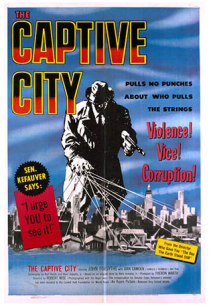
DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for Jan. 8, 2016

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Hope every had a good holiday. Unlike the past couple of editions, this one is absolutely loaded with releases. Here are the highlights. 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!

Close Range - An ex-soldier takes on a drug cartel who is threatening his sister and niece in this low-budget action picture. Those who saw it warned that the script and acting was downright wooden and silly. However, they also stated that the fight choreography was impressive and that the action sequences in general were well-handled. As direct-to-DVD B-movie schlock-fests go, they felt that the fisticuff scenes make it slightly above average. It features Chad Adkins, Nick Chinlund and Caitlin Keats.

Condemned - A privileged young woman rebels and squats with her boyfriend in a seedy apartment building. When drugs and noxious chemicals combine into a virus and turn the residents into bloodthirsty maniacs, she struggles to get out alive. This low-budget horror effort got toxic reviews, with many stating that the characters weren't engaging and that the gross-outs eventually lost their impact. The movie stars Ronen Rubenstein, Lydia Hearst and Michel Gill.

Deathgasm - This horror/comedy festival favorite from New Zealand follows a couple of teenage head-bangers in a heavy metal band. Trouble arises when their music accidentally raises a nasty demon. Critics were mostly positive about the attempt, writing that while the movie was derivative of genre classics like *Shaun of the Dead* and *Dead/Alive*, it was elevated by its likable kids, high-energy approach and several funny gags. Milo Cawthorne, James Blake and Kimberly Crossman take on the lead roles.

Experimenter - Based upon the work of Stanley Milgram, this biopic tells the story of how the professor created and employed a series of unique obedience experiments back in 1961, and follows them through to their shocking and controversial results. A few members of the press didn't think the material warranted a feature, but in general almost all enjoyed the film and the work of its stars. Personally, I found it quite interesting and felt it only falters by not knowing exactly how to wrap the story up. It's got a great cast that includes Peter Sarsgaard, Winona Ryder, Taryn Manning, Anton Yelchin, John Leguizamo, Anthony Edwards, Dennis Haysbert,

Lori Singer and Jim Gaffigan.

The Games Maker - A young boy with an interest in board games enters a fantastical landscape and must use his wits to defeat a sinister game inventor. This Argentina/Canada/Italy co-production split reviewers. All admired the attempt to tell an epic story with limited means and appreciated the art design, but about half found the story too convoluted to really recommend. Now viewers can roll the dice and decide for themselves. It features Joseph Fiennes, Tom Cavanagh, Megan Carpenter, Valentina Lodovini, Edward Asner and David Mazouz.

The Green Inferno - Director Eli Roth's cannibal terror flick had quite a difficult time reaching the big screen (not because of the content, but rather a legal tussle among producers and distributor). It follows a college student who joins an activist movement in the Amazonian rainforest. After a plane crash, the kids find themselves captured by hungry natives. Naturally, it received a wide variety of extreme reactions, although most found its attempts to shock unappealing. Personally, the weak and unconvincing performances of its young cast is its biggest issue. Curious horror fans will likely want to give it a try regardless. Lorenza Izzo, Ariel Levy, Aaron Burns and Sky Ferreira are on the menu.

Infinitely Polar Bear - A man suffering from bi-polar disorder attempts to win back the affections of his wife and children after a stay at a hospital. He decides to help care for the kids while mom attends business school, leading to varied stresses and comic episodes. Critics generally liked the film, calling it sweet overall. They praised the performances as well, although a few felt that the movie dealt too lightly with the lead's mental state. The movie features Mark Ruffalo, Zoe Saldana, Kier Dullea and Imogene Wolodarsky.

Joe Dirt 2: Beautiful Loser - Some 14 years after the original, comic David Spade returns for this sequel about a white-trash-hero. This time out the character finds himself caught in a tornado and transported to the past, where he attempts to correct some of his worst decisions. As expected, the press weren't fond of the follow-up calling it an unnecessary flick full of repetitive scatological gags. Brittany Daniel, Patrick Warburton, Mark McGrath, Dennis Miller and Christopher Walken also make appearances.

Memories of the Sword - Three warriors get involved in a failed revolt against a corrupt King in South Korea. Many years later, a survivor raises one of his friend's daughters to take revenge on her father's killer. Notices were decent for this foreign effort. It has been described as a bit

bloated and slow, but write-ups also liked the cast and found the visuals to be absolutely gorgeous. The cast includes Byung-hun Lee, Do-yeon Jeon and Go-eun Kim.

Scouts Guide to the Zombie Apocalypse - Wow, it really is a big week for horror releases. This gory, R-rated comedy deals with a Boy Scout troop who end up in the middle of a zombie rampage. Critics were really split on the movie when it came out at theaters a couple of months back. About half called it uneven but felt that it offered a few interesting new gags on the undead flick formula, while others called it crude and tasteless. Guess it'll all depend on your sense of humor. It stars Tye Sheridan, Logan Miller, Joey Morgan, David Koechner and Cloris Leachman.

Sleeping With Other People - A womanizer and a serial cheater befriend one another and slowly form a friendship that eventually turns romantic in this indie comedy starring Jason Sudeikis and Alison Brie. It received a few more positive writ-ups than negative. While several found it to be a fresh and amusing comedy, others didn't find it quite funny enough to recommend. Adam Scott, Billy Eichner, Jason Mantzoukas, Amanda Peet and Natasha Lyonne also make appearances.

The Visit - The latest from M. Night Shyamalan (*The Sixth Sense*, *Unbreakable*, *The Last Airbender*) marked something of a turnaround for the director, receiving better than average notices and grossing large sums at the box office. It's a found-footage effort about two kids who are sent to meet their estranged grandparents and stay with them. Unfortunately, the odd behavior displayed by the hosts soon becomes downright creepy. While some critics wished that it had been more original, the majority found it to be both scary and amusing in turns. The cast features Olivia De Jonge, Ed Oxenbould and Kathryn Hahn.

The Walk - Philippe Petit's harrowing 1974 tightrope walk between the Twin Towers in Manhattan is fictionalized in this drama from director Robert Zemeckis (*The Polar Express*, *Back to the Future*). Perhaps most interesting is that much of it was shot in front of a green-screen. Reviews were decent overall. Although many found the approach to the humans a bit broad and lacking in subtlety, all were impressed by the gorgeous cinematography and finale (although the sequence might work better in IMAX 3D than on the small screen). It stars Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Charlotte Le Bon and Ben Kingsley.

Blasts From the Past!

Shout! Factory was another double feature Blu-ray containing a couple of cheeseball titles, *The House Where Evil Dwells*
(1982) and
Ghost Warrior
(1984). In the first, a samurai murders his family. When an American clan moves in, he thinks he's found a great deal. However, the ghosts start to manipulate them in the hopes of repeating the events of 100 years ago. The second feature is an action flick about a samurai who is unfrozen and attempts to attempt to life in the modern world.

Criterion have an impressive Blu-ray set called *The Complete Lady Snowblood*. It features *Lady Snowblood*
(1973) and
Lady Snowblood: Love Song of Vengeance
(1974), two Japanese cult flicks about a female assassin out to kill the men who murdered her family when she was a child. Extras include a 2K digital image restoration, new English subtitles, interviews with the artist of the manga that inspired the movie and the screenwriter as well as an essay on the film's importance in cinema.

Kino have a bunch of great flicks arriving on Blu-ray. *The Captive City* (1952) from director Robert Wise (West Side Story) features John Forsythe in a thriller about organized crime.
Fantomas
(1913) is a silent film from France famous for its visuals - the story follows a criminal mastermind.

The Hotel New Hampshire (1984) tells the tale of an oddball family vacation and includes early performances from Rob Lowe and Jodie Foster. They've also got *Th e Phantom From 10,000 Leagues*
(1955) a sci-fi monster flick about a creature that rises from the depth.
Spellbinder
(1988), starring Tim Daily and Kelly Preston, sounds like an enjoyably goofy thriller. It's about a lawyer who falls for a woman escaping a witch's coven.

Two for the Seesaw (1962) is another flick from Robert Wise. It's a romance title starring Robert Mitchum and Shirley MacLaine. They've also got *Valentino* (1977),

filmmaker Ken Russell adaptation of the famous ladies' man. Finally, you can pick up a Blu-ray of the South Korea/Japan giant creature feature,
Yongary, Monster From the Deep
(1967) in which the title reptile attacks the city of Seoul.

You Know, For Kids!

Here are some new releases the kids might enjoy.

Elmo's World: Elmo's Wonders

The Games Maker

Grimm's Fairy Tales - 6 Classic Stories

Wild Kratt's Australian Adventures

By Glenn Kay

For the Sun