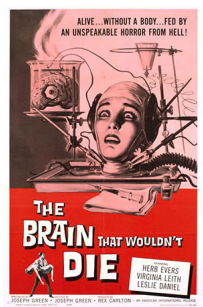


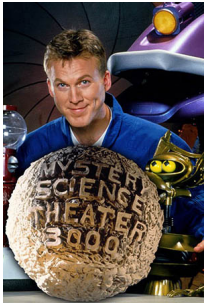
DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for Dec. 25, 2015

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Happy holidays, everyone! While there are still some shoppers out braving the crowds, there are still plenty of new releases on DVD and Blu-ray for those ready to relax indoors. The highlights are listed below. 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!

12 Rounds 3: Lockdown - I had no idea there was even a follow-up to the original, but this week bring a second sequel to the action title *12 Rounds*. In it, a police officer finds himself hunted down in his own precinct by crooked cops. None of the cast of the previous installments return, making this a sequel in name only. The few reviews posted have been negative as well, calling it a dull, routine B-movie. It stars Dean Ambrose and Roger R. Cross.

Dragon Blade - Known in its homeland as *Tian Jiang Xiong Shi*, this 65 million dollar action epic

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is one of one of the most expensive film productions to ever come from China. When corrupt Roman leader Tiberius decides to take control of Silk Road, a general rebels and defects, teaming with a local army to fight back. It was a huge hit in the East, but failed to ignite the passion of Western reviewers, who thought the battle scenes were elaborate, but found the dialogue creaky and the story muddled. The cast includes Jackie Chan, John Cusack, Adrian Brody and Si Won Choi.

Pawn Sacrifice - The famous chess showdown between Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky is recreated in this drama. Viewers follow the idiosyncratic Fischer as he becomes one of world's best players and struggles during the competition with paranoia and early signs of mental illness. Reactions to the project were generally positive, with most praising the work of the cast, even if they felt that the story played out in a safe and mannered fashion. It features Tobey Macguire, Peter Sarsgaard, Liev Schreiber, Michael Stuhlbarg and Lily Rabe. To read more about the film, just [click here](#).

Project Almanac - This found-footage teen sci-fi thriller hit theaters in January, so it's taken quite a while for it to finally arrive on DVD. It follows a young man who creates a time machine and attempts to use it for his own benefit. Unfortunately, altering events ends up creating more problems than it solves. Notices were negative, with the majority disliking the shaky camerawork and feeling that it just didn't generate enough tension to recommend. Now viewers can make up their own minds. The movie stars Jonny Weston, Sofia Black-D'Elia and Sam Lerner.

Queen of Earth - A woman who has lost her father and just gone through a breakup retreats to the lake house of her best friend in this arthouse drama. However, her inner state spirals further downhill and tension builds between she and her compatriot. This is an eccentric one that has been described as an odd slow-burner. However, it received raves from reviewers. They wrote that the lead performance was mesmerizing and presented a deeply unsettling picture of a woman's mental collapse. Elizabeth Moss takes on the lead role, with help from Katherine Waterston and Patrick Fugit.

War Room - This religious film follows a seemingly amiable family who are actually coming apart at the seams. Through the power of prayer, they come to respect and understand each other like never before. Critics were not taken with the movie. While some felt it was slickly made, they suggested that the writing wasn't up to narrative standards and that it felt like a strange advertisement/instructional video for the church. The cast includes Priscilla C. Shirer, T.C. Stallings and Karen Abercrombie.

Blasts From the Past!

Only two big releases this week, but they're kind of amusing genre efforts from different eras. Shout! Factory are delivering the goofy sci-fi B-movie *The Brain That Wouldn't Die* (1962). It's about a scientist who loses his girlfriend in a car accident. Naturally, he first instinct is to save her brain, so he resurrects her decapitated head and goes looking for a new body. Unfortunately, the newly revived lady has plans of her own. It's very cheesy stuff and should provide B-movie fans with plenty of laughs.

This Blu-ray has some great features too. It includes an uncut print of the movie, a full episode of *Mystery Science Theater 3000* in which the characters riff on the flick, a film historian commentary, an alternate scene from the international cut, and some promotional materials. Sounds like fun.

They also have the anthology horror title, *Nightmares* (1983). This was one of those fright flicks that always seemed to be playing on cable in the early 80s. Appropriately, the movie was originally made for television. Upon completion, Universal found it too intense, and it was deemed decent enough to garner a theatrical release. The four stories include one about a woman being stalked by an escaped lunatic at a gas station. an arcade obsessed teen who ends up fighting a video game for real, a family dealing with an oversized supernatural rat, and an ex-priest who goes fights off a demonically possessed car.

It features a strong cast, including Emilio Estevez, Richard Masur, Veronica Cartwright and Lance Henriksen. The video game segment is particularly amusing, as Estevez's character talks obsessively about reaching the final level of his game and his quest to, "Beat the Bishop," which sounds like some sort of rude euphemism. The Blu-ray includes both widescreen and fullscreen versions, an audio commentary with executive producer and one of the actresses, a trailer and radio spots.

You Know, For Kids!

Looks like families are going to be stuck with the latest Peter Pan adventure.

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Pan - Speaking of mega-budgeted flops, this effort was certainly one of the year's biggest money losers. It's a prequel to Peter Pan that shows how the young boy found his way to Neverland and introduces all of the famous fable's characters. Despite possessing some incredible visuals, response was quite weak from the press. They found it to be an inconsistent jumble of ideas that never really cohered. Hugh Jackman headlines along with Levi Miller, Garrett Hedlund, Rooney Mara and Amanda Seyfried.