

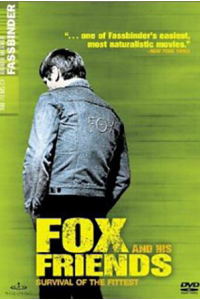
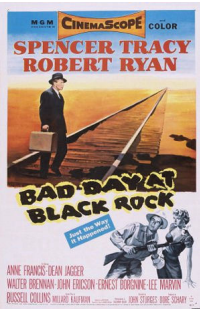
DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for Jan. 20, 2017

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 20 January 2017 07:03



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Welcome back to a new edition of highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. It's a busy report, with plenty of releases both big and small, critically praised and reviled. 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!

Come and Find Me - In this independent thriller, a man's girlfriend mysteriously disappears. He goes on the hunt for her, but finds himself in danger after discovering that she has been living a double life. Reviews were good for this feature. A few complained that the plotting was slow and events weren't clarified enough by the close. However, more felt the performances were strong and mentioned that once it got going, the movie delivered enough intrigue to recommend. It stars Aaron Paul, Annabelle Wallis, Garret Dillahunt and Zachary Knighton.

Death Race 2050 - If you enjoy pulp cinema, then you're no doubt familiar with the 1975 Roger Corman cult classic, *Death Race*. Unlike the big-budget Jason Statham remake of a few years back, this indie effort comes from Corman himself (he produced this title). Once again, the story follows a group of strange characters on a cross-country race in which they rack up bonus points along the way by running down pedestrians. This is a direct-to-DVD title, so as of right now there are no reviews available. The cast includes Manu Bennett, Malcolm McDowell, Marci Miller and Yancy Butler.

The Girl on the Train - A commuter riding a train to the city thinks she witnesses a murder in this

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studio thriller. However, no one believes her and as the protagonist investigates, she begins to become a suspect herself. Based on a bestselling novel, reviews were decidedly mixed. The majority felt that the movie was serviceable and benefited from its strong cast, but didn't offer anything new. A few also complained that it didn't appear to translate the tension present in the book. It features Emily Blunt, Rebecca Ferguson, Haley Bennett, Justin Theroux, Allison Janney and Lisa Kudrow.

The Hollow Point - This independent drama with western overtones is a modern day crime saga. When a drug deal goes horribly wrong, several people and a large pile of money go missing. On the case is a retiring sheriff and his replacement-in-training, who attempt to solve the elaborate crime. The press didn't think too much of this one, commenting that while the movie did possess a certain degree of style, the entire exercise came across as a poor man's take on *No Country for Old Men*. Patrick Wilson, Ian McShane, John Leguizamo, Jim Belushi and Lynn Collins headline the feature.

Keeping Up With the Joneses - A suburban couple are smitten with their worldly and charming new neighbors in this comedy. But after befriending them, the leads begin to wonder if the new arrivals might be secret agents in hiding. Notices were generally disastrous for this effort. The main critique seemed to be that despite the funny and talented cast, the story and joke-writing was extremely dull and bland, resulting in a completely forgettable film. The movie stars Zach Galifianakis, John Hamm, Isla Fisher, Gal Gadot and Matt Walsh.

Long Way North - This excellent French/Danish animated film involves the exploits of a young Russian aristocratic girl in 19th century St. Petersburg who follows her dreams of being an explorer. When the youngster's grandfather disappears while on an excursion to find a new route to the North Pole, the determined girl sets out to find him. Notices were exceptional, praising the art and the compelling storyline as well as the likable and realistic characters. While it's unlikely they'll get mentioned at the Oscars, *April and the Extraordinary World* and this film were two of the strongest animated features of the year.

Ouija: Origin of Evil - Coming just years after the financially successful but critically panned *Ouija*, this horror follow-up involves more characters who dare to play the scary, spirit-raising board game. This time out, it's a family of hustlers with a phony séance business who end up summoning a real and malevolent supernatural force. Surprisingly, critics were very upbeat on this sequel, calling it a vast improvement on its predecessor. They admired the zippy pace, charismatic performances and sharp, well-timed shocks that effectively built tension. It features

Annalise Basso, Elizabeth Reaser, Lulu Wilson and Henry Thomas.

The Whole Truth - A lawyer vows to help defend the teenage son of a close friend in this courtroom suspense/thriller. While the boy has admitted to committing a murder, as more evidence is revealed, a conspiracy is unraveled that points to another party. Unfortunately, members of the press couldn't quite recommend the feature. They believed that due to the generic script and TV-movie, monochromatic photography, the movie never truly managed to build up a great deal in the way of excitement or drama. The cast includes Keanu Reeves, Renee Zellweger, Gugu Mbatha-Raw and Jim Belushi.

Zero Days - Those with an interest in documentaries will likely be enticed by this effort that deals with cyber-warfare. It details the creation of the most powerful computer virus ever envisioned and reveals its secret history and development, as well as the unintended consequences after the powerful malware was released. The movie earned almost uniform raves from reviewers. There were minor qualms about the fact that many interviewees couldn't comment on specific details, but they all referred to the feature as a shocking, troubling, compelling and important effort that will leave you with plenty to ponder.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST!

There's definitely some interesting older titles arriving on Blu-ray in high definition. Arrow Video have *Takashi Miike's Black Society Trilogy*. For those who don't know, Miike is a Japanese filmmaker who has made some incredibly disturbing but effective material, most notably

Audition

(1999) and

13 Assassins

(2010). This box set contains three of his earliest efforts -

Shinjuku Triad Society

(1995),

Rainy Dog

(1997) and

Ley Lines

(1999). They arrive with new transfers, a recent interview with Miike and actor Show Aikawa (who appears in

Rainy Dog

and

Ley Lines

), in addition to audio commentaries for all three films by Miike biographer Tom Mes, original

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theatrical trailers for the titles and a collector's booklet. If you're a fan, this looks like a great set.

Warner Archive have some great made-to-order titles being made available. This includes a Blu-ray for *Bad Day at Black Rock* (1955), a compelling, Oscar-nominated crime thriller starring the impeccable Spencer Tracy. The actor plays a mysterious stranger who arrives in a tiny town just off of the railway tracks in order to meet with a former associate. The icy locals won't help the man out and act vaguely (and then not so subtly) threatening towards him, eventually leading to conflict.

They also have DVD-Rs of several out-of-print titles. They includes the Cate Blanchett WWII drama, *Charlotte Gray* (2001) and the romance *Living Out Loud* (1998), starring Holly Hunter, Danny De Vito and Queen Latifah. Additionally, they have the Barbara Streisand drama

Nuts

(1987). Perhaps the most interesting release is the small, romantic comedy

Overnight Delivery

(1998), which features lead performances from a very young Paul Rudd and Reese Witherspoon just before they hit the big time.

Shout! Factory have a double feature Blu-ray of the slashers *Slumber Party Massacre II* (1987) and *Slumber Party Massacre III*

(1990). I suppose the plots for these films are pretty self-explanatory. The package does contain plenty of impressive extras. This includes two cuts of each film - the R-rated version and lengthy unrated cuts (each features more than 10 minutes of additional footage). It also includes cast/crew audio commentaries, making-of documentaries and trailers.

Finally, Criterion have a couple of releases as well. The Blu-ray for the biting German film, *Fox and His Friends*

(1975). Besides a new 4K transfer, the disc contains new interviews with crew member, archived bits with director Werner Fassbinder and newly translated subtitles. They also have the drama,

Something Wild

(1961), which follows a woman suffering from trauma after a sexual assault. Among other bonuses, this release includes a restored transfer, interviews with the star and director as well as film critics praising the feature.

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YOU KNOW! FOR KIDS!

Here are some titles that small fry may enjoy.

Lego Jurassic World: The Indominus Escape

Lego Nexo Knights: Season 2

Surf's Up 2: Wave Mania (direct-to-video sequel)

Teletubbies: Big Hugs

ON THE TUBE!

And these are this week's TV-related releases.

12 Monkeys: Season 2

Diagnosis Murder: Seasons 1, 2 and 3

The IT Crowd: The Internet is Coming (documentary about the BBC Series)

The Love Boat: Season 3, Vol. 1

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The Love Boat: Season 3, Vol. 2

The Mod Squad: The Complete Collection

NYPD Blue: The Final Season

Rizzoli and Isles: The Complete 7th and Final Season

Scarlett: The Miniseries Event (1994 Joanne Whalley/Timothy Dalton miniseries)

Secrets of the Dead: Van Gogh's Ear (PBS)

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