

Welcome back to another look at highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. This edition has fewer Hollywood features, but there is a big film hitting stores, and plenty of smaller choices, too. 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!

Above the Shadows - This unusual drama involves a young woman who was once a tabloid photographer, but who now lives on the fringes and avoids personal contact. She unexpectedly encounters and befriends an ex-MMA fighter and realizes that one of her pictures ruined his career. The lead decides to try to make amends for her past, so that she can move on. Reviewers were split on this independent effort. About half thought the film was uneven, but original and found themselves enjoying the ride. The others complained that despite the likable cast, the movie quickly ran out of steam and become too sentimental and corny for its own good. It stars Megan Fox, Olivia Thirlby and Jim Gaffigan.

Adult Inference - Shot in 2017, this independent comedy played a few festivals under the title *Wild Man* and is now finding distribution on disc. The story involves a football player turned failed actor whose life is on the skids, as he arrives home to attend a high school reunion. It doesn't go well and when he's sentenced to a 90-day house arrest, he encounters an odd youngster living across the street. He decides to help mentor the boy and help him succeed personally and in class, while the child tries to teach the adult how to make a new start. There are no reviews of the film available right now, so interested parties will just have to take a chance. The cast includes Ted Welch, George Baron, Christine Woods and Kate Upton.

The Black Forest - Also known as *A Mata Negra*, this Brazilian supernatural flick involves a young woman who discovers the Lost Book of Cipriano, which is believed to bring its owner either unimaginable wealth and prosperity...or pure evil. Guess it depends on the luck of the draw. One imagines that things start off well, but quickly devolve as sinister forces arrive. This foreign-language film doesn't have too many write-ups, but the ones that have appeared online aren't bad.

In fact, many say that it's an effective low-budget creeper that features a likable heroine, lots of gore and plenty of crazy, unexpected turns. While it's debuting on disc this week, it's also up on Amazon Prime for those who want to preview it first. It features Albert Merlin.

Bodied - An awkward graduate student looking for a thesis finds himself intrigued by the world of battle rap and decides to investigate the phenomenon. The lead meets one of the best players in the game, who takes him under his wing and introduces him to the world of rap competitions. Despite being a fish out of water, he becomes more involved and finds himself onstage dueling against other professionals. Notices were remarkably strong for this indie flick.

One or two didn't think it held together quite as well as it could have. Still, the overwhelming majority said it built momentum as it progressed, dealing with some interesting issues and displaying some great battle rap showdowns. Calum Worthy, Jackie Long, Rory Uphold, Walter Perez, Charlamagne the God, Debra Wilson and Anthony Michael Hall headline the picture.

Candy Corn - Using horror films of the '70s and '80s as inspiration, this Halloween set chiller involves a group of bullies looking to pull a cruel nasty prank on another student. When it results in a death, the gang tries to cover it up. However, the victim soon rises from the grave and takes revenge out on his tormentors. This low-budget effort is debuting online and on disc at the same time.

Right now, only a couple of articles on the picture have appeared, and they've been reasonably positive. They state that the movie works well and expertly recreates the era and should make horror fans feel like they've discovered a lost picture. The cast includes P.J. Soles, Tony Todd, Courtney Gains, Caleb Thomas and Pancho Moler.

Dark Phoenix - The highest profile film of the week is the latest entry in the X-Men franchise. Strangely enough, the plot is a redo of 2006's X-Men: The Last Stand

, which featured the team of heroic mutants being forced to square off against one of their own after she turns into a super-powerful entity who could destroy the world. Critics were not overwhelmed with the first take on this story and were even less enamored with this remake. A small percentage liked the visual effects and grittier tone on display.

However, the consensus was that this was a mess, not just repeating the mistakes of *Last Stand*, but emphasizing action over the characters and underutilizing the impressive cast. They thought it would leave viewers cold and uninvolved in the proceedings. It stars James McAvoy, Michael Fassbender, Jennifer Lawrence, Nicholas Hoult, Sophie Turner, Tye Sheridan, Alexandra Shipp, Evan Peters, Kodi Smit-McPhee and Jessica Chastain.

Dead Water - Speaking of low-budget horror, actor Casper Van Dien has made a career out of appearing in low-budget genre flicks. This time out, he plays an ex-marine enjoying a vacation at sea with his wife and friend. When they're boarded by psychotic pirates, the hero must rise to the occasion, fight his inner demons and save the day. Critics were not swept away by this independent feature and completely panned it.

Every one of them suggested that except for the main antagonist (who at least appeared to be having fun), the other characters weren't well written, the filmmakers lacked the ability to develop or maintain suspense. It also features Judd Nelson, Brianne Davis and Griff Furst.

Find Me - This small drama has an intriguing premise. It involves a reserved, recently divorced accountant who decides to track down a close female friend who mysteriously vanished. The lead receives clues to her whereabouts and decides to traverse through a series of National Parks to locate her. The press didn't mind the long trek.

While a few didn't think that the big emotional climax hit the mark, almost everyone called it a sweet and engaging film that inspires one to take risks in life. They also commented that the beautiful photography of the many public parks was a big plus. Curious parties should note that this title is also available for free on Amazon Prime for anyone with the service. It stars Tom Hung and Sara Amini.

Kings of Beer - Fans of the alcoholic beverage will no doubt be thrilled to see a documentary devoted to the subject. Well, this isn't exactly that movie. The film specifically deals with Budweiser, showing the vigorous standards that go into producing their drink, as well as personal stories and competitions between the company's master brewers to improve the product. There aren't many reviews of the titles yet.

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A few random comments have popped up online, with some calling it nothing more than a feature-length commercial for Budweiser. Yet some notices suggest it does provide some background into the process and suggest that if you like the drink, then you may find it of interest. Aisha Tyler and Jay Chandrasekhar make appearances in the doc.

Kung Fu League - A comic book artist falls for a woman at his place of work who seems to share his feelings. Unfortunately, they're both thwarted by a bullying boss who wants to tear them apart. The lead decides to use his skills to summon the four greatest martial arts legends through time in order to help him fight back. This foreign-language comedy/action picture from Hong Kong hasn't been seen on this side of the world yet and the reviews that have appeared for it seem to be all over the map. Some have found it amusing and the team-ups entertaining, while others have complained that the slapstick jokes become tiring instead of funny. The cast includes Ashin Shu, Danny Chan Kwok-kwan, Jay Chou, Andy On and Vincent Zhao.

Blasts from the Past!

There are plenty of interesting new arrivals involving older titles as well. Arrow Video has a Special Edition Blu-ray of *The Hills Have Eyes Part 2* (1985). This is a sequel to the 1977 horror classic about a family of cannibals terrorizing vacationers in the desert. For some reason, the survivors from the first film decide to return to the same area with some dirt-bikers and find themselves under assault once again.

As follow-ups go, it's ridiculous and few can claim that it is a good sequel. However, it does have a couple of amusingly crazy scenes that may appeal to genre fans and collection completists. Many characters experience flashbacks to the original movie and the highlight of hilarity occurs when the camera closes in on the family's German shepherd who also has a flashback of his experiences in the previous flick...No joke...this really happens.

The release includes a 2K restoration of the film from its original film elements, an audio commentary with *The Hysteria Continues*, a new documentary on the making-of the movie and the troubles behind the scenes, along with a gallery of stills, a 40-page booklet and other bonuses.

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They've also got a Blu-ray of *Who Saw Her Die?* (1972), an Italian giallo film about a Venice artist (played by George Lazenby) who sets out to catch a killer who targets children... and adults who get in the way. The release includes a 2K restoration of the full-length version taken from the original camera negative, a film critic commentary, interviews with the director, screenwriter, a cast member, as well as a talk with an author and critic of Italian horror flicks. Of course, you'll also get the movie's U.S. and Italian trailers. This is an interesting little thriller that takes a few chances with its themes and subtext.

MVD Visual is delivering two Blu-rays featuring titles released the very same year. *Find Me Guilty* (2006) is a comedy with Vin Diesel as a mobster who is forced to defend himself in a criminal trial. Extras include a conversation with the film's director, Sidney Lumet (*12 Angry Men* , *Network* , *Serpico* , *Dog Day Afternoon* and many others). It also includes trailers and TV spots.

They also have a Blu-ray of the well-regarded thriller, *The Illusionist* (2006). This Vienna-set effort stars Edward Norton and Paul Giamatti and is said to be an engaging tale of magic and murder that fell a little under the radar when it was originally released. Seems like a title worth catching up with. The disc includes a director commentary and numerous featurettes.

The fine people at AGFA are putting out *The Films of Sarah Jacobson*. This Blu-ray release includes the feature-length *Mary Jane's Not a Virgin Anymore* (1993) and the 30-minute film *I Was a Teenage Serial Killer* (1996). Considered a Queen of Underground Cinema, these independent efforts focus on presenting a depiction of teen life as truthfully as possible, warts and all. The Blu-ray presents her films with new 2K restorations from the only 16mm prints in existence, along with some rare shorts and videos from the filmmaker.

Shout! Factory has some fun Blu-rays as well. Based on Neil Simon's *Biloxi Blues* (1988), this Blu-ray is a coming-of-age tale with Matthew Broderick as a young man who heads to boot

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camp during WWII and must contend with an unforgiving sergeant played by Christopher Walken. The disc includes a new interview with co-star Corey Parker, as well as a trailer and some TV spots.

They also have the Hammer horror flick *Straight on Till Morning* (1972). This one tells the tale of an innocent young woman who moves to London and falls for a charmer. Unfortunately, he may also be a serial killer. It comes with an audio commentary featuring star Rita Tushingham and a film historian. You can also watch the film in two different aspect ratios, see an interview with a movie critic, and witness a short making-of doc and trailer.

Kino has plenty of Blu-rays to promote as well. The first is the Australian crime drama *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* (1978) which includes two versions of the feature, interviews with the director, cinematographer and the star. The longer cut includes an intro from director Fred Schepisi (Plenty, A Cry in the Dark, Fierce Creatures) and a filmmaker commentary.

Kino is releasing the British drama *Homecoming* (1973) in high definition. They are also putting out a Blu-ray of the Sharon Stone prison drama *Last Dance* (1996). Additionally, you can now pick up the drama *Philadelphia, Here I Come* (1975).

They also have Blu-rays of the James Garner comedy/western *Support Your Local Sheriff!* (1969) and its follow-up, *Support Your Local Gunfighter* (1971). Both pictures have been given new transfers and come with film historian audio commentaries and trailers. The second picture also includes deleted scenes as an extra.

Criterion has two very different features debuting on Blu-ray. The first is the British comedy of manners *Cluny Brown* (1945) which is about a quirky parlor maid who enjoys plumbing, all set

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against the backdrop of WWII. The movie has been given a 4K restoration and comes with a film scholar video essay, an interview with another movie expert, and a 1950 radio adaption of the feature.

Fans of filmmaker John Waters (Pink Flamingos, Hairspray, Cry-Baby) will be pleased to see his comedic take on melodrama,

Polyester

(1981), receive the Criterion Blu-ray treatment. It follows a put-upon housewife (played by frequent Waters collaborator Divine), whose life begins to spiral downward only to find herself forging a new start with a new heartthrob. The feature has been given a 4K restoration, features a commentary with Waters that was recorded in 1993, a new conversation with the director, archival interviews with cast and crew and later discussions with them recorded in 1993, twenty minutes of deleted scenes and alternates takes, and perhaps most importantly, a scratch and sniff odorama card to be used while watching the movie.

Mill Creek Entertainment has some curious budget-priced Blu-rays hitting store shelves as well.

They include another couple of low-budget action pictures from Andy Sidaris (*Hard Ticket to Hawaii* (1989) and *Hard Ticket to Hong Kong* (1991)). The first film is *Hard Ticket to Hong Kong* (1991).

(1990), which is about a team of female government agents in Hawaii who set out to stop a South American drug cartel. Erik Estrada co-stars.

The follow-up, *Do or Die* (1991), involves two of the same agents taking on another evil criminal mastermind. Pat Morita takes on the part of villain, with Erik Estrada returning in a supporting role. Both films have been given 4K transfers and are appearing in widescreen for the first time ever. Bonuses also include introductions to the movies, director commentary tracks, featurettes and trailers.

They are also putting out the underrated Julia Roberts/Clive Owen comedy *Duplicity* (2009), about two corporate spies trying to outdo one another.

Warner Archive is making an excellent title available as a made-to-order Blu-ray. Set in the '50s, *My Favorite Year* (1982) is a hilarious flick about a comedy writer starting work on a TV show. When he is asked to keep an aging, mischievous film star with a drinking problem from ruining the live broadcast, chaos ensues. Peter O'Toole plays the difficult, consistently inebriated, but

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sweet-natured actor.

Warner Bros. has decided to rerelease the original Michael Keaton Batman films. The Batman 4K Film Collection (1989 -1997) includes the first four films in ultra-high definition.

And finally, Kit Parker Films has a Blu-ray box set of classics called the Noir Archive Volume 3: 1956 - 1960: 9-Film Collection

. The titles featured include

The Crimson Kimono

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The Lineup

,

The Shadow in the Window

,

The Long Haul

,

Pickup Alley

,

The Tijuana Story

,

She Played with Fire

,

The Case Against Brooklyn

and

Man on a String

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You Know, For Kids!

The main releases this week are some old Max Fleisher cartoons involving Popeye that are likely more for adults than children.

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for September 20, 2019

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Popeye the Sailor: The 1940s, Volume 3 (Warner Archive)

On the Tube!

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

Country Music (PBS Ken Burns Mini-series)

Doctor Who: The Complete David Tennant Collection (BBC)

Lethal Weapon: Season 3

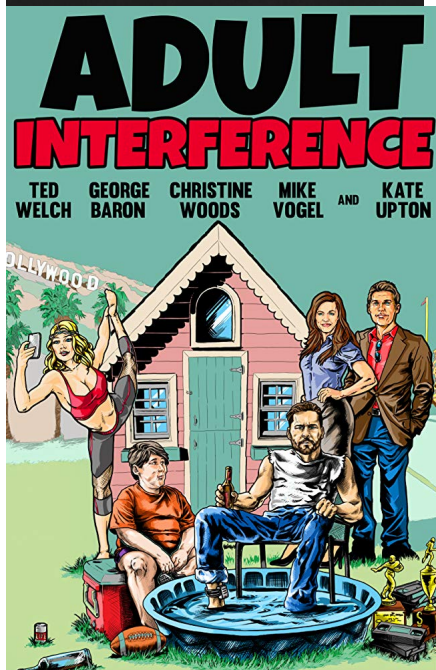
South Park: Seasons 11 - 15

Supergirl: Season 4



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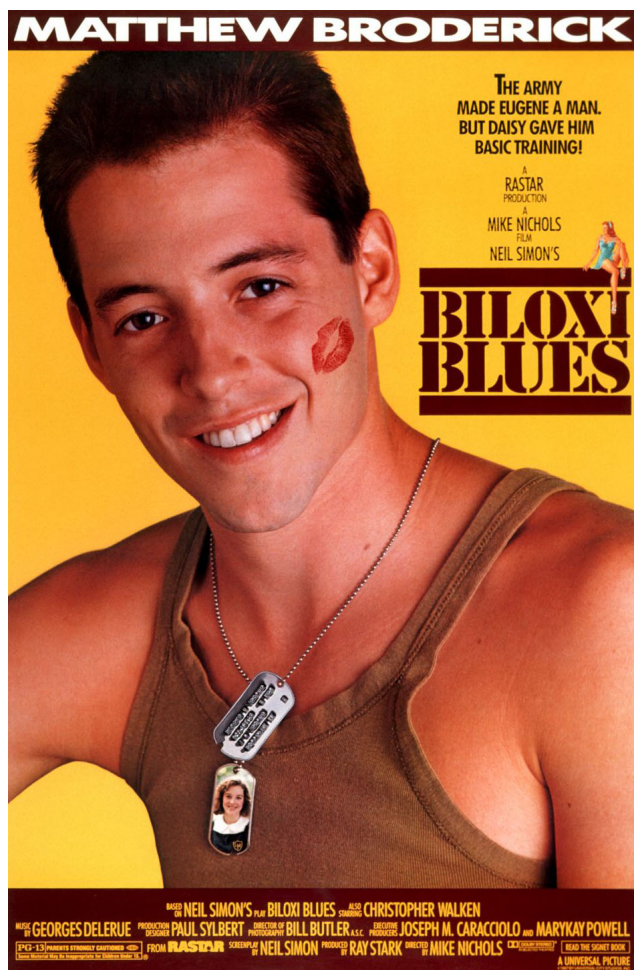
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