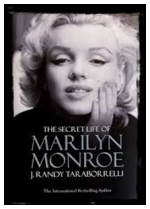
DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for August 21, 2015

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It’s time once again to look at new rele1ase highlights on Blu-ray and DVD. Unfortunately, it’s a relatively quiet week, but there are plenty of fascinating older features being issued in high definition for your viewing pleasure. 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!

Cub - A tormented young boy scout on a weekend outing with his troop discovers that a mythic monster of legend in the woods may actually be real. Unfortunately, no one believes him, leaving the protagonist with some difficult decisions as to how to handle the matter. This foreign-language fright flick from Belgium garnered reasonable notices at genre film festivals last year. While many English-language audiences found some aspects of the story difficult to follow and called it uneven overall, others appreciated the film’s attempt to tackle the subject of bullying in a genre film.

Lambert and Stamp – Music enthusiasts may be interested in this documentary about a pair of aspiring filmmakers in the 60s who discovered and managed famed rock band *The Who*. The film captures their early years working together and includes interviews with band members Roger Daltrey and Pete Townsend. It garnered positive notices earlier in the year. While a few felt it went on some unnecessary tangents, most found it to be an interesting tale chronicling the unexpected rise of a legendary group.

The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe - The life of the famous actress is depicted in this Lifetime miniseries that aired earlier in the year. It follows Monroe’s relationship with her mother (and second husband, Joe DiMaggio) and tells how they managed to hide some of their private details to the press. The press were split on the biopic - they all appreciated the performers and found the lead actress’s take on the screen idol impressive, but found the storytelling a bit slow, and felt that it offered little depth or insight into its subject. The cast includes Kelli Garner, Susan Sarandon, Emily Watson, Jack Noseworthy and Jeffrey Dean Morgan.

Strangerland - An Australian family living in the outback go through a crisis when their two teenage kids disappear hours before a massive and devastating sandstorm is set to hit. They team with a local cop in a desperate search to find them before the desert heat and storm finish the kids off. It’s a concept ripe for drama, but notices for this independent drama were generally poor. The consensus seemed to be that while the actors were strong, the approach taken to the

material was too slow and ponderous to build any tension or momentum. Now viewers can make up their own minds. The movie stars Nicole Kidman, Joseph Fiennes and Hugo Weaving.

Vendetta - Here's a weird one. Talented horror directors Jen and Sylvia Soska (*American Mary*) take on this low-budget action project from WWE. It's about a detective out for vengeance after his wife is murdered. To do so, he gets himself thrown into prison with the convict, but uncovers a bigger criminal conspiracy in the process. There aren't a lot of reviews for this title, but those that have appeared online suggest that a couple of good fight scenes help to cover somewhat for the routine and predictable plot. Dean Cain and Paul "Big Show" Wight headline the cast.

Z Storm - This action/drama from Hong Kong details an elaborate plot by an international consortium of crooks to steal hundreds of millions from China's government and its citizens. Of course, it's up to a simple cop to uncover all of the corruption and various guilty parties in order to save the day. No one in this part of the world has seen it yet, so interested parties will have to take a chance on this effort. A word of warning, though, online reaction from those who have seen it hasn't been stellar, describing it as a choppily put together disappointment. It stars Louis Koo and Michael Wong.

Blasts From the Past!

Shout! Factory have two big releases this week, including the 20th Anniversary edition of *Hackers*
(1995), the Angelina Jolie, Jonny Lee Miller cyber-thriller that was one of the first internet-savvy efforts to hit cinemas. The two leads play teens who discover a plot to infect the world's computers with a nasty virus. Can't say I was a big fan of this flick during its original release, but its datedness may make it a fun title to revisit. Extras include new interviews with director Iain Softly, as well as various cast and crew members.

Nomads (1986) is an early suspense picture from director John McTiernan (*Die Hard*, *Predator*) . It follows a doctor who is bitten by a fatally wounded patient and begins to have visions of the last few weeks of his life - which include run ins with a malevolent supernatural force. It stars Lesley-Ann Down and Pierce Brosnan. The Shout! Blu-ray includes new interviews with Down and composer Bill Conti as well as a few advertising materials.

As if that isn't enough, Kino are putting out some really interesting Blu-rays as well. *Burn, Witch, Burn* (1962) is a stately British horror movie about a college professor who doesn't believe in the supernatural, but begins to change his mind after he discovers that his wife is a witch attempting to protect him from sinister forces at his school. I haven't seen it since I was a kid, but *The Couch Trip* (1988) was a guilty pleasure of mine back in the 80s. It's about a psychiatric patient who escapes from an institute and impersonates a psychiatrist on a radio show, becoming a star on the airwaves. It probably doesn't hold up well, but I'm curious to see it again, and if nothing else it'll be fun to see stars Dan Aykroyd, Walter Matthau and Charles Grodin mug for the cameras.

My personal pick of the week is the con-man comedy, *Diggstown* (1992). It's a really entertaining flick with James Woods, Louis Gossett Jr., and Bruce Dern. Woods plays an ex-con who sets up an elaborate bet with a wealthy businessman who owns the majority of a small town full of boxing enthusiasts. In order to win the wager (and much of the city) he must find a fighter who can enter the ring and beat 10 of the antagonist's pugilists in under 24 hours. Naturally, both men try all sorts of devious tricks to get the best of one another and the result is a genuinely enjoyable little comedy.

Kino have also got Blu-rays of some Westerns coming your way. They include the Burt Reynolds flick *Navajo Joe* (1966), and *A Reason to Live, A Reason to Die* (1972), in which James Coburn and Telly Savalas lead a group of criminals attempting to redeem themselves by taking on a suicide mission.

Criterion have a foreign language classic arriving on Blu-ray. *Day for Night* (1973) from Francois Truffaut tells the tale of a director (played by Truffaut himself) dealing with a myriad of personal and professional trouble during a film production. The disc has a new, restored transfer, archival and brand new interviews with cast and crew (as well as film scholars) as well as a detailed documentary of the making-of the movie. It looks like a great package for this Best Foreign Language Film Academy Award winner.

Mill Creek have two impressive, budget friendly collections on DVD. The first is the *Hammer Films Collection Vol. 1*
(
The Curse of the Mummy's Tomb
,
The Gorgon, Scream of Fear
,

Stop Me Before I Kill
,
The Two Faces of Dr. Jekyll
). These may not be the greatest titles in the studio catalog, but there are some fun and rare 60s movies in the set. The second is the
William Castle Horror Collection
(
13 Frightened Girls
,
13 Ghosts
,
Homicidal
,
Mr. Sardonicus
,
The Old Dark House
). Again, for the price you can't go wrong. I've always had a bit of a soft spot for the
Homicidal
(it's a lot of whacked-out fun despite the fact that it's an obvious rip-off of
Psycho
) and now anyone interested in this famous genre producer's work can get several of his drive-in classics for one low price.

Finally, horror fans with a very strong stomach can pick up the Cult Epics Blu-ray of *Angst* (1983). It's an Austrian film about a serial killer that targets a family. It remains very graphic and disturbing. If memory serves, it was also one of the earliest flicks to attach a camera directly on the lead actor soon viewers could see him as he walked around town searching for victims.

You Know, For Kids!

Here's what the kids can look forward to. Of particular note is the *Walt Disney Animation Studios Short Films Collection*
, which contains 12 shorts that include the popular
Frozen Fever
as well as several other recent Oscar winners (
Paperman
and
Feast
) all in one package.

Batman Unlimited: Monster Mayhem - Original Movie

Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood: Daniel Goes to School

Nickelodeon Favorites: Celebrate Fall

Teen Titans Go: Season 2, Part 2

Walt Disney Animation Studios Short Films Collection

On the Tube!

There's a great mix of old and new on the TV front.

Atlantis: Season 2, Part 2 (BBC)

Blacklist: Season 2

The Jeff Foxworthy Show: The Complete Series

Frontline: Obama at War (PBS)

Grey's Anatomy: Season 11

Mike and Molly: Season 5

NCIS: Season 12

NCIS: Los Angeles: Season 6

NCIS: New Orleans: Season 1

Once Upon a Time: Season 4

The Rebel: The Complete Series

The Royals: Season 1

The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe (Lifetime miniseries)

Teen Titans Go: Season 2, Part 2

TV Guide Spotlight: TV's Greatest Animal Stars

TV Guide Spotlight: TV's Greatest Crime Stoppers

TV Guide Spotlight: TV's Greatest Game Shows

TV Guide Spotlight: TV's Greatest Westerns

Welcome Back, Kotter: The Final Season