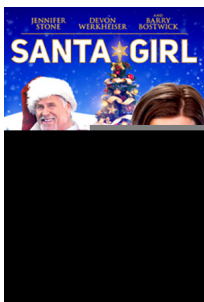


## Blu-ray/DVD Roundup for November 1, 2019

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Friday, 08 November 2019 09:27

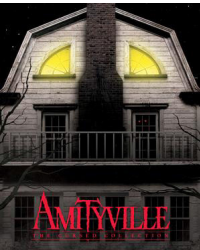
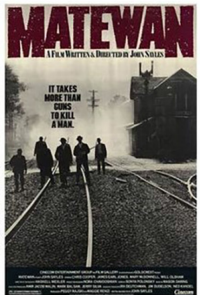
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Greetings and welcome to a look at highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. As you might have guessed, there are some interesting new releases along with plenty of seasonal Halloween-themed discs coming your way. So, if you can't make it out to the movies this week, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

### Big New Releases!

*10 Minutes Gone* - A man taking part in an elaborate heist to steal priceless jewels finds himself set up and being hunted down by the cops. After taking a blow to the head and suffering amnesia, the protagonist tries to piece together all the available information and recover a very specific ten minutes of his life when things went sideways. Of course, this is all so he can get revenge on the responsible party. This independent crime thriller hasn't gotten much of a positive reception from reviewers so far.

They wrote that it wastes a great cast and complained that the twist was easy to figure out, with the screenplay resorting to every dull action flick cliché ever conceived. It stars Bruce Willis, Michael Chiklis, Meadow Williams, Kyle Schmid and Texas Battle.

*A Cinderella Story: Christmas Wish* - Halloween may have only just occurred, but distributors are already set to push the next big holiday on us. This direct-to-disc feature is an update on the *Cinderella* story. It's about a struggling singer-songwriter with a nasty stepmom and stepsisters. Desperate for cash, the protagonist takes a job as an elf at a holiday wonderland.

There, she meets a handsome costumed Santa Claus, but can their relationship survive her mean-spirited family? Probably, one would guess. Anyway, this title is premiering on Blu-ray and DVD, so it hasn't been screened for the press. Potential viewers will have to hope and wish that there's some holiday chemistry present onscreen. The cast includes Laura Marano, Gregg Sulkin, Isabella Gomez and Garfield Wilson.

*Jay Myself* - This documentary follows photographer Stephen Wilkes as he details the life and career of his mentor, Jay Maisel. Viewers will discover that the New Yorker bought a six story, 30,000 square-foot building in the Bowery decades ago for next to nothing. He would display his photos as well as a series of interesting found objects collected over the past 40 years in this

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massive space. Now, Maisel prepares to sell the structure for tens of millions of dollars, and goes through all of his work and collections, leading to some self-reflection about his career.

The film has played several film festivals and received praise from critics. They thought the subject was an entertaining eccentric and enjoyed visiting the old building and seeing art in the most unlikely of places.

*Jirga* - A former soldier from Australia who served in Afghanistan decides to return to the war-torn country and attempts to find the family of a man whom he accidentally killed during the conflict. Hoping to be granted forgiveness and tie up loose ends for all involved, he eventually finds the village and attempts to heal wounds. This low-budget, independent feature earned generally good notices from the press. They all appreciated the earnestness on display and attempts to bring a human side to the war.

While a few commented that it didn't ultimately make as big of an emotional impact as hoped for, most thought that its attempts were laudable and admired the picture overall. It features Sam Smith and Mohammad Mosam.

*Legend of the Demon Cat* - Set during the Tang dynasty in China, this foreign-language fantasy picture involves a poet and a monk who are tasked with solving a strange murder. The pair soon discover that it is all tied to a black cat with supernatural powers...who may be possessing others and causing havoc in the city. As it turns out, they learn that a hidden secret about the kingdom and empire could help stop this unusual threat. Reaction was upbeat toward this oddball creation.

A small grouping didn't find the story involving and critiqued the picture for relying too much on visuals. However, almost all others called the movie silly, yet extremely entertaining, with jaw-dropping imagery and a high level of humor and enthusiasm. Huang Xuan, Shta Sometani and Zhang Yuqi headline the feature.

*Luce* - A married American couple adopts a young boy from war-torn Eritrea. Nearly a decade later, the youngster is an all-star academic at his high school. When he turns in an assignment about an historical figure whom he admires, his teacher becomes concerned about the content and contacts the parents. This sets off a chain of events as tensions rise between all parties

and fractures form both at school and at home.

Reviews were excellent for this heavy drama. It appears that one or two found the themes too serious without offering clear answers. However, that is exactly what others enjoyed about it, calling the performances first rate and stating that the movie forces everyone to think about and deal with controversial subjects. It stars Naomi Watts, Octavia Spencer, Tim Roth and Kelvin Harrison Jr. The movie is currently only being made available on DVD, so hopefully a Blu-ray release will follow shortly.

*Mike Wallace is Here - 60 Minutes* newsman Mike Wallace is the subject of this documentary. The film charts his storied career, his personal troubles and shows archival footage of some of his most famous and combative interviews. Over the course of the running time, viewers get a sharper picture of the man, how he thought, and approached his many discussions with famous and powerful figures worldwide. Critics greatly enjoyed this title as well.

A few complained that some of the film's attempts to compare Wallace's and modern-day journalist's techniques is a bit of a stretch. Regardless, the consensus was that the film painted a sharp, clear, and unflinching portrait of one of television's greatest interviewers. For those curious, please note that this movie is being released on DVD only at this time.

*The Rainbow* - Located in Los Angeles on the famous Sunset Strip, the Rainbow Bar & Grill is considered one of the country's most iconic Rock 'n Roll venues. This documentary details its history and the many crazy shows, events and meetings that have occurred on the property and transformed the business. Using interviews with various participants and musicians, viewers will learn all about the spot and the various celebrities who have passed through its doors. The picture is debuting on disc, so there currently aren't any reviews available for it. Still, it boasts discussions and interviews with plenty of familiar faces, including Slash, Ozzy Osbourne, Gene Simmons, Mickey Dolenz, Lita Ford, Lemmy, Robert Lamm and Steve Riley.

*Santa Girl* - The second Christmas-themed movie to hit store shelves just in time for Halloween is this romantic comedy about a Santa's daughter, Cassie. Wanting to experience the real world before she is married to the son of Jack Frost, Cassie is allowed to attend college for a semester before heading back to the North Pole. She then falls for a sweet, kind classmate, causing her to question the future that has been planned for her.

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This is another picture that is premiering on disc, and so there is no word on it from the press. It certainly sounds like the kind of flick you'd find on the Hallmark Channel, though. The cast includes Barry Bostwick, Jennifer Stone and Devon Werkheiser. Merry Halloween!

### Blasts from the Past!

As you might have guessed, there are plenty of horror-themed releases arriving this week. Arrow Video is releasing a Limited Edition - Special Edition Blu-ray of *An American Werewolf in London* (1981). The picture is about a pair of friends backpacking across the UK. When they are attacked by a strange creature on the moors, one of them begins to wonder if he hasn't been turned into a monster himself.

This werewolf film was famous in its day for deftly mixing scares with a sense of dark humor (which was revolutionary at the time) and it still stands as one of the best of its kind. Not only is it both chilling and funny, but it also features an on-camera man-to-monster transformation that was so good, it earned make-up effects man Rick Baker an Academy Award.

The movie has been given a new 4K restoration from the original camera negative, and comes with two commentary tracks (one with stars David Naughton and Griffin Dunne and another with a movie historian and authority), a new documentary on the feature, a second new feature-length documentary on werewolf pictures in general, a recent talk with writer/director John Landis (*Animal House*, *The Blues Brothers*, *Three Amigos*, *Coming to America*), a piece on the movie's legendary effects, extra interviews with cast and crew, outtakes, publicity material and so much more. It has got everything you could possibly want and more.

The same company is also putting out *The Ringu Collection*, a 3-disc Blu-ray Collector's Edition Set that includes the entire Japanese horror series.

*Ringu*

(1998) is about a reporter investigating an urban legend about a videotape that can kill the viewer if they don't pass it along and make another person watch it within a limited time frame. The movie was remade for US audiences in 2002 as

*The Ring*

, but many consider the first film the most effective. This set includes

*Ringu*

along with

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*Ringu 2*

(1999), the original story

*Ringu 0*

(2000), and the “lost” original sequel,

*The Spiral*

(1998) aka

*Rasen*

.

You'll get a brand new 4K restoration from the original camera negative of the first title, as well as an historian audio track and a critic commentary, interviews on the series and its influence on horror, discussions on the career of director Hideo Nakata, new talks about the series, deleted scenes and other extras. And if you're only interested in the original feature, you can also buy it on Blu-ray separately from the box set.

And there's more. Arrow Academy has a Blu-ray of *Man of a Thousand Faces* (1957) with James Cagney playing the legendary silent film star, Lon Chaney. It follows the effects of the man's early life as a clown and work playing the Hunchback of Notre Dame and Phantom of the Opera onscreen. The film has been given a brand-new restoration from the original negative by Arrow Films and includes a film scholar commentary, a look at Chaney and his legacy, an image gallery and the original trailer. Sounds like a great disc.

Not to be outdone, Shout! Factory has some fantastic titles as well. The first is a Collector's Edition Blu-ray of *The Blob* (1988), a remake of the 1958 chiller about a jellified substance from space attacking and absorbing the residents of a small town. While it wasn't a big hit with audiences or critics during its initial release, it's actually about as impressive a redo as one could ever hope for. The effects work was a vast improvement over the first film and the screenplay was much sharper than it was ever given credit for being.

Co-writer Frank Darabont would later be praised for his work as writer/director on *The Shawshank Redemption*

(1994),

*The Green Mile*

(1999) and the first season of the hit TV-series,

*The Walking Dead*

(2010). This release includes a new audio commentary with director Chuck Russell (

*The Mask*

) and a second track with co-star Shawnee Smith. Additionally, the Blu-ray includes interviews

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with just about every cast and crew member (with the exception of Darabont), as well an archived commentary track with the director and all of the film's marketing materials. Horror fans will certainly enjoy this underrated title.

They also can't go wrong with the Hammer flick, *The Devil Rides Out* (1968), which features Christopher Lee as a man trying to protect a youngster from a sinister cult who will stop at nothing to bring the youth into their fold. It's a fast-paced and exciting little UK Hammer horror effort and the Blu-ray has been given a wealth of materials. You'll get a new 2K scan of the 20th Century Fox interpositive of the film, as well as a restored master from Studio Canal in Europe. It also comes with a new movie historian audio commentary, some talks with other experts about the feature, an archived commentary with the late, great Christopher Lee, specials on the making-of the picture, a World of Hammer episode and trailers.

On a less horrific note, you can now pick up the teen romantic comedy *Private School* (1983) on Blu-ray. This title stars Phoebe Cates and Matthew Modine, and the disc includes new interviews with Modine and cast member Betsy Russell, an audio commentary with another cast member, a teen film expert informational track, a VHS version of the feature and marketing materials.

Criterion is also bringing some monsters to disc for the holiday. They have a massive box set, *Godzilla: The Showa-Era Films* (1954 - 1975) which contains the big green lizard's first 15 movies (and 17 cuts, since there were a couple of versions of the original and 1963's *King Kong vs. Godzilla*). You get all of the great flicks like *Destroy All Monsters* (1968), and the extremely enjoyable but not-so-great sequels like *Godzilla vs. Megalon* (1973) and 1976's *Son of Godzilla* (which actually has the identical plot as the later Hollywood hit, *Home Alone*). The set includes film historian audio commentaries on a few of the titles, interviews with authorities and experts on Japanese monster movies, programs detailing the special effects, new interviews with cast and crew members, a feature on the real-life tragedy that inspired the original movie and so much more. If you have the dough available, this is a must-own.

The distributor also has the drama *Matewan* (1987) from writer/director John Sayles. This one



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is set in West Virginia and details a coal miner strike from 1920 that develops into a violent revolt. It was nominated for several Oscars and comes highly recommended. The movie has been received a new 4K restoration, a director and cinematographer commentary, a new documentary on the making of the film with interviews including most of the cast and crew, as well as programs on the production design, the score and publicity materials.

*Two Evil Eyes* (1990) is also getting a Blu-ray upgrade courtesy of Blue Underground in the form of a 3-disc Limited Edition. This film tells two stories based on the written work of Edgar Allan Poe from directors George A. Romero ( *Night of the Living Dead*, *Dawn of the Dead* ) and Dario Argento ( *Creepshow*, *Deep Red* ),

*Suspiria* ). It's a fun little horror flick that should satisfy fans of the filmmakers. According to reports, the disc includes a spotless 4K restoration of the feature on Blu-ray and DVD (and a CD of the score), as well as a fresh commentary from an Argento expert, new interviews with most of the cast and crew, archived interviews with Romero and Argento, a look at the special effects by Tom Savini and a trip to his home, which is filled with props from his career. There's too much to go into here, but the disc generally looks great.

Vinegar Syndrome is a label devoted to small and obscure little genre films. This week, they're releasing a number of titles to Blu-ray. *Amityville: The Cursed Collection* (1989 - 1996) is a box set that contains four of the later sequels in the

*Amityville* franchise (when follow-ups began hitting the market as straight-to-video releases). The titles include

*The Evil Escapes*

(1989),

*It's About Time*

(1992),

*A New Generation*

(1993) and

*Dollhouse*

(1996). All the films have been newly scanned and restored in 4K and come with interviews with the directors, as well as some of the crew members.

They also have Blu-rays of *Berserker* (1987), *Beyond the Door III* (1989), *Bloody New Year* (1987),

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*Nightbeast*

(1982),

*Satan's Slave*

(1976),

*Unmasked Part 25*

(1989) and

*Watch Me When I Kill*

(1977). The picture quality on all of the titles has been upgraded so they should look much sharper than they ever have before, and each comes with a few extras as well. The last title listed is a Special Edition and will have even more bonuses. If B-movie horror is your thing, you may find something here to your liking.

Kino has a wide variety of high definition releases, too. First, there's the box set, *The 3D Nudie Cuties Collection*

(1951 - 1962) contains a series of R-rated adult films featuring an added dimension - one of which was co-directed by a very young Francis Ford Coppola (

*The Godfather*

,  
*Apocalypse Now*

).

On a completely different note, you can pick up a Special Edition Blu-ray of the Oscar-nominated *Kundun* (1997) from Martin Scorsese (*Taxi Driver*, *Goodfellas*, *The Departed*). It tells the life story and difficulties faced by the 14th Dalai Lama. The disc includes a feature-length making-of documentary, an hour-long doc on the Dalai Lama, a 30-minute talk with Scorsese, the full EPK, a film historian audio commentary and interviews with the movie's composer and editor.

You can also pick up the Michael J. Fox show-biz comedy *Life with Mikey* (1993) on Blu-ray, in addition to the French film

*La Marseillaise*

(1938) and the anthology comedy

*New York Stories*

(1989), which features three different segments directed by Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola and Woody Allen. Additionally, the distributor has a Special Edition Blu-ray of the women-in-prison picture,

*Nightmare in Badham County*

(1976). This release includes 2K transfers of two cuts of the film (the TV and R-rated theatrical cut) along with a director interview and a film historian commentary.

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Severin also has some B-movie horror coming your way on Blu-ray: titles include *Byleth: The Demon of Incest* (1972), a Limited Edition of *Paganini Horror* (1989) and the old monster movie, *Werewolf in a Girls' Dormitory* (1961).

VCI has decided to release the Bela Lugosi flick, *The Human Monster* (1939) aka *Dark Eyes of London* on Blu-ray. This one arrives with a film historian commentary and a few other bonuses.

Mill Creek is well known for affordably priced Blu-rays. This week sees them putting out a double feature disc of *Little Women* (1994) and *Marie Antoinette* (2006).

Warner Archive has a couple of notable made-to-order Blu-rays to boast about as well. The first is the Oscar-winning Jack Lemmon drama, *Days of Wine and Roses* (1962), about a young woman who marries an alcoholic and develops his affliction. The second is the Jackie Chan action flick, *Mr. Nice Guy* (1997). It's about a reporter who videotapes a gangland deal and is hunted down.

She accidentally bumps into a chef/TV-show host and switches tapes with him. He must use his kung-fu to avoid being killed by various thugs. Sammo Hung directs and has a part in the proceedings. The film has been given a new 4K scan of the original camera negative and is presented in its complete form (the North American theatrical release had 9 minutes of material edited out of it).

It's the 25th anniversary of the animated feature *The Swan Princess* (1994) and Sony is celebrating with a Blu-ray release. Loosely based on the ballet *Swan Lake*, it features the voice talent of Jack Palance, Sandy Duncan, Steven Wright and John Cleese.

Finally, some of the bigger studios are also making a few catalogue titles available in 4K with improved picture and sound. Lionsgate has the underrated Arnold Schwarzenegger/Jim Belushi

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buddy action flick, *Red Heat* (1988). Paramount is rereleasing the Jimmy Stewart classic, *It's A Wonderful Life* (1946) on Blu-ray. And Warner Bros. would like you to be aware of a new 80th Anniversary 4K edition of the family favorite, *The Wizard of Oz* (1939). Most of these titles come packed with the same extras along with the picture upgrade.

### You Know, For Kids!

Here are some titles that may appeal to youngsters and the young-at-heart.

*The Swan Princess* (1994) 25th Anniversary

*The Wizard of Oz* (1939) 80th Anniversary 4K Edition

On the Tube!

And here are the week's TV-themed releases.

*Animal Babies: First Year on Earth* (PBS)

*Batman Beyond: The Complete Series & Return of the Joker* (Animated)

*A Discovery of Witches: Series 1*

*A French Village: The Complete Series*

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*Queens of Mystery*: Series 1

*Warrior*: Season 1