

That Nerd Show



WEEKLY NEWS



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FILM / TV NEWS, STORIES, INTERVIEWS, THE NERD OPINION,
MUSIC NEWS, REVIEWS, GAMING, COMICS, COSPLAY & SCIENCE NEWS



"A Message From Your Squad Leader"
C.O.D. VANGUARD ZOMBIES
by K. Scott Cooper

IS CALL OF DUTY GOOD AGAIN?

By Marcus Blake and K. Scott Cooper



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REVIEWS



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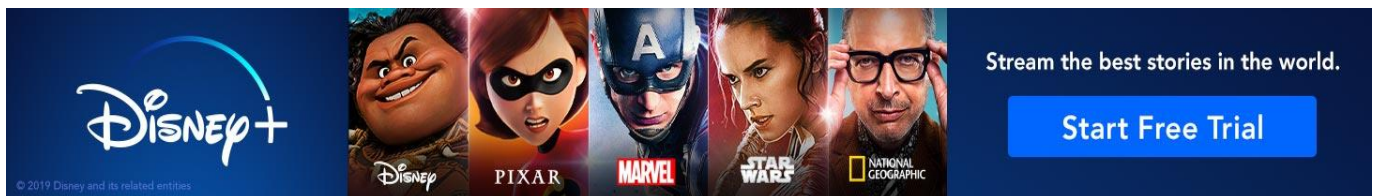
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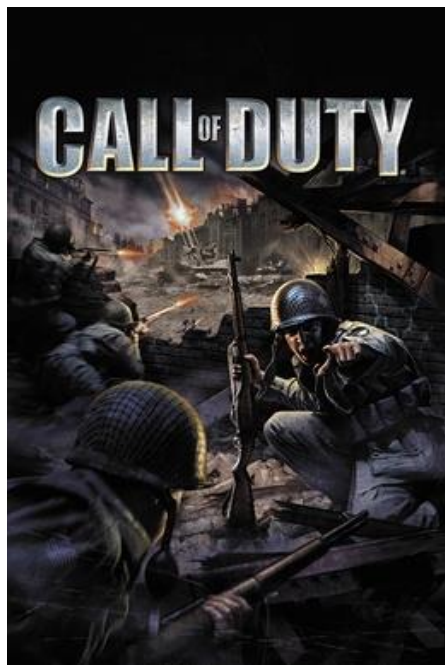
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IS CALL OF DUTY GOOD AGAIN?

By

Marcus Blake and K. Scott Cooper



IS the Call of Duty franchise actually good again? Will they ever make a game as good as they used to? With the latest release in the Call of Duty franchise, Call of Duty: Vanguard, it's time that we ask whether the franchise has seen its best days and whether it's worth playing anymore Call of Duty games. There is no denying the impact of Call of Duty in the gaming world. It is the largest selling first-person-shooter franchise in gaming history, having sold over 400 million copies since the first published game in 2003. Call of Duty is actually the third highest selling gaming franchise in gaming history behind Super Mario Brothers and Tetris. The impact of this franchise is easy to see, but like all major franchises there's always hit and misses. We also can't deny that some of the games in the Call of Duty franchise haven't been very good and it makes one question whether it's worth buying any more games in the series. We are fans of

Call of Duty here at That Nerd Show. We have played every game released since the beginning, even before this news outlet was created. We can't deny that we're fans and in a lot of ways that we can't get enough from the series, but we also have to admit that some of the games haven't been worth the money spent on them. We know that we're not the only Gamers to feel this way. It seems every year Activision releases a new Call of Duty game. We pretty much know that we're playing a new Call of Duty game every year on top of all the other games that we review, but there's also been a lot of years that we just haven't look forward to playing one so it was with cautious optimism that we played Call of Duty: Vanguard and made us ask the question "is Call of Duty good again?" Or are the games even worth playing? You will have to keep reading to find out.

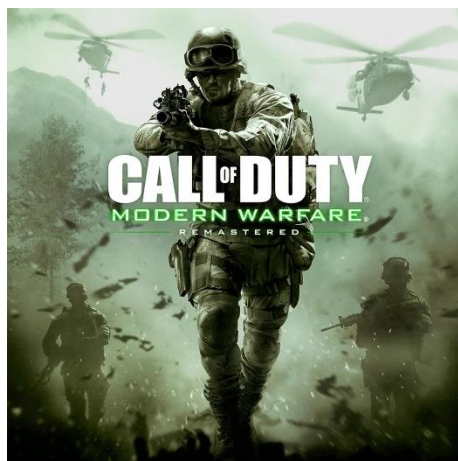
YOU can say that Call of Duty is really just an offshoot of EA's franchise Medal of Honor released in 1999, which had a majority of it's Developers from that gaming series leaving for Infinity Ward and soon after making the first-person-shooter that was released in 2003 on PC, published by Activision. The first game was released without much fanfare and most Gamers felt that it was pretty much just like playing Medal of Honor. It wasn't until Call of Duty 2 was released on PC and consoles such as the Xbox 360 that the Call of Duty franchise came into its own, while simultaneously taking the gaming world by storm. Infinity Ward had created something better than what Medal of Honor had done in the past and what it was becoming, not only with its sleeker storytelling set in a familiar theme of World War II, where Gamers were creatively introduced to playing the great conflict from its many allied battles

in Europe's Eastern front and Asia's Western front, Seeing the war from both American and British forces in the East and Russian forces to the west. What makes games a like this stand out, is gamers are getting to be a part of History by playing in a war they've only read about in history books and it's not like first-person-shooters can't be fun because we've had these kinds of games since the beginning of the video game industry, but Gamers could take an interactive role in history and hopefully learn something along the way. it's not so much that way anymore, but a first-person-shooter series like Call of Duty had an opportunity to teach gamers history through the stories they were telling. It's one thing to watch HBO's Band of Brothers that came out 20 years ago, we all still love rewatching the series, but to actually play a video game in those warfronts is something else. That was part of the genius of developing a video game series like this. You can have fun gameplay but also tell great stories.



OF course, here at That Nerd Show we've always been fond of saying that "the best stories are the ones that you play." If you look at the highest rated Call of Duty games, they are the games that have the best stories whether it's Warfare in a modern setting or Black Ops set during the early stages of the cold war. Why is World War II still the best type of war game to play because we look at WWII as the most honorable and

righteous war that soldiers fought in because nations came together to defeat Nazi Fascism. It's a war where the bad guys clearly lost and the good guys won. To understand what made Call of Duty good is to understand the type of games they put out at first. The first three games in the series were set in WWII and even though Call of Duty 3 is still rated as one of the worst games in the series, the first two are still rated very high whether they were played on PC or Console. And then of course with the fifth title in the franchise came World at War and gamers played a US Marine in the Pacific front and then they snuck in a whole separate mode where you can fight Nazi zombies, which was never intended to be anything more than something special for watching the whole of the credits. Call of Duty didn't invent zombies in a video game. Quicksilver Zombie is generally considered the first zombie game, which came out in 1984. However, with video games getting bigger and bigger because you can store more information on DVD disc or Blu-Rays, the Call of Duty franchise was able to do different kinds of modes as in the case of having a massive multiplayer mode and introducing a zombie mode. Medal of Honor never achieved this and these extra modes made Call of Duty more popular than ever even if it seems they lucked into it, but they expanded on this concept.



THE highest rated games of the franchise have always been Call of Duty 2, Call of Duty World at War, Call of Duty Modern Warfare (2007), and then Call of Duty Modern Warfare 2. All of

these games were released between 2005 and 2009. What set them apart, two great games that you played in a WWII setting and then two great games that you played in a modern war setting. Call of Duty wasn't the first video game franchise to have a modern war type game, they just made it better with a great storyline of a special forces team trying to take down a terrorist and putting gamers into what a semi realistic modern Urban War setting might look like. But it was the stories that they told and the gameplay that made these four games some of the highest rated video games ever and nothing within the Call of Duty franchise has been able to top it. Critics always say that the third movie in a trilogy is usually the worst of the trilogy. That was certainly the case with Call of Duty 3, the third game in a European WWII setting and Modern Warfare 3, although Modern Warfare 3 still had pretty good ratings by critics, but the biggest complaint was that it felt all too familiar.

IT'S not hard for video game franchises to run out of steam. Usually within a franchise by the time you get to the third game, the franchise is not as good. Maybe Halo 3 on Xbox 360 and Super Mario Brothers 3 on the original NES are the only two games to come third in a series that we're better than its predecessors, but it is a rare feat. The Call of Duty franchise is like any gaming franchise where after you've done great with one story, you start exploring and try to do more. That's where they came out with the Black Ops series which also had its connection to Call of Duty: World at War. The first two Black Ops games were received well by critics. It was certainly different being able to play a war game set in a spy world and not have it be like a James Bond game. Essentially the storyline followed a CIA operative and his clandestine unit as he's being forced to recall certain memories of combat related experiences that would aid in the discovery of a numbers station which would lead to the bad guy in the story. All of this set during the Cold War in the 1960s. The Black Ops series had great reviews, at least the first two and it was touch and go in Black Ops 2, but then it

all seemed to jump the shark with Black Ops 3 which was another one of Call of Duty's futuristic games. The worst games from a review standpoint and have been considered failures are the ones with a futuristic setting like Call of Duty Advanced Warfare or Call of Duty Infinite Warfare. Even Black Ops 3 had a futuristic tone when dealing with technologically advanced weapons. These games just weren't what we were used to seeing with Call of Duty. With Advanced Warfare you get futuristic weapons and a commentary on private armies, does that make for a great story? Not even having Kevin Spacey act in the game could save it and given that Kevin Spacey has been blacklisted it is finished forever. Infinite Warfare was just a complete tragedy of a game because it took the Call of Duty franchise into space making Gamers wonder if Call of Duty was simply trying to make their own version of Halo, which has been one of the most popular gaming franchises as an Xbox exclusive. Call of Duty had a series of games that were more or less set in the future which is something that the Battlefield series with EA had been exploring.



It was as if the Developers for the Call of Duty games had lost all creativity and wanted to get into first person shooters that were set in the future. This started in 2013 with Call of Duty Ghosts. a game that literally starts you off in space and then blends it in a little bit of modern warfare and Black Ops into a futuristic War Front slightly featuring a playable dog character. It's honestly not a terrible game as it had a good Special Ops

storyline to the game, but the story does end on a cliffhanger and Developers have not been too keen on going back to the series. It also featured a zombie like game mode called Extinction, where players would square off against Aliens known as Crpytids in operational style missions. Which in itself was a great change of pace from the Zombie saturated time that it was and still gave gamers something they had not had before in a semi familiar comfort zone.. But over the next four years Call of Duty made futuristic games that just never did well. In fact, Activision's CEO at the time, Eric Hirshberg was quoted in an interview on why Infinite Warfare failed. He said that "they had hit the guardrail of creativity and at the end of the day it just didn't feel enough like Call of Duty. If anything, the game just amplified the demand for boots on the ground that much more." Call of Duty games were never really that successful in space or in the future. As we've seen the highest rated games were games that had "boots on the ground" especially in a historical time period. Essentially playing a video game set during a past war is more fun than playing a futuristic first-person-shooter. At least when it comes to Call of Duty.

IT'S easy for creators to want to try and do something new, but it doesn't always work with an audience that's used to a certain style. Fans were ready to get back to the beginning and that's why in 2017 we got Call of Duty WWII. It was the first WWII story built for the new console generation of PlayStation 4 and Xbox One. It was a WWII story in HD. The game may not have been like Call of Duty where you played on different fronts, it's centered on an 1st Army US Infantry Division that starts out on D-Day and you play missions until the Allied Army wins the war in Europe, but it was a WWII game. It felt familiar while also giving fans a new story. Unlike Call of Duty 2 and Call of Duty World at War, it had amazing cutscenes that told this fantastic story even with an American Jewish soldier who gets captured by the Germans and survived a Holocaust camp. It felt like a Call of Duty game even if it wasn't as good as past WWII stories and that's

what Call of Duty needed at the time. It invigorated the franchise with something familiar and something new at the same time." Call of Duty WWII was a job completed after hitting rock bottom, the storyline is a return to roots of what was truly awesome about Call of duty as a series but done so in a very flashy half political fashion. showing the player the painful truth of the holocaust at a glance and in a bumbling fashion, it was clear that at this point Activision was all about pulling heart strings for the purse strings to open. Don't get us wrong, the game has a fantastic revamp on Nazi Zombie that made it feel more like I was playing a Grinde House horror film with an all-star cast than playing Call of Duty. In the end you could tell everything was about the multiplayer and micro transitions. But Call of Duty did return to WWII, which is where they were at their best!



FANS may have gotten what they wanted with a Call of Duty WWII story but that didn't stop Call of Duty from trying to recapture the same old magic from two of their other popular series, by revamping and re-releasing the Black Ops series and the Modern Warfare series. Black Ops Cold War took fans to the 1980s with a mission sanctioned by Ronald Reagan. We admit that was kind of cool, but we all agree that it was the first Black Ops game turn on its head and set up in such a convoluted timeline that it's impossible to be completely sure if it is the Black Ops 2 reboot or something new all together. Call of Duty also brought back the character of Captain

Price from the Modern Warfare story, reestablishing the timeline of events that takes place before the 2007 Modern Warfare and reopening the door to tell the same story a different way. These games were okay and sometimes you need a return to the familiar when all of your other creative experiments fail or you release a Black Ops title that was strictly a multiplayer or Battle Royale or zombie game that is set in the events taking place after the Black Ops 3 storyline, hint at a storyline and then put no storyline. Black Ops 4 was the first Call of Duty game that never had a solo campaign. The game was rushed out of development, it never should have been released as a storied Call of Duty game and should have just been offered as the something else familiar it really was. However, multiplayer and Battle Royale games have become more popular than ever so it is only the logical step that the Call of Duty franchise would feature its own take on those kinds of gaming. This doesn't mean that it was a success for the Call of Duty franchise, Yes, multiplayer is popular and it has led to the creation of Call of Duty Warzone, which is like Fortnite, but Call of Duty style. And after the failure of Call of Duty Black Ops 4 it's only natural to want to go back to what has worked before and that's why we got another story in the Black Ops series as well as another Modern Warfare. But Nostalgia only gets you so far. The familiar can only make Gamers happy for so long. We're not saying that the latest Black Ops game or Modern Warfare were terrible games, but they were not on the same level as the first games in those particular series. It's almost like getting the band back together for a farewell tour. It may be good, even fun to an extent, but it's not as great as it used to be. Which is what happens as expectations in storytelling develop with the tech used to generate those stories, so the old sound styles of the band don't match up with the expectations of the fans as their taste in music expands with other bands. So, in 2021, Call of Duty went back to its roots yet again and made a WWII story. Going back to your roots or going back to basics doesn't always have to be a complete reboot or overhaul

of what you are good at and for once it seems like Activision has finally produced a game worth buying! Call of Duty: Vanguard is a gripping storyline that comes at you from various points of the war to the final moments of Nazi Germany through a very well written and properly performed cinematic tale of an Allied operation that takes place behind enemy lines.



This isn't just good voice acting behind hype, this is real actors with a real script playing roles that may not be historically on the money, but this is something you just can't put down.

OUR point is if the Call of Duty franchise stays in the ballpark of WWI to Early modern events, they are in an area that has shown to be a sweet spot for them despite the overall quality of the game. It's true that the first two games in the Modern Warfare series were great, but Call of Duty hasn't come close to making something as good and the series is starting to get stale. It's time for fresh stories and we think that's what has made Call of Duty: Vanguard one of the best Call of Duty games in the last 10 years. So to this point in the franchise we

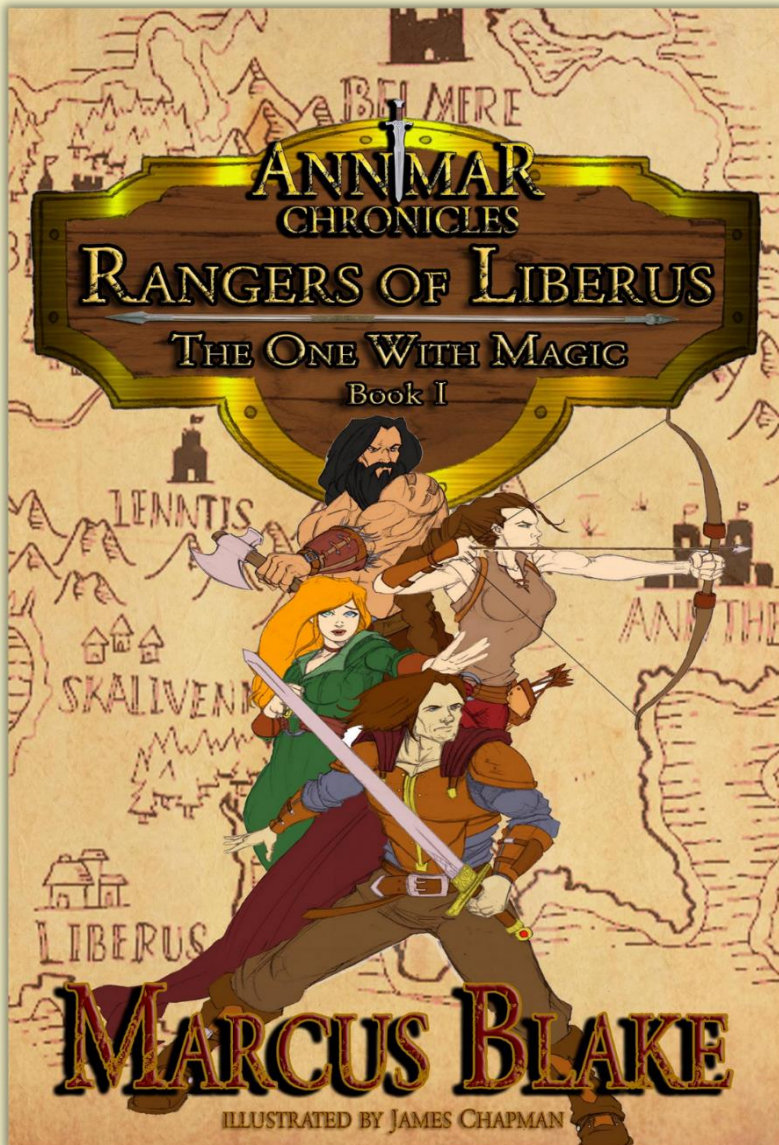
say Welcome back to the Good old days we are glad they are back! Call of Duty Vanguard took us back to that sweet spot and left us with a wonderful open ending that could lead to equally good or better stories. The biggest disappointment in any gaming franchise, just like in a movie franchise, is when the creators try to keep the ball rolling and they try to be better than before. Hopefully, we get more games equally as good without the repeats of bad games they normally turn it into. So, as we wait with "baited breath" for what the future may hold we can only dwell in the now and the now is Call of Duty Vanguard is a great game!

To the Employees at Activision

We at That Nerd Show stand with the employees of Activision who demand change and better working conditions. We support your pursuit of a work environment free of sexual harassment and a place where all employees are respected no matter their gender, their color, and sexual orientation. May you spearhead change at Activision and the gaming industry so that you may continue to create great content. You are voice of change and we support you!



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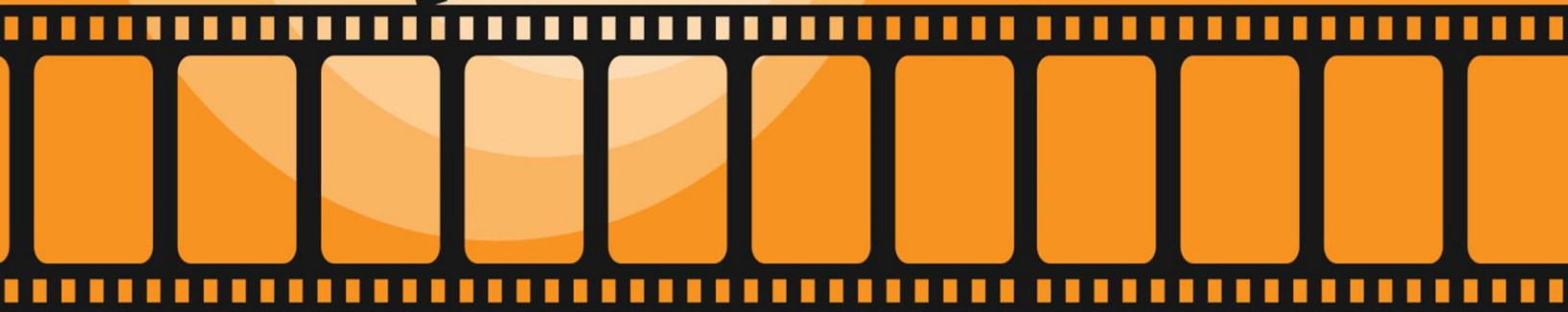
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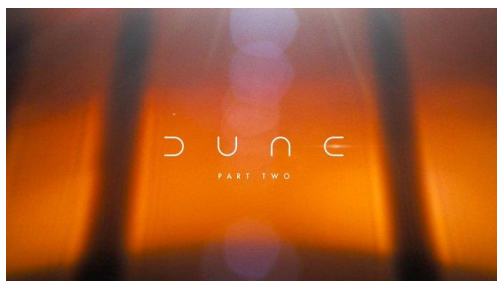
STAR WARS

THE BOOK OF

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DECEMBER 29, 2021

‘DUNE’ Sequel Greenlighted by Legendary & Warner Bros; Pic Will Get Theatrical Window In October 2023



In what comes as no surprise, the sequel for *Dune* finally has been greenlighted for an October 20, 2023 theatrical release with director, producer and co-screenwriter Denis Villeneuve returning. The key word here is theatrical. We understand that a key point of negotiations between Legendary and Warner Bros was that *Dune: Part Two* would be given a pure theatrical window; no day-and-date HBO Max release plan is in the mix for this cinema spectacle. The greenlight news was announced Tuesday on the Legendary and WB social accounts: While David Lynch’s 1984 feature adaptation of Frank Herbert’s 412-page 1965 novel crammed the whole story into one movie, it was always part of Villeneuve’s vision to spread his reboot across

two films. *Dune* overperformed its domestic projections this past weekend, opening to \$41 million, with over half of its ticket sales driven by large-format and PLF theaters. Heading into the weekend we’d heard that *Dune* had some \$12M in advance tickets sales; more than any other event film during the pandemic. The pic was bolstered further by Canada, which delivered 11% of domestic weekend ticket sales; it was on a theatrical window up there since HBO Max isn’t available in the country. In regards to its performance on HBO Max, while WarnerMedia didn’t report any figures, Samba TV — which measures streaming viewership in 3 million U.S. households — reported that 1.9M Smart TV households watched Villeneuve’s *Dune* over the weekend. Among the theatrical/HBO Max titles measured by Samba TV, that’s the sixth-best weekend debut by a Warner Bros/HBO Max day-and-date title, *Mortal Kombat* topping that list with 3.8M. All of this is a great indicator that those who wanted to watch *Dune* saw it in a movie theater. Warner Bros launched the movie ahead in overseas markets, where its current global box office stands at \$223.2M.

“Denis Villeneuve has crafted a film that is both visually extraordinary and emotionally transporting, as evidenced by its global success both critically and at the box office,” said Toby Emmerich, Chairman of Warner Bros Picture Group. “We are thrilled to continue on this journey with Denis and his cast and crew, and our partners at Legendary, and can’t wait to bring the next chapter of this epic tale to theaters in October 2023.” WarnerMedia Studios and Networks Chair and CEO Ann Sarnoff told Deadline in a sit-down last week that a *Dune* sequel was definitely in the cards, with Legendary carrying 80% of the production cost and Warners the balance. “Legendary is pleased to officially move forward with *Dune: Part Two* ... once again based on the amazing books written by Frank Herbert,” said Legendary. “We would not have gotten to this point without the extraordinary vision of Denis and the amazing work of his talented crew, the writers, our stellar cast, our partners at Warner Bros., and of course the fans! Here’s to more *Dune*.”

Reported by Deadline.com



PREDATOR Prequel Gets Title & Sets Summer 2022 Release



On Disney+ Day, the studio announced that its new *Predator* movie is set to drop in summer 2022, and will be titled *Prey*. For some time, the pic was shot

under the title *Skulls*. *Prey* will debut on Disney+ sister streaming service Hulu. Deadline first told you about the project a year ago, with *10 Cloverfield Lane* director Dan Trachtenberg directing. On Friday, we learned the plot line with the pic set in the world of the Comanche Nation 300 years ago, following Naru, a skilled female warrior who fiercely protects her tribe against a highly evolved alien predator. The script was written by Patrick Aison, whose producer-writer credits include the series *Kingdom*, *Jack Ryan* and *Treadstone*.

Prey aka *Skulls* wrapped on September 12 in Calgary as revealed by the pic’s DP Jeff Cutter on Instagram. The *Predator* movies through six films, including two *Alien vs. Predator* movies, have grossed \$750.8 million at the global box office. Few projects announced in the Disney+ sizzle reel yesterday had hard 2022 drop dates. There is a still from the movie and a logo which will be dropped later this morning and we’ll update you then.

Reported by Deadline.com

Norman Reedus, Sean Patrick Flanery & Director Troy Duffy In Early Talks To Reunite For 'THE BOONDOCK SAINTS III' – AFM



The Boondock Saints are in the process of coming back. Director Troy Duffy said he is reuniting with Norman Reedus and Sean Patrick Flanery for *Boondock Saints III*, a new installment of the saga of fraternal twin Irish brothers Connor and Murphy MacManus, who go on a vigilante track. That starts after they dispatch two Russian mobsters in self defense, and then have an epiphany to rid their Boston hometown of all crime. Impossible Dream Entertainment partners Shaun Redick (*Get Out*, *BlackKkKlansman*) and Yvette Yates Redick are producing the package with Don Carmody (*Good Will Hunting*) and Duffy. Duffy wrote the script for the film with Flanery, with a lot of input from Reedus, Duffy and Redick said. Financing is Todd Myers' Dragonfly Films, and The Exchange will broker worldwide sales at the Virtual American Film Market. Reedus and Flannery are executive producing along with Nat McCormick of The Exchange and Todd Myers of Dragonfly Films. "The fans have loved these characters for 20 years," Duffy said. "They use terms of endearment like 'the Brothers' or 'the Boys.' We left them in jail at the end of *Boondock 2* and fans want to know what happened to them. Norman and Sean have been a driving force to keep this franchise on track and break some new ground story-wise. The fans have been waiting. They literally ask about it daily, and I am really excited to be working with Impossible Dream to make *Boondock III* a reality." Said Shaun Redick: "It's easy to see how this franchise has attracted and maintained its strong cult following all of these years when you dig into the mythology and execution of the storytelling. Troy, Norman and Sean have skillfully architected a killer story that fans will go crazy for, just as Yvette and I have. We love and appreciate that *Boondock Saints* has such a rabid fan base that is starving for anything and everything that builds on the franchise. We see fans tattoo the characters, sayings, and prayer on their bodies, they engage in digital and social media, and they travel enormous distances to meet and engage with the creators and stars of the films and comics. All this makes us excited to get to work with the team and deliver something distinct and special." Yvette Yates Redick added that "Regardless of whether or not someone has seen the first two films, *Saints III* will blow them away. Moreover, this is a proud comeback moment for Troy — a

storyteller who has demonstrated humility and resilience in the face of adversity and emerged more focused and determined than ever to continue the *Boondock Saints* story. We're proud to back him and his authentic vision for this franchise." The hope is grow a rabid fan based and turn the *Saints* into a *John Wick*-type global action franchise. It is the latest twist in the saga of Duffy and the *Saints*, a crazy ride that has more ups and downs than an EKG. Duffy was a bartender/musician who, tired of watching bad action films, tried to write a good one. It made the Hollywood rounds and suddenly this rowdy suds slinger at J Sloans saw the bar filled with studio execs trying to make a deal. He chose an offer from Harvey Weinstein and Miramax that was to give him title to the watering hole in addition to a fat check. Duffy never got the bar, as Weinstein lost interest when he couldn't land the stars he wanted. Duffy prevailed in getting the film made, only to find himself in the awkward position of showing it to studios right after the murders at Columbine High in Colorado. *The Boondock Saints* did paltry box office, then went on to become wildly profitable in its ancillary run. It continues to have a strong following, which its makers hope bodes well toward growing the franchise now that there will be enough money to make the second sequel on a grander scale. "You never know which films are going to hit, or what kind of special you got that makes for something people will gravitate toward," Duffy told Deadline.

"Nobody knows. The closest we got to someone knowing happened when we were having the first screenings for *Boondock Saints*, at the Sony lot, Paramount lot, Fox lot, and it was right after the Columbine incident. Columbine shut us down. They were pulling back on everything violent, especially with youthful violence, even ones that featured trench coats [which the Columbine killers wore]. We got caught right in the middle of that, distraught because everyone had worked so hard. We didn't have anything to do with this tragic thing that happened in Colorado, and we felt, there is real life and there are movies, what is going on? A buyer told us. Hey, you guys have been blacklisted. Nobody is buying your movie to release in theaters right now. And then something prophetic. It was Billy Connolly who came walking out of the theater, and he was like [mimicking Connolly's Scottish brogue], 'Fuck it! The kids will find it! It's rock and roll.' He was the only one who was like, it doesn't matter. This is too good, it's going places. All of us didn't know, except Billy. "I've seen people with perfect projects that just sail through all the processes and turn into terrible films," he said. "And then ones that are super difficult, nothing but stress and horror from the first second, and they make great ones. Films like *Precious*, where everybody comes down and sacrifices so much, and their paychecks go out the window and they don't

care. Those ones are magic. You see so much in this business, you never know what's going to hit, but we did, and why change the sausage now? So here comes three."

Even the third film was turbulent, as Flanery in 2017 tweeted that he and Reedus were no longer involved in *Boondock III* because of disagreements. But Flanery was in many ways the driving force in getting done the current draft, Duffy said, and whatever differences they had have been patched. In *Boondock Saints II: All Saints Day*, the brothers end the film behind bars for their vigilante crimes. The third film picks up from there. "Where we're going is, the brothers are older," Duffy said. "They are coming out into a brand new world that is not like the one they left. They are at odds. One wants to continue, the other doesn't. There's a new enemy out there, not like the traditional ones they've faced. That's the thing that is timely about this one. I asked the fan based once, who would you most like to see Connor and Murphy kill? There were like 4500 answers, and some were Biblical; people just don't give you one word answers. The number one answer was, politicians. I wrote a scene right now where one of them says, are you f*cking kidding? You can't kill a politician and the other saying, are you kidding me? They're the ones doing it. It turns out one guy is doing it much worse than everyone else. Without getting too deep into the story, what it is, is, two boys coming out of prison after staying there much longer than expected, to a brand new world. They're at odds on whether to push forward. But the type of people we face today in our society, is unlike any we've faced before. And that brings them together and they say, we cannot turn our backs on this." "Since I hooked up with Red and Yvette, they've proven to be some of the best in the business," he said. "*Boondock* has always had a hard independent road. You'd try to get the best people in the area you're shooting in, and there are things you just can't believe that happen on an independent film set where you have to make a decision, get that footage and move on and not cry about it. Rob Peter to pay Paul, move, move, move 100 mph and you're lucky if you get a salient story at the end of it. One of the things I've never had is the comfort of enough days, and the comfort of working with top people. I've got stunt work, gun work here, that deserve the attention and care paid by that franchise. One of the things that is really cool for me now is jumping in the pool with these guys who'll say, you know what? Here's what *we* can do."

Reported by Deadline.com

Robert Downey Jr. And Matt Damon Latest Stars to Join Christopher Nolan's 'Oppenheimer'



The ensemble for Christopher Nolan's next film *Oppenheimer* keeps growing in star power as sources tell Deadline Matt Damon and Robert Downey Jr. are in talks to join Cillian Murphy in the Universal Pictures tentpole. Deadline previously reported that Emily Blunt is in talks to join the cast as well. Nolan is writing and directing the film that revolves around J. Robert

Oppenheimer, the scientist who ran the Manhattan Project that led to the invention of the atomic bomb. The film will bow on July 21, 2023, a slot typically saved for Nolan films in the past. It's also roughly two weeks before the anniversary of the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima. Details behind who Damon and Downey Jr. will be playing in the project are being kept under wraps. Reps for Universal, Damon and Downey Jr. could not be reached for comment. Universal will distribute *Oppenheimer* theatrically worldwide and release the film in North America. Nolan will also be producing along with Emma Thomas and Atlas Entertainment's Charles Roven. The film is based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning book *American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer* by Kai Bird and the late Martin J. Sherwin. Deadline was

first to announce this would be Nolan's next film and also broke the news of Universal landing the rights to the project following a heated bidding war among almost every major suitor in town. Deadline also first mentioned that Murphy would have a key role in the project, which is now confirmed to be the man at the center of the story. Nolan is known for having ensembles with a mix of talent he's worked with in the past, along with stars he would be working with for the first time. This film touches both areas. Damon previously worked with Nolan on his sci-fi epic *Interstellar*. As for Downey Jr., this would mark the first time the two will work together on a project.

Reported by Deadline.com



Jason Momoa & Dave Bautista Create Bidding War For Buddy Action Comedy Pitch; MGM Wins 4-Bidder Battle



MGM wins the auction for an untitled buddy comedy action pitch that will pair Jason Momoa with Dave Bautista, who've emerged as the two hottest action stars in Hollywood. I expect the deal to close by morning. The duo pitched it all over town this week, with Jonathan Tropper writing. The connection

between the writer and stars comes from *See*, the Apple TV+ drama series that stars the duo. Tropper also scripted the upcoming Shawn Levy-directed *The Adam Project* with Ryan Reynolds. The film came from an original idea from Momoa, Bautista and Tropper. The studio will develop it, but the principals have made rich deals that kick in when the picture goes into production. Jeff Fierson is producing. Essentially, the pitch calls for the duo to play brothers in a *Lethal Weapon*-esque buddy cop comedy likely to shoot in Hawaii. The stampede to get the duo began with an August 19 Tweet by Bautista: "Just going to throw this out into the atmosphere and see what happens. Here we go...Me and Momoa in a *Lethal Weapon* type buddy cop movie directed by David Leitch. Ok! There it is. Now we wait." Momoa reinforced this during an appearance

days later on *The Late Late Show with James Corden* (see below). They are pals who text all the time, and Momoa said they will shoot on Hawaii, with Bautista in a Speedo and Momoa in his trademark board shorts. The project doesn't have a director, but the duo didn't have to wait long at all. The hope will be to shoot in 2023 because they are so busy with their franchises. The actors appeared in *Dune* but didn't have scenes together. They have gone mano a mano all season in *See*. Momoa is shooting the sequel *Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom*, while Bautista has another *Guardians of the Galaxy* and the *Dune* sequel in tap.

Reported by Deadline.com

‘MARLOWE’: Diane Kruger & Jessica Lange Among Cast To Join Liam Neeson’s Philip Marlowe Thriller, Filming Underway



Diane Kruger, Jessica Lange, Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje, Alan Cumming, Danny Huston, Ian Hart and Colm Meaney have joined Liam Neeson in noir thriller Marlowe, which is now filming in Ireland and Spain. The script

from William Monahan (*The Departed*) is based on the novel *The Black-Eyed Blonde* by John Banville, with Oscar winner Neil Jordan (*The Crying Game*) aboard to direct. In *Marlowe*, when private detective Philip Marlowe (Neeson) is hired to find the ex-lover of a glamorous heiress, it looks an open and shut case, but Marlowe soon finds himself in the underbelly of Hollywood’s film industry and unwittingly drawn into the crossfire of a legendary Hollywood actress and her subversive, ambitious daughter. Danny Huston will play the colourful country club manager, Floyd Hanson.

Akinnuoye will play Cedric, the right-hand to sharply-dressed gangster Lou Hendricks, played by Cumming. Pic is being produced by Alan Moloney, Gary Levinsohn, Philip Kim, Patrick Hibler, Mark Fasano and Billy Hines. The film is being executive produced by Elisabeth Costa de Beauregard, Patrick Muldoon, Jeff Rice, Steven Sims, Harris Tulchin, Tobias Weymar, Christopher Hines and Celine Haddad.

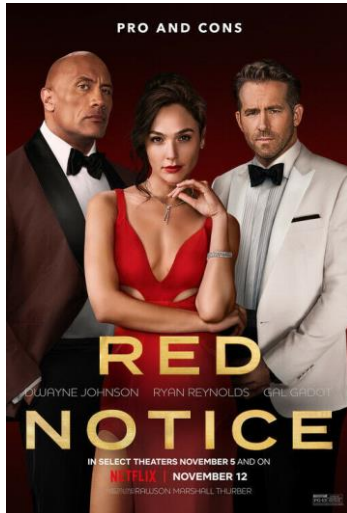
Reported by Deadline.com



TASTE, THAT’S WHY.

"Red Notice" Review

By Marcus Blake



"Move over Ocean's 11, Red Notice is the next great heist franchise that will keep you coming back for more!"

Dwayne Johnson, Gal Gadot, and Ryan Reynolds all in the same movie, how is this not going to be entertaining? Even when you have a good cast, a movie can still be bad, it happens. But with the movie Red Notice, that is not the case. I was thoroughly entertained with this film, not only because it's essentially a heist movie, but you also have an Indiana Jones feel to it and if you're looking for a good Indiana Jones type movie to fill the void until Indy 5 comes out in 2022 then Red Notice is a good one. This movie isn't some high drama with an important message. It's not going to win an Oscar. It's just a fun action film with a lot of great comedy and a few twists and turns as thieves compete with one another to steal some priceless artifacts. Ryan Reynolds and Gal Gadot's characters are competing art thieves looking for 3 golden eggs gifted to Cleopatra. Dwayne Johnson plays the FBI agent trying to stop them both until he's framed and has to work with Ryan Reynolds' character to bring down the number one art thief in the world. In a lot of ways, this movie reminded me of the Bruce Willis films, RED. They're just fun action comedies that you don't have to think a whole lot about and can be entertained for two hours. I was definitely entertained.

What makes the movie worth watching are definitely the performances of the main characters. You've got three great actors leading the way who have good chemistry and look as if they had fun making the film. Ryan Reynolds always makes great action comedies, even if the story isn't that strong.

The Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard was not as good as the first one, but it still manages to entertain. If you want a good comparison with this film then think of all the Ocean's Eleven films, all of them will entertain you and make you laugh. That's what Ryan Reynolds brings to this kind of film and Gal Gadot believe it or not makes a perfect villain. But the performances are good. The back and forth and the dialogue is even better. Also, this film is very much an adventure film that will take you to multiple locations and like I said before it makes you feel like you're in an Indiana Jones Heist movie, who wouldn't want to see that! The movie has the right amount of action that it's not so over-the-top and makes you feel like you're watching a Michael Bay film, but the number one thing that makes it a fun movie to watch are the twists and turns because you won't see them coming in the end. It certainly isn't a predictable film. That's what I really enjoyed about it. I do feel like this would have been a fun movie to see in the theaters, but it's also a perfect film for Netflix and while Netflix has some hit and misses with their original films, especially the last Ryan Reynolds Netflix film "6 Underground," Red Notice certainly not a miss.

Now it isn't exactly a perfect movie and while I do think the performances are good, more so with Ryan Reynolds and Gal Gadot, we're not always use to seeing Dwayne Johnson play the straight man to the funnier character as with Ryan Reynolds. Dwayne Johnson is incredibly funny and I think action movies are the only time he's really good as the straight man like in the Fast & Furious series or a revenge movie he did about 10 years ago called "Faster." It may not be his most comedic performance, but it works when he's playing off Ryan Reynolds. There are times that the flashback scenes do seem a little out of place when trying to tell the backstory, but you will quickly forget them has all of them lead into the more adventurous parts of this film and that's where it does feel more like an Indiana Jones film wrapped up with a little Ocean's 11. But if I'm being honest, my critiques are small because. I thoroughly enjoyed the film and can certainly see a franchise out of it. It may not be a perfect film or something worthy of an Oscar, but it's a fun film and you'll watch it again.

Yes, Red Notice, it's definitely a hit for Netflix. With three great actors that work well on screen and lots of exotic locations that make for a good heist movie, it feels a little bit like an Indiana Jones film or maybe what an Uncharted film should be, I can guarantee you, you'll be entertained and you will definitely watch this movie again unless

you're just don't like action comedy movies. The filmmakers added just enough twists to keep you guessing and shocked, and more importantly, all the twists make the film work. You can easily tell that they let Ryan Reynolds do what he does best and just improvise making his character funnier. As I said before, it's not high drama and the story isn't going to inspire you or look at the world in a new way, but good action comedies are there to entertain us. Red Notice is perfect for that and a good escape if you had a bad week. It reminds me of the National treasure movies where it doesn't need to be that dramatic and you can have a good adventure story with the right amount of comedy. So, when Red Notice pops up in your Netflix recommendations, hit play, you'll be glad you did.

Final Grade: 8 / 10 (Good)

"Ghostbusters: Afterlife" Review

By Alex Moore



Anyone who was born between the years of 1976 and 1982 grew up with it, give or take a few years, as well. "Who you gonna call? Ghostbusters!" How do you really define the generations for specific film franchises? Do you have to be of a certain age when the film was released or is it enough to have been born in time for that fateful moment? Does it still count if you only saw it later on, once it was out on VHS or Laserdisc? If you were able to view it on the big screen during a special, commemorative year, does that, then, absolve you of missing it when it was first released in theaters? One thing is for sure, regardless of how you choose to answer those questions:

"Ghostbusters" was a quintessential staple of the 1980s and people of all ages enjoyed it then, as well as today.

The push for a third installment to the franchise was talked about for years upon years. Who knows why it took so long to reach actual development? However, the biggest setback, at least in more recent years, was the passing of one Harold Ramis. A few years ago, we received a follow-up, of sorts. For whatever the reason, it was considered controversial by many prospective audience members, but did well at the box office, globally, and received relatively positive reviews from most critics. I will let you each be the judge as to why it seemed to be so polarizing, from the very outset. Moving onward, this year, we have something of a more direct sequel, as opposed to a reboot. It is directed by the son of the man who brought us the original film, all the way back in 1984, Jason Reitman ("Tully"). He, also, co-wrote the screenplay with Gil Kenan ("A Boy Called Christmas"), as well as produced. The idea was to provide something fresh and witty, but also nostalgic. This is a very common approach for these types of films, but could it be done successfully this time around?...

The story begins with an homage to the late Harold Ramis. It was filmed in a way that was clever and respectful. It sets up the story without a single word being uttered and we know exactly who this is and what is about to occur. To me, that is how to pay tribute to a character than can no longer be portrayed by the only actor who ever played him on the big screen. Right away, the cinematography takes center stage, as well. Credit Eric Steelberg ("Dolemite Is My Name") for his fine work on that note. The real story begins when Callie Spengler, played by Carrie Coon ("The Nest") receives word of her father's passing, all in the midst of being evicted from her apartment with her two children: Phoebe, played by McKenna Grace ("Malignant") and Trevor, played by Finn Wolfhard ("The Goldfinch"). They pack up and set forth to a small town in Oklahoma. Once they arrive, they begin to settle in to their new surroundings, which are odd, to say the least.

The major fixtures of the town include: Gary Gooberson, played by Paul Rudd ("Avengers: End Game"); Podcast, played by Logan Kim; and Lucky Domingo, played by Celeste O'Connor ("Freaky"). They, basically, round out the respective love interests of the characters across from them, who were mentioned here in the above paragraph, although Phoebe and Podcast are a little bit too young to be considered "loveys." While everyone has their moments to shine with nifty one-liners and superficial jokes, probably around half of the jokes, or less,

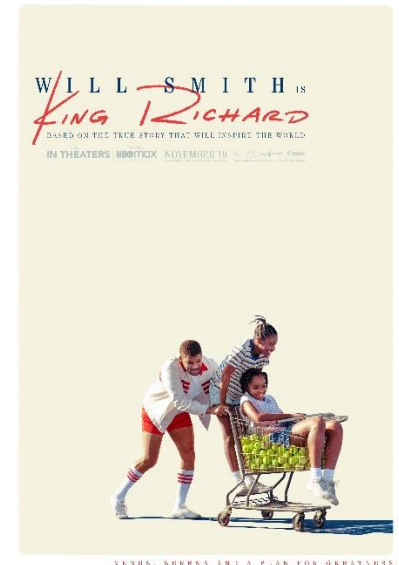
actually land, effectively. What I could hear from the audience, which was mostly comprised of fans and critics, was forced laughter, scattered about. Sometimes the anticipation that comes with nostalgia is enough to make that happen, but is it truly enough? I spent the majority of the first half of the movie feeling perplexed by what I was watching. Was I watching a kids movie or a real sequel to the original franchise from 32 years ago? Could it be that so much time has gone by that it is no longer appealing to keep this franchise going any further? I was liking to overall look of the film, as I mentioned before, but I was largely dissatisfied with the writing. To sum it up, there was not much of a story.

By the time the meat of the plot unfolded, I was out of patience and uninterested with any of the characters on screen. Even the late arrival of the original Ghostbusters, who are still alive, was not enough to save me from the sensation of boredom I was feeling at the time. They even brought back the original monsters from the first film. The makeup and effects looked solid, but was it anything special? No, not really. If you like the Marshmallow Man, he even got a couple of scenes, which were so out-of-place and inexplicable that I hardly found any of it amusing because I was distracted by the sheer inclusion of it all. In other words, it was there just to be there, but maybe you will enjoy that more than I did. Having said all this, I did enjoy the ending. The posthumous inclusion of Egon Spengler was, both, effective and sweet and did not feel overly cheesy. Perhaps there should have been more of him, as limited as he could really have been. I will say this, there is plenty of reason to expect another sequel. My only thought to that notion is that, hopefully, they are planning to bring us something better when that installment arrives. "Ghostbusters: Afterlife" is not a horrible movie, but it was not decent enough to warrant a recommendation on my part. In the end, it fell flat and felt pretty average and forgettable. I would say that you just stick to the original movies from the 1980s and, perhaps, even rewatch the reboot, if you are so inclined, before watching this one. My final question: did this movie really need to be made?

Final Grade: 5 / 10 (Average)

"King Richard" Review

By Marcus Blake



Another Sports biopic comes to theaters. Usually, it's about a football or baseball or basketball star, but this time we get a biopic about tennis stars Venus and Serena Williams and how they became stars after being coached by their father Richard Williams, hence the name of the movie, *King Richard*. Admittedly, I am not a tennis fan and hardly knew anything about Venus and Serena Williams. Maybe I'm the perfect audience member having gone into this film blind and not knowing much about the two tennis icons. This allowed me to see how informative the movie really is. I admit that I found out a great deal about Venus and Serena Williams, and the film only made me want to know more, especially about Richard Williams. The movie was entertaining, only made better by the Great Performances of Will Smith and Aunjanue Ellis who played the parents of the two tennis stars in the film. They were fantastic. And although, there was some controversy surrounding Will Smith playing Richard Williams, there's no denying how great his performance is. Love or hate Will Smith, he has he has turned out some stellar performances as sports figures, the main one being Muhammad Ali. It almost makes him perfect for the role of Richard Williams Because let's face it it's no small task to play the legendary Muhammad Ali.

The movie is about Richard Williams and how he molded Venus and Serena Williams when they were about ten years old to make them tennis stars. As he said in the movie, he had a plan the day they were born, and he executed that plan. At the start of the movie,

we find Richard Williams teaching his daughters on a broken-down tennis court in the Compton neighborhood of L.A. It seems almost an impossible task that he can mold two tennis stars under tough circumstances. But he does it and is able to find them a top-rated Tennis coach that has the right pedigree to get them to the top while also, eventually getting them to a prestigious Tennis Academy that has a great reputation for turning out the best tennis stars in the United States. We get a great backstory for Venus and Serena Williams and yes this is a bit of a spoiler, the film doesn't show them winning their first professional tournament, the film is about how they got there, and all that Richard Williams sacrificed for his daughters. The story is not so much about them as it is about the father who successfully made a plan for their success. A biopic can be a great movie, but it usually doesn't do any better when telling the whole story compared to a documentary. I don't feel like that matters so much with this film because of the performances by the cast. The cast gives us an intimate portrayal of these characters, which in turn gives us a great connection to them and that's something a good documentary can't do. So, what makes this movie worth

watching are the performances, mostly of Will Smith. It may not be his best role, but he's fantastic as Richard Williams.

I don't think the movie is perfect because it only gives us a glimpse of what happened with Venus and Serena Williams right up to when Venus makes her professional debut in a tournament and almost beats the number one ranked tennis player in the world. It's not bad for a story, but it does leave the audience wanting more. While the title is called King Richard and you can arguably say that the movie really is about him, it shouldn't be. I think the focus of the story should be the perfect balance of Richard Williams and when Venus and Serena are kids. Their journey is just as important, and the film focuses too much on what Richard Williams did for them up until Venus Williams makes her professional debut and we see everything more from her perspective. Maybe that's on purpose, all I'm saying is the film could have been better if there was an equal balance of the different perspectives from the characters because it wasn't just Richard Williams' Journey and he didn't do it alone, But the pacing is pretty good. It's a 2-hour movie and it flies by quickly, keeping you well entertained

Overall, this is a good movie and worth checking out at least on HBO Max. The entire cast does a great job of giving us a glimpse at the backstory of Venus and Serena Williams right up until the moment they turn pro, but make no mistake, this is really Will Smith's film where he gets a shine more than anybody else. It's a great performance, maybe even worthy of an Oscar nomination, but there's only so many things a 2-hour movie can tell compared to a documentary series. And there's certainly more to tell put the story of Venus and Serena Williams. If this film did anything, it made me wish that there was a multiple episode documentary about Venus and Serena Williams because they're both so interesting and their journey to the top of tennis is a remarkable one considering their background. The movie will certainly leave you wanting to know more about them and although, the film doesn't tell us enough about their story, The performances by the cast will make you want to see this movie. Will Smith is great in the film and his performance alone will not leave you disappointed, nor will anybody else's performances.

Final Grade: 7 / 10 (Okay)



good cheer,
**GREAT
MOVIES**

**CINEMARK HAS SO MANY WAYS TO SHARE
BIG-SCREEN JOY WITH FAMILY & FRIENDS**

tick tick... Boom

Review by Danielle Butler



Come theater kids, drama queens,

dancers, and sing-along song fans... This movie is for you. The story of the composer Jonathan Larson is told with passion and tragedy. This film unfolds what led up to the popular musical *RENT*. Before *RENT* there was *tick tick BOOM*. This film, Lin Manuel Miranda's big directorial debut the big screen adaptation of Jonathan Larson's autobiographical musical *tick tick BOOM* focuses on the man "boy genius" Jonathan Larson. Not only is this a musical about the making of a musical, but this is also a story of a man comes to develop his breakthrough musical.

The musical production *RENT*, one of the longest running and widely celebrated musicals was set to release on off-Broadway on January 25, 1996. The same day (SPOILER ALERT for those not familiar Larson's story) Jon passed away at the age of 35 from an aortic dissection after being misdiagnosed with the flu. The film focuses on Jonathan's life in the weeks leading up to his 30's birthday. The story has an incredible way of showing the personal and real inspirations for Jonathan Larson's work. He was a composer/ playwright working in a diner and trying to make it big.

Larson, (played by Andrew Garfield), was extremely focused on creating musicals. Watching the adorable Andrew Garfield sing, dance, and compose music as Larson had was beyond enjoyable. I particularly enjoyed the split scene between the fight with his girlfriend Susan (played by the beautiful Alexandra Shipp) and sing of the song *Therapy* about the fight (scene with Vanessa Hudgens and Andrew Garfield.) I enjoyed the songs, *Why*, *Louder Than Words*, and *30/90*. The singing and dancing was enamoring and left me in awe from all the fantastic harmonies. The lyrics encapsulates the struggles, strong friendships/relationships, aging, and hurdles of being relevant as creative. It's especially funny, to see the scenes of Jonathan incapable of deciding between two words and mulling over it for hours. I

also giggled at the 90s looks like Vanessa Hudgens big 90s hair.

The most comical and heartfelt moments of this film were carried by the personal struggles and life outlook Larson had during his quest to get this work on Broadway. Writers, actors, and composers will likely deeply appreciate seeing all it takes to accomplish your creative aspirations and the funny, gurling, and painful ways life gets in the way.

The opening song about turning 30 is relevant to how terrified my generation is of turning 30. Perhaps older generations felt the same. The fear of turning 30 is real; however, the fear of not achieving a dream is the driving force of the film's plot. Not only can artists/creatives relate, but anyone who has asked themselves how am I going to fulfill my dreams realistically struggles with the same notion. This passionate portrayal of a man working to leave an impactful musical in the world of theatre arts is something we all can admire.

The musical production *RENT*, one of the longest running and widely celebrated musicals was set to release on off-Broadway on January 25, 1996. Which was (SPOILER ALERT for those not familiar Larson's story) the same day Jon passed away at the age of 35 from an aortic dissection after being misdiagnosed with the flu. The film focuses on the life of Jonathan in the weeks leading up to his 30's birthday. Not only does the film address how Jonathan dedicated his time to his passion for theatre/composing; it also reaffirmed Jon's question, what am I doing with his life? The resounding theme of the film highlighted Jonathan making the most out of life and emphasizing this in his songs. Jonathan tackled serious and timely topics such as poverty, gentrification, addiction, LGBTQ rights, and the AIDs crisis. Issue's people face even while working as a server in a diner.

I love the filmography and progression of the plot as actors sing and dance through various scenes. There are so many well-known actors/ Broadway stars in this film including: Joanna P. Alder, Laura Benanti, Richard Kind, Judy Kuhn, Judith Light, and Bradley Whitford to name a few. Cast and crew did a great job portraying the 90s and tackling the issues as well as the costumes and scenery... New York City in this film was delightful to see as it was such a different time then. The monologues are super relatable in terms of tapping into the human dilemmas in everyday life. The diner scene poking fun at how annoying people from the perspective of customer service person.

As a creative myself, I think they did a great job with the dichotomy of struggling to make a living and in this case living paycheck to paycheck as well as living as a "starving artist" trying to fulfill your dream. The film showed how John lived and breathed his passion project. For audience members who are creatives, it is not surprising that John is obsessively writing and rewriting his musical in hopes his work will develop into a sustainable career path that puts food on the table.



In addition to girlfriend Susan (Alexandra Shipp), a few notable characters in this film were: Karessa (Hudgens) sang as lead vocalists in Larson's *tick tick BOOM*. Michael, Larson's best friend (played by Robin de Jesus) was a big support and influenced Larson's work. Michael a former actor took a different route than his friend Jon and worked at a big ad agency and making a lot of money. As a former advertising person, I must say, I understand this was set 30 years ago but am I to believe it only takes a few years at ad agency to get a corner office?

The idea of *tick tick BOOM* is time is fleeting. Jon alludes to the clock ticking in his head and the urgency he felt to get his work done. The irony of his sudden death is tragic and is more emphasis to his message to go after your dreams. The success of *tick tick BOOM* inspired Jonathan to create more musicals.

Composer Stephen Sondheim was referenced several times by Jonathan (Garfield) one of the professionals critiquing John's musical name *Superbia*. During the film Jonathan spent time calling all Broadway legends to promote his musical and invite them to the opening of *Superbia* in hopes they come. There are subtle hints of foreshadowing in this movie that are tied to issues of its time. I am waiting for the other shoe to drop. "Write what you know," advice given to Jonathan after his first musical does not get the reviews and acknowledgment he was hoping. Rosa Stevens Jon's classic NY agent invites all the well-known producers and they like the musical enough to give Larson call backs and want to see more of his work. He realizes that they didn't understand his musical and felt it was too artsy now he is worried, but he'll never amount to anything in their eyes that isn't industry standards. The lead up about Michael was beautiful.

True stories don't always have happy endings but sometimes the silver lining is a musical with lasting impact that illuminates everything in its wake. Hats off to Andrew Garfield for his captivating performance. It's such a shame Jonathan did not live to see his musical achieve such success. He has not only left his mark in the world of musical theatre world but changed the trajectory of what a musical can be.

Final Grade: 10 / 10 (Perfect)

'The 100' Prequel Not Moving Forward At The CW

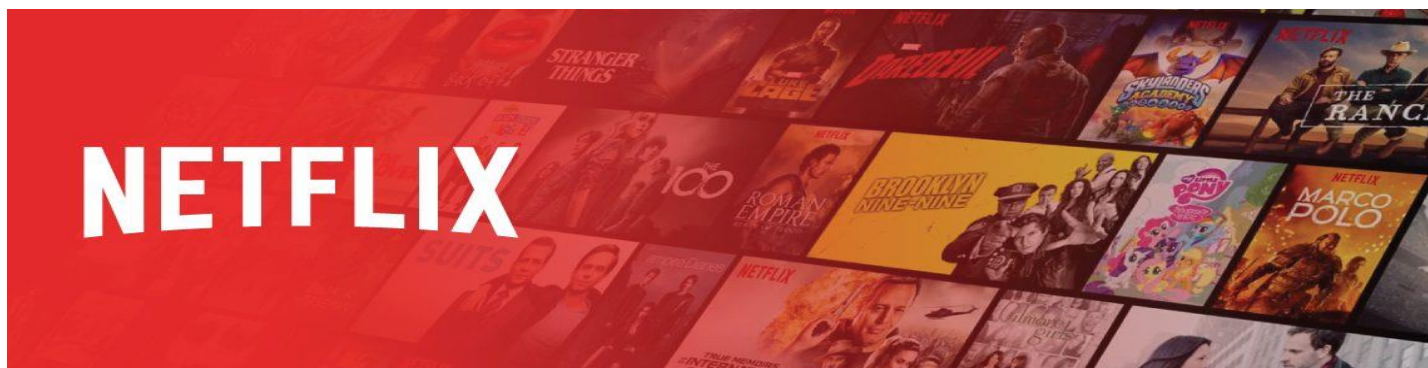


The long-in-the works spinoff of *The 100* that refused to die for two years is now officially over at the CW. The prequel, from *The 100* developer/executive producer/showrunner Jason Rothenberg, started as a backdoor pilot in the seventh and final season of The CW drama, and was greenlighted in October 2019. The

project did not go to series in May 2020 but was kept alive. As Deadline has reported, the scenario that was discussed on and off for *The 100* prequel was a joint run on the CW and HBO Max. That remained the path that was pursued for the project until the end. In his most recent update in May of this year, the CW president Mark Pedowitz gave fans hope. "There are still discussions going on — it is not done in any way, shape or form," he said during The CW's upfront press call. "The discussions are still happening." Set 97 years before the events of the original series, the prequel starts with the end of the world — a nuclear apocalypse that wipes out most of Earth's human population — and follows a band of survivors on the ground as they learn to

cope in a dangerous world while fighting to create a new and better society from the ashes of what came before. Iola Evans, Adain Bradley and Leo Howard appeared in the backdoor pilot; their options expired a year and a half ago. Rothenberg executive produces with *The 100* EP Leslie Morgenstein and Gina Girolamo of Alloy for *The 100* producers Alloy Entertainment in association with Warner Bros TV and CBS Television Studios. It is unclear whether WBTV would shop the project elsewhere. *The 100* finished its seven-season run in September 2020.

Reported by Deadline.com



'Night Court': NBC Skeds Sitcom For 2022-23 Season



Night Court, the follow-up to the classic legal sitcom, will air on NBC in the 2022-23 season. When the series, which stars and is exec produced by *The Big Bang Theory*'s Melissa Rauch, was first ordered, the broadcast network had yet to decide whether it would air in midseason or in the next season. After launching its midseason schedule today, Susan Rovner, Chairman,

Entertainment Content, NBCUniversal Television and Streaming, confirmed that it will bow next season. "We love *Night Court* and really do believe in it. It will be on next year's schedule," she told Deadline on a post-midseason schedule call. Multicamera series *Night Court* comes from Rauch and *Outmatched* and *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* co-EP Dan Rubin. It was first developed last December, scored a pilot order in May and was picked up to series in September. Based on the original series created by Reinhold Weege, *Night Court* centers on unapologetic optimist judge Abby Stone (Rauch), the daughter of the late Harry Stone, who follows in her father's footsteps as she presides over the night shift of a Manhattan arraignment

court and tries to bring order to its crew of oddballs and cynics, most notably former night court prosecutor Dan Fielding, with John Larroquette reprising his role. Rauch and Winston Rauch exec produce via their After January production company with Rubin, who wrote the pilot, also exec producing. Larroquette is a producer on the half-hour laughter, which comes from Warner Bros Television, Universal Television and After January. The pilot, which was directed and exec produced by Pamela Fryman, also stars Ana Villafañe (*Younger*), Loretta (*Gotham*) and *Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist*'s Kapil Talwalkar.

Reported by Deadline

'The Righteous Gemstones' Gets Season 2 Premiere Date



Can I get an Amen? After a two-year delay caused by the pandemic, HBO is resurrecting *The Righteous Gemstones*. It's the story of a world-famous televangelist family with a long tradition of deviance, greed, and charitable work, and will start its nine-episode second season with two back-to-back shows on Sunday, Jan. 9 from 10 PM-11:25 PM ET/PT. The premiere will be followed by additional half-hour episodes on subsequent Sundays at the

same time. The series debuts on HBO and will be available to stream on HBO Max. The series was created, written and executive produced by Danny McBride (HBO's *Vice Principals* and *Eastbound & Down*), marking his third HBO comedy series from Rough House Pictures. McBride collaborators Jody Hill and David Gordon Green also serve as executive producers and directors. Returning cast includes Danny McBride as Jesse Gemstone, Adam Devine (*Pitch Perfect*) as Kelvin Gemstone, Edi Patterson (HBO's *Vice Principals*) as Judy Gemstone, John Goodman (HBO's *Treme*, *The Connors*) as Eli Gemstone, Cassidy Freeman (*Longmire*) as Amber Gemstone, Tony Cavalero (*School of Rock*) as Keefe Chambers, Tim Baltz (*Drunk History*) as BJ, Skyler Gisondo (*Booksmart*) as Gideon Gemstone and Greg Alan

Williams (*Greenleaf*) as Martin Imari. Recurring cast includes Walton Goggins as Baby Billy Freeman, Jennifer Nettles as Aimee-Leigh Gemstone, Jody Hill as Levi, Valyn Hall as Tiffany Freeman, Kelton Dumont as Pontious Gemstone and Gavin Munn as Abraham Gemstone. New recurring cast additions this season include Jason Schwartzman as Thaniel Block, Eric Roberts as Junior, Eric Andre as Lyle Lissons and Jessica Lowe as Lindy Lissons. Season two is executive produced by John Carcieri, Jeff Fradley, and Brandon James; co-executive produced by Jonathan Watson; produced by David Brightbill; and consulting produced by Grant Dekernion, Kevin Barnett, Edi Patterson and Chris Pappas.

reported by deadline.com



MOVIES, SHOWS, & SPORTS

“Cowboy Bebop” (Netflix) Season 1 Review

by Chloe James



When adapting an animated show into live action, you have to follow an extremely delicate plan. You have to be faithful to the original to a point while also bringing something new and unexpected to the table, all while maintaining the overall feel of the original. Where there are few examples of this actually working, there have been no successful examples stemming from an anime.... Until now. Cowboy Bebop follows the bounty hunting duo, Spike Spiegel (John Cho) and Jet Black (Mustafa Shakir), as they go flying around the solar system trying to scrounge up some much needed Woolongs and, in Spike's case, some meat for his bell peppers and noodles. In their adventures, they run into some problematic encounters with the Syndicate, including Vicious (Alex Hassell) and his girlfriend Julia (Elena Satine) who also used to be romantically entangled with Spike. They also make some new friends in another hired gun Faye Valentine (Daniella Pineda) and the everyone's favorite data dog, the corgi known as Ein. The show was

developed by André Nemec (Life on Mars, October Road) and was largely written by Christopher Yost (Thor: Ragnarok, The Mandalorian). The directorial duties were split by Alex Garcia Lopez (The Witcher, Daredevil) and Michael Katleman (The Fix, Reverie, Smallville).

Cowboy Bebop is an anime that I watch on a fairly regular basis, but when they announced the live action show was actually happening, I stopped my annual to bi-annual binges. I knew I had to watch the live action and I knew that if I had watched the original recently, I'd compare the two a little too much. I was cautiously optimistic to put it lightly. As we got closer and closer to release and they kept showing new images from the show, I got more and more excited. I have to say it doesn't disappoint, for the most part. The anime was lightning in a bottle. To expect them to recreate that magic is unrealistic. It's a fool's errand. Characters had to be combined. Story had to be changed or created exclusively for the show. But it never stops feeling like Cowboy Bebop, even with its changes.

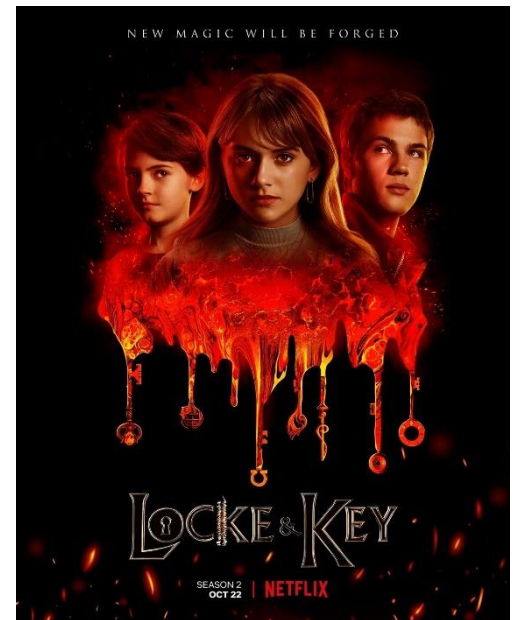
Ever since the cast list was first announced, the one thing I kept seeing on the internet was complaining about John Cho's age. Yes, Spike Spiegel in the anime is 27 and John Cho is 49, but not once while watching the show did I think that he was too old to play the part. He had the complete physicality expected of Spike. Daniella Pineda as Faye Valentine was another person that was complained about because of her outfit, but she is the embodiment of Faye Valentine in my eyes. The person that really blew me away was Mustafa Shakir. There are moments that you can just close your eyes and listen to him speak and just see the anime. I got chills a couple times when he yelled "SPIKE!" While I certainly anticipate some of the major plot and character changes will piss off the more "purist" fans of the series, I can honestly say for myself Cowboy Bebop is one of the

most faithful in spirit (and enjoyable to watch) live action animes I've seen yet.

Final Grade: 8 / 10 (Good)

“Locke and Key” (Netflix) Season 2 Review

by Julie Jones



The first season of Locke and Key was one that was as mysterious as it was enchanting. While it wasn't something that completely consumed me, I thought it was fun to watch and I was very entertained. But, I have to admit that at the end I was wondering where it would go. Haven't we all felt that way after watching the first season of a new show? Sometimes a second season can surpass the first season. Locke and Key continues where it left off, the kids are still in the Keyhouse. They are trying to adjust to life and find some normalcy, but it feels like something is missing. And soon they realize that there is a new mystery to unfurl. But, as you might expect...that mystery isn't the only one and it certainly isn't what it seems. It all seems familiar, but that doesn't mean Season 2 isn't worth watching.





GAMING NEWS

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ROCKET LEAGUE® SEASON 5 HAS BEGUN



Psyonix, the San Diego video game developer, announced that Rocket League Season 5 begins on November 17 on all platforms! The upcoming season blasts into space and will feature a new Arena variant, Rocket Pass, Limited Time Mode (LTM), Competitive Season, and more. Rocket League Season 5 will include: Starbase Arc: Aftermath Arena Variant – The classic Starbase Arc Arena has been invaded by an evil force and will be available once Season 5 begins. Take a look at the new trailer, which features a reimagined version of the song “Player Of Games” made for Season 5 by the artist GRIMES,

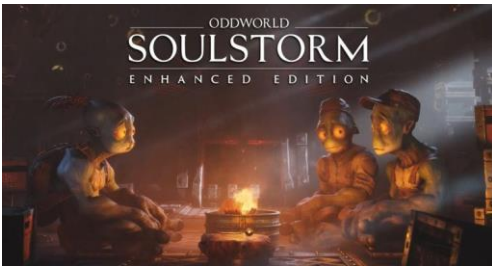
HERE New Rocket Pass – The next Rocket Pass will be headlined by the Nexus car and feature items such as the Spacedirt Paint Finish, Hyperspace Animated Decal, and Cosmosis Goal Explosion. More information about the Season 5 Rocket Pass will be fully revealed next Tuesday, November 16. Heatseeker Ricochet LTM – Players will be able to compete in Heatseeker action with a twist on three new Rocket Labs Arenas (Barricade, Colossus, and Hourglass) beginning November 18. Additional Updates – There will also be general quality of life improvements to the game and Season 4 Competitive Rewards will be distributed shortly after Season 5 begins. For more information, read the latest blog post [HERE](#). Rocket League Season 5 will be live on November 17 following a game update on November 16 at 4 p.m. PST (12 a.m. UTC November 17), pending first party certification. If you or a member of your team is interested in Rocket Pass

Premium codes, please let us know and we will send you a code when Season 5 is live.

ABOUT ROCKET LEAGUE

Winner or nominee of more than 150 “Game of the Year” awards, Rocket League is one of the most critically-acclaimed sports games of our generation. Rocket League is a high-powered hybrid of arcade-style soccer and vehicular mayhem with easy-to-understand controls and fluid, physics-driven competition. Available on Nintendo Switch™, PlayStation®4, PlayStation®5, Xbox One, Xbox Series X|S, and PC on Epic Games Store, Rocket League includes nearly endless customization possibilities, a fully-featured offline season mode, multiple game types, casual and competitive online matches, and special “Mutators” that let you change the rules entirely.

ODDWORLD: SOULSTORM ENHANCED EDITION COMING NOVEMBER 30



Vykkers Lab for Xbox & Toby’s Escape for PlayStation and Epic Games Store. Today, Microids and Oddworld Inhabitants announced that award-winning* action adventure platformer Oddworld: Soulstorm Enhanced Edition will launch on November 30, 2021. It will be available on Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One, PlayStation®5, PlayStation®4, and Epic Games Store. Oddworld: Soulstorm Enhanced Edition includes dramatically improved gameplay mechanics and motion code, audio balance

improvements, seven additional months of polish, improved Slig and follower AI (more intelligent and responsive), as well as all previously released updates and brand-new content. **What’s Soulstorm’s Brand New Content?** Oddworld: Soulstorm Enhanced Edition’s new content is a separate challenge game mode accessed via the main menu once you complete the game. Xbox players will go hands-on with Vykkers Labs, a throwback to classic Oddworld 2.5D gameplay featuring short puzzle-filled levels. Earn leaderboard prestige for speed runs or zero-death performances. For those who don’t recall, Vykkers Labs is a large airborne lab used for pharmaceutical testing on animals and run by the sadistic Vykkers. PlayStation and Epic Games Store players will experience Toby’s Escape. Like Vykkers, it is a throwback to classic Oddworld

gaming with short puzzle-filled levels to master. If you have played Soulstorm, you’ll know Toby from the train, but how did Toby escape RuptureFarms and become the train’s conductor...find out in Toby’s Escape. What If You Already Own Oddworld: Soulstorm? For the millions of gamers who already own Oddworld: Soulstorm on PS5®, PS4®, and Epic Games Store, you will receive the Enhanced Edition as a free update. Pre-Order for Xbox Series X|S & Xbox One The retail versions for the Collector and Day One Editions of Oddworld: Soulstorm Enhanced Edition are already available for pre-order. Fans who pre-order the Day One Edition or Collector’s Edition at participating retailers will also get access to the game’s Original Soundtrack and a Digital Artbook.

FINAL FANTASY XIV: ENDWALKER ANNOUNCES NEW RELEASE DATE



SQUARE ENIX® today announced the highly anticipated fourth expansion pack for its critically acclaimed MMO, *FINAL FANTASY® XIV: Endwalker™*, will now release on December 7, 2021, with Early Access set to begin on December 3. *FINAL FANTASY XIV Online* Producer and Director Naoki Yoshida discussed the new release date during the latest Letter from the Producer LIVE broadcast, and provided the below statement regarding the reasons for the change: *"We sincerely apologize for postponing the release at the last minute on this occasion. FINAL FANTASY XIV: Endwalker is both the latest expansion pack for the game and the one that will conclude the Hydaelyn and Zodiark saga spanning 11 years since the launch of the original FFXIV. "We will of course deliver a new adventure in FFXIV to follow on from Endwalker but, with the various struggles we experienced from the failure of the original FFXIV leading up to where we are now, I just couldn't contain my desire to perfect Endwalker to the best of my ability. As a result, the time we spent on quality improvement exceeded our expectations and we ended up using our time allotted for debugging. On the other hand, as stability is crucial for an online game, I have taken the decision to postpone the release of the expansion pack for two weeks in order to resecure the time for debugging that would arise as we wrap up development. "Once more, I'd like to convey my deepest apologies to all of our Warriors of Light and partners for the inconvenience this has caused. We will continue to do our utmost to bring you the best adventure in Endwalker and to expand the game experience through further updates that will follow, in order to restore your trust step by step."*

A wealth of new content is set to arrive with *Endwalker*, and Yoshida gave updates on the below topics:

- **Crafter and Gatherer Updates** – New crafting and gathering actions will be added along with adjustments for existing actions. Additionally, Studium Deliveries, which are similar to Crystarium Deliveries, will be added for Disciples of the Hand and Land to experience, with extra quests

available upon completing all of the new questlines.

- **New Role Quests** – Players can look forward to a new series of role quests for tank, healer, melee DPS, physical ranged DPS, and magical ranged DPS. Players who complete all five role questlines can look forward to extra quests in a future patch update.
- **New Raids** – Yoshida offered a first look at the Pandæmonium raid during the broadcast. Normal and Savage difficulties will be available for players to challenge in the forthcoming 6.01 and 6.05 patch updates respectively.
- **New Treasure Hunt Dungeon** – A new treasure hunt dungeon, The Excitron 6000, will arrive with Patch 6.05 and offer new chances at rare treasure and spoils.
- **New Housing Area** – The Ishgardian housing area, Empyreum, will be available to visit beginning at the launch of *Endwalker*, with plots becoming available for purchase with the release of Patch 6.1.
- **Expansive System Updates** – New Allagan tomes, crafter and gatherer scripts, updates to the achievement UI, and more will also be added with the upcoming patch updates.



Also detailed during the broadcast were major updates coming to PvP content in Patch 6.1, including new PvP content titled "Crystal Conflict". This new content will provide an all-new ruleset and gameplay experience on new maps, as well as various new systems that can be enjoyed by both casual and competitive players.

- **5v5 Competition** – "Crystal Conflict" will introduce 5v5 team gameplay and an updated matching system that will pair players of similar skill levels together.
- **Exciting PvP Gameplay** – Players will fight for control of a crystal in the middle of the arena as they work to keep control of it long enough for it to be pushed into the opposing team's goal. Crystal

Conflict will feature three playable match types depending on play preference: Casual Match, Ranked Match and Custom Match.

- **Ranked Seasons** – PvP seasons will be available through Crystal Conflict, offering rewards for those who participate and climb the rankings. Additionally, a new "Series Level" feature allows players to gain rewards such as mounts and equipment simply by participating in PvP matches and earning rewards by raising their Series EXP.

Players can look forward to the new upcoming content based on the below patch schedule:

- **December 3, 2021** – Early Access
- **December 7, 2021** – 6.0 Launch
- **December 21, 2021** – Patch 6.01
- **January 4, 2022** – Patch 6.05

Finally, *FINAL FANTASY XIV Online* continues to grow on a global scale, with the upcoming Oceania Data Center scheduled to release in February 2022. It was confirmed during the broadcast that Worlds on the Oceania Data Center will be classified under the "New World" status and provide various bonuses for new players and those who transfer existing characters to those Worlds, including free character transfers during a limited period. Details can be found here: <https://sqex.to/Sn9>.

With more than 24 million total registered players, there has never been a better time for newcomers to begin their adventures in the critically acclaimed *FINAL FANTASY XIV Online* saga. The expanded Free Trial now includes all content from *A Realm Reborn™* and the *Heavensward™* expansion (and updates through Patch 3.56), as well as an additional playable race (Au Ra), and three additional playable jobs (Dark Knight, Astrologian, and Machinist). Free Trial players can enjoy hundreds of hours of award-winning gameplay and story experiences equivalent to two full *FINAL FANTASY* titles, without limit on playtime. More information is available here: <http://sqex.to/FFXIVFreeTrial>

FINAL FANTASY XIV: Endwalker will be available for PC, Mac, PlayStation®4 and PlayStation®5 on December 7, 2021 and is rated T (Teen). Please visit the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) website at www.esrb.org for more information about ratings.

STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC DOCKS ON NINTENDO SWITCH



Experience the legendary RPG classic with vivid HD graphics anywhere in the galaxy

Aspyr and Lucasfilm Games have announced that the original, critically acclaimed, award-winning RPG legend **Star Wars™: Knights of the Old Republic™** is available today on Nintendo Switch via the Nintendo eShop for \$14.99 | £11.29 | 12,49€. Whether you're a long-time fan or a newcomer who has yet to discover this genre-defining adventure, you can experience one of the greatest **Star Wars™** RPG classics ever made at home and on the go in HD fidelity with upgraded resolution, textures, UI and cinematics. Four thousand years before the Galactic Empire,

countless Jedi Knights have fallen in battle against the ruthless Sith, and now you are the last hope of the Jedi Order. Can you master the awesome power of the Force and save the Republic? Or will you fall to the lure of the dark side? Hero or villain, savior or conqueror... you alone will determine the fate of the entire galaxy!

Key Features:

- Journey through the original *Star Wars* RPG classic, set in an era long before the rise of the Empire and filled with unique characters, creatures, vehicles and planets.
- Choose your own path with customizable characters and meaningful decisions that will impact your squad, your story and your destiny.
- Wield your own lightsaber and harness the power of the Force with over 40 different abilities.
- Adventure through eight enormous and iconic *Star Wars* worlds, including

Tatooine and Kashyyyk, in your own daring starship, the Ebon Hawk.

- Choose your party from and build everlasting bonds with nine unique crewmates, including Twi'leks, droids and Wookiees.
- Experience the legend in incredible HD detail with upgraded resolution, textures, UI and cinematics.

Star Wars™: Knights of the Old Republic™ is rated T (Teen) by the ESRB.

About Aspyr

Aspyr is a leading video game publishing and development partner focused on maximizing the potential of games across all platforms and for all players. Today, the company supports a growing network of partners that includes many of the industry's leading entertainment IP holders, publishers, developers, and technology providers. Aspyr is based in Austin, TX. For more information, visit www.aspyr.com



SKYFORGE RETURNS TO TERRA WITH THE HEART OF STEEL UPDATE, AVAILABLE NOW!

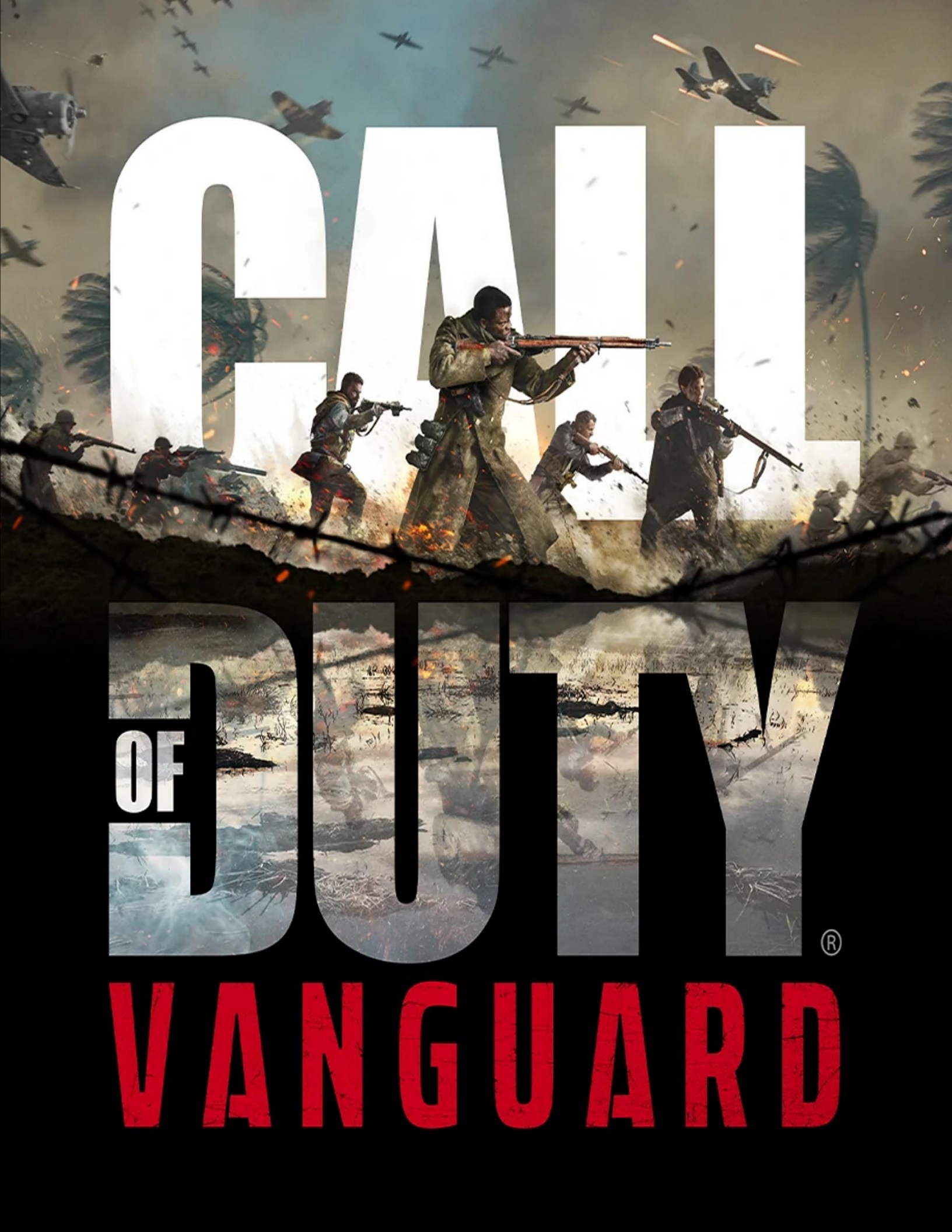


Free update will return players to Terra for a new Dungeon, Adventure, and PvP Arena.

MY.GAMES has announced a new free update for fantasy MMORPG Skyforge.

Heart of Steel will launch today on PC, PS4, PS5, Xbox One, and Xbox Series X|S. The update contains a continuation of the ongoing storyline, two new dungeons and a new PvP Arena. Continuing the Terra storyline, heroes will delve deeper than ever before into the bowels of this mysterious planet in a new adventure. Immortals will be able to bore into Terra's Crystal Grottoes, which are awash with glowing water and shimmering crystals – a priceless, highly-coveted resource – while fending off evil forces. Heart of Steel will also bring Wynd's Laboratory, a new 5-player Dungeon, where players will uncover the

dark secrets harboured in an industrial unit made by the father of the Mechanoids, the sinister William Wynd (also known as The Integrator). After epic adventures, users will be able to have a bit of fun fighting it out with other Immortals playing in two teams of three in a new PvP Arena named Xintara's Trial. Players will battle for supremacy across a map based on Terra's subterranean labyrinthine netwo



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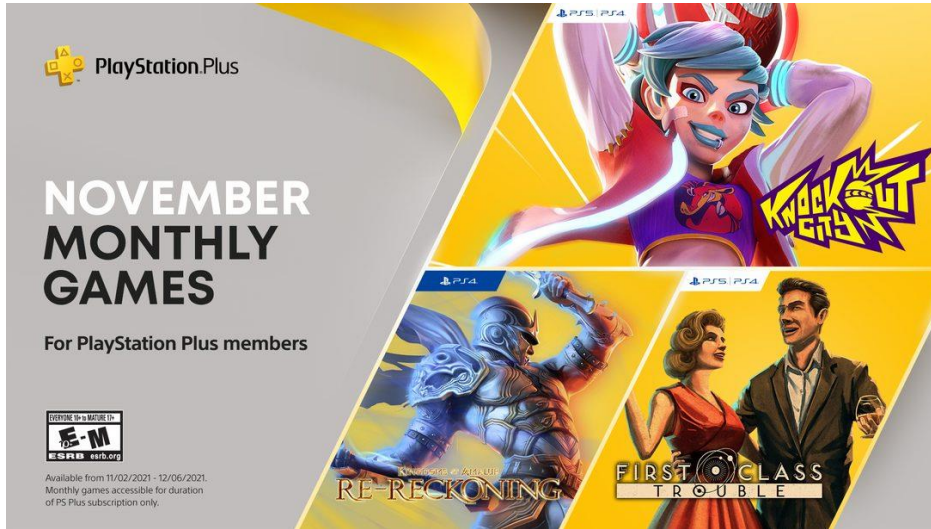
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QR Code**



**Accepted
in Local Store**



PLAYSTATION PLUS GAMES FOR NOVEMBER: *KNOCKOUT CITY*, *FIRST CLASS TROUBLE*, *KINGDOMS OF AMALUR: RE-RECKONING*



It's a bumper PlayStation Plus lineup this November, with six titles in total available to add to your game library starting Tuesday, November 2. Partake in an epic dodgeball tournament with Knockout City, play sleuth and spot imposters in social deduction game First Class Trouble, then wield weapons and battle monsters in the fantasy world of Kingdoms of Amalur: Re-Reckoning. And to celebrate PS VR's 5th anniversary, this month's PlayStation Plus lineup will include three bonus PS VR titles. Survive the horrors aboard a procedurally generated spaceship in The Persistence, tackle zombies in The Walking Dead: Saints & Sinners and showcase your sword skills in roguelike Before The Fall.

Knockout City | PS5 & PS4

Team up and duke it out with rival crews in style as you settle the score with epic dodgeball battles online*. Brace yourself for outrageous fun and intense competition in an all-new take on team-based multiplayer games. Customize your character and form a crew with friends to start your Knockout City takeover. Knock out opponents with trick shots and coordinated teamwork while dodging and catching balls flying across the map. No ball? No problem! You can literally ball up, roll into a teammate's hands, and become the ultimate weapon.

First Class Trouble** | PS5 & PS4

First Class Trouble is a social deduction party game where six people play together online* aboard a luxury space cruiser. At the start of each game, four players will be randomly selected to be Residents, cooperatively trying to shut down a rogue A.I. at the heart of the ship. The other two players will be Personoids, who will lie, deceive, and do whatever it takes to stop them! Teamwork is the key to survival, but who can you trust?

Kingdoms of Amalur: Re-Reckoning | PS4

From the minds of the bestselling author R.A. Salvatore, Spawn creator Todd McFarlane, and Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion lead designer Ken Rolston, comes Kingdoms of Amalur: Re-Reckoning. Remastered with stunning visuals and refined gameplay Re-Reckoning delivers intense, customizable RPG combat inside a sprawling game world. Uncover the secrets of Amalur, from the vibrant city of Rathir to the vast region of Dalenarth to the grim dungeons of the Brigand Hall Caverns. Rescue a world torn apart by a vicious war and control the keys to immortality as the first warrior ever to be resurrected from the grips of death.

The Persistence | PS VR***

The Persistence challenges you to survive aboard a doomed deep space colony starship in the year 2521. Stranded, malfunctioning, and caught in the inexorable pull of a black hole, "The Persistence" is overrun with a crew mutated into horrific & murderous aberrations. It's down to you, a clone of security officer Zimri Eder, to make your way deeper in the decks of The Persistence to repair the systems and prevent the ship from being torn apart. Gather resources, upgrade abilities and fabricate an arsenal of weapons in this brutal sci-fi horror rogue-lite.

The Walking Dead: Saints & Sinners – Standard Edition | PS VR***

Face all the horrors that the living and the dead can offer in this new VR adventure in The Walking Dead universe. Travel through the ruins of walker infested New Orleans as you fight, sneak, scavenge, and survive each day unraveling a city wide mystery within the iconic quarters. Encounter desperate factions and lone survivors who could be friend or foe. Whether you help others or take what you want by force, every choice you make has consequences. What kind of survivor will you be for the people of NOLA?

GAME RELEASES FOR NOVEMBER 2021

<u>PRODUCT</u>	<u>COMPANY</u>	<u>FORMAT</u>	<u>RELEASE DATE</u>
<u>Conway: Disappearance at Dahlia View</u>	Sold Out	NS, PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	02/11/2021
<u>Giants Uprising</u>	Varsav Games Studio	PC	02/11/2021 (Early access)
<u>Tunche</u>	LEAP Game Studios	NS, PC, PS4, XO	02/11/2021
<u>Usurper: Soulbound</u>	Caspian Interactive	PC	02/11/2021
<u>World War Z</u>	Solutions2Go	NS	02/11/2021
<u>World War Z</u>	Solutions2Go	NS	02/11/2021
<u>Bloody Rally Show</u>	Digerati	PS4	03/11/2021
<u>Evercade VS</u>	Evercade		03/11/2021
<u>Bloody Rally Show</u>	Digerati	NS	04/11/2021
<u>Demon Turf</u>	Playtonic Friends	NS, PS4, PS5, XSX	04/11/2021
<u>Just Dance 2022</u>	Ubisoft	NS, PS4, PS5, Stad, XO, XSX	04/11/2021
<u>MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM BATTLE OPERATION Code Fairy</u>	Bandai Namco	PS4, PS5	04/11/2021
<u>Recipe For Disaster</u>	Kasedo Games	PC	04/11/2021 (Early access)
<u>Spacelines from the Far Out</u>	Skystone Games	PC, XO	04/11/2021
<u>Stardrytch</u>	Nils Kastens	PC	04/11/2021
<u>Starsand</u>	Toplitz Productions	PC	04/11/2021 (Early access)
<u>To The Rescue!</u>	Freedom Games	Mac, PC	04/11/2021
<u>TramSim Munich</u>	Aerosoft		04/11/2021
<u>Bloody Rally Show</u>	Digerati	XO	05/11/2021
<u>Call of Duty: Vanguard</u>	Activision	NS, PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	05/11/2021
<u>Len's Island</u>	Flow Studio	Mac, PC	05/11/2021 (Early access)
<u>Let's Build a Zoo</u>	No More Robots	PC	05/11/2021 (Closed beta)

<u>PRODUCT</u>	<u>COMPANY</u>	<u>FORMAT</u>	<u>RELEASE DATE</u>
<u>Stilstand</u>	Niila Games	NS, PS4	05/11/2021
<u>Blue Reflection: Second Light</u>	KOEI TECMO EUROPE LTD	NS, PC, PS4, PS5, XO	09/11/2021
<u>BLUE REFLECTION: Second Light</u>	KOEI TECMO	NS, PC, PS4	09/11/2021
<u>Death Becomes You</u>	Quill Studios	PC	09/11/2021
<u>Football Manager 2022</u>	SEGA	An, iOS, Mac, PC, XO	09/11/2021
<u>Football Manager 2022</u>	SEGA	PC	09/11/2021
<u>Football Manager 2022</u>	SEGA		09/11/2021
<u>Forza Horizon 5</u>	Microsoft	PC, XO, XSX	09/11/2021
<u>My Singing Monsters Playground</u>	Big Blue Bubble	NS, PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	09/11/2021
<u>Sparklite</u>	Merge Games	An, iOS	09/11/2021
<u>Captain Toonhead vs the Punks from Outer Space</u>	Teravision Games	Oculus Rift, PC, PSVR, Quest	11/11/2021
<u>Epic Chef</u>	Team17	NS, PC, PS4, XO	11/11/2021
<u>Interior Designer</u>	Microids	Mac, NS, PC, PS4, XO	11/11/2021
<u>Kainga: Seeds of Civilization</u>	Green Man Gaming Publishing		11/11/2021
<u>Pups & Purrs Animal Hospital</u>	Aksys	NS	11/11/2021
<u>Shin Megami Tensei V</u>	Atlus	NS	11/11/2021
<u>STAR WARS: Knights of the Old Republic</u>	Aspyr Media	An, iOS, NS	11/11/2021
<u>SYNTHETIK 2</u>	Flow Fire Games		11/11/2021
<u>Game & Watch: The Legend of Zelda</u>	Nintendo		12/11/2021
<u>Grow: Song of the Evertree</u>	505 Games	NS, PC, PS4, XO	16/11/2021
<u>Marsupilami: Hoobadventure</u>	Microids	NS, PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	16/11/2021
<u>Sherlock Holmes: Chapter One</u>	Frogwares	PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	16/11/2021
<u>The Last Stand: Aftermath</u>	Armor Games	PC, PS4, PS5, XSX	16/11/2021
<u>Creepy Tale 2</u>	Creepy Brothers	XO, XSX	17/11/2021

<u>PRODUCT</u>	<u>COMPANY</u>	<u>FORMAT</u>	<u>RELEASE DATE</u>
<u>Klang 2</u>	Ratalaika Games	NS, PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	17/11/2021
<u>BloodRayne 2: ReVamped</u>	Ziggurat Interactive	NS, PS4, XO	18/11/2021
<u>BloodRayne: ReVamped</u>	Ziggurat Interactive	NS, PS4, XO	18/11/2021
<u>Century: Age of Ashes</u>	Playwing		18/11/2021
<u>Planetary Control</u>	Kerberos Productions	PC	18/11/2021
<u>Space Moth: Lunar Edition</u>	Chorus Worldwide	NS, PC, PS4, XO	18/11/2021
<u>The Lady Afterwards</u>	Weather Factory	Tbl	18/11/2021
<u>LEGO Star Wars: Castaways</u>	Gameloft	iOS	19/11/2021
<u>Moncage</u>	X.D. Network Inc.	An, iOS, PC	19/11/2021
<u>NASCAR Heat Ultimate Edition+</u>	Motorsport Games	NS	19/11/2021
<u>Alpine - The Simulation Game</u>	Aerosoft	PC, PS4	23/11/2021
<u>Brewmaster</u>	Auroch Digital	PC	23/11/2021 (Alpha)
<u>FINAL FANTASY® XIV: Endwalker</u>	Square Enix	Mac, PC, PS4, PS5	23/11/2021
<u>Let's Sing 2022</u>	Ravenscourt	NS, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	23/11/2021
<u>Puppies & Kittens</u>	Microids	Mac, NS, PC, PS4	23/11/2021
<u>Asterix & Obelix: Slap them All!</u>	Microids	NS, PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	25/11/2021
<u>DEEEER Simulator : Quite normal deer game</u>	Gibier Game	PC	25/11/2021
<u>Pandemic Train</u>	Triggerlabs	PC	25/11/2021

CALL OF DUTY

VANGUARD

Review by
K. Scott Cooper and Marcus Blake

Marcus Blake Review



After a few years, Call of Duty finally went back to its roots and made a WWII story. I think Call of Duty is always at its best when it does a WWII story and Call of Duty: Vanguard is actually pretty amazing. I won't say that it's the best Call of Duty game set during World War II. Call of Duty 2 and Call of Duty: World at War are still absolutely amazing games and they're still fun to go back and play on an old console. I mean, I'd be lying if I said that soon after I was done with the Vanguard campaign, I didn't start Call of Duty 2 again on an Xbox 360 and World at War is next. Call of Duty is still the biggest first-person shooter franchise in

the gaming world, but it does have a few hit and misses. Unfortunately, as cool as it might be to go back into the Modern War franchise or the Black Ops franchise as in the case of the last two games that the Call of Duty put out, those stories still never beat a good WWII story. For all the complaints that we've had at That Nerd Show about Call of Duty not really being that good anymore, I can honestly say that Call of Duty hit it out of the park with Vanguard.

While this campaign is not your typical WWII story, it does give us a different side of the war we're Gamers deal with Allied special forces and more behind the scenes warfare than the typical battles that we know from history. Those are always fun to play. But we've also played those campaigns before in other Call of Duty games so it's only right that we get a brand-new campaign and get to see something different set and WWII. Well, I'm not going to spoil the entire campaign, the basic story is about a Special Forces Unit made up of an American Soldier, a Russian soldier, an Australian Soldier and an American pilot who are tasked with hunting down the remaining members of the Third Reich as there trying to escape Germany when they know that the Nazi regime has lost the war. But the bulk of the campaign is playing each of the soldier's backstories where you get to see the different war fronts like the Airborne invasion of France after D-Day or the Battle of Midway in the Pacific and my personal favorite, a Russian sniper surviving the

Battle of Stalingrad. You get to participate in all of the battlefronts that we are used to seeing within the Call of Duty franchise while at the same time dealing with a stealthier type of war as in the case of the sniper story. So, the gameplay isn't just playing through different battlefronts like in Call of Duty 2. Players actually get to experience the same kind of gameplay, but also mix in with a little bit of Black Ops in a retro setting, which is fantastic. And of course, the campaign does leave you hanging a little bit knowing that Nazis did Escape Germany and that they had future plans for what would be the Fourth Reich so I'm sure there will be sequels with a storyline. And who wouldn't play a storyline while you're hunting down Nazis that are hiding all around the world after World War II. I would play the "shit" out of that game, would you? But when it comes to grading the campaign itself oh, it's definitely an "A." My only complaint is that it feels too short.

The gameplay is decent although there's a few bugs that need to be worked out. I shouldn't have to drop it down to an easy level just to kill certain bad guys and it shouldn't take 5 headshots to get some of them down. I think my biggest complaint on the gameplay is when using a sniper rifle it should only take one shot to get someone down and I've had to use more bullets with a sniper rifle. As in other Call of Duty games it's a good technique that when you are controlling your breathing the game

slows down a little bit to make the shot more easily, but even in a video game, a headshot is a headshot and you're not coming back from that. One-shot, one kill and that's all it should take. I did find some glitches throughout the game that can easily be fixed with "patches" and I'll be interested in seeing if those get fixed the next time I go through the campaign because the campaign is good enough that I will replay it. All Call of Duty games have glitches, it's going to happen. However, a lot of these shouldn't happen on a "day one" launch like getting killed by grenades and not being able to see the grenade indicator, especially when there's smoke or sand being blown all over the place in a firefight. I think I was killed more by enemy grenades and not being able to see the grenade indicator and throw it back than anything else



The only other big complaint I have is flying should be a bit easier, especially when dive-bombing and pulling up during the Battle of Midway. I found myself having to drop it down to an easy level just to accomplish the task because the correct buttons you're supposed to press didn't pop up in time and I crashed on the hard deck of an enemy aircraft carrier more than once. Also, I have to remind myself that this is Call of Duty, and their strong suit is not aerial combat. but even with some minor critiques, I was still able to enjoy the gameplay in the campaign. As for

multiplayer, it's the same kind of multiplayer that you're used to accept that you are on more WWII Maps with more sophisticated weapons. the same problems we all always have in multiplayer are still there. I have found the best strategy is to get a good scope on whatever rifle you're using and find a way to hide behind doors or entryways along paths where there's a lot of traffic and then you can easily pick off the enemy. But the same problems with every other multiplayer where it takes multiple shots to the head to get a guy down is still an issue and very frustrating. The zombie mode is good, but different. I won't say that it's the best zombie mode we've ever had in Call of Duty, but zombies never truly disappoint. A zombie mode with different portals that take you to different survival missions is interesting. It's something new and if you like playing zombies in Call of Duty then just be aware that it may not be something you're not used to, but you can still have fun with this mode. Although there have definitely been better zombie maps. Call of Duty Black Ops 3 was not a very good game, but the zombie Chronicles are incredible. Sometimes the weakest campaigns have the best zombie modes when it comes to a Call of Duty game so I would look at the zombie mode in Vanguard as just average, but you can still have fun with it.

Overall, this is a good Call of Duty game. It is worth the price and will certainly have some replay value unlike the last two Call of Duty games. Getting back to its roots and having an interesting WWII story at the tail end of the war that could lead into post-World War II stories is a good thing unlike having ridiculous storylines set in the future where they're just trying to be the Battlefield Franchise or Halo. I'm talking about Advanced Warfare and Infinite Warfare. In Vanguard, each of the characters' backstories are incredible stories, especially that of the Russian sniper because it makes you feel like you are in the movie "Enemy at the Gates." I would honestly say that out of all the World War II Call of Duty games while Vanguard is not the best, it's certainly

one of the better ones and the future of this storyline looks bright. I have not necessarily been impressed with Call of Duty over the past few years since the last World War II story, but this game made me want to continue playing the Call of Duty franchise, especially if they're going to continue this storyline. I had pretty much given up on the franchise, but I can honestly say that Activision has won me back with Vanguard and I hope they continue to make sequels within the storyline. Overall, Vanguard is a good game. if you're a fan of Call of Duty, this game will make you excited for the franchise again. Call of Duty: Vanguard is a 7.

K. Scott Cooper. Review



Going back to your roots or going back to basics doesn't always have to be a complete reboot or overhaul of what you are good at and for once it seems like Activision has finally produced a game worth buying! Yeah, I know, bit of a shock coming from me, but gang this goes beyond just a basic WWII game. This is a fantastic storyline that comes at you from different points of the war to the final moments of Nazi Germany through a very well-planned and properly performed cinematic tale of a joint Allied operation that takes place behind enemy lines. This isn't just good voice acting dressed up behind a bunch of crappy hype, this is real actors with a real script playing roles that may not be historically on the money, but this is the Nazi killing team we have needed for a long time. They designed the playthrough of the game to be done either full bore blowing up everything or you go in silent with a blade in your hand, now with this being said Call of Duty Vanguard does have some familiar moments with the sniper storyline of

Lady Nightingale that takes us back to the Russian side of the war in Call of Duty: World at War and the same can be said for whole of the Pacific play through with Wade in Vanguard feeling just a touch too much like Pvt. Miller's hell in you guessed it World at War, I also understand that there is only so much you can do in a WWII game.

However, a good historian could have offered up some tasty alternatives giving us a full package deal of something completely new and powerful lady character that could have been based of any of the amazing Female pilots of WWII known as The Night Witches, these ladies had those Nazi bastards shitting in their jackboot for real and they did some amazing things in planes at night! Hence the name and we could have introduced a joint flipping it on its head by dropping us into Operation Typhoon that was joint Nazi and Imperial Japanese submarine attack force that featured mixed crews of Germans and Japanese, now take away Wade's role as a Pilot and shift him to an Aircraft Gunner and have him get shot down on an island where Typhoon was being based. This would make his Focus ability make a touch more sense in the storyline and would be a score of fun shooting Zeros from a ball turret, yes it would be very similar to the mission of The Black

Cats in World at War, but it would be much more interesting and engaging than what was given. I also feel that the game does a piss poor job highlighting the struggles of Arthur and properly illustrating what was actually faced by troops of color during the War and gives this half-assed glaze over blurb that can easily mislead people into thinking that race relations were on the level of chill the game plays it to be. I do understand that there are a large number of Call of Duty fans who would be classified as a Racist Neck Beard. So, I'm not completely shocked at Activision is all I really have to say, but I will say that I found it enjoyable that the lead character is a well-rounded and well-balanced character that is a person of color. Guess what gang? They don't even kill him in the end or pull some silly hero stunt, nope this time we got all the moments of loss and death of team members or friends/friends at just the right moments with just the right people dying in front of you. It is my honest hope that this will usher in a new age of Call of Duty, which have narratives that are balanced and equal, with all social issues aside, this game does well to highlight that the Nazis were and are still the bad guys, and gives the player the satisfaction of no holds barred violence against those evil turds.

Does this returning to the roots mean a new wind of change blowing through the drab halls of Activision? I have no clue, but Call of Duty: Vanguard gave me a degree of hope that I haven't had in the franchise for some time. It also does give me a touch of excitement of what is to come with as they continue the narrative of this team and their mean Nazi killing ways. So, as we wrap this game review up and get to the scoring with a shocking 7 out of 10, not going to sell "fibs" or give the wrong ideas this game does have a replay feel that will make you want to go through the campaign at least twice. Oh wait, you want to know about the Multiplayer? I haven't played it because it's pretty much the same old stuff they have been doing for the past 10 years and are tying the season pass tiers together with Warzone and Black Ops Cold War. I may poke my head in when my player level his Prestige 1, but that is a big fat maybe that has been warned twice by his Doctor and just won't put down the pie. I'm not telling you to rush out the door and grab it like a life-changing experience, pick it up when you feel like it, but know that you are getting yourself into something I dare say... very fun. Call of Duty: Vanguard is a 7

Final Grade: 7 / 10 (Okay)



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR SQUAD LEADER

BY K. SCOTT COOPER



THE UNDEAD WAITING ROOM!

A REVIEW OF CALL OF DUTY: VANGUARD ZOMBIES

The saying used in pop culture goes “less is more.” which in the grand scheme of how Activision generates additional content it makes one pause for concern where they will go with the zombies mode in their newest release Call of Duty Vanguard. Now in the past we have seen the zombies mode sprout from a very small mini game at the end of the credits for World at War and as the fans cried out for more and more, it grew slowly with the adding of a few new maps, and then game a small slightly silly story line that was still never really expected to be anything lasting. Then as the fans screamed for more and more something started to happen around Black Ops, where more little bits of a very wacky dark story line akin to Wacky Racers on a racist acid trip that had so many holes no one was sure what was really going on. Then branches sprouted as we saw the various versions and sequels come and go in the Call of Duty series, most would feature some mode or another where players would hold out against ever increasing waves of mean

baddies to fight until the ultimate end of the player being overwhelmed at the bitter end. Black Ops 4 became the first blossoms to bloom as they ended the first narrative and all those that directly touched with it, they also introduced another story line/world that may return or it may not. It was at that point that the pedals fell and the bitter cold winter set in, Call of Duty WWII brought a chilling wind that gave zombies a raw feeling of horror and playing at the roots of how dark zombies could really go in Call of Duty and at the same time giving Hardcore fans like myself brought excitement back to what had become too farfetched and over the top. We saw no return of our beloved game mode in the reboot of Modern Warfare and many of us wondered if it would ever return and my how it has returned, now knowing what they have Activision as taken I wonderful flowering plant and put in a new conservatory the was Black Ops Cold War.

Zombies had returned, but it was somehow different and now there was an established story line that was clearly designed be more and have something more to it, the single familiar name of Samantha Maxis is all that remains of what was. Activision allowed zombies to evolve by giving us the story linked mode of Outbreak, giving more options to solo players to discover as much of the extra lore as squads could in past versions and filling wait time between story maps with extra little side mission that bridge the gaps of time passed between events. Then Activision created the waiting room for us as they announced the release of Vanguard, by leaving teasers collectibles that can be found in outbreak as they released more seasonal content. Then the big announcement that Vanguard’s Zombie mode is connected to that of Black Ops Cold War, but does not have a set story line as of yet. So, the waiting room got a fresh new coat of paint and that is about it. Sadly there isn't much to say in the way of the Zombies mode of Vanguard, players can run at it solo or in a squad up to four, were they perform the same

three style of objective missions over and over again to unlock different parts of the small map meant to be the city square in Stalingrad are unlocked, completing the objectives gives you a “Black Heart.” which allows you to get randomly generated effects that act much like the weapon mods from previous versions of the mode. With there being no story in place to drive the map or the game play past what the player can survive or what they can endure before boredom with the repetitive bad character writing of needlessly tacky demons takes over and you exfil the map. Which at this time offers only bonus experience because there is no system currently in place to upgrade perks or mods you get from selling the hearts, so if you are looking for a mode where you can work your weapons and get familiar with the absolute bare basics, here you go. In all honesty it does feel as if they will be introducing a lot more to what this mode has to bring and new blooms left to flower, all else aside it feels as if this simplification is being done to slowly introduce the new changes that will be made to the ever-changing incarnation that is the Zombies game mode. As a returning Zombies fan and veteran of the mode it makes me very nervous to what this will bring for the future, in the same breath it brings me excitement because I feel that despite the faults of past games the redeeming aspects of them have been the zombie modes of each. I personally enjoyed the direction of the story line in Black Ops Cold War and I am excited to see how they unfold what is to come surrounding the Dark Aether and what other possible secrets there are to reveal past Project Endstation’s research, so here we are gang in the big undead waiting room and I’m just as nervous as you are. Until Activision gives the word on what will become of this clearly not finished part of the game, which I happily accept instead of an unfinished Campaign, all we can do is wait and well get back into our favorite past zombie modes.



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The **NERD** Opinion

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"8-BIT CHRISTMAS" IS THE GAMER'S CHRISTMAS CLASSIC!

By Marcus Blake



There's a lot of holiday classics that we watch every year and one in particular that deals with getting that perfect Christmas present. If you are a child of the 80's, you grew up with *A Christmas story*. You also grew up with such films as *Christmas Vacation* or *Home Alone*. And yes, *Elf* is the perfect Christmas movie, but we've never had a gamer's Christmas Story. We've never had a movie that dealt with the struggle of gamers getting a brand-new console and what they had to go through to find one when every store seems to be sold out. Well, now we have that movie in *8-Bit Christmas* and the setting couldn't be more perfect. Set during the 1980s when kids were struggling to get a brand-new Nintendo Entertainment System, that's right the original Nintendo. Even though it had come out in America about 1985, it still wasn't a popular gaming system until about 1988 and that was the year when more systems were produced and more kids wanted it, which led to huge shortages in store during the holidays. I know this because I lived through it, and I was one of the lucky ones to get an original Nintendo that year thanks to a loving and scrappy mother who I'm still convinced had to fight other mothers at a Walmart to get me the perfect Christmas gift. So, I can honestly say that for a gamer, the new Christmas classic will be *8-Bit Christmas* because it is about the struggle of 10 and 11 year olds, trying to get a Nintendo and living in a town where it seemed like only one kid had one. But there were shortages and of course there were evil parents who thought video games rotted children's brains and would stop at nothing to deprive kids of a Nintendo Entertainment System. Yes, there were those kinds of parents who convinced the other parents that video games were bad. We don't talk about that nowadays, but it was a real fear in the 80s, the equivalent of crazy Christians thinking that Dungeons & Dragons and fantasy role-play was

of the devil. Yeah, it sounds like something like that would never happen, but you had to be there. Just like they say in the movie, "It was the 80's, things got real!"

But yes, *8-bit Christmas* Even if it's not as good as other Christmas movies will be a Christmas Classic, I'm convinced of that because it's a movie especially for gamers. The best way I can describe the movie is it's a mixture of *The Goonies*, *The Wizard*, and *A Christmas Story*. I'm not even going to say it is as good as other Christmas movies, but it doesn't have to be. It's just a fun movie and if you've ever played video games or got a new console for Christmas, you will appreciate it especially if you've played video games since the Atari era. I've been there since the beginning and remember how cool it was to have an 8-bit gaming system. I think the movie is fantastic, I cannot wait to watch it again and it is brought to you by the same studio that made *Elf* so you know it's a heartwarming tale and you will laugh. Of course, there's the all-important Christmas message that family is more important than getting a new gaming console. Yes, that's true, but also just as important is the adventures we had as kids when trying to get that new console or some other toy. We would plan a special ops type mission to get what our parents wouldn't let us have by pooling our allowance together just so we could afford to buy something we would all have to share and then hiding it from our parents if we needed to. You know, something that the *Goonies* would do. I think as we get older, we forget that some of the best times we had in our lives is when we were kids and the adventures we had with our friends. To me that was the best part about this movie because, I feel like I would have done what they did if my mother hadn't gotten me a Nintendo for Christmas. And the Steve Zahn character very much reminded me of my father who was very frugal to the point of being cheap and would not buy a new gaming system. That's something I would have to earn money for.

But I do firmly believe this is the next great Christmas classic and maybe that's just the nerd in me because I'm a gamer. *8-bit Christmas* is funny and down-to-earth and captures all of those perfect moments of our childhood like playing video games with your friends. It also perfectly captures all the tropes of the 80s with

crazy Christian parents who wanted to end the video game industry because they thought it was bad to the shortages stores had on toys like Cabbage Patch Kids and gaming consoles. And my favorite little metaphor was just how awful the Power Glove turned out to be, but it looked cool. When I finished watching the movie, I remembered the year I got a Nintendo, it was 1988 and me and my cousins spent the majority of Christmas that year in the extra bedroom at my grandparent's house trying to beat *Super Mario* (NES) and of course this was before we knew any of the cheat codes and how you could warp to other levels.



cousin and I who have been playing *Madden* since we were kids, first started "duking" it out on Tecmo Bowl. There's a lot of movies that are more nostalgic then really being good. If I was a harsh critic of this movie, I probably only give it a 7, but the Nostalgia factor and reminding me of my childhood makes it an instinct Christmas classic for me. If you're a nerd and you're a gamer, I guarantee you're going to watch this movie just like *Elf* or *Christmas Vacation* or *A Christmas Story* for the 50th time. *8-bit Christmas* is a gamer's Christmas Story just like *Fanboys* is for every hardcore Star Wars fan who had the idea that they should break into Skywalker Ranch in steel an early print of the Star Wars movie. *8-bit Christmas* is the Christmas movie made for every child who grew up in the 80s and played video games. And this movie couldn't have been more well-timed since gamers are dealing with shortages this holiday season on the new PlayStation 5 or the Xbox Series X a year later after they came out. So for the gamers who grew up in the 80's, this is the Christmas movie you watch first before you watch any other Christmas movie.... like I said, it's a gamer's Christmas Story and we definitely need one among all the other Christmas movies we watch every year!

Also, my mother was also smart enough to get a couple of extra games like *Tecmo Bowl* and *Ice Hockey*. My

COWBOY BEBOP IS BETTER AS ANIME!

A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

by Julie Jones



I am not really an anime fan. But, there are a few anime and manga that are the exception. Whether I love Ranma 1/2 or Cowboy Bebop more is pretty hard to decide, but if you ask me whether I prefer Ninja Scroll or Ghost in the Shell, that's an easy one. Sometimes I actually prefer the anime to the manga. It really just depends. And when I heard that they were making a live-action Cowboy Bebop I wanted to be excited. But, I also knew there was a lot of room for error. Cowboy Bebop is a series about a crew that runs through space working jobs, collecting bounties. Bebop is the name of the ship and Cowboy is a

term used for bounty hunters. Spike is the main character, played by John Cho. He is a cocky guy who is too cool for anyone and always seems to remain chill. It doesn't matter what chaos he walks into, there is always reason for him to remain calm. He runs into little snags in his plans here and there but always seems to find a way out. Maybe he will end up losing out on the deal, but he'll still be breathing. The storylines in this series were the same ones you can find in the anime. That shouldn't be any surprise.

But, I thought that they could have tried to write something that was a LITTLE different here and there, instead of going line by line and straight along the plot points laid out for them. Of course, I am sure that they avoided this to keep the peace with fans. Still, you can stay true to the story while keeping it a little fresh. The direction isn't anything new, but the aesthetic is something a little more rare. While it isn't anything we haven't seen before, it is something that feels close to a flat comic display. The colors are like muted comic colors and add to the feel, keeping it true to the original series. The mood manipulation here is good, but is lost on most scenes.

The acting is the only thing you can really comment on since everything

else is a replica of the anime. And I have to say that it was flat. I love John Cho as much as anyone, but he wasn't a good choice for Spike. He didn't have the swagger or charm and the acting was just short of what it needed to be. However, that seemed to be the theme with most of the cast. Even to the point where a lot of great characters become annoying kid sisters of themselves. I'm looking at you Faye and Ed.

While I thought overall it could have been worse, I didn't really LIKE it. I would give it a seven and a half overall, but we don't do that here...so, it's a seven. I thought it could have been done better and I thought there was a lot of room for potential that was easy to fill. It seemed pretty dialed in. It really felt like someone took the anime series and decided to make school theater version of it. Overall, I doubt I will watch it again, but I did think it was worth seeing if you're a fan. If you are wondering if you should see it, give it a watch. Just make sure you have something to drink nearby or something to do during. At least until Einstein shows up and then you can just do what I did...scream "EINIE!!!" Every time he shows up. The cute little rascal makes Cowboy Bebop worth watching.



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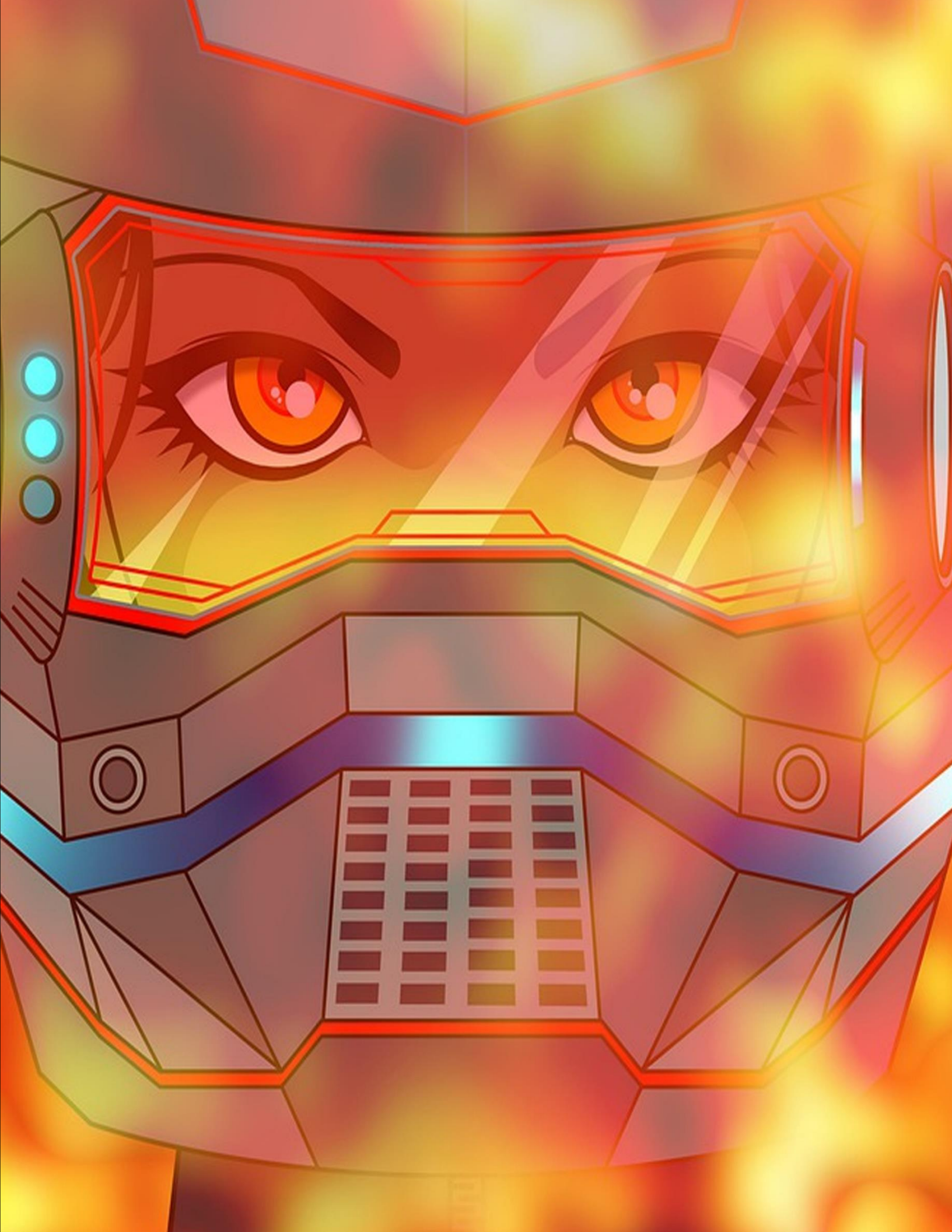
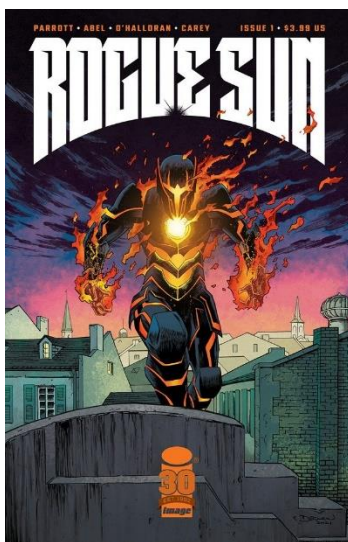


IMAGE SUPERHERO UNIVERSE EXPANDS IN FEBRUARY 2022 WITH SUPERMASSIVE ONE-SHOT CROSSOVER EVENT & ROGUE SUN SERIES LAUNCH



Two momentous new releases will join Kyle Higgins and Marcelo Costa's *Radiant Black* in the Image Comics superhero universe in February 2022. The month will kick off with an eye-melting, page-turning crossover superhero event in *Supermassive* one-shot by writers Kyle Higgins, Ryan Parrott and Mat Groom and artist Francesco Manna. Then, fans will be primed and ready to return to comic shops to get their hands on the pulse-pounding new ongoing series launch – *Rogue Sun* by writer Ryan Parrott (*Mighty Morphin, Power Rangers, Dead Day*) and artists Abel (*Harley Quinn, Crimes of Passion*) & Chris O'Halloran. "The best part of making comic books is the collaboration," said Higgins in an exclusive scoop about the announcement that ran on *io9*. "My favorite part is when that collaboration is with your friends. From *Power Rangers* to *Ultraman*, Mat, Ryan and I have done quite a bit of world building together. All of which feels a bit like a warmup act for what we're building now. To echo Mat's sentiment – there's a reason we're calling this *Supermassive*. Thirty years ago, Image changed the superhero game. This February, we're excited to help kick off the next stage of where creator owned superheroes can go." Groom added to *io9*: "There's a tremendous freedom that comes with doing creator-owned comics. But that freedom comes with a responsibility – to experiment, to swing for the fences... and maybe even to encourage people to rethink where the fence should be. I think anybody who has been reading *Radiant Black* can attest to the fact that Kyle and Marcelo have been living up to this responsibility – and I see *Supermassive* as not only continuing this, but escalating it dramatically. There's a reason we gave it that name!" Manna said also: "One of the things I love most in the

world of comics is the feeling between creators working on a project. It's a synergy that drives every story and every page to its best. That's what brings Kyle, Mat and I together again for this *Supermassive* story." These two epic superhero drops will leave *Radiant Black* fans breathless and provide a jolt of high octane action to new readers interested in jumping in on the excitement. Parrott comes to Image – after lending his talents to 50+ issues of *Power Rangers* – for his first image book by creating an original Image superhero. "I was thirteen when Image Comics was born and I remember collecting every single one of those founding series. So the idea that thirty years later, I'd add a character to the ranks and become a part of this legacy is more than a dream come true," said Parrott. "To me, the beauty of the original Image shared superhero universe was that it was modern, accessible and free from the weight of massive corporate oversight. It felt like it was just a bunch of friends telling stories together and we wanted *Supermassive* to encapsulate that same spirit." First, 2021's hottest new superhero *Radiant Black* launches into his first ever crossover event with the Image Comics debut of *Inferno Girl Red* – spinning out of the highly successful Kickstarter – which is coming to Image later next year and the first appearance of *Rogue Sun*! *Power Rangers: Shattered Grid* architects Higgins, Parrott, Groom and Manna (*Marvel's Ultraman*) and colorist extraordinaire Igor Monti, unite for a one-shot, extra-length story so big it can only be called – *Supermassive*.



"It feels to me like *Rogue Sun* was never created; he just burst out in front of us. Being part of this is a thrilling flight in so many ways!" said Abel. Next, *Rogue Sun* kicks 2022 into high gear when rebellious teenager Dylan Siegel discovers that the late superhero *Rogue Sun* was his estranged father, Marcus – and that he's inherited his father's mantle. Tasked with protecting our world from the forces of the supernatural – and solving his father's murder – Dylan will be forced to come to terms with the man he's spent the majority of his life hating. This new ongoing series is a supernatural murder mystery that explores the complicated bond between father and son and cements itself squarely in a corner of the Image Comics superhero universe.

Supermassive one-shot will be available at comic book shops on Wednesday, February 2:

- Cover A by Manna & Monti - Diamond Code DEC210098
- Cover B by Marcelo Costa, Abel, Durso - Diamond Code DEC210099
- Cover C 1:25 copy incentive - Diamond Code DEC210100
- Cover D 1:50 copy incentive - Diamond Code DEC210101

Rogue Sun #1 will be available at comic book shops on Wednesday, February 16:

- Cover A by Declan Shalvey - Diamond Code DEC210054
- Cover B by Goñi Montes - Diamond Code DEC210055
- Cover C 1:10 copy incentive by Abel - Diamond Code DEC210056
- Cover D 1:25 copy incentive by Daniele Di Nicuolo - Diamond Code DEC210057
- Cover E 1:50 copy incentive by Booth - Diamond Code DEC210058

Both *Supermassive* and *Rogue Sun* will also be available for purchase across many digital platforms, including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, and Google Play.

UPCOMING INDIANA JONES-ESQUE MINISERIES COMPASS WILL PUT ADVENTURE COMICS ON THE MAP – AVAILABLE NOW!



In collaboration with bestselling writer/creator Greg Rucka (*The Old Guard*), writers Robert Mackenzie and Dave Walker (*Lazarus Sourcebook*) team up with artist Justin Greenwood (*Stumptown*, *The Fuse*, *The Last Siege*) to take readers on a breathless journey in the forthcoming *Compass*. This all-new, five issue miniseries will launch from Image Comics in June. "*Compass* was born out of our desire to tell a story of discovery without colonialism, of adventure without exploitation –

something with the verve and energy of the pulps, but with a perspective that hadn't been seen much in that genre," said Mackenzie. "Getting there was its own process of discovery, and it's been a joy to work with co-creators who have the talent to truly unearth Shahidah's quest. I'm so pleased to be able to share *Compass* with the world." In *Compass*, readers meet Shahidah El-Amin, a main character who is many things: scholar, cartographer, astronomer, mathematician, scientist, explorer, adventurer, and – when need be – two-fisted fighter. Setting out from Baghdad's legendary House of Wisdom during the Islamic Golden Age, Shahi's quest brings her to 13th-century Britain...where the Welsh are whispered to possess the secret of eternal life. But Shahi's not the only one after it...

"This story has been with Robert and I since our earliest days writing together. We wanted to step into a world that felt definably real – but still with the thrills of haunted ruins, ancient wonders, deadly rivals," said Walker. "Justin found that world immediately and brought it to life, and Daniela, Simon and Greg have all added their inimitable touches to truly make it something special."

Greenwood added: "*Compass* has just the kind of energy and fun that I'd been looking for in a new project. The sense of adventure is palpable in every issue and Shahi is one of the most engaging characters I've ever gotten to

draw. *Compass* being a teen book is also a big bonus for me creatively, as my kids are finally getting old enough to read comics too. I've always enjoyed this type of pulpy action comic but being able to share it with my family is a new and gratifying experience. Very excited to share what this talented creative team has been cooking up." "I fell in love with Dave and Robert's idea the moment they shared it with me. I love stories rooted in historical truth, in facts that have somehow been overlooked or – more frequently, I think – ignored in favor of another, more 'traditional' narrative," said Rucka. "As much as *Compass* is an action-adventure with all of those wonderful pulp elements I adore, its engine is personal and intimate, ultimately about the friendship between two very impressive, very capable women from two very different backgrounds. As soon as I realized that, I knew Justin was the only artist who could deliver what Dave and Robert were after. I'm very proud to claim a very small part in making this book come to life."

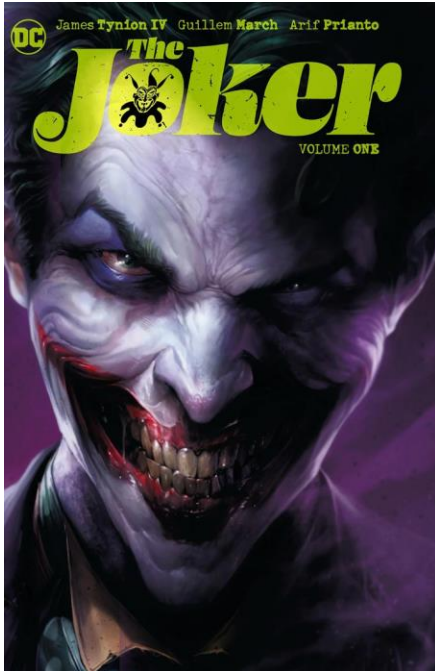
Compass #1 (Diamond Code APR210113) will be available at [comic book shops](#) on Wednesday, June 16.

Compass #1 will also be available for purchase across many digital platforms, including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, comiXology, and Google Play.



The Clown Prince of Crime is the Target of a Worldwide Manhunt!

The Joker Volume One Hardcover Graphic Novel Collection, Available Now at Comic Book Shops, Bookstores, and Participating Digital Retailers



The Joker's alleged attack on Arkham Asylum in DC's *Infinite Frontier* #0 resulted in untold carnage and destruction, and the rise of The Magistrate and the Peacekeepers in Gotham City! As a result of the events that came to be known as "A-Day," a mysterious benefactor hires former Gotham City Police Commissioner Jim Gordon to go on a global manhunt to catch, and potentially kill the Clown Prince of Crime.

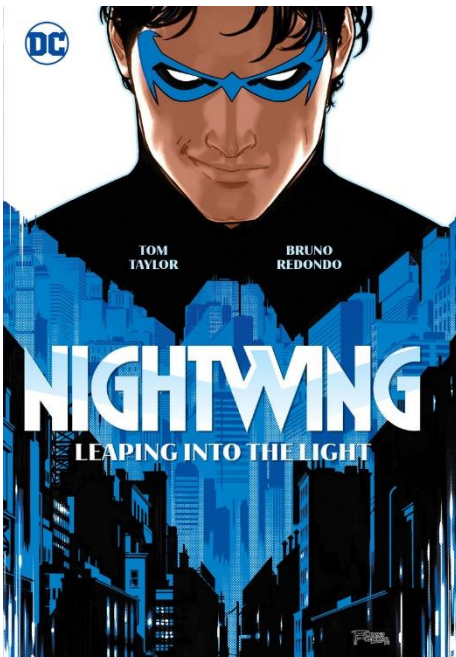
The Joker Volume One collects the first five issues of the series, written by award-winning writer James Tynion IV (*Batman*, *Detective Comics*, *The Nice House on the Lake*) with art by Guillem March. This volume also includes a special Year One flashback issue co-written by Tynion and Matthew Rosenberg (*Legends of the Dark Knight*) and artist Francesco Francavilla (*Batman: The Black Mirror*)

Though the world is after him for the destruction of Arkham Asylum, nothing

involving the Joker is ever as easy as it seems. What Gordon finds and what the Joker wants him to see...will change his perspective on the world forever. And he's not the only one who wants the Joker found; the mysterious Sampson family are on his tail as well as Vengeance, daughter of Bane!

For the latest information on *The Joker* and the World's Greatest Super Heroes, visit the DC website at www.dccomics.com and follow @DCComics and @thedcnation on social media. The DC UNIVERSE INFINITE digital subscription service includes a can't-miss selection of titles involving *The Joker*, as well as books by James Tynion IV and Guillem March. For more details and a free trial, visit www.dguniverseinfinite.com.

NIGHTWING: BACK IN BLUE AND BETTER THAN EVER IN 'NIGHTWING VOL. 1: LEAPING INTO THE LIGHT'



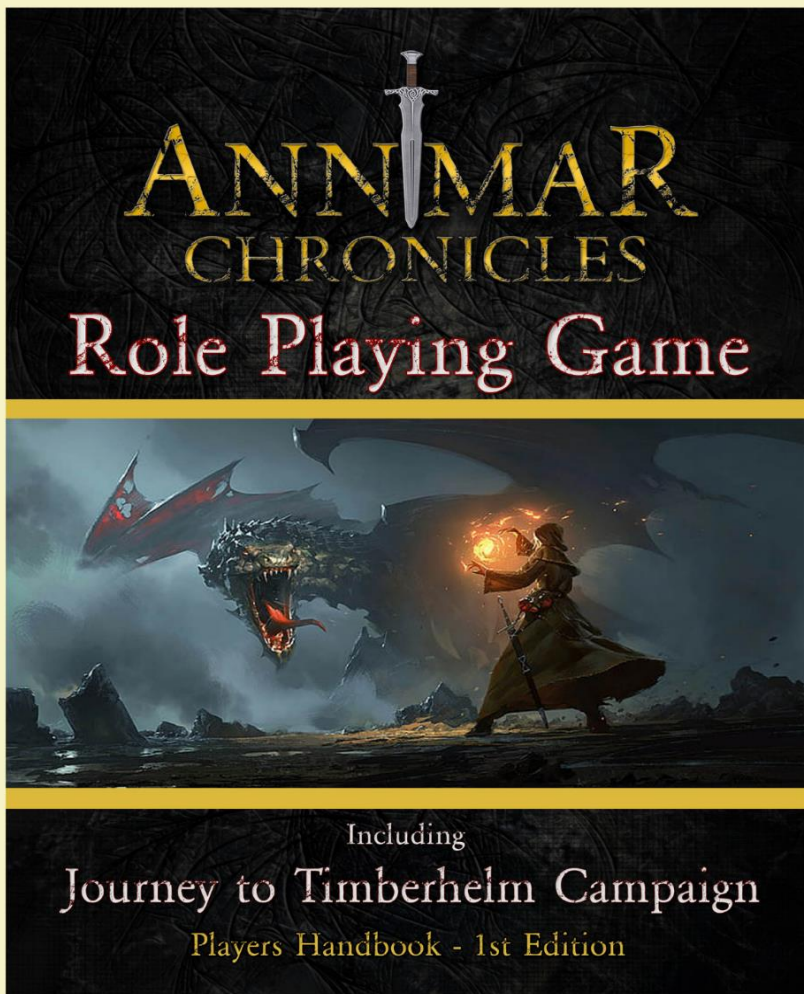
BACK IN BLUE AND BETTER THAN EVER

The *New York Times* bestselling *Injustice* team of Tom Taylor and Bruno Redondo take on Nightwing in *Nightwing Vol. 1: Leaping Into the Light*!

Nightwing is back in Blüdhaven! It's been a long time since Dick Grayson has been himself, but now he's smiling again, cracking wise, sticking up for the little guy, and sticking it to the bad guys. Dick's life is beginning to have a sense of normalcy: he's got an apartment and a new —and totally adorable— three-legged puppy named Haley, who also has an alter ego named Bitewing. Barbara Gordon is now back in his life, too... but this time it feels different, like she could be the one. Still, ensuring Blüdhaven's safety is no small

task, especially now that the city is being menaced by Nightwing's most terrifying foe yet — a mysterious and murderous villain with a penchant for stealing and collecting his victims' hearts, known only as Heartless. The city Nightwing has sworn to protect has also appointed a new mayor...with the last name Zucco. When Dick investigates this politician bearing the same name as the man who murdered his parents, he discovers details that will shock him and fundamentally change the hero forever. Tom Taylor (*DCeased*, *Injustice*), Bruno Redondo (*Injustice*, *Suicide Squad*), Adriano Lucas and Wes Abbott bring Nightwing out of the shadow of the Bat and into the light in *Nightwing Vol. 1: Leaping Into the Light*! *Nightwing Vol.1: Leaping into the Light* (9781779512789/\$24.99/HC) will publish on December 14, 2021. Pick up a copy at your local comic book shop or wherever books are sold.

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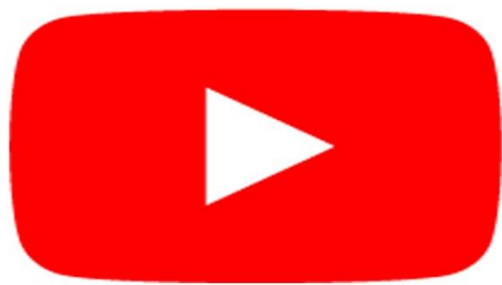


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Robert Plant Has No Plans to Retire



Robert Plant has no plans to retire from making music. The Led Zeppelin frontman has released his second duets album, 'Raise The Roof', with Alison Krauss today (19.11.21), and the 73-year-old musician has insisted he still very much enjoys what he does and isn't ready to call it quits anytime soon. In an interview with Britain's The Daily Telegraph newspaper, Robert said: "I was 19 on the first Led Zeppelin rehearsals, and I was 32 when [drummer] John

[Bonham] passed away, that awful time. "People used to say to me, 'Well, you must have done enough now?' Enough of f***** what? 'Enough to retire!' "So imagine the blessing to be 40 years further down the road, and I still don't know enough to stop in any respect. "There's always something new to learn, somewhere new to take it. I love it." As someone who loves to learn something new, the 'Stairway to Heaven' hitmaker was more than happy to become Alison's harmonies student. The rocker quipped that he was too busy being a "rock 'n' roll cliché" to know about "strict melodies" and proper harmonising when he was in Zeppelin, and so he jumped at the chance to be coached by fiddle and harmony expert, Alison, on how best to compliment her vocal.

He said recently: "As an English singer, I usually reach for the normal pop/rock stuff

that I might have done with Zep on 'Thank You' or 'Little Drops Of Rain'. "But Alison comes from a different world. "She is always at pains to tell me that while was flying my kite in the back of a van she was seven years into fiddle competitions. "She never went to prom because she was in the corner harmonising when I was already becoming a rock 'n' roll cliché at a very early age. "She coaches me and gives me alternatives to bolster her vocal. "She hears the way you can embellish a melody. "I was learning all that Chitlin' Circuit phrasing in the mid-60s, so I never knew about strict melodies. "I was very happy to put myself into the position of being a student to see if I could do it." 'Raise The Roof' comes 14 years after the pair's Grammy-winning 'Raising Sand' LP.



Ed Sheeran to Perform on Pokemon GO App



Ed Sheeran is set to perform on the 'Pokemon GO' app. On Monday (22.11.21), the 'Thinking Out Loud' hitmaker will be putting on a special set in a crossover with the popular game based on the Japanese franchise at 11am PST (7pm GMT). 'Overpass Graffiti' from the Grammy-winner's latest album, 'Equals', will be

played in-game, while the flame-haired pop superstar is set to perform a setlist of 'Perfect', 'Bad Habits', 'Overpass Graffiti', 'Thinking Out Loud', 'First Time', and 'Shivers'. What's more, Ed's favourite Pokemon, Squirtle wearing sunglasses, is set to return for the one-off event, which takes place between November 22 and November 30. It will help bring to a close the Season of Mischief, with the likes of Totodile, Mudkip, Piplup, and Oshawott in the wild. The 'Pokemon' franchise is known for its collaborations with pop stars. In May, Katy Perry released the single 'Electric' to mark 25 years of Pokemon. The track is on the star-studded LP, 'Pokémon 25: The Album', which also features Post Malone, J Balvin, Lil Yachty, Mabel, and Jax

Jones. The 37-year-old singer said at the time: "When I visited the Pokémon Café while touring Japan, I got so nostalgic. It took me back to my junior high years. So when I got the call to be a part of the 25th-anniversary celebration alongside Post Malone and J Balvin, I was elated, "The song's themes – resilience, igniting your inner light – have guided my life and also parallel Pokémon's story and characters. Pikachu is the evolved form of Pichu, so in the video, you see the younger version of me with Pichu and myself in the present day with Pikachu. We both evolve, yet retain a sense of playfulness." 'Circles' hitmaker Malone released a cover of Hootie and the Blowfish's 'Only Wanna Be With You' for the collection

Your Place To Talk!

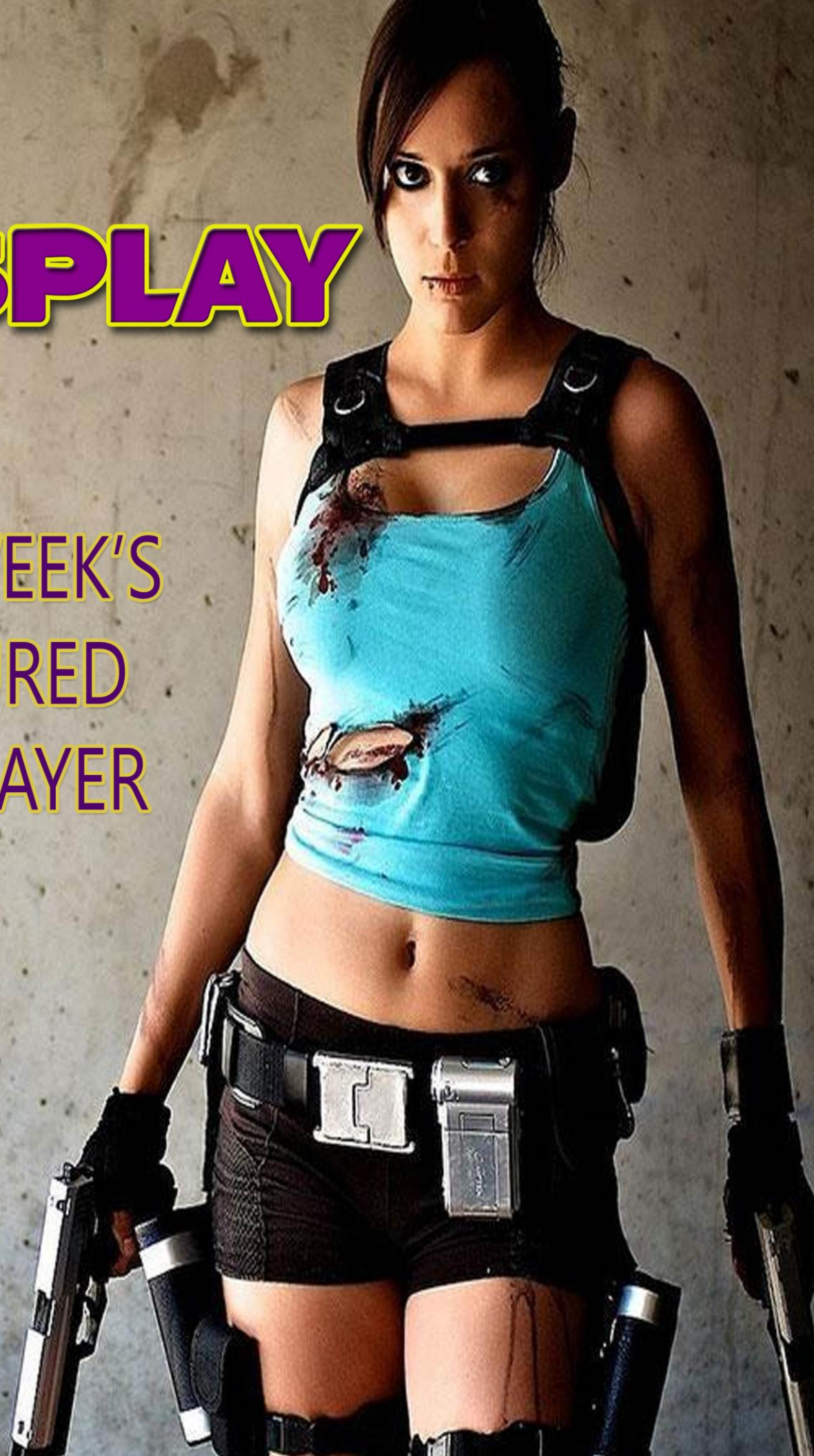


DISCORD



COSPLAY

THIS WEEK'S
FEATURED
COSPLAYER



STELLAE COSPLAY



STELLAECOSPLAY



STELLAECOSPLAY



STELLAECOSPLAY



STELLAECOSPLAY



Squirrelnelly Jedi
PHOTOGRAPHY

LOKI / MARVEL



PEGGY CARTER / CAPTAIN AMERICA

ABOUT STELLAE COSPLAY

Stellae Cosplay has been cosplaying since 2012, Stellae (stell-ay) loves crafting, playing D&D, and attending conventions, Doing non-profit work is very important to her as and she volunteers her time when she can as a cosplayer. Stellae also loves 3D printing, building, and learning new costuming techniques. Besides costuming, Stellae loves building community, making sure everyone is included and trying to make the world a better place through non-profit work. Check out Stellae Cosplay on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok @stellae cosplay!

- INTERVIEW -

How did you get into cosplay?

My friend took me to an anime convention back in Spring 2012. I was involved in fandom, but I had never considered costuming outside of Halloween. I saw all of the awesome costumes and was hooked. I made a cosplay for the convention that following Fall.

Who is your favorite character to cosplay and why?

Currently, my favorite character to cosplay is Anna from Frozen. I only wear her when I am volunteering, but I love seeing kids' faces light up! I love answering their questions and interacting with them as Anna.

What tips do you have on making a costume?

If you have a Facebook account lookout for Facebook groups that are for your specific characters' cosplay! I am a part of many costuming groups and they have helped tremendously whether I want my costume to be screen accurate or budget-friendly. Also, look for your local cosplay community! I have met so many amazing people that help me and are my closest friends!

What is your favorite memory of being a cosplayer?

My favorite cosplay memory is the Marvel photoshoot at DragonCon 2019! I met a lot of awesome people at that shoot and I got to hold Loki's scepter and the infinity stones that were screen used!

What advice do you have for fans getting into cosplay?

Do it, have fun, and do what makes you happy! If you put on a costume whether it's bought or every piece of your costume is handmade, you are a cosplayer!

If you could have a weapon or superpower to fight the forces of evil, what would you choose?

I would have an ability akin to Domino's ability. In a world where things don't always go the right way, it would be fun to be able to have some control over the outcome and have luck on your side.

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Astronomers Team Up to Create New Method to Understand Galaxy Evolution



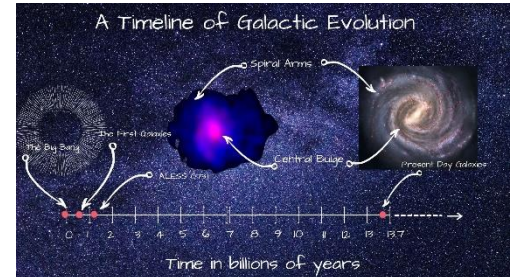
A husband-and-wife team of astronomers at The University of Toledo joined forces for the first time in their scientific careers during the pandemic to develop a new method to look back in time and change the way we understand the history of galaxies. Until now forging parallel but separate careers while juggling home life and carpooling to cross country meets, Dr. Rupali Chandar, professor of astronomy, and Dr. J.D. Smith, director of the UToledo Ritter Astrophysical Research Center and professor of astronomy, merged their areas of expertise. Working along with UToledo alumnus Dr. Adam Smercina who graduated with a bachelor's degree in physics in 2015 and is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Washington, they used NASA's Hubble Space Telescope to focus on a post-starburst galaxy nearly 500 million light years away called S12 that looks like a jellyfish with a host of stars streaming out of the galaxy on one side. Smercina, the "glue" that brought Smith and Chandar together on this research, worked with Smith as an undergraduate student starting in 2012 on the dust and gas in post-starburst galaxies. While spiral galaxies like our Milky Way have continued to form stars at a fairly steady rate, post-starburst galaxies experienced an intense burst of star formation sometime in the last half billion years, shutting down their star formation. The resulting breakthrough research published in the *Astrophysical*

Journal outlines their new method to establish the star formation history of a post-starburst galaxy using its cluster population. The approach uses the age and mass estimates of stellar clusters to determine the strength and speed of the starburst that stopped more stars from forming in the galaxy. Using this method, the astronomers discovered that S12 experienced two periods of starburst before it stopped forming stars, not one.

"Post-starbursts represent a phase of galaxy evolution that is pretty rare today," Smith said. "We think that nearly half of all galaxies went through this phase at some point in their lives. So far, their star-forming histories have been determined almost exclusively from detailed modeling of their composite starlight." Smith has studied post-starburst galaxies for more than a decade, and Chandar works on the stellar clusters in galaxies that are typically about three or four times closer than those in Smith's data. "Clusters are like fossils -- they can be age-dated and give us clues to the past history of galaxies," Chandar said. "Clusters can only be detected in these galaxies with the clear eyed-view of the Hubble Space Telescope. No clusters can be detected in even the highest quality images taken with telescopes on the ground." Smith has led several large multi-wavelength projects to better understand the evolutionary history of post-starburst galaxies. He discovered, for example, that the raw fuel for star formation -- gas and dust -- is still present in surprising quantities in some of these systems including S12, even though no stars are currently being formed.

"While studying the light from these galaxies at multiple wavelengths has helped establish the time that the burst happened, we hadn't been able to determine how strong and how long the burst that shutoff star formation actually was," Smith said. "And that's important

to know to better understand how these galaxies evolve."



The astronomers used well-studied cluster masses and star formation rates in eight nearby galaxies to develop the new method, which could be applied to determine the recent star formation histories for a number of post-starburst systems. The researchers applied their different approach to S-12, which is short for SDSS 623-52051-207, since it was discovered and catalogued in the Sloan Digitized Sky Survey (SDSS). "It must have had one of the highest rates of star formation of any galaxy we have ever studied," Chandar said. "S12 is the most distant galaxy I've ever worked on." The study indicates star formation in S12 shut off 70 million years ago after a short but intense burst formed some of the most massive clusters known, with masses several times higher than similar-age counterparts forming in actively merging galaxies. The method also revealed an earlier burst of star formation that the previous method of composite starlight modeling could not detect. "These results suggest that S12's unusual history may be even more complicated than expected, with multiple major events compounding to fully shut off star formation," Smith said. The research was funded by the National Science Foundation and NASA. Chandar and Smith are two of four UToledo astronomers leading some of the first research projects on NASA's new James Webb Space Telescope scheduled to launch in December.

Baby Seals Can Change Their Tone of Voice



Hoover the seal was initially kept in a family home and could imitate human speech, barking catch phrases in a gruff accent ("Come over here"). But vocal learning -- the ability to imitate sounds -- is a rare trait among mammals. Only a few species may be capable of changing the pitch of their voice to sound higher or lower, which is a crucial element of human speech. "By looking at one of the few other mammals who may be capable of learning sounds, we can better understand how we, humans, acquire speech, and ultimately why we are such chatty animals," explains MPI's Andrea Ravnani, senior investigator of the study. Are seal pups already capable of changing the pitch (or 'tone height') of their voices?

Wadden Sea noises

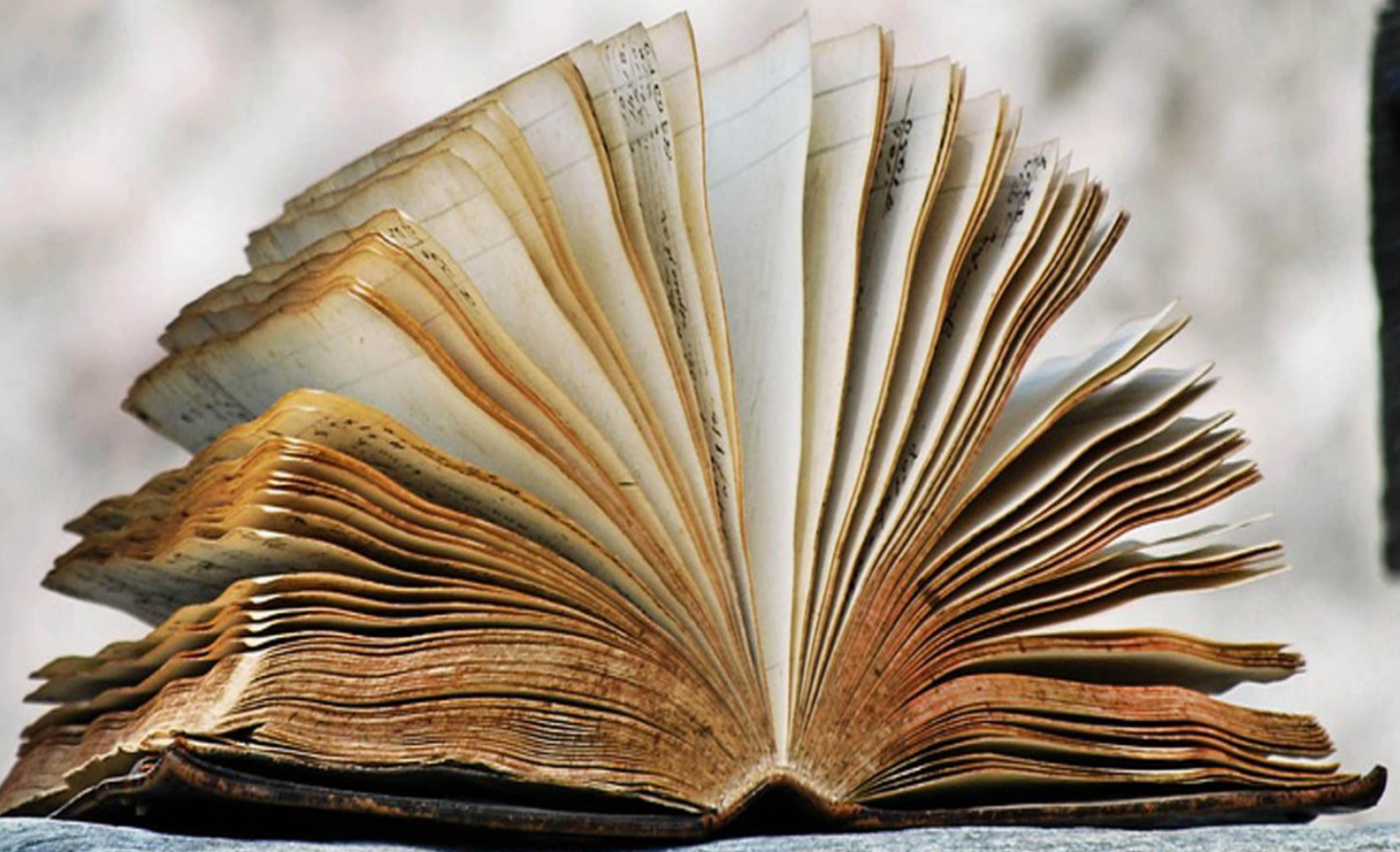
The researchers studied eight harbour seal pups -- 1 to 3 weeks old -- that were being held in a rehabilitation centre (the Dutch Sealcentre Pieterburen) before

being released back into the wild. To investigate whether the pups could adapt their voices to noises in the environment, the team first recorded noises from the nearby Wadden Sea. For several days, the sea noises were then played back to the pups, in three degrees of loudness (varying from no sound to 65 decibel), but with a similar tone height to that of the seal pups' calls. The team also recorded the pups' spontaneous calls. Would the pups change their tone of voice to adapt to the sea noises? When the seal pups heard louder sea noises, they lowered their tone of voice. The pups also kept a more steady pitch with the more intense noise levels. One seal clearly showed the so-called Lombard effect, producing louder calls when the noise got louder. The Lombard effect is typical for human speech, as people raise their voices in noise to be better understood. The pups did not produce more or longer calls when they heard different levels of sea noise.

Direct neural connections

Apparently, young seals adapt to the noises in their environment by lowering the tone of their voice, an ability they seem to share with humans and bats. Other animals in similar experiments only raise their voice (i.e. make louder calls) in response to louder noise. "Seal pups have a more advanced control over their vocalisations than assumed up until now," says Ravnani. "This control seems to be already present at only few weeks of age. This is astonishing, as few other mammals seem capable of that. To date, humans seem to be the only mammals with direct neural connections between the cortex ('the outer layer of the brain') and the larynx ('what we use to produce tone of voice')," he concludes. "These results show that seals may be the most promising species to find these direct connections, and unravel the mystery of speech."

Storytellers





My life in a Thousand Words

By

Marcus Blake

The man stood outside the bar waiting, waiting for the man who ruined his life. He was beat down; tired, and suffering from the worst hangover in his life, but there he stood waiting. All he could think about was the man who destroyed everything he had and of course that's when revenge seemed possible. He had a true enemy in the man he waited for and his enemy had struck a deadly blow. The bar he was in front of was called Jake's downtown bar and it was the regular hangout for the man he waited for. Vincent was his name, the man who ruined his life, and he'd done it in a thousand words.

The man waited 20 minutes while patrons from the bar gave him dirty looks as they walked in and out; they gave him the same disdained looks as they would a junkie or homeless person. Finally, the moment arrived, Vincent showed up for his afternoon drink, it was his daily break from the grind of deadlines and endless typing that never seemed to make sense. He said hi to the usual crowd that stood outside the bar and he knew like his own family. As he was shaking a friend's hand the man who had been waiting pulled a gun from his jacket and grabbed Vincent pushing him down to the ground. He waved the gun in his face. Vincent had a look of terror on his face, not knowing what to make of the situation. It wasn't the first time he'd had a gun waved at him, but other times he had been too drunk or stoned to care. They were his Hunter Thompson moments and now he was looking for one again, but this time he came up short as he was being forced to face his demons.

The man with gun waved the gun at the crowd outside the bar waving them back so he would not be crowded. He picked Vincent up and led him into the bar and then told everybody to get out or he would start killing people. A few moments later the bar was empty except the man with the gun, Vincent, and the bartender. The man with the gun after putting Vincent in one of the booths by force finally asked him.

"Why did you do it, man?"

"Do what sir?" Vincent asked him, trying to be polite at the same time as not to upset the man with the gun.

"You know what you did, you ruined my life."

"How did I ruin your life? I don't even know you and I think you have to know somebody to ruin their life."

"Don't be fucking smart with me."

"I'm not trying to be sir, but I honestly don't know what you're talking about."

"It's what you wrote man."

"I write lots of things, can you be more specific?"

The man with the gun walked over and hit Vincent in the head with his gun. Then he replied "I'm the cop you wrote about. The article said I hate niggers."

"I know who you are now and I never said that in my column."

"But you were thinking it and you implied it you fucking bastard. Do you know how much shit I have to put up with now, I can't even work thanks to you."

Vincent just stared at the man with a gun, he wasn't even afraid anymore, he was guilty and then in a moment's flash his guilt turned to anger. He replied to the man. "I don't write anything that isn't true."

When he said that, man with the gun got even angrier. He pulled the cocking hammer back on the gun as if he was about to finally shoot, but then he stopped. He said to Vincent "Fuck you, you still don't know what you're talking about. You can only right the truth if you really know what happened. You weren't there, how would you know?"

"There were witnesses to what happened, I have their accounts."

"I was alone when it happened, people will say what they have to just to protect themselves."

Vincent sighed for a moment. He adjusted himself in the booth to sit more comfortably. Then looked directly at the man with the gun and said. "Be honest with yourself, you could have done things differently, you could have done things better. You made a mistake and I called you on it."

"We all make mistakes, but in the heat of the moment when you're staring down the barrel of gun that's when we're our true selves and that's when we let the fear dictate our actions. What do you do when you're faced with that kind of fear?"

"I don't know."

"Exactly, you don't."

"But could you have done something differently?"

"Maybe, but I didn't. Should I be punished all my life for it? Does my life have to end with that one single moment?"

"You killed somebody; you can't just walk away from that. You should have to live with it."

The man with the gun started to drop the gun as he stared at Vincent at the utter shock at what he said. He couldn't believe the arrogance and self righteous attitude of Vincent. He lifted the gun again pointing it at Vincent to make him cower in fear then he stopped. He said to Vincent. "You know, you're right. So you'll have to live with the death of your friend." Then the man with the gun pointed it at the bartender and shot him three times. After he did Vincent screamed at him in anger to stop because it wasn't too late. The gun crazed man looked at Vincent and said his last words. "I hope somebody will write about this, it should only take a thousand words." He shot himself in the head after that. Vincent ran behind the bar to help his friend Jim - it was too late, he was already dead.

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Being me

Dark chocolate colored eyes,
that mirrors sunsets when sun rays hit just right.
Caramel covered skin,
the same my ancestors once wore.
Mamá always called me "Chicana"
Papá always said "Que viva la raza"
I'll always be "Ni de aqui, ni de alla"
Latina by roots, American by birth,
but Chicana at heart.
Fluently bilingual, rolling my "R"
But misspelling it all.
"Build that wall"?
That shit don't faze me at all.
My dark chocolate colored eyes,
don't mirror sunsets anymore.
But mirror agony that's hidden in my soul.

-Juliana Rodriguez



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Word Search

Find the words from the list in the puzzle below.

N	K	F	E	X	U	R	V	S	J	L	F	S	C
O	Y	B	G	L	T	E	Y	U	A	D	G	C	H
R	D	A	N	W	F	E	U	A	L	A	U	J	R
T	D	R	I	G	V	H	U	L	A	N	S	O	I
H	U	E	K	Y	Z	C	A	C	C	C	P	Q	S
P	B	H	C	H	O	U	V	A	I	E	I	U	T
O	K	T	O	G	G	J	B	T	S	T	R	D	M
L	T	A	T	H	G	Q	I	N	U	O	I	V	A
E	P	F	S	X	A	Z	J	A	M	Y	T	U	S
R	E	E	D	N	I	E	R	S	G	S	I	N	G

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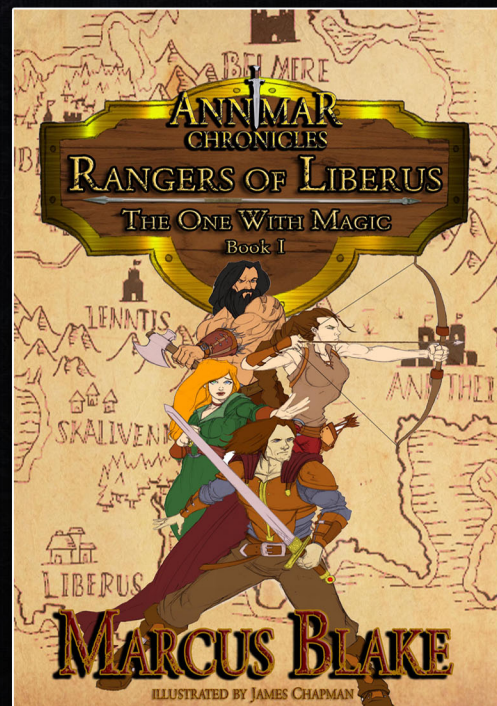
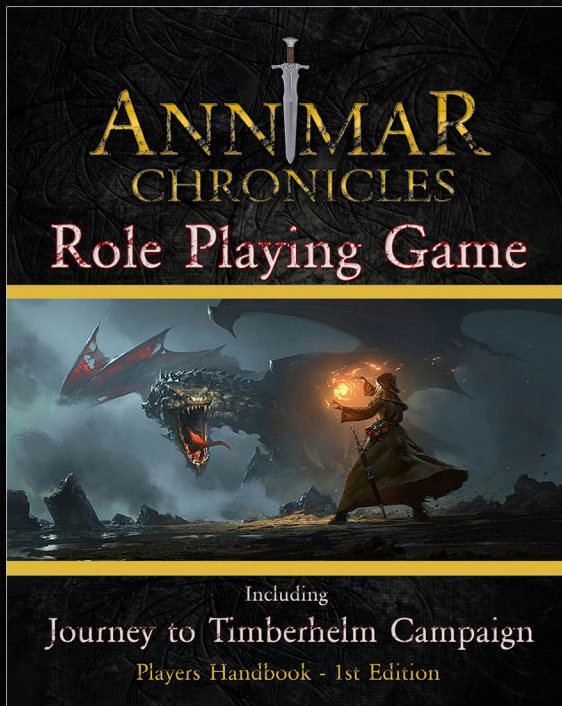
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