mars
(1978). The flick was actually written by horror maestro John Carpenter (
Halloween
).

Speaking of which, the distributor also has *Ghosts of Mars* (2001) in high definition, which was directed and co-written by Carpenter. It isn't one of the filmmaker's best, but it does provide some good moments as a Martian police unit battles it out with some enraged and possessed persons at a remote mining post. No word on whether or not the amusing director commentary track from the DVD release is included.

Warner Archive also has a few notable Blu-rays coming your way. They include the Jack Lemmon comedy, *The Prisoner of Second Avenue* (1974). And with the recent hit remake garnering so much attention, the studio has also decided to put out the original
A Star is Born
(1954) along with the Barbra Streisand/Kris Kristofferson redo,
A Star is Born
(1976).

And it's hard to believe, but the feel-good Kevin Costner baseball flick *Field of Dreams* (1989) has hit a milestone. To celebrate, Universal is making a 30th Anniversary Blu-ray available, and also putting out a new, cleaned up 4K version of the film. This classic is sure to make many a guy's eyes water. It comes with all of the previously released features and likely some other extras.

Finally, Scorpion is releasing a Blu-ray of the UK crime flick, *Conduct Unbecoming* (1975) and Mondo Macabro has
The Devil's Nightmare
(1971) in high definition. Both discs likely also come with a few bonuses.

You Know, For Kids!

Here are some titles that may be of interest to children.

Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood: Won't You Be My Neighbor? (PBS Kids)

Mr. Peabody & Sherman: The Complete Collection

On the Tube!

And here are the week's TV-themed releases.

The Adventures of Robin Hood: The Complete Series

Buried Secrets of the Bible with Albert Lin (National Geographic)

Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood: Won't You Be My Neighbor? (PBS Kids)

Darrow & Darrow: Body of Evidence (Hallmark TV-movie)

The Donna Reed Show: Seasons 1 - 5

Finding Your Roots: Season 5 (PBS)

The Found Footage Festival: Volumes 7 & 8

Korea: The Never Ending War (PBS)

The Lone Ranger: Seasons 1 & 2

Mr. Peabody & Sherman: The Complete Collection

NOVA: The Next Pompeii (PBS)

Patrick Melrose: Season 1

Power: Season 4

Power: Season 5

Secrets of the Dead: The Nero Files (PBS)

The Shield: The Complete Series

Wedding March 4: Something Old, Something New (Hallmark TV-movie)

By Glenn Kay
For the Sun