

That Nerd Show



WEEKLY NEWS



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VOL. 2

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A MESSAGE
FROM YOUR
SQUAD LEADER
"GAMING ADVICE"

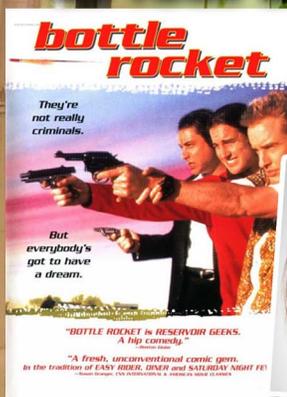
THE SURVIVAL OF MOVIE THEATERS

AND WHY THEY NEED TO SURVIVE!

By Alex Moore and Marcus Blake

"BOTTLE ROCKET"

25 YEARS LATER



INTERVIEW WITH
JENNI TOOLEY



"BLISS"

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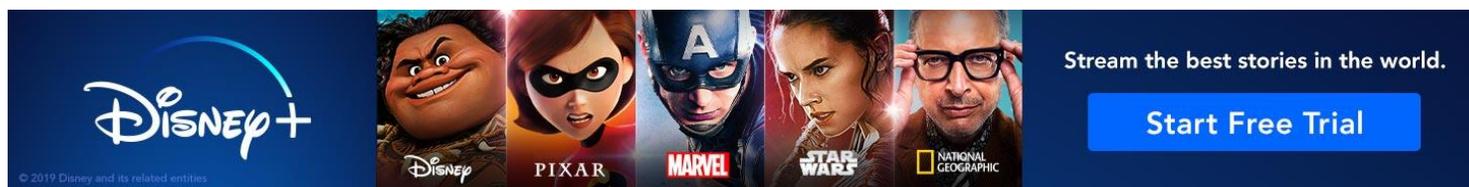
WHAT YOU SHOULD
BINGE-WATCH



Victoria Borodinová

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THE SURVIVAL OF MOVIE THEATERS

AND WHY THEY NEED TO SURVIVE!

By Marcus Blake and Alex Moore

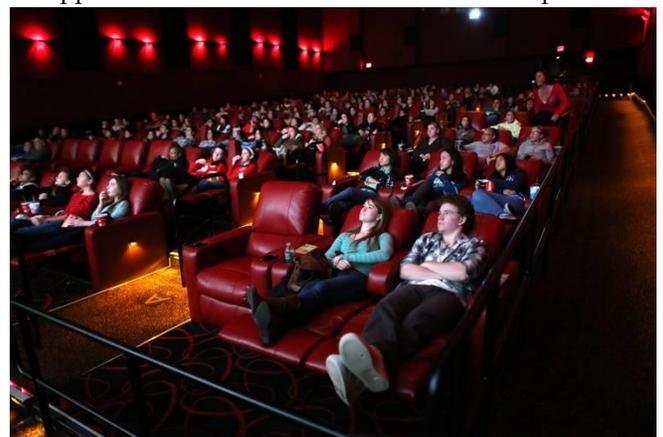


It's the beginning of 2021 and we're still asking the question, will movie theaters survive the pandemic? Many industries were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, but the hardest hit had to be the movie theater industry because overnight they became something like a ghost town. Whereas with restaurants they could do to-go orders or curbside service, restaurants were able to survive by restructuring how they served people. Movie theaters had no way of doing that and therefore suffered the greatest financial losses of any industry in 2020. After all, they rely on customers going to their place of business and using their services. We may never truly grasp the overall effects that the pandemic had on movie theaters, of course, financial losses have been reported each quarter since last year, but the effects run much deeper than just dollars. What it really comes down to is a way of life that we may never get back. Think about it, how many years will it be before society truly trusts being able to go to a movie theater with large crowds even with the COVID-19 vaccine being distributed now. It's a state of mind. Much like any service when something is not safe and we can't trust it, we generally don't use that service anymore. In time that may be the bigger question we try to answer about movie theaters and it's not like the Great Depression where people couldn't simply go because they didn't have money, people still went to the movie theater. It was still one of the few industries that people would shell out their last nickel for. This way

of life, which has been threatened by this pandemic, we may never get it back, especially since we live in a technological age with so many streaming channels and other avenues to watch movies.

JUST to fully understand the losses, the movie theater industry had coming into 2021, over 90% of the 5477 theaters in America were instantly closed when the first shelter orders across the US happened. The box office was down 80% compared to the year before. Those kinds of numbers literally put movie theaters out of business and it was estimated that 70% of small to mid-owned operated theaters would go out of business by the end of 2020. Larger chains were able to survive, but at great losses. AMC theatres and Cinemark, the two largest theater chains in the United States, have lost the most money, even reporting over a billion dollars in losses just in the third quarter of 2020.

900 million was lost by AMC theatres alone in the third quarter. Cinemark, the Texas based theater chain was better equipped to survive because according to their CEO Mark Zoradi, they had 750 million cash on hand. Two theater chains filed for bankruptcy protection in 2020, AMC theatres which was able to survive because of an influx of cash at the end of the year, but the other theater chain was the Studio Movie Grill who needed bankruptcy protection to restructure their debt. Most theater chains tried to survive in various ways even after having furloughed 90% of their staff. Of course, the first stimulus package that came out in March of 2020 helped, but it couldn't stop what really



affected movie theaters, studios were delaying the release of their films and it wasn't just delaying a film one-time, multiple films have been pushed back into 2021, after experiencing multiple delays of their release date. The latest James Bond film has been delayed three times as of this article.



THEATER chains tried to stay open the best they could by putting CDC requirements into effect with social distancing and requiring consumers to wear masks. Even without the release of summer blockbuster films that would have made up the bulk of third quarter earnings, most theater chains released classic films that are always great to see on the big screen and did it at a discount. Cinemark was the first to do it by offering \$5 movie tickets for films like *Back to the Future* or *The Big Lebowski*. You could even rent private theaters dirt cheap. AMC and Cinemark both offered private theaters for 10 to 15 people for \$99. Even the Studio Movie

Grill offered a theater for up to 115 people for \$200. Any way to get folks in the door while dealing with the restrictions of shelter orders, that was the aim of theater chains in trying to stay in business. Did it really work, not really, as all movie theater chains would lose money in the last two quarters of the year, but what this strategy did prove is that people wanted to go see movies. Moviegoers wanted the social experience. And that's the thing, with going to see a movie, there's a social aspect to it that has been seriously missed. It's not always about seeing a movie, but the interaction with other moviegoers or having the same great experience seeing something wonderful on the big screen. For example, how many moviegoers came out of the theater excited or pumped and even inspired when they saw *Avengers: Endgame*. Seeing a great movie with other fans adds to the social dimension of seeing a movie in a movie theater. If that aspect wasn't part of seeing a movie in a theater then there wouldn't be a need for movies to be seen on the big screen, but we all know that certain movies are just meant to be seen on the big screen.

BUT how are theater chains supposed to survive when new movies are not being released? Studios won't release new films thinking they will lose money because people won't go to the theater and movie theaters can't survive if there's not any new content. The one blockbuster movie that got released into theaters last year was Christopher Nolan's, *Tenet*. It was 100 million loss for Warner Media. The film being released last summer was like a test balloon, just to see if fans would go to the theater to see it. But even though some restrictions had loosened when it came to shelter orders, it still couldn't stop the mindset of people when it came to quarantining themselves. It was a scary time because there was so much that we really didn't know and of course so much misinformation about the coronavirus thanks to the former presidential administration. All it really did was keep people away from the theaters. What was supposed to be the summer blockbuster movies of 2020 have all been delayed to 2021. The next James Bond film, *No Time to Die*, was originally supposed to come out in April of 2020, it got delayed until the fall and then delayed until the spring of 2021, and now has been delayed again till October of this year. The 9th installment of the *Fast and Furious* franchise was originally scheduled to come out last May and has also been pushed back until May 2021. Some studios don't have a very good outlook for 2021 so even big movies like *Ghostbusters: Afterlife* have gotten pushed back to 2022. The same with *Avatar 2*. Probably the biggest movie beyond James Bond that got delayed was the sequel to *Top Gun*. *Top Gun: Maverick* was scheduled to be a big summer blockbuster movie in 2020 and is now been delayed until the 4th of July weekend of this year. At one time we thought we'd get to see it at Christmas of 2020, Paramount Studios opted to just push it too this summer which would coincide with the 35th anniversary of the original *Top Gun* movie.



It's understandable that delays were necessary, but what studio executives didn't really know is how far to delay a film because it seemed that there was always new information about COVID-19 and that would bring about new shelter orders and restrictions. *Wonder Woman 1984* with one of the biggest casualties, having its date changed multiple times throughout 2020, only to have it finally released at Christmas, but not only released in limited theaters, Warner Media's streaming service HBO Max on the same day. These delays have left studios wondering what they should do when it comes to the release of their films. It's really

unprecedented because of the way the film industry is compared to the last time a pandemic affected American Society, the influenza pandemic of 1918. It's hard to completely compare this pandemic and the movie industry to what it was like over 100 years ago, especially when new reels were going to a theater on a weekly basis. You didn't have home video or streaming content, all people had was the movie theater. But when the pandemic hit in 1918 movie theaters just completely shut down and that forced production to stop as well. This also happened at a time when the first World War was ending and American soldiers were coming home. Now, while it seemed for a while that Americans had lost interest in the film industry and what was considered a passing fad would finally stop, it was actually quite the opposite. When production companies were able to start up again, they were able to release films to theaters in a week's time. Whereas today it can take a year or more to make a film, they were created in less time thus giving the public opportunity for new content and wetting their appetite for new films. It also didn't hurt that one of the biggest stars at the time was a young fella named Charlie Chaplin who could release new films with his central character of the tramp in speedy fashion. But the one commonality between these two eras of the film during a pandemic is people never really lost their appetite for film and wanting to go to a movie theater.



Now a new concept in the entertainment industry when it came to movie releases was premium on demand. Studios found a way to release films and charge \$20 to \$30 to rent their movie online. This was something else unprecedented, it never been done before or even considered because the success of a film lives and dies at the box office. However, it was advantageous for studios who could still make money from people seeing their film. It did generate \$630 million profit for studios in 2020, but it's still a drop in the bucket compared to a huge loss of \$32 billion dollars in the theater industry around the world.

While this new concept may never match the amount of money that can be made by movie being seen in a theater, it did help studios make money that would help fuel budgets for future films. And renting premium on demand is less of a financial burden for families. As our senior writer Allison Costa pointed out. "Saving money is the biggest factor. At home you spend \$20 and can bring your own candy, popcorn, and snacks. At the movie theater, it's about a \$100 for a big family, plus it's always more comfortable wearing PJ's and have a couch and blankets while watching the movie. However, you definitely lose some of the excitement and special event factor of watching a movie in a theater, there's just something magical about it." But it's fair to say that the biggest loser with this concept will always be the movie theater industry. It may be a temporary fix for the studios, but what if you have studios considering doing it on a permanent basis. Warner Media took the position late in 2020 that all of their films in 2021 could be released in theaters and on HBO Max on the same day. This is one of the most controversial moves by a studio when it comes to releasing their films and we don't know the full ramifications of what they're proposing going into 2021. So far only two movies have been released this way, Wonder Woman 1984 at Christmas and The Little Things, which came out a few weeks ago. In both instances, more viewers saw these films on HBO Max than in the theater, but the comparison of how many current subscribers compared to new subscribers in terms of dollars determining whether these films were financially successful remains to be seen. We may not know the full impact of this move by Warner Media until the first quarter of 2022 and it doesn't bode well for sustainable success in the theater industry, especially when so many theaters are fighting to survive.

It's true that showing classic movies people love to see on the big screen can still bring in an audience, but nostalgia alone isn't always profitable. It's February 2021 and no theater has made a net profit yet, they are still seeing losses, which leads to movies getting delayed again. Studios hope that by the fall of 2021 and after most people in the United States have had the COVID-19 vaccine, large crowds can go back to the theater. The bigger question is, will they? Will people feel safe enough to go back to the theater? Some studios are betting that by the time summer gets here, summer blockbuster movies will bring people back in droves and help save the theater industry. One of the more interesting stories regarding that is the release of the Top Gun sequel. It is still scheduled to be released during the summer, Paramount studios refused to sell this movie to any streaming service even though it

garnered the highest bidding for a movie by giants like Amazon prime and Netflix and even Apple + TV. It was certainly one of the most anticipated movies of 2020 and they're counting on that it will be for 2021 bringing people back to theaters, but again, how many people will feel safe enough to go see it even by this summer.



WE are heading into the Film Festival season with the Sundance Film Festival having done a virtual festival this past year. one of the biggest indicators of how this industry has changed especially regarding movie theaters is that when it comes to the bidding on the films coming out of Sundance, the majority of them are being bought by streaming services such as Netflix and Apple + TV. It appears that distributors are skeptical and forgoing the typical theater distribution route. But something else that hasn't been talked about enough is how the forced closure of the theater industry effected film festivals. Film festivals thrive by having a movie theater to showcase films that are

seeking distribution. It's easy for critics and distributors to see these films through an online Screener, but the crowd's reaction to a film also helps determine whether it might be successful therefore easily persuading a distributor to buy a film. 2020 was the first year that we were not physically present at a Film Festival. It was the first year that we did not conduct Film Festival interviews or sit down interviews with filmmakers, all of our interviews were virtual and while media can still get great interviews doing that, it's never the same as being able to do a physical interview with a filmmaker. It'll never have the same impact. It still remains to be seen whether film festivals will happen at physical theaters or they'll go the virtual route. As we have seen, yes, they can survive and find some success, but much like films being released through premium on demand, it seems more of a stopgap than a solution. There's no doubt that the film industry will be affected for a long time because of the pandemic and things will certainly never be the same because studios are rethinking how to release their films in order to still be profitable. Streaming channels such as HBO Max and Disney + have proven successful to when it comes to distributing new movies, but not in the same way as films being seen in a movie theater. Movie theaters have always garnered more profit for a film, especially a blockbuster. However, despite the financial impact and new ways to release films, there is one question that has not been answered....

WHY THEATERS NEED TO SURVIVE

SINCE the early years of the 20th century, spectators around the globe, especially within the United States, have paid to see "moving pictures." It began with the arrival of an oncoming train, progressed to the addition of voices and colors and even broadened to a more panoramic scope. It was all for the sake of making our viewing experiences more stimulating and true-to-life, while providing us with a break from reality, as well.

When you think back to your earliest memory of watching a movie (on the big screen), what do you remember the most? Perhaps it was a specific moment that made you laugh with glee or wince with fear. As you got older, what kept you going back? Was it the enjoyment of talking to complete strangers as you stood around, for hours at a time in line, wrapped around the outside of the theater? Did you wave to each other as you climbed into your various seats around the large, crowded room, trying to take pictures with your cameras before the lights went down and the film was loaded and run through the projector? These are all just a handful of examples from personal experience and for every, single one of us, there is bound to be something very similar and/or completely unique to add to this.

IMAGINE, if, one day, not too far from this particular time and place, we suddenly had nowhere to relive these memories or to, still, create new ones. It has been nearly a year since the latest pandemic entered into our lives and stifled our relatively-free existences and countless facets of our lives have been affected in a sharply-negative way. While it's fair to say that certain details are significantly more important than others, for each and every one of us, inherently less-important activities have apparently gone missing and have left something of a void in many of our lives, if not all of them. The absence of watching movies on the big screen



happens to be one of them and if we do not get that back, we might lose it in a way that many of us are not truly prepared for. The primary question is simple: why must movie theaters survive? Well, this is somewhat, in the paragraphs above this one, but allow us to expand just a little bit... Why do certain movies belong in a theater? This question will be answered with another one: did you see the original *Star Wars* on television or on VHS before you watched it on the big screen? When having the opportunity to view



that movie (and the rest of the original trilogy) in a movie theater, it was easy to feel that this great film had been seen the way it was truly meant to be seen. You see, no one feels let down if they missed the chance to see *My Dinner With Andre* on the big screen, but if it is another movie from the same year, such as *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, then you have the chance to see something really special that you may never experience again, in precisely the same way. Let us move on...

THIS question is asked as film critics, but also as fans of movies, in general: why are theaters beneficial to film festivals? Well, for anyone who can think of an instant that you had an especially great time watching a specific movie and it was, at least in part, due to the audience you had the pleasure of seeing it with, then I believe that is where you can find the most-reasonable answer to that question. Forget about theatrical etiquette or just a moment. Truthfully, we critics are often the worst-behaved people in the audience. We take a somewhat nerdy type of pride in being able to engage with the rest of the audience for just one, brief moment. It is something along the lines of when Roger Ebert told the story about how he went to see the latest *Jaws* movie and noticed a glaring editing mistake and he verbally remarked, "His clothes are dry!" It received a rousing response from the rest of the audience. There is no doubt that Mr. Ebert got more

enjoyment out of that singular phrase than he did from the entire movie that night. Moments like that probably exist in numerous packed houses on a consistent basis. With more movies showing at a given time, there is more room for an entertaining audience, as well. So what else can we say about movie theaters? If this is the most-popular means of escaping reality, then what kinds of movies do we need to keep alive the most? Well, one thing I thought might be a plus as studios have lost the amount of money they have, recently, is that they will need to focus on making greater movies on smaller budgets. If our theory about low-budget movies holds up, this means that character-driven movies will become more common, but is that what most moviegoers are interested in? Summertime is without a doubt the most opportune time for the studios to dazzle audiences with special effects and exciting plots. That trend ought to continue, but on a smaller scale. When I was growing up, it was favorable if you could expect an average of one, big blockbuster movie in each month, over the summer. Maybe that is all we really need.

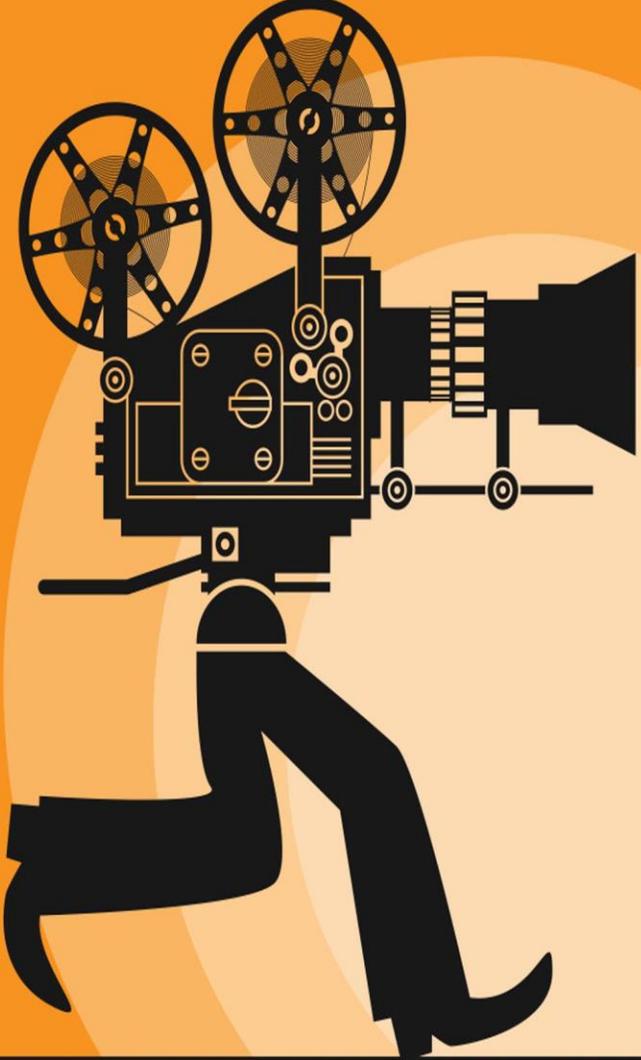
AS for theaters themselves, it's hard not to miss the days of having small, privately-owned venues, as opposed to the big, corporate-themed structures we have seen so much over the past 20 years or so. However, they stand a better chance of surviving. What if the movie studios put in some for their own money into the theaters? This was once illegal, but is now a valid option. As the studios compete within the various theaters for the money, we the spectators, are willing to pay, the prices should stay fair and we will have the ability to dictate what we want to see and what we want out of a theater, altogether. Perhaps more restaurants should get involved with providing food and beverages at specific theater locations and then more customers will have greater reasons to put their hard-earned money into a movie theater experience. These are just many ways they can survive, but as we mentioned before, it's the social aspect and the experience that will make theaters survive. The future of technology has long-been about simplifying our access to multiple media outlets. Why not continue that same progress in the movie theater/restaurant industry? It can always get better, right? Is there a better way to unify suffering industries in this day and age, frankly speaking! And more importantly, allowing us to keep making new memories at a movie theater. Let us not take this all for granted before it is too late!



MARVEL STUDIOS

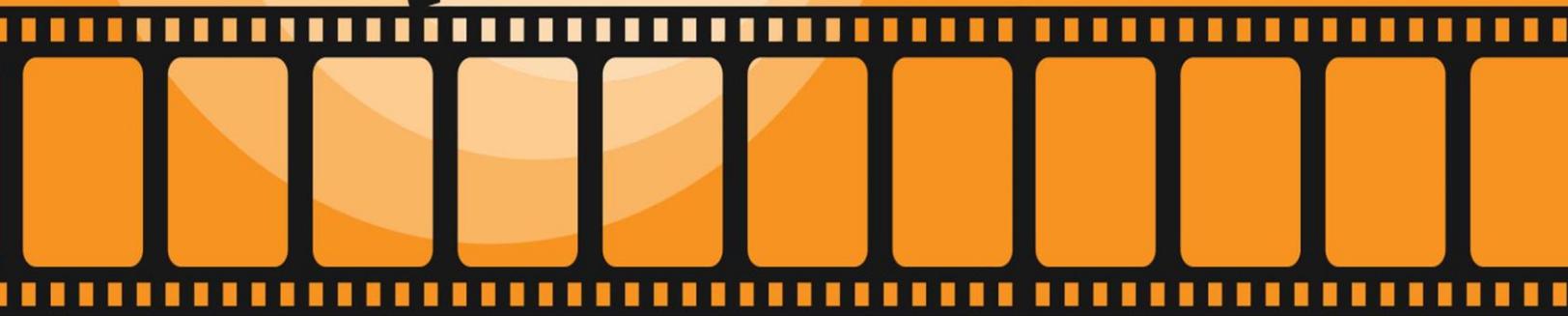
BLACK WIDOW

MAY 2020



Film and

TV



What's Happening This Week...



SUNDANCE FF: Apple Lands 'CODA' For \$25M Record Setting WW Deal; First Major Virtual 2021 Sundance Film Festival Sale

From Deadline.com

In the first big deal of the 2021 virtual Sundance Film Festival, Apple has landed worldwide rights to *CODA*, for a number just north of \$25 million. That sets a new a Sundance acquisitions record — above the \$22.5 million that *Palm Springs* received last year from Hulu/Neon. But this time, all the premiere watching and all night auctioning was done far from the slopes of Park City. It came down to a pitched battle between Apple and Amazon. Writer-director Siân Heder's coming-of-age drama is about a high school senior who is the only hearing person in her deaf family and is torn between holding together that unit or seeking her own dreams. The film premiered opening night in the U.S. Dramatic Competition. Buyers loved it, and it became clear yesterday that its value to distributors was heading into the stratosphere, after receiving glowing reviews and reaction from buyers. Multiple offers were on the table and brought the bidding close to *Palm Springs* territory. That was the Andy Samberg-Cristin Milioti movie that broke the Sundance sales record last year with \$22.5 million.

The film (the title's acronym is for Child of Deaf Adults) centers on Ruby (Emilia Jones), the only hearing person in her deaf family. When the family's fishing business is threatened, she finds herself torn between pursuing her love of music and her fear of abandoning her parents. The pic is based on the award-winning French hit *La famille bélier*. Jones is a real discovery and the film is a bonafide crowd pleaser with heart and awards potential. Heder has captured the fishing scene in Boston, and the love of classic Motown and Joni Mitchell and Marvin Gaye, whose songs are broken down and connect you to the messages within them, and why they resonate with the characters navigating difficult circumstances. Most importantly, it creates a real way into the world of a mother, father and son who were born deaf, and when the film transports the audience to how these deaf characters experience the world without sound, and try to appreciate the bright singing talent of a cherished daughter they can't hear, the results are what they build Best Picture candidates out of. Numerous buyers discussed the film with me yesterday and were saddened when the numbers shot past what they could spend as it became clear this would be a world rights deal with a streamer.

Deal was led for Apple by heads of Worldwide Video Zack Van Amburg & Jamie Erlicht, who last year reeled in the Sundance docu *Boys State*, which is in the Oscar race right now. It becomes the latest statement-making deal for Apple, which at last virtual Cannes broke the record there for the Antoine Fuqua-Will Smith runaway slave drama *Emancipation* in a record pre-buy. Said writer/director Heder: "I have been so moved by the outpouring of response to the film and am so excited to have found a partner in Apple that loves and deeply gets this movie, the spirit in which it was created and is committed to having this film reach the widest audience possible in a thoughtful and meaningful way. The whole CODA team is also so grateful to Sundance for being a part of the film's journey. I hope that this film and Apple's powerful support will help kick down some doors standing in the way of inclusion and representation and pave a path for more stories that center characters from the Deaf and Disabled community. The world has waited too long for these stories to be told. Now is the time. No more excuses." Eugenio Derbez, Marlee Matlin and Ferdia Walsh-Peelo also star. Fabrice Gianfermi, *The Pathe* film was produced by Philippe Rousselet, and Patrick Wachsberger produced the film with Jerome Seydoux, and exec produced by Ardavan Safaee, Sarah Borch-Jacobsen, and co-produced by Hester Hargett-Aupetit, Ged Dickersin, Marie De Cenival, and Eric Jehelmann, Stephane Celerier, and Valerie Garcia.

Peter Dinklage, Shirley MacLaine To Star In Paul Dektor-Helmed 'American Dreamer;' Ted Melfi Script

From Deadline.com

Peter Dinklage and Shirley MacLaine are set to star in *American Dreamer*, an indie which has been set to begin production March 15 in Vancouver. The film is written by Academy Award nominee Theodore Melfi, and will be directed by award winning commercial director Paul Dektor. *American Dreamer* is produced by Peter Dinklage and David Ginsberg's Estuary Films, Theodore Melfi and Kim Quinn's Goldenlight Films, Paul Dektor and Flying Firebird LLC. Quinn will also act in the film, playing MacLaine's daughter Maggie. The film is currently in pre-production.

Pic is told in a similar tone as Melfi's *St. Vincent* and based on a true story segment from the *This American Life* podcast. The film follows Dr. Phil Loder (Dinklage), a low-level, adjunct professor of economics at Harvard, whose grand dream of owning a home is tragically out of reach...until an incredible, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity comes his way when a lonely, childless, near-death widow (MacLaine) offers Phil her sprawling estate for pennies. But Phil quickly learns the deal is too good to be true.



Netflix To Make GameStop Stock Movie Package; Mark Boal In Talks To Write, Noah Centineo Attached, Scott Galloway To Consult

From Deadline.com



As Wall Street developments unfold in real time in the David V Goliath battle between hedge funds and social media-fueled day traders that sent shares of GameStop soaring 135% on a single day, a bull market is developing for projects chronicling this unprecedented episode and its greater implications. Deadline hears Netflix is in talks to make an untitled film that Mark Boal is in negotiations to write. He's the Oscar winning screenwriter of *The Hurt Locker* and *Zero Dark Thirty*. Noah Centineo will be attached to play a major role – Centineo starred in the Netflix film *To All The Boys I've Loved Before*, completed the Jackie Chan-directed *The Diary* and will play Atom Smasher opposite Dwayne Johnson in the Jaume Collet-Serra-directed *Black Adam*. Scott Galloway, the activist/journalist and NYU prof and an expert on tech issues who teams on the the popular *Pivot* podcast, is in talks to consult on the script. Makeready founder/CEO Brad Weston will produce the film with Definition Entertainment's Nick Styne, with Mark Sourian aboard as executive producer. This follows

close on the heels of last night's Deadline scoop that MGM acquired in bidding a book proposal by Ben Mezrich about the GameStop trading. His previous books include *The Accidental Billionaires*, which became a pillar of *The Social Network*. Netflix declined comment on the Mark Boal project, but sources said the intention is to use the GameStop episode as a specific way to shine a light on the phenomenon of how social media has leveled the playing field and allowed the masses to challenge status quo gatekeepers, for good and bad. The examples range from the stock spike for GameStop, AMC and other formerly lagging stocks that are subject to the short-selling maneuvers of billion-dollar hedge funds, to the social media spread of unfounded election rigging charges conveyed by conservative social media sites and Trump Tweets that fired up right wing extremists to storm the Capitol while President Biden's election was being certified, leading to the death of five people. The ripples of the Reddit rebellion has struck at the core of some hedge funds in a way that is reminiscent of the greed-fueled subprime mortgage bundling that caused the 2008 financial collapse, captured in the Oscar-winning *The Big Short*, which New Regency co-financed while Weston ran that production company. That film will certainly be a model for the GameStop dissection, and sources said there are several potential rival projects mobilizing to tell the story.

The general rule when competitive projects emerge is that the first one in production is often the only one made. Netflix makes its pictures quickly and Boal seems ideal for such a real time exercise. He and director Kathryn Bigelow were working on a film about an unsuccessful hunt for Osama Bin Laden, but the moment President Barack Obama announced that the 9/11 mastermind had been killed by Navy SEALs, they quickly pivoted and constructed the manhunt story into the Best Picture nominee *Zero Dark Thirty*. The turnaround time on that pivot was remarkably fast. The drama on the GameStop stock rise continues to play out in today's stock trading. The phenomenon was led by Kevin Gill, who rallied Reddit users to rebel against hedge funds betting heavily against the brick and mortar videogame retailer GameStop. Though it fluctuates daily, an investment of \$53,000 in GameStop he made in 2019 turned into a position worth nearly \$48 million, according to his Reddit posts. Gill has not yet sold his life rights. I wouldn't be surprised if he gets a few knocks on his door from Hollywood, but this drama is playing out so publicly in real time that it is unclear how vital rights will be in telling this story onscreen.

GameStop[®]
POWER TO THE PLAYERS[®]



Jennifer Lopez To Star & Produce Action Pic 'The Mother' At Netflix -Niki Caro Will Direct!

From Deadline.com

We can tell you first that [Jennifer Lopez](#) is reteaming with [Netflix](#) again, this time she will star and produce the action feature [The Mother](#) which [Mulan](#) director [Niki Caro](#) is in talks to direct. Lopez will play a deadly female assassin who comes out of hiding to protect the daughter that she gave up years before, while on the run from dangerous men. I'm told that the project is in the

spirit of the Luc Besson classic *The Professional*. *Lovecraft Country* creator Misha Green penned the original screenplay with revisions by *Straight Outta Compton*'s Andrea Berloff. Lopez is producing with Elaine Goldsmith Thomas for Nuyorican Productions; Benny Medina; Roy Lee and Miri Yoon for Vertigo Entertainment; as well as Green. Catherine Hagedorn will serve as EP with Courtney Baxter as Associate Producer. As previously announced, Lopez is starring in and producing the Netflix adaptation of the Isabella Maldonado novel [The Cipher](#). In that movie, Lopez will play FBI agent Nina Guerrero, who is pulled into a serial killer's case after he leaves complex codes and riddles online, which are linked to his recent murders.

Lopez recently performed at the U.S. Presidential Inauguration of Joe Biden. She is currently filming Lionsgate's *Shotgun Wedding*, and will be seen in Universal's musical-driven romantic comedy *Marry Me* with Owen Wilson which is set for theatrical release on May 14. In 2019, Lopez scored her biggest domestic opening for a live-action feature at the box office and stateside hit with STX's *Hustlers* (\$33.1M opening, \$105M domestic B.O.), a role which earned her a second Golden Globe nomination, as well as a supporting actress SAG nom. She is repped by CAA, The Medina Co., and Hirsch Wallerstein Hayum Matlof and Fishman. Caro directed Disney's live action feature adaptation of its classic animated feature *Mulan* which was released last year in cinemas abroad and on Disney+ streaming services. The movie in its first week in Nielsen streaming ratings accumulated 525 million minutes of viewing. Caro's 2002 feature *Whale Rider* won a Best Feature Film BAFTA in the Children's Award section and earned a Lead Actress Oscar nomination for Keisha Castle-Hughes. Caro also directed *North Country* and *The Zookeeper's Wife*. She is set to helm Amblin Partners' *Beautiful Ruins* based on the Jess Walter's *New York Times* bestseller. She is also directing three episodes of the Amazon musical series *Daisy Jones & The Six*.

'The Crown' Star Emma Corrin To Star Opposite Harry Styles In Amazon's 'My Policeman'

From Deadline.com

Coming off her Golden Globe and SAG nominations for her portrayal of Princess Diana in *The Crown*, [Emma Corrin](#) will star opposite [Harry Styles](#) (*Dunkirk*) in the Amazon Studios' romantic drama [My Policeman](#). Based on the acclaimed novel of the same name by Bethan Roberts, *My Policeman* will be produced by Greg Berlanti, Robbie Rogers and Sarah Schechter of Berlanti-Schechter Films, in association with Cora Palfrey and Phillip Herd at Independent Film Company and MGC. The story takes place in the late 1990s, when the arrival of elderly invalid Patrick into Marion and Tom's home, triggers the exploration of seismic events from 40 years previous: the passionate relationship between Tom and Patrick at a time when homosexuality was illegal. Styles and Corrin are set to star as Tom and Marion, respectively.

'The Crown's Golden Globe-Nominated Emma Corrin Reacts To Kristen Stewart's Upcoming Princess Diana, Says Role Was "One Of The Best Experiences" Tony and Olivier Award winner Michael Grandage will direct from an adapted screenplay by Academy Award and Emmy nominee Ron Nyswaner. Corrin is best known for her role as Lady Diana Spencer in Season 4 of the Netflix world-wide, award winning hit series *The Crown*, which earned her Golden Globe, SAG and Critics Choice nominations for Best Actress. Emma joined Season 3's stellar cast including Olivia Colman, Tobias Menzies, Helena Bonham Carter and Josh O'Connor in the latest iteration of the show that released in November 2020. Emma has also been selected by *The Hollywood Reporter* as one of their 'Next Gen' breakout actors and named as one of *Screen International's* 'Stars of Tomorrow' 2020. Last March, Emma made her debut film appearance in *Misbehaviour*, a historical drama film following the story of a group of women from the Women's Liberation Movement seeking to disrupt the 1970 Miss World beauty competition, which took place in London. Cast as 'Jillian Jessup', the Miss South Africa contestant, Emma starred alongside Keira Knightley, Keeley Hawes and Gugu Mbatha-Raw, amongst others. Emma's previous television roles include her appearance as 'Esme', a recurring role in the 10-part Warner Brothers/EPIX series *Pennyworth*.



The Beauty and Grace of "The Dig!"

A Film Review

by Marcus Blake



Beautiful and graceful is the best way that I can describe the movie *The Dig* on Netflix. It's not some action-packed spy Thriller or Guy Ritchie film about the underbelly of London Society, it is a film built on the essence of human existence, how we are connected to each other and the past. The story centers around the famous Sutton Hoo excavation in 1939, one of the largest excavations in English history when archaeologists discovered ships, tools, and treasures from the Dark Ages, which proved wrong, up to that time all their notions about what had actually happened during the Dark Ages. But the film isn't so much about the excavation as it is about the people who worked on it and the woman whose land all it was discovered on. As I said this story is about human existence and The Connection to the Past, I repeat that to emphasize its importance.

The character played by Carrie Mulligan hire an excavator you start digging and what her and her late husband had thought regarding what was beneath the earth on their property. The excavator is played by Ralph Fiennes, who is not really an archaeologist, but an excavator like his father before him and his grandfather. Essentially, he knows what he's doing, but he doesn't have the education like Premiere archaeologists in England. But you immediately figure out that you have these lost souls who come together to discover something extraordinary. A grieving Widow who is sick and dying, and wants to fulfill the wishes of her late husband. You have an excavator who for all intense and purposes is shunned by the upper elite of archaeologists, but also has a reputation of being one of the best diggers. What they discover will be remarkable, but also what they discover about each other will be more remarkable. What makes this film extraordinary is how all the characters relate to each other, especially when the archaeologist for the Museum of Great Britain comes down and try to take over. You have the stuck-up archaeologist played by Ken Stott, who starts to become more vulnerable throughout the film when he realizes that the excavator is truly one of a kind thus making his stereotypes fall apart. You have the married couple who seem to be married for convenience, but don't really love each other. The wife, played by Lily James, seems to be misunderstood and wants to do more, but because she's a woman can't seem to get ahead. The way these characters all interact with one another is great, it's dramatic and comedic and you feel connected to these characters. Because I think in a lot of ways are all misunderstood and if you're looking for a metaphor in this film it is as they dig deeper and tear down the barriers surrounding what they find, it's their own barriers that are being torn down as human beings you are trying to connect to one another. The great English stories generally have this as a central theme. The cinematography is also wonderful acting like it's own character in the film, plus the way the weather plays havoc on the dig as well as how they shot this movie basking in natural sunlight makes it a very beautiful film. I really did enjoy what I do highly recommended, but it's not a perfect film.

If I have one chief complaint about the film, it's what I consider a forced love story between the wife who seems misunderstood and the brother of the main character who is about to go off to war. Now I understand wartime romances and sometimes when you're trapped in a marriage you will find the love you think you should have outside of that marriage. But I also think that there should be a subtlety to that story that doesn't overshadow the rest of a film. And I kind of feel like that part of film towards the end was forced. Because what the story really is about to tell these people come together for this archaeological dig and then trying to protect it against the backdrop of World War II has Germany start bombing England. For anybody that knows anything about the Sutton Hoo excavation, they essentially have to rebury it to protect it against the devastation of War. In fact, most of the prominent excavation of the site didn't happen until after the war and continued well into the 1960s. If you read any of my reviews, you know I always talk about pacing and well for the most part the pacing in the film is very good, there are moments that it staggers a little bit. Most of the time it happens with the scenes that are supposed to connect to other scenes, but where this film is strongest is where you have interaction between the main characters, whether it's on the Dig or discussing business-related matters. The other great scenes are the ones with the son learning about archaeology and assisting, even when he runs away the excavator's house and everybody is frantic to find him. They're such sweet moments of all of these people connecting to one another that helped drive the story. But overall, the film does an exceptional job in focusing on the main point of the story which is the excavation itself and how everybody's lives connect to it. All the scenes that focus on that narrative makes the film stronger and everything else that takes away from that makes the film less than perfect.

The Dig is a beautiful movie and it's perfect for streaming content. Although, I definitely would have enjoyed seeing this in the theater and believe it is one of the best films on Netflix. They can certainly be categorized as a wartime story because it is on the eve of Great Britain entering into World War II and subtly showing how everybody's life will change after this great discovery, but they also that the war could not destroy what they had discovered and the history that they had learned which I think is a big part of it because Nazi Germany was trying to rewrite history heard what the film shows and such a beautiful and graceful way are the connections between these characters and how that will change because of this one archaeological event that connects them to the past. But I do think that the characters are delightful and there are some very humorous moments that display to happiness of these people before war is beset upon them. The cinematography and landscape really add a new dimension to the greatness of this film. It may not necessarily be one that you go back and revisit although it is certainly rewatchable and I'm anxious to do that again to see if I discover anything new. But the performances are fantastic and you generally get that when you cast great British actors. So I highly recommend *The Dig* if you're looking for something new on Netflix and for those that just want a beautiful film where good acting drives the story instead of action and violence, especially if it's a movie about our past and how we connect to it. After all the Sutton Hoo excavation is very interesting in itself, but what this film does perfectly is connect us to the people who were there and the human experience of finding such a treasure. Because those who are apart of such an extraordinary event usually find out something about themselves that they may not have realized... and that is the perfect narrative for any great. Watch it and I guarantee you will not be disappointed or quickly forget this beautiful Netflix film.

It's a 8/10 (Good)

What Did I Just Watch?

The 'Bliss' Film Review

by Chloe James

I'm certain we've all had movies (or even shows) that when we finish them, we must ask ourselves, "What the f*** did I just watch!?" Most of my favorite media have a sort of mystery about them. A feeling that you have absolutely no idea what's going on in the beginning, but the concept is so intriguing that you are compelled to see it through till the end to discover just what it all meant. Some films pull this off pretty well such as *Donnie Darko*, *Dark City*, and *Identity*. Some give you a few answers but continue to pile on distracting questions (*Prometheus*, anyone?) And some...leave you completely clueless as to what you had just seen. To this day, the entertainingly confusing *Southland Tales* is the most egregious example of this.

But I may have found this category's runner up in *Bliss*, now streaming on Amazon Prime, Greg (Owen Wilson) can no longer concentrate on his hum drum 9-5 life as he has constant visions of a place he has never been to and a woman he's never met. After letting his distractions cost him his job, he meets Isabella (Salma Hayek) who happens to resemble the woman in his visions. Not only that, but she reveals she and Greg have the power to control the world around them by swallowing these special crystals. As Greg gets more involved with Isabella, he begins to see that the world as he knows it may not be as real as it seems. As *Matrix*-esque as the plot sounds, I definitely won't say its trying to be *The Matrix*. At least not completely. I feel like writer/director Michael Cahill took inspiration from a number of films such as *Fight Club*, *Midnight Cowboy*, *Inception*, as well as *The Matrix*. If it's one credit I can give to Cahill, he certainly loves to experiment with blending genres. And lord knows, I love me some good mixing of genres. But the key to genre blending in any medium is the overall result must make sense somehow. The elements must harmonize with each other.

And that is the most frustrating part about this whole film. The inspirations Cahill had to make this are actually brilliant. I was absolutely entranced throughout most of the film by trying to guess at the point it was trying to make. I loved all of the elements he gathered to tell this story. But in the end it didn't feel like a harmony at all but rather different instruments playing different songs very loudly over each other. I couldn't make out a single melody trying to be expressed, let alone a harmony.

Enough with me trying to explain through vague metaphors. There are still quite a few good things about *Bliss*. As I mentioned earlier, I was intrigued throughout the entire film. It definitely grabbed my attention right from the beginning and held it up until the (messy) final act. Visually, it was a gorgeous film, taking full advantage of the beautiful locations used as well as some decent visual effects. I even want to give a shout out to the score for being minimalist yet effective.

As for the acting...well I'm unsure of what to say. I guess Owen Wilson did a good job as I, for brief moments, caught glimpses of a character that wasn't Owen Wilson. Don't get me wrong, I love the man, but but he has a very set character he plays that he rarely breaks out of. As for Salma, I'm not even sure what to say. I normally adore her, to the point of having a big ol' girl crush on her. But her portrayal of Isabella is either the worst acting I've ever seen her do or the most brilliant. I can't honestly say because I was completely confused as to what to make of her character at all.

Really, I'm at a loss as to what to make of this entire movie. Not only did it never give me that "mystery solved" satisfaction I crave, but I can't even say if it was good or bad. I can say it was pretty, entertaining, and genre defying. But the execution just didn't cut it. Honestly, I hope its just a case of I'm too stupid to understand it and only those with a high enough IQ could glean the true meaning of it. Regardless, the true meaning of *Bliss* remains as elusive as the feeling of "bliss" itself.



It's a 6 / 10 (Adequate)

Palmer – One of the Best Movies on Apple + A Film Review

by Danielle Butler



After 12 years in prison, Eddie Palmer (played by Justin Timberlake) returns to his hometown to rebuild his life and ends up caring for the neighbor's kid, Sam, after the mother runs off with her deadbeat boyfriend. Soon after Palmer moves in with his grandmother, Sam comes to live with Miss Vivian (grandma - June Squibb) and shortly after she passes away leaving Palmer the only adult to look after Sam in his small Louisiana hometown. (Wait, no one said anything about a kid staying with an ex-con parolee? I'll get to that.) Well-behaved Sam struggles with bullies in school and his community because he doesn't fit into gender norms, playing and dressing like his friends who are girls. At first Palmer is annoyed by Sam, asking, "You know you're a boy, right?" But eventually, puts those concerns aside in order to love and care for this sweet kid.

I enjoyed this movie. I liked the storyline between Palmer and Sam's teacher Miss Maggie (Alisha Wainwright) who work together to look out for Sam. The pace of the film was slow until the very end, when things escalated quickly. J.T. was a grungy, silent type. The filming was a lot of show not tell and truthfully, I forgot he was the guy from the 90s boy band with the bleach blonde tips. His character was likable, admirable even. It's endearing watching a man be a good father figure to a kid. Especially when it's not his kid. Especially, to this kid. Having parental rights is privilege not a unconditional guarantee so let's dive into the major plot holes in the story. First off, Palmer takes the child to the police station when his grandmother dies as he didn't plan to take care of the child. Child Services was called, and a social worker did visit the home and watch Sam and Palmer's interact and just sweep his criminal defense under the rug and forget about it.

I don't buy it. I volunteered with children in the foster care system every week for two years and I had to do interviews, background checks, and lots of paperwork in order to do so. There is NO way they would have allowed Palmer to care for this child. There are more non-binding laws and

regulations in Child Protective Services than Starbucks on corners. Sidebar, that is not a shout out to Seattle's most over commercialized bean monopoly. Support your local businesses people. The movie would have ended with the child going to a capable relative or licensed foster parent. Period but Hollywood trumps laws and Social Services so the movie continues. Second strike, okay, so Palmer was given a second change with a job as a custodian at the elementary school in town. He was hired by someone who's knows him because he was a star football player with a minor offense. Fine, but when (SPOILER ALERT) Palmer grabs the arm of an elementary school child and tells him if he touches Sam again, he will break the kid's arm outside on school grounds no less...I kept waiting for the other shoe to drop and never did. You can't say that to a kid, Palmer never got fired and the kid never said anything to an adult...possible, but not very realistic. I do agree what was said in court is exactly what would happen in really life. Lastly, how on earth did he afford his own place after his grandmother's house was left to the church. Those details were barely mentioned in the movie.

This movie is a heartwarming, uplifting tale of how a man regains not only his life but a purpose which is to protect Sam at all costs. When the going gets rough, Palmer's past threatens to ruin his new life and his chances supporting and even being in Sam's life. In the end, it was up to the mother. In real life, it is up to the birth parents. They have rights so I was pleasantly surprised she made a healthy selfless choice for her child. I won't spoil the ending completely, but you'll have to watch J.T. make good and bad decisions in effort to protect Sam. I think I teared up at the end. The truth is when it comes to kids, we all want what's best. That happy ending was well-deserved. Justin's performance was excellent for someone who rarely primarily sings.

It's a 8/10 (Good)



2021 GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINEES

The Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) has announced the nominees for the 78th Annual Golden Globe Awards. **Sarah Jessica Parker**, six-time Golden Globe winner, and **Taraji P. Henson**, Golden Globe winner, disclosed the nominees. For the first time in the history of the Golden Globes, the nominations were announced virtually, following the current safety measures during the Covid pandemic.

The 78th Golden Globes will take place on February 28, coast to coast from 5 pm to 8 pm PT/8-11 ET on NBC. The event will be hosted by **Tina Fey** and **Amy Poehler**, returning for the fourth time, after hosting in 2013, 2014, and 2015. Fey and Poehler will share duties from their respective cities, with Fey on the East Coast and Poehler on the West Coast. Fey will be live from New York's Rainbow Room, Poehler will be live from the Beverly Hilton, in Beverly Hills, and nominees, from various locations around the world.

In addition to the categories announced today, the 2021 Golden Globes will honor **Jane Fonda** with the **Cecil B. deMille Award**, and **Norman Lear** with the **Carol Burnett Award**. Lear will be the third recipient of the recently created Carol Burnett Award, which honors contributions to television. As previously announced, **Satchel and Jackson Lee**, children of filmmaker and three-time Golden Globe nominee **Spike Lee** and producer and philanthropist Tonya Lewis Lee, will serve as the 2021 Golden Globe Ambassadors.

BEST MOTION PICTURE - DRAMA

THE FATHER (Trademark Films; Sony Pictures Classics)
 MANK (Netflix; Netflix)
 NOMADLAND (Highwayman / Hear/Say / Cor Cordium; Searchlight Pictures)
 PROMISING YOUNG WOMAN (LuckyChap Entertainment / FilmNation Entertainment; Focus Features)
 THE TRIAL OF THE CHICAGO 7 (Marc Platt Productions / Dreamworks Pictures; Netflix)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTRESS IN A MOTION PICTURE - DRAMA

VIOLA DAVIS *MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM*
 ANDRA DAY *THE UNITED STATES VS. BILLIE HOLIDAY*
 VANESSA KIRBY *PIECES OF A WOMAN*
 FRANCES MCDORMAND *NOMADLAND*
 CAREY MULLIGAN *PROMISING YOUNG WOMAN*

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTOR IN A MOTION PICTURE - DRAMA

RIZ AHMED *SOUND OF METAL*
 CHADWICK BOSEMAN *MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM*
 ANTHONY HOPKINS *THE FATHER*
 GARY OLDMAN *MANK*
 TAHAR RAHIM *THE MAURITANIAN*

BEST MOTION PICTURE - MUSICAL OR COMEDY

BORAT SUBSEQUENT MOVIEFILM (Four By Two Films; Amazon Studios)
 HAMILTON (Walt Disney Pictures / RadicalMedia / 5000 Broadway Productions / NEVIS Productions / Old 320 Sycamore Pictures; Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures)
 MUSIC (Pineapple Lasagne Productions / Landay Entertainment; Vertical Entertainment / IMAX)
 PALM SPRINGS (Party Over Here / Limelight Productions; NEON / Hulu)
 THE PROM (Netflix / Dramatic Forces / Storykey Entertainment; Netflix)

BEST ORIGINAL SCORE - MOTION PICTURE

ALEXANDRE DESPLAT *THE MIDNIGHT SKY*
 LUDWIG GÖRANSSON *TENET*
 JAMES NEWTON HOWARD *NEWS OF THE WORLD*
 TRENT REZNR, ATTICUS ROSS *MANK*
 TRENT REZNR, ATTICUS ROSS, JON BATISTE *SOUL*

BEST ORIGINAL SONG - MOTION PICTURE

"FIGHT FOR YOU" – *JUDAS AND THE BLACK MESSIAH*
 Music by: H.E.R., Dernst Emile II
 Lyrics by: H.E.R., Tiara Thomas
 "HEAR MY VOICE" – *THE TRIAL OF THE CHICAGO 7*
 Music by: Daniel Pemberton
 Lyrics by: Daniel Pemberton, Celeste Waite
 "IO SÌ (SEEN)" – *THE LIFE AHEAD*
 Music by: Diane Warren
 Lyrics by: Diane Warren, Laura Pausini, Niccolò Agliardi
 "SPEAK NOW" – *ONE NIGHT IN MIAMI...*
 Music by: Leslie Odom Jr, Sam Ashworth
 Lyrics by: Leslie Odom Jr, Sam Ashworth
 "TIGRESS & TWEED" – *THE UNITED STATES VS. BILLIE HOLIDAY*
 Music by: Andra Day, Raphael Saadiq
 Lyrics by: Andra Day, Raphael Saadiq

BEST TELEVISION SERIES - DRAMA

THE CROWN - NETFLIX (Left Bank Pictures / Sony Pictures Television)
 LOVECRAFT COUNTRY - HBO (HBO / Afemme / Monkeypaw / Bad Robot / Warner Bros. Television)
 THE MANDALORIAN - DISNEY+ (Lucasfilm Ltd.)
 OZARK - NETFLIX (MRC Television)
 RATCHED - NETFLIX (Fox21 Television Studios)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTRESS IN A TELEVISION SERIES - DRAMA

OLIVIA COLMAN *THE CROWN*
 JODIE COMER *KILLING EVE*
 EMMA CORRIN *THE CROWN*
 LAURA LINNEY *OZARK*
 SARAH PAULSON *RATCHED*

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTRESS IN A MOTION PICTURE - MUSICAL OR COMEDY

MARIA BAKALOVA *BORAT SUBSEQUENT MOVIEFILM*
KATE HUDSON *MUSIC*
MICHELLE PFEIFFER *FRENCH EXIT*
ROSAMUND PIKE *I CARE A LOT*
ANYA TAYLOR-JOY *EMMA*

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTOR IN A MOTION PICTURE - MUSICAL OR COMEDY

SACHA BARON COHEN *BORAT SUBSEQUENT MOVIEFILM*
JAMES CORDEN *THE PROM*
LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA *HAMILTON*
DEV PATEL *THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD*
ANDY SAMBERG *PALM SPRINGS*

BEST MOTION PICTURE - ANIMATED

THE CROODS: A NEW AGE (DreamWorks Animation; Universal Pictures)
ONWARD (Walt Disney Pictures / Pixar Animation Studios; Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures)
OVER THE MOON (Netflix / Pearl Studio / Glen Keane Productions; Netflix)
SOUL (Walt Disney Pictures / Pixar Animation Studios; Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures)
WOLFWALKERS (Cartoon Saloon / Melusine; Apple / GKIDS)

BEST MOTION PICTURE - FOREIGN LANGUAGE

ANOTHER ROUND (DENMARK) (Zentropa Entertainments; Samuel Goldwyn Films)
LA LLORONA (GUATEMALA / FRANCE) (La Casa de Producción / Les Films du Volcan; Shudder)
THE LIFE AHEAD (ITALY) (Palomar; Netflix)
MINARI (USA) (Plan B; A24)
TWO OF US (FRANCE / USA) (Paprika Films; Magnolia Pictures)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE IN ANY MOTION PICTURE⁵

GLENN CLOSE *HILLBILLY ELEGY*
OLIVIA COLMAN *THE FATHER*
JODIE FOSTER *THE MAURITANIAN*
AMANDA SEYFRIED *MANK*
HELENA ZENGEL *NEWS OF THE WORLD*

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE IN ANY MOTION PICTURE

SACHA BARON COHEN *THE TRIAL OF THE CHICAGO 7*
DANIEL KALUUYA *JUDAS AND THE BLACK MESSIAH*
JARED LETO *THE LITTLE THINGS*
BILL MURRAY *ON THE ROCKS*
LESLIE ODOM JR. *ONE NIGHT IN MIAMI...*

BEST DIRECTOR - MOTION PICTURE

EMERALD FENNELL *PROMISING YOUNG WOMAN*
DAVID FINCHER *MANK*
REGINA KING *ONE NIGHT IN MIAMI...*
AARON SORKIN *THE TRIAL OF THE CHICAGO 7*

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTOR IN A TELEVISION SERIES - DRAMA

JASON BATEMAN *OZARK*
JOSH O'CONNOR *THE CROWN*
BOB ODENKIRK *BETTER CALL SAUL*
AL PACINO *HUNTERS*
MATTHEW RHYS *PERRY MASON*

BEST TELEVISION SERIES - MUSICAL OR COMEDY

EMILY IN PARIS - NETFLIX (Darren Star Productions / Jax Media / MTV Studios)
THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT - HBO MAX (HBO Max / Berlanti Productions / Yes, Norman Productions / Warner Bros. Television)
THE GREAT - HULU (Hulu / Civic Center Media / MRC)
SCHITT'S CREEK - POP TV (Not A Real Company Productions / Canadian Broadcast Company / Pop TV)
TED LASSO - APPLE TV+ (Apple / Doozer Productions / Warner Bros. Television / Universal Television)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTRESS IN A TELEVISION SERIES - MUSICAL OR COMEDY⁵

LILY COLLINS *EMILY IN PARIS*
KALEY CUOCO *THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT*
ELLE FANNING *THE GREAT*
JANE LEVY *ZOEY'S EXTRAORDINARY PLAYLIST*
CATHERINE O'HARA *SCHITT'S CREEK*

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTOR IN A TELEVISION SERIES - MUSICAL OR COMEDY

DON CHEADLE *BLACK MONDAY*
NICHOLAS HOULT *THE GREAT*
EUGENE LEVY *SCHITT'S CREEK*
JASON SUDEIKIS *TED LASSO*
RAMY YOUSSEF *RAMY*

BEST TELEVISION LIMITED SERIES, ANTHOLOGY SERIES OR MOTION PICTURE MADE FOR TELEVISION

NORMAL PEOPLE - HULU (Hulu / BBC / Element Pictures)
THE QUEEN'S GAMBIT - NETFLIX (Netflix)
SMALL AXE - AMAZON STUDIOS (BBC Studios Americas, Inc / Amazon Studios)
THE UNDOING - HBO (HBO / Made Up Stories / Blossom Films/David E. Kelley Productions)
UNORTHODOX - NETFLIX (Studio Airlift / RealFilm)

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTRESS IN A LIMITED SERIES, ANTHOLOGY SERIES OR A MOTION PICTURE MADE FOR TELEVISION

CATE BLANCHETT *MRS. AMERICA*
DAISY EDGAR-JONES *NORMAL PEOPLE*
SHIRA HAAS *UNORTHODOX*
NICOLE KIDMAN *THE UNDOING*
ANYA TAYLOR-JOY *THE QUEEN'S GAMBIT*

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTOR IN A LIMITED SERIES, ANTHOLOGY SERIES OR A MOTION PICTURE MADE FOR TELEVISION

CHLOÉ ZHAO *NOMADLAND*

BEST SCREENPLAY - MOTION PICTURE

EMERALD FENNEL *PROMISING YOUNG WOMAN*

JACK FINCHER *MANK*

AARON SORKIN *THE TRIAL OF THE CHICAGO 7*

FLORIAN ZELLER, CHRISTOPHER HAMPTON *THE FATHER*

CHLOÉ ZHAO *NOMADLAND*

BEST ORIGINAL SCORE - MOTION PICTURE

ALEXANDRE DESPLAT *THE MIDNIGHT SKY*

LUDWIG GÖRANSSON *TENET*

JAMES NEWTON HOWARD *NEWS OF THE WORLD*

TRENT REZNOR, ATTICUS ROSS *MANK*

TRENT REZNOR, ATTICUS ROSS, JON BATISTE *SOUL*

BRYAN CRANSTON *YOUR HONOR*

JEFF DANIELS *THE COMEY RULE*

HUGH GRANT *THE UNDOING*

ETHAN HAWKE *THE GOOD LORD BIRD*

MARK RUFFALO *I KNOW THIS MUCH IS TRUE*

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTRESS IN A TELEVISION SUPPORTING ROLE

GILLIAN ANDERSON *THE CROWN*

HELENA BONHAM CARTER *THE CROWN*

JULIA GARNER *OZARK*

ANNIE MURPHY *SCHITT'S CREEK*

CYNTHIA NIXON *RATCHED*

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTOR IN A TELEVISION SUPPORTING ROLE

JOHN BOYEGA *SMALL AXE*

BRENDAN GLEESON *THE COMEY RULE*

DANIEL LEVY *SCHITT'S CREEK*

JIM PARSONS *HOLLYWOOD*

DONALD SUTHERLAND *THE UNDOING*

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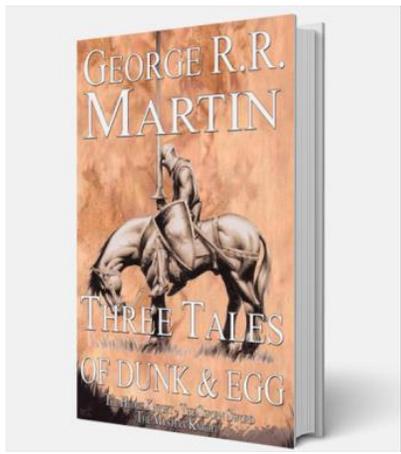
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'Game Of Thrones' Prequel Series 'Tales Of Dunk & Egg' In Works At HBO

From Deadline.com

HBO has put in development a series adaptation of *Tales of Dunk & Egg*, a prequel to *Game of Thrones*, based on George R.R. Martin's series of fantasy novellas. Set in the world of Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* on which *Game of Thrones* is based, the series would follow the adventures of Dunk (Ser Duncan the Tall) and Egg (the future king

Aegon V. Targaryen), some 90 years before the events of *A Song of Ice and Fire*, sources close to the project tell Deadline. The project is in very early development, and a writer has not been attached yet. HBO declined to comment. *Tales of Dunk & Egg* is one of a slew of *GoT*-universe projects that are floating around at HBO in various stages. The premium cabler has given a straight-to-series order to another *GoT* prequel series *House of the Dragon*, which is expected to debut in 2022.

House of the Dragon was the second *Game of Thrones* prequel to receive a green light, following a project written by Jane Goldman, which went to pilot starring Naomi Watts, but was not picked up to series. Martin has published three novellas — *The Hedge Knight* (1998), *The Sworn Sword* (2003), and *The Mystery Knight* (2010). The three novellas were published together in *A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms* on October 6, 2015.

Wakanda Series In Works For Disney+ - 'Black Panther' Helmer Ryan Coogler Stakes His Proximity Media Banner To 5-Year Exclusive Disney Television Deal

From Deadline.com

The Walt Disney Company has extended its relationship with *Black Panther* director and co-writer [Ryan Coogler](#). Disney has made a five-year overall exclusive television deal with Coogler's Proximity Media, which he runs with principals [Zinzi Coogler](#), [Sev Ohanian](#), Ludwig Göransson, [Archie Davis](#) and [Peter Nicks](#). Coogler, who is working on the *Black Panther* feature sequel he will direct this year, will develop new television series for the studio. The first one will delight *Black Panther* fans: a drama based in the Kingdom of Wakanda for Disney+. The deal also enables Proximity to develop television for other divisions of the Company. "Ryan Coogler is a singular storyteller whose vision and range have made him one of the standout filmmakers of his generation," said [Bob Iger](#), Executive Chairman, The Walt Disney Company. "With *Black Panther*, Ryan brought a groundbreaking story and iconic characters to life in a real, meaningful and memorable way, creating a watershed cultural moment. We're thrilled to strengthen our relationship and look forward to telling more great stories with Ryan and his team."

Said Coogler: "It's an honor to be partnering with The Walt Disney Company. Working with them on *Black Panther* was a dream come true. As avid consumers of television, we couldn't be happier to be launching our television business with Bob Iger, Dana Walden and all the amazing studios under the Disney umbrella. We look forward to learning, growing, and building a relationship with audiences all over the world through the Disney platforms. We are especially excited that we will be taking our first leap with Kevin Feige, Louis D'Esposito, Victoria Alonso and their partners at Marvel Studios where we will be working closely with them on select MCU shows for Disney+. We're already in the mix on some projects that we can't wait to share," stated Ryan Coogler on behalf of Proximity Media. "Coogler founded the multi-media company Proximity with Zinzi Coogler, Ohanian, Göransson, Davis and Nicks with a mission to create event-driven feature films, television, soundtracks and podcasts that look to bring audiences closer together through stories involving often-overlooked subject matters. Proximity intends to generate a wide variety of projects across all budget levels.

Coogler's rise to the Hollywood A-list has been meteoric. His debut came on the lauded *Fruitvale Station*, and he reunited with Michael B Jordan on *Creed*, after persuading Sylvester Stallone to allow him to revive his Rocky Balboa character and franchise. *Creed* has turned into a franchise of its own. Coogler then followed with *Black Panther*, a film that grossed north of \$1.3 billion globally, the most for a film by a Black filmmaker. It created a global zeitgeist groundswell and became the first superhero film to get a Best Picture Oscar nomination. Star Chadwick Boseman died last year, and Coogler and Disney are moving forward with a sequel he has written, one that will not recast another actor in that role.





For Your Bing Worth Pleasure!

Fate: The Winx Saga (Netflix) Season 1

Review by Allison Costa

Recently Netflix debuted Fate: The Winx Saga in live action. Although the Winx cartoon series has been out for on Nickelodeon for years, this is the first attempt at a live-action rendition showing Bloom's adjustment to the Otherworld. Now for me personally, I have never seen the cartoon series so I knew nothing about the origin of this season and therefore can't compare the love action to the cartoon. Maybe if you are a die hard fan of the cartoon series you might have some complaints, but for those of us that are novices to these characters and this world I thought it was really well done. It was a pleasant surprise when right now there aren't a lot of really great shows in the teenage drama series for fantasy.

Especially if you are a fan of the slightly cheesy genre of fantasy! Which I definitely am. Was a little reminiscent of The Vampire Academy series--its a highly underrated book series that was made into a movie. Fairies instead of Vampires of course, but similar elements of magic, teenagers and a special school for them all. The main actress who plays Bloom, Abigail Cowen, it's definitely a ringer for a young Lindsey Lohan and has her same charm and charisma. The chemistry between Bloom and Skye is very palpable and for the most part the casting was really good. Think Mean Girls meets Harry Potter as far as mixing magic, snark and action.



There were a few things I didn't love about the series, it has been called homophobic from other reviewers, but really, I feel it just sought to paint an accurate portrayal of how cruel and unaccepting teenagers can be--even magical teenagers. The plot was intriguing, and it had several plot twists, some predictable and some less predictable. I liked that there was magic, but that it wasn't completely trashy as some other magical series on Netflix have been. You come to care about the characters and realize that even though they are flawed they have redeeming characteristics. There are also only 6 episodes which means that the action builds quickly and there aren't a lot of down moments. The story moves fast and each episode is action packed. I am really excited for Season 2. If you hate CW type fantasy shows, then this definitely isn't for you. But if you are a fan of CW type fantasy and drama shows, then you will definitely love this.

It's a 9/10 (Great

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SEASON 2

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Stepan Keller



MARVEL STUDIOS

WandaVision

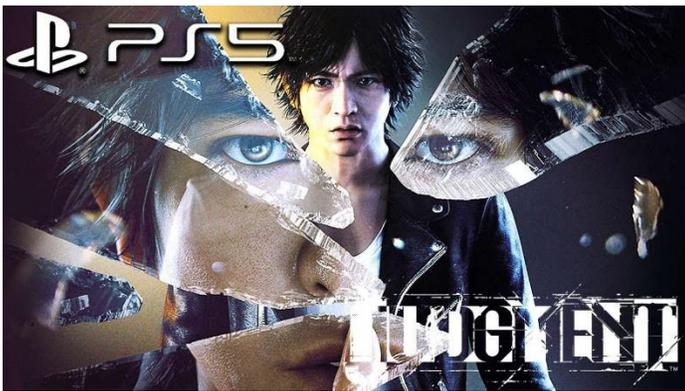


Original Series Streaming Jan. 15

GAMING NEWS



This week In Gaming...



Acclaimed Action Thriller Judgment Comes to Xbox Series X|S, PlayStation 5 and Google Stadia on **April 23**

SEGA and Ryu Ga Gotoku Studio are returning to the streets of Kamurocho, Tokyo, to present *Judgment's* tale of murder and mystery in remastered form on Xbox Series X|S, PlayStation 5 and Google Stadia on April 23 for \$39.99. *Judgment* takes advantage of the new hardware with refined visuals in 60 frames per second along with improved load times and includes all previously released DLC on these three

platforms. Praised as 'the best crime drama not on TV' by the Hollywood Reporter, *Judgment* was originally released on PlayStation 4 in 2019. The remastered *Judgment* marks the gritty tale's debut on Xbox and Stadia. Investigate the new trailer here:

Judgment is an action thriller that puts players in the shoes of Takayuki Yagami, disgraced attorney turned rugged private detective, as he uncovers the mystery behind a grisly series of murders. Joined by his partner, ex-yazuka Masaharu Kaito, Yagami must claw his way through Kamurocho's criminal underground to unravel the truth - as painful as it may be. In addition to locale, *Judgment* takes on the classic hallmarks of the *Yakuza* series through the eyes of Yagami. Fans will recognize rough-and-tumble street fights, engrossing side missions with locals, and comedy breaks with mini-games. *Judgment* ups the ante with emphasis on investigative gameplay tracking suspects and discovering clues as Yagami walks the thin line of justice in a world of corruption. Packed with a thrilling story, filmic combat and a cast of intense characters, *Judgment* will keep all aspiring private detectives on their toes.

Direkter Link zum SEGA-Presseserver: www.sega-press.com SEGA Europe Ltd. Gehört zur japanischen SEGA Corporation, einem der weltweit größten Anbieter interaktiver Unterhaltung für den Heim- und Spielhallenbereich. SEGA entwickelt und vertreibt interaktive Unterhaltungs-Software für eine Vielzahl von Plattformen, darunter PC, Handhelds und Spielkonsolen von Nintendo, Microsoft und Sony Computer Entertainment. Weitere Informationen befinden sich auf der Website von SEGA Europe Ltd. unter: www.sega-europe.com

TEAM17 REWINDS TO THE 1980s WITH MYSTICAL TECHNO ADVENTURE **NARITA BOY**

Studio Koba's debut title arms players with the Techno-Sword and whisks them away to the Digital Kingdom later this spring on PC and consoles. Team17 and Studio Koba have revealed the international games label is joining forces to publish the Spanish studio's debut title, *Narita Boy*. The side-scrolling mystical techno-tale, which will release this spring on Steam, Nintendo Switch™,

PlayStation 4, and Xbox One - including on release day with Xbox Game Pass for PC and Console - is a heart-felt love story to the 1980s, featuring a narrative-driven adventure that takes players to a game inside a game, battling powerful bosses and overcoming puzzles in order to uncover the secrets of the Digital Kingdom and - ultimately - its creator. *Narita Boy* puts players in the shoes of the eponymous digital warrior chosen to wield the Techno-Sword, a legendary weapon capable of defeating fearsome foes in melee or from afar as it instantly transforms into a shotgun or devastating laser beam. By using this new weapon and with the help of the Motherboard, the spiritual leader of the Digital Kingdom, players will face corrupted enemies and hulking bosses to save the electronic synthwave world from the invading Stallions, a group of rogue code bent on forced rule and subjugation. During the journey, players will also explore the memories of the creator that reveals his story, from his early years in Japan, to his creation of - and connection with - the Digital Kingdom.

Key Features: **Go back to the future:** A homage to the eighties with a new spin on classic gameplay styles, *Narita Boy* takes players back in time for blast from the past **You have the power!:** The Techno-Sword can be used alongside mysterious magic so that players can carve and blast their way through enemies great and small.... **Might as well jump:** The classic 2D platformer will see players explore imaginative landscapes and navigate a plethora of pixel art environments... **Pixel-perfect story:** Encounter weird and wonderful digitised characters on a journey to discover the secrets of the Digital Kingdom and its elusive creator.... **Pump up the jam:** Inspired by the glory days of analogue synthesizers, the pumping soundtrack turns back the clock for this techno-journey. *Narita Boy* came to the attention of Team17's indie games label following Studio Koba's successful Kickstarter campaign that saw over 5,000 people back the game, leading to it smash stretch goals. **Narita Boy powers Saving The Arcade World** Today also sees the launch of the Saving The Arcade World, a campaign powered by *Narita Boy* and created to raise awareness of the plight facing arcade games and arcade amusements. Team17 is partnering with The Strong: National Museum of Play in Rochester, New York, The National Videogame Museum in the UK, and Arcade Vintage: Museo del Videojuego in Spain, to ensure this distinct and important part of video games history is protected and preserved. Further information on #SavingTheArcadeWorld is available from www.team17.com.



Destruction AllStars, Control: Ultimate Edition, and Concrete Genie are your PlayStation Plus games for February



This month's PlayStation Plus lineup is all about creativity. Dazzle the crowds with creative chaos as you run, ram, and slam in the vehicular combat of Destruction AllStars, showcase your artistic side with some magical portraiture in Concrete Genie and get inventive with supernatural abilities in order to save your skin in Control. Destruction AllStars is also the focus of a new State of Play that showcases the game in all its glory. This deep dive, which you watch below, will equip you with all you need to know to leap into the arena come Tuesday, February 2 when the game launches into PlayStation Plus alongside Control: Ultimate Edition and Concrete Genie.

Let's take a closer look at the games...

Destruction AllStars (PS5)



Entertain the crowds by bringing controlled chaos to the vehicular combat arena of this metal-crunching multiplayer game*. Pick one of 16 superstar competitors, then leap into four game modes, using timing, tactics and skills to cause carnage behind the wheel or create havoc with your parkour skills. Perfect your character's abilities - including a hero vehicle unique to them - to give you the edge in free-for-all battles or team challenges and become Global Destruction Federation Champion. The game also supports PS5's Game Help feature**, giving you hints and tips to become the ultimate destructive machine without the need to leave the game.

Control: Ultimate Edition (PS5 and PS4)

Master supernatural abilities and wield a shape-shifting sidearm in this third-person action-adventure from Remedy Entertainment (Max Payne, Alan Wake). Take on the role of Jesse Faden, Director of the Federal Bureau of Control, whose New York headquarters are breached by an ominous enemy. Despite outward appearances, the skyscraper's interior is vast and ever-shifting. You'll need to explore - and weaponize - this unpredictable environment to clean house and repel the invaders. The Ultimate Edition includes the base game as well as The Foundation and AWE expansions. And on PS5 console, use the console's Game Help feature** for hints and walkthroughs to help you solve puzzles and overcome challenges as you explore the Oldest House.



Concrete Genie (PS4)



Pick up a magic paintbrush and return the polluted town of Denska to its former bright and bustling seaside self in this touching and multi-award winning action-adventure. Cleanse streets and alleyways, then use your Living Paint to create mischievous Genies whose magical powers will aid you in overcoming puzzles and seeing off bullies who pursue you. The game also includes two additional modes built especially for PS VR to let you further unleash your creativity***.

Destruction AllStars is available on PlayStation Plus until Monday, April 5. Control: Ultimate Edition and Concrete Genie are available until Monday, March 1....

New Games with Xbox Gold for February 2021 Featuring Gears 5 and More!



The February Games with Gold lineup is here! On Xbox Series X|S and Xbox One, experience one of gaming's most acclaimed sagas in *Gears 5*, survive against the living dead in the horror-thriller title that started it all with *Resident Evil*, and experience the gorgeous and imaginative world of Salt in the action-adventure platformer *Dandara: Trials of Fear Edition*.

And for our classic lineup via Backward Compatibility, crack your whip and get ready to explore in *Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb*, and return to the troubled world of E.D.N III in the action-shooter, *Lost Planet 2*. Xbox Live Gold members will have exclusive access to these games for a limited time as part of Games with Gold. Xbox Game Pass Ultimate members will also receive all the fantastic benefits of Gold plus access to over 100 high-quality games with Xbox Game Pass.



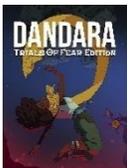
Gears 5

Experience the celebrated campaign and multiplayer, now fully optimized for Xbox Series X|S. With all-out war descending, Kait Diaz breaks away to uncover her connection to the enemy and discovers the true danger to Sera... herself.



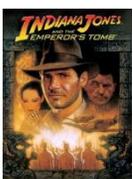
Resident Evil

It's the game that defined the genre. In this remastered version, join the special forces team, S.T.A.R.S., and investigate a mysterious mansion on the outskirts of Raccoon City. Stay alert because supplies are scarce, and the living dead are all around.



Dandara: Trials of Fear Edition

Discover secrets, dangers, and an array of unique characters in the world of Salt. In this metroidvania-style platformer, a heroine arises out of the aether of fear to help a world on the brink of collapse. Featuring stunning handcrafted pixel art and original soundtrack compositions that bring a visual and auditory wonderland to life.



Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb

It's time to put on your fedora and help Indy recover one of the most powerful artifacts known to man. In epic, globe-spanning fashion, take on Nazis and the Asian underworld to track down the mysterious Heart of the Dragon before it falls into hostile hands.



Lost Planet 2

After 10 years removed from the original title, return to the troubled planet torn apart from the ongoing battle for thermal energy. Play four player co-op and customize your character with an arsenal of weapons and vehicles to pilot.

Read more about our Games with Gold program here and stay tuned to Xbox Wire for all the latest news on Xbox. Like we said before, if you're an Xbox Game Pass Ultimate member, you get all the benefits of Xbox Live Gold, over 100 high-quality games you can play on console, PC, and Android devices with cloud gaming (Beta, where available), and access to EA Play at no extra cost. New games are added all the time, so you're never without something new to play when you're looking to find your next favorite game. If you're new, or if you're an existing Xbox Live Gold and Xbox Game Pass for Console member, join or upgrade today for just \$1

A MESSAGE FROM THE SQUAD LEADER



It's All in... Say Hips Again, I F'kin Dare You.

Gamer Rants, Insults, and Anger...

By K. Scott Cooper

Greetings and Welcome back Nerdy Gamer, I salute you. Keeping in time with last month's topic, we are focusing on You in the Youniverse of squad gaming. Last time I brought up several points about general things you can do to improve your mindset to begin improving your team structure. You are still the topic today, so saddle up buttercup we are going for the feels!

POINT 1: How to Deal with Your Anger!

Keep it zipped or pack your shit- games get insane sometimes and we all know that sometimes in certain games there comes a time where it doesn't matter what you do, the game just slams you like a 20 car pile-up with fuel truck and a bus load of nuns. You and your team get pissed as you should, but don't let it come to a case of the "angries" with your mates. We all know that one stray comment can turn a fun time into a scream feast of mothers doing all sorts of unethical things, so take a break and keep it directed at the situation. But there may come a time where "You" as the squad leader may have to break up something that breaks out hot fast and in a hurry, best thing to do in the situation is defuse it as quickly as possible. This is where snack breaks come into play, take five minutes to grab some nibbles, take in a stretch or a smoke to get the body all loosie goosy and let those angry feels turn into a magnificently refined hatred shiv that you will then use to rib tickle the unholy pleasure of a good old fashioned prison style blood- letting onto the game and your team's enemies. At NO POINT does snappy words travel past your lips with your team, when it does happen and trust me it will, remind yourself and your team that every needs to take a breath. You are better than the angry little rage goblin that lives deep inside you, nurture it, feed it, make it your friend, but never let it drive the meat suit.

POINT 2: How to Properly Rant!

Rants are like family sized peanut M&Ms- if you are like me ranting is in your DNA and when you get all worked up something awful as my Grandfather used to say, nothing makes a situation worse like the wrong kinda rant or one that's too long. You don't just open your mouth and dump the whole family size in because that's how you lose a foot, in the gaming case it how you lose mates. Rants should be colorful, slightly crunchy (being verbal meanie without offending people.), and something the whole squad can relate to in the game. Every gamer has had the experience in online play of the one weapon in the game that is just too much and how there is always some human trash pile that abuses it, it makes you angry and your mates angry and you have ever right to be! This is the source of the rant and it should only branch off in the small of ways, at no point should your rant begin to besmirch anything other than the conduct displayed in the game. Calling the player, a lanterned jawed F@\$k that goes weak in the knees for objects that bear a striking resemblance to the reproductive parts of male blue footed boobies because his play style is equally as weak, perfectly fine as long as it stays in that wheelhouse. All that toxic shit of calling people sexual slurs or racial slurs is not shock value humor to be thrown around like the old shit filled bag that it is and should be the first thing every good squad leader enforces straight away. Your mates don't want to be mindful and observant of this standard, find a new friend and don't think twice about cutting their dead weight loose for the betterment of the squad, YOU ARE BETTER THAN THAT!

POINT 3: Beware of Your Insults!

You know nothing of the Crunch- It will happen, and you will find yourself in a situation where you have to go toe to toe one the verbal battlefield with a low browed shit nose with a slack ass as mentioned above, this is where a little something I like to call the "Crunch" comes into play. Being crunchy is verbally destroying your foe and not playing into the situation or become just as equally closed minded, letting that happens just means you really got it wrong. Your crunch should focus on the simplest task of using the other persons words against them and highlight how ignorant their viewpoint is. For example, let's say that you and your mates are playing some shootie bang bang, when out of nowhere QAnon2020 calls you a "fag@@t" for some reason only known to him and you have decided today is the day. Start with the simple tactic of Q&I- Question & Insult, ask them what its like have the rectal tumor of a deformed lab rat for a brain or which truck stop hooker they shortchanged to buy the game, leaving an opening your squad mates to join in on the fun IE by stating a collection should be taken up for said hooker. This directly confronts the issue, establishes that it isn't allowed, and also does the wonder of disrupting your foes train of thought while brining the squad together in that warm fuzzy after school special kind of way.

Well, ringa ding ding Nerdy Gamers they are playing my song and that means you cats have been the haps, that's my time. Join us for more topics, tips, and dives into what makes for good squad play. Want to work on your crunch game, fire me your comments, questions, or concerns to get sorted out proper. More in-depth convos to come and looking forward to hearing from you Nerdy Gamer.

Until then... Stay Safe, Stay Crazy, and Stay Easy.



**TASTE,
THAT'S WHY.**

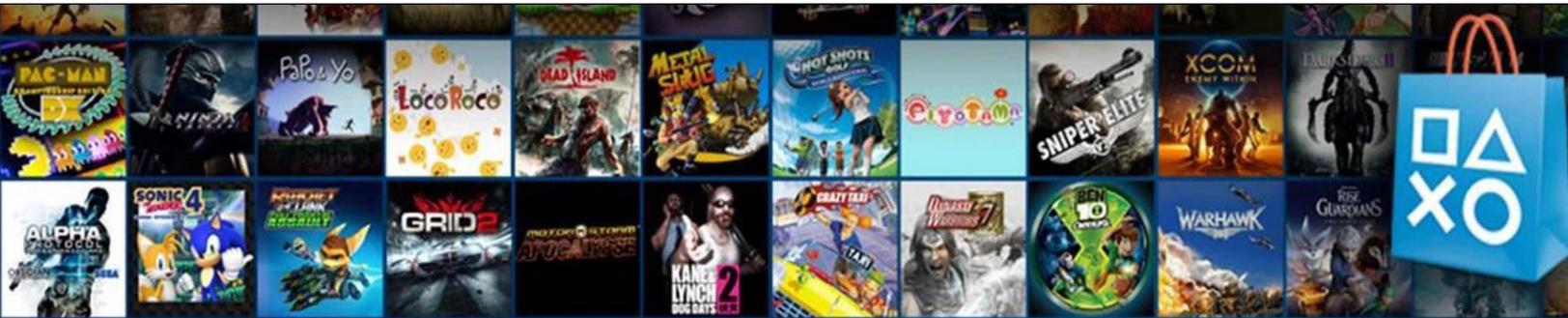
GAME RELEASES FOR FEBRUARY 2021

VIDEO GAME	COMPANY	FORMAT	RELEASE DATE
Space Farmers 2	Bumpkin Brothers	PC	01/02/2021
The Captain is Dead	Thunderbox Entertainment	Lin, Mac, PC	01/02/2021
Valheim	Coffee Stain Studios	Lin, PC	02/02/2021 (Early access)
Habroxia 2	eastasiasoft	NS, PC, PS4, XO	03/02/2021
Conarium	Iceberg Interactive	NS	04/02/2021
Football Cup 2021	7LEVELS	NS	04/02/2021
Haven	The Game Bakers	NS, PC, PS4	04/02/2021
NUTS	Noodlecake Studios	iOS, NS, PC	04/02/2021
Odysseus Kosmos and his Robot Quest	HeroCraft	NS	04/02/2021
Skyforge	MY.GAMES	NS	04/02/2021
Werewolf: The Apocalypse - Earthblood	Nacon	PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	04/02/2021
Arrog	Nakana.io	PS4, PS5	05/02/2021
Kinetic Edge	SeaCorp	PC	05/02/2021
Nioh 2 - The Complete Edition	KOEI TECMO EUROPE LTD	PC	05/02/2021

VIDEO GAME	COMPANY	FORMAT	RELEASE DATE
Nioh 2 Complete Edition	KOEI TECMO	PC	05/02/2021
YS IX: Monstrum Nox	NIS America	PS4	05/02/2021
Cat Colony Crisis	Devil's Cider Games	An, iOS, PC	09/02/2021
Hero-U: Rogue to Redemption	Transolar	NS	09/02/2021
Reset Earth	United Nations Ozone Secretariat	An, iOS	10/02/2021
The Last Shot	Crytivo	PC	10/02/2021
Aground	Fancy Fish Games	NS, PS4, Web, XO	11/02/2021
Death Crown	Badland Publishing	NS, PS4, XO	11/02/2021
Little Nightmares II	Bandai Namco	NS, PC, PS4, XO	11/02/2021
Potentia	Wily Pumpkin	PC	11/02/2021
Ultimate ADOM: Caverns of Chaos	Assemble Entertainment	Lin, Mac, PC	11/02/2021
Gal*Gun Returns	PQube	NS, PC, XO	12/02/2021
Good Night, Knight	No Gravity Games	PC	16/02/2021 (Early access)
30XX	Batterystaple Games	PC	17/02/2021 (Early access)
Learning Factory	Luden.io	PC	18/02/2021 (Early access)

VIDEO GAME	COMPANY	FORMAT	RELEASE DATE
Rustler	Games Operators	PC	18/02/2021 (Early access)
Silence Channel	Lexip Games	PC	18/02/2021
Far Cry 6	Ubisoft	PC, PS4, PS5, Stad, XO, XSX	21/02/2021
Curse of the Dead Gods	Focus Home Interactive	PC	23/02/2021
Persona 5 Strikers	ATLUS	NS, PS4	23/02/2021
Taxi Chaos	Lion Castle	NS, PS4, XO	23/02/2021
Code: Realize ~Wintertide Miracles~	Aksys	NS	25/02/2021
Ghosts 'n Goblins Resurrection	Capcom	NS	25/02/2021
Hellpoint	tinyBuildGAMES	NS	25/02/2021
Lust from Beyond	Movie Games	PC	25/02/2021
Riders Republic	Ubisoft	PC, PS4, PS5, Stad, XO, XSX	25/02/2021
Wing of Darkness	UNTIES	NS, PC, PS4	25/02/2021
Pixel Puzzles Illustrations & Anime	Kiss Publishing Limited (KPL)	PC	26/02/2021
Almost My Floor	Potata Company	PC	Feb 2021
Azur Lane: Crosswave	Idea Factory	NS	Feb 2021

VIDEO GAME	COMPANY	FORMAT	RELEASE DATE
Capcom Arcade Stadium	Capcom	NS	Feb 2021
DOTORI	CFK	NS, PC	Feb 2021
Gem Wizards Tactics	Keith Burgun Games	PC	Feb 2021
Glam	Three Legged Egg	NS, PC	Feb 2021
Guardian of Lore	Round2Games	PC	Feb 2021
Scarlet Hood and the Wicked Wood	Headup	Lin, Mac, PC	Feb 2021 (Early access)



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Stepan Keller

The

INTERD

Opinion

RUN: The Most Underrated Movie of 2020 and You Probably Haven't Seen It, But Why You Should

By Danielle Butler



One of the most underrated movies of 2020 and it's right there on Hulu. The film *Run*, a Hulu original that was largely forgotten, but shouldn't be for many reasons. This movie was intense. You can expect it to get more intense the longer you watch. It was hard to watch but hard to look away. The movie starts out showing all of the medical conditions and diseases of Chole the teenage daughter (Kiera Allen) of a single mom (Sarah Paulsen). I quickly learned on top of all of the challenges brought on by this girl's disabilities and health issues and we also learned of how isolated they are, this girl and her mother. This teenage girl is homeschooled, so she doesn't appear to have classmates, friends, or other family members. Heck, there aren't even any neighbors as they live on quite a bit of land in a small town. We learn about 20-30 minutes into the movie that the internet is restricted. Do agree the stakes are high for a movie where the title is "Run?" Me too. I thought the director did a great job of revealing information at just the right time.

It became increasingly clear that the mother appears to be a Munchausen and not have the daughter's best interests at heart. Despite the progression of gaslighting, the timing of the film was perfect in keeping the audience on the seat as Sarah Paulsen's character revealing little by little how desperate she is to control her daughter and her health or should I say medications. Clearly, in the 21st century, not having internet even for homework for a teenager is

practically unheard of and seems like cruel and unusual punishment until you witness and unearthing of just how low this mother goes. For reasons, that were never justified in my book, but I don't want to spoil everything.

I will say, I was not shocked by the very ending or by the actions of the character Chole. It was nice to see how she handled things and I was satisfied with the ending. I found this movie very hard to watch but it ended up being a great thriller. The performances by Sarah Paulsen and Kiera Allen were incredible, especially Kiera Allen since this is the first time an actor with handicap disabilities was one of the lead actors. The scenes with the mother and daughter together were the most intense, but well-orchestrated by the actors. Original movies on streaming services can be hit or miss, most are B-quality movies and that's why they end up on streaming services. *Run* is not one of those movies and you won't be disappointed if you watch it. *Run* is a good example of why Hulu has some really good original films and why this streaming service is worth having more than just to catch up on TV shows.





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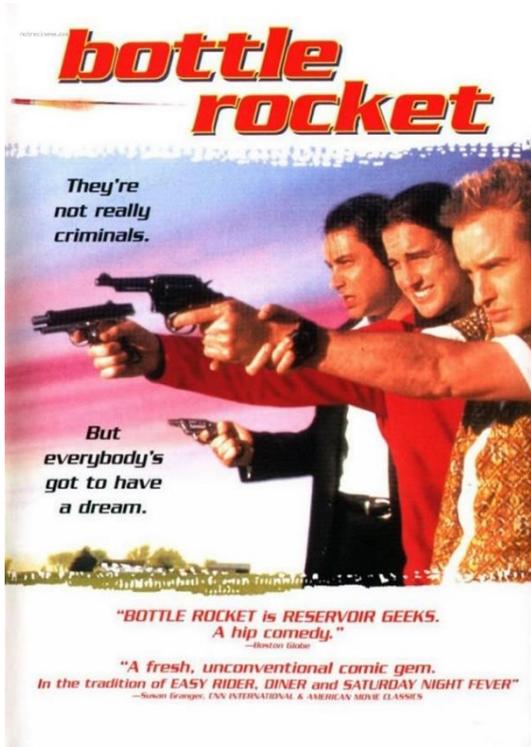
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Bottle Rocket: 25 Years Later...

Remembering One of the Best Indie Films from Dallas

By Alex Moore



We all have starting points. That's a part of life. Points in our life that will define who we are and what we do. If you're from Dallas, like me, you were born, you started school here, and then you may have embarked on a writing and broadcasting career. It's just an example. But filmmakers have a different kind of starting point that are often defined by the place they shoot their first film. For another individual, going by the name of Wes Anderson, a crucial starting point began in this same city, sometime in 1995 or so. He invited along a few local actors and some buddies from college, plus a prominent, big screen legend of days gone by. Seconds into the finished project, which came in 1996, the title was unveiled: *Bottle Rocket*, complete with the appropriate sound effects of the titular reference. It was based on a short film by the same name, a couple of years prior.

There was nothing outstanding about the movie in terms of its cinematography or storyline. As I have pointed out so many times before, the strength of a low-budget film tends to be in its characters, rather than its plot and *Bottle Rocket* is no different. The unlikely love story is charming and the relationship between two, average individuals and their laughable goals for the short term (and the long term) are a joy to watch, in all its silliness and insanity.

Surely, no one could have expected that the movie would become such an important piece of work and be remembered so fondly all these years later, but here I sit, recounting the happy memories and giving the film its props for being an example of one that can stand the test of time, mainly because it is not relying on special effects or a unique style, as far as how it looks on screen. The director, himself, had not really developed his hallmark approach at this stage, but, still, you can see small details that would go on to become a mainstay. It is in the writing and the dialogue. It was something original and organic that relied on a combination of what was in the script and what was not in the script, which was co-written by Owen Wilson.

Despite the commercial "failure" in its day, fans of the movie have not only followed the continued efforts and success of its band of filmmakers, but have, also, adopted it as a slice of modern Texas movie lore. Even the great Martin Scorsese praised it as one of his personal, all-time favorite movies. I would likely consider trading in every last ticket sale for a positive affirmation, such as that one... almost! Thankfully, it was not the end of the line, but merely the start of something grand, no pun intended. As prospective audience members, we should never shun a work of art, no matter how small, because what you are watching might very well be the next *Bottle Rocket*... perhaps? We will find out in another 25 years.



Interview with Jenni Tooley: “Stacy Sinclair” from Bottle Rocket



Why do you think Bottle rocket has stood the test of time and is considered one of the best comedies of the 90’s?

It’s honest and simple. I believe it’s one of Wes Anderson’s best films. Yes the rest are amazing but they are so controlled and perfect. Because of its budget and as a first film, Bottle Rocket couldn’t be that so it has a lot more humanity to it. These guys are just being guys. They’re trying. They’re working within the limitations/world that they know. They’re losing. They’re taking the consequences. And there’s still some sense of hope and humor there.

How did you get cast in the film?

This was one of my first auditions ever. My agent called me to audition – I looked at the title “Bottle Rocket” and my boyfriend’s name “Future Man” and immediately thought it was going to be one of those over-the-top projects that were so popular at the time. Little did I know. I went in with a really big character. They thanked me and a few biting nail days or weeks later I was booked! Yay! When we shot the scene, I did my big theater-style read and Wes paused and quietly asked me “Could you bring that down a little?” I laugh when I

think about that moment. I later learned that I was their THIRD CHOICE! Two other women had been booked before me but had had conflicts. A good reminder that you just never know what might happen.

It’s the first time that we’re introduced to the Wilson brothers, what was your experience acting with them?

My experience was very brief with them. I had no prep time with them for the scene- we just did a quick rehearsal onset and shot it. I spent more time chatting with Andrew because of the weather and learned a lot about how Bottle Rocket got to be produced and about the industry.

What is your impression of your character, Stacy and has it changed over the last 25 years?

For quite some time I was known as the “You’re really complicated, aren’t you?” girl. People would walk up to me and say the line. It has been quoted in journals and magazines and is on a list of one of the most remember lines from movies. That fascinates me. And it’s kind of funny because I’ve turned it around and taken the power back. When fans and friends use it on me now my response is: “Yes I am.” I did not think too highly of Stacy Sinclair at the time- but it wasn’t my job to do that. She absolutely represented that type of girl from that era. I knew those girls. I wasn’t one of them though- when wardrobe put me in a pink sweater and penny loafers I was like...pink???? As a woman of a certain age, I look back on her fondly, sadly, and with compassion. I see a lot of my young self in her when it comes to some of our shared traits of low self-esteem and putting someone else’s power first. I wish that Stacy Sinclair had had enough self-esteem and strength to walk away from those guys and the choices she was making but that was her journey and she had to take it.



As a young actress starting out, what did you learn from your experience being in the film, Bottle Rocket?

This was my second film. I had no training. I was so naive and it was obvious I had no idea what I was doing! But it was fun. Meeting Polly Platt was fun. I am a consummate learner- I soak up experiences and am always watching and asking questions so I learned a lot about how a film gets developed and produced. I also learned that sometimes I needed to trust my agent more than myself (I was double-booked for the re-shoot and really wanted to do my friend’s film instead. Ivett said to me in her gravelly voice “Honey, you need to do Bottle Rocket. That movie is going to go somewhere and get you some exposure. The other one won’t.” She was right. Bottle Rocket is still recognizable enough that I was able to use it and Boyhood as leverage to get my first feature made. Film lovers love Bottle Rocket.

FUN FACT: Here’s a little insider about the scene that you may not know – that scene was supposed to be shot at night. But it poured rain all night long. Andrew Wilson and I took down the divider in the honey wagon and sat and chatted until they finally cancelled the shoot. The reshoot could only be schedule for the day time. Changes up the story a bit, eh? Listen to more about Jenni Tooley being in Bottle Rocket on her Podcast at <https://jennitooley.com/podcast>

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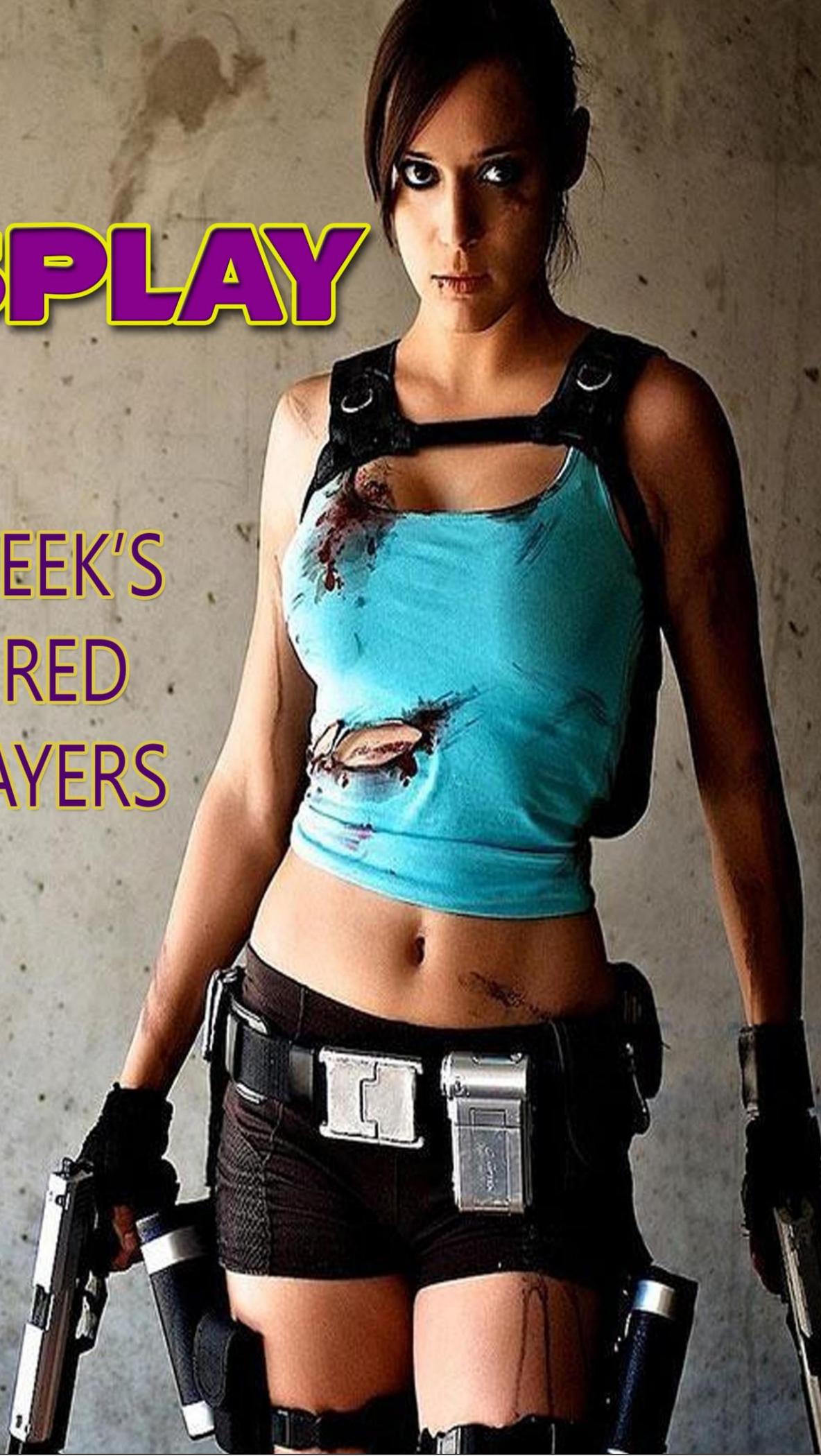
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Tesla Isley

Isley Cosplay



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Mara Jade - Star Wars
Photographer: Alan Tijerina

ABOUT ISLEY COSPLAY: Tesla Isley is a North Texas Cosplayer who loves all things nerd and geek! A cosplayer with a variety of looks from Stars Wars to comic book characters to horror, Tesla is multidimensional when it comes to cosplay. She is one of the best Poison Ivy's on the cosplay scene with 20 different looks just for the character and as a Botanist by trade, she has better insight into the character's persona more than most. Tesla is also a writer at Sharemycosplay.com, sharing fantastic tips and ideas about Cosplay. You check out what she has to say on their website. As an avid gamer, Tesla can be found on Twitch schooling other gamers in Fortnite or playing the latest Star Wars game like Jedi Fallen Order. You can see her awesome cosplay as a Star Wars fan favorite, Mara Jade. Tesla Isley is one of the most renowned cosplayers in Texas and can find her at comic and fan conventions.

~ INTERVIEW ~

How did you get into cosplay?

My mother is a costume designer, so I grew around the theater and was constantly trying on costumes or getting my mom to make me ones. After my first convention I was hooked and started making my own costumes and really getting into cosplay as an art.

Who is your favorite character to cosplay and why?

Poison Ivy! I think I have over 20 variations of Ivy. I am a botanist by trade so it just kind of fits to want to cosplay her. I love that fact that she is such a unique character in that she can be a hero, villain, or anti-hero. There are also so many renditions of her that I don't think I will ever run out of cosplay source material.

What tips do you have on making a costume?

Learn from others. I can guarantee you that someone out there has tried to make what you are building and has posted a fantastic tutorial online. Even if it's not exactly what you are building you can always find something helpful from another cosplayer, seamstress, prop builder, etc. Knowledge is power and the more skills you can pick up as you go the easier your cosplay creations will be moving forward. You also don't have to know EVERYTHING! If something doesn't work out don't dwell on it, start thinking of other ways that you can achieve your goal.

What is your favorite memory of being a cosplayer?

I think my favorite memory is just having fun with all my friends. Whether it be karaoke singing 'Bad Romance' dressed as Pennywise the clown or having a dance off as Spider-Woman, the cosplay community is definitely what makes the memories.

What advice do you have for fans getting into cosplay?

Don't stress about your cosplay being perfect. You have plenty of time to perfect it and I can bet no one is going to notice that ~one~ thing that you are stressing about. They're going to be in awe of your creation.

What Game got you into playing Video Games

Spyro the Dragon! That was probably the first game I got as a kid on the Playstation 1 and I would play it to 100% every time! After that I really started getting into more fps and RPGs in college.

What is your go-to game as an adult?

I am obsessed with the Borderlands series and Red Dead Redemption 2. I feel like I could play those games for weeks on end. (I'm still trying to get 100% on all challenges in RDR2)

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

If we're going simple, probably telekinesis or shapeshifting. Who's to say I'm not the evil one though ;)



Pennywise - IT

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“Where did I park my car?”

Brain Stimulation Improves Mental Time Travel



You might remember you ate cereal for breakfast but forget the color of the bowl. Or recall watching your partner put the milk away but can't remember on which shelf.

A new Northwestern Medicine study improved memory of complex, realistic events similar to these by applying transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) to the brain network responsible for memory. The authors then had participants watch videos of realistic activities to measure how memory works during

everyday tasks. The findings prove it is possible to measure and manipulate realistic types of memory. "On a day-to-day basis we must remember complex events that involve many elements, such as different locations, people and objects," said lead author Melissa Hebscher, a postdoctoral fellow at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. "We were able to show that memory for complex, realistic events can be improved in a safe and non-invasive way using brain stimulation. "The study was conducted on healthy young adults in a controlled laboratory setting. These methods, however, also could eventually be used to improve memory in individuals with memory disorders due to brain damage or neurological disorders, Hebscher said. The study will be published Feb. 4 in the journal *Current Biology*. **A new approach to studying memory: Incorporating video.** The study authors used TMS with the goal of altering brain activity and memory for realistic events. Immediately following stimulation, subjects performed a memory task while having their brains scanned using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). Instead of showing study participants pictures or lists of words -- typical practices in laboratory tests that analyze memory -- participants in this study watched videos of everyday activities such as someone folding laundry or taking out the garbage. "Our study used video clips that more closely replicate how memory works on a day-to-day basis," Hebscher said. Following stimulation, study participants more accurately answered questions about the content of the video clips, such as identifying the shirt color an actor was wearing or the presence of a tree in the background.

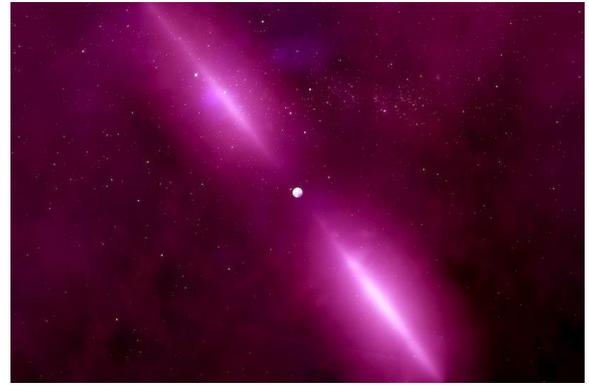
Additionally, the study found that brain stimulation led to higher quality reinstatement of memories in the brain. Reinstatement is when the brain replays or relives an original event, Hebscher said. Following stimulation, a person's brain activity while watching a video more closely resembled their brain activity when remembering that same video.

"This is why remembering can sometimes feel like 'mental time travel,'" Hebscher said. "Our findings show that stimulation enhances this 'mental time travel' in the brain and improves memory accuracy. These findings have implications for the development of safe and effective ways to improve real-world memory."

How the study worked: The study authors used a brain imaging technique called multi-voxel pattern analysis to compare patterns of brain activity when subjects were watching a video to brain activity when subjects were remembering that same video. The scientists measured the effect of stimulation by comparing memory and brain activity following stimulation of the memory network to the same measures following stimulation of a control brain region that does not belong to the memory network. During the memory test, subjects watched a large set of video clips and later remembered them and answered true/false questions about the content of the videos. The researchers found that memory network stimulation improved the number of questions that subjects answered correctly. It also increased reinstatement of videos in brain regions associated with visual processing. "Follow-up studies will work to gather more reliable measures of the brain network responsible for memory in healthy subjects as well as in patients with memory disorders," Hebscher said. "Having a more reliable measurement of this network will help us more easily identify reinstatement in the brain and may help improve the effectiveness of stimulation for enhancing memory. "The senior author is Joel Voss, associate professor of medical social sciences, neurology and psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Feinberg. Other Northwestern authors include Thorsten Kahnt, assistant professor of neurology at Feinberg, and postdoctoral fellow James E. Kragel. This research was supported by grant R01- MH106512 from the National Institute of Mental Health.

Story Source: Materials provided by [Northwestern University](#). Original written by Kristin Samuelson. *Note: Content may be edited for style and length.*

True Identity of Mysterious Gamma-Ray Source Revealed



An international research team including members from The University of Manchester has shown that a rapidly rotating neutron star is at the core of a celestial object now known as PSR J2039-5617.

The international collaboration used novel data analysis methods and the enormous computing power of the citizen science project Einstein@Home to track down the neutron star's faint gamma-ray pulsations in data from NASA's Fermi Space Telescope. Their results show that the pulsar is in orbit with a stellar companion about a sixth of the mass of our Sun. The pulsar is slowly but surely evaporating this star. The team also found that the companion's orbit varies slightly and unpredictably over time. Using their search method, they expect to find more such systems with Einstein@Home in the future. Searching for the so-called 'Spider' pulsar systems -- rapidly spinning neutron stars whose high-energy outflows are destroying their binary companion star, required 10 years of precise data. The pulsars have been given arachnid names of 'Black widows' or 'Redbacks', after species of spider where the females have been seen to kill the smaller males after mating. New research published in, *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*, details how researchers found a neutron star rotating 377 times a second in an exotic binary system using data from NASA's Fermi Space Telescope.

The astronomer's findings were uniquely boosted by the Einstein@Home project, a network of thousands of civilian volunteers lending their home computing power to the efforts of the Fermi Telescope's work. The group's search required combing very finely through the data in order not to miss any possible signals. The computing power required is enormous. The search would have taken 500 years to complete on a single computer core. By using a part of the Einstein@Home resources it was done in 2 months. With the computing power donated by the Einstein@Home volunteers, the team discovered gamma-ray pulsations from the rapidly rotating neutron star. This gamma-ray pulsar, now known as J2039-5617, rotates about 377 times each second. "It had been suspected for years that there is a pulsar, a rapidly rotating neutron star, at the heart of the source we now know as PSR J2039-5617," says Lars Nieder, a PhD student at the Max Planck Institute for Gravitational Physics (Albert Einstein Institute; AEI) in Hannover. "But it was only possible to lift the veil and discover the gamma-ray pulsations with the computing power donated by tens of thousands of volunteers to Einstein@Home," he adds. The celestial object has been known since 2014 as a source of X-rays, gamma rays, and light. All evidence obtained so far pointed at a rapidly rotating neutron star in orbit with a light-weight star being at the heart of the source. But clear proof was missing. The first step to solving this riddle were new observations of the stellar companion with optical telescopes. They provided precise knowledge about the binary system without which a gamma-ray pulsar search (even with Einstein@Home's huge computing power) would be unfeasible.

The system's brightness varies during an orbital period depending on which side of the neutron star's companion is facing the Earth. "For J2039-5617, there are two main processes at work," explains Dr. Colin Clark from Jodrell Bank Centre for Astrophysics, lead author of the study. "The pulsar heats up one side of the light-weight companion, which appears brighter and more bluish. Additionally, the companion is distorted by the pulsar's gravitational pull causing the apparent size of the star to vary over the orbit. These observations allowed the team to get the most precise measurement possible of the binary star's 5.5-hour orbital period, as well as other properties of the system."

With this information and the precise sky position from Gaia data, the team used the aggregated computing power of the distributed volunteer computing project Einstein@Home for a new search of about 10 years of archival observations of NASA's Fermi Gamma-ray Space Telescope. Improving on earlier methods they had developed for this purpose, they enlisted the help of tens of thousands of volunteers to search Fermi data for periodic pulsations in the gamma-ray photons registered by the Large Area Telescope onboard the space telescope. The volunteers donated idle compute cycles on their computers' CPUs and GPUs to Einstein@Home. The new knowledge of the frequency of the gamma-ray pulsations also allowed collaborators to detect radio pulsations in archival data from the Parkes radio telescope. Their results, also published in *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*, show that the pulsar's radio emission is often eclipsed by material that has been blown off the companion star by its nearby Redback pulsar.

Story Source: [Materials](#) provided by **University of Manchester**. Note: Content may be edited for style and length.



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This Week's Story...

A DENIZEN OF THE SHALLOWS

PART 2

By Sydney Costa

The serpent reared its scaly head, towering above me. It roared...weakly? Then, almost lethargically, it slumped over, half-closing its eyes. I watched it fall towards me, petrified. I was going to be crushed by its massive weight.

"Aka, watch out!" Iwan suddenly yelled, tackling me out of the way just in time. The leviathan landed with an enormous *thud* on the sand.

"Are you okay? You could've gotten badly hurt!" he said concerned. "You have to be more careful."

I brushed him off. "I'm fine," I said, a little shaken. I tried to conceal it so Iwan wouldn't worry. "What is that thing?"

Iwan squinted up at it. "I don't know. We'd better get out of here for a bit in case it wakes up."

"What about squid fishing? Or the serpent?"

"We'll be fine if we miss one day of--wait, you're worried about that..that *thing*?"

"Of course! It must be hurt somehow! We have to help it!"

Iwan frowned at it, confused. "It'll eat you in one bite if you try that." He looked down at the small amount of medical supplies he was holding. "Besides, I don't think I can help it with whatever's wrong while using these supplies. Look how big it is."

"Please?" I begged.

Iwan shook his head. "It's tough. It'll be alright. Come on, let's get you bandaged up."

I pulled my hand away when he tried to wrap it up. "No."

"What?"

"I'm going to go help it." I made my way towards the dragon cautiously, not quite sure *how* exactly I could help it. I decided that I needed to know what was wrong first. I crept closer, trying my best to not frighten it.

"Aka, stop!" Iwan whisper-shouted. He started to run quietly after me, but the serpent hissed loudly as soon as he got close.

Spooked, Iwan stepped back and tried in vain to get me to come back. "Get back here!" he said, trying to stay quiet but still get my attention.

I ignored him and got closer. The creature had yet to growl at me, so that was a good sign. I made my way around the side of its face and discovered the problem.

"Oh, no. You poor snake," I said, gazing at the crown embedded on its head. It seemed to be draining the dragon's energy somehow, in the same way Iwan had described...

"Iwan! You drain ink from the squids, right?" I said to him somewhat louder than I'd intended to.

Confused, Iwan half-nodded. "Technically, I drain the ink from the water."

"Well, I think this crown is draining the serpent's energy, like how you drain ink."

Iwan was absolutely baffled at this point. "What crown?"

"Come here and see."

"I can't; it'll get mad."

"Try it anyway. I'll keep it calm," I assured him. I tentatively reached my hand out to pet the creature. It didn't resist. Instead, it closed its eyes and let me stroke it gently. Seeing this, Iwan cautiously took a step towards it. Nothing happened. So he tiptoed all the way over to where I was standing.

"Oh, wow. I see what you mean," he admitted. I nodded solemnly.

He rubbed his temples. "I did not expect this today," he muttered under his breath. He sighed. "Alright, fine. Here's what we're going to do. I'm going to take off the crown, and you're going to stand all the way over there in case something happens. Okay?"

I shook my head. "No, I want to stay and help. It was my idea."

"But you--!" He cut himself off and groaned instead. "Fine. You help me pry it off."

And so we did. After a lot of pushing, pulling, and hurt fingers, we managed to wedge one of Iwan's tools underneath the rim of the crown and use leverage to get the crown off. It flew through the air and landed with a *thump* on the ground nearby. Relieved, Iwan and I sat down on the serpent's head, glad we'd finally completed our task.

Iwan stood up and stretched. "Okay, I think it's about time we head home. It's getting late."

I looked up at the sun, which was fairly far from setting but had long since passed halfway. "Oh, come on! It's only afternoon! Why can't we fish until evening?"

Iwan ruffled my hair, getting it even messier than it already was. "Well, the squid were probably all scared away by this thing anyway. I'm tired, and I think you've had enough life-threatening experiences for today. Let's go."

I sighed. "Okay, I'm--"

The serpent began to move underneath us, stopping me short. It raised its head slowly. Sensing that we were going to fall off, Iwan dropped down and hugged his arms around me and the crest on the dragon's head.

The creature rose to its full height, its scales glinting gorgeously in the mid-afternoon light. Looking at it, I finally realized what a majestic, beautiful beast it was. I was glad to have helped such an amazing animal.

The serpent growled happily, lowered its head so it was streamlined, and surged forward.

"Hold on!" Iwan shouted, breathless, terrified, and ecstatic all at the same time.

And so I did.

The ride must've only lasted a few minutes, but it felt like hours. I was soaring through the sky and on its back at the same time. It was the closest thing to flying aside from swimming. The exhilarating rush of riding on its back was unforgettably surreal. We made giant waves as the dragon seemed to fly forward in its own special way.

For once, Iwan was laughing.

I'd seen him smile, chuckle, and be happy before, but had never heard him truly laugh like he did. It was pure joy personified, and it was infectious. Despite the small bit of fear I felt, I started to laugh and enjoy the ride even more.

And just like that, it was over all too fast. The dragon had somehow known where our house was and stopped right in front of it. It stooped over and let us hop off.

I could've sworn it smiled and waved as it dove back into the water, its sleek red tail disappearing under the surface. After the magical ride, we walked inside, almost in a daze.

"So, how was your fishing trip?" Poki asked, hopping down from the table.

Iwan and I shared a glance.

"It was just your average fishing trip," he replied casually.

"Yeah," I agreed. "But it was almost...magical."

Pins

I'm holding on to the now
In this room, that I know so well
Random sketches of anxious youth
Girls and guys
And wide, nervous eyes
Fall from the wall
Grasped merely by pins

Dozens of pins forced through
Vision boards
French awards
Old and new friends
Past and present trends
The person I was then
The person I am now

In five months' time
I will be in a new room
Tacking new sketches
Photos and awards
But the things
That will remain
The things that hold me together
The pins.

~ Savanna Rose

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