

By Glenn Kay

For the Sun

Welcome back to another look at new Blu-rays and DVDs arriving on store shelves. This edition features a lot of interesting and quirky features, as well as plenty of older flicks that are getting high-definition upgrades. So, since you can't, or perhaps shouldn't be going out to the movies for just a little while longer, why not give one of these titles a try!

BIG NEW RELEASES!

BODY BROKERS: Two struggling drug addicts in Ohio meet a figure on the street who promises to help them kick the habit. The pair accepts the offer and travel to Los Angeles. While the leads are initially happy with their treatment, they become suspicious of the organization's true intentions and begin to suspect that the clinic is actually a front for an illegal fraud operation. The press gave the movie more positive reviews than negative ones.

Some viewers commented that the feature had a difficult time establishing a singular tone, lacked passion and didn't quite work as a whole. However, slightly more critics found the story intriguing and the struggle of the characters both relatable and compelling. It stars Jack Kilmer, Alice Englert, Michael K. Williams, Jessica Rothe, Melissa Leo and Frank Grillo. The title is premiering on DVD only for the time being.

BOSS LEVEL: A former Special Forces agent is murdered and suddenly finds himself in a time loop, repeating his final day over and over. Desperate to find out exactly what happened and try to save himself from his nasty fate, he learns more about the secret government project that caused this temporal abnormality. After finding and confronting the colonel running the program, hordes of assassins are sent to kill him. Response was strong toward this action picture.

Those who disliked it didn't care for its violent extravagances, calling it too silly and suggesting

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that the cast was wasted. The majority stated that they enjoyed the performers and said the movie provided plenty of over-the-top and entertainingly choreographed action. The cast includes Frank Grillo, Naomi Watts, Mel Gibson, Annabelle Wallis, Ken Jeong, Will Sasso and Michelle Yeoh.

CRESTONE: This documentary details a group of SoundCloud rappers who live a solitary life in the desert community of Crestone, Colorado. The location was a religious mecca and now serves as home for these artists, who use the peaceful natural surroundings as a means to keep the outside world at bay while working. Apparently, the site helps build friendships and collaborative projects between participants, with the intention of maximizing creative output. The press generally liked this non-fiction feature.

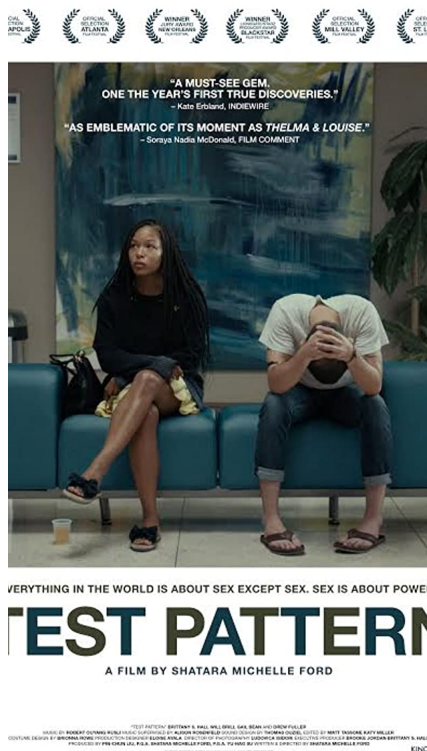
There were some who thought that the movie didn't ask enough tough questions about how it all worked, thought the artists were living in squalor and found the movie exploitative. Still, the consensus was that the subjects lived a fascinatingly odd existence and that the end results were hard to classify and intriguing.

CRISIS: The opioid epidemic serves as the backdrop for this drama. It tells three separate stories that slowly intertwine as events progress. One section involves a drug trafficker smuggling product into the country, another details an architect searching in desperation for his missing son, and a third follows a figure who discovers that his pharmaceutical giant employer is bringing a dangerous new product onto the market. Write-ups were mixed for this drama, although it did receive more recommendations than critical responses.

Many reviewers thought the storytelling was bland and also stated that the writing didn't allow for the characters to make an impression. Yet more said that enough of it worked to keep them watching and commented that the excellent work of cast members held their attention. It features Gary Oldman, Armie Hammer, Evangeline Lilly, Greg Kinnear, Michelle Rodriguez, Luke Evans, Lily-Rose Depp and Kid Cudi.

DEATH RANCH: Set in the 1970s, this independent, low-budget action/horror picture follows three African-American siblings on the run from police in the Tennessee backwoods. They find shelter on a nearby ranch, only to discover that it is the hunting ground of a cannibalistic faction of the Ku Klux Klan. The group must try to avoid capture, fight back against the horrific menace and escape to safety. There currently aren't a lot of reviews available for this title and it appears to be primarily debuting on disc.

Still, one or two write-ups have been posted online and they have been largely upbeat. These reviews state that the movie is a very well-acted and a spine-tingling throwback to old genre flicks. The cast includes Deiondre Teagle, Faith Monique, Travis Cutner, Scot Scurlock and Brad Belemjian.



THE MORTUARY COLLECTION: Looking for more horror? This anthology begins with a young drifter applying for work at a small-town mortuary. She meets an odd and eccentric mortician from a funeral home. He interviews the arrival and decides to give her a rundown of the strange and terrifying history of the town.

He tells her four supernatural and creepy asides about the area. The press gave this indie genre flick very high marks. Only a few complained that the end results were uneven, with several stories that weren't scary enough to give them the chills. However, almost everyone else called it one of the best horror anthology films in recent years.

They wrote that the stories featured were clever and that the practical effects and overall mood of the piece was consistently entertaining. It stars Clancy Brown, Caitlin Custer, Christine Kilmer and Jacob Elordi.

ONCE UPON A TIME IN TOMBSTONE: Most readers will be familiar with the town of Tombstone and the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral. This independent film asserts that it will add a few details about the famous event and what occurred there. At least, that's what the press synopsis promises. It claims to deliver the true stories behind all the iconic people featured, including personal stories of the Earp Brothers, Doc Holliday, Johnny Rings and the Clanton Brothers.

Unfortunately, that's all that is known about the movie at present. It is premiering exclusively on DVD and there have been no reviews made available. The one or two online notices that have appeared online so far, have not been complimentary, suggesting that the movie's low-budget undermines all the flick's aspirations. The cast includes Paul Clayton, Jerry Chesser and Jezibell Anat.

THE SUMMONING: Those looking for some international horror may want to give this title a try. It's a Thai feature that was originally released in 2018 under the title *Residence of Evil*. A psychic medium and his acquaintances conduct a séance in a household where an entire family died. Bad idea!

It results in several spirits of the deceased mom, dad, and child arriving and attempting to possess individuals. Desperate to save themselves, these mediums must keep themselves alive, find out what really happened in the house, and foil the spirits. The film hasn't been seen by many in this part of the world and is arriving exclusively on DVD. A review or two have appeared online and they have generally been positive, saying that the characters act dim-witted at times, but that the feature is atmospheric and scary. Ananda Everingham, Peerapol Kijreunpiromsuk and Teerawat Mulvilai headline the film.

TEST PATTERN: This independent drama follows a young interracial couple enduring hardships brought upon them by others. Things get even worse for the pair when a violent sexual assault occurs. The man drives his distressed partner across the city looking for a rape kit, encountering a series of difficulties and prejudices along the way. Write-ups for the film were almost uniformly excellent.

One or two did believe that the movie could have done more to develop the leads early on and

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give viewers a fuller picture of the story and characters. Still, almost everyone else called the film incredibly effective and important, stating that it did an excellent job of displaying the numerous racial inequalities in the U.S., in addition to showing problems within the health care system. It stars Brittany S. Hall, Will Brill, Gail Bean and Drew Fuller.

THE VIOLENT HEART: Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* appears to be the inspiration for this independent drama. After a childhood trauma involving the murder of his sister, a young man still grieves over the death. Just out of school and working as a mechanic, he meets and falls for a younger woman attending a local high school. The families of the main protagonists don't like the idea of the relationship, and the added conflict reveals new information about the killing many years earlier.

Reaction toward this feature was generally split, but it did earn a few more positive reviews than negative ones. Almost half of reviewers claimed that the story gets increasingly preposterous and said it failed to pull them in. Slightly more said that while flawed, the performances were strong and that the movie was an impressive directorial debut. The cast includes Jovan Adepo, Grace Van Patten, Lukas Haas and Mary J. Blige.

A WEREWOLF IN ENGLAND: This low-budget UK horror/comedy is a Victorian period piece about a parish representative who is assigned to escorting a murderer to a trial. The man charged with the slaying, claims he was actually attacked by a werewolf, but the official is unmoved by his pleas. That all changes when a storm hits and they take refuge at a country inn. The pair and others staying there are attacked by a pack of hairy monsters.

There haven't been a lot of press reviews so far, but one genre critic called it an enjoyable monster movie with plenty of laughs. Those who have written up the film online have a variety of opinions about it. Some called it an entertaining B-movie, while others complained that it was amateurish and ineffective. It features Rory Wilton, James Swanton, Derek Nelson and Natalie Martins.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST!

There are some interesting older titles receiving high definition upgrades this week. Mill Creek is premiering *Dave Chappelle's Block Party* (2005) on Blu-ray. This documentary follows the

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comedian as he rounds up a group of locals from his hometown and buses them to Brooklyn, New York to put on an elaborate show featuring himself and musicians like Kanye West, the Fugees and Big Daddy Kane. Viewers see all that goes on behind the scenes in the creation of this sudden, improvised event.

The movie was directed by Michel Gondry (*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *Mood Indigo*, *Microbe & Gasoline*) and the disc includes bonuses like a making-of and extended performances from all the musical guests.

Criterion is releasing a Blu-ray of *The Furies* (1950), a western melodrama with Barbara Stanwyck and Walter Huston about a ranch owner fighting with his daughter about the future of their land. In addition to a digital restoration of the picture, the disc also includes a film historian commentary, an interview with another critic on the importance of the title, a 1967 television interview with the director, a rare on-camera interview from 1931 with star Huston, and a 2008 talk with the performer's daughter. It also comes with a stills gallery and a trailer.

You can also pick up a Blu-ray of *Memories of Murder* (2003), the second film from Oscar-winning writer/director Bong Joon Ho (*The Host*,

Snowpiercer

, *Parasite*

). The movie is a procedural cop drama about two officers investigating a series of murders in a small Korean province. This release arrives with a 4K digital restoration of the picture, two 2003 commentaries featuring the filmmaker with cast and crew, an interview with director Guillermo del Toro about the movie, a new interview with Bong Joon Ho about the inspiration for the story, a making-of documentary, deleted scenes, an analysis on sound design in the movie, publicity materials. You'll even get a student film that was made by the moviemaker.

Paramount is focusing on comedy with their titles this week. The studio is presenting the Cheech & Chong flick *Still Smokin'* (1983) on Blu-ray. This stoner comedy hasn't been listed on Amazon yet, but is up for order on other sites. The varying information on different sources means that there is a possible chance of a delay with the release of the feature, so you may have to stay calm and chill for a while before it officially arrives.

They are also rereleasing individual Blu-rays of *The Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad!* (1988), *The Naked Gun 2 1/2: The Smell of Fear* (1991) and *Naked Gun 33 1/3: The Final Insult* (1994). Based on the short-lived, but hysterical TV series *Police Squad!* (1982), the movies follow the adventures of a good-natured, but clumsy police detective out to stop crime in Los Angeles. These are no doubt the same versions that were previously released by the studio. If you're looking for a good laugh, the first title is a comedy classic and the follow-ups have a few chuckles as well.

You can also find the original series on Blu-ray, which also comes with the highest of recommendations.

And Warner Archives is putting out a massive selection of made-to-order Blu-rays through its Warner Archive site (you can also pick them up on Amazon). They have the Oscar-winning musical *Annie Get Your Gun* (1950) and the Fred Astaire feature, *Broadway Melody of 1940* (1940). Those looking for drama can purchase the Best Picture winner and period drama, *Chariots of Fire* (1981). Based on a true story, it follows two track athletes vying for glory at the 1924 Olympics.

Doctor X (1932) is a horror picture about a New York journalist who attempts to track down a mad scientist and stop his creation that has been responsible for several murders. The feature was directed by Michael Curtiz, who would go on to helm classics like *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, *Casablanca*, *Mildred Pierce* and *White Christmas*. *Each Dawn I Die* (1939). It is a hard-boiled crime drama with James Cagney and George Raft about an innocent reporter who is wrongly arrested and jailed for murder. He eventually becomes hardened in prison while friends try to fight for his release. Finally, you can also pick up the Lana Turner drama *Green Dolphin Street* (1947) and the Charles Laughton adventure,

Blu-ray/DVD Roundup for April 23, 2021

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Mutiny on the Bounty
(1935).

Sounds like a great week for classic flicks.

YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

If you're looking for something to entertain tots, here's what is available.

We're All Fruit Salad: The Wiggles Greatest Hits

ON THE TUBE!

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

Love in Store (Hallmark)

NATURE: Big Bend – The Wild Frontier (PBS)

Til Death: The Complete Series

VISIT: WWW.CINEMASTANCE.COM

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