

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup For July 3, 2015

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Welcome once again to another article detailing the week's highlights on Blu-ray and DVD. As always, there's plenty to choose from. So if you can't make it out to the movies this week, be sure and give one of these titles a try!

Big New Releases!

Danny Collins - An aging, self-deprecating rocker decides to make amends and change his ways after discovering a letter written to him by the late John Lennon. Believe it or not, this independent comedy/drama is loosely based on a true story. The movie received decent reviews from the press, stating that the strong work of the cast helped buoy the otherwise predictable story. Its impressive cast includes Al Pacino, Jennifer Garner, Annette Bening, Christopher Plummer and Nick Offerman.

Get Hard - Will Ferrell and Kevin Hart headline this comedy hit about an obscenely wealthy white collar criminal who commits fraud and is sentenced to San Quentin. A family man pretends to be a thug and is hired to teach the businessman the ropes before he goes to prison. While the flick may have made a lot of money earlier in the year, most critics weren't as taken with it as the public. Some thought it was in poor taste and many felt the performers were wasted in a script that included too many repetitive gags. However, there were a few differing opinions. The movie also stars Tip 'T.I.' Harris, Alison Brie and Craig T. Nelson.

The Gunman - An assassin attempting to lay low after a hit has his cover blown and must run from those out to kill him in this action/thriller. He reunites with his girlfriend and ends up investigating members of his own team as events progress. Sean Penn takes the lead role with supporting turns from Jasmine Trinca, Javier Bardem, Idris Elba and Ray Winstone. The press disliked the film, calling it a gloomy, ponderous and at times unbelievable attempt at branding its star as the latest Liam Neeson-style tough guy.

I Am Evel Knievel - This documentary charts the career of one of the most famous daredevils in modern history. Using interviews with family members and celebrity fans (as well as archival footage), the picture follows the man from his early days, to his daring motorcycle and stunt jumps like his well publicized escapades at Caesar's Palace and Snake River Canyon. There aren't any advance reviews as of yet, so interested parties will have to take their own leap of faith if they decide to check it out.

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While We're Young - A husband and wife in their 40s befriend a young couple and try to keep up in this comedy from Noah Baumbach (*The Squid and the Whale*, *Frances Ha*).

While they find all of the new experiences liberating, certain issues begin to cause friction within the group. While a few found the film uneven, overall it received very strong notices. The majority wrote that it was a humorous and insightful look at the problems facing middle-aged couples that would appeal to fans of Woody Allen comedies. It stars Ben Stiller, Naomi Watts, Adam Brody, Amanda Seyfried and Charles Grodin.

Blasts From the Past!

There's some really quirky cult stuff arriving courtesy of Shout! Factory. First up is *The Decline of Western Civilization Collection*

. It's a very well-regarded documentary series that is focused on young people and their musical tastes. The set include the 1981 original (which follows the LA punk scene), it's 1988 follow up (about fans of heavy metal bands) and the 1998-shot third chapter (which focuses more on homeless kids). The Blu-ray and DVD set contain all three titles restored with a high definition transfer supervised by director Penelope Spheeris (

Wayne's World

). She's interviewed on the release as well and there's a very intriguing running audio commentary from series fan and Foo Fighters lead singer Dave Grohl.

Also from Shout! is a Double Feature disc that contains two "not-so-great" Italian horror efforts. In their homeland, the two films were advertised as sequels in the *Evil Dead* series, even though they share absolutely no relation those Sam Raimi classics.

Ghosthouse

(1988) features a haunted house with a creepy clown doll and

Witchery

(1988) pairs David Hasselhoff with Linda Blair (and yes, she becomes possessed as the film progresses). If you like your horror filled with schlock and unintentional chuckles, you probably can't lose with this bill.

Criterion also have an unusual new release on Blu-ray. *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* (1970) is a remarkably trippy Czech fantasy film that incorporates famous fairy tales into an incredibly surreal narrative. This very, very odd art film has its share of fans who will be pleased with the presentation. Among the many extras, the Blu-ray includes a new restoration of the film, interviews with cast members and a film scholar on the movie's cultural importance, as well as three short films made by the same director.

Veering back into campy territory, the early 80s saw plenty of *Mad Max* and *The Road Warrior* knock-offs. Blue Underground have given three Italian post-apocalyptic action flicks the Blu-ray treatment. The titles are

1990: The Bronx Warriors

(1982),

Escape From the Bronx

(1983) and

The New Barbarians

aka

Warriors of the Wasteland

(1983). American cast members who pop up periodically in these movies include Fred Williamson and Henry Silva. They're all pretty terrible, but will definitely rustle up some B-movie night laughs with friends.

Warner Archives have some new made-to-order DVDs now available on their site. *Come Fly With Me*

(1963) is a fluffy comedy about air hostesses looking for a rich man to marry.

A Global Affair

(1964) stars Bob Hope as a diplomat. A word of warning, this effort was not as well liked by critics or the public as the first title mentioned.

Finally, MGM is offering made-to-order DVD-Rs of their horror/comedy *Mom* (1991). It's the tale of an elderly woman who rampages through the streets of LA as a werewolf during full moons. The movie also features Claudia Christian and the late, great Brion James in a supporting role. Genre fans may want to check it out.

You Know, For Kids!

It's a quiet week for kid's releases, but here's what is being made available.

My Little Pony - Friendship is Magic: Cutie Mark Quests

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Reading Rainbow: Animal Cafe (PBS Kids)