

That Nerd Show



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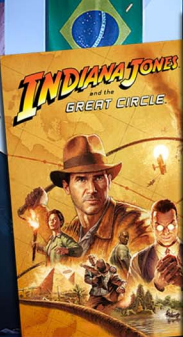


A MESSAGE
FROM YOUR
"SQUAD LEADER"
Call of Dumpy
BO6 Review

Cobra Kai Goes Out with a Bang

How The Series Made the Karate Kid Universe Better than the Movies Ever Did

By Marcus Blake



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Cobra Kai Goes Out with a Bang

How the Series made the Karate Kid Universe Better than the Movies Every Did!

By Marcus Blake

It's been 7 years since the premiere of Cobra Kai on YouTube when they got into the streaming business and created original content. How did this show get so good? Seriously, a show that nobody really believed would be that good because bringing back the story of karate rivals from when they were teenagers, doesn't seem that exciting when they're middle-aged men, and I admit as much as I love the Karate Kid movies, I was very skeptical. I didn't think the show was ever going to be good, but my love for the Karate Kid movies willed me to check it out and I was proven wrong... this series is fantastic! I know I'm not the only one who felt this way and then had their opinion changed after season 1. We all thought that the story of Daniel LaRusso and Cobra Kai especially his rival Johnny Lawrence was over back in the '80s and there was no reason to revisit these characters. But we couldn't be more wrong. There were still plenty of stories to tell. They were still rivals who ended up becoming best friends and more importantly competing senseis. Their story didn't end in high school as a new generation of students wanted to learn karate and the rivalry between Cobra Kai and Miyagi-Do was revived! But just because it seemed like a good idea on paper doesn't mean it was actually going to translate into a good series and then somehow it happened. Why? The creators Josh Heald, Jon Hurwitz, and Hayden Schlossberg knew their

stuff when it came to the Karate Kid lore and unlike a lot of different writing teams who don't respect the source material therefore ruining the story, they got it right. They brought a sense of nostalgia that we didn't know we were missing for the Karate Kid. The nostalgia was a big factor and we'll talk about that later. However, 30 years ago it seemed like the Karate Kid franchise was dead after a fourth movie that didn't star Ralph Macchio. In fact, the main character was a young actress up and coming before she would win two Oscars by the name of Hillary Swank. She's known as the next Karate Kid based on the title of the movie and the movie is not that terrible, it certainly isn't great either.



It didn't have the same charisma as the first three Karate Kid movies and the villains weren't as good as Cobra Kai or even rival karate students in Japan who fight to the death. Personally, I don't consider the movie that bad, but it did pretty much kill the franchise and made Hollywood studios all but forget The Karate Kid franchise. As far as they were concerned, there were no more stories to tell. Although, there was a slight reboot with Jackie Chan 15 years ago

where he taught, not karate despite the title of the movie, but Kung Fu, and the young star was Jaden Smith. Not a bad movie, not a great movie! But hey, it's Jackie Chan and as a martial arts legend from China, he always makes entertaining movies. That movie was largely forgotten as well. Although, now it is in the same universe as the Karate Kid and that movie will be tied to The Karate Kid franchise starting in May of 2025 with the Karate Kid Legends movie! There are no spoilers about that movie so as fans will just see how it all plays out, but getting back to Cobra Kai and how this show became so good and worth watching. The first two seasons were on YouTube and then Netflix bought the rights through Sony to continue the franchise for the next four seasons and the world of Cobra Kai got bigger and better with each season starting with other original characters returning, especially old villains! So if you've never seen the series, but you're familiar with the movies, the rest of this article will contain spoilers... Just giving you a warning!



**The Great Story in
Cobra Kai**

So what makes this show great? Is it the story? Is it the nostalgia and all the Easter eggs? The answer is both. Josh Heald, Jon Hurwitz, and Hayden Schlossberg knew that you had to have enough nostalgia to connect to the movies to make you want to watch this series. That's great, but you can only get so far with nostalgia. Disney tried that with their Star Wars sequel trilogy and all we got was nostalgia. But the brilliance of Cobra Kai was not to center the story on Daniel and where he was 30 years later. The main character of Cobra Kai is Johnny Lawrence. This is really his story and Daniel LaRusso is a secondary character. And if you ever thought that Johnny Lawrence was a villain, it's this show that makes you re-examine everything from the movies and you'll realize he was never the villain. He was just being trained by the villain. We never really get much of Johnny's story from the movies. We didn't know that he had a rich stepdaddy that didn't really love him and his mother basically married Rich to take care of her son. He felt ostracized and it wasn't until he found karate through Cobra Kai that he felt like he belonged to something. It's similar to Daniel's story. One of the best parts of Cobra Kai is getting to re-examine who Johnny Lawrence was as a character and how he got down on his luck to where he had the opportunity to restart Cobra Kai. Daniel's the one that looks like the villain in season 1. We also get to see more things from Johnny's perspective like how he viewed Daniel as stealing Ali, his girlfriend when he was trying to patch things up at the beach. Great character stories always give you two different perspectives or you don't know which side is absolutely right and the other side is absolutely wrong. As it turns out, Johnny and Daniel were never villains, they had

more in common than they wanted to admit and if you really want to get legit, they are the epitome of the Odd Couple, but in the world of karate. I think that's my favorite part about them. To me, they're the funniest version of the odd couple next to Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau. If Johnny is anything, he's misunderstood and while Daniel seems to have his life together, it's Johnny who has to come full circle and deal with his past mistakes. Even when he restarts Cobra Kai, he's not necessarily doing it the same way as John Kreese. He just wants all his students to be "badasses" and not have the same attitude that Mercy is a weakness. But he has to get his footing as a sensei and that makes for some of the most comical moments of Cobra Kai.

Through the entire series, you start to figure out that Johnny and Daniel aren't really rivals even though they pick back up where they left off in the first few seasons until an even bigger villain comes along and they realize that they have to work together. Just like in Miyagi-do karate where it's all about finding balance, the balance for the main characters is them working together. One of the best aspects of Cobra Kai is both Daniel and Johnny learning how to be senseis because they've never done it before. Sure, Daniel taught his daughter Samantha, but he didn't really teach other students and Johnny basically takes a crash course in learning how to teach.

So Cobra Kai is about these two characters who are now middle-aged men bringing back a rivalry that in the grand scheme of things seems kind of stupid, it's also about them evolving as men and realizing that there is a great friendship underneath. As it's pointed out by one of the great cameos in the series, they are more alike and they need each other. However, Cobra Kai is also about the next generation and the different Karate teachings. There are moments that the series very much plays out like a high school drama and is not always exciting, but I also think it's necessary because you are mostly dealing with high school kids who are trying to fit in, they're trying to find their place in society while falling in and out of love and learning the values that are going to make them better people in the future. Daniel has two children that he has taught karate to and Johnny has an estranged who ends up learning karate to piss off his dad but from his rival. Yes, there's a lot of high school drama that makes you roll your eyes, but beneath that surface are a lot of darker tones and we quickly get to those when some of the characters start coming back.

This series would have been okay if we just had Daniel and Johnny being rivals again, but like I said they're not the real villains. There were always bigger and worse villains in the story. So when season 1 ended with John Kreese

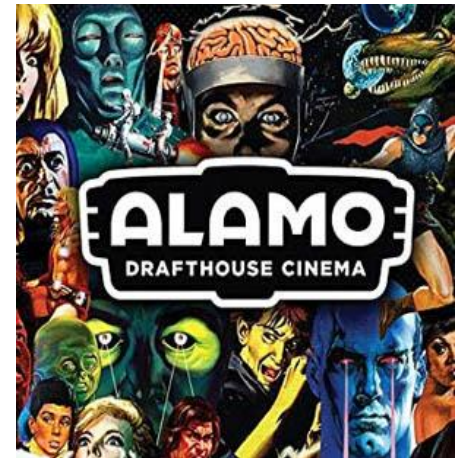
coming back to help put Cobra Kai back on top That kicks this series off into a new gear. And you would think he's dead, but no just like Cobra Kai, he never dies! And it's easy to look at him as the ultimate villain in the series, but is he? Yeah, he was a bad guy in the movies, but another great thing about this series is we get his backstory. He becomes a sympathetic character because of how he was bullied and then survived some traumatic events during Vietnam and then wanted to bring the teachings of Cobra Kai to America. You get all of this backstory and it's hard to hate him. You can hate his motivations, but he is a sympathetic character and it wasn't hard to feel sympathy for him because of Martin Kove's performance. But hey Cobra Kai, didn't stop there when it came to villains, of course not. I've always maintained that there was one big baddie in the Karate Kid movies and that was Terry Silver. So when Josh Heald, Jon Hurwitz, and Hayden Schlossberg actually got Thomas Ian Griffith to come back and portray Terry Silver in seasons 4 and 5, that just made this show even better. The man was pretty much retired from acting, but I guess getting a chance to play one of his best characters again was too strong to ignore and he was great.



Cobra Kai Had the Best Cameos.

It's one thing to bring back your two main characters, it's another thing to bring back the two big villains, but what about everybody else? This is what I appreciated more than anything about the series, it seemed like everybody from the movies came back to this show. Randee Heller Who played Lucille LaRusso came back for a few episodes. You actually have all of the Cobra Kai actors come back except for Chad McQueen. There's a great episode in season 2 where Johnny reconnects with Bobby and Tommy and Jimmy and they raise hell together. I had a chance to talk with William Zabaka last year during a red-carpet interview about his favorite cameo and he said that that was probably the funniest episode of the series. It would also be the last acting performance of Rob Garrison who played Tommy as he passed away from cancer in 2019. But Ron Thomas makes a few appearances right through the last season. And here's the thing, you get to know all these guys and realize they were never villains, just stupid high school kids being influenced by a bully through karate. After watching the first couple of seasons, I figured they weren't really going to be able to pull off some of the bigger cameos and then we were all surprised. Like for example, how the hell did they get Elisabeth Shue to come back and play Ali for one episode.. It's not my favorite of the cameos, but it was a great episode and it's the center point for Daniel and Johnny to start working together. She's the one that has to point out that they are more alike and that they need each other and who better than a former girlfriend that they were both in love with. When I interviewed the main cast and the creators, I specifically asked everybody who their favorite cameo was. Ralph Macchio laughed and said in the interview that it was a

shame he only had a pick one, but he picked what turned out to be my favorite. Yuji Okumoto as Chozen. Now any character you have to fight to the death is certainly a villain, but can they be redeemed?



Cobra Kai answered that question and gave Chozen the greatest redemption story. Who would have thought that he and Daniel would become great friends in team up...that Chozen would become one of the main senseis of the show! That's a storyline that I don't think anybody saw coming and it worked because he's part of the final seasons in an integral part of the story. I also love the fact that Tamlyn Tomita came back and reprised her role as Kumiko. I'm not ashamed to say that the two episodes in season 3 with her and Chozen made me cry. Now you would think that bringing all of these people back would complete the circle of great cameos...no! You're really going for a deep dive on cameos when you bring back the actress who played the young girl that Daniel rescues during the monsoon. Yes, Traci Toguchi comes back and will end up helping Daniel save his car dealership. Yes, that's a bit of a spoiler but I already warned you. Nonetheless, that's an amazing cameo and as a fun fact, the Karate Kid part 2 was her very first movie. So you can say that the circle is complete when it comes to her character in The Karate Kid

universe. Daniel saved her, she saves Daniel. But the creators didn't stop there. What are the reasons this series made the Karate Kid universe better was actually making the storylines from previous movies better. The Karate Kid part 3 was not a great movie, it didn't live up to the first two, that's a fact. But the storylines within the Cobra Kai series through Terry Silver, Jessica Andrews, and Mike Barnes made that movie better So of course they brought Robin Lively back to reprise her role as Jessica the girl that Daniel almost dated. And How she's connected to Daniel meeting his wife is awesome. But I'm going to let you watch the series to find that out. Mike Barnes wasn't really a great character in Karate Kid Part 3. He was just that movie's bully, but he gets a pretty interesting backstory through Cobra Kai and you realize that he was just another karate champion used by John and Terry to get back at Daniel LaRusso and Mr Miyagi.

How he helps the story of Cobra Kai is not only shocking but pretty amazing because there was always more to his character than what we got to see in the third movie. So yes if Cobra Kai did one thing right it literally brought everybody back. Now of course there was always one cameo that we would have liked to have seen just to really connect all the Karate Kid movies. Karate Kid part 4 is not a great movie, but it was one of the first movies for Hillary Swank and 30 years later, I can admit that it's a fun movie but certainly doesn't live up to the other three. But she was a student of Mr Miyagi and it would have been nice to see her come back in the series somehow, sadly that did not happen. But maybe it wasn't necessary because Cobra Kai is really about Daniel and Johnny's story and all of the characters from the first three movies that helped shape their history and the rival that

was started at the beginning of the series.



Karate Kid Easter Eggs

The nostalgia factor in Cobra Kai is extremely high and that is shown through all of the little easter eggs that connect to the movies. Some are very obvious like Daniel giving out bonsai trees to all his customers. Miguel discovering the drum from Karate Kid part 2 is a good one and Sam showing him the drum technique in Season 3. I love the fact that Daniel still has the car from the first movie which is a 1947 Ford Super Deluxe. There are a lot of great scenes of him driving in the car with the students. Johnny's still has his original headband from the first movie and there's a great story about how Ali was the one who gave it to him. But of all the easter eggs, to me the fact that they recreated the date scenes from the first movie with the original music from the soundtrack was awesome. Miguel and Sam go to Golf N' Stuff and do all the same things Daniel and Ali did from the first movie including getting pictures. And of course, in Season 3 Johnny & Ali go back and recreate the date because it was originally their spot. However, it isn't just recreating scenes from a nostalgia standpoint, it's actually using the old music, *Young Hearts* by Commuter and *Feel the Night* by Baxter Robinson. Its little things like this that easily

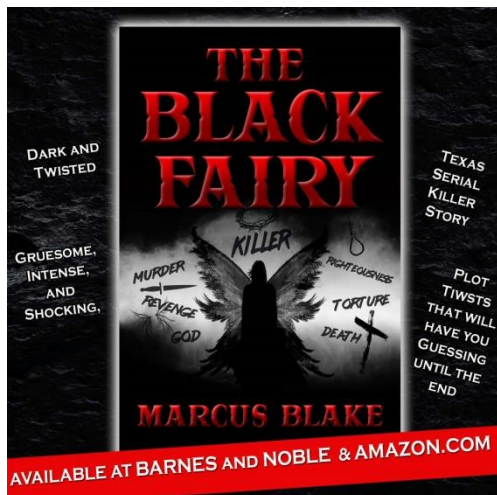
connect us to the first movie. I would even go as far as to say that Robin Lively making a cameo and explaining to Amanda the history with Terry Silver and why she needed to take it more seriously is an Easter egg that adds a bigger scope to the entire story Just like when Daniel sees Kumiko teaching the same traditional dance that she taught Daniel when he arrives in Okinawa. These things are important because they transcend generations and it puts us right back into the movies. I like many fans had forgotten so many things about the movies that it was great to be reminded by these easter eggs. I think it's a testament to how much care and love the creators had for the Karate Kid movies and wanted to bring that back to a new generation but make us who saw the originals fall in love with the movies all over again. I rewatched these movies over the last 6 years and have found a whole new appreciation for them because of Cobra Kai. I know I'm not the only one.



Does the Show End Right?

Having a perfect season finale is a tall order, not every show has gotten it right. There are plenty of great shows that have controversial endings like *The Sopranos* or *Seinfeld* or *Star Trek Enterprise* when the last episode literally just

became a glorified Next Generation episode. And as a nerd, I can still argue the ending of Battlestar Galactica in 2009... another one that was a bit controversial. How many shows can we admit got it right? Well, Cobra Kai that did. It ends exactly how it should. All of the characters come full circle. They become better versions of themselves by the end and the two main villains Go out with a bang...literally!!! I mentioned in my previous review that I loved how they broke the final season up into three sections like it was three different movies and a perfect trilogy. The final five episodes center around the Sekai Tails tournament after the tragic death of one of the participants. The tournament is basically called off, but of course, it's the big villain that somehow manipulates everybody to bring it back. I mean you can't have Cobra Kai without an all-out Karate Tournament. And it's easy to assume that some of the main characters like Miguel or Tory would win everything, So this is what makes the final episodes brilliant when the creators, Josh Heald, Jon Hurwitz, and Hayden Schlossberg, turned it on its head and have the dojos end in a tie to where it's the Sensei's who have to fight for the tiebreaker.

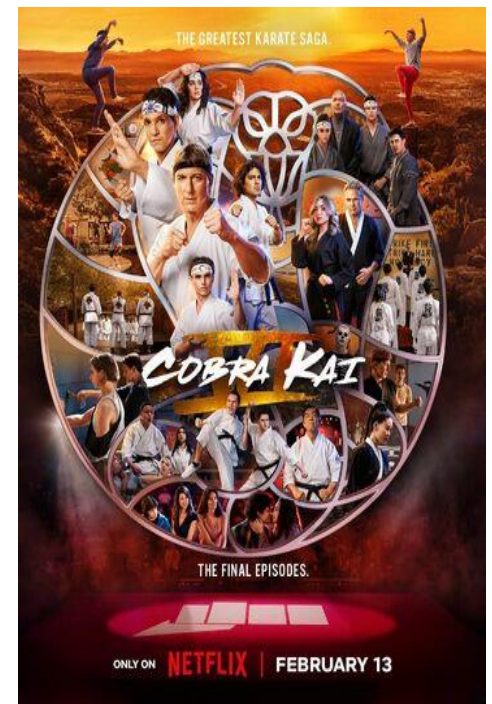


I said from the beginning that Johnny was always the main character of this show because it is

his story that really comes full circle while Daniel who is more successful begins to realize that his way isn't the only way of doing things when it comes to karate, and that Johnny was never his enemy. We never really cared that much about Johnny after the first movie and the beginning of the second movie because the movies weren't really his story. Did we as an audience even consider that he would have a rough life even though he had a rich stepdad? Did we ever consider that he would end up a loser and would have to redeem himself? No, because he wasn't the main character in the movies and Cobra Kai made us care about Johnny Lawrence and root for his success. He's the underdog that we are supposed to root for in Cobra Kai and although, it's not a straight path to success, of course, it would be him that had to do the final battle as a way to rid himself of all of his failures and to come out on top and be the better man especially, with a new relationship and a new child. So yes the show ended exactly how it should have. Johnny finds redemption and becomes the hero, Daniel and Johnny put their past behind them and become best friends while finding success in the karate world nearly 40 years later. So when Johnny has to have one final battle that is essentially his Rocky 4. That's what I mean that Cobra Kai goes out with a bang. And this show is filled with tons of '80s references including movies, which is one of the things I love about it.

What makes the final episodes brilliant? They're not so over the top that you can't believe it. Even if you argue about the technical aspects of the karate, the story is believable. Johnny is the underdog compared to a better sensei. He is Rocky to Ivan Drago and with his best friend in his corner, he will overcome. Cobra Kai is about

second chances. It's about characters finding redemption. Maybe not necessarily Terry Silver, but I would say that John Kreese definitely finds redemption and has the perfect ending for him in his old friend/enemy. No, I'm not going to completely spoil it. You'll just have to watch it yourself. The show also proves that Cobra Kai doesn't have to die. The style itself was never bad, just certain people who used it and I love that Daniel recognizes that in the end. The ending of his story is realizing that Cobra Kai needs to exist and there can be two different styles that the students can learn.



There's not one style better than the other, you take different aspects of different martial arts to be a better fighter. Isn't that essentially what Bruce Lee did with Jeet Kune Do. Daniel and Johnny need each other, they are the perfect Ying and Yang that brings balance to the valley. So in a sense, you do get kind of a fairy tale ending with these characters with more stories to tell and I hope it's not the last time we see them together. One more thing, I have to praise the Rocky references. Sure, they may be silly, but if you're a

child of the '80s who loves the Rocky movies then this show makes the perfect reference to the movies. I won't say that every season has been great, but overall this show is fantastic and I absolutely give it a 9. The last season was not the best season, but final seasons generally aren't the best of a series...just a way to wrap it all up. However, what they did with the last season is still amazing. What the creators did

with this show especially bringing back all of the old characters is amazing. This is great storytelling. This is the perfect example of how you can still tell a great story and bring all the nostalgia for the original source material. It's too bad that Disney under Kathleen Kennedy doesn't get that with their Star Wars films But if you ask me, they did everything right with Cobra Kai and they made the

Karate Kid universe better than the movies ever did. It's true that Cobra Kai never dies and because of this show our love for the movies and this universe will never die!

A special Thanks to Josh Heald, Jon Hurwitz, and Hayden Schlossberg for bringing back the Karate Kid Universe!



**TASTE,
THAT'S WHY.**

JACKIE
CHAN

BEN
WANG

AND
RALPH
MACCHIO

Karate Kid LEGENDS

EXCLUSIVELY IN MOVIE THEATRES
MAY 30



FILM & TV NEWS

Jason Momoa to Play Lobo in *Supergirl: Woman of Tomorrow*



Jason Momoa, star of Warner Bros and DC's *Aquaman* films, has been tapped to play Lobo in *Supergirl: Woman of Tomorrow*, Deadline has confirmed. Momoa has been linked to the Lobo role since before James Gunn came in to lead DC alongside Peter Safran. He's been vocal in the past about his interest in the part and today confirmed his attachment to the role in a post on Instagram, where he screenshotted comments from a past interview.

"I collect comics, and I don't do so much anymore, but was always my favorite, and I always wanted to play Lobo, because I'm like, 'Hello? It's the perfect role,'" said the actor. Momoa went on to say that should DC come around asking him to play Lobo, it would be "a f*ck yeah." Alongside the Instagram screenshot, Momoa posted a caption this morning that reads, "They called." An antihero known for his violent and irreverent personality, who hails from the planet Czarnia, Lobo possesses superhuman strength, regenerative abilities and an invulnerability that makes him a formidable opponent. Created by writer Roger Slifer and artist Keith Giffen, the character often is depicted as a bounty hunter who enjoys chaos and destruction. He was first introduced in *Omega Men* #3 in June 1983.

Plot details for the new *Supergirl* are under wraps. As previously reported, *House of the Dragon*'s Milly Alcock landed the title role after a long search, with Matthias

Schoenaerts boarding as villain Krem of the Yellow Hill. More recently, Eve Ridley came on to play the part of Ruthye Mary Knolle. Craig Gillespie will direct from a script by Ana Nogueira. The project is based on Tom King's 2022 comic book series *Supergirl: Woman of Tomorrow*, which Bilquis Evely illustrated. DC bosses Gunn and Safran will produce, with DC EVP Chantal Nong executive producing. Production kicks off on January 13. Warner Bros and DC naturally are high on Momoa, given that his recent pair of *Aquaman* films together grossed more than \$1.5 billion worldwide. Upcoming, the actor also has Warner Bros projects including *A Minecraft Movie*, which releases April 4, and the live-action/animated *Animal Friends* from Legendary. Additionally, he'll be seen in *Fast X: Part 2*, the Apple miniseries *Chief of War*, and Amazon MGM's *The Wrecking Crew* opposite Dave Bautista, among other projects.

From Deadline.com

James Mangold Doesn't Want To Be "Handcuffed" To 'Star Wars' Lore With Upcoming Prequel



As James Mangold makes his mark on a galaxy far, far away with his upcoming *Star Wars* installment, he's emphasizing the "long time ago" part of the setting. The 2x Oscar nominee, who is set to co-write and direct *Star Wars: Dawn of the Jedi*, recently teased

that his prequel will aim to "find a way on the page to say something original" about the origin of The Force without relying too much on the franchise's established lore. "To me, the really important aspects are the freedom to make something new. [Screenwriter Beau Willimon] and I, in relation to *Star Wars*, have been working on a script, and we'll see what happens," he told MovieWeb. "The *Star Wars* movie would be taking place 25,000 years before any known *Star Wars* movies take place," added Mangold. "It's an area and a playground that I've always [wanted to explore] and that I was inspired by as a teenager. I'm not that interested in being handcuffed by so much lore at this point that

it's almost immovable, and you can't please anybody." First announced at 2023's Star Wars Celebration in London, the project is based on the 2012 comic book series about the origins of the Jedi Order. A release date for the film has not yet been set. Willimon, who previously earned an Emmy nomination for his writing on the *Star Wars* series *Andor*, was announced as Mangold's co-writer in April.

From Deadline.com

‘Superman’ Estate Sues Warner Bros. Discovery, DC Comics To Block Release In Key Territories



The estate of Superman creator Joseph Schuster is suing Warner Bros. Discovery and its DC Comics, claiming it lacks the rights to release the upcoming summer tentpole in a handful of key territories. Plaintiff Mark Warren Peary, executor to the estate, filed the suit today in Federal Court in the Southern District of New York seeking “damages and injunctive relief for Defendants’ ongoing infringement in Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Australia, as well as declaratory relief establishing the Shuster Estate’s ownership rights across relevant jurisdictions.” The matter is ripe for adjudication, it said, “as Defendants are actively planning a major new Superman motion picture and other derivative works for imminent worldwide release.” The latest *Superman* starring David Corenswet in the title role, is fact, set for release on July 11. The cast includes Rachel Brosnahan as Lois Lane, Nicholas Hoult as Lex Luthor and María Gabriela de Faría as The Engineer.



Warner and Peary and his longtime legal team have been in court rather often before this, most recently regarding termination rights under the U.S. Copyright Act. But The automatic foreign copyright reversion issue in this case did not occur until years later, said Marc Toberoff, attorney for the estate, and was never actually litigated. Now it will be. “We fundamentally disagree with the merits of the lawsuit, and will vigorously defend our rights,” said a WBD spokesman. At issue are foreign copyrights to the original Superman character and story, coauthored by Jerome Siegel and Shuster. Though Siegel and Shuster assigned worldwide Superman rights to DC’s predecessor in 1938 “for a mere \$130 (\$65 each), the copyright laws of countries with the British legal tradition—including Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Australia—contain provisions automatically terminating such assignments 25 years after an author’s death, vesting in the Shuster Estate the co-author’s undivided copyright interest in such countries,” the suit said. “Shuster died in 1992 and Siegel in 1996. By operation of law, Shuster’s foreign copyrights automatically reverted to his estate in 2017 in most of these territories (and in 2021 in Canada). Yet Defendants continue to exploit Superman across these jurisdictions without the Shuster Estate’s authorization—including in motion pictures, television series, and merchandise—in direct contravention of these countries’ copyright laws, which require the consent of all joint copyright owners to do so.” This is bound to be most unwelcome as DC and parent WBD start to gear up for the release. The trailer was the most viewed and the most talked about in the history of both DC and Warner Bros” when it hit in December, said DC Studios co-head James Gunn on X at the time. Watch it below. The lawsuit requests a jury trial, claiming “defendants’ acts of direct infringement have been willful, intentional, and purposeful, in wholesale disregard of and indifference to the rights of Plaintiff.”



“As a direct and proximate result of Defendants’ infringement of the Work’s copyrights and exclusive rights, Plaintiff has been injured in an amount to be determined at trial, inclusive of Plaintiff’s actual damages and Defendants’ profits,” it said. Meanwhile, the estate is asking the court for a cease and desist order “enjoining Defendants, their officers, agents, employees, and those acting in concert with them, preliminarily during the pendency of this action and permanently thereafter from: (a) infringing, or contributing to or participating in the infringement by others the copyright in the Work or acting in concert with, aiding, or abetting others to infringe said copyright in any way; (b) copying, duplicating, selling, licensing, displaying, distributing, preparing derivative works of the Work, or otherwise using or exploiting the Work, which Plaintiff jointly owns, without Plaintiff’s prior written consent or license to do so.”

From Deadline.com



Mark Strong Joins ‘Neuromancer’ Apple TV+ Series



Mark Strong (*Dune: Prophecy*, *Kingsman: The Secret Service*) is set as a series regular opposite leads Callum Turner and Briana Middleton in *Neuromancer*, Apple TV+'s 10-episode drama series based on the award-winning novel of the same name by William Gibson. Created for television by Graham Roland and JD

Dillard, *Neuromancer* follows a damaged, top-rung super-hacker named Case (Turner) who is thrust into a web of digital espionage and high-stakes crime with his partner Molly (Middleton), a razor-girl assassin with mirrored eyes, aiming to pull a heist on a corporate dynasty with untold secrets.

Strong will play Armitage, Case and Molly's mysterious employer. In addition to Turner and Middleton, he joins previously cast Joseph Lee who plays Hideo, a professional bodyguard. A co-production between Skydance Television, Anonymous Content and Apple Studios, *Neuromancer* is also produced by Drake's DreamCrew Entertainment. Roland will serve as showrunner and Dillard is set to direct the pilot episode.

Neuromancer is executive produced by Roland and Dillard, alongside David Ellison, Dana Goldberg, and Matt Thunell for Skydance Television; Anonymous Content; Drake, Adel 'Future' Nur and Jason Shrier for DreamCrew Entertainment; Zack Hayden and, Gibson. Strong was most recently seen as Emperor Javico Corino in *Dune: Prophecy* on Max. His film credits include the Venice award winner *Tár*, *1917*, *Cruella*, the *Kingsman* franchise, and *Zero Dark Thirty*. He was recently seen in *The Critic* opposite Ian McKellan and recently wrapped on Joe Carnahan's *Shadow Force* opposite Kerry Washington and Omar Sy. Strong is repped by Markham Froggatt and Irwin and WME. *From Deadline.com*



‘Bosch’ Star Titus Welliver Inks First-Look Series Deal With Amazon MGM Studios



For more than a decade, Titus Welliver has been an Amazon MGM Studios MVP as the star and executive producer of Prime Video's *Bosch* and *Bosch: Legacy*. As the latter is coming to an end, Welliver is staying in the studio fold with a first-look deal for series. "As one iconic chapter closes with *Bosch: Legacy*, we're incredibly excited to begin a new journey with Titus Welliver," said Vernon Sanders, head of television, Amazon MGM

Studios. "His portrayal of Harry Bosch has defined a generation of crime drama, bringing unparalleled depth and authenticity to the role. We're thrilled to continue our creative collaboration and can't wait to see what comes next."



Launching in 2014, *Bosch* became Prime Video's first drama hit and remains the streamer's longest-running series, spanning seven seasons. Welliver also toplines *Bosch: Legacy*, which is set to debut its third and final season March 27 and will help launch the upcoming Renée Ballard franchise spinoff starring Maggie Q. "I have enjoyed a wonderful and rewarding working relationship with Amazon for more than a decade," Welliver said. "I am grateful and excited to continue our collaboration to develop interesting and meaningful stories." Welliver recently signed on to star in CBS' planned spinoff from *The Equalizer*, so the Amazon MGM Studios will work around Welliver's acting services on the crime drama should it go forward. He was also recently seen in indie *Ricky*, which premiered at Sundance. Welliver's upcoming projects include the feature *Killing Castro*. *From Deadline.com*

“Love Hurts”

Review by Marcus Blake



Valentine’s Day movies don’t have to be rom-coms or even romantic. There are many kinds of Valentine’s Day movies so as a critic I prefer the ones that are not typical. That’s why the movie with Ke Huy Quan is one of the best Valentine’s Day’s movies I’ve seen in a long time. That isn’t to say it’s a great movie, it’s just better than the typical romantic movies that we often see around this time. But I tend to think martial arts action comedy movies with a little bit of romance are always going to be better than the typical Valentine’s Day rom-com or Hallmark like movie where everybody finds love in the end. What if you have to fight your way back to love through hundreds of bad guys... doesn’t that sound fun!!!

What can I say about *Love Hurts*... it’s stupidly fun, but it isn’t going to win any awards. It might win a “Razzie,” but it’s not supposed to be an Oscar-worthy film, just a fun action comedy that will keep you entertained for 90 minutes. As a fellow critic pointed out, it says if Roger Corman had made the movie... that’s not an insult at all, just a different style of filmmaking. The story is about a former hitman working for his mob brother and decides not to kill the woman he fell in love with so therefore they both disappear. The character of Marvin played by Ke Huy Quan becomes a top-selling real estate agent until the woman he was supposed to kill decides to come back into his life and go after the men that wanted her dead so she could have her life back and not live in hiding anymore.

That’s when Marvin is pulled back into the life and has to defend himself against ruthless killers trying to put him down. Of course, we have seen this plot before, but if you’re a fan of martial arts action movies then the plot is not as important as the action itself and that is this film’s strong suit. Just like Jackie Chan movies or Jet Li movies, the martial arts action sequences are always better than the story itself. And if you think Ke Huy Quan is not in the same league as the two legends I mentioned before, when his acting career declined after being a child star, he became a stunt coordinator. In fact he was the stunt coordinator on the first X-Men movie with Hugh

Jackman... isn’t that a fun movie fact! He definitely has the skills to be a great action star and it is very much showcased in this movie. The fight choreography is amazing and there’s a lot of humor to it that makes this a fun movie to watch even if the plot is largely forgettable.

I’m not saying this is a bad movie. It’s a very entertaining movie. But it’s a martial arts action movie and that’s all it’s meant to be. What works is the action with a lot of good comedy and a fun cast. Having Sean Astin in the movie and bringing a bit of a *Goonies* reunion was awesome. But unfortunately here’s what makes the movie not that great. It’s a recycled plot line. A former hitman goes into hiding until they bring him back out and he has to deal with his pass by killing all the bad guys. Yeah that’s been played out as a story. That plot line was pretty much used for the *RED* movies with Bruce Willis. But like any great action movie, the plot is not necessarily important as long as you get great action scenes. And that’s the one thing that *Love Hurts* truly accomplishes. Throw in a very cynical girl who hates Valentine’s Day but ends up finding love on Valentine’s Day with a poet assassin and then you got yourself a winner. It’s just like a Hallmark movie except a lot of people are going to die, but still better than a Hallmark movie! This is not the best Ke Huy Quan movie. It’s not an Oscar worthy performance like in *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, but it doesn’t have to be. Sometimes actors just make fun movies. So at the end of the day even though the plot is kind of silly and you may feel like that you’ve watched this movie before, you’re going to get a lot of great action mixed in with some good comedy and those two things are a great combination when it comes to making fun movies. *Love Hurts* is a fun movie that’s not trying to be anything else and that’s why it’s worth watching. Maybe it’s not worth the price of a movie ticket but it’s worth the price of movie rental when you just want to stay in and relax.

FINAL GRADE: 6 / 10



“The Gorge”

Review by Jimmy Alford



In my opinion Apple TV+ is the best streaming service to buy into, if you’re a fan of science fiction. Apple has been churning out interesting and entertaining original content that is far and away better than the competition. I can’t say enough good things about “Dark Matter,” “Severance,” “Silo,” or “For All Mankind.” It’s this pedigree I had in mind when I watched Scott Derrickson’s “The Gorge.” To be up front, it doesn’t earn a spot at the of my list of favorites, but it’s serviceable and still worth a watch. It is a bit genre-bending, as it blends romance, action, and sci-fi into a single, ambitious package. The mix of high-stakes drama, good character building, some tired tropes and a finale that’s a little too neat. The movie is full of well-worn tropes that accompany any number of military action movies. The haunted soldier, the cold corporations, sins of the past coming back to bite us, and the ever-present double cross is what you see in this movie. Frankly, you can predict where each cliché will turn its head. To sum up, the writing is nothing special, but despite that we get some nice acting and cool creatures.

After the obligatory character intros, we meet the gorge. Their missions are simple. Nothing leaves the gorge alive. Levi, played by Miles Teller, is on the west side and Drasa, played by Anya Taylor-Joy is on the east. They know little about the why behind their assignments. The world-building is pretty good, with decent details. The set design and creature design is excellent and reminds me of the likes of “Silent Hill,” “Pirates of the Caribbean,” and “Resident Evil.” Unfortunately, most of that doesn’t come until we’re about an hour into the movie. The first hour is spent watching the protagonists endure their solitude, exchanging messages and synchronizing their patrols as a way to connect. This slow burn is necessary to develop the snipers’ budding romance. At its core, “The Gorge” is a love story set against impending doom. Teller and Taylor-Joy inject plenty of life

into their characters. We get an entertaining connection that is sorely lacking in many sci-fi and action movies. I was overjoyed at the great storytelling I got in the 2024 film “A Quiet Place: Day one,” and I’m similarly glad to get some decent character development here. The acting is really what elevates the film beyond its limitations of the humdrum writing, and their relationship feels organic despite the implausibility of its circumstances.

While the first half of the movie offers little in the way of action, the second half goes all in. We meet the mysterious creatures called hollowmen and our snipers stumble onto new troubling layers of conspiracy and horror. The final act, unfortunately, is where “The Gorge” falters. The last-minute villain, Bartholomew, played by Sigourney Weaver, feels underdeveloped. Honestly, I had almost forgotten she was in the film, until the last 20 minutes. The conclusion just seemed rushed, and too easy. Too easy in the fact that the plot armor around our snipers could snap Wolverine’s adamantium claws. I found myself snickering at all the easy fixes that had to have been written during some late nite cram session. At one point they slap the hood of an 80 year old jeep and drive off. I laughed out loud, because I can’t get my truck to start if it sits for two weeks without being started. Don’t get bogged down in the details here. You’ll get stuck all night. “The Gorge” remains an entertaining watch, largely due to its strong lead performances. I think it’s a good date night popcorn flick. Watch it at least for Taylor-Joy’s performance and to hear her attempt at a Lithuanian accent.

FINAL GRADE: 6 / 10

“Captain America: Brave New World”

Review by Marcus Blake



Meet the new Captain America... Sure, we got to see him in a series on Disney +, but we haven’t gotten the new Captain America in his first solo movie and sadly we could have waited a bit longer. Let’s get right to it and just say, this is one of the worst Marvel movies I’ve ever seen. I have nothing against Sam Wilson as a character, I’ve loved him as the Falcon, but you sir are no Steve Rogers as pointed out by General Ross in the movie. That is the most profound line of this film and that’s why it’s hard to get excited for Sam Wilson as Captain America. I hate to say it, but here at That Nerd Show we’re not in the habit of bullshitting you when it comes to Marvel movies no matter how much Disney would want a good review. I’m going to tell it like it is and this is not a good movie. However, it does one good thing, it sets up a new character for bigger ensemble movies. We’ve been down this road before, we’ve gotten lots of origin movies to help establish characters that will be in Avengers movies and that’s probably the best thing Captain America Brave New World does... The Avengers will eventually get back together or what’s left of them, but we know it’s coming. We know that we have to establish the new Avengers post and game with some old Avengers and new ones. And who better to start the new Avengers than Captain America... I get it, but this just makes me really miss Steve Rogers.

So the movie is set after the Falcon and Winter Soldier series. Sam Wilson is fully implemented as the new Captain America and tasked with missions by the new president, General Thaddeus “Thunderbolt” Ross, this time played by Harrison Ford after William Hurts passing. There’s a new bad guy or should I say an old bad guy that you never expected from the Incredible Hulk movie with Edward Norton. That’s all I’ll say, no spoilers, but it’s not that exciting of a bad guy...hate to say it! The story centers around President Ross setting a treaty with world nations after Adamantium has been discovered and determining how it will be shared. So of course this is also a movie that will set up the future X-Men in this universe because if you know your comic books that is the substance that is covered over Wolverine’s skeleton. But the new bad guy is manipulating everything to make General Ross look bad... he succeeds. But after everything that we’ve seen with all the various bad guys leading up to Thanos, it’s just too hard to get excited for the bad guy in this movie. The only point to this movie is to set up the new Captain America and of course the Red Hulk. That’s right folks, General Ross is the Red Hulk... not really a spoiler considering we see that in the trailer. The movie does have a lot of good action and it has some wonderful performances. I like Harrison Ford as President Ross / The Red Hulk. But there’s nothing to really get excited about with this movie. To be honest it felt like a 2-hour credits scene that is setting up something else. Oh and don’t get me started about the lackluster credit scene where the bad guy explains to Sam that he should be afraid of the others... Yeah we know, there’s somebody worse than Thanos.... Thank you for setting up the Secret Wars.

The performances are good, don’t get me wrong. Anthony Mackie makes a great Falcon and “B” version of Captain America. I mean he’s like the Gobots version of Transformers. But he’s always been good in the Marvel movies. Like I said, I don’t hate his character, he’s just not Captain America. He should have stayed the Falcon. But after over 30 Marvel movies and various origin stories, this just feels very lackluster compared to what we’ve seen over the last 15 years and it leaves us asking the question... Why should we care? The series The Falcon and the Winter Soldier is a good series, one of the better ones for Disney +, but all it really does is make us care more about Sam as the Falcon... not Captain America. And if you’re going to make a movie where he constantly questions whether he should have taken the serum to be a super soldier... Yeah, you should have because we don’t care about you as some ordinary man with wings playing Captain America. Cap is a super soldier. In fact, after watching this movie I care more about Isaiah Bradley as the forgotten Captain America than I do as Sam playing “New Cap.” The bottom line is there’s not enough of a good story to make us care about these characters. They’re introduced as part of an origin story to set up the new Avengers and this could have been done in a post-credits scene, not a 2-hour movie! For me, the film feels like a very long intro to something bigger with characters that I just don’t care about. Congratulations Disney and Marvel, you’ve made me stop caring about your superheroes!!! The best moments of the film are with Harrison Ford and Anthony Mackie especially when Captain America and the Red Hulk are fighting, but it’s hard to be invested when you know they’re eventually going to be on the same side. So my honest opinion about Captain America: Brave New World, it’s not even a halfway decent movie that would be good for Disney +. This is a movie that should not have been in the theaters, it should have gone straight to the streaming platform where at best we waste 2 hours of our time, but not the price of a movie ticket. After watching this “shitshow” of a movie, Disney, you owe me a refund as a fan!!! This movie should have gone straight to Disney Plus and Black Widow should have gotten the theatrical at least it deserved. But I’ll leave you with one final thought, the one scene with the Winter Soldier, Bucky Barnes just makes me want to watch the Thunderbolts movie even more even though I’m not sure that’s going to be very good, but it’s got to be better in this movie!

FINAL GRADE: 4 / 10



WHAT YOU SHOULD BINGE-WATCH

Two Great Spy Shows You Should Watch on Netflix!

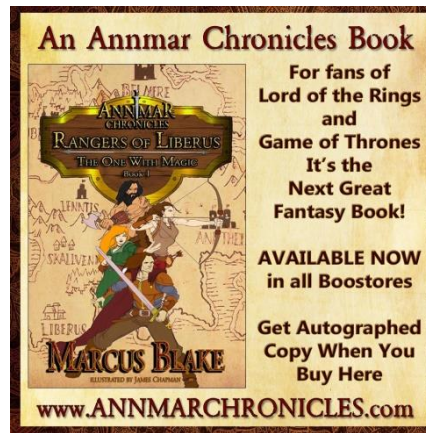


The Night Agent: Season 2 Review by Allison Costa

Season Two of “The Night Agent” recently dropped on Netflix. If you can recall, in Season 1 we are introduced to Peter Sutherland, an under-used agent at the FBI who sits in a basement by a mysterious phone where agents in the field can call in if they are in serious trouble—it’s a secretive sub-branch called Night Action. One evening Peter receives a call from a woman named Rose whose aunt and uncle were undercover agents and give her this number as they are about to be murdered. From there the plot explodes as Peter is called in to protect Rose but also finds himself embroiled in a giant conspiracy plan to kill the president and where his mentor is a traitor.

Fast forward to Season 2. Now it is 10 months later and Peter has been actively in the field being trained as a Night Action agent on behalf of a request made by the President. When on a routine recon mission everything goes wrong and his partner is killed. Peter goes into hiding as we try to discover what truly happened. Given his past history he does NOT trust those he works for and fears another conspiracy. Meanwhile Rose is in California seeing a therapist and trying to figure out her life

when a random man calls her asking about Peter—whom she hasn’t heard from in 10 months. From here the plot starts to get very complicated as Rose uses her technical facial recognition hacking skills to find Peter and make sure he is okay. Again Peter and Rose find themselves in the mindset of a dangerous case—this time involving a deadly terrorists threat on United States soil.



There are several new characters introduced this season. There is Peter’s mentor, Catherine, as well as an entirely new sub-group of Iranian diplomats that have their own sub-plot as well. Although I really enjoyed Season 1 of Night Agent, Season 2 was more problematic for me. Although the storyline and the two different plots are actually pretty interesting and intense, I had a hard time connecting with the characters. Rose was actually better in this season and seemed more helpful and more of an asset than Peter. Peter’s new handler, Catherine, is flat and boring and honestly just very flat—no dimension to her. And Peter? Well in Season 1 he seemed very noble and humble and was quite likeable....not sure what happened in Season 2?? His character isn’t particularly charming, doesn’t have amazing skills and isn’t even all that bright? I don’t know if it’s the actor who is the problem or if the writers just tried to

write him differently this Season—edgier—and it just didn’t work out? But it was really hard to rally around him as the protagonist. I often found myself liking the characters of the bad guys, better than Peter. All in all it’s still a good show, and I still recommend watching it, I just hope that in the future they change up his character or help him to have more dimension and depth. Even with a great plot and good action, if your main character is flat and boring eventually the show will fail.

FINAL GRADE: 7 / 10



The Recruit: Season 2 Review by Marcus Blake

Season 2 of Netflix’s hit show, The Recruit dropped this past week after a 3-year wait, and boy, was it worth it. This has been one of my favorite shows on Netflix. Yes, it’s a spy show, but without an actual spy being the main protagonist. Owen Hendricks is a Jack Ryan type of character who is just trying to do a simple job with the CIA but somehow gets involved in the craziest of situations in the world of espionage. But what makes the

show spectacular is he always finds a way out. He's a "Chaos Agent" with a heart of gold just trying to keep his head above water, and when he gets in trouble and is sent to what is commonly referred to as no man's land within the CIA where he can't do anything, somehow he finds himself in an international situation saving the day from a foreign agent who will spill all their secrets.

Season 2 picks right where season 1 ended where Owen saves a day but is also about to be killed by rogue agents because he got in their way from completing their own mission. As punishment, he's relegated to being "rubber stamped" which is basically no man's land where he can't do any work, but somehow intercepts a secret message from a foreign operative and has to stop that agent from spilling CIA sequence. This takes him to South Korea. While season 2 wasn't as long as the first season, six episodes is really all we needed to tell this story regarding the latest mission that Owen Hendricks is on and that's a good thing.

The story wasn't drawn out, the pacing was great and it was balls to the walls full of action and a wonderful spy story that keeps you on the edge of your seat through the last episode. For those that don't know, the creator of the series is Alexi Hawley who's also the showrunner of ABC's hit show with Nathan Fillion, "The Rookie." The show is filled with plenty of action, humor, and good drama, everything you need to make a great series

and I love the fact that Nathan Fillion plays Director West. While we do get the same old characters, new characters are introduced through the Russian Assassin Nichka who is Max's daughter from the first season. And she is very much like her mother in all that entails. If you're a fan of the first season then there isn't anything to not like about the second season. As I said before, the best part is it's not too long and the story is very concise. I feel like, you can tell these spy adventures in six episodes or two three-hour movies that you can watch back to back in the afternoon. I really don't have any complaints about season 2 except I hope they don't wait 3 years to give me season 3 because this is one of the best shows on Netflix. If you've always been disappointed about studios trying to make Jack Ryan into an actual spy when he never was, then this is the show for you because Jack Ryan as a character has always been an analyst who at best knows how to defend himself. He's never been a super spy or soldier even though he knows how to handle a gun. To me, the character of Owen Hendricks represents Jack Ryan more than even the Jack Ryan series on Amazon Prime. Nothing against John Krasinski who I think portrays a good Jack Ryan, but I actually like this character better who's more of an accidental spy that saves the day.

The worst part of season 2 is simply that we don't get enough time with each of the characters. If you want to get right down to it and if I can make an

interesting reference, Season 2 feels more like Quantum of Solace to Casino Royale where it's a long epilogue to a better story. I think season 1 is better because of the way it introduces the characters, but season 2 is still fantastic where you get to see the evolution of the main character who will be one of the most important operators at the CIA one day. And just because I make that James Bond reference doesn't mean that I dislike the movie Quantum of Solace, I still think that's a good movie, but I call it what it is, it's just an epilogue to the previous story. I would have liked that through a couple more episodes, but it doesn't take away from the non-stop action in great pacing in season 2. They tell a really good story in six episodes. So if you're looking for a great spy story that involves actual tradecraft and not super spies then this is the show for you. There are a lot of great spy stories and Netflix also has the Night Agent which is very good, but the "accidental spy" who gets himself into trouble but keeps surviving is a little bit more of an endearing story than a super spy that you know is always going to win. Whereas I gave season 1 a 9 because of how much I like the show, I only give season 2 an 8 because in a lot of ways, it feels like seasons 1 and 2 are just one big story. That's not a bad thing when you only need 14 episodes to tell a great spy story.

FINAL GRADE: 8 / 10

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GAMING NEWS

PlayStation Plus Monthly Games for February: Payday 3, High on Life, Pac-Man World Re-Pac

Plan the ultimate heist, team up with talkative weaponry then jump and chomp your way through an island adventure with the [PlayStation Plus](#) Monthly Games lineup for February! Payday 3, High on Life and Pac-Man World Re-Pac will be available to PlayStation Plus members from February 4*. Let's take a closer look at the games.



Payday 3 | PS5

Revel in the thrill of a perfectly planned and executed heist in this high-octane, co-op FPS experience for up to four players online. Step out of retirement back into the life of crime in the shoes of the Payday Gang, the envy of their peers and the nightmare of law-enforcement wherever they go. Several years after the crew's reign of terror over Washington DC has ended, they assemble

once again to deal with the threat that roused them out of early retirement.



High on Life | PS4, PS5

Fresh out of high school with no job and no ambition, you've really got nothing going for you until an alien cartel that wants to get high off humanity invades Earth. Now, you and a team of charismatic talking guns must answer the hero's call and become the deadliest intergalactic bounty hunter the cosmos has ever seen. Travel to a variety of biomes and locations across the cosmos, go up against the nefarious Garmantuous and his gang of goons, collect loot, meet unique characters, and more, in the latest comedy adventure from Squanch Games.



Pac-Man World Re-Pac | PS4, PS5

In this 2022 remake of the original PlayStation platformer, with improved UI, fine-tuned mechanics and updated visuals, Pac-Man arrives home on his birthday to find the Ghosts have kidnapped Pac-Man's family & friends and ruined his party. Off to the rescue, Pac-Man sets out to Ghost Island. Dodge Ghosts, solve environmental puzzles, rescue the Pac-Fam, and more in this platforming adventure. Play a collection of 3D mazes in Maze mode, clear Quest mode to unlock the original Pac-Man game in Original mode.

All three games will be available to PlayStation Plus members on February 4 until March 3.



“Indiana Jones and the Great Circle: Why It’s the Best Game of 2024”

By Marcus Blake



2024 may not have been a great year for games, but there is one game that surpassed everything and it is my Game of the Year. Yes, gamers, I'm talking about *Indiana Jones and the Great Circle*, The first Xbox exclusive that is nearly perfect! I don't know if Xbox has ever had an exclusive game that was perfect. Still, I can honestly say that *Indiana Jones and the Great Circle* beat out all of their exclusives to date... yes, even beat the Halo games Developed by MachineGames and published by Bethesda, this game is the Indiana Jones story that we should have had in the form of a movie after the Last Crusade. If you're an Indiana Jones fan like me, you've probably been disappointed with the last two films and I hate to admit it, but Harrison Ford did age out of the role. However, the story of the Great Circle is exactly what we always want in an Indiana Jones story. Even though it is not set after the events of the Last Crusade, it's actually set a year after *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, this is a perfect Indiana Jones adventure. The more I played the game, the more I just wanted to watch this movie! The cut-scenes as a film are better than anything we've gotten with Indiana Jones since the third movie. And it makes it even better that we get to play this adventure. There's been other good Indiana Jones games, but not quite like this one. If you're a fan of adventure games like *Tomb Raider* or *Uncharted* then this is the perfect game for you but with our favorite archaeologists who always defeat the Nazis at every turn! Sure, my nostalgia for Indiana Jones stories may affect how critical I am of this game and it's hard not to feel the nostalgia of a classic Indiana Jones story, but the rest assured, I'm still going to be very critical and talk about what I hope the developers improve if they ever make a sequel, and they should!

So let's dive in! First of all, the story is amazing. It's a great adventure across the globe with lots of puzzle-solving and a story rooted in religious and mystic lore that doesn't seem so hokey. Sorry, Kingdom of

the Crystal Skull, it's hard to throw in alien technology with Indiana Jones and make it believable. An Indiana Jones story should not be an X-Files episode. But the story of the Great Circle has just the right amount of mysticism that connects to religious stories the same as the Last Crusade or *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. I very much enjoyed this story because like a good adventure game, you get to go to different places. It didn't just take us to the Vatican or out in Giza. Being transported to wartorn Shanghai was a really cool part of the adventure. But let's be honest, a great Indiana Jones story always has religious zealots and mystics, and a great enemy. So of course Indiana Jones battling Nazis makes for a great story. But one of the things that I truly loved about the story in this game is that he meets a female protagonist who can keep up with him.



The story is set in 1937 and Marion Ravenwood has already left him. They touch on that at the beginning of the game and it adds another emotional layer to the story. But they did add a great female protagonist Who very much keeps up with Indiana Jones in the form of a journalist looking for her sister who somehow got conned into working with the Nazis. Gina is a great character and very reminiscent of Marion. And like in all great Indiana Jones stories, you have to have a good female protagonist especially if Marion Ravenwood is not going to be part of the story. There are certainly some similarities to *Raiders of the Lost Ark* especially with the evil Nazi scientist who wants to use some mystic power to control the world. The character of Voss is a great antagonist and the final boss fight against him at the end of the game is amazing! So the developers definitely came up with a great story and that's the first part in making a fantastic Indiana Jones game. Like I said, I want to watch this story as a movie because even if we didn't get to play the adventure it would make one hell of an Indiana Jones movie even in animation form! I have to admit, the

story is damn near perfect just like *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and the Last Crusade.



My biggest criticism of the game is with the gameplay. I love the puzzle-solving just like in a *Tomb Raider* game or *Uncharted* game. I love the fact you constantly have to use the whip to scale walls or bring down stuff that will help you continue the adventure. I love the fact that you can use the whip as a weapon and take weapons away from Nazis. The whip is so iconic with Indiana Jones that having to use it to use it throughout the game are the best parts of the gameplay. I make a lot of comparisons to *Tomb Raider* and the *Uncharted* games because those are easily two franchises that are built upon adventure and forms of archeology so it's only natural that the developers of this game would mimic a lot of things from familiar adventure games such as *Tomb Raider* and *Uncharted*. If you're a huge fan of those franchises then it's not hard to like the Indiana Jones game. But here is where they got it wrong with Indiana Jones and the Great Circle. The best adventure games are always done in a third-person point of view. The *Tomb Raider* and the *Uncharted* games are perfect examples. I don't understand the reasoning for doing this game as a first-person point-of-view action game when all of the cut-scenes and some of the puzzle-solving scenes are a third-person point of view. It makes it very confusing and makes the combat a little bit more difficult. I am not saying that a first-person point-of-view game can't have good gameplay, but that is mostly reserved first-person shooters nowadays. I can't remember the last adventure game where it was a first-person point of view. I don't think it takes away from the Indiana Jones game overall, but it is very confusing going back and forth and makes it feel strange, especially with all the stealth

actions you have to complete the game. You can't just take on the Nazis and survive, there is a lot of sneaking around, and shifting between the first-person's point of view to the third-person is very cumbersome. If the developers had been smart, they would have included an option where you can switch between first-person and third-person points of view. I think most gamers would have chosen third-person because that's what we have been used to over the last 20 to 25 years in gaming. I would have preferred the third-person point of view like previous Indiana Jones games. This limited the gameplay and made some of the actions in combat more problematic than it should have been. It's a big misstep that can easily be corrected in a sequel by either just making it a third-person point of view or giving the gamer the option to choose between both.



The stealth action was actually really good. In fact the hardest part of the game for me was infiltrating a Nazi base and stealing gold to buy a breathing device to go underwater. You can't fight your way out of that base, you constantly have to sneak around and time everything just right when knocking out the guards. But the stealth takedowns weren't as smooth like other games such as Uncharted, Tomb Raider, or Assassin's Creed which is built upon stealth action in the gameplay. Again this is an easy fix by allowing the gamer to choose what point of view they want to play the game. But the fact that Indiana Jones can't just fight his way out of everything and has to sneak around and put on disguises, that's one of the best parts of the game. Roaming around the Vatican in disguise made the game a lot of fun. But then again fighting Nazis is always fun as well. I am critical of the hand-to-hand combat and being able to parry. Older games like the first couple of Uncharted games seem to have smoother hand-to-hand combat.

Perhaps this can change with the option to switch between a first-person point of view and a third-person point of view. I know it seems like I'm harping on this one issue, but it's really the biggest flaw of the Indiana Jones game. I feel like in a lot of ways this game would have been absolutely perfect if it weren't for this flaw.

The only other critical issue that I had with the game is being able to take down bad guys with one blow. Having to hold the left trigger button down to have a forceful punch or blow and even when that didn't work but should have especially if you're using a big rock hammer to knock someone out, it gets extremely irritating when you're trying to knock someone out from a heavy blow and then you end up having to fight them which will alert other guards. Takedowns should be simple and smooth just like in Tomb Raider. And if you want to get down to it, Uncharted 4 really mastered being able to quietly take down guards with your bare hands. They actually improved upon the "takedown" from the first Uncharted game to the fourth one. This is something that the developers can improve with a sequel. Now it doesn't take away from playing Indiana Jones and the Great Circle, it just makes the game harder than it should be. But once you've mastered it, your second play-through shouldn't be as difficult.

Overall, this is a great game with a few minor critiques. I won't give it a perfect score, but there's an awful lot to love about Indiana Jones and The Great Circle. Not only is it the best Indiana Jones video game we've ever gotten, it's the perfect adventure story that should have been a movie, but perhaps is more fun to play if you're an Indiana Jones fan. I have to praise Troy Baker for voicing Indiana Jones. It's no small feat walking in those shoes and he very much sounds like Harrison Ford. The performances of the game are fantastic especially that of Tony Todd. This was his last official video game performance before his death in 2024 and he was fantastic. He will truly be missed. If this game proves anything then the continuation of Indiana Jones adventures is not in movies anymore or even on the small screen, it's in video games. MachineGames has proven that you can make a great Indiana Jones adventure that is better to play than anything that we would see on the big screen. And if I'm being honest I'd rather replay this game than watch Kingdom of the Crystal Skull or The Dial of Destiny, two movies that probably never should have been made. I will forever love the first three Indiana Jones movies, but the best Indiana Jones adventures now are the ones we get to play. If you love the Tomb

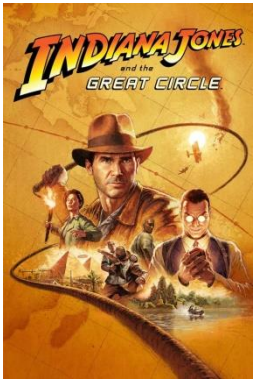
Raider games and the Uncharted games then you absolutely must play this game. You will not be disappointed. I know some critics are going to be overly critical for the sake of being a critic. I also know some other critics will give in to their nostalgia for Indiana Jones.



Yes, I have a lot of nostalgia for the character, but I'm not afraid to criticize poor storytelling like in the last two movies. The developers got it right with this story and even if the gameplay isn't perfect, the story outweighs any problems you might have with the gameplay. There are so many video games today that you'll play through it once and you may not even complete it, and you certainly won't go back to replay the game. Not Indiana Jones and the Great Circle. It definitely has a lot of great replay value. At the time of this review being published, I'm ready to play it again. It's been one of my favorite games over the last 10 years. It is certainly my 2024 game of the year! The developers put a lot of love into *Indiana Jones and the Great Circle*. Their love for the character and good storytelling is very evident. Yes, it's not perfect, but it's close especially the way the game starts and ends, and feels exactly like an Indiana Jones movie. I got Goosebumps when I heard the theme song for the first time in the game and hearing it at the end during the credits almost brought tears to my eyes. If you're a fan of Indiana Jones, you'll probably have the same experience. And while I hope the developers change the point of view in the gameplay for the sequel or at least give us an update to where we can choose from first person to third person in this game, those minor criticisms don't overshadow the awesomeness of the game. I can be overly critical, it's true, but I had so much fun playing this game that I have to give the game a 9. The fun we have in a video game always outweighs the criticisms we have of that game. And that's why I rate this game as high as I do. I can't ignore how much fun I had and how much I want to play the game again. And I can't wait to play another Indiana Jones adventure.



THAT NERD SHOW'S TOP 10 GAMES OF 2024



1



2



3



4



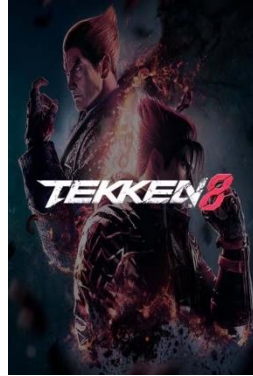
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10

 **XBOX**
GAME PASS

 **Play**

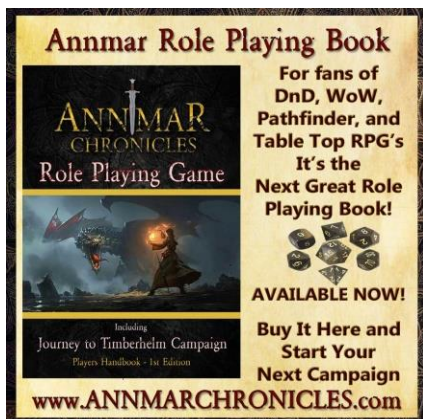
Together for one low monthly price!

TOMB RAIDER IV-VI REMASTERED

AVAILABLE NOW ON PC & CONSOLES



Aspyr and Crystal Dynamics are excited to release **Tomb Raider IV-VI Remastered**, available today on PlayStation®5, PlayStation®4, Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch, and PC via Steam, the Epic Games Store and GOG for \$29.99. Developed and published by Aspyr, this new three-game collection features *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation*, *Tomb Raider: Chronicles*, and *Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness*, each remastered with improved visuals, modern control options, Photo Mode, classic cheat codes, trophies and achievements, and much more. Aspyr has also released a new bundle, “**Tomb Raider I-VI Remastered**,” featuring all three titles from the acclaimed *Tomb Raider I-III Remastered Starring Lara Croft* (*Tomb Raider I* + The “Unfinished Business” Expansion, *Tomb Raider II* + The “Gold Mask” Expansion, and *Tomb Raider III* + The “Lost Artifact” Expansion) plus everything included in *Tomb Raider IV-VI Remastered*. Grab this six-game bundle deal today on PlayStation®5, PlayStation®4, Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch, and PC via Steam and GOG for \$54.99.



Tomb Raider IV-VI Remastered brings the next trio of beloved, globe-trotting Tomb Raider adventures, originally developed by Core Design, to modern platforms with a variety of improvements for players to relive or experience for the very first time. Building on the success of last year’s *Tomb Raider I-III Remastered Starring Lara Croft*, Aspyr has raised the bar even further this time around, introducing several fresh tools to improve the experience, including the new Flyby Camera Maker, an on-screen ammo counter, a cutscene skipper, and multiple new animations.

Key Features

- **Enhanced Visuals:** Discover remastered visuals that bring new life to environments, characters, and artifacts, with the option to toggle between classic and modern graphics on the fly!
- **New Modern Control Scheme:** Choose between new modern controls inspired by later entries in the series for smoother movement and camera capability, or opt for the original tank-style controls.
- **The Return of Photo Mode:** Photo Mode is back with all poses from *Tomb Raider I-III Remastered Starring Lara Croft* included, along with brand-new ones to commemorate the adventure!
- **Flyby Camera Maker:** This new tool empowers players to create their own dynamic, cinematic shots. Map out moving camera paths through any scene, opening up a world of creative possibilities. See it in motion with this special video preview.
- **And So Much More!** Enjoy a variety of quality-of-life updates like boss health bars, an ammo counter, cutscene skipper, new animations including ledge hangs and 180-degree turns, and new trophies and achievements* nodding to iconic moments from the series.

God Set, unwittingly unleashing him and fulfilling an ancient prophecy—one that plunges mankind into darkness. Pursued at every turn by her archrival, the unscrupulous archaeologist Werner Von Croy, Lara embarks on a journey of discovery across Egypt, where she must overcome the most ingenious puzzles and infernal traps ever devised while facing terrifying evil from beyond the grave.

Tomb Raider: Chronicles (2000)

Following the events of *The Last Revelation*, Lara Croft is buried in an Egyptian tomb and presumed dead. At her memorial, those closest to her reminisce about secrets from her past. Travel back and experience Lara’s untold adventures, introducing new gameplay mechanics like stealth and tightrope balancing

Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness (2003)

Accused of murder, Lara becomes a fugitive on the run, uncovering a sinister conspiracy involving alchemical experiments and the search for ancient artifacts. It’s up to Lara to stop this unholy alliance from unleashing its incredible powers on the world.

Tomb Raider IV-VI Remastered is available today on PlayStation®5, PlayStation®4, Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch, and PC via Steam, the Epic Games Store, and GOG for \$29.99.

*Trophies and achievements available on supported platforms.



Tomb Raider IV-VI Remastered includes:

Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation (1999)

Lara Croft uncovers the lost tomb of the Egyptian

Dive Into Casey Jones & The Junkyard Jam, Available Now for Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Splintered Fate



Today, the first DLC for [Super Evil Megacorp](#)'s award-winning *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Splintered Fate* – *Casey Jones & The Junkyard Jam* – has officially released on all platforms, including Steam, Steam Deck, Epic Games Store, Nintendo Switch and Apple Arcade! Players can now grab their hockey stick and mask because **Casey Jones** has officially

entered the fray! Armed with his unique hockey arsenal, including his special ability, the Guard Break, Casey becomes the first character in *TMNT: Splintered Fate* with a ranged attack. Players can take advantage of five new artifacts that are perfect additions for co-op play, as well as new ways to take control of the battlefield



Warner Bros. Games Announces Official PC Modding Support for Hogwarts Legacy with Creator Kit and Downloadable Mods



Warner Bros. Games today announced that for the first time, it will officially support PC modding with the critically acclaimed open-world action RPG *Hogwarts Legacy*. Beginning 30th January, Steam and Epic Games Store players can download the latest patch to easily access and download available mods directly from the main menu in the game, and those who want to create

their own mods can do so with the *Hogwarts Legacy Creator Kit* available for free on the Epic Games Store.

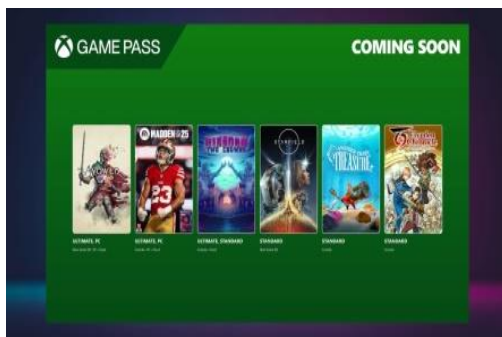
CurseForge, one of the world's largest repository of mods and addons for video games, will be hosting and moderating the *Hogwarts Legacy* mods. The *Hogwarts Legacy Creator Kit* will support modding new quests, dungeons, and character enhancements such as cosmetics and skins. The mods can then be submitted through the CurseForge platform to be published in the game.

Providing details on the integrated modding system, *Hogwarts Legacy* developer Avalanche Software conjured up a new

video that discusses what players can expect and showcases some of the studio's favorite mods that will be available when the feature launches next month. Highlighted in the video is the "Dungeon of Doom" mod, a dungeon packed with combat and hidden secrets, as well as all-new broom replacement mods, expanded character creation, outfit customization and more. A Steam or Epic Games Store account linked to a Warner Bros. Games account will be required to access official *Hogwarts Legacy* mods. Players can link their accounts now at...

<https://rewards.wbgames.com/games/hogwarts-legacy/link-account/curseforge>

New Games coming to Game Pass February 2025: Avowed, Madden NFL 25, and More



Xbox has unveiled an exciting lineup of games coming to Game Pass in February 2025, featuring a mix of new releases and returning favorites. Here's a breakdown of what's in store:

Available Now

Far Cry New Dawn (Cloud, Console, and PC)
Game Pass Ultimate, PC Game Pass, Game Pass Standard

Dive into a transformed, vibrant, post-apocalyptic Hope County, Montana, 17 years after a global nuclear catastrophe. Lead the fight against the Highwaymen as they seek to take over the last remaining resources.

Another Crab's Treasure (Console)

Now with Game Pass Standard. A soulslike adventure set in a crumbling underwater world. As Kril the hermit crab, you'll need to wear the trash around you as shells to withstand attacks from enemies many times your size. Embark on an epic treasure hunt to buy back your repossessed shell and discover the dark secrets behind the polluted ocean.

Eiyuden Chronicle: Hundred Heroes (Console) – February 5

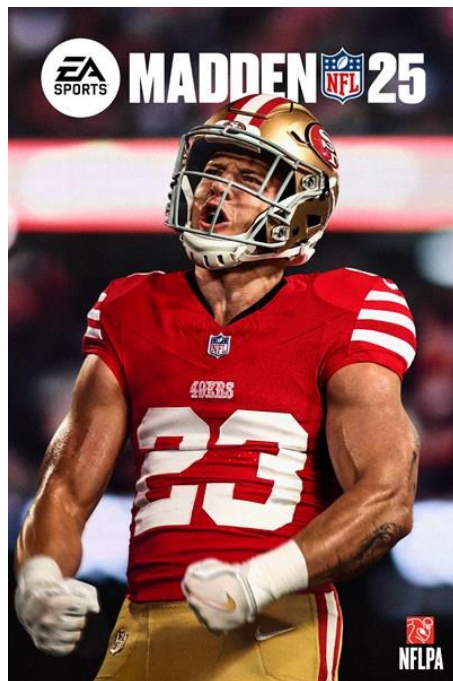
Now with Game Pass Standard. Gather your allies for *Eiyuden Chronicle: Hundred Heroes*, the grand JRPG adventure. Assemble your 6-party team from a cast of over a hundred heroes and shape your destiny in this lush, hand-crafted 2.5D world brimming with war, intrigue, and magic. Manage your town of vibrant characters, play delightful mini-games, and prepare for an unforgettable narrative of boundless charm.

Starfield (Xbox Series X|S) – February 5

Now with Game Pass Standard. *Starfield* is the first new universe in 25 years from Bethesda Game Studios, the award-winning creators of *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* and *Fallout 4*. In this next generation role-playing game set amongst the stars, create any character you want and explore with unparalleled freedom as you embark on an epic journey to answer humanity's greatest mystery.

Madden NFL 25 (Cloud, Console, and PC) EA Play – February 6

Game Pass Ultimate, PC Game Pass. Read the defense and drive downfield with precision and get unlimited access to *Madden NFL 25*, coming soon to The Play List. Members can dominate the gridiron with Xbox Cloud Gaming (Beta), PC Game Pass or Game Pass Ultimate via EA Play. Plus, score a Supercharge Pack from February 6 to March 6.



Kingdom Two Crowns (Cloud and Console) – February 13

Game Pass Ultimate, Game Pass Standard. Making a return to the Game Pass library!

In *Kingdom Two Crowns*, players must work in the brand-new solo or co-op campaign mode to build their kingdom and secure it from the threat of the Greed. Experience new technology, units, enemies, mounts, and secrets in the next evolution of the award-winning micro strategy franchise!

Avowed (Cloud, PC, and Xbox Series X|S) – February 18

Game Pass Ultimate, PC Game Pass. **Available on day one!** Welcome to the Living Lands, a mysterious island filled with adventure and danger. Set in the fictional world of Eora that was first introduced to players in the Pillars of Eternity franchise, *Avowed* is a first-person fantasy action RPG from the award-winning team at Obsidian Entertainment. Game Pass Ultimate and PC Game Pass members can purchase the **Avowed Premium Upgrade Addon** to receive up to 5 days early access, two sets of

premium skins, and access to the *Avowed* digital artbook & original soundtrack.

In Case You Missed It

Ninja Gaiden 2 Black (Cloud, Console, and PC) – Available now

Game Pass Ultimate, PC Game Pass. The highly acclaimed and legendary game from 2008 returns graphically remastered! *Ninja Gaiden 2 Black* features the high-speed, ninja action of iconic hero Ryu Hayabusa and his deadly Dragon Sword. Embark on a global battle against formidable foes, engage in relentless combat, and play as additional characters Momiji, Ayana and Rachel. Learn more here on Xbox Wire.

Star Wars Jedi: Survivor Available on Xbox One and Cloud Gaming (Beta) via EA Play

Game Pass Ultimate Stand against the darkness in *Star Wars Jedi: Survivor*, winner of IGN's Best Action Game of 2023 — now on The Play List! Continue Cal Kestis' journey on Xbox One and with Xbox Cloud Gaming (Beta) with Game Pass Ultimate via EA Play.

DLC/Game Updates

Call of Duty: Black Ops 6 Season 02 – Available now

You are in the fight now, so watch your back in four new 6v6 Multiplayer maps, fan-favorite modes like Gun Game, as well as a new Multiplayer mode where players can earn unique buffs. In Zombies, players will experience a brand-new map, The Tomb, and search for the Sentinel Artifact. The hunt has never been more thrilling. Check out the Call of Duty blog to learn more.

No Man's Sky Worlds Part II Update – Available now

The latest free update to No Man's Sky, Worlds Part II introduces billions of new stars and planets (including epic and volatile gas giants, deep water oceans and new biomes), massive technology upgrades to lighting, terrain and water, and much much more. Learn more here on Xbox Wire.



JOIN THE SEARCH-AND-RESCUE MISSION TO UNCOVER TRUTHS OF THE HARMONY IN STAR TREK ONLINE: AVAILABLE NOW!



New Update Celebrates 15 Years of Star Trek Online and Features Star Trek Celeb Jonathan Del Arco (as Hugh)

In celebration of *Star Trek Online*'s 15th anniversary, Arc Games announced today that *Star Trek Online: Unveiled*, the 33rd season of their long-running free-to-play Star Trek MMORPG, will launch on February 11, 2025 for PC and will launch on PlayStation and Xbox consoles on March 11, 2025. In this new *Star Trek Online* season, players can dive into new story content within the Axiom episode, a 15th Anniversary event, updates to the Infinity Lockbox and more. In *Star Trek Online: Unveiled*, a new and far more sinister Borg incursion is taking place in the Ram Izad system. While responding to a request for help from Hugh, renowned Cooperative Borg Faction

Leader and Executive Director of the Reclamation Project, players will discover the damaged and seemingly abandoned ship of Aetherian leader, Thaseen-Fei, in the Delta Quadrant. Mounting a search-and-rescue mission, the Players must reunite with familiar faces in order to uncover the truth about what went wrong aboard the *Harmony*!

This new adventure features beloved Star Trek franchise star Jonathan Del Arco who returns to the Trek universe as Hugh, the renowned Cooperative Borg Faction Leader. Jonathan Del Arco is known for playing Hugh in the fifth and sixth season of Star Trek: The Next Generation, alongside reprising the role in the first season of Star Trek: Picard.

Star Trek Online: Unveiled will include the following new features:

• New Episode – Axiom

- Mount a search-and-rescue and uncover the truth of what went wrong aboard the Aetherian ship, the *Harmony*, and find your contact, Hugh, leader of the Cooperative Borg Faction!

• Season 33 Event – 15th Anniversary

- During this new event, players can celebrate 15 years of *Star Trek Online* through playing selected content to earn a variety of rewards

including a Garret Command Alliance Dreadnought Cruiser [T6].

- **New Lock Box: “Discovery: Partners In Crime”**
- Includes a brand-new Grand Prize starship: Breen Keth Sarr Intel Courier [T6].
- Contains an entirely new selection of rewards, inspired by Season 5 of Star Trek: Discovery.
- Accompanied by new items for purchase on the Lobi Crystal Store.

Star Trek Online is a free-to-play massively multiplayer online game that allows players to explore the *Star Trek* universe from within. Players can forge their own destiny as Captain of a Federation starship, champion the Empire through the far reaches of the galaxy as a Klingon Warrior, rebuild the Romulan legacy as the commander of a Romulan Republic Warbird or carry out daring missions on behalf of the Dominion as a Jem'Hadar soldier. Captains can also explore iconic locations from the *Star Trek* universe, make contact with new alien species and battle alongside other players in customizable starships. *Star Trek Online* is currently available on PC and PlayStation and Xbox consoles.





A MESSAGE FROM YOUR SQUAD LEADER!

By Omri Uí Néill

“Call of Dumpy - Break Up 6” Call of Duty Black Ops 6 Review

By Omri Ui Neill.

I have returned in all my amazing Glory and even changed my name to protect the innocent, the Squad Leader has a very not so kind review of the latest Activision/Gamepass release “Call of Duty: Black Ops 6.” Now as you would expect from yours truly, this review was done with much love and compassion for as long as my beverage lasted. This means in plain speech that this title was beyond frustrating for so many reason that I am about to jump into. But first I wanted to state that at first I was going to stomp the old bones stumps of mine to peck out a funny and dark side story featuring myself and our loving Editor, Marcus Blake. Then as every good Squad Leader does, I had a shit and thought about it, decided it wasn't worth it. Now I gotta break up with Call of Duty, yeah that bad. Alright Gang, Call of Duty has done it again with releasing something pretty generalized, lackluster, and downright boring to slog through a campaign that I have done to date since the Advanced Warfare use of Kevin Spacey, just ewwww. So I'm going to start this rant with the campaign and then work my way down to zombies, right after these brief word from “What the Hell Were you Thinking!!!” Why in the hell would you make multiplayer leaned only towards PC players that have forgotten the sweet touch of Mother Nature and embraced the glow of the screen to be their guiding light into rotting. Didn't play it and I won't play it because we all know the “Dev” teams will drag their dirty unchanged diapers at the speed of smell to make any fixes to stop cheaters as they throw cosmetics to purchase at the store.

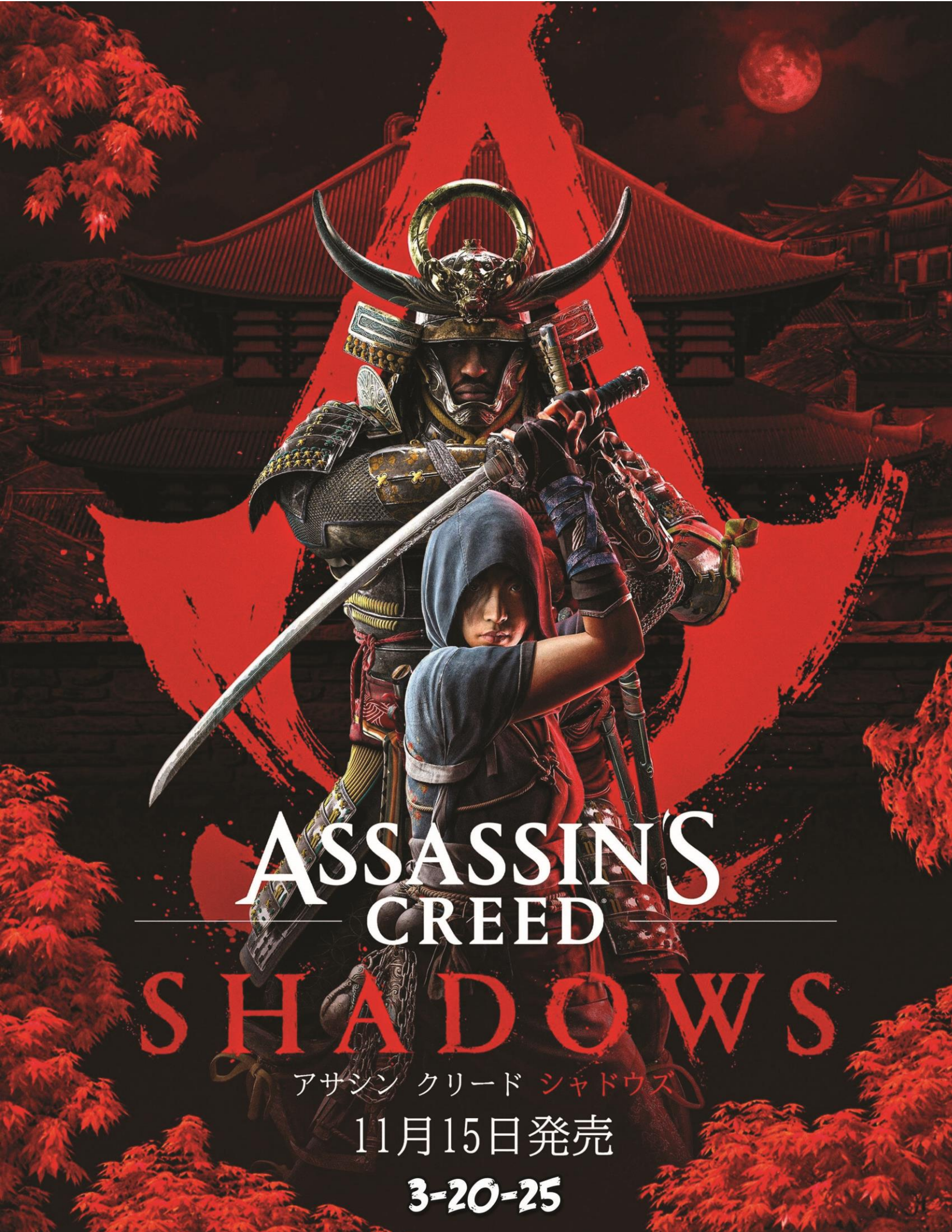
Gang, I really wanted to have hope in this Black Ops game and in the beginning I thought you know what this is when they turn it around, really get their shit together, and actually started caring about the relationship we all once had. Nope, pretend to care and failed to deliver anything new or remotely exciting to long term veteran players, they even threw a damn zombies mission into it. Without dropping heavy spoilers

the beginning of the game actually felt like a blockbuster film, set into a great time period for Black Ops. I even enjoyed the use of the black light, lock picking, and hacking terminals done in an enjoyable post-cold war fashion that gives you the feeling of a possible good time. Even teased us with Lou Diamond Phillips and gave us an interesting team build up, then the storyline takes a hard right into the wall of saw this coming a mile away. Don't be excited for the faceless hero Case in the game, because the ending pulls one of the cut to black before anyone can actually being shown dead leaving the player to think they were killed and we know the Devs will pull the sad little stunt of hero returned villain to sell game content in the cosmetic store. I would also like to add that it was really stupid to add a heist in the storyline as a distraction for something great, but no way in hell would burned agents not grab more cash than what is given in the missions completion. The workbenches and use of perks in the campaign make no sense if Activision was attempting to give the player a taste of what was going to be in the multiplayer, they forgot how make game elements fun or that part of the game changed hands to many times. Do I like all the connections to Black Ops 2 being made hinting at the return of some older storyline that hasn't been beat to death... the Numbers Mason!

Well “Jerry” I suspected something was wrong when Zombies started cheating on me with advanced cryptography when all the Zombie Chronicle Easter eggs released were getting a touch long winded and convoluted. But when round based Zombies came back, it didn't look anything like me and that's when I knew Zombies was fooling around with an Algebra professor that has a kink for convoluted scavenger hunts. Honestly Gang, best of luck to you and trying to find the win on this edition of why do headshots do nothing after round 5 and all your weapons might as well be shooting frozen peas, the weapon leveling is very unbalanced and while it does offer the player more attachment slots to equip as you level, the infield advantages they offer are meager. Making the player slowly

unlock and level various known Perk sodas and Field Equipment is designed to make the player constantly slog through match after match with the illusion of replay value, while returning to the sad tactic of putting sub traits that don't allow for progression until another useless sub trait is unlocked. The “Devs” decided that making a 29 step Easter egg for each map that even a dedicated experience squad will struggle wasn't bad enough, the return of gobble gum does not gives you the feeling Zombies is going to become Pay to Win. Zombies has become a boring lackluster version of its former glory and while much of this may be caused by the growing pains of new management, it is highly doubtful this rendition will be anything more than what was seen in Call of Duty; Vanguard.

In conclusion Gang, its time to break up with Call of Duty all together! If this was an actual relationship between two people, sadly we are trying to fix them and we are about to hit rock bottom, Call of Duty doesn't want to change because we keep rewarding their toxic behavior. So its, time to do the right thing for our mental health and our personal sense of fun, throw Call of Duty's shit into the street and change the locks! Delete this game, demand a refund if you made the mistake of a purchase, and let Call of Duty die. We deserve better than this and we as gamers know this, look at any review comment section of Call of Duty: Black Ops 6 and it is be verbally abused as it rightfully deserves and it is sad to think this an established publisher with generations of experience. Gang this is the rating, warts and all, 4 stars out of 10 stars, just don't do it and save your much need money. Since this game started being developed before Microsoft completed its sale of Activision then maybe Microsoft can take the franchise back to its glory days when the Call of Duty games were awesome instead of churning out shit year after year. Gamers can hope and if that happens then maybe the Squad Leader and Call of Duty will cancel the breakup and get back together!!!

The image is a promotional poster for the video game Assassin's Creed Shadows. It features a central figure in traditional Japanese samurai armor, including a helmet with large curved horns and a circular crest. The figure is holding a katana across their chest. In the foreground, a hooded assassin character is visible, looking towards the viewer. The background is a dark, atmospheric scene of a Japanese temple or shrine with traditional architecture, set against a large, glowing red full moon. The overall color palette is dominated by dark tones and a striking red hue. The title 'ASSASSIN'S CREED' is written in white serif font, and 'SHADOWS' is written in a larger, red, stylized font below it.

ASSASSIN'S
CREED
SHADOWS

アサシン クリード シャドウズ

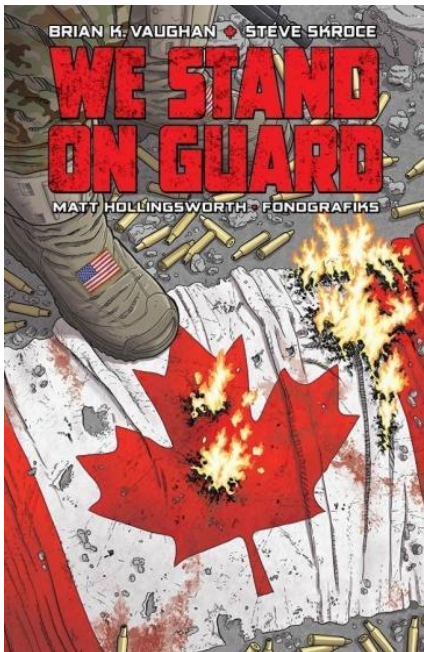
11月15日発売

3-20-25



COMIC BOOK NEWS

US INVADES CANADA IN TRENDING WE STAND ON GUARD GRAPHIC NOVEL FLYING OFF SHELVES NOW



The fan-favorite backlist graphic novel, *We Stand on Guard*, by *New York Times* bestselling writer Brian K. Vaughan (*Saga*, *Paper Girls*) and artist Steve Skroce (*Doc Frankenstein*, storyboard artist for *The Matrix*) is seeing a resurgence in popularity this month in

light of current events surrounding the United States-Canada trade relations.

Available in both trade paperback and hardcover, orders piling up this week exceeded total sales for the title in the past year. The limited edition deluxe hardcover is currently nearing a complete sell-out at the distributor and copies of the paperback are flying off the shelves at record speed.

"Many of my proudest collaborations have been with Canadian creators, and it was a particular thrill to finally work with legendary artist Steve Skroce," said Vaughan. "So I'm grateful that readers have been revisiting our nightmarish war story, which we hope remains fiction."

Set 100 years in the future, *We Stand On Guard* follows a heroic band of Canadian civilians turned freedom fighters who must defend their homeland from invasion by a technologically superior opponent... the U.S. It collects the complete story, *We Stand On Guard* issues #1-6.

We Stand on Guard first launched a decade ago in single issue format and went on to be released in a deluxe hardcover edition and then trade paperback.

We Stand On Guard (ISBN: 9781534301412, Lunar Code 0217IM194) is available at local comic book shops, independent bookstores, Amazon, Indigo, Barnes & Noble, Books-a-Million, and Waterstones.

We Stand on Guard is also available across many digital platforms, including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, and Google Play.

Select praise for *We Stand on Guard*:

"Direct and visually explosive." —*CBC News*

"A sprawling read, offering a beautiful look at a war torn new world." —*IGN*

"*We Stand On Guard* punches you in the mouth, holds you by the throat, and squeezes your gut all the way to the last page." —*ComicsVerse*

"Intriguing, emotional, and engaging." —*Paste Magazine*

"A smart book filled with beautiful artwork that you should be reading." —*Horror Talk*

DOUBLE SELL-OUT OF GEIGER—KEY ISSUES #10 & #11 FAST-TRACKED FOR REPRINT THIS WEEK

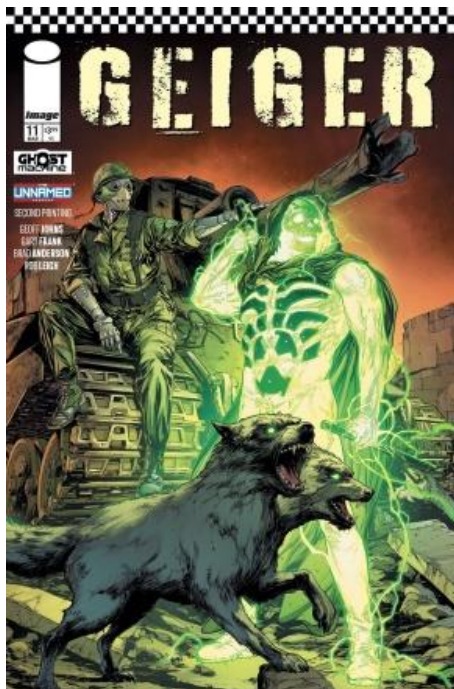


Image Comics/Ghost Machine’s key issue *Geiger #10*—by Geoff Johns, Gary Frank, Brad Anderson, and Rob Leigh—has sold out completely at the distributor level and triggered an instant sell-out for its follow-up issue, *Geiger #11*. This exciting moment in the world of *Geiger* introduces fans to a new character, The Glowing Woman, and both issues are being rushed back to print this week in order to keep up with demand.

“The response to Ashley Arden’s debut has been phenomenal,” said Johns. “We can’t wait to share more of her story in the rest of this arc.”

Frank added: “This story only gets more explosive with each issue. If you thought #10 and #11 were big, it’s just the

beginning.”

Turns out that Tariq Geiger isn’t the only radioactive outcast fighting to survive in the world of *The Unnamed*. Teased since the start of the *Geiger* ongoing series, Ashley “Ash” Arden—who was purported to have a cure for the same radioactive condition ravaging Geiger’s body—finally made her first appearance in *Geiger #10* making it a highly collectible issue for both the *Geiger* series and *The Unnamed* universe as a whole.

The introduction of this long-awaited character promises to have a profound effect on Geiger’s post-nuclear-war world going forward.

In *Geiger #11*, readers finally meet the poor soul who was transformed into a monster of mass destruction by the radioactive fallout—but then somehow cured. Can this spiritual doppelgänger truly help save Geiger from his increasingly out-of-control abilities?

Ghost Machine’s groundbreaking creator collective was launched at New York Comic Con in October 2023 and features a global best-of-class lineup of artists and writers whose award-winning and iconic works include a who’s who of comic book legends such as Batman, Superman, Spider-Man, Aquaman, Stargirl, JSA, The Flash, The Ultimates, Black Lightning, Green Arrow and countless more: Brad Anderson, Jason Fabok, Gary Frank, Bryan Hitch, Geoff Johns, Rob Leigh, Lamont Magee, Francis Manapul, Brad Meltzer, Ivan Reis, Peter Snejbjerg, Peter J. Tomasi, and Maytal Zchut. In an industry first, all of Ghost Machine’s creators jointly own and run the company, sharing in all of

Ghost Machine’s publishing, media, merchandising and licensing. Each creator is exclusive to the company for their comic book work after completing projects already committed to. Ghost Machine recently boosted its already unrivaled creator roster with renowned inkers Andrew Currie and Danny Miki who joined on an exclusive basis.

Geiger #10, third printing (Lunar Code 1224IM851) and *Geiger #11*, second printing (Lunar Code 1224IM854) will both be available on Wednesday, March 12.

Geiger #12 will also be available at [comic book shops](#) on Wednesday, March 12:

- Cover A by Frank & Anderson - Lunar Code 0125IM367
 - Cover B by Martín Morazzo & Chris O’Halloran - Lunar Code 0125IM368
 - Cover C by Frank & Anderson (wraparound) - Lunar Code 0125IM369
- Geiger #13* will be available at [comic book shops](#) on Wednesday, April 9:
- Cover A by Gary Frank & Brad Anderson - Lunar Code 0225IM351
 - Cover B by Joe Prado & Wes Dzioba - Lunar Code 0225IM352
 - Cover C by Sean Von Gorman - Lunar Code 0225IM353

All Ghost Machine titles, including *Geiger*, *Hyde Street*, *Redcoat*, *Rook: Exodus*, *The Rocketfellers*, and more, are also available across many digital platforms, including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, and Google Play.

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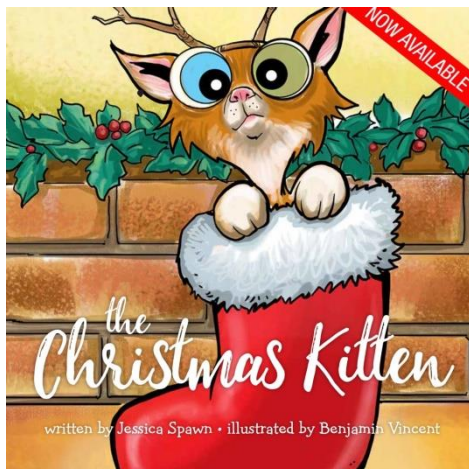
STRIKING TULA LOTAY COVER FOR UPCOMING WE'RE TAKING EVERYONE DOWN WITH US SERIES REVEALED



Image Comics is pleased to reveal a stunning variant cover by Tula Lotay (*Supreme: Blue Rose*) for the highly anticipated, upcoming series launch, *We're Taking Everyone Down With Us*—by Matthew Rosenberg (*4 Kids Walk Into A Bank*)—currently being adapted for film starring Oscar nominee Liam Neeson) and artist Stefano Landini (*Daredevil, Prodigy*)—set to hit shelves when both series launch this March.

"Stefano and I have been working on this project together for a few years now and it has been one of the most rewarding books I've ever been involved with," said

Rosenberg. "But definitely having an artist like Tula show us her beautiful interpretation of our characters has been one of my favorite moments."



We're Taking Everyone Down With Us follows 13-year-old Annalise who's left all alone in the world after her mad-scientist father is killed by the world's greatest spy. Now, alongside her dead dad's robot bodyguard, Annalise has a choice: try to lead a normal life for the first time ever...or seek revenge and maybe overthrow the world order in the process.

Landini added: "Having a new interpretation of our characters is always a great emotion, then there are artists

like Tula, who make the emotion become great, very great."

This new series will see Rosenberg reteam with previous *Punisher* collaborator, Landini, for an unparalleled journey of super spies and pseudoscience, growing up and global domination, and regret and retribution.

We're Taking Everyone Down With Us #1 will be available at [comic book shops](#) on Wednesday, March 26:

- Cover A by Landini - Lunar Code 0125IM317
- Cover B by Mattia De Lulis - Lunar Code 0125IM318
- Cover C die-cut by Josh Hood - Lunar Code 0125IM319
- Cover D 1:25 copy incentive by Chip Zdarsky - Lunar Code 0125IM320
- Cover E 1:50 copy incentive by Martin Simmonds - Lunar Code 0125IM321
- Cover F virgin, foil by 1:75 copy incentive - Lunar Code 0125IM322
- Cover G by Lotay - Lunar Code 0125IM804

We're Taking Everyone Down With Us will also be available across many digital platforms, including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, and Google Play.



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RIDE SHOTGUN IN THIS APRIL'S MOONSHINE BIGFOOT ACTION-COMEDY MINISERIES LAUNCH



Fan-favorite creators Zach Howard (*Wild Blue Yonder*) and Steven Ellis (*High Moon*) along with writer Mike Marlow, team up with colorist Nelson Daniel for the upcoming four-issue action-comedy miniseries, *Moonshine Bigfoot*. This imitable adventure will be the latest launch out of the Syzygy Publishing line at Image Comics and hit shelves in April.

In *Moonshine Bigfoot*, it's Buzzard County in 1981, and Moonshine Bigfoot spends his days making a living while outwitting clueless cops, reckless rivals, and buffoonish Bigfoot-hunters. All is hunky-dory until he draws the attention of an Illuminati-esque cabal. With his partner in life and crime, Amethyst, our hairy hero is about to learn that some problems can't be handled just by jumping them in a souped-up Mach 1.

Moonshine, muscle cars, and mayhem collide in this exciting new romp perfect for fans of Rick Remender's *The Scumbag*, Sergio Aragones' *Groo The Wanderer*, and Alex Grecian and Riley Rossmo's *Proof*.

"We set out to make a fun-loving satire of 1981-ish Americana, and stumbled into a beautiful, coming-of-age story," said Howard. "Give *Moonshine Bigfoot* a go and we'll curl the toes right off your feet!"

Marlow added: "*Moonshine Bigfoot* is a goofy idea conceived on a road trip has turned into one wild ride (that isn't what you think). Lots of fun, lots of crazy, and we can promise no one will ever be bored."

Moonshine Bigfoot #1 will be available at comic book shops on Wednesday, April 16, and is being offered with two covers:

- Cover A by Howard, Ellis, and Daniel - Lunar Code 0225IM311
- Cover B, a movie poster-inspired 1:10 copy incentive by Howard, Ellis, and Daniel - Lunar Code 0225IM312

Moonshine Bigfoot will also be available across many digital platforms, including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, and Google Play.

Early praise for *Moonshine Bigfoot*:

"There's high concept, and then there's 'HOLY MOLEY' high concept. That's what you have with *Moonshine Bigfoot*! It's big, ballsy fun wrapped in a gorgeous

package by Steve Ellis and Zach Howard." —**Jamal Igle**, *Molly Danger, Supergirl*

"Zach Howard is a true artistic maestro! Prepare your eyes for this visual Symphony of Chaos!" —**Dan Panosian**, *Dream Works, Canary*

"A top-shelf creation! Upon first taste, you're struck by a symphony of aromas, from the remarkable smoothness of the dynamic pencil work to the depth and complexity of the inks and finishes. With rich and layered notes of color, offset by a subtle hint of spice, this blend of action and comedy is impeccably crafted to impress even the most discerning connoisseur." —**Nick Runge**, gallery painter

"I've admired Zach Howard's work for a number of years now, ever since I first laid eyes on it, actually. His pictures seem not to be drawn so much as carved out with ink: bold, rich, and dark. Beautiful work. Suddenly I want a cup of coffee, preferably Sumatra." —**P. Craig Russell**, *The Sandman, Gotham by Gaslight, Coraline: The Graphic Novel*

"Steve's pencils and layouts are excellent, and then the inks make these signatures Zach Howard. He's like this generation's Terry Austin." —**Mike Kennedy**, *Ghost, Star Wars*

"Steve Ellis has created more worlds than almost anyone. And every story breathes action and imagination and, of course, crazy monsters! He's bent genres and combined creations for decades, and I can't wait to see where he takes this latest romp!!!" —**Ben Caldwell**, *Dare Detectives, Dracula*

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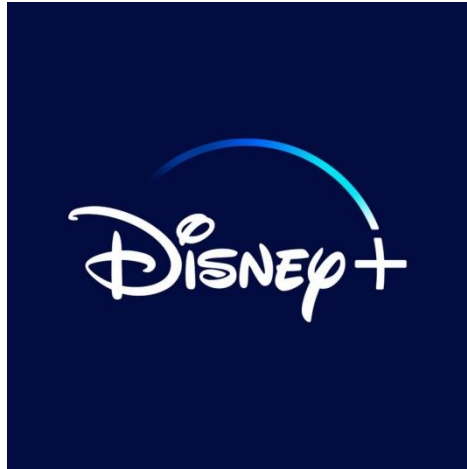
Meet Isaiah Bradley, the First Black Captain America



became one of 300 Black soldiers who were forcibly given an experimental Super-Soldier Serum. Most of the test subjects died, but Isaiah survived.

Although this version of the Super-Soldier Serum did not replicate Steve's powers, it put Isaiah in peak human condition. At the height of his powers, Isaiah could lift roughly 1,000 lbs. and run at a top speed of 40 mph. Thanks to his super-dense muscles, Isaiah was able to recover from serious injuries like broken bones within a few days, and his stamina allowed him to operate without tiring for hours. Although the serum significantly slowed his aging process, Isaiah's mind gradually deteriorated in his later years.

HOW ISAIAH BRADLEY BECAME CAPTAIN AMERICA



Who is Isaiah Bradley? Discover the secret history of the first Black Captain America, whose heroism during World War II left a lasting impact on his family and the rest of the Marvel Universe. [Captain America](#) casts a long shadow across the Marvel Universe. Despite his rousing speeches, steadfast dedication to his ideals, and world-saving heroics, the Super-Soldier also inspired cruel experiments in attempts to replicate his powers.

While top secret government programs like Project: Rebirth left most of their subjects dead, **Isaiah Bradley** survived, and he briefly carried on Captain America's legacy during World War II after Steve Rogers disappeared. The details of his heroism remained secret for decades, but the truth about Isaiah eventually got out, and he rightfully took his place as a respected forefather of today's heroes. Now, let's take a closer look at Isaiah Bradley and his secret history. From his wartime heroics to his crucial role in assembling the [Young Avengers](#), this is how Isaiah left his mark on the Marvel Universe, as told in stories found on [Marvel Unlimited](#).

WHO IS ISAIAH BRADLEY?

Isaiah Bradley debuted in [TRUTH: RED, WHITE, & BLACK \(2003\) #1](#) by [Robert Morales](#) and [Kyle Baker](#). As Steve Rogers got powers from the Super-Soldier Serum and fought in World War II as Captain America, Isaiah fell in love with Faith Shabazz and married her in New York. While Faith was pregnant with their daughter Sarah, Isaiah joined the army. Although the Super-Soldier Serum formula was lost when [Doctor Abraham Erskine](#) died, Colonel Walker Price and Doctor Wilfred Nagel continued working with Project: Rebirth to replicate it. Isaiah

Ultimately, members of the German resistance rescued Isaiah. When Isaiah got back in touch with the military, they court marshaled him and sentenced him to life in prison for stealing Captain America's costume.

LIFE AFTER CAPTAIN AMERICA

While his wartime exploits slowly became legend, Isaiah Bradley sat in solitary confinement for 17 years. Faith, his wife, wrote President Eisenhower monthly letters asking for his release, and Isaiah received a full pardon during the president's final moments in office. However, Isaiah's health deteriorated considerably while he was in solitary confinement due to the untreated side effects of the Super-Soldier Serum.

Although his family had been sworn to secrecy, the legend of the "First Black Captain America" spread through word of mouth. Over the years, several heroes, celebrities, and political figures quietly visited Isaiah and paid their respects to the elderly hero, who affectionally came to be known as Captain Bradley. When Isaiah's tattered costume resurfaced, Steve Rogers met Faith, learned about Isaiah's history, and embraced Isaiah as his fellow Captain America in [TRUTH: RED, WHITE, & BLACK \(2003\) #7](#) by [Robert Morales](#) and [Kyle Baker](#).

At the wedding of [Black Panther](#) and [Storm](#), Isaiah was honored as a special guest, although some of the heroes present still did not know his story. Now, Isaiah's time as Captain America is effectively an open secret, and he is still celebrated as a forefather of the hero community.

Before Isaiah Bradley joined the war as Captain America, he went into action with the other survivors of Project: Rebirth's Super-Soldier research. While their families were told they had been killed in battle, Isaiah and his teammates formed a covert operations team.

On the group's final mission, Maurice Canfield and Luke Evans were killed, which left Isaiah as the team's last surviving member. For his last mission, Isaiah was tasked with killing Doctor Raymond Koch, who was trying to create a Super Soldier Serum for Germany, and destroying his research in [TRUTH: RED, WHITE, & BLACK \(2003\) #4](#) by [Robert Morales](#) and [Kyle Baker](#).

Before jumping into action, Isaiah stole a Captain America costume and a steel shield featuring a bald eagle and the "Double V" logo, a historic symbol representing victory in the war against racism in America. Although he successfully killed Koch, Isaiah was captured by the Germans, who unsuccessfully tried to recruit him before planning to dissect him to send a symbolic message to America.



JOSIAH X

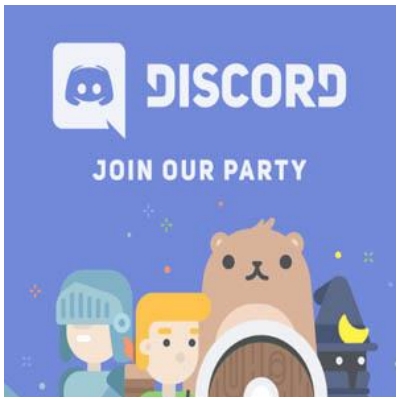
Isaiah only wore Captain America's costume briefly, but his son [Josiah X](#) carried on his legacy for some time after he debuted in [THE CREW \(2003\) #1](#) by [Christopher Priest](#) and [Joe Bennett](#). Using blood samples from Isaiah, Project: Rebirth genetically engineered Josiah so

they could continue testing the Super-Soldier Serum.

After his surrogate mother helped him escape, Josiah ended up at an orphanage and took the name Josiah Smith, as detailed in [THE CREW \(2003\) #5](#) by Priest and Bennett. He served in the military and escaped government custody again, allowing him to discover his relationship with Isaiah and his father's history. When he met Isaiah's family, they turned him away—but only in fear for his safety, since they were under constant government surveillance. After a brief stint as a mercenary, Josiah converted to Islam and took the name Josiah al hajj Saddiq.

Thanks to improvements in the Super-Soldier Serum, Josiah X possesses the same abilities as Isaiah, but he also has enhanced intelligence and memory. While working at a mosque in Brooklyn, Josiah joined [War Machine \(James "Rhodey" Rhodes\)](#) and the small team he assembled after his sister's death.

To help Rhodes take down the criminal Triage and his 66 Bridges Gang, Josiah picked up his father's shield and donned a costume inspired by Captain America. Despite regularly visiting the Bradleys and embracing Isaiah as his father, Josiah eventually cut off contact for unknown reasons.



PRESIDENT BRADLEY

In one alternate reality, Isaiah Bradley was a celebrated hero and public figure who was eventually elected President of the United States. To save his future, President Bradley traveled to the modern Marvel Universe in [CAPTAIN AMERICA \(2002\) #28](#) by [Robert Morales](#) and [Eddie Campbell](#).

On his world, Isaiah Bradley became Captain America instead of Steve Rogers, and he adventured with [Bucky](#) throughout World War II. When Isaiah had a daughter named Becky, Bucky effectively raised her since Isaiah never had time for her. After Bucky died in battle, Becky went mad with grief and tried to kill her father through time travel.

However, Becky ended up in the Marvel Universe, where Steve's friend Rebecca Quan killed her in self-defense. When President Bradley tried to follow his daughter, he landed in the Marvel Universe and met Steve Rogers.

As they untangled what happened, the two Captains and Rebecca traveled to President Bradley's comic book-obsessed world and stopped Becky from jumping across dimensions with the reality-warping Infinity Cube. After President Bradley saved his daughter from falling to her death, Steve returned home with Rebecca.

ISAIAH BRADLEY AND PATRIOT

[Eli Bradley](#), Isaiah's grandson, also carried on his family's heroic legacy as Patriot starting in [YOUNG AVENGERS \(2005\) #1](#) by [Allan Heinberg](#) and [Jim Cheung](#). After the [Avengers](#) broke up, a young, time-traveling version of [Kang the Conqueror](#) called [Iron Lad](#) wanted to recruit Josiah X for a new team. However, he found Eli, who claimed to have powers from a blood transfusion he received from his grandfather.

In reality, Eli faked his powers using mutant growth hormone (MGH), a drug

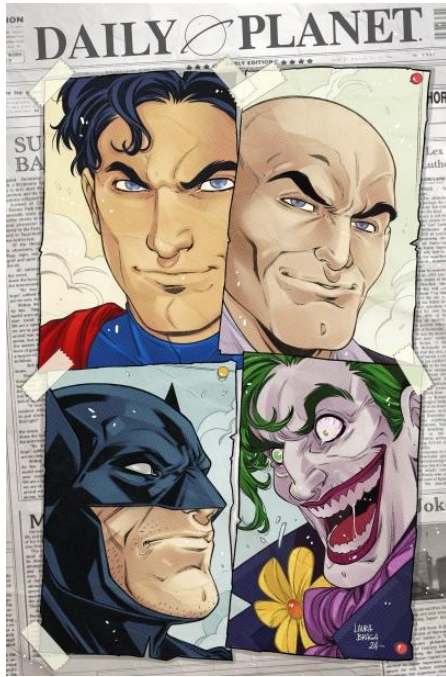
that briefly gives its users superhuman abilities. As Patriot, Eli helped the Young Avengers take down Kang, began using one of Captain America's old shields, and replaced Iron Lad as one of the group's leaders.

Once his use of MGH was discovered, Eli briefly left the Young Avengers, but he rejoined the group to help save his kidnapped teammate [Hulking](#). When that escalated into a battle between the [Kree](#) and the [Skrull](#) aliens, Eli used his body as a human shield to save Captain America from gunfire. Severely wounded by this heroic act, he received a blood transfusion from Isaiah that saved his life in [YOUNG AVENGERS \(2003\) #12](#) by [Heinberg](#) and [Cheung](#).

After that, Eli finally inherited his grandfather's powers, which he used to help the Young Avengers through crises like [CIVIL WAR \(2006\)](#). The Young Avengers then disbanded after helping the Avengers save the [Scarlet Witch](#) in [YOUNG AVENGERS: THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE \(2010\)](#). Eli effectively retired as a hero after that, although he has jumped back into action as Patriot on a few occasions. Eli continues to maintain a good relationship with his grandfather. From [Marvel.com](#)



DC's "We Are Yesterday": The First Major Crossover of DC All In Starts This April!



The events of the *DC All In Special* return to haunt the DC Super Heroes of the DC Universe this April, as the publisher today announced plans for "We Are Yesterday," the first major crossover of DC's All In publishing initiative. Fan-favorite storyteller Mark Waid is joined by an incredible roster of co-writers and artists to helm parts one to three of this story, taking place in the pages of *Batman/Superman: World's Finest*, *Justice League Unlimited*, and the *Batman/Superman: World's Finest 2025 Annual*.

On April 16, Gorilla Grodd takes center stage as "We Are Yesterday" kicks off in *Batman/Superman: World's Finest* #38. The Man of Steel and the Dark Knight will be hard-pressed as it is to keep up with the psychic powers of DC's sinister simian, but this time there's something different, as if Grodd has knowledge of the future. And it remains to be seen what any of this has to do with the death of Darkseid! In addition to the first of three connecting main covers by artist Dan Mora, *Batman/Superman: World's Finest* #38 features variant covers by Gavin Guidry, Adrián Gutiérrez, and Elizabeth Torque, plus an April Fools' Day variant cover by Brandt & Stein.

Readers should buckle up for a wild ride as part two unfolds in *Justice League Unlimited* #6, where the horrific hidden identity of the Inferno cult is revealed! What does this have to do with Lex Luthor, The Joker, Cheetah, and some of the most dangerous super-villains in the DC Universe's plan to take down the Justice League?

Writer Waid and artist Travis Moore are staging one of the biggest throwdowns of DC All In when this issue hits comic book shops on April 23. This issue features the second of three connecting covers by *Justice League Unlimited* artist Mora, with variant covers by Lee Bermejo, Nathan Szerdy, Dan Jurgens, Felipe Massafera, and Moore.

Part three of this blockbuster story arrives on April 30 in the *Batman/Superman: World's Finest 2025 Annual*, written by Waid, Christopher Cantwell, and Morgan Hampton with art by Dan McDaid and Clayton Henry. The secret origin of the Legion of Doom is finally revealed, and DC's worst super-villains have set in motion a scheme to lay waste to Batman, Superman, and the Justice League Unlimited. This exciting issue also presents the *World's Finest* debut of John Stewart, the newest ring slinger of Sector 2814. Mora provides the third of three connecting main covers, with variant covers by Henry, Salvador Larroca, and Laura Braga.

For the latest information on *Batman/Superman: World's Finest*, *Justice League Unlimited*, and everything DC All In, follow @DCOfficial on social media and visit the DC All In hub at <https://www.dc.com/allin>. Readers on the go can catch up on DC All In series with a subscription to the DC UNIVERSE INFINITE digital subscription platform (DCUI). For more information and a free trial, visit the DCUI website at <https://www.dcuniverseinfinite.com>. DCUI is not available in all countries and is not intended for children.

A Six-Part Crossover Introducing the Legion of Doom and More in the Pages of *Batman/Superman: World's Finest*, *Justice League Unlimited*, and *Batman/Superman*:

World's Finest 2025 Annual. Parts One, Two, and Three Available for Preorder January 17. On Sale Throughout April



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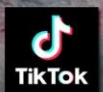
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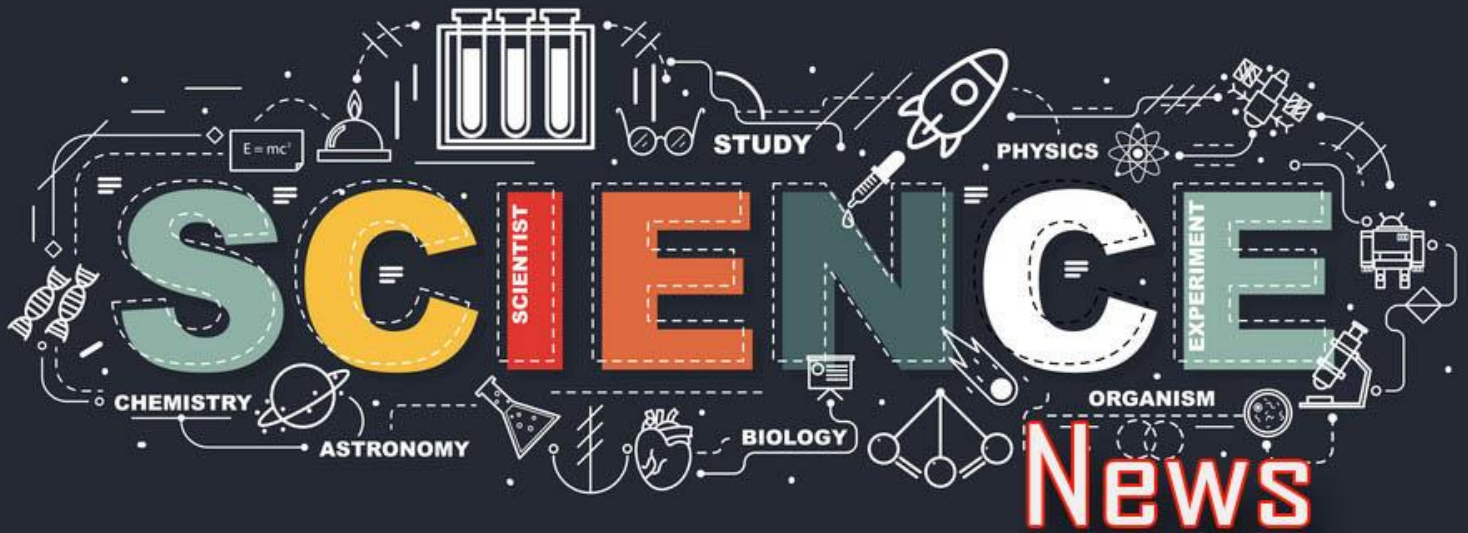
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Physicists Uncover Evidence of Two Arrows of Time Emerging From the Quantum Realm!



What if time is not as fixed as we thought? Imagine that instead of flowing in one direction -- from past to future -- time could flow forward or backwards due to processes taking place at the quantum level. This is the thought-provoking discovery made by researchers at the University of Surrey, as a new study reveals that opposing arrows of time can theoretically emerge from certain quantum systems.

For centuries, scientists have puzzled over the arrow of time -- the idea that time flows irreversibly from past to future. While this seems obvious in our experienced reality, the underlying laws of physics do not inherently favour a single direction. Whether time moves forward or backwards, the equations remain the same.

Dr Andrea Rocco, Associate Professor in Physics and Mathematical Biology at the University of Surrey and lead author of the study, said:

"One way to explain this is when you look at a process like spilt milk spreading across a table, it's clear that time is moving forward. But if you

were to play that in reverse, like a movie, you'd immediately know something was wrong -- it would be hard to believe milk could just gather back into a glass.

"However, there are processes, such as the motion of a pendulum, that look just as believable in reverse. The puzzle is that, at the most fundamental level, the laws of physics resemble the pendulum; they do not account for irreversible processes. Our findings suggest that while our common experience tells us that time only moves one way, we are just unaware that the opposite direction would have been equally possible."

The study, published in *Scientific Reports*, explored how a quantum system -- the world of the sub-atomic -- interacts with its environment, known as an 'open quantum system'. Researchers investigated why we perceive time as moving in one direction, and whether this perception emerges from open quantum mechanics.

To simplify the problem, the team made two key assumptions. First, they treated the vast environment surrounding the system in such a way that they could focus only on the quantum system itself. Second, they assumed that the environment -- like the entire universe -- is so large that energy and information dissipate into it, never returning. This approach enabled them to examine how time emerges as a one-way phenomenon, even though, at the microscopic level, time could theoretically move in both directions.

Even after applying these assumptions, the system behaved the same way whether time

moved forward or backwards. This discovery provided a mathematical foundation for the idea that time-reversal symmetry still holds in open quantum systems -- suggesting that time's arrow may not be as fixed as we experience it.

Thomas Guff, postdoctoral researcher who led the calculations, said: "The surprising part of this project was that even after making the standard simplifying assumption to our equations describing open quantum systems, the equations still behaved the same way whether the system was moving forwards or backwards in time. When we carefully worked through the maths, we found that this behaviour had to be the case because a key part of the equation, the "memory kernel," is symmetrical in time.

"We also found a small but important detail which is usually overlooked -- a time discontinuous factor emerged that keeps the time-symmetry property intact. It's unusual to see such a mathematical mechanism in a physics equation because it's not continuous, and it was very surprising to see it pop up so naturally."

The research offers a fresh perspective on one of the biggest mysteries in physics. Understanding the true nature of time could have profound implications for quantum mechanics, cosmology and beyond.

JOURNAL REFERENCE: Thomas Guff, Chintalpati Umashankar Shastry, Andrea Rocco. **Emergence of opposing arrows of time in open quantum systems.** *Scientific Reports*, 2025; 15 (1) DOI: [10.1038/s41598-025-87323-x](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-87323-x)



'Game Changing' release of Type Ia Supernovae Data may hold key to the History of the Universe



A unique dataset of Type Ia Supernovae being released today could change how cosmologists measure the expansion history of the Universe.

Dr Mathew Smith and Dr Georgios Dimitriadis from Lancaster University are both members of the Zwicky Transient Facility (ZTF), a wide-field sky astronomical survey using a new camera attached to the Samuel Oschin Telescope at Palomar Observatory in California.

Type Ia Supernovae are the dramatic explosions of white dwarf stars at the ends of their lives. Cosmologists use them to probe distances across the universe by comparing their fluxes, as further objects appear dimmer.

The ZTF cosmology science working group is today publishing twenty-one articles studying these 3628 Type Ia Supernovae, forming a Special Issue in *Astronomy & Astrophysics*.

Lancaster astrophysicist Dr Mathew Smith, co-leader of the ZTF SN Ia DR2 release, said: "This release provides a game-changing dataset for supernova cosmology. It opens the door to new discoveries about both the expansion of the universe and the fundamental physics of supernovae."

This is the first time that astrophysicists have access to such a large and homogeneous dataset. Type Ia supernovae are rare, occurring approximately once per thousand years in a typical galaxy, but ZTF's depth and survey strategy enable researchers to detect nearly four per night. In only two and a half years, ZTF has doubled the number available Type Ia Supernovae for cosmology acquired for the last 30 years to almost three thousand.

Head of the ZTF Cosmology Science working group Dr Mickael Rigault from the Institut des deux Infinis de Lyon (CNRS / Claude Bernard University) said: "For the past five years, a group of thirty experts from around the world have collected, compiled, assembled, and analysed these data. We are now releasing it to

the entire community. This sample is so unique in terms of size and homogeneity, that we expect it to significantly impact the field of Supernovae cosmology and to lead to many additional new discoveries in addition to results we have already published."

The ZTF camera, installed on the 48-inch Schmidt telescope at Palomar Observatory, scans the entire northern sky daily in three optical bands, reaching a depth of 20.5 magnitude -- one million times fainter than the dimmest stars visible to the naked eye. This sensitivity allows ZTF to detect nearly all supernovae within 1.5 billion light-years of Earth.

Professor Kate Maguire from Trinity College Dublin, a co-author of the study, said: "Thanks to ZTF's unique ability to scan the sky rapidly and deeply, we have captured multiple supernovae within days -- or even hours -- of explosion, providing novel constraints on how they end their lives."

The acceleration of the expansion of the Universe, awarded by the Nobel prize in 2011, was discovered in the late 90s using approximately a hundred of these Supernovae. Since then, cosmologists are investigating the reason for this acceleration caused by the dark energy that plays the role of an anti-gravity force across the Universe.

Co-author Professor Ariel Goobar, Director of the Oskar Klein Centre in Stockholm, one of the founding institutions of ZTF, and also member of the team that discovered the accelerated expansion of the Universe in 1998 said: "Ultimately, the aim is to address one of our time's biggest questions in fundamental physics and cosmology, namely what is most of the Universe made of? For that we need the ZTF supernova data."

One of the key outcomes of these studies is that Type Ia Supernovae intrinsically vary as a function of their host environment, more so than expected before, and the correction mechanism assumed so far has to be revisited. This could change how we measure the expansion history of the Universe and may have important consequences for current deviation observed in the standard model of cosmology.

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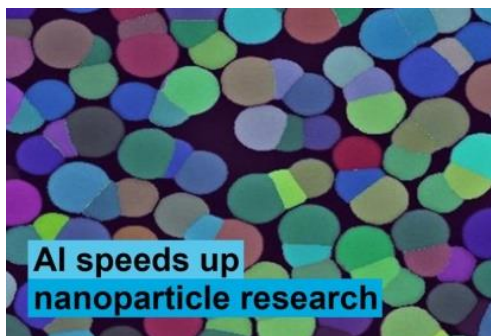
Dr Rigault said: "With this large and homogeneous dataset, we can explore Type Ia supernovae with an unprecedented level of precision and accuracy. This is a crucial step toward honing the use of Type Ia Supernovae in cosmology and assess if current deviations in cosmology are due to new fundamental physics or unknown problem in the way we derive distances."

JOURNAL SOURCE: M. Rigault, M. Smith, A. Goobar, K. Maguire, G. Dimitriadis, J. Johansson, J. Nordin, U. Burgaz, S. Dhawan, J. Sollerman, N. Regnault, M. Kowalski, P. Nugent, I. Andreoni, M. Amenouche, M. Aubert, C. Barjou-Delayre, J. Bautista, E. Bellm, M. Betoule, J. S. Bloom, B. Carreres, T. X. Chen, Y. Copin, M. Deckers, T. de Jaeger, F. Feinstein, D. Fouchez, C. Fremling, L. Galbany, M. Ginolin, M. Graham, S. L. Groom, L. Harvey, M. M. Kasliwal, W. D. Kenworthy, Y.-L. Kim, D. Kuhn, S. R. Kulkarni, L. Lacroix, R. R. Laher, F. J. Masci, T. E. Müller-Bravo, A. Miller, M. Osman, D. Perley, B. Popovic, J. Purdum, Y.-J. Qin, B. Racine, S. Reusch, R. Riddle, P. Rosnet, D. Rosselli, F. Ruppin, R. Senzel, B. Rusholme, T. Schweyer, J. H. Terwel, A. Townsend, A. Tzanidakis, A. Wold, L. Yan. **ZTF SN Ia DR2:**

Overview. *Astronomy & Astrophysics*, 2025; 694: A1 DOI: [10.1051/0004-6361/202450388](https://doi.org/10.1051/0004-6361/202450388)



AI Speeds up Nanoparticle Research



Nanoparticle researchers spend most of their time on one thing: counting and measuring nanoparticles. Each step of the way, they have to check their results. They usually do this by analyzing microscopic images of hundreds of nanoparticles packed tightly together. Counting and measuring them takes a long time, but this work is essential for completing the statistical analyses required for conducting the next, suitably optimized nanoparticle synthesis.

Alexander Wittmann is a professor of colloid chemistry at the University of Konstanz.

He and his team repeat this process every day. "When I worked on my doctoral thesis, we used a large particle counting machine for these measurements. It was like a cash register, and, at the time, I was really happy when I could measure three hundred nanoparticles a day," Wittmann remembers.

However, reliable statistics require thousands of measurements for each sample.

Today, the increased use of computer technology means the process can move much more rapidly.

At the same time, the automated methods are very prone to errors, and many measurements still need to be conducted, or at least double-checked, by the researchers themselves.

A correct count -- even with complex particles During the coronavirus pandemic, good fortune brought Wittmann into contact with his doctoral student Gabriel Monteiro, who not only has knowledge of programming and AI, but also has connections to computer scientists.

Wittmann and Monteiro developed a program based on Meta's open source AI technology "Segment Anything Model." The program enables the AI-supported counting of nanoparticles in a microscopic image and the subsequent automatic measurement of each individual particle.

"For clearly definable particles, the 'watershed method' has worked quite well so far. Our new method, however, can also automatically count particles that have a dumbbell or caterpillar shape, consisting of strings of two or three overlapping spheres," Wittmann explains.

"This saves a massive amount of time," he adds. "In the time it would usually take to complete a particle synthesis and make the corresponding time-consuming measurements,

we can now concentrate on particle syntheses and examining them under the microscope, while the AI system takes care of most of the rest. This last step is now possible in a fraction of the time it used to require. This means, we can complete eight to ten particle analyses in the time we used to need for one."

In addition to this, the AI measurements are not only more efficient, but also more reliable.

The AI method recognizes the individual fragments more accurately and measures them more precisely than other methods -- even those conducted by humans.

As a result, subsequent experiments can be adapted and carried out more precisely, which leads to the faster success of the test series.

The research team has published the new AI routine as well as the required codes and data from the study Open Access on Git-Hub and KonData for other researchers to use and discuss.

JOURNAL SOURCE: Gabriel A. A. Monteiro, Bruno A. A. Monteiro, Jefersson A. dos Santos, Alexander Wittmann. **Pre-trained artificial intelligence-aided analysis of nanoparticles using the segment anything model.** *Scientific Reports*, 2025; 15 (1) DOI: [10.1038/s41598-025-86327-x](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-86327-x)

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Foraging Seals Enable Scientists to Measure Fish Abundance Across the vast Pacific Ocean



Over the past 60 years, marine biologists at UC Santa Cruz have monitored the behavior of northern elephant seals that journey to nearby Año Nuevo Natural Reserve. With the seals gathering on the beach by the thousands to breed and molt, generations of researchers have been able to amass more than 350,000 observations on over 50,000 seals.

With the help of powerful technologies and the intrepidity to get close enough to carefully tag, weigh, and observe these loud and lumbering marine mammals, the long-term research project has extensive historical and real-time data on their fitness, foraging success, at-sea behavior, and population dynamics.

Roxanne Beltran is next in line to lead the project, and her new study being published on February 14 as the cover story for *Science* reports that seals can essentially act as "smart sensors" for monitoring fish populations in the ocean's eerily dim "twilight zone." This is the layer of water between 200 and 1,000 meters below sea level, where sunlight penetration all but stops, and today's ocean monitoring tools cannot reach with ease. Ships and floating buoys only allow measurements of a tiny fraction of the ocean, while satellites can't measure below the surface where fish occur.

Importantly, this zone holds the majority of the planet's fish biomass. Because this is also where the seals feed, seals whose foraging success is tracked can provide a previously impossible way to measure the availability of fish populations across a vast ocean. This, Beltran said, represents a significant discovery because humans are considering harvesting these fish populations to satisfy humanity's ever-increasing need for protein-rich foods.

"Given the importance of the ocean for carbon sequestration, climate regulation, oxygen production, and food for billions of people, there is an urgent need to measure changes in marine ecosystems," said Beltran, an assistant professor of ecology and evolutionary biology. "Our research shows that the vast foraging extent and millions of feeding attempts by elephant seals make them a fantastic ecosystem sentinel, both for fish populations and top predators in the open ocean."

For context, each seal makes an average of about 75,000 foraging attempts during a seven-month, roughly 6,000-mile journey across the Pacific Ocean. This means that tracking just 14 seals per year could provide estimates of fish availability across 4.4 million cubic kilometers of ocean volume.

Beyond that, weighing the seals also allows researchers to measure long-term fluctuations in prey abundance. And as commercial fleets increase the depth and breadth of their harvesting to satisfy demand, sustainable fisheries management requires assessing the size of fish populations and how they respond to environmental change.

Empowering Students Through Publications

Besides the promise of providing visibility into the ocean's mysterious mesopelagic zone, this study also stands out for another reason: The paper is co-authored by 14 undergraduates who took an immersive, inquiry-based field course taught by Beltran and Año Reserve Director Patrick Robinson in which the students undertook projects analyzing the six decades of data from the seal research program. In the course, which continues to be offered at UC Santa Cruz, students participate in fieldwork, learn to generate scientific questions, perform exploratory data analyses, and present their results through mentored practice.

"We want the students to feel like they are part of a community of scientists," said Allison Payne, a graduate student in the Beltran Lab who served as the course's teaching assistant. "It's an incredible opportunity for the students and instructors alike to collaborate on real-world science, and it builds students' confidence in navigating the scientific process."

Payne recently led the publication of another research article with student co-authors from a different offering of the field course, in this case, examining how the reproductive success of elephant seals diminishes after seals reach prime age.

At the outset of the course in 2022, students brainstormed research topics and chose to study how cohorts of seals fared in different years. Each pair of students tackled a subset of the project. One undergraduate student, Madi Reed, downloaded oceanographic data to test hypotheses about links between oceanographic conditions and the likelihood that seal pups would live long enough to produce pups of their own.

Reed (Rachel Carson '22, marine biology) discovered dramatic fluctuations in elephant seal survival and reproductive success over the last four decades strongly linked to ocean conditions where they forage. "It was really exciting to directly experience how the concepts we learned in our classes could be applied to real research," she said. "This discovery has hugely inspired my current drive to pursue a career in biological oceanographic research, where I hope to continue making useful data connections."

Beltran Lab members also recently led a related perspective piece in *Ecology Letters* on the potential for long-term studies to provide these inclusive opportunities for training ecologists.

Sustaining the Twilight Zone

Fish in the twilight zone are ecologically important prey for economically important species, Beltran says, adding that the realm they inhabit may soon become a fishery. But little is known about twilight-zone fish: Scientists' best estimates

of their abundance spans a 10-fold range of uncertainty. Reductions in these fish populations could have huge impacts on many other species in the ecosystem, including species that humans rely on for sustenance and livestock feed.

This study integrated and applied research data obtained over the last six decades, including those by co-authors Burney LeBoeuf and Dan Costa, the two program leaders that preceded Beltran. "This effort documented the coupling between the elephant seals' behavior thousands of miles at sea, to their breeding success on the beach," said Costa, distinguished professor of ecology and evolutionary biology. "This could only be accomplished with a long-time series coupled with a multidisciplinary team, including oceanographers, demographers, modelers, and seal biologists."

Previous discoveries born from this ongoing research included the long-distance foraging migrations of elephant seals, the high frequency of elephant seal foraging attempts for small fish, and the likely possibility that seal pup quality is linked to ocean health through maternal foraging success.

The new study showed that the foraging success of elephant seals was tightly linked to a broad-scale oceanographic index that can be measured by orbiting satellites. "This linkage allowed us to measure the ocean's pulse and estimate fluctuations in fish availability five decades into the past and a few years into the future," Beltran said. Hence, insights and tools from this study provide a critical ecological baseline for sustainable fishing and assess the impacts of anthropogenic environmental changes on fish populations at the scale of entire ocean basins.

In addition to Beltran, Payne, Reed, LeBoeuf, and Costa, the co-authors include Marm Kilpatrick, Conner Hale, Joffrey Jouma'a, Patrick Robinson, Emma Houle, Wade Matern, Alea Sabah, Kathryn Lewis, Samantha Sebandal, Allison Coughlin, Natalia Valdes Heredia, Francesca Penny, Sophie Rose Dalrymple, Heather Penny, Meghan Sherrier, Ben Peterson, Joanne Reiter at UC Santa Cruz, and Elliott Hazen and Steven Bograd at NOAA.

This research was supported by many funders, including the National Science Foundation, Office of Naval Research, Arnold and Mabel Beckman Foundation, and David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

JOURNAL SOURCE: Roxanne S. Beltran, Allison R. Payne, A. Marm Kilpatrick, Conner M. Hale, Madison Reed, Elliott L. Hazen, Steven J. Bograd, Joffrey Jouma'a, Patrick W. Robinson, Emma Houle, Wade Matern, Alea Sabah, Kathryn Lewis, Samantha Sebandal, Allison Coughlin, Natalia Valdes Heredia, Francesca Penny, Sophie Rose Dalrymple, Heather Penny, Meghan Sherrier, Ben Peterson, Joanne Reiter, Burney J. Le Boeuf, Daniel P. Costa. **Elephant seals as ecosystem sentinels for the northeast Pacific Ocean twilight zone.** *Science*, 2025; 387 (6735): 764 DOI: [10.1126/science.adp2244](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.adp2244)



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STORY TELLING

STAR WARS

FORCE OF NATURE

By
Matthew Tracy

CHAPTER 1

Young Tita Rosé climbed into bed and secured his sheets tightly around him, allowing them to consume him in both comfort and warmth. He glanced out the window and was almost blinded by the light of Oba Diah’s multiple moons. Misty clouds wafted up through the air, obscuring the light emanating from the large, stellar entities. Tita shivered wondering just how big the moons really were.

He pointed towards the largest one slowly passing through the center of his room’s singular conclave window. “So father and Pi are up there?”

His mother, Mina, sat down on the edge of his bed. “Yes, sweet boy, they are going to your father’s house on that moon right there, Theyjo. Can you imagine being that far from home?”

The small Pyke shook his overly large head as it bobbed from side to side, “no way, I’m gonna stay here forever!”

His mother smiled, her soft, violet eyes glowing in the moonswept room, “you’ll miss out on all of the amazing sights in the galaxy if you do that?”

Tita glanced up at the empty bunk suspended above him, and saw his twin brother’s pajamas still hanging in the closet. “Is Pi going to see some amazing sights?”

His mother sighed, “Theyjo’s a lot like home, dark and rocky. I meant outside of our system.”

“Like where you go?” Tita asked curiously.

Mina acquiesced with a grin, “yes, where I go. There are so many wonderful worlds out there, where you can meet so many new people and learn so many new stories.”

Tita thought for a moment, trying to envision entire planets that looked like the images from his picture books. He wondered if there really were worlds that were colorful, and had trees and water. The thought frightened him, but he knew if his mother had traveled out there, then it mustn’t be all that bad.

“What kind of worlds?”

Mina looked up at the moonlight illuminating the ceiling like ripples on a pond. “There are worlds that are covered in fire, and vast lakes of lava as far as your little purple eyes can see, but I try to stay away from those.” She shivered and Tita smiled, “tell me about the ice ones.”

She put her finger to her lip, pretending to think, “oh yes, we can’t forget the icy worlds, covered in shimmering sparkles and thick, crunchy snow and icicles taller than our home.”

“And furry monsters?” Tita asked with wide eyes.

“And furry monsters,” she affirmed him, “can’t forget about those. They come in all shapes and colors, with more hairs than you can count.”

Tita almost gagged at the thought of hair growing from someone’s body. He loved his smooth, green skin.

“What else? What else?”

She grabbed the half-empty glass beside his bed and swirled it around. “There are even worlds that are covered entirely by water. All of the cities and people live and breath deep under the ocean. With giant fish who could gobble you up in one bite.”

She reached down and tickled the boy, who laughed and tried to escape her playful grasp. He loved having her home for a change, and he never wanted her to leave. Maybe this time she will stay home for good.

“Now, look at that. I’ve gotten you all riled up when you need to be going to sleep. Close your eyes young man,” she said, rising to her feet.

“No, no, you can’t leave yet!” Tita said grabbing her hand, “tell me a story.”

She sighed, “I just told you one?”

“No, a real story,” Tita said with a downturned mouth. He knew she couldn’t resist when he begged.

She rolled her eyes and smiled as she softly set herself back down on the lower bunk, “alright, fine. The one about the Angels?”

He shook his head and smiled, revealing a row of sharp, freshly-brushed teeth. “No, the scary one about the monster.”

Mina frowned, “are you sure you want to hear that one before bed? Last time I told it, you couldn’t sleep for a week.”

“That was when I was six, I’m seven now!” he protested.

She rubbed the top of his smooth, triangular head, “you sure are, my big boy. Alright, if you promise me you won’t get scared.”

Tita nodded and adjusted his body to be more comfortable.

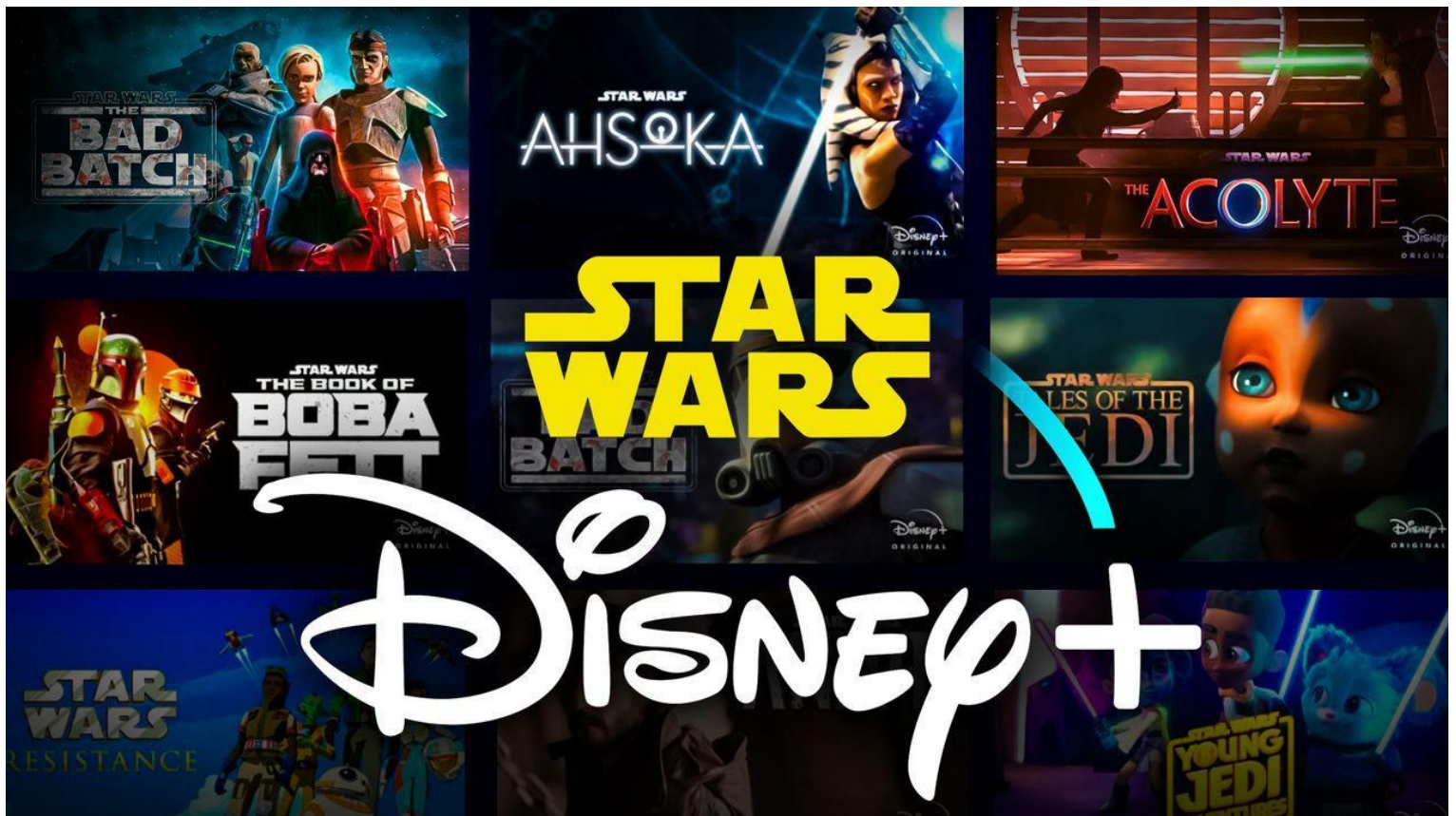
The moonlight began shifting across the room as one lunar body passed in front of the other, creating a miniature eclipse that darkened the violet room.

“Now as you know, I learned this story from an old H’draichi merchant I met on Jakku.”

Tita laughed, “they look so funny.”

“Shhhhhh, I’m telling the story now. No interruptions,” she chided him.

Tita grinned and adjusted his flat pillow to better suit his large cranium.



CHAPTER 2

“There once was a boy, much like you, who lived in a place much different than this. Where the boy lived, there were grassy plains, forests of green and brown, and pools of water that stretched for miles.

This boy grew up in a village of proud warriors, and none were more proud than his own family. When the little boys of this village wanted to go out and explore the galaxy, they first had to go find and slay a mighty monster.

One day, the little boy decided he was tired of the plains and the trees and the pools, and he wanted to go on his own adventures and see the lands of fire and ice, of water and air, of light and darkness. So the boy gathered his sling and a few rocks and set out to find a monster.

He went to the fields, where he saw a beast covered in long fur, with curly horns as big as tree trunks. It towered over him, blocking out the very sun itself. The boy went up to this beast and asked him if he was a monster.

The beast shook it’s head and said, ‘no, I am no monster. I am a peaceful wanderer, and I love to eat the grass of the plains and bask in the warm sun overhead. If you want to find a monster, go try the forest. I saw a scary creature there.’

The little boy thanked the beast and went to the forest to find his monster so that he could travel among the stars.

When he reached the dark forest, he saw a large creature. It had bright red eyes, four big arms, and long teeth that rose from its lower lip like stalagmites. The boy went up to this creature and asked her if she was a monster.

The creature shook its head and said, 'no, I am no monster. I am a hunter just like you. I walk through the trees everyday, finding food and caring for all of my babies. If you want to find a monster, go try the pools. I saw a scary titan there.'

The little boy thanked the creature and went to the pools to find his monster so that he could finally visit the colorful worlds he had seen only in books. He went to the pools, where he saw a titan the size of a house. It swam in the depths, with sharp fins, deep scars, and rows of teeth as big as the boy's head. The boy went up to this titan and asked him if he was a monster.

The titan shook its head and said, 'no, I am no monster. All I do every day is swim. Sometimes I come up to see the light of your beautiful moon, but mostly I swim in the deep waters, where it's dark and cold and quiet. I like the quiet. If you want to find a monster, go back to your village. I saw a bunch of scary monsters there.'

The little boy left the pools disappointed and confused, trying to think of a time when he had seen a monster in his village. If they were truly there, why had none of the other villagers told him instead of sending him out into the plains and the forests and the pools. All he wanted to do was see, up close, all of the planets that were only tiny specks from his window.

The boy made it back to the village just as the sun began to set. He went to his room, putting down his sling and his stones, and prepared for bed after a long day, just like you.

As he tried to fall asleep, he heard a loud sound coming from under his bed. A dark, swirling mist filled his room. And a monster appeared, covered with hundreds of eyes, claws, and fangs. And it stared at the boy, ready to consume him in a single motion."

Tita pulled his covers up over himself, only allowing his bright, lavender eyes to peek out and stare at his mother in fright.

Mina continued, "the boy looked into the countless eyes and asked it if it was a monster.

'Yes,' the creature said, 'I am a monster.'

The boy looked at all of the eyes and claws and fangs and said, 'why couldn't I find you out in the plains or the forest or the pools? And why didn't the villagers tell me you were here?'

The monster's mouths snickered, 'because I am your monster. I was with you at the plains and the forest and the pools. And I have always been with you in the village. I have lived inside of you, but now that you're old enough, it's my turn to take over.'

The little boy would not have it. He knew if the monster got loose, it would hurt the people in his village and the beast in the plains and the creature in the forest and the titan in the pools. He needed to protect them. All of them. This was his monster, and he was the only one who could fight it.

He grabbed his sling and his rocks and he fought the scary monster. For what felt like hours, days, and weeks, he fought it. They fought in the lowest crevices and on the highest mountaintops, until they finally ended up back in the boy's room at the foot of his bed.

With one final blow, he struck the monster. It screamed as it began to crack and light shone from within it. The swirling black mist, and all of the eyes and claws and fangs went back into the boy and suddenly it was quiet once again.

The boy knew that the monster was not dead, but only trapped. And that someday, when it was strong enough, it would come back out again to consume the boy. But the boy would travel to new worlds, find new weapons, learn new ways to fight, and make many new friends.

And he would be ready.

The monster would not scare anyone anymore, and all the people in the galaxy would be safe once again."



CHAPTER 3

Mina Rosé stood up from the bed and kissed her son goodnight. Tita shivered as he thought about the horrific monster she had just described, wondering what it would look like in his own spacious room, or under his own bed.

"I don't have a monster inside of me, do I?" he asked, trying to put on his bravest face.

His mother just smiled warmly as she approached the door, "no Tita. That was just a story. There are no monsters inside of you and you have nothing to worry about. You have me and your father and Pi to protect you."

His mother turned off his lights as the moonlight shifted once more across the floor and illuminated the doorway where she stood.

He called out to her once more. "Mom, when are you leaving again?"

The smile faded from her face, "as soon as your father and brother get back, dear. But now is not the time to think about that. Now is the time to sleep. Goodnight."

The door shut behind her and Tita waited for a moment before flipping on his nightlight. The constantly convulsing lunar reflections on his floors scared him, and he could just imagine them as glaring eyes or massive rows of sharp teeth.

He checked under his bed, which was messy but monster free.

He had told his mother he wouldn't be scared, but he couldn't help it. All of those new worlds and crazy creatures sounded just as scary as the horrifying monster itself. He wanted to tell himself that he would stay here on Oba Diah forever, but the idea of a planet covered in green, just like his skin, intrigued him more than anything.

Maybe someday, when he was older, he would travel the stars as a merchant like his mother, or embark on some crazy adventures as a smuggler like his father. But for now, he would stay in his nice safe room, with his nice warm bed.

Tita extended his arm towards the desk at his feet, and his glass of water lifted up, barely sloshing this time, and landing softly into his hand. He took a sip before placing it back where it had been and then reached out towards the small stuffed Wookiee sitting in the chair on the opposite end of the room.

It hovered over to him, passing through the waves of moonbeams, and he plucked it out of the air above his chest.

He held it tight as he snuggled down into his bed.

There was no monster inside of him.

And even if there was, he would never let it hurt the ones that he loved.

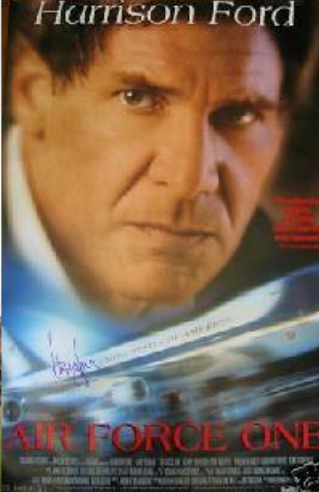
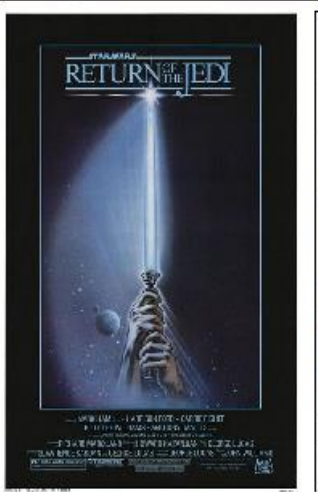
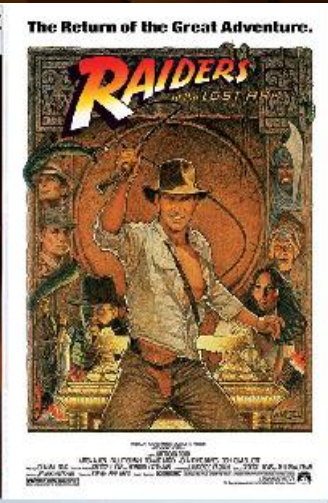
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TRIVIA!



-HARRISON FORD MOVIE TRIVIA-

ROUND 1 – Name the Harrison Ford Movie!

ONE: A Cowboy and a Rabbi, rob banks and travel to San Francisco together!

TWO: Harrison Ford plays an Army Colonel alongside Captain Quint from Jaws, and Apollo Creed in this military movie!

THREE: *A lawyer accused of murder and is defended by Gomez Adams*

FOUR: *Irish Cop befriends IRA member and then has to bring him to justice before IRA member is assassinated.*

FIVE: *Harrison Ford once did a movie with James Bond...name that movie.*

SIX: *Old-time Baseball owner who makes the controversial call to integrate his baseball team.*

SEVEN: *He plays a L.A. Detective who chases down record producer murderer with young partner.*

EIGHT: *He once played a Russian Submarine Captain alongside Qui-Gon Jinn.*

NINE: *The movie where Harrison Ford suffers a traumatic brain injury and rediscovers his family again.*

TEN: *Plays a cop who lives with the Amish and this is the only time Harrison Ford was nominated for an Oscar.*

ROUND 2 – Indiana Jones Trivia

ONE: *Where did Indiana Jones get the name "Indiana?"*

TWO: *Where did Indiana Jones go to college and Study Archeology with Abner Ravenwood?*

THREE: *What is the name of the city where Indy finds the Ark of the Covenant?*

FOUR: *How did Indiana Jones get his famous Fedora?"*

FIVE: *What famous song is sung by Willie at the beginning of Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom?*

SIX: *In which "Indiana Jones" movie does Indy look into the "Well of Souls"?*

SEVEN: *How did Indiana Jones meet Short Round?*

EIGHT: *Who autographed Henry Jones' diary?*

NINE: *What did the student in Dr. Jones' class have written on her eyelids In Raiders of the Lost Ark?*

TEN: *What piece of film history is Temple of Doom responsible for?*





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The Karate Kid

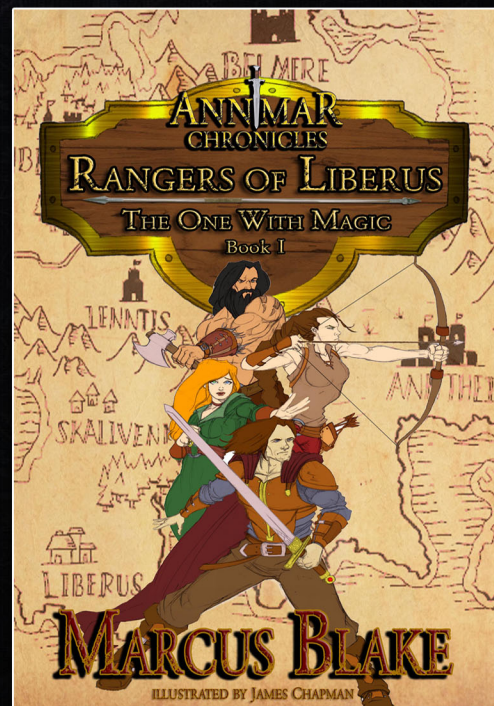
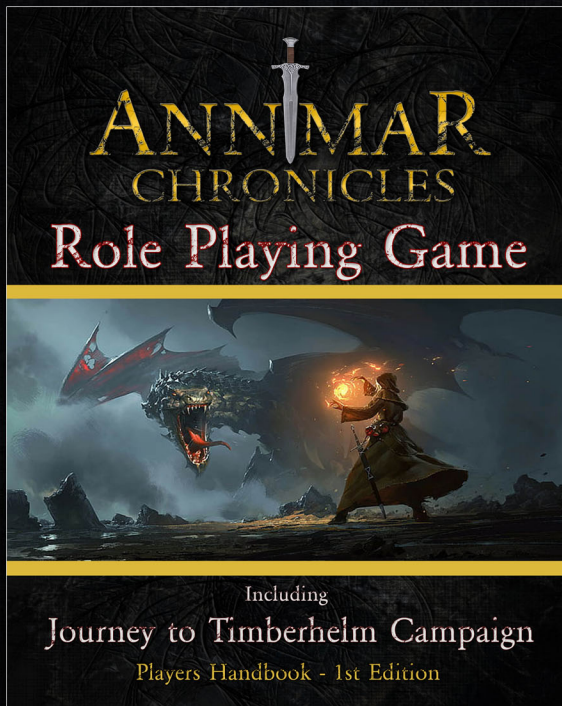
COLUMBIA PICTURES Presents a JERRY WEINTRAUB Production of a JOHN G. AVILDSEN film "THE KARATE KID" Starring RALPH MACCHIO - NORIYUKI "PAT" MORITA - ELISABETH SHUE - MARTIN KOVE - WILLIAM ZARBA Music by BILL CONTI. Music supervisor BROOKS ARTHUR. Executive producer R. J. LOUIS. Written by ROBERT MARK KAMEN. Produced by JERRY WEINTRAUB. Directed by JOHN G. AVILDSEN.

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