

# That Nerd Show

 **WEEKLY NEWS** 

July 4 / July 11, 2021

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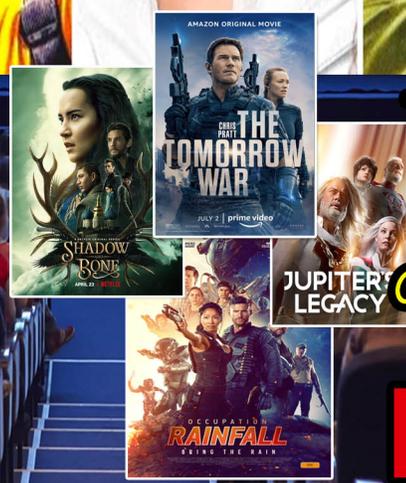
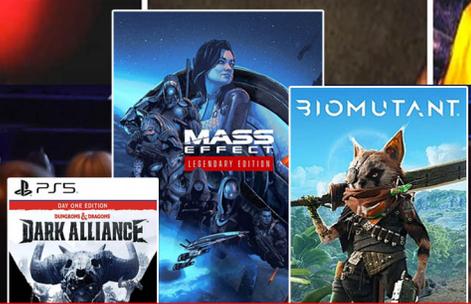
FILM / TV NEWS, STORIES, INTERVIEWS, THE NERD OPINION,  
MUSIC NEWS, REVIEWS, GAMING, COMICS, COSPLAY & SCIENCE NEWS



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR  
**SQUAD LEADER**  
**WARHAMMER: VERMINTIDE 2**  
"FANTASY DONE RIGHT!"

## MOVIE THEATERS ARE OPEN FOR BUSINESS!

### WHAT SUMMER BLOCKBUSTERS SHOULD YOU WATCH?



The Tomorrow War  
Shadow and Bone  
Jupiter's Legacy  
Occupation: Rainfall  
and

**WHAT YOU SHOULD  
BINGE-WATCH**





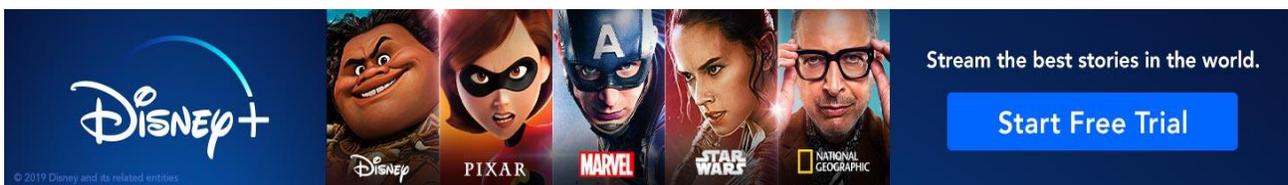


**MARVEL** STUDIOS

**JULY 9**

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# MOVIE THEATERS ARE OPEN FOR BUSINESS!

## What Summer Blockbusters Should You Watch....



*Summer* is here and that means the return of summer blockbuster movies. It feels a little weird to say that after the past year. 2020 was not kind to the movie theater industry. I don't think there's ever been a time when we didn't go see a movie in the summer. Even during the Great Depression people could still go to movie theaters even if they could not afford it. Finally being back to movies in an actual theater is a sigh of relief to say the least, But we all know that it's going to take a while to get back to normal. A lot of the movies we expected to be released have still been pushed back to the fall of 2021. Shouldn't we have seen the latest James Bond installment by now. How many of you were looking forward to seeing the sequel to Top Gun? It's been a slow process getting back to the theater. After months of Covid-19 protocols where social distancing and masked mandates were still in full effect. as of June 1<sup>st</sup>, according to CDC guidelines, if you have been vaccinated then you can return to the movie theater, the same as you did before the pandemic.

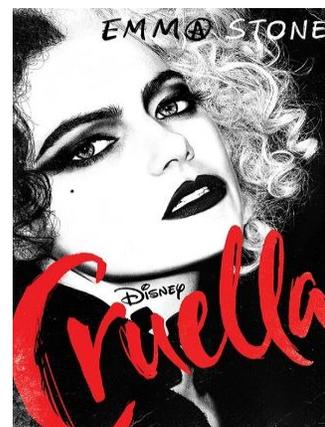
It's safe to say that some people are still apprehensive, but we are starting to see a rise in going back to the movie theaters which means we finally get to enjoy summer blockbuster movies, at least a few of them. In 2020 revenue at movie theaters fell 80% from the year past. Only renting movies on demand through a theater seem to keep the

industry alive. Between 2016 to 2019 theater revenues were just a little over \$10 billion upwards to 12 billion. Right now, what we are seeing is anywhere between 4.5 billion to 6 billion in revenues. The kind of revenues that you would see 40 years ago when Raiders of the Lost ark or E.T. The Extraterrestrial was released. However, slowly but surely, we are getting back. All major theater movie chains have relinquished their mask mandates. AMC theaters was the first to do it followed by Cinemark and Regal theaters.

When the Alamo Drafthouse returns later this summer, it will do the same. But as movie goes go back to the theater, the biggest question looming is what to see. In a lot of ways, it's still very much as a lackluster year for movies, but far from the drastic change that happened last year when all of a sudden we couldn't go to a theater to see a movie. Only a third of movies that we would normally see during the summer have been released and very few are getting released in July and August. The two biggest movies coming out over the next couple of months is Marvel's Black widow which is finally being released after a year and WarnerMedia's Suicide squad 2. Of course, Space Jam 2 is finally getting released, but that doesn't really feel like a summer blockbuster movie where one that people will rush out to theaters to see when they can see it on HBO Max the day it releases. So here at That Nerd Show, we offer you a nerd's opinion on what movies you should see and why. Check out our reviews for all the major releases as you decide what movies to see in the theater this summer. It may not be like in years past and it may be years before we get back to normal when it comes to summer blockbusters, but there are quite a few good ones that are worth going to see.

### Cruella

by *Chloe James*



While many know me as a Disnerd when it comes to Disney's animated feature length films (or the "Disney

Canon", as they like you to call them), I've been skeptical, to say the least, when it comes to the live action remakes. I'll be the first to admit, many of them have been surprisingly good. Some...eh...at least I'm reminded through them how much I like the original animated film. The bar for me was set low to begin with, in my great annoyance with the film Maleficent. I'll try not to get into details about why that movie really didn't work for me, but it boils down to how needless it is to ruin such a perfectly evil villain by giving her a sympathetic alternative backstory. Fast forward eight years later, and I'm really hoping Cruella convinces me to give the same concept another chance. The film follows Estella Miller (Emma Stone), a child with a wild side whom she desperately tries and fails to control, in her journey into becoming the character we all know, Cruella de Vil. We see her, as a child, meet her two rapscllions that would grow up to be her trusted lackeys, Horace (Paul Walter Hauser) and Jasper (Joel Fry). As she grows up, she turns to crime using her skills of fashion to create their disguises. Now, as an adult, she gets a job at the best clothing store in the city to try to

enter into the fashion industry from the ground floor, which is literal as she is scrubbing basement floors. She gets the attention of the Baroness (Emma Thompson), a world famous designer, by getting drunk one night and making a window display in a style that we can only classify as Cruella. While working for the Baroness, Estella starts to go behind her back and start stealing a new prize, the public's attention with the help of her old school friend, Anita Darling (Kirby Howell-Baptiste). The film also stars Emily Beecham as Estella's Mother, Kayvan Novak as Roger Dearly, and Mark Strong as John, the Baroness' valet. Cruella was directed by Craig Gillespie (Lars and the Real Girl; I, Tonya) and written by Dana Fox (Couples Retreat) and Tony McNamara (The Favourite). I have to mention the cinematographer, Nicolas Karakatsanis (The Drop; The Loft; I, Tonya) because there were so many beautifully shot scenes. For example, there was an extremely fast tracking long shot when they showed off the clothing store. It was only a minute long and it was stitched together, but it seamlessly transitions from a crane shot to a steadicam walking extremely fast through the large building.

And we can't talk about this movie without mentioning the most important part, the fashion. They got the legendary costume designer, Jenny Beavan (A Room with a View, Sense and Sensibility, Gosford Park, Mad Max: Fury Road), to create the elaborate costumes that serve as the main theme of the film. She had to design a total of 277 different costumes for the film, and 47 for Cruella de Vil alone, and each one is better than the last. She already has two Oscars under her belt, but I can already say that she's a frontrunner this year for her third. Something elsewhere deserves special mention in this film is the fact it has one of the most awesome soundtracks I've heard in years. Featuring dozens of iconic songs from the era (totaling in a soundtrack budget I'm sure only Disney could afford) the music became a

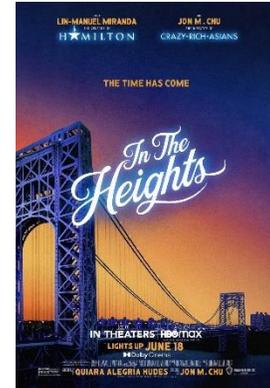
character in itself. I can go on for quite a while about how, on a technical level, Cruella deserves very high scores. However, I wanted to give it as much credit as I could before I get into the bad. Unfortunately, the "bad" in this film is enough to outweigh the good. Disney attempted to make a compelling story in which we, the audience can sit for two and a half hours and relate and empathize with a villain who we all know later kidnaps and attempts to murder puppies. And to their credit, they did their best. But the writing of this movie was just all over the place. I'm doing my best to give this review without spoiling much, but I'm not sure if Disney knew exactly what they wanted this movie to be. Is it a literal canon prequel that takes place before the animated feature we all know so well? Is it a completely sympathetic "alternative" look into a misunderstood villain's origin story?

Perhaps with some of the more "grey morality" villains (and very competent writers) both could be achieved at once. Cruella de Vil, however, is such an extreme villain in the canon Disney film, that the writers really needed to choose one path or another. Yet, it appears they couldn't decide and chose both. The result feels completely inconsistent in its overall message. Maleficent may have annoyed me in its overall concept and execution, but by the end of that film, at least I could say I understood what they were aiming for. Cruella may not have convinced me to change my mind about Disney villain origin story films, but I won't tell you to avoid watching it, either. I can honestly say it's very fun, visually pleasing, and entertaining, albeit drags on a bit long. I just have to emphasize to any fellow Disnerds out there, if you want any consistency with the original source material, leave your expectations at the door.

**6 / 10 (Adequate)**

## In The Heights

by Marcus Blake



*Lin-Manuel Miranda's, "In The Heights" has finally hit the big screen. One of the films that should have come out before the pandemic, but*

got delayed and if you are a fan of the musical, then it has been worth the wait. The great thing about any musical that gets turned into a film is you're able to do more with your set and I think the best part about this film is it really showcases the neighborhood of Washington Heights in New York. I almost think that is the best character of this story. It's a good movie in a lot of ways and has an incredible cast. There's no denying that. But what this film as well as the stage musical really is a love letter to the neighborhood that Lin-Manuel Miranda grew up in. I'm not saying that it's a bad thing, but this is also the same kind of story that can be told in any community. I very much like the film. As a fan of musicals, I am always a little picky when they try to transform a great musical into a movie, sometimes it's hit or miss and then sometimes they surprise you. In The Heights is a great representation of the stage musical, much like how the movie West Side Story was a great representation of its stage musical. From the sets to the atmosphere, you feel like you are in Washington Heights, so on that note they did a great job.

The cast does an incredible job with the music and you are for the most part transported into the stage musical itself. The choreography is phenomenal and I think in a lot of ways are able to do more with it with actually being on a film set

compared to being on a stage even though it may not be as intimate. But what really makes this film great to watch is if you don't know anything about the Washington Heights neighborhood and how it is a true melting pot of Dominican Republican Immigrants along with Irish and African-American, you really feel like that you are there and you understand their everyday problems. But this film isn't perfect just like the stage musical isn't perfect.

This is where I have my criticism of the story and don't get me wrong, I am not saying don't watch it, if you're a fan of musicals then it is a must see, but it is also predictable. I don't know if there really is anything original about this story except to the people who are from Washington Heights, like I said it's a great love letter to that neighborhood and it's great to have a musical showcase that. However, this is still a story that can be told in any poor neighborhood in any city where the true essence of that neighborhood is the community that faces the same struggles and sticks together. The problems the characters face aren't original. The only thing original to this musical and the movie is the music itself and the neighborhood for which it is set in. There are a lot of familiar tropes in this, but it doesn't take away from the performances of the cast or the music itself. And when it comes to Lin-Manuel Miranda, pretty much anything he is going to do is going to be great. I mean it's hard enough taking over a chimney sweeper character that was originally played by Dick Van Dyke in the original *Mary Poppins*, but Lin-Manuel Miranda almost did it flawlessly in *Mary Poppins Returns*. What I am saying is this story and the film itself seem very familiar and you may get a sense that you've seen this story before, but then again maybe that's okay because isn't *West Side Story* really just *Romeo and Juliet* with poor immigrants in a New York neighborhood!

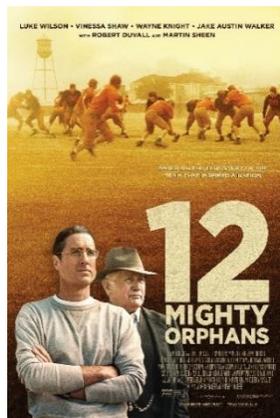
And, that's why I won't say this is a horrible film, but it also can't be a fantastic film at the same time. If you love Lin-Manuel Miranda and anything he does, then check out *In The Heights*. If you love musicals, then watch this film because really the best part and the heart of this story is him showing you where he came from and why this neighborhood represents pretty much any poor, but thriving community in America. It can very easily be the Treme neighborhood in New Orleans. The movie may not be perfect, and it may not be original, but that doesn't mean you won't enjoy it. It's worth checking out! And the mark of any great music is music that gets stuck in your head, which will easily happen when you watch *In the Heights*.

7/10 (Okay)

**AMC**  
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## 12 Mighty Orphans

by Alex Moore



*I was born* and raised in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Sooner or later, you find out about the game of football. What you also find out is that football, in the state of Texas, is more than just a game for many, many people around these parts. For me, it was not my early exposure to the Dallas Cowboys of the NFL that drove home this point. In actuality, it was

my time that I have spent as a play-by-play that made me realize just how significant the game truly is. Having been around, I have seen so much variety. Not just in the stadiums, whether they be modern or vintage, but in the general vibe the fans bring with them. Some venues and towns are more special than others, though I will not go into which ones, specifically. Having said that, part of what sets the tone is the history behind each place and when I think about that, the history is what truly makes a difference in the feeling and the experience. As time has gone by, there is more and more history for all of us to dig into. So where does that leave us when it comes to high school Texas football?...

Author Jim Dent once wrote a non-fiction book about a team of orphans in the Fort Worth area that came to prominence in a surprising way. It has now been adapted into a new sports movie, "12 Mighty Orphans." The film was directed by Ty Roberts, who also co-wrote the screenplay with Kevin Meyer and Lane Garrison (who also plays as the character of Luther in the movie). Heading the cast is Luke Wilson ("All the Bright Places") as Rusty Russell, the head coach of the Masonic Home and School. Just as a side note, if you enjoy the spread offense, you have this man to thank for developing it. I think it should be noted that although Russell was greatly successful coaching at the high school level, he did not fair nearly as well at the collegiate level, though he certainly tried, but I digress...

Rounding out the rest of the primary cast is: Vinessa Shaw ("The Blazing World") as Juanita Russell, Wayne Knight ("The Very Excellent Mr. Dundee") as Frank Wynn— the antagonist of the movie, if you will, and bit of a typecast for the actor, Jake Austin Walker ("No One Lives") as Hardy Brown— a youngster who is new to the school and stands out immediately as a special football player (and did actually play in the NFL throughout the 1950s), Jack Lofland ("Maze Runner: The Death Cure") as Snoggs, Levi Dylan as Fairbanks, Robert Duvall ("Widows") as Mason Hawk and Martin Sheen ("Judas and the Black Messiah") as Doc Hall (and is also the film's narrator). Right off the bat, while I think almost everyone enjoys the work of Sheen as a narrator, I do not think it was

really necessary for this particular movie. However, I cannot fault the filmmakers for including that little detail. After all, it is a story based on a true tale from the 1930s. I was quickly reminded of the basic story premise of movies like 1986's "Hoosiers," except that this is in Texas and has to be about football, right? The aspect I found that I enjoyed the most was the dialogue, which is quick and sharp. Wilson and Sheen seem to have a good on-screen chemistry within the context of their interactions in the story. The flow of the story, as is typical these days, is fast-paced and that might explain why so much of the true story was condensed in a way that makes it inaccurate.

In fact, Coach Russell did not come around to the Masonic Home and School during the height of The Great Depression. He actually moved his family out there in the late 1920s and was there until the early '40s, when he transferred his coaching job to Highland Park, in Dallas, but let us move on... I believe that most audience members are going to enjoy this film for what it is: inspirational and uplifting, but full of the expected and predictable cliches and tropes familiar to the sub-genre. The acting and production quality and writing style are its strengths and they should combine to give most people enough to feel satisfied. However... As much as I wanted to root for this movie, I was turned off by the flawed story-telling aspects and overwhelming examples of historical inaccuracies. I realize that most movies cannot be expected to stay on cue with all aspects of a true story, but I would have appreciated a bit more authenticity. That might just be my nit-picky sports broadcaster brain doing the talking, though. I am willing to concede that much, at least. Overall, I would still say that "12 Mighty Orphans" is more of a positive experience than a negative one. I simply cannot forget my sentimental Texas high school football connections enough to not recommend this film.

6/10 (Adequate)



## Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard

by Marcus Blake



*Does every movie really need a sequel? Pretty much any movie that is at least a little bit successful at the box office will get a sequel, that doesn't mean it needs one. So I can understand*

why The Hitman's Bodyguard got a sequel! Sure, I was kind of excited because I love Ryan Reynolds and Samuel L. Jackson, but truth be told after seeing the sequel, no, it didn't really need to be made. I'll get right to the point The Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard is not really that good of a movie and not even Salma Hayek being a badass with her gorgeous boobs can really save this movie. That might hey bet misogynistic to say, but when half your jokes about her character are about her boobs, I'm not the one to blame. And that should also should tell you something about the writing . Even though it's a bad movie, Ryan Reynolds, Salma, Hayek and Samuel L. Jackson have good performances, they're funny, but the story is shit and Antonio Banderas will never make a convincing bad guy even if he was Desperado! Also, not even Morgan Freeman can save this movie and yes this part is a spoiler, we don't buy him as the bad guy either! The story is basically Ryan Reynolds' character getting roped into having to save Salma Hayek and Samuel L. Jackson's character as they're being hunted while he's trying to stay away from bodyguarding to find some kind of tranquility. Yes, it's a high octane action film and all of them are great and yes the one-liners are kind of funny, but also very predictable and we saw it all in the first film! The first film was fairly original... It's good and you'll watch it again and again, but the sequel is largely forgettable because it feels like all the good stuff happened in the first film. Same action, same jokes, same action movie tropes. It's almost as if they just

regurgitated the first film, changed a few things here while adding Morgan Freeman and Antonio Banderas and then called it a sequel! And who doesn't love a predictable action movie... Yes, I'm being sarcastic, but then again Michael Bay keeps making movies!

There are a few things to like in this film. This movie was really made to show off how much of a badass Salma Hayek really is. She is still absolutely gorgeous in her 50s and doesn't look like she's aged at all from the movie Desperado. Ryan Reynolds is funny as usual, but this movie resembles more like any number of sequels to the The Fast and Furious where you have to somehow top yourself from the last film and the plot doesn't really matter. I guess it was nice to get a bit of a backstory of these characters that we grew to love in the first film. Origin stories can be nice, but it's not enough to save the film. I did laugh a few times, but I almost feel like at least for Ryan Reynolds all of his jokes are just warm up material before Deadpool 3, which is fine, but you shouldn't charge a full-price movie ticket for that sort of thing! I will say that it's a fun little action movie with a lot of great one-liners, that can be entertaining, but this is not a film that you should pay a full price movie ticket for and I definitely want my money back! Wait to rent it on Redbox or watch it free on cable. I wish the sequel could have been better, maybe it was a better film, but somehow the editor made it worse. Sometimes the editing is the true culprit of a bad film. If the first film is a good A -, the sequel is definitely a good D +. But at this point, I feel like they need to make a third and treat it like a Windows operating system where the new version is only fixing the old version. So why not round out these movies with a trilogy and the third one can fix the second one, but we all know it'll never be as good as the first one. If you go to the movie theater to see this film, make sure it's a matinee or at a dollar theater. It's not worth full price. But the one advantage of this movie compared to a lot of others is it is a good drinking movie. It is a good movie for day drinking at The Studio Movie Grill or an Alamo Drafthouse. Unfortunately, that's probably the best part of the movie!

5/10 (Average)

# A Quiet Place 2

by Julie Jones

A Quiet Place 2 is the first blockbuster movie being shown in theaters after the Pandemic and it was great to be back. John Krasinski and



Emily Blunt worked together on the first one and here we are for a sequel! So many people say that couples working together seems like a disaster, but they seem to make it work. Now, let's just see if lightning strikes twice! Quiet Place 2 is the sequel and picks up right where the first one left off. They even start the film with a little origin story scene, making sure that we all remember why we are here and what is happening. There are new challenges to face, but like the first, there are plenty of jump scares and heartfelt moments. While John Krasinski didn't make it through the second one, Emily Blunt definitely revives the emotional struggle that comes with "momming" two kids in a tragic situation. The acting is nothing spectacular, but something has to be said for actors who can express characters in silence while retaining suspension of disbelief. I don't know that The Academy will be considering them, but the acting is definitely better than a lot of movies out there. Emily Blunt does a great job and with the addition of Cillian Murphy, you have two great character actors that bring a lot to the table and make the movie better than it is. If you think Cillian Murphey can't hold his own as an actor then you clearly need to check out Peaky Blinders on Netflix!

The writing left a little bit to be desired, but not a lot. I thought that the dialogue was ok and the plot seemed viable. This film is a good continuation of the first and adding the origin story makes it better. But somehow the story fell just a little short for me. I didn't think it was unbearable, but I wasn't amazed. Maybe this movie is setting up a third film to round off the A Quiet Place trilogy. It

would be doable. Color and lighting isn't huge, as far as manipulation in this film. But, you will notice a few little tricks here and there, if you're paying attention. The beauty is that if you're not, it is seamless enough that it rolls through and adds to the intensity of this horror film. Cinematography and direction don't offer anything new, so there isn't a lot to talk about. But, it is easy to forget that the Quiet Place films are debuts for John Krasinski. While he hasn't established his style, yet, it isn't obvious that he's new to this. I'm not saying they're bad films, but Krasinski hasn't directed his Oscar worthy film yet. Overall, it was a good movie. It wasn't amazing or innovative, but if you enjoyed the first one you will enjoy the second. If you haven't seen either, they are worth watching on a binge. But, don't expect Citizen Kane. I give it an 8, because we don't do halves around here and it's not quite a nine. But, it's worth a matinee ticket if you have a date that you want jumping into your shoulders/arms. It's a good film to see in the theaters while getting back to a theater after the Pandemic.

8/10 (Good)

## The Conjuring: The Devil Made Me Do It

by Julie Jones



I love a great horror film as much as the next person. But, if we're being honest, a good one can be hard to come by. And while the Conjuring

series might not be the scariest across the board, there are some great stories, enough to keep you watching. And more than a few will leave you questioning the shadows at night. So, will this film keep

that series alive...maybe. Remember, a studio made 7 Nightmare on Elm Street movies and those were not as good as the Conjuring Series. This film is about a boy who is in love with a girl. Simple enough until you realize her brother is possessed and the family is distraught over it. The boy is close to the brother, so he feels horrible for him and challenges the demon to take him instead. And that's where we take off. Can the boy get out of this Pickle and how does he go about it? Also, there is the fact that he is brought up on murder charges for killing someone while he is possessed. So, how does it all play out? Does it feel like you may have already seen this film? I mean, how many possession movies have been made where the story seems to be the same! The acting is ok. It isn't anything amazing, but it allows for the suspension of disbelief and is enough for you to invest in the story, though not without strings. Vera Farmiga and Patrick Wilson are good as usual. They tend to hold these movies together. The aesthetics and mood lend well to the film, giving you something great to work with if you live to settle into a horror movie. It definitely makes it feel a little eerie and dark. But, there is nothing new or innovative about it. And there doesn't need to be for this film to be good. The film direction and cinematography aren't much to comment on, either. Same song, different dance...nothing new. The story is a good one and based on a true story. It is something you will definitely want to read about and flows well through the film. Some of the best horror films have been based on a true story adding to the urban legend of the story they are based on. Researching the real story that the film is based on can be just as entertaining and it can also add to the suspense of the film. It definitely makes the film worth checking out, but fans of the Conjuring Series are going to enjoy it no matter what. It's a good entry in the series. Overall, I thought it was a good film. Not amazing and not a disaster. Great for a night in or a date night,

especially if you're a horror fan, but nothing to clear your schedule for. And don't forget it is on HBO Max for 30 days. I give it an 8 and I would say it is worth a matinee ticket, but not full price. Check it out, but without expectations. If nothing else, if your anxious to see a movie in a theater again after the pandemic, especially a summer blockbuster this latest entry in the Conjuring series is a good one for that.

**8 / 10 (Good)**

## **Fast and Furious 9**

**by Marcus Blake**



*The last movie we review is Fast and Furious 9, it's also our winner for the category of "we could care less." There is nothing regarding the*

9th installment of the Fast and the furious series that screams, rush to the theater and see it. After 9 installments, how more ridiculous can you get and at what point do these just become Michael Bay films. Now we won't spoil anything for you, the trailer pretty much already does that anyway. You already know that Dom has some long lost brother played by John Cena and he's a bad guy. You already pretty much know that there's some kind of weird family drama and why wouldn't there be when your main character is constantly telling you that he doesn't have friends, he has family. You already know that you're going to get high-speed car chases. And you already know that you're going to have to suspend disbelief that the characters from the first movie who hijacked truck parts and did street racing are somehow now international spies and can do all things that Tom Cruise can do in a Mission Impossible movie. At some point I feel like these two movie franchises have to converge and make just one big super high octane, adrenaline fueled movie that blows our socks off in a movie theater, but if that happens that will be the end of action movies because nothing will ever be able

to top what we see. But if there's one thing that I can say about the latest Fast and the Furious movie, damn the story, some how they seem to away the top themselves with action, you know, just like a mission impossible movie! There isn't anything in this movie that you haven't seen before except the addition of new characters and somehow we bring a character back from the dead, not really, we won't spoil that story, but again still kind of ridiculous! It's almost like a soap opera, but with fast cars! Honestly this movie is like a 2 because you've seen this movie the past four or five times in this series, but we give it two extra points because Charlize Theron is in it and she's the hottest thing in the movie. Now if you choose to see this movie in a theater, do it at one that serves alcohol because it is the perfect movie for day drinking in a movie theater and that's something that we have truly missed in the last year!

**4 / 10 (Below Average)**

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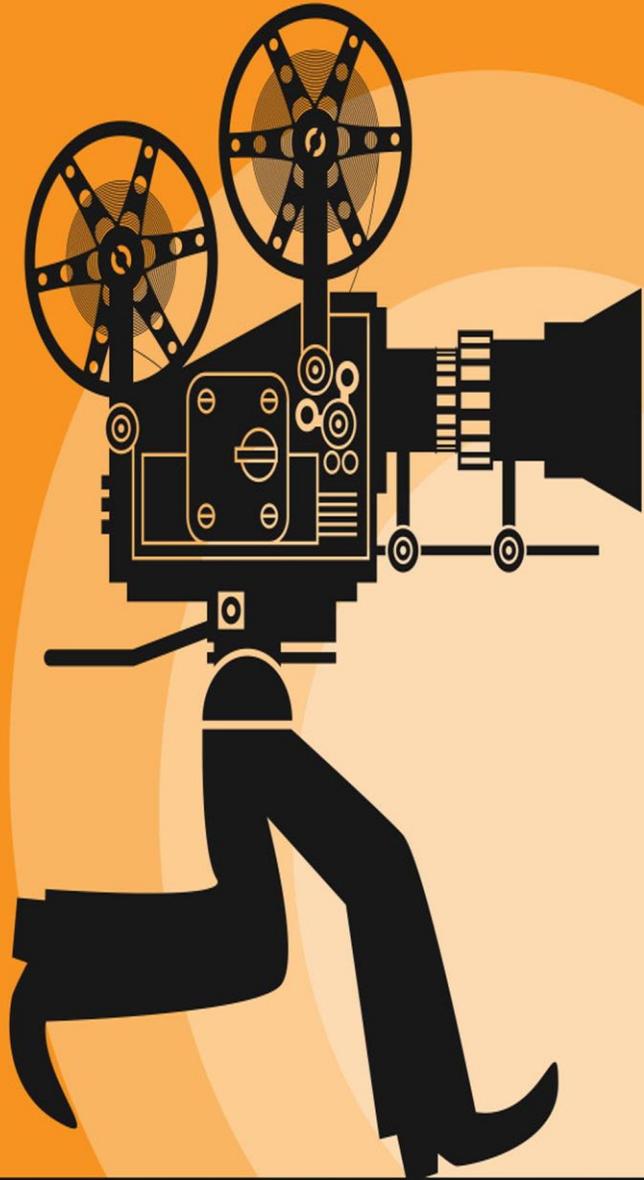
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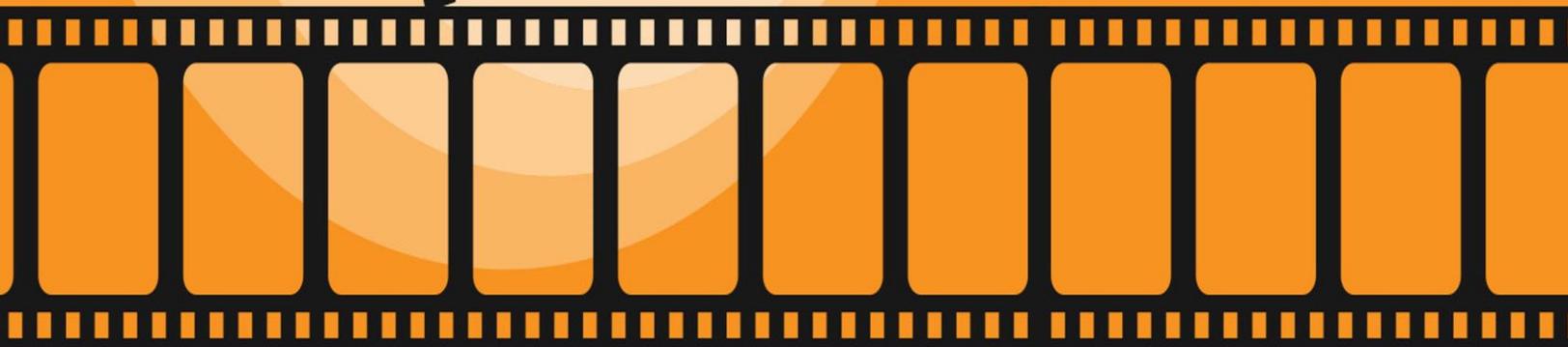
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# Amazon Confirms It's Buying MGM For \$8.45 Billion

“James Bond Will Remain Theatrical Amid Amazon’s Acquisition Of MGM, Eon Bosses Say!”

## MGM Will Plug Into Amazon Streaming Machine As It Hits Higher Gear



After months and weeks of speculation, Amazon and MGM are merging in a deal that has the e-commerce giant acquiring the storied studio for \$8.45 billion. It's the first groundbreaking deal in a long anticipated marriage of the era's big tech players and Hollywood, sparked by a digital revolution in content and the explosion of streaming. The pact, which will recast Prime Video, is the second mega-merger in as many weeks following the planned combination of AT&T's WarnerMedia and Discovery. Amazon declined to comment beyond the release but a person close to the company said, as Deadline reported Friday, that it intends to continue MGM's theatrical releases and looks forward to MGM's fan-favorites hitting theaters. The announcement this morning is pretty bare bones and there's no press briefing planned. It's early days and the Seattle company didn't address some big issues including the structure of a merged leadership or the future of Epix. Amazon-MGM Deal: Deadline's Complete Coverage Amazon is holding its annual shareholder meeting today at noon and is bound to get some questions about the purchase. The pricetag, while no sweat for a company with a \$1.6 trillion market cap, is still a hefty for the studio and a triumph for MGM chairman Kevin Ulrich, whose Anchorage Capital has been a major investor for a decade. Bezos, at Amazon's last quarterly earnings in late April, gave Prime Video a shout out as it turned 10. He said over

175 million Prime members had streamed shows and movies over the past year and that streaming hours are up more than 70% year-on-year. Amazon Studios garnered 12 Academy Award nods and two wins, he noted, touting upcoming originals Tom Clancy's *Without Remorse*, *The Tomorrow War* and *The Underground Railroad*. (Bezos is stepping down as CEO of Amazon later this year for the new title of executive chairman, handing the reins to Andrew Jassy, who runs Amazon Web Services.)

Amazon did note MGM's nearly century-long history of filmmaking and said it complements the work of Amazon Studios, which has mostly focused on television production. "Amazon will help preserve MGM's heritage and catalog of films, and provide customers with greater access to these existing works. Through this acquisition, Amazon would empower MGM to continue to do what they do best: great storytelling," the Jeff Bezos-founded company said.

"MGM has a vast catalog with more than 4,000 films – 12 *Angry Men*, *Basic Instinct*, *Creed*, *James Bond*, *Legally Blonde*, *Moonstruck*, *Poltergeist*, *Raging Bull*, *Robocop*, *Rocky*, *Silence of the Lambs*, *Stargate*, *Thelma & Louise*, *Tomb Raider*, *The Magnificent Seven*, *The Pink Panther*, *The Thomas Crown Affair*, and many other icons – as well as 17,000 TV shows – including *Fargo*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Vikings* – that have collectively won more than 180 Academy Awards and 100 Emmys," said Mike Hopkins, senior VP of Prime Video and Amazon Studios. "The real financial value behind this deal is the treasure trove of IP in the deep catalog that we plan to reimagine and develop together with MGM's talented team." "It has been an honor to have been a part of the incredible transformation of Metro Goldwyn Mayer. To get here took immensely talented people with a true belief in one vision. On behalf of the Board, I would

like to thank the MGM team who have helped us arrive at this historic day," said Ulrich. "I am very proud that MGM's Lion, which has long evoked the Golden Age of Hollywood, will continue its storied history, and the idea born from the creation of United Artists lives on in a way the founders originally intended, driven by the talent and their vision. The opportunity to align MGM's storied history with Amazon is an inspiring combination," he added. The companies didn't anticipate when they expect the deal to close but noted that it's subject to regulatory approval.



The announcement is is pretty bare bones and there's no press briefing planned. It's early days and the Seattle company didn't address some big issues including the structure of a merged leadership or the future of Epix. Amazon-MGM Deal: Deadline's Complete Coverage Amazon is holding its annual shareholder meeting today at noon and is bound to get some questions about the purchase. The pricetag, while no sweat for a company with a \$1.6 trillion market cap, is still a hefty for the studio and a triumph for MGM chairman Kevin Ulrich, whose Anchorage Capital has been a major investor for a decade.

Reported by Deadline.com  
<https://deadline.com/2021/05/amazon-to-buy-mgm-for-8-45-billion-merger-1234764306/>

# Steven Spielberg's Amblin Partners. In Deal To Make Movies For Netflix



What a difference two years and a global pandemic make. Steven Spielberg, who a couple of years ago was quoted — his camp maintains he never said it or anything he might have said was severely taken out of context — drawing a clear line between theatrically released films and streamer films, has berthed his Amblin Partners into a partnership with Netflix that will cover multiple new feature films per year. It shows once again the Netflix-led progress toward dissolving the lines between streamed and theatrical films and symbolically it is a big deal for Netflix's Ted Sarandos and Scott Stuber. The Netflix deal will co-exist side by side with the one Spielberg and Amblin have at Universal Pictures. Neither will have first shot at Amblin properties; Spielberg will make some films for Universal, and others to be made for Netflix. The expectation is that Amblin will generate multiple films per year for Netflix, which has a voracious appetite for content and releases a new film per week. Amblin's Universal deal was extended last December, at which time comments reflected the possibility that a streaming deal might be in the offing. The two companies have been collaborating for some time in an informal capacity. Netflix released the Amblin-produced, Aaron Sorkin-directed *The Trial of the Chicago 7*, a film that garnered six Oscar nominations. Netflix stepped up to acquire to finance and distribute *Maestro*, the film that Bradley Cooper is directing and starring

in on the iconic composer Leonard Bernstein. That film is in pre-production. Said Amblin Partners chairman Spielberg on Monday in a statement: "At Amblin, storytelling will forever be at the center of everything we do, and from the minute Ted and I started discussing a partnership, it was abundantly clear that we had an amazing opportunity to tell new stories together and reach audiences in new ways. This new avenue for our films, alongside the stories we continue to tell with our longtime family at Universal and our other partners, will be incredibly fulfilling for me personally since we get to embark on it together with Ted, and I can't wait to get started with him, Scott, and the entire Netflix team." Netflix Co-CEO and chief content officer Sarandos called Spielberg "a creative visionary and leader and, like so many others around the world, my growing up was shaped by his memorable characters and stories that have been enduring, inspiring and awakening. We cannot wait to get to work with the Amblin team and we are honored and thrilled to be part of this chapter of Steven's cinematic history." Said Jeff Small, Amblin Partners CEO: "By deepening our ties with Netflix via this new film partnership, we are building on what has for many years been an incredibly successful working relationship in both television and film. The global platform they've built — with more than 200 million members — speaks for itself, and we're extremely grateful to have the opportunity to work closely with Scott and his amazing team to deliver Amblin's iconic brand of storytelling to the Netflix audience." Stuber, Netflix's Head of Global Film, said that "Amblin and Steven Spielberg are synonymous with incredible entertainment. Their passion and artistry combine to make films that both captivate and challenge audiences. We look forward to working with

Steven, Jeff and the entire Amblin family on a new slate of films that will delight generations for years to come." CAA advised Amblin Partners on the deal. Amblin's Universal output includes the Best Picture Oscar winner *Green Book* and the Sam Mendes-directed *1917* which won three Oscars. Upcoming is the Colin Trevorrow-directed *Jurassic World: Dominion*, which shot during the pandemic and will bow on June 10, 2022. Amblin is also producer on *Stillwater*, the Focus Features film that Tom McCarthy directed and Matt Damon stars in. That film premieres at Cannes next month. Spielberg will direct and has also written with oft-collaborator Tony Kushner an Amblin-produced film based loosely on the master filmmaker's childhood growing up in Arizona, with Michelle Williams, Paul Dano, Gabriel LaBelle, Seth Rogen and Julia Butters. One would assume there might be some jockeying between Universal and Netflix over a film like that, but that one will go through a theatrical release at Universal. One area the director will not revisit is *Jaws*. Deadline heard recently that Universal broached the subject to reboot Spielberg's breakout classic, with Spielberg producing, and the answer was a firm no. Some at Universal and Amblin said this was already known and not a recent conversation. Whatever, while *Jaws* sequels fell far short of Spielberg's original, some films should just be left alone and appreciated in their original form. Spielberg directed a number of them, including *E.T.* and *Schindler's List*.

Reported by Deadline.com  
<https://deadline.com/2021/06/steven-spielberg-amblin-netflix-partnership-movies-the-trial-of-the-chicago-7-bradley-cooper-the-maestro-1234778665/>



# 'Attack The Block 2' is Happening!

## John Boyega Set To Reunite With Joe Cornish for Sequel



**The aliens are back on the block.** A decade after *Attack the Block* achieved sci-fi cult status and launched the career of its star John Boyega, Studiocanal, Film4, Complete Fiction Pictures & UpperRoom Productions are moving forward with *Attack the Block 2* with Boyega locked to return as Moses. In the original, Moses mobilized his mates against a group of nasty extraterrestrials looking to take over

their neighborhood. Joe Cornish is writing and directing the sequel, and he will produce with Boyega (through his UpperRoom Productions banner), Nira Park (through the new Complete Fiction banner she has formed with Cornish and Edgar Wright) and James Wilson. The four teamed to make the original film.

Plot of the sequel remains under wraps. Boyega is coming off a celebrated turn in the Steve McQueen-directed BBC/Amazon Prime drama *Small Axe*, and before that playing Finn in the *Star Wars* films, but it was the 2011 turn in *Attack the Block* that launched him. The film came out of nowhere to win the Audience Award at both SXSW and Los Angeles film festivals. "It's been a decade since *Attack the Block* was released and so much has changed since then," Boyega said. "I'm

excited to see this heightened story return to the streets of London. Moses has remained one of my favorite characters to play and bringing him back is a huge honor." Said Cornish: "I'm thrilled we're officially announcing our return to the world of *Attack the Block* on the tenth anniversary of the film's release. I can't wait to work alongside John again, bringing audiences an even bigger slice of inner-city alien action."

Reported by Deadline.com  
<https://deadline.com/2021/05/attack-the-block-2-sequel-john-boyega-joe-cornish-reunite-nira-park-studio-canal-film4-cult-classic-1234758463/>

## Timothée Chalamet To Play Willy Wonka In New Origin Tale From Warner Bros And The Roald Dahl Story Co.



**Timothée Chalamet** is ready to head to a world of pure imagination as the Oscar-nominated actor is set to star as the iconic inventor and chocolate maker in Warner Bros and the Roald Dahl Story Co.'s *Wonka*. Based on characters created by Roald Dahl, the story will focus on a young Willy Wonka and his adventures prior to opening the world's most famous chocolate factory. Sources also tell Deadline that *Wonka* will mark the first time Chalamet gets to show off his singing and

dancing skills with several musical numbers set to appear in the film. He's been the top choice for some time but scheduling was a hurdle that had to be overcome as training for those numbers is included in the prep for this film. Paul King will direct from the screenplay he wrote with Simon Farnaby (with prior writers including Simon Rich, Simon Stephenson, Jeff Nathanson and Steven Levenson). David Heyman is producing via his Heyday Films. Luke Kelly is also producing, with Michael Siegel and Alexandra Derbyshire executive producing. This marks the third time WB has taken on the Wonka story, with the previous versions being adaptations of Dahl's classic novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. The first one, in 1971, starred Gene Wilder as Wonka, and the second in 2005 starred Johnny Depp in the role. While plot details

are unknown, the new pic will be an origin tale of the character and mark the first time Charlie Bucket will not be featured. For Chalamet, the Oscar nominee has avoided the tentpole pic over the years with his upcoming *Dune* adaptation being his first true venture into the genre. This film will also give him a possible franchise was well. Later this year, Chalamet will be seen staring in Denis Villeneuve's *Dune* for Warner Bros and Legendary, Wes Anderson's *The French Dispatch* opposite Frances McDormand, and Adam McKay's *Don't Look Up* opposite Leonardo DiCaprio and Jennifer Lawrence.

Reported by Deadline.com  
<https://deadline.com/2021/05/timothee-chalamet-willy-wonka-warner-bros-1234762658>

# Khris Davis To Play **George Foreman** In The Sony Biopic From Director George Tillman Jr.



*After a wide hunt*, Khris Davis has landed the role of two-time world heavyweight champion George Foreman in the George Tillman Jr.-directed biopic which is set up under Sony's AFFIRM Films label. "We went through an extensive search across the world to find someone who could channel George," said Tillman Jr "and ultimately, Khris was the only one who could encapsulate his journey so effortlessly as he went from one of boxing's most feared fighter to retirement only to achieve one of the most astonishing comebacks at age 45." In addition, Sullivan Jones has been cast to play legendary fighter Muhammad Ali.

The film will follow the remarkable life and times of George Foreman, from Olympic Gold medalist to World Heavyweight champion, Rumble in the Jungle fight with Muhammad Ali in Zaire, to preacher, then stepping back in the ring to regain the heavyweight champion at age 45, the oldest heavyweight champion in boxing history. Frank Baldwin and Tillman Jr. co-wrote the pic based on the original screenplay by Dan Gordon. Peter Guber and David Zelon are producing for Mandalay Pictures. Production is slated to commence in October. Davis most recently appeared in the Oscar-nominated film *Judas and the Black Messiah*. Other credits include the FX series *Atlanta*, NBC's *The Blacklist* as well as the Tony-nominated Broadway play *Sweat* and *The Royale* at Lincoln Center Theater for which he won a Clive Barnes Award, Obie Award, and Theatre World Award for best actor. Davis will soon be seen in the Warner Bros' *Space Jam: A New Legacy*, starring LeBron James. Jones can currently be seen in Netflix limited series *Halston* with Ewan

McGregor. His upcoming projects include a major recurring role in season 1 of Tracy Oliver's Amazon series *Harlem* as well as an appearance in A24's *False Positive* and Julian Fellowes' HBO series *The Gilded Age*. Tillman directed the critically acclaimed drama, *The Hate U Give*, based on the NYT bestseller by Angie Thomas. He has a number of forthcoming projects including a film adaptation of Thomas' second novel, *On The Come Up*. Tillman and producing partner Robert Teitel recently signed a first-look deal with Sony Pictures Television for their State Street Pictures banner.

Reported by [deadline.com](https://deadline.com/2021/05/khris-davis-george-foreman-sony-biopic-george-tillman-jr-1234765482/)  
<https://deadline.com/2021/05/khris-davis-george-foreman-sony-biopic-george-tillman-jr-1234765482/>

## **Amazon Studios** Takes U.S. & Latin America On 'Val', A24 Documentary About Actor **Val Kilmer**



*Amazon Studios* has acquired US and Latin American rights to the documentary *Val* from A24 about *Top Gun* and *The Doors* actor Val Kilmer. Amazon will release the doc later this year; A24 controls all remaining global rights. From directors Leo Scott and Ting

Poo, *Val* includes hours of footage which Kilmer has amassed throughout his career and life from 16mm home movies made with his brothers, to time spent in iconic roles from blockbuster movies like *Top Gun*, *The Doors*, *Tombstone*, and *Batman Forever*. Kilmer said: "At least once a day for years I looked around and got this bittersweet feeling that there are a thousand reasons that this project could've been shipwrecked. I mean, what could a film look like of a man filming himself, sometimes daily, years at a time? It is unimaginable that this movie actually could've ever come to light without the partnership of my dear friends, Leo and Ting, and my producing partners. Tireless

hours of editing and endless emotions with each new cut! I couldn't be more proud to share this with the world!" This is the first feature in the slate of documentaries and doc-series being produced by A24, whose nonfiction arm is led by Ben Cotner. Producers include Boardwalk Pictures' Andrew Fried, Dane Lillegard, Jordan Wynn, TwainMania's Kilmer, Ali Alborzi and Brad Koepenick, Leo Scott of Cartel Films, and Ting Poo.

Reported by [Deadline.com](https://deadline.com/2021/05/val-kilmer-documentary-amazon-a24-1234765283/)  
<https://deadline.com/2021/05/val-kilmer-documentary-amazon-a24-1234765283/>

# 'THE LORD OF THE RINGS' GOES ON: ANIME FILM 'THE WAR OF THE ROHIRRIM' IN WORKS AT NEW LINE



The J.R.R. Tolkien franchise is heading back to the big screen in a fresh New Line and Warner Animation anime title *The Lord of the Rings: The War of the Rohirrim*. I'm told that the Oscar-winning feature architects Peter Jackson and Fran Walsh are not involved with the project as we speak, but that will be determined down the road. Oscar-winning *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King* scribe Philippa Boyens will be a consultant on the new project directed by Kenji Kamiyama. The pic is being fast-tracked with animation work done by Sola Entertainment. Voice casting is currently underway. Pic will be distributed around the globe by Warner Bros. Pictures. *The War of the Rohirrim* focuses on a character from the book's appendix, the mighty King of Rohan, Helm Hammerhand, and a legendary battle which helped shaped Middle-earth heading into *LOTR*. The

anime pic will expand the untold story behind the fortress of Helm's Deep, delving into the life and bloodsoaked times of Hammerhand. Overall, the movie is a companion piece to New Line's *LOTR* trilogy and is set roughly 250 years before that movie during the third age (Note Amazon's upcoming *Lord of the Rings* mini-series is set during the second age). The news comes at a time when *Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring* is celebrating its 20th anniversary. Kamiyama has been behind such anime projects as *Blade Runner: Black Lotus* and the TV series *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex*. Joseph Chou (*Blade Runner: Black Lotus*) will produce. Jeffrey Addiss and Will Matthews (*The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance*) are writing. Carolyn Blackwood, Chief Operating Officer, Warner Bros. Pictures Group, and Richard Brener, President and Chief Creative Officer, New Line Cinema, said, "All of us at New Line feel a deep affinity for the extraordinary world J.R.R. Tolkien created, so the opportunity to dive back into Middle-earth with the team at Warner Bros. Animation is a dream come true. Fans know Helm's Deep as the stage for one of the greatest battles ever put to film

and, with many of the same creative visionaries involved and the brilliant Kenji Kamiyama at the helm, we couldn't be more excited to deliver a fresh vision of its history that will invite global audiences to experience the rich, complex saga of Middle-earth in a thrilling new way." "This will be yet another epic portrayal of J.R.R. Tolkien's world that has never been told before. We're honored to partner with much of the incredible talent behind both film trilogies, along with new creative luminaries to tell this story," said Sam Register, President of Warner Bros. Animation. "And so it begins." Through six movies, including the *Hobbit* trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings* movies have grossed \$5.9 billion at the WW box office and reps the most awarded film series in history with the highest number of Academy Awards and nominations including 11 Oscars for *Return of the King*, tying the record for a single film.

Reported by deadline.com  
<https://deadline.com/2021/06/lord-of-the-rings-anime-film-the-war-of-the-rohirrim-new-line-1234773024/>

## Donnie Yen Joins Keanu Reeves In Lionsgate's 'John Wick 4'



Donnie Yen has been set by director Chad Stahelski to star with Keanu Reeves in *John Wick 4* for Lionsgate. Yen will play an old friend of Reeves' super assassin John Wick, who shares his same history and many of the same enemies. One of the most successful actor-

filmmakers from the East, Yen is known for his unique style of contemporary screen combat. His popularity extends worldwide from roles in such features as *xXx: Return of Xander Cage*, *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* and the *IP Man* franchise. Scripted by Shay Hatten and Michael Finch, *John Wick 4* is produced by Basil Iwanyk, Erica Lee and Stahelski, with Reeves and Louise Rosner executive producers. The project begins production this summer shooting on location in France, Germany and Japan. Yen's casting follows Lionsgate setting Japanese-British pop superstar Rina Sawayama for a lead role. "We are very lucky to have Donnie Yen join the

franchise," said Stahelski. "I am looking forward to working with him in this exciting new role." Added Iwanyk: "Donnie Yen will bring a vibrant and powerful energy to the franchise. We were determined to bring him on board to *John Wick 4* and are thrilled for the opportunity to have such a major talent to collaborate with Keanu."

Reported by deadline.com  
<https://deadline.com/2021/06/donnie-yen-john-wick-4-keanu-reeves-lionsgate-rina-sawayama-1234769020/>

# Terry Silver Returns In 'Cobra Kai' Season 4



Terry Silver is back. There has been speculation about the return of *The Karate Kid III* baddie, played by Thomas Ian Griffith, since the Season 3 finale. Now Netflix has confirmed Silver will return for Season 4. "Since the beginning of the series, we've been carefully orchestrating the right moment to unleash Cobra Kai dojo co-founder Terry Silver back into the universe. That moment is now. We can't wait for the whole world to experience Thomas Ian

Griffith's majestic return to the franchise," said executive producers/writers Josh Heald, Jon Hurwitz and Hayden Schlossberg. In a new teaser above, with his back to the camera, a pony-tailed Griffith stands in darkness as voice-overs play in the background. "If a man can't stand, he can't fight. If a man can't breathe, he can't fight. If a man can't see, he can't fight. Extreme situations require extreme measures."

There were hints of Silver's return in the Season 3 finale. Flashbacks revealed John Kreese (Martin Kove) saving Silver's life while they were held prisoner during the Vietnam war. Kreese later is seen staring at a photo of Silver as he talks on the phone with an old friend. *Cobra Kai* takes place over 30 years after the events of the 1984 All Valley Karate Tournament with the continuation of the inescapable conflict between Daniel LaRusso (Ralph Macchio) and Johnny

Lawrence (William Zabka). Cast also includes Courtney Henggeler, Xolo Maridueña, Tanner Buchanan, Mary Mouser, Jacob Bertrand, Gianni Decenzo, Vanessa Rubio, Peyton List and Martin Kove with Dallas Dupree Young, Oona O'Brien and Thomas Ian Griffith. *Cobra Kai* is written and executive produced by Heald, Hurwitz and Hayden Schlossberg via their production company, Counterbalance Entertainment. Will Smith, James Lassiter and Caleb Pinkett executive produce for Westbrook Entertainment along with Susan Ekins in association with Sony Pictures Television. Ralph Macchio and William Zabka also serve as executive producers.

Reported by [deadline.com](https://deadline.com)

<https://deadline.com/2021/05/terry-silver-returns-cobra-kai-season-4-thomas-ian-griffith-1234765219/>

## 'The Offer': Miles Teller Replaces Armie Hammer As Producer Al Ruddy In Paramount+ Limited Series About Making Of 'The Godfather'



Miles Teller has been tapped to star as *The Godfather* producer Al Ruddy in Paramount+'s limited event series *The Offer*. Teller replaces Armie Hammer, who exited the show in the wake of sexual assault allegations. *The Offer* is based on the Oscar-winning producer Ruddy's never

before revealed experiences of making the iconic 1972 film that Francis Coppola directed and adapted with Mario Puzo from Puzo's bestselling mob novel, starring Marlon Brando, Al Pacino, James Caan, John Cazale, Robert Duvall, Diane Keaton and Talia Shire. The 10-episode event series is written and executive produced by Nikki Toscano, who also showruns, and Oscar- and Emmy-nominated writer Michael Tolkin (*Escape at Dannemora*, *The Player*). Teller and Ruddy also will serve as executive producers on the series, along with Leslie Grief (*Hatfields & McCoy*). Dexter Fletcher (*Rocketman*) will direct the first and last block. *The Offer* is produced by Paramount TV Studios.

*The Offer* was set up at Paramount+ with a straight-to series commitment. Teller's upcoming films include *Top Gun: Maverick*, set for release in November, and Netflix's *Spiderhead* with Chris Hemsworth and director Joseph Kosinski. He was most recently seen in Nic Refn's Amazon series *Too Old To Die Young*.

Reported by [deadline.com](https://deadline.com)

<https://deadline.com/2021/05/the-offer-miles-teller-replaces-armie-hammer-producer-al-ruddy-paramount-plus-limited-series-1234766175/>

# Netflix's Next "Must See" Family Movie

## The Mitchells vs. The Machines Review

By Sydney Costa



*The Mitchells vs. The Machines* is a movie that is simple in concept and flawless in execution. It was released on Netflix not too long ago by Sony, and it's a joy to watch. The idea isn't anything special; it's just a family road trip conflict focusing on the miscommunication issues between a father and his daughter (and a robot apocalypse, I guess). So why is it so great? Well, there are three things in this movie that really make it shine--comedy, animation, and characters.

First of all, this movie is hilarious. Its jokes feel natural and genuine, and they don't ruin the movie for the potential chance of getting a small laugh out of the audience. This movie has a lot of great running gags, like:

- The little brother having a grown man's voice.
- I can't speak for others, but I personally thought it was a funny little detail.
- The dog. Just. The dog.
- The custom screwdrivers. They fit perfectly with everything else and were a great, clever *deus ex machina*.

There were a lot of other great moments as well (the Furby scene is glorious), but if I were to list them all, we'd be here a while. The animation of *The Mitchells vs. The Machines* is also very well-done. It takes inspiration from the style of *Spider-Man: Into the Spideverse* with the film being 3D animated and then putting 2D lines on top of it. However, it feels completely different in this film. Where *Spideverse* had sharp, gorgeous linework that fit its action-packed theme, *Mitchells v Machines* has this

round, goofy linework that fits the movie's feeling of not taking itself seriously. There are small cartoony animations that are sometimes added in on top of everything else as well, and they only pile onto its feeling of being artsy and interesting and just generally fun. The colors in this film pop, but not to the point of being an eyesore. Every character has a good design that perfectly fits them and gets their point across. Speaking of which, it's finally time to talk about the characters.

As I said earlier, this movie focuses on a dysfunctional family of four, each member with their own diverse and realistic personality. However, rather than being a family that hates each other and is trying to stop fighting, they're a loving family that just has trouble getting along sometimes. The conflict is focused on the wilderness-loving father and his daughter, an amateur film maker who is planning on going to school for it. There is also the mother, who is just trying to hold everyone together, and the younger brother, a dinosaur-lover that, as the movie puts it, "gets" the sister. As the story goes along, there are never any forced fights or ridiculous and unnecessary emotional cliches. Everything is realistic, and they truly feel like a real, genuine family just struggling through each of their own trials.

All in all, this movie is a wild ride packed to the brim with its unique, ridiculous charm. It really feels like everyone who worked on this film just had a really fun time working on it, and I'm glad they did. If that weren't true, we'd never have them to thank for this colorful explosion of a film. From its hysterical comedy to its stunning animation to its wonderfully well-done characters, this movie flabbergasted me with how good it was, and it was a treat to experience. *The Mitchells vs. The Machines* is truly a gem, and I'd happily watch it again. It's a Perfect 10... Yes, Really!

**Final Grade: 10 / 10 (Fantastic!)**

# 'The Last Of Us': Merle Dandridge To Reprise Role From Original Game For HBO Series



The cast of HBO's *The Last Of Us* series adaptation continues to grow as Merle Dandridge joins the cast to reprise her role from the original 2014 PlayStation video game. From *Chernobyl* creator Craig Mazin and *The Last Of Us* creator Neil Druckmann, *The Last of Us* the story takes place twenty years after modern civilization has been destroyed. Joel, a hardened survivor, is hired to smuggle Ellie, a 14-year-old girl, out of an oppressive quarantine zone. What starts as a small job soon becomes a brutal,

heartbreaking journey, as they both must traverse across the U.S. and depend on each other for survival. Dandridge will return to the world of *The Last of Us* as Marlene, the head of the Fireflies, a resistance movement struggling for freedom against an oppressive military regime. The actress also voiced Marlene in the 2020 PlayStation sequel, *The Last of Us Part II*. She will join Pedro Pascal, Bella Ramsey and Gabriel Luna, who are set to appear as Joel, Ellie and Tommy, respectively. Kantemir Balagov is directing the pilot episode of *The Last Of Us*, a co-production with Sony Pictures Television. PlayStation Productions, Word Games, The Mighty Mint, and Naughty Dog produce the TV series, based on the video game developed by Naughty Dog exclusively for the PlayStation platforms. Jasmila Žbanić and Ali Abbas will also direct the series. Druckmann and Mazin write and executive produce; Carolyn Strauss also executive

produces along with Naughty Dog president Evan Wells, Asad Qizilbash and Carter Swan of PlayStation Productions as well as Rose Lam. Dandridge most recently recurred as Kim Hammond in HBO's *The Flight Attendant*, starring Kaley Cuoco. She has also appeared in *Greenleaf*, *Murphy Brown*, *The Night Shift*, and *Star-Crossed*. In addition to *The Last Of Us* franchise, the actress has appeared in a number of other video game titles including *Uncharted 4: A Thief's End*, *Dota 2* and *Half-Life 2*. In 2016 she received the BAFTA Game best former award for her portrayal as Katherine Collins in *Everybody's Gone To the Rapture*.

Reported by deadline.com

<https://deadline.com/2021/05/the-last-of-us-merle-dandridge-repris-original-game-hbo-series-1234765808/>

# 'Moon Knight': Oscar Isaac Confirms Casting in Marvel & Disney+ Series



Oscar Isaac will officially star in Marvel and Disney+'s *Moon Knight* series as the *Star Wars* actor confirmed his casting on Thursday. In a tweet posted to the official Marvel Studios account, Isaac posed in front of enlarged panels from the *Moon*

*Knight* comic series, setting his involvement in stone. "WE ARE MOONKNIGHT," the Twitter post read. We learned about the actor's casting for the series back in October, upon hearing that he was in negotiations to star in the titular role. Jeremy Slater, behind Netflix's series adaptation of *The Umbrella Academy* comic books, has been tapped to develop and lead the writing team on the series for the Disney streaming platform. Moon Knight, aka Marc Spector, is a mercenary who has numerous alter egos — cabbie Jake Lockley and millionaire playboy Steven Grant — in order to better fight the criminal underworld. But later he was established as being a conduit for the Egyptian moon god

Khonshu. Most recently, the character was a consultant who dresses in all-white and goes by the name Mr. Knight. *Moon Knight* was created by Doug Moench and Don Perlin and appeared in the August 1975 issue *Werewolf by Night* #32. Mohamed Diab will direct the upcoming Marvel series, which will feature May Calamawy and Ethan Hawke in the cast.

Reported by deadline.com

<https://deadline.com/2021/05/moon-knight-oscar-isaac-confirms-casting-marvel-disney-series-1234765654/>

# What You Should Binge Watch!

*What's worth checking out on streaming services...*



## Awake (Film)

Review by Danielle Butler.



Can you stay awake!

What if you couldn't sleep, which is the premise of the Netflix film, Awake!

Starring, Gina Rodriguez as sober former

addict and mom of a teen Noah (Lucius Hoyos) and young girl Matilda (Ariana Greenblatt). Yes, this is a far stretch from her role in my personal favorite *Something Great*. The premise of the film is the mother is trying to protect her daughter from all the sleepless crazies. Brian, a colleague of the university that is

in some unknown way connected to the sleep-clinic/ hub (spoiler alert) is killed. Right after this alternation with the not-so-friendly is also the time the estranged mother takes her kids from the grandma (Frances Fisher) who has legal custody. [Spoiler alert we do not learn more about this...it's only to show the tension and trust issues between Noah and Jill.]

This movie has a freak, paranoia theme like *Bird Box*. No one can sleep and we don't know why. Except for one lady (the doctors and sciences are doing studies on in "the hub" and, Jill's daughter, Matilda. Apparently in addition to the normal things that happen to people that are sleep deprived (some symptoms are: slowed thinking, worsened memory, poor or risky decision-making, moral impairment, hallucinations, weaken immune system and can cause diseases) but apparently this causes the general public to become psycho murders. The phases of insanity that happened to the soldiers and staff at the lab was more gradual because they were It was actually This film ESCALATES QUICKLY in a "s e r i o u s l y d i s t u r b i n g" way. The various hallucinations were funny however, the ways in which characters were harmed and/or die were messed up! I would have been. If I ran with this storyline people would have the extreme giggles,

overeat and probably drink themselves to death, but this story takes a different path. Once at the lab we see the other lady who sleeps get poked and prodded as well as a chimpanzee tested and treated inhumanely. Did I mention if you don't like violence and injustice, you're going to have a field day with this film!

So, the happy family, minus grandma, figure out how to live (I won't spoil that 'how' for you.) Like *Bird Box* the cause of the crazy is not explained at all. Also Dodge, (played by the beautiful Shamier Anderson) what was up with that guy? His storyline seemed so random. It's surprising his character arch didn't go further than it did. Gina Rodriguez did an outstanding performance being a fierce, protective mother, desperate to keep her kids safe and experiencing a rollercoaster of emotions. Ariana Greenblatt also was an incredible little actress portraying empathy, fear, bravery, and strength. I would rate this movie a 6 at best although, these types of movies are definitely not my jam. If you watch it, have a Goodnight and May you sleep well!

**Final Grade: 6/10 (Adequate)**

## Jupiter's Legacy: *What we Really Thought of it!*

Review by Holly Scudero

Countless Marvel, DC, and other superhero movies and comics have taught us that superheroes are more than just *super*; they're real people (or sometimes technically aliens) with their own unique backstories, family dynamics, and complicated lives. Netflix's new original show *Jupiter's Legacy* takes the complex lives of

superheroes to an entirely new level, as we follow the adventures of an aging superhero team and the next generation struggling to fill their shoes. The original members of the Union of Justice have been doing their best to keep their world free of crime for nearly a century, but there's no getting around the fact that they won't be around forever. Each episode of *Jupiter's Legacy* alternates back and



forth between the present day, when these aging heroes are struggling with the future of their own children as

the next generation of the Union, and the past, when the Utopian/Sheldon (Josh Duhamel), Lady Liberty/Grace (Leslie Bibb), and their friends received their own powers.

Along the way, we are introduced to the Utopian's moral creed of never killing, no matter the situation--a concept that society in general and his own children in particular feel can't stand up to modern supervillains.

Viewers also get a sense of just how much pressure is put on these younger superheroes. The Paragon/Brandon (Andrew Horton) feels he can never live up to his dad's expectations, who makes him feel like he did the wrong thing even when he saves lives.

Meanwhile, his sister Chloe (Elena Kampouris) has fully rejected being a hero, choosing instead to use her celebrity status to do photoshoots and gain sponsorship deals... and live wildly in the local party scene.

It really all makes for a fascinating, strongly character-driven show, when all is said and done, even if it takes time for some of the characters to develop truly three-dimensional personalities. Viewers may well spend the first half of the first season developing a strong dislike to Sheldon, whose determination to do the right thing--and never kill anybody, ever--comes across as outdated and even dangerous in some situations. And the way he treats his own children--the high expectations, the lectures--doesn't make him any more likeable. Meanwhile, Brandon, who could easily be the star of the show, feels a little... flat... for much of the early episodes. It's not until his drive and passion really start to shine through later on in the show that viewers will really start to love him and the future he stands for. Overall, though, the actors do a good job with their roles despite the potential awkwardness of playing the same characters, decades apart. This aids in our ability to really see how the characters' experiences in their youth shaped who they became as adults, and the sense of rightness and

responsibility they strove to champion as heroes. The only really awkward thing about it is that the makeup jobs aren't always entirely convincing, even taking into account the idea that heroes age differently. Lady Liberty's smooth skin is at odds with her silver hair; it's hard for us to believe that she's really so old when she looks like her younger self simply put on a wig. *Jupiter's Legacy* is a fascinating show and does justice to its original source material. It's binge-able and has characters that will stick with you. Maybe, we'll actually get a season 2!

**Final Grade: 7 / 10 (Okay)**

## **Shadow and Bone** *The Show on Netflix You Should be Watching!*

Review by Allison Costa



Not too long ago, Netflix begin its first season rendition of the popular book series "Shadow and Bones". As a reader, I don't always love when my favorite series are turned into shows or movies because it can often be a huge let down. Thankfully, I haven't read any of "Shadow and Bones" so I had zero expectations to compare it to and was able to simply focus on the

streaming series. At first, it can be a little hard to follow because the events exist in an entirely different world and realm and familiarizing yourself with this world's history, terminology and inner workings can be jarring. They do a decent job of giving information slowly with flashbacks and other story telling mechanisms that still allows the current plot line to run.

I will say that the first 2-3 episodes were kind of all over the place and I couldn't yet tell if I was going to like the series or not but at least I was intrigued enough to keep going. The concept of the series is interesting and the acting is done pretty decently. A couple of the more minor characters are actually my favorites. There is some pretty good action and humor and we do see some development of the main character, although not as much as I would like. Basically, the world is broken up into not only different countries and class systems, but different kinds of people as well--mainly magic vs non-magic. Each has a hatred and dislike for the other based on stereotypes and misconceptions--can anyone relate to this?...The magic powers seem to be fairly similar to those of the Avatar series actually--fire, water, air--but also include telepathic and mind-bending powers. The powers of sunlight and darkness are also HUGE forces at play because they are rare and there is only one bloodline for darkness and only the "savior" figure has the sunlight powers. I don't want to give away too much or the series won't be interesting at all! But of course there is always a twist as to who the true heroes and the true villains are. I am definitely excited to see what Season 2 will bring. Season 1 wasn't amazing, but good enough that I will be wanting to see where the storyline goes in Season 2!! If you are a fan of sci-fi and magic and looking for a slightly cleaner show than say, "Game of Thrones", "Shadow and Bones" may be a good fit for you!!

**Final Grade: 7 / 10 (Okay)**

# ALIEN INVASION DOUBLE FEATURE

## 2 Great Alien Invasion Movies to Watch

### Along with Independence Day on the 4th of July

Reviews by Marcus Blake

#### THE TOMORROW WAR



**What** if you had to fight aliens in the future? Yes, you heard me, you have to go to the future to fight aliens in order to save your world. Now you know the meaning behind the title *The Tomorrow War* and it's not as bad as it sounds. The new movie hitting Amazon 4th of July weekend in 2021 is enjoyable and as we embark on the 25th anniversary of another great alien invasion movie, *Independence Day*. I'm reminded of the fact that all alien invasion movies seem a little ridiculous at first. Sometimes the best movies started out with a ludicrous premise and then the action and the story itself makes it into a good movie. Now let me start off by saying that this film may not be as iconic as *Independence*

*Day*, only time will tell, but an alien invasion movie starring Chris Pratt, Star Lord himself, it's at least going to be entertaining. The basic story is there will be an alien invasion in 30 years and in order to fight that war they must go back in time and find human beings that they can transport to the future after installing the first conscription act or draft since the Vietnam War. Low and behold, Chris Pratt's character who is also a doctor and engineer gets conscripted to fight because he has military training. Sounds kind of boring, until you find out why he was chosen and who his commanding officer is in the future. No, I'm not going to spoil that for you...you will just have to watch this movie during the 4th of July weekend either before or after you watch *Independence Day*!

First, let's start with the aliens. Any kind of alien can be awesome if they're monstrous just like the aliens in the movie *Alien* and James Cameron's *Aliens* where they and just ingest themselves into your body and you serve as a host. They were awesome then they can be just as ridiculous as cockroach type aliens from *Starship Troopers*. The aliens in *The Tomorrow War* are pretty cool and just on the right side of scary, so that definitely makes this movie worth watching. The action is pretty good, especially in the third act. It isn't just a straight shoot'em up or blow'em up movie... there is a predator-type quality to hunting the aliens and the aliens hunting humans. In a lot of ways, I felt like this would be a great video game

that I want to play. Earlier this year we reviewed the game *Outriders*... I almost feel like this story should have been the story in that game which not only makes me want to watch the movie again, but play it as video game. Chris Pratt is outstanding as well as Yvonne Strahovski. And JK Simmons pretty much steals the show as he usually does. The performances are good and that's what makes this movie worth watching despite the fact that you're dealing with a time traveling alien invasion movie, yeah I know how that sounds!

Now, the danger of it doing any movie that deals with time travels is you're bound to get it wrong, I know you can almost hear Doc Brown from *Back to the Future 2* talking about changing the future and creating an alternate timeline. There's lots of missteps and a lot of scientific points that seem to get glossed over just to tell an action story with aliens. If you can ignore that then you'll enjoy this movie. But then again does anybody ever really tell a time travel story correctly. Not even *Star Trek* always gets it right! If you're a nerd like us then you pay attention to the finer details, but then again sometimes you have to ignore those details. The biggest problem I have with this film is I feel like there's a lot of plot points that are missing, a lot of things that you can't explain in a 2-hour movie, but they try anyway. I'd be lying if I didn't say that I had lots of questions at the end of it. Maybe I just need to watch it more than once, maybe that's the writer's and director's

intention. I almost feel like you could have done a limited series on Amazon or even Netflix to tell a bigger story. Then again, maybe there's going to be a trilogy out of all this. Like for example, you briefly try to explain why the aliens are there, but it's a short simple answer. I feel like that needs more explaining. This is a story that's getting crammed into 2 hours and it feels like it. One of the most brilliant things regarding a sequel to a film that happened a few years ago was when Blade Runner 2049 came out, to explain what had happened up to that movie, they made little shorts. Maybe that's something they could have done to tell this story or maybe again, do a limited series! It really feels like a bigger story and somehow we're just skimming the surface to make it a 2 hour movie. When you have something like that, then really all you're getting is an action movie where the plot doesn't matter. But great Sci-Fi movies especially alien invasion movies shouldn't just be an action movie. There's always a better story to tell. Like a good old-fashioned be Sci-Fi movie, maybe you don't really need a huge plot to tell an entertaining story and that's where I think the film The Tomorrow War blurs that line between great Sci-Fi and B-Sci-Fi films. This doesn't mean I'm telling you to not watch it, it's a good one for streaming services and it's worth checking out.

There's a lot that could have made this a great Sci-Fi film, but it does come up short in a lot of ways which makes it just an okay film. And that doesn't really matter when it comes to watching it on Amazon or not. Like a previous film on amazon, Coming to America 2, it's not great and it doesn't have to be in order to be entertaining. Plus, when we examine the value of movies and whether it's worth paying a full-price movie ticket versus just watching it on a streaming service, The Tomorrow War is perfect for

Amazon. At the end of the day, the movie doesn't do enough to tell this great massive life-changing story, but it will entertain you and that's all it needs to do. Chris Pratt and the rest of the cast are really good and because you won't be seeing it in a theater, you won't feel let down because it's just an okay film. But really, sometimes, all we need is just an okay film instead of a film that has too much hype and we hope it's going to be great only to be disappointed later. I didn't expect much what this film and I definitely wasn't disappointed and yes, I will certainly be watching it again, especially when doing a double feature about alien invasion movies because, like another film that we reviewed this year, Occupation: Rainfall, it's perfect for that as well. Even though it's not the best Sci-Fi movie I've ever seen, I didn't waste 2 hours watching it and neither will you. You will certainly be entertained and that makes having an Amazon Prime account worth it so check out Chris Pratt in The Tomorrow War, it may not be the next guardians of the galaxy, but you won't go wrong with checking this film out!

**Final Grade: 7 / 10 (Okay)**



## ***Occupation: Rainfall***

*Are* you like me when you watch Independence Day and wonder what the alien invasion looked like in other parts of the world, how come nobody ever made a movie about that? Even though it's not really a sequel or even related to Independence Day, there is a movie that deals with an alien invasion in a different part of the world and that movie is Occupation: Rainfall! It answers the question what if Australia was the last refuge of society fighting an alien invasion, which makes the film even more interesting as an alien invasion film because there's something unique and rebellious about Australia, it's very much a unique character within any movie that's set within the country.

Maybe it's because it's a harsh land and Australians are more stubborn than most which in a sense would make them better fighters to quell an alien invasion. But if you ask me, it's almost the perfect setting for an alien invasion movie. As this film

is about to hit Amazon prime you might be surprised to know that it's actually a sequel to an independent film that came out a few years before. Yes Occupation: Rainfall is pretty much like The Empire Strikes Back of the story after the first movie introduces all the characters and how their lives have changed after aliens invaded the world. And Australia is the last stand against the invasion. The reason I mention Independence Day is you automatically get a similar vibe when watching Occupation: Rainfall. It could easily be categorized as a B sci-fi film, but a great B sci-fi film... Some of the best sci-fi films in the world are not mainstream. First let me say that I enjoyed this movie for what it is. No, it's not going to win an Oscar, but great movies don't have to be Oscar winners. And there's plenty of great sci-fi films that haven't won the award. This is a straight up action movie where your characters have formed a rebellion against an invading alien race. The plot is fairly simple. And maybe what makes it great is that it doesn't overcomplicate things. Plus, you got a great Australian cast from Dan Ewing to Temuera Morrison. There's plenty to like about this film and it's perfect for Amazon prime.

You're not going to get any great philosophical debates as you see in movies like Blade Runner. In fact you can almost look at this film as the Red Dawn of science fiction films, how would you fight back against invading aliens. How would you start the rebellion to take your home back? And of course, you're dealing

with humanity itself who will betray each other and their own cause. But what makes this film great is you get a lot of good action, a lot of great fight scenes and great special effects that rival any JJ Abrams film, but without the annoying lens flare. In a lot of ways, I felt like I was in the story of one of my favorite video games WarFrame. And then add Ken Jeong to the next to make it more light-hearted. So you basically get action and comedy, how can you go wrong with that! I think the best part of this film is it's not trying to be anything other than what it is. Just a good old-fashioned Sci-Fi action film about fighting an alien invasion. Like I said, the best stories are the ones that don't overcomplicate things. Pretty much the cast from the first film came back for this film so the continuity is definitely there. If I have any true criticisms of this film is it definitely feels like the middle part of a trilogy so it leaves a lot of unanswered questions and it would be very disappointing if we didn't get the third film. The writer and director Luke Sparke has done a wonderful job of making a fun sci-fi film and even though it isn't Star Wars, you can definitely see how he has been influenced by great sci-fi from Star Wars to Battlestar Galactica and Star Trek. One of the first things I noticed when watching this film knowing that it was sent in Australia is how much it made me think of Farscape, one of the true hidden gems of the Sci-Fi world. That was a show that didn't need overcomplicated stories, it was simple and it was a fun series. I look

at this film as being on the same level as that. Something I can put in the background and just enjoy especially if I am working. One more criticism of the film is that it does feel familiar and you've seen it before, but so what. Even if it is the poor man's version of Independence Day, that's okay because those kinds of films are fun and that's all they need to be. Occupation: Rainfall does a great job picking back up where the first film that introduced all the characters ended. It's definitely an improvement over the first one as it had a bigger budget and you were able to do more with it while broadening the stories of all the characters. And it very much is the middle part of a trilogy, so it definitely has the feel of Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers. It may not win any awards, it may not be one of the most successful films of all time, but if you are a science fiction fan then you'll have fun watching this movie. You'll enjoy it for the action and the character development, especially if you've seen the first film and it will leave you wanting to see more. You may think it's just a B Sci-Fi film, but as I mentioned before, sometimes those are the best. This film is a love letter to everybody who loves science fiction and action movies, who watch these movies just to be entertained and escape! Occupation: Rainfall does that perfectly!

**Final Grade: 7 / 10 (Okay)**

# Modern Expectations for “*The Mighty Ducks: Game Changers*”

## Season 1 Review

by Alex Moore



As someone who grew up in the '80s, but more memorably into the '90s, I can look back on a number of moments connected to entertainment during that era. In 1992, specifically, a handful of famed Disney productions were released and I could seemingly not get enough of any of it. While “Aladdin” was probably the biggest film that they put out that year, there was another, which became a big success in its own right. It was called “The Mighty Ducks.” Though it did not make nearly as much money at box office as the aforementioned title did and it was not nearly as well-received by critics at the time, its moderate level of success led to two, additional sequels: “D2: The Mighty Ducks are Back!” and “The Mighty Ducks 3.”

I can vaguely recall my experience during the first two movies, but by the time the third film was released, I had all but lost any interest in the franchise. I guess you could say that the teen version of me had outgrown it, somehow. Over the years, I never really returned to any of it, but like most people who had reached the age of nostalgia, I eventually became curious to re-experience it all, again, but this time, through the eyes of an adult. Do you remember someone ever telling you to, “Never meet your heroes” and wondered what it meant? Well, I would add that, sometimes, you should never try to relive your childhood memories, for possibly the same or similar reasons...

What I was trying to say, in so many words, is that the original “Mighty Ducks” films are only as good as nostalgia will carry you and that beyond any of this, the movies are objectively bad, on numerous levels. I found myself feeling pretty frustrated by what the filmmakers had tried to push out. As someone who has grown to understand the game of hockey as a sports commentator, the gameplay does not hold up well and as someone who now watches movies from a much more analytical perspective, the stories are largely flimsy and shallow. Oh, and forget about continuity between the three movies; they were all directed by someone differently from the one prior. Some characters were even written out without any real explanation in the story, itself, but I digress. When word got to me that Disney was bringing back the franchise with an all-new streaming series, “The Mighty Ducks: Game Changers,” I hoped for the best, but feared for the worst. Of course, I had probably already seen the worst and standards have certainly changed since the 1990s. So, what could possibly go wrong?...

It begins with ‘Episode 1: Game On!’ Lauren Graham (“Middle School: The Worst Years of My Life”) is Alex Morrow, a single, hard-working and under-appreciated mother of a child, Evan, played by Brady Noon. He is trying out for the Mighty Ducks, who are now a powerhouse hockey team in the Minneapolis, Minnesota area, but in order to keep things that way, they must recruit only the best and Evan is not among them. At least not now. For anyone familiar with the franchise, this team is now very reminiscent of the Hawks from the very first film, back in 1992, although the colors are different. Alex does not seem to understand the concept of “dedication at any level” and the present coach of the Ducks, Coach T, played by Dylan Playfair, seems to lack the requisite sympathy to truly care for any of the kids participating. Shortly after things unfold, Evan and his mother plan to start up a brand new team, very much like the plot in 1994’s “The Little Giants.” Nick Ganz, played by Maxwell Simkins, and Koob, played by Luke Islam, are recruited early, along with Lauren, played by Bella Higginbotham, and Maya, played by Taegan Burns. Logan, played by Kiefer O’Reilly, and Sam, played by De’Jon Watts, round out the rest of the primary players on the team that soon becomes known as the “Don’t Bothers,” who dress up like the Wyoming Cowboys of the NCAA, in a hideous arrangement of brown and yellow, which actually fits the team nicely, in my view. Oh, and of course, the immortal Emilio Estevez (“The Public”) reprises his role of Gordon Bombay, but is now down-and-out and “hates hockey.” I can only imagine where this is going to go from here.

The next two episodes, 'Dusters' and 'Breakaway,' are about the early growing stages of a new team that seemingly cannot compete with anyone in the league that they have just joined. They lose their first couple of games by a combined score of 29-1, including a 17-1 defeat at the hands of the Mighty Ducks. What everyone on the Don't Bothers realizes quickly is that losing and losing big are not fun; competing is too important to "not bother with." However, with their last-second goal versus the Ducks, the Don't Bothers have scored for the first time in the season and there seems to be some hope for the future, as a result, but it comes with some assistance from an outside source and the new coach, Alex, is really struggling, though it is understandable as to why. Meanwhile, Nick has developed a crush on the snack stand waitress, Winnie Berigan, played by Em Haine, who seems to shuffle through young men associated with the various snack ingredients, such as cocoa and mustard. As Nick joins the new hockey team, he is also replaced by the father of the girl whom he once broadcasted games with: Mary Jo (aka "MJ"), played by Lia Franklin. Her dad, Terry, is quite humorous filling in for Nick, bringing back memories of the second man in the booth for the "Major League" movies of the late '80s and early '90s. Episode 4: 'Hockey Moms' pits Alex with her boss from work, Stephanie, played by Julie Cerda ("Madeline's Madeline"), who has a child playing with the Ducks, Trevor Reddick, played by Kasra Wong. An awkward dinner involving Bombay as Alex's date with Stephanie and her husband leads to a competitive showcase on the ice, where one mom edges out the other, but only due to a strange technicality. The cute side stories seem to continue mostly with Nick, who invites Evan over for a sleepover, but Koob winds up being included and shines as a singer who can manipulate parents when he so chooses. At some point, the duo of mom and son, Alex and Evan, meets with Bombay, to form a triangle. Does that seem familiar?

Episode 5: 'Cherry Picker' might be the strongest episode in the series. Here, we see the development of bonding between two of the girls on the team, Lauren and Maya; one is part of the "in" crowd at school, while the other likes to wear capes and cosplay with her circle of friends. What you come to see is that either one of them is capable of being judgmental of the other. In other words, it is a two-way street. Elsewhere, Evan reunites with his wayward dad, who bonds with Bombay during a wing-eating contest, involving Cholula hot sauce. The bonds are strong enough to translate to the Don't Bothers' first win of the season, 5-4, over the Hawks, and Evan scored every meaningful goal in the game, resulting in a 1-5 record on the season.

The following two episodes, 'Spirit of the Ducks' and 'Pond Hockey,' represent the next stage of the team's development. Sofi Hanson-Bhatt, played by Swayam Bhatia, has become good friends with Evan and switched over to the Don't Bothers from the Mighty Ducks, strengthening the roster in the process, but now Evan has earned the right to rejoin the Ducks and must make a decision on what to do next. Bombay sees an old group of Ducks and the real story about his past and why he left the club comes to the surface. Alex is now beginning to look and sound like a real coach and the Don't Bothers continue to string together more victories, albeit, their methods are still quite silly. For the final three episodes, we have: 'Change on the Fly,' 'Head Games' and 'State of Play.' Success is breeding confidence for Coach Alex and the Don't Bothers, but at least one player is still struggling, though he has a lot going for himself, elsewhere. Bombay finds a way to teach him how to be effective on the ice and now he appears to have the total package, at least according to one teammate. As the hockey season draws to a close, some major shifts occur at the coaching position, back and forth, between Alex and Bombay, but not for the reasons you might presume. At times, the story begins to feel like something from "Cobra Kai," which I do not mean as a bad thing. It comes down to how the players behave around each other, especially when players from the other teams are in the mix. As you know, young people are quite fickle. When the final tournament ensues, the team that should win does, but the team you want to win finds victory in another variation and as a result, there is a major turn of events to close out the series. It is a meaningful and satisfying finish, in my opinion. The way "Game Changers" wraps up makes me wonder if Disney was feeling very confident about how the reaction might turn out for this show. There was such a significant ending that the story seemed mostly unbelievable, at that stage. If it had occurred over the span of two or three years, it would have made a lot more sense, but how much reality do we really want or need, under the circumstances? I think those who were involved found a nice balance between nostalgia and originality for this series, overall, but the writing was still weak at times, too. I certainly enjoyed myself and found more that I liked about this show than I did not like. I would even say that the quality of this series was better than the previous movies. So, modern times have affected this franchise in a largely-positive way. That is what I think about it, anyway.

**Final Grade: 6 / 10 (Adequate)**



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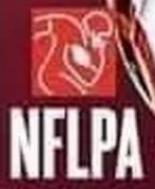
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# MADDEN NFL 22

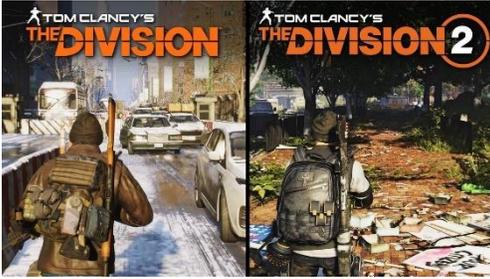
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**GAMING NEWS**

# UBISOFT ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF THE TOM CLANCY'S THE DIVISION UNIVERSE



## Ubisoft Shares New Details About The Division's Expanding Trajectory With New Games and Transmedia Content Coming to the Franchise.

Ubisoft announced an update on the Tom Clancy's The Division universe. The launch of Tom Clancy's The Division® back in 2016 marked the first completely original IP under the Tom Clancy umbrella since 2009, and the game broke multiple Ubisoft sales records. The franchise continued its development with Tom Clancy's The Division® 2 becoming one of the most successful games of 2019 and its 2020 expansion, Tom Clancy's

The Division® 2 Warlords of New York, was the most active in the game's history. "In the past five years, The Division has grown from a very ambitious project at Ubisoft to a world-renowned franchise reaching 40 million unique players," explained Alain Corre, executive director of Ubisoft EMEA. "We are very proud of what our teams have accomplished with this franchise and the amazing universe they have created. The potential and depth of this enables us to explore new and exciting content that will please loyal long-term fans of The Division and new ones alike." As part of this expansion of the franchise, today Ubisoft unveiled Tom Clancy's The Division® Heartland, a brand-new free-to-play game set in the universe of The Division. Development is being led by Red Storm Entertainment, a studio with close ties to the Tom Clancy licenses, who have also worked on The Division and The Division 2.

The Division Heartland will be a standalone experience available on PC, console and cloud platforms in 2021-22. Ubisoft also announced plans to take The Division franchise to mobile, bringing the

universe to an even wider audience. More details on this project will come at a later date. Finally, The Division 2 will also be receiving brand-new content as part of an update coming in late 2021. Ubisoft Massive, with support from Ubisoft Bucharest, is leading the development of this new content that will include an entirely new game mode and new methods for levelling agents up with an emphasis on increasing build variety and viability. More details will be revealed on this new update ahead of its release. The Division is also expanding its transmedia offering, with the film, starring Jessica Chastain and Jake Gyllenhaal, in development with Netflix. Inspired by the events of the original game, the film will be directed by Rawson Marshall Thurber. Additionally, The Division is announcing an upcoming original novel published by Aconyte. The story will be set after the events of The Division 2 and will explore how the Outbreak affects different regions of the United States as agents fight to secure supply routes.

## SPORTS FANS: Nacon and Eko Software announce **Rugby 22**



NACON and Eko Software are pleased to announce *Rugby 22*, a new game in the leading rugby franchise, which will release in January 2022 on...

PlayStation 5, PlayStation 4, Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One and PC. The Paris-based development studio has used all its expertise

in sports games (*Handball 21*, *Rugby 18* and *Rugby 20*) and is making many improvements to this latest simulation. This includes more realistic AI, improved difficulty that adapts better to each player's level, and more lifelike star-player faces – especially on the latest-generation consoles – thanks to the use of photogrammetry. Benoît Clerc, Head of Publishing at NACON, explained the goal for this new edition: "Rugby 22 continues and builds upon the great work started by Eko Software on the previous two games. We want to offer rugby fans the most authentic and complete experience possible with updated gameplay that has incorporated many improvements based on player feedback on the previous titles and by including official teams and competitions never seen before in a rugby simulation." Among the official teams and

competitions included in *Rugby 22*, players can find the top leagues with all the official clubs, as well as the major national teams like France, Italy, Ireland and Japan to name a few. Rugby fans can also play as the sport's current star players and choose their favorite teams to compete against their friends in multiplayer. *Rugby 22* will be available in January 2022 on PlayStation®5, PlayStation®4, Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One and PC. About NACON" NACON is a company of the BIGBEN Group founded in 2019 to optimize its know-how through strong synergies in the video game market. By bringing together its 11 development studios, the publishing of AA video games, the design and distribution of premium gaming devices, NACON focuses 20 years of expertise at the service of players. [www.nacongaming.com](http://www.nacongaming.com)

# SAVE THE UNIVERSE (PROBABLY) WITH MARVEL'S GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY GAME - COMING 10-26-21



## Play as Star-Lord and Experience an Original Guardians of the Galaxy Story on October 26, 2021

During the SQUARE ENIX® PRESENTS digital-showcase event, Eidos-Montréal and SQUARE ENIX today unveiled *Marvel's Guardians of the Galaxy*, a bold third-person narrative action-adventure game which combines original storytelling with electrifying single-player gameplay. Developed by Eidos-Montréal in collaboration with Marvel Entertainment, *Marvel's Guardians of the Galaxy* will release simultaneously on the PlayStation®5, PlayStation®4, Xbox Series X|S and Xbox One consoles, and on PC, and streaming via GeForce NOW on October 26, 2021. Fire up Star-Lord's jet boots for a wild ride across the cosmos in this fresh take on Marvel's *Guardians of the Galaxy*. With the

unpredictable Guardians at your side, blast your way from one explosive situation to another, with both original and well-known Marvel characters caught in a struggle for the fate of the universe. You got this. Probably. "The Eidos-Montréal team is honored to have the opportunity to work on such an iconic franchise alongside our trusted collaborators at Marvel Entertainment," said David Anfossi, Head of Studio at Eidos-Montréal. "Our teams are known for revisiting IPs and bringing their own twists and craft to the stories and the art surrounding them. As you will experience, it's no different for *Marvel's Guardians of the Galaxy*." *Marvel's Guardians of the Galaxy* is created by the seasoned Eidos-Montréal team, working closely with Marvel Entertainment to provide an original and authentic experience inspired by over 50 years of *Guardians of the Galaxy* lore. Influenced by the comics, this unique spin on the *Guardians of the Galaxy* will take players on a riotous journey across the stars as Peter Quill and the Guardians unintentionally become the galaxy's first and last line of defense. "A distinct mix of sci-fi, family drama, and rock n' roll attitude with an edgy aesthetic is the foundation for our *Guardians franchise*", said Jay Ong, EVP and Head of Marvel Games. "We are thrilled to collaborate with Eidos-Montréal knowing they are the team that can deliver on this core promise. The team's

*laser-focused vision for our beloved band of misfits shines in *Marvel's Guardians of the Galaxy*. We are excited for our fans to play it this October."* Master Star-Lord's dynamic combat style to obliterate foes with his Element Blasters and call on the unique abilities of each Guardian to defeat a wild variety of interplanetary enemies. Also, as self-proclaimed leader of the *Guardians of the Galaxy*, players will engage in select player-choice driven dialogue and interactions between Quill and the Guardians that further strengthens the bonds within this dysfunctional family.

Finally, *Marvel's Guardians of the Galaxy* wouldn't be complete without a killer soundtrack to rock out to while soaring through space in the Milano. The game is jam-packed with classic 1980s hits and kicking original tracks. *Marvel's Guardians of the Galaxy* will be available on PlayStation®5 console, PlayStation®4 console, Xbox Series X|S and Xbox One consoles, and PC digital, and streaming via GeForce NOW on October 26, 2021. Pre-orders are available now for the Standard and the Deluxe Editions. For full details on pre-order items and more information on *Marvel's Guardians of the Galaxy*, please visit the official website and follow us on social networks.

## Ash Williams Returns in Evil Dead Game



*The King* himself, Bruce Campbell, breaks down the new co-op/PvP multiplayer game, coming to PC and consoles later this year

Saber Interactive and Boss Team Games have released a new gameplay overview trailer for *Evil Dead: The Game*. Featuring Bruce Campbell as the original boomstick-brandishing, chainsaw-wielding hero Ash Williams, this video is your first major look at the co-op and PvP multiplayer action game,

coming later this year to PC, PlayStation®5, PlayStation®4, Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One, and Nintendo Switch. You'll also get a glimpse of new surprises like Cheryl Williams and Henry the Red as playable characters, plus Ash's Delta (and yes, you can drive it). Inspired by the iconic horror, humor, and action of the "Evil Dead" universe, *Evil Dead: The Game* brings the biggest characters from the franchise together in an over-the-top, gore-filled experience against the forces of darkness. Work as a team of four survivors, including Ash, Kelly Maxwell, Pablo Simon Bolivar, Scotty, Lord Arthur and more, to fight the Deadites and banish the vile Kandarian Demon. Or become the mighty Demon yourself, using your powers of possession to stop the good guys dead and swallow their souls!

Battle across memorable sights from the

franchise, including the infamous Knowby cabin, brought to life with tons of terrifying visuals and all-new dialogue from Bruce Campbell. Discover more than 25 weapons, including Ash's Gauntlet, Boomstick, and chainsaw, and level up a variety of skill trees to grow even stronger and survive the night. *Evil Dead: The Game* is a collaboration between Saber Interactive, Boss Team Games, Renaissance Pictures, Creative Licensing on behalf of STUDIOCANAL, leading entertainment company Metro Goldwyn Mayer (MGM), and global content leader Lionsgate (NYSE: LGF.A, LGF.B). For more information, visit [www.EvilDeadTheGame.com](http://www.EvilDeadTheGame.com), and follow the game on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/EvilDeadTheGame](https://www.facebook.com/EvilDeadTheGame), Twitter [@EvilDeadTheGame](https://twitter.com/EvilDeadTheGame) and Instagram [@EvilDeadTheGame](https://www.instagram.com/EvilDeadTheGame).

# Avast Ye Landlubbers! Pirate Action-RPG *KING OF SEAS* Sets Sail



*Highly-anticipated swashbuckling game available today for PC, Xbox One, PlayStation 4 and Nintendo Switch!*

Developers 3DClouds and global independent games label Team17 are thrilled to announce that highly-anticipated pirate action-RPG *King of Seas* launches today. Prepare for adventure on the high seas and enter a buccaneering world filled with colourful characters and treasure-laden missions. *King of Seas* is now available to purchase for [PC via Steam](#) and [GOG](#), [PlayStation 4](#), [Xbox One](#) and [Nintendo Switch](#). Budding pirates looking to get their sea legs before taking the plunge can download a demo version of *King of Seas* for [PC](#), [Xbox](#) and [Nintendo Switch](#).

**About King of Seas :***King of Seas* is an action role-playing game set in a deadly procedurally generated pirate world. In a ferocious plot, you will fight to regain what has been taken away and embark on an epic adventure in a fantastic world, filled with battles, lost islands and treasures. A universe full of amazing characters and breathtaking missions will keep you anchored as you strive to become the king of all pirates.

#### Main features

- **Story:** A series of quests guide you on your journey and uncover the intriguing characters of the *King of Seas* world who will lead you to the next path of your epic adventure.
- **Procedural Generation:** Dive into a lush, procedurally generated world that constantly refreshes the exploration mechanics within each new game.
- **Dynamic World:** The world reacts to your every action, naval routes change and with each conquered settlement the difficulty adapts to constantly give you a more challenging time.
- **Map:** A thick fog will ensure travelling towards objectives is not plain sailing, after all wouldn't you want to lose the joy of exploration?

- **Navigation system:** Atmospheric effects influence gameplay. Sail during a storm at your own risk, escape the enemies and always remember to carefully watch the wind direction to stay in control during battles. The strategy starts here.
- **Ship customization:** Five types of highly customizable ships through an equipment and skill system, just as in any true role-playing game!
- **Combat system:** Not only cannon shots and nautical strategy but also speed and spectacle, thanks to a set of more than 20 skills to choose from and three branches of talents to suit any playstyle.

3DClouds and Team17 also revealed the post launch roadmap for *King of Seas* kicking off towards the end of June with a PC Tech update featuring re-bindable keys and following that there will be a quality of life update, Monster update and mouse support all on the way. *King of Seas* is available now for Windows PC via [Steam](#) and [GOG](#), [PlayStation 4](#), [Xbox One](#) and [Nintendo Switch](#). Demo versions of the game can be downloaded for [Nintendo Switch](#), [Xbox](#) and [PC](#).

## *Warhammer Age of Sigmar: Storm Ground* is out now! Prepare to fight for the Mortal Realms!



*Age of Sigmar: Storm Ground*, the action-packed, turn-based strategy game developed by Gasket Games and published by Focus Home Interactive lands today on PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch

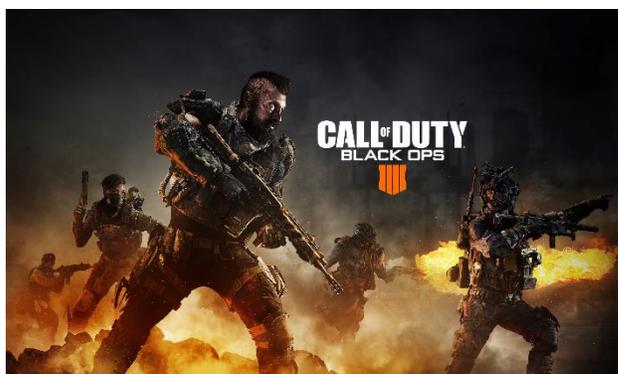
and PC. *Storm Ground* is based on Games Workshop's iconic fantasy IP "Age of Sigmar" - a dark-fantasy universe where immortal knights ride heavenly stardrakes to eradicate Chaos & Death across a multitude of realms. Battle in solo campaigns or online multiplayer with everyone thanks to full Crossplay support. Lead your customisable armies in dynamic, turn-based warfare in solo and PvP Become the commander of one of the extraordinary factions of Warhammer Age of Sigmar - This is *Storm Ground*, a world of legends, heroes, hellish creatures and fearsome battles. Lead your highly-customisable

force in this dynamic and spectacular skirmish turn-based strategy game packed with fast-paced warfare. Victories allow you to collect and upgrade new types of units, powerful equipment, and unlock devastating skills. Explore all the routes in *Storm Ground's* non-linear campaign. During each new playthrough, overcome new odds to find unique units and gears. Build your legendary army and defy other players in epic online duels. *Warhammer Age of Sigmar: Storm Ground* is available now on PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch, and PC with full crossplay support.



# PlayStation Plus games for July 2021

**The PlayStation Plus July lineup** packs in thrilling firefights, wrestling superstars, intense horror, and martial arts action. Whether your tastes lie with first-person shooters (Call of Duty: Black Ops 4), over the top arcade punch ups (WWE 2K Battlegrounds), third-person survival horror (A Plague Tale: Innocence) or battling your way up global leaderboards (Virtua Fighter 5 Ultimate Showdown), PlayStation Plus next month has something for you. Call of Duty: Black Ops 4, WWE 2K Battlegrounds, and A Plague Tale: Innocence are available to add to your console library starting Tuesday, July 6 until Monday, August 2. And if you missed it last month, Virtua Fighter is available on PlayStation Plus for a second month, and is available to PlayStation Plus members until Monday, August 2.



## Call of Duty: Black Ops 4 | PS4

Call of Duty: Black Ops 4 delivers a trio of action-packed multiplayer-modes\* for first-person shooter fans. First there's the series' iconic multiplayer experience pitting players against each other worldwide. Second, is the fan-favourite Zombies experience, letting you and friends battle the undead. Last but not least is Blackout, an intense large-map mode inspired by battle royale. Blackout brings together characters, locations, weapons and gear from across the series in all-out survival combat – all with a unique Black Ops twist.

## WWE 2K Battlegrounds | PS4

The world of WWE is your battleground with over-the-top, arcade action as your favorite WWE Superstars and Legends battle in interactive environments around the world. Play through a new story mode while unlocking unique characters and Battlegrounds. Compete using special abilities and power-ups in match types like Steel Cage, Royal Rumble, and more! Compete in Online Tournaments or stake your claim as King of the Battleground against players from around the world!\* Plus, battle it out in local multiplayer and dominate your friends.



## A Plague Tale: Innocence | PS5 version only\*\*



The critically acclaimed adventure releases on PS5 with 4K native resolution\*\*\*, targeted 60 FPS, highly improved visuals, and fast loading – and makes its debut onto PlayStation Plus. Follow the tale of young Amicia and her little brother Hugo, in a heartrending journey through the darkest hours of history. Hunted by Inquisition soldiers and surrounded by unstoppable swarms of rats, Amicia and Hugo will come to know and trust each other. As they struggle to survive against overwhelming odds, they will fight to find purpose in this brutal, unforgiving world.

# XBOX: New Games with Gold for July 2021

**GAMES WITH GOLD**  
With \$79.96 in value and 3000 in Gamerscore

Game Title	Availability	Price
Planet Alpha	Jul 1 – Jul 31	\$19.99 Free
Rock of Ages 3: Make & Break	Jul 16 – Aug 15	\$29.99 Free
Conker: Live & Reloaded	Jul 1 – Jul 15	\$9.99 Free
Midway Arcade Origins	Jul 16 – Jul 31	\$19.99 Free

XBOX LIVE GOLD      GAME PASS **ULTIMATE**

**The July Games** with Gold lineup is here! On the Xbox One and Xbox Series X|S, explore a mysterious, strange world in *Planet Alpha*, and create your own levels and destroy everyone else's in *Rock of Ages 3: Make & Break*. And for our classic lineup [via Backward Compatibility](#), play as everyone's favorite raunchy squirrel in *Conker: Live & Reloaded*, and relive the golden age of arcade gaming in *Midway Arcade Origins*.

Xbox Live Gold members will have exclusive access to these games for a limited time as part of [Games with Gold](#). So will [Xbox Game Pass Ultimate](#) members, who receive all the fantastic benefits of Gold plus access to over 100 high-quality games with Xbox Game Pass.

- *Planet Alpha* (\$19.99 ERP): Available July 1 to 31
- *Rock of Ages 3: Make & Break* (\$29.99 ERP): Available July 16 to August 15
- *Conker: Live & Reloaded* (\$9.99 ERP): Available July 1 to 15
- *Midway Arcade Origins* (\$19.99 ERP): Available July 16 to 31

***Planet Alpha***: Survive a strange planet filled with danger and mystery. Marooned and alone, venture across the beautiful foreign land and unlock its many hidden secrets. With relentless enemies pursuing you, harness the power of night and day in your fight to stay alive in this alien world.

***Rock of Ages 3: Make & Break***: Jump into a sprawling, gut-busting story featuring bizarre and absurd takes on legendary characters. Design, build, and share your custom levels with friends in this Monty Python-esque tower defense and arcade game.

***Conker: Live & Reloaded***: Back with a hangover and a heavy dose of attitude, play gaming's notorious squirrel, Conker, through a raunchy world full of twisted characters, innuendos, and outrageous movie parodies.

***Midway Arcade Origins***: With more than 30 timeless entries from the golden age of arcade gaming, relive your childhood or discover classic games for the first time, such as *Defender*, *Gauntlet*, *Rampart*, and more. No quarters needed to play!

[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 try 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.](#)

# *JULY 2021* VIDEO GAME RELEASE DATES

<u>PRODUCT</u>	<u>COMPANY</u>	<u>FORMAT</u>	<u>RELEASE DATE</u>
The Fermi Paradox	Anomaly Games	PC	01/07/2021 (Early access)
The Procession To Calvary	Digerati	XO	01/07/2021
Foodtruck Arena	Ultimate Games	NS, PC	02/07/2021
Mythic Ocean	Nakana.io	NS	02/07/2021
The Procession To Calvary	Digerati	NS	02/07/2021
Breach Wanderers	Baronnerie Games	An, iOS, PC	04/07/2021
A Plague Tale: Innocence	Focus Home Interactive		06/07/2021
ENDER LILIES: Quietus of the Knights	Binary Haze Interactive	PS4, PS5	06/07/2021
Indigo 7	Dolores Entertainment	PS4, PS5	06/07/2021
Indigo 7	Dolores Entertainment	NS, XO, XSX	08/07/2021
Sam & Max: This Time It's Virtual!	HappyGiant	Quest	08/07/2021
Black Skylands	tinyBuildGAMES	PC	09/07/2021 (Early access)
The Silver Case 2425	NIS America	NS	09/07/2021
QB Planets	Madowl Games	PC	12/07/2021
Curved Space	Only By Midnight	NS	13/07/2021
Gravitational	Perp Games	PSVR	13/07/2021
Outsider: After Life	Once A Bird	PC	13/07/2021
Triversal	Phantom Compass	PC	13/07/2021
Where the Heart Leads	Armature Studio	PS4, PS5	13/07/2021
XCOM 2 Collection	Feral Interactive	An	13/07/2021
Blake: The Visual Novel	LegendOri Productions	PC	14/07/2021
Evolution	North Star Digital Studios	NS	14/07/2021
Chicken Police - Paint it Red	HandyGames	NS	15/07/2021
Little Witch Academia VR: Broom Racing	UNIVRS	Oculus Rift, PC, PSVR	15/07/2021

<b><u>PRODUCT</u></b>	<b><u>COMPANY</u></b>	<b><u>FORMAT</u></b>	<b><u>RELEASE DATE</u></b>
F1 2021	Codemasters	PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	16/07/2021
The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword HD	Nintendo	NS	16/07/2021
World for Two	room6	PC	16/07/2021
Cris Tales	Modus Games	NS, PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	20/07/2021
Death's Door	Devolver Digital	PC, XO, XSX	20/07/2021
Mini Motorways	Dinosaur Polo Club	PC	20/07/2021
Song of Horror	Raiser Games	PS4	20/07/2021
Wingspan	Monster Couch	iOS	20/07/2021
Succubus	Madmind Studios	PC	21/07/2021
Deepest Chamber	Balcony Softworks	PC	22/07/2021 (Early access)
AKIBA'S TRIP: Hellbound & Debriefed	XSEED Games	NS, PS4	23/07/2021
Orcs Must Die! 3	Robot Entertainment	PC, PS4, PS5, Stad, XO, XSX	23/07/2021
Clone Drone in the Danger Zone	Doborog Games	NS, PC, PS4, XO	27/07/2021
DariusBurst Another Chronicle EX+	Taito	NS, PS4	27/07/2021
Eldest Souls	CI Games	NS, PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	27/07/2021
Hell Let Loose	Team17	PC	27/07/2021
Idol Manager	Playism	PC	27/07/2021
Microsoft Flight Simulator	Microsoft	XSX	27/07/2021
NEO: The World Ends with You	Square Enix	NS, PS4	27/07/2021
The Great Ace Attorney Chronicles	Capcom	NS, PC, PS4	27/07/2021
Tribes of Midgard	Norsfell	PC, PS4, PS5	27/07/2021
Winds & Leaves	TREBUCHET	PSVR	27/07/2021
Chernobylite	The Farm 51	PC	28/07/2021
The Forgotten City	Modern Storyteller	PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	28/07/2021
Abomi Nation	DANGEN Entertainment	PC	29/07/2021
Escape from Naraka	Headup	PC	29/07/2021
Nothing To Remember	Guts United	PC	29/07/2021
The Ascent	Curve Digital	PC, XO, XSX	29/07/2021

# A MESSAGE FROM YOUR SQUAD LEADER!

## WARHAMMER: VERMINTIDE 2 FANTASY DONE RIGHT!

By K. Scott Cooper



*As more and more summer game releases flop* more than a dying fish out of water, so too did the hopes of a D&D summer play-fest. D&D Dark Alliance sucked so hard an F-5 tornado from Oklahoma is suing for copy right infringement, so I have taken to renaming the game Dung heaps & Dumb-asses: Detritus Amassed. "But Scott this article is about Warhammer: Vermintide 2!" yep you are absolutely correct and sometimes it takes a steaming pile of shit generated by outdated neck beards to make you notice all the good things in your life you already have. So in true southern fashion I'm going to talk about the game I like and how well its doing, as a way of shaming the lesser game for being a massive disappointment while it sits in the corner and cries. Welcome to every Christmas I ever celebrated Dark Alliance, I will be playing the role of my jerkoff Stepdad and you are Me, yikes! Warhammer: Vermintide 2 a fantastic first person hack and slash created by Fatshark (a company smaller than Wizards of the Coast.) and set in the fantasy world of the Warhammer (D&D more successful cousin.) universe created by games workshop(a company that didn't fail so bad it was bought out by

Hasbro's bitch. *Cough* Tactical Studies Rules *Cough...*), that can be found free on Xbox gamepass or you could be a gem by giving it a buy like I did. Vermintide 2 dropped in 2018 and has since then seen the release of several DLC expansions and even as recently released free to all DLC "The Chaos Wastes." that is a whopping 75gb that adds that little something extra for repeat gamers and newcomers alike, which plays like a build your own adventure style game play as the squad votes on the path it will take.

Now for those of you that have not played the game, im not going to set here and detail the story line with spoilers, but what I am going to tell you about is some of the awesome features in the game. For those of you out there like me that decide you want to tackle a game alone for awhile before introducing it to your friends Vermintide 2 not only has an awesome tutorial for you to play through that gives you a taste of all the characters at their most base level and the simple mechanics of them game.(unlike some games that make a tutorial that educates you in the most out of order and lazy move sets of the shit character that you select in the beginning.) Vermintide 2 also offers a truly unique look at bots that are more useful than real humans, its scary to think but its true. Which gives you the ability to run through the massive maps at a pace of your choosing to get familiar with the world and so forth.

Vermintide 2 is of course a sequel and offers up some well-done cut scenes to spin newcomers up on the basics and to recap for return gamers to the story line, but even if you are new the story line this game is straight to the point and dangles teasers for those wishes to venture into the million hours of lore that is Warhammer.( if some games would have tried a little hard and paid more attention to what gamers are looking for by not creating a shitty app version of a PC game, maybe they would be allowed to join the family at the dinner table. But nooo! Some game decided to continue a story line that absolutely 2 whole people in the world remember and this game wonders why no one loves them.) mainly because jawing on and on about the Vermintide 2 is making me want to play it, so im going to wrap this up tighter than a prom night romp and finish just as quick. Characters in Vermintide 2 are just locked in at one general type, each of the five characters to pick from has 4 or more sub-types that give something new to try as you level those characters to best fight the murder master in you. No need to fight over dropped loot because Fatshark thought ahead of that and based everything on the collective success of the team and if players wish to bump up that grade of loot, they have to explore and dive further into the maps finding loot dice, grimoires, or tombs that add bonuses to the final scores of the match and improving rewards. This is also good news for gamers that don't mind a bit of the danger stranger and play with all the randoms the world has to offer as grieving, trolling, and all the various forms of ass pain the little shit taints of the world inflict on others is almost completely removed. Which means they have to be very creative to cause problems and holds no real advantage other than pure homicidal rage.

So in closing gang, Vermintide 2 is an absolute win for squads big and small in the stadium of fantasy gameplay, so go grab some of your favorite brew and some yummy chew food, and deep dive into the insane heart racing madness that is pure rat killing of Vermintide 2.



# New Video Games, But Are They Worth Playing?

## BIOMUTANT

Review By Marcus Blake



*What* happens when you get the Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild and the movie Kung Fu Panda... No, this is not the answer to some inane trivia question. Well, the answer would be the video game Bio Mutant! Honestly that's what I thought I was playing, some weird version of the movie Kung Fu Panda that was meant to look like breath of the wild! This game has been on our radar for the last couple of years and it's another one of those games that should have come out last year, but got delayed during the pandemic. And to say the least, this game is not at all what I expected. Now I'm not going to say that it's an absolutely horrible game, it's not, but that doesn't mean it's necessarily great and you should run out and buy it especially a full price. I honestly feel that this is a game that would be perfect for PlayStation Now or the Xbox Game Pass, something that you can download on a subscription service for free on day one. Sometimes you get really great games

that you can do that with but most of them are just okay or average at best. Biomutant is something perfect for that.

I really hate when the expectations for a video game is a lot better than the game itself and unfortunately Biomutant. as fun as it is, just feels very underwhelming. It's a fun open world game with genetically engineered animals set in a feudal Japan type of setting where you have mythic creatures and Samurai. It's a cool idea, but I can't say the game really delivers on the concept. The more that I played, the more that I felt like it'd be a lot better of a game if there was a multiplayer aspect to it and you could "squad up" with three to four players. The gaming mechanics are fairly simple. It's basically a hack and slash game where you have to complete little missions to open up the rest of the world. You can say it's a lot like Immortals: Fenix Rising, the open world animated game that came out last winter. But I would say that's a much better game. Biomutant almost feels like a B version of Immortals. There are a lot of things to like about this game, it will definitely keep you playing for hours so when a lot of ways you do get your money's worth. As we always place value on a game, it seems these days that only true open world games can really be worth the full retail price. And they're definitely is an escapism in this game. If you're just looking for a fun little adventure where you can hack and slash your way through a vibrant world, then this might be okay. But there isn't anything really special about Biomutant... both that we haven't really seen before. The story is not even that interesting.

But I don't want to rag on this game too much... we've played worst games that never should have been put out. This isn't one of them, but it's a good example

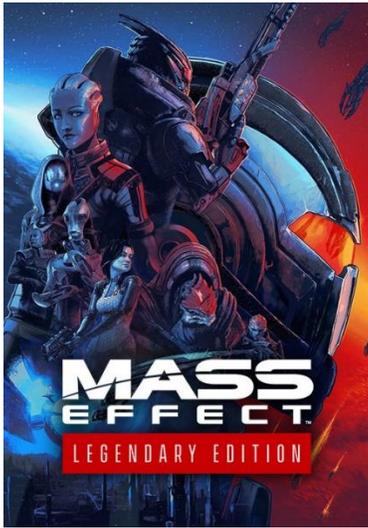
of having too many expectations for a fun open world game and being let down. Those kinds of games aren't the ones you buy at full price. These are the kind of games that should be on a Game Pass. With so many games becoming available on day one with the Xbox Game Pass, some I would have gladly paid full price for like The Outer Worlds... Biomutant is one that I feel like I wasted my money on because it didn't give me anything more than some of the other games that I've played over the last few years that were great discoveries on a Game Pass service. And while I do make the comparison to Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild and I certainly have my problems with that game being more about nostalgia than anything else, at least that one is worth getting a whole new gaming system like the Nintendo Switch just to play it. But maybe with Biomutant, it's really about finding the perfect audience... kid gamers who aren't ready for huge violent open worlds like it in Assassin's Creed game or a Far Cry game. The mechanics aren't hard to pick up in Biomutant and the puzzles that you kind of have to solve along the way or fun. However, if you are going to buy this game get it at a discount because you really shouldn't spend any more than \$20 for it. I may go back and play this game, but I'll do it when it's available on Game Pass or PlayStation now. And as I said before, the developers missed a golden opportunity to take what seems like a great concept and make a fantastic multiplayer squad game because I would totally play this game with my gaming squad. It's a little too boring to play alone!

**Final Grade: 6 / 10 (Adequate)**

## Mass Effect Legendary Edition

*Why it's worth it!*

Review By Beth Currier



If you're trying to decide whether the legendary edition is worth it, (whether you're familiar with or brand new to the Mass Effect universe) here are some of the reasons that it is. For brand new players, this is an absolute steal! Mass Effect: Legendary Edition contains the entire Mass Effect trilogy and all of the single player DLC for less than the price of a single full price game. For players like me who have played all the games before, it is full of nostalgia with better quality.

Right off the bat, the actual mechanics of the game are much improved from its original counterpart. The aiming and stability of the weapons is miles better. The textures and colors are greatly improved. The cut scene visuals have been enhanced to look great on 4K televisions. The character visual (mostly seen in conversations) is upgraded but it is also the place where you notice the age of the game animation. The attention to detail in the environment adds so much to the beauty of the game. This is from playing on an Xbox One, so the visuals may be even more enhanced and refined on the latest console.

The M35 Mako (the vehicle Shepard takes to land on worlds) got a full mechanics makeover. The missile and the turret firing systems are exponentially more accurate to where the player is actually aiming. The zoom on the weapons system can see farther and it so much clearer than the original Mako. The boost now gives the vehicle a boost that is useful and is capable of getting the vehicle out of a position if it gets stuck. The jump boost has been slightly altered so that it may be used more often and the Mako can jump higher. The overall control of the driving is smoother and more accurate. The Mako got a full makeover and all for the better.

Veteran Mass Effect players will appreciate some of the seemingly smaller changes that were always a sore spot. For starters, anyone who has played Mass Effect knows the endless elevator rides that are more or less glorified load screens. In the Legendary Edition, those elevators rides have been made skippable because sometimes you just want to get where you're going and the squad banter is not nearly entertaining enough for how long those elevators take. The HUD has gotten a total overhaul. It is now in the bottom center of the screen with clear bars for the shield and health of both you and your squad mates. In the bottom left corner where the health used to be now shows Shepard's gun and how close it is to overheating. There is also a different system for leveling up. A player can still choose classic mode which gives you a couple technique points over the course of 60 levels. However, there is now a legendary mode option which makes 30 the max level that can be reached. The same number of points are still distributed but with legendary mode the player gets twice as many points per level increase which is ultimately more useful when trying to achieve milestones.

While there are many more improvements that have been made, the best way to truly experience them all is to purchase Mass Effect: Legendary Edition

and play them for yourself. Whether you've been with Mass Effect since the beginning, you've never played the games, or anything in between this edition is worth every single penny.

Final Grade: 9 / 10 (Great)

## DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS DARK ALLIANCE

*What Hot Garbage is This!*

By Marcus Blake and K. Scott Cooper



Marcus Blake

The worse thing for a gamer is getting a video game that is absolutely hot garbage! I don't know what's worse, when you pay for the game and it sucks or that it's so bad that it's not even worth playing when it's free! But that's what happened when our squad sat down and tried to play Dark Alliance, The Dungeons & Dragons RPG game that is a continuation of one of their campaigns and was recently released on all consoles and free on Ultimate Game Pass. We tried to play the game, we couldn't even get through the first mission without the server crashing. We couldn't even play 5 minutes without glitches. We were already apprehensive about playing this game anyway, but we are professional's

and we'll at least try it. But the sad ugly truth about this game is it seems like it's a rip off of every other cartoonish or graphic RPG game out there. I think the graphics of world of Warcraft that came out on PC over a decade ago were better and that doesn't bode well for a new game that is being released on the next generation of consoles. The mechanics seem very familiar or at least a basic rip off of games like Warhammer Vermintide 2, and I find it very curious that this game seems to be a rip off of Vermintide 2... It's like the B version of a game that was somehow cobbled together at the last minute, but you know isn't going to quite be as good as what it's copied from.

If you have Ultimate Game Pass and you're trying to decide which little RPG game to play, it's not Dark Alliance... Yeah you should do Warhammer Vermintide 2 or maybe try For Honor since that's free on Game Pass now. Fun hack and slash RPG games that you can do co-op or put together a four-person squad for are great and the two games that I just mentioned are perfect for that, but Dark Alliance isn't worth even a free download. Games that are not complete or half-assed should always come with a warning label. The developer should tell us straight out that they couldn't finish the game or they didn't have enough money to make a good game. We at least appreciate the honesty! But then again if you can't finish the game or you don't have enough money to make a good game then why are you trying in the first place! I think

this Dungeons & Dragons game is a perfect example of why a good RPG campaign should be strictly reserved for a tabletop RPG or a story should a fantasy novel. I can definitely see the full potential in doing this campaign, but it doesn't translate well in a video game especially when you're wanting to form a squad with your gaming buddies. Maybe the developers have the best of intentions, but they failed miserably and while we can easily give this game a rating of zero, I will at least give it a three because the logo looks good! And the only other good thing I can say about Dark Alliance... Well at least it was free on Game Pass!

### *K. Scott Cooper*

Lurking deep in the crunchy spunk soaked lair, surrounded by the sticky smashed cans of yesteryears energy drinks and the grease inked husks of decaying fast-food and pizza boxes, sits the pox faced lump of human waste that is the elder gross nerd. What I just described to you is more interesting than the bunk that is Dungeons & Dragons Dark Alliance, a game so shitty, it found a way to half ass being lazy. The overflowing possibilities of lore, culture, and epic places that fill the literal fucking sleeves of generational spanning books that could have been used to weave an amazing landscape of squad-based bliss. But instead, we got a cheesy animated cartoon continuation of D&D Novels that only the hardcore of the hardcore even remember. This is a massive mistake on

the part of Wizards of the Coast, the smart move would have been to create a fresh narrative that you can use to tie older narratives to as a means to bring back older fans and introduce newcomers to the generations of past works. This fumbling mess of a game can only be compared to a poorly designed app game that poorly rips off D&D and then crashes when you try to use it. The few saving graces of the game is... Wait there aren't any and I personally would be ashamed of myself less for shooting low budget basement porn than I would if I worked on this poorly designed, managed, and presented game.

If you know someone that suffers from a rare brain syndrome where they still think that its 1991, then I have your next stocking stuffers that you can pick right out of the Microsoft version of Walmart's straight to DVD bargain bin. Yes, that is a touch mean to Game Pass and all the joy it brings to gamers the world over, "but Scott you aren't talking about the game play!" I know gang, it's that damn bad that I couldn't even stomach the completion of the first mission due to glitches, bugs, and over all broken controls that give us broken combat. So, if you paid real money for this game, get a lawyer and get to suing if you can't get a refund! My grade is a 0 because I just can't find anything good about the game!

**Final Grade: 3 / 10 (Bad)**

It gets a 3, only for the Logo!



# COMIC BOOK NEWS



# Your Place To Talk!



**DISCORD**



# DC's 'INFINITE FRONTIER' MINISERIES LAUNCHES JUNE 22



Final Orders for 'Infinite Frontier' launch issue due to Local Comic Shops on Thursday May 27. Mitch Gerads' cover for 'Infinite Frontier' #4 is revealed! Featuring the return of Flashpoint Batman!

Interconnecting Variant Covers by Bryan Hitch feature President Superman, Jade and Obsidian, Green Lantern Alan Scott, Arsenal, and more. Start here for everything you need to know about Joshua Williamson and Xermanico's summer blockbuster *Infinite Frontier* before the new DC miniseries launches on June 22!

Picking up directly from [Infinite Frontier #0](#), when our heroes saved the Multiverse from Perpetua in *Dark Nights: Death Metal*, everything was put back where it belonged...and we do mean everything. All the damage from all the Crises was undone, and heroes long thought gone returned from whatever exile they had been in. Most of them, at least. Alan Scott, the Green Lantern from the Justice Society of America, has noticed some of his allies are still missing in action, and he's determined to find them. There are others, though, who would rather remain hidden than explain themselves, like Roy Harper, a.k.a. Arsenal, a man who should be dead but now is not. What does all this mean for the DCU's place in the Multiverse? On opposite sides of a dimensional divide, both Barry Allen and President Superman ponder this question. Not to mention the Darkseid of it all! Or a team of Multiversal heroes called Justice Incarnate!

**Infinite Frontier #1**, written by Joshua Williamson with art by Xermanico, a cover by Mitch Gerads and a card stock variant cover by Bryan Hitch, publishes on June 22. Add this Multiverse-defining new series to your pull list! Just a week later, get an inside look into the cast of *Infinite Frontier*! Do you have the lowdown on all the characters starring in DC's summer blockbuster? If not, [Infinite Frontier: Secret Files](#) will tell you everything you're dying to

know. Take a look inside Director Bones personal database for stories featuring Jade and Obsidian, the children of the original Green Lantern; Psycho-Pirate, the scourge of many a Crisis on many an Earth; President Superman, the Multiverse's ultimate beacon of hope; Roy Harper, back from the dead; and just who are the Totality...?! Featuring six stories set in DC's Infinite Frontier!

## **Infinite Frontier: Secret Files**

**#1**, written by Joshua Williamson, Brandon Thomas, Stephanie Phillips and Dan Watters with art by Inaki Miranda, Valentine De Landro, Stephen Byrne, Phil Hester and Christopher Mitten, featuring a cover by Bryan Hitch, publishes on June 29. And then in July, the mysteries deepen! How is Roy Harper alive? Who abducted Jade?

In **Infinite Frontier #2**, what secrets and changes lurk inside the newly expanded Multiverse? The devious Director Bones of the D.E.O. re-forms a ragtag team to keep the new worlds at bay, but was highly skilled agent Cameron Chase recruited because the director needs her help, or because he wants a patsy when things go south? Meanwhile, Alan Scott, the original Green Lantern, takes drastic measures to find his missing daughter. Someone has kidnapped Jade, and Alan's going to find out why and bring her home. Plus, the resurrection of Roy Harper gives the former Teen Titan some unexpected and unpredictable new powers. Two weeks later **Infinite Frontier #3** arrives, and all you need to know is that Barry Allen's history with the Psycho-Pirate isn't pleasant. The Flash encountered this mind-bending villain all the way back in the original Crisis on Infinite Earths, and it did not end well for the Scarlet Speedster. For the first time since his death and rebirth, Barry runs afoul of this foe—hopefully it will go better this time around! That is, if the even bigger villain behind the Pirate stays out of the fray, or if President Superman of Justice Incarnate sticks around to help win the day.

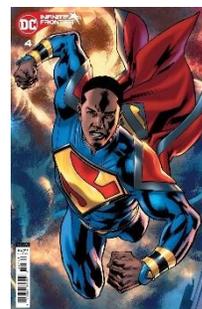
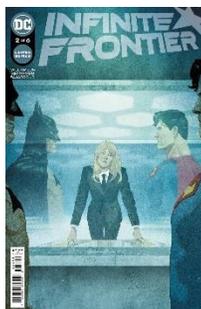
**Infinite Frontier #2**, written by Joshua Williamson with art by Xermanico, Paul Pelletier, & Jesús Merino, a cover by Mitch Gerads and a card stock variant cover by Bryan Hitch, publishes on July 13. **Infinite Frontier #3**, written by Joshua Williamson with art by Xermanico, Paul Pelletier, & Jesús Merino, a cover by Mitch

Gerads and a card stock variant cover by Bryan Hitch, publishes on July 27. Let your Local Comic Shop know you want this Multiverse-defining new series on your pull list! Coming up in August, the Multiverse's Finest clash!

In **Infinite Frontier #4**, President Superman finds himself in the wrong world, and it isn't looking good. Bones and Chase attempt to stop super-powered heroes and villains from crossing Multiversal lines. If they can shut down the President of Steel, they think that it will serve as a signal to all to not mess with Earth-0! This is only a distraction, however, as Injustice Incarnate begins to show them the worst the Multiverse has to offer, and only Flashpoint Batman is there to lend the heroes backup. And then, building towards a finale that could mean chaos, or crisis, or both for the DC Multiverse: what is the Omega Planet?

In **Infinite Frontier #5**, Roy Harper finds himself forced to do things on his own. He's been through a lot since he was Green Arrow's sidekick, and usually, the only person he can count on is himself. Hence, he's hiding the fact that he's back from the dead from his old friends. He comes across Jade, who has also been stranded by herself—can he help her while letting her help him? Because neither of them can handle Darkseid all by their lonesome. Meanwhile, Barry Allen sends out a call: it's time for all the heroes exploring the Infinite Frontier to come to the Omega Planet!

**Infinite Frontier #4**, written by Joshua Williamson with art by Xermanico, Paul Pelletier, & Jesús Merino, a cover by Mitch Gerads and a card stock variant cover by Bryan Hitch, publishes on August 10. **Infinite Frontier #5**, written by Joshua Williamson with art by Xermanico, Paul Pelletier, & Jesús Merino, a cover by Mitch Gerads and a card stock variant cover by Bryan Hitch, publishes on August 24. How will DC's Multiverse-spanning summer blockbuster end? With the reveal of Flashpoint Batman on the cover of **Infinite Frontier #4** by Mitch Gerads, everything you think you know about DC's *Infinite Frontier* gets turned upside down! Two more Mitch Gerads covers to be revealed! One more Bryan Hitch variant cover! And did you miss the Darkseid of it all?? Stay tuned for more news about DC's *Infinite Frontier*!



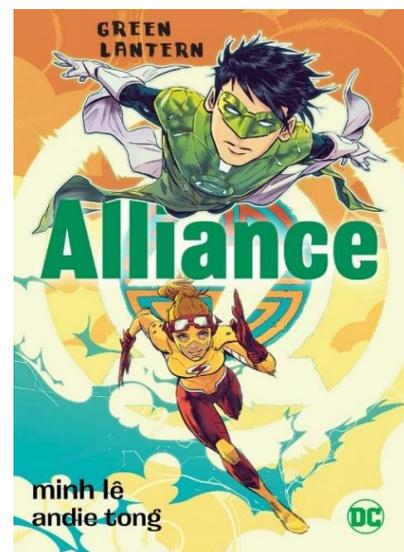
# The Fan-Favorite Super Hero Returns in 'Green Lantern: Alliance'

## THE FAN-FAVORITE SUPER HERO RETURNS IN GREEN LANTERN: ALLIANCE

Minh Lê and Andie Tong, the Bestselling Writer & Artist Behind 'Green Lantern: Legacy,' Bring New Adventures with Tai Pham to Audiences From DC's Books for Young Readers Line, the Middle-Grade Title will be Available Digitally and at Participating Bookstores on April 5, 2022.

The creative duo behind fan-favorite *Green Lantern: Legacy* are working on the action-packed sequel we've all been waiting for! DC announced today that *Green Lantern: Alliance*, the newest middle-grade graphic novel from bestselling writer Minh Lê (*Drawn Together*) and artist Andie Tong (*The Batman Strikes!*), will be available to

young readers on April 5, 2022. Join Green Lantern super hero Tai Pham as he once again comes face-to-face with nemesis Xander Griffin — this time with help from Kid Flash! It's only been a few months since Green Lantern Tai Pham inherited his ring from his ba and defeated his nemesis, Xander Griffin, but Tai knows their last battle was only the beginning. Even though no one believes him, Tai is determined to prove that Xander is up to his old tricks again. When a string of fires starts popping up around Coast City, Tai finds himself stretched thin as he struggles to keep up with school, training, working at his parents' store, and following Xander's trail. That is until a new hero, known as Kid Flash, shows up on the scene with an offer to help. Can the heroes find the arsonist before it's too late? *Green Lantern: Alliance* will be available digitally and at participating bookstores next Spring.



## Batman and Superman Return to Animation with Two Thrilling New Series



From the iconic, beloved Fleischer shorts of the 1940s to the groundbreaking shared animated universe that introduced DC's Super Heroes to legions of fans, Superman and Batman have a long legacy in animation. A legacy that will soon enter a thrilling new chapter. HBO Max and Cartoon Network announced a pair of new animated series this morning featuring DC's two biggest heroes — Batman and Superman. *Batman: Caped Crusader* stems from the creative minds of Bruce Timm, J.J. Abrams and Matt Reeves and promises a fresh take on the Dark Knight and his popular rogues' gallery. In contrast, *My Adventures with Superman* will bring youthful energy to the world of the Man of Steel in a new animated series aimed at kids and families. Produced by Warner Bros. Animation, Bad Robot Productions and 6th & Idaho, and executive produced by Timm, Abrams and Reeves, *Batman: Caped Crusader* notably marks Timm's return to Batman in animated episodic television after his iconic work on the Emmy-winning *Batman: The Animated Series*, which ran from 1992 through 1995 and spawned an interconnected animated universe that's still growing to this day. Critically acclaimed and viewed by many as the gold standard of animated superhero storytelling, *Batman: The Animated Series* is considered one of the best depictions of the Dark Knight in any medium. Now, nearly three decades later, Timm is returning to the world of the Bat, this time alongside two acclaimed filmmakers and fans:

J.J. Abrams and *The Batman* director Matt Reeves. Utilizing state-of-the-art animation techniques and technology, *Batman: Caped Crusader* promises to once again reinvent Batman and his super-villains with sophisticated storytelling, nuanced characters and intense action sequences all set in a visually striking world. "We are beyond excited to be working together to bring this character back, to tell engrossing new stories in Gotham City," said Timm, Abrams and Reeves in a joint statement. "The series will be thrilling, cinematic and evocative of Batman's noir roots, while diving deeper into the psychology of these iconic characters. We cannot wait to share this new world." *Batman: Caped Crusader* has received a straight-to-series order by HBO Max and Cartoon Network. The announcement was made this morning by Tom Ascheim, President, Warner Bros. Global Kids, Young Adults and Classics and Sam Register, President, Warner Bros. Animation and Cartoon Network Studios ahead of WarnerMedia's 2021 upfronts presentation. "*Batman: The Animated Series* was a masterpiece that shaped the perception of the character for an entire generation of fans," said Register. "It is in that spirit that we are bringing together three master storytellers in J.J., Matt and Bruce — each with their own intuitive understanding and affection for the character — to create a new series that will continue in the same groundbreaking legacy." Of course, anyone who grew up shouting "I am vengeance, I am the night!" knows that Timm's influential Batman series was followed by the equally beloved *Superman: The Animated Series* a year later, and in much the same spirit, the Man of Steel will also be returning to animation in a new show. Produced by Warner Bros. Animation, *My Adventures with Superman* introduces us to twenty-somethings Clark Kent, the bright and driven Lois

Lane and their best friend Jimmy Olsen as they begin to discover who they are and everything they can accomplish together as an investigative reporting team at the Daily Planet. Promising a mix of action, comedy and romance, the new series has received a two-season order from HBO Max and Cartoon Network, as announced this morning by Warner Bros.' Head of Kids & Family Programming, Amy Friedman. Described as a serialized coming-of-age story, *My Adventures with Superman* will follow Clark as he builds his secret Superman identity and embraces his role as the hero of Metropolis — and perhaps the world. Lois, now growing into a star investigative journalist, takes aspiring photographer Jimmy Olsen under her wing. All the while, Clark and Lois are falling in love, sharing adventures, taking down bad guys, stumbling over secrets and discovering what it means to be Superman and Lois Lane. Actors Jack Quaid (*The Boys*) and Alice Lee (*Zoe's Extraordinary Playlist*) will lead the *My Adventures with Superman* voice cast as Clark Kent and Lois Lane, respectively. The series is produced by Warner Bros. Animation with Register (*Teen Titans Go!*) serving as executive producer. Jake Wyatt (*Invader Zim: Enter the Florpus*) and Brendan Clogher (*Voltron: Legendary Defender*) are on board as co-executive producers and Josie Campbell (*She-Ra and the Princesses of Power*) as co-producer. "It's been a great partnership working with Cartoon Network and HBO Max to bring more DC Super Heroes to the platform in new and creatively interesting ways," summed up Register. "This is the first animated Superman series in many years and we want to tell our Superman story through the trio of Clark, Lois and Jimmy — whose relationship dynamic will allow for rich, serialized and engaging stories as we explore their lives as individuals and their journey together as friends."

# Black Cat Gets Powers from Asgard



First Doctor Strange, and now Black Cat. In KING IN BLACK tie-in issue BLACK CAT (2020) #2, Felicia Hardy used the Yggdrasil Staff, a magical relic from Asgard, to receive a power boost similar to that of the Sorcerer Supreme's in KING IN BLACK #4. And, in this week's BLACK CAT #3, she's starting to wield that power. Doctor Strange isn't happy about it. Black Cat's partners Boris Korpse and Bruno Grainger aren't happy about it. And Black Cat, even with magical omnipotence, discovers that there

are serious consequences to having everything go your way. Cut off by a partition in her own consciousness, Hardy is forced to confront the darkest corners of her past and is pushed to answer the question: What would you do with all the power in the world?

## SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK (2020) #4

Forces collide in this throwback series from Peter Parker's earliest days with the Black Suit. Spider-Man and his allies (Kang the Conqueror?!) learn you can't just walk around Knowhere without running into trouble... Enter: Ulik the Troll. Monica Rambeau and Rocket guest star!

## KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES (2021) #3

The new Valkyrie finds her weapon—will it be enough? Plus, a spotlight on Dani Moonstar as the X-Man fights to save both human and mutantkind! Jane

Foster is going to need all the friends and power she can muster, but Knull and his symbiote army are slaughtering at a rate that even a hundred Valkyries can't match... and now Knull has some of the world's greatest heroes on his side. Can four warriors hope to stem the tide?

## KING IN BLACK: NAMOR (2020) #4

An untold tale of the young Sub-Mariner—and the dark, chilling birth of the Black Tide, a former team of Atlantean warriors now corrupted to rule the seas. The Black Tide's wave of devastation now threatens Atlantis itself. Namor, Dorma, and Attuma may be the undersea world's only hope, but unless they can shake off their utter defeat from last issue, they don't even stand a chance. And worse, the one possible weapon they could wield against the Black Tide is in Murmansk, thousands of miles away. It's Atlantis's darkest hour...

## The Mysterious Threat Behind the Last Annihilation Revealed in *'Guardians of the Galaxy' #15*



Marvel's new age of space kicks it into high gear this summer in THE LAST ANNIHILATION, a new crossover spinning out of GUARDIANS OF GALAXY! Known for his long-term world building and big payoffs, acclaimed

writer Al Ewing continues to revolutionize Marvel's cosmic landscape. All the pieces are now in place for a conflict that will shake the stars and test the very limits of the galaxy's mightiest heroes.

THE LAST ANNIHILATION will begin in July's GUARDIANS OF THE

GALAXY #16 but the mastermind behind this latest threat has been kept under wraps. However, fans won't have to wait long! After months of speculation, fans will finally learn the identity of the saga's secret villain next month in GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #15. The issue will deliver an ending no one will see coming and will also see two heavyweights from Ewing's current titles collide. Both reeling from recent conflicts, the new Guardians of the Galaxy will come face to face with mutantkind's new space agency, S.W.O.R.D. Get a glimpse at the Guardian's tense showdown with the master of magnetism, Magneto, in all-new never-before-seen artwork by series artist Juan Frigeri!

"GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY and S.W.O.R.D. have been building their own unique gravity for a while now, and in space, when two objects have gravity, there's a pretty good chance they'll crash

into each other - or get sucked into the orbit of something even bigger," Ewing said. "Marvel Space these days is a fragile coalition of worlds that chose peace over war, a little bubble of hope in a cruel void - but there's an enemy nobody ever suspected readying an attack that'll either cement all those frail alliances or tear them to pieces."

In recent issues, the Guardians of the Galaxy have increased their ranks like never before, recruiting powerhouses such as Wiccan, Hulkling, the original Quasar, and even Doctor Doom! But will they all be enough to withstand what's to come? Pick up GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #15 to discover what villain is behind THE LAST ANNIHILATION and to see the twisted vision they have in store for the galaxy. And stay tuned for more information on this epic cosmic crossover, including the full revealed cover of GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #16!

# DARK HORSE COMICS TO PUBLISH 'THE HOUSE'



See if you can make it through without leaving a piece of yourself behind

This fall, writer Phillip Sevy (*TRIAGE*, *Tomb Raider*) and artist Drew Zucker (*Canto*) dare

you to enter *The House*! Originally released as a digital series, Dark Horse Comics has collected the critically-acclaimed passion project into 184-pages of pure trade paperback terror that will surely lure and delight horror fans to Halloween and beyond.

During the Battle of the Bulge, a squadron of US soldiers is caught in a blizzard while patrolling through the woods. Seeking refuge from the impending white out, they stumble across an abandoned manor, seeking shelter and safety. Once inside, however, the doors disappear, rooms begin to morph, exits become entrances, and they quickly realize there is no safety to be found! As their eyes deceive them, their minds descend into madness, panic, and paranoia. Is this real? Or is there more to this labyrinth than what resides within the walls? Secrets are revealed, history is retold, and death is the only mercy.

The creative team met at NYCC in 2010. Drew was a recent SCAD alum, and Phillip had just enrolled in SCAD's MFA program for Sequential Art. Over the next six years, *The House* remained in production until

its release on comiXology, and in 2018, was launched on Kickstarter for print, exceeding the funding goal by 50%. It landed on Paste Magazine's 15 Best Horror comics of 2018, as well as nabbing a spot on the Top 100 Horror Comics of all time list. The decision for Dark Horse to reprint came in 2020 after selling out of all self-published copies.

"When Drew and I began working on *The House*, well over a decade ago, Dark Horse was one of our top Dream Publishers," said Phillip Sevy. "We hoped to be able to work with Dark Horse to bring our story to the world. It was a long process with countless hours of hard work, spread out over years, but to have the book coming out through one of the premiere publishers of horror in comics is an honor and testament to the work we put in. We couldn't be more excited."

"For years *The House* has been a passion project for Phillip and I and we've been fortunate to have loyal fans and retailers during that time," said Drew Zucker. "To have a partner like Dark Horse bring it to an even larger audience has been thrilling for us and we can't wait to share it with everyone."

## THE WORLD OF 'BLACK HAMMER' GETS A LITTLE MORE UNBELIEVABLE



A New Spin-Off Series by Jeff Lemire and Tyler Crook, the Team Behind 'Colonel Weird: Cosmagog.' The world of the Eisner Award-winning Black Hammer series continues to expand with this meta team superhero saga taking place between two

different worlds in *The Unbelievable Unteens*! Written by critically acclaimed author and Black Hammer co-creator Jeff Lemire (*Berserker Unbound*, *Sweet Tooth: The Return*) and illustrated by returning Black Hammer artist, Tyler Crook (*Colonel Weird: Cosmagog*, *Harrow County*), *The Unbelievable Unteens* spins a genre-bending origin story for a brand-new superhero team! After signing at a comic book convention, *Unbelievable Unteens* artist Jane Ito finds herself visited by one of the

characters from her own creation – but was it her own creation? Were the Unteens an actual school of teenaged misfit superheroes who battled supervillains under the lead of the mysterious Dr. Miles Moniker? And if so, who wiped their memories and why? As Jane's world is turned upside down and she learns the true nature of her identity she discovers a sinister plot leading her to assemble a team she had suspected was purely fictional. "The *Unbelievable Unteens* is a Black Hammer story that I have been working on for a few years and was just waiting for the right time and the right collaborator," said Lemire. "After doing *Colonel Weird* with Tyler Crook I knew he would be perfect to bring the creepy and wonderful teenage super hero world of the Unteensto life. This series stands alone but will also tie back into the new Black Hammer: *Reborn* series in unexpected ways!" "I loved working with Jeff Lemire on *Colonel Weird: Cosmagog* and was very excited that he wanted to continue working with me on *The Unbelievable Unteens*," Crook added. "I haven't had many opportunities to work on superhero stories and this book gave me the chance to scratch that itch. I can't wait for readers to get to know these characters and the weird events that made these Unteens so "unbelievable!" The

*Unbelievable Unteens* #1 (of four) will hit comic shops August 11, 2021. It is available for pre-order at your [local comic shop](#).

Praise for Black Hammer:

"Amazing. Just flat-out amazing."  
-Patton Oswalt

"I don't read many comics these days, and I can't remember the last time I read a superhero comic, but I'm loving Black Hammer..." -Mike Mignola

"Black Hammer is easily one of Lemire's best creations." -Scott Snyder

"On my pull list by the time I got to page five." -Mark Waid

"Black Hammer is the maddest, most brilliant comic I've read in years."  
-Mark Millar

"This book is a freaking masterpiece."  
-James Gunn

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# For Nerd Mom's, This is How You Properly Celebrate May the 4<sup>th</sup>



By Allison Costa

AKA "Nerd Megamom"

*So here's a little secret to all of you moms* out there who are wanting to be "cool" for your kids but who didn't actually grow up watching "Star Wars".....you can still totally rock May the 4th and have your kids thinking you are the coolest Mom ever! Just follow these few simple tips! Although I did grow up watching Star Wars, there is still a LOT of pressure to help your kiddos learn Nerd Culture in a fun way! With 7 kids spanning from toddlerhood to teenagers, it can be tricky to get everyone involved. My little kids aren't even allowed to watch all the Star Wars classic movies yet!



However, this Franchise has grown so incredibly HUGE that there are tons of options to make May 4th completely amazing whether you have preschool kids or teenagers. First start with the basics – researching amazing food dishes (think anything on Pinterest or simply google!) is always fun and exciting. Everything from Princess Leia dip to Wookie Cookies to HanBurgers. Pick your favorite foods and recipes and make it FUN! Dressing up either as characters or simply in Star Wars t-shirts and gear also lends to the spirit of the holiday! Of course you can do a movie marathon that day or leading up to that day, but it's also really fun to search up some cool games to play as a family. There are quizzes, trivia and even piñatas or pin the light saber on Darth Vader!

Having the day become interactive will lend to how memorable it will be. Pool noodles make great light sabers in a pinch! As do bubble Wands. And if your kids are still too young to really comprehend (or even pay attention too!) the real Star Wars movies, never fear because Lego and Disney have you covered! There are a zillion spin offs and other cartoons you can watch to keep the spirit of the original (and the new) characters alive and well. I can assure you that with amazing themed-food, dressing in character, playing party games, and watching the movies or amazing spin-offs that this may easily become one of your kiddos favorite holidays to celebrate as a family! In fact, you may come up with so many things to do that not only do you end up celebrating May the 4th, but that "Revenge of the Sith" becomes a thing as well!

# The 90's Martial Arts Movie You Should Watch If You Like Cobra Kai

## The "Paper Tigers" Film Review

By Alex Moore



In some form or fashion, without even realizing it, I have been a fan of martial arts films for most of my life. Yes, we all loved "The Karate Kid," but the franchise was such an instant success and has remained relevant even to this day with "Cobra Kai." The purists tend to be offended when others try to step inside of their inner circle, so to speak. If I may digress, it was not just "The Karate Kid" movies that swept America by storm in its day. A few short years after the original film, there was the first "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" movie, as well, and although it was not as universally (and positively) accepted by the critics, it was applauded by most fans of the animated series it was based on. Let me see. What else?...

Well, I remember a more serious and dramatic martial arts film, which I believe was trying to cash in on the crest of popularity in the sport at the time. It was called "Best of the Best." I watched it many times over and still go back to it every so often, in spite of its mixed reception. Does anyone else remember "Sidekicks" or "3 Ninjas?" How about some more obscure examples, such as "The Magic Kid" and "Showdown?" Yes, most of these were poorly received by most viewers, but the point is that the competitive sport of martial arts has never really lost its shine since the onset of its popularity, way back in the early 1970s (in the United States). It was no less than a month ago that I happily watched the reboot of "Mortal Kombat." Now, I find myself digging in to a much more light-hearted experience in "The Paper Tigers," which was largely filmed in the region of Seattle, Washington, an apparent tribute to the legendary

status of Bruce Lee, himself. Before I proceed any further, I would like to point out that if anyone who views this movie is not personally committed to the sport, itself, it is more-than-likely that you will not fully appreciate the craft of this particular film. I was once trained in the sport, myself, but I have been out of the game for quite some time now and I would be lying if I said that I were still as invested as I used to be...

"The Paper Tigers" consist of three men: Alain Uy as Danny, Ron Yuan ("Mulan") as Hing and Mykel Shannon Jenkins ("Teleios") as Jim. Much in the vein of 2004's "Four Brothers," they are reunited, after some time apart, by a tragedy that deeply impacts all of them in a very similar kind of way. The key difference is that these men have all led pretty harmless lives, which is not a bad thing, by the way. The story felt a little bit disjointed during that first segment, but begins to gain its focus once the real action begins. In order to gather information connected to their unified loss, they must succeed in a series of one-on-one, hand-to-hand sparring sessions, but without the benefit of pads and headgear. As expected, they come through when it matters the most, but come up short early. In other words, there is nothing surprising about the patters of the story, itself. However, the interaction and progress of the characters, themselves, are what really count. This means that even though this is an action movie, of sorts, it is more character-driven than it is plot-driven.

I would say that "The Paper Tigers" is more comedic than your basic martial arts title, too. I do not mean to draw any comparisons to "Kung Pow! Enter the Fist," as that was a lot more zany and over-the-top (and not nearly as effective, either). This entry was more charming and less goofy and I am pleased by that. The fight scenes may seem repetitive, in terms of how they are used in the story, but each match brings something new to the table when you focus on how they are executed from a presentation aspect. There was no major effort to look stylish or fancy, but the choreography is strong enough on its own that it did not need anything very fancy. True practitioners of the sport ought to enjoy that, in all honesty. Is there anything about this film that really stands out? In my view, no, but there was almost nothing that bothered or annoyed me, either. Do I think that the editing and overall execution of the story could have been better? I would say, "yes," but how far should any of us set our expectations in the first place? After all, this is Tran Quoc Bao's feature movie, directorial debut. For that, it is a fairly impressive project.

If I can be frank, I did not think that this was as strong as the previous martial arts film that I saw, though I have to concede that these are two, very different kinds of martial arts movies. In fact, I would put them just about as far apart on the sub-genre spectrum as possible. Objectively-speaking, I enjoyed "The Paper Tigers," but not as much as I enjoyed the new "Mortal Kombat," but the critic scoring, up to this point, tells a pretty different opinion. Oh well! Watch them both and you will probably like them both enough to consider watching them again one day. I cannot complain about that, in any year.

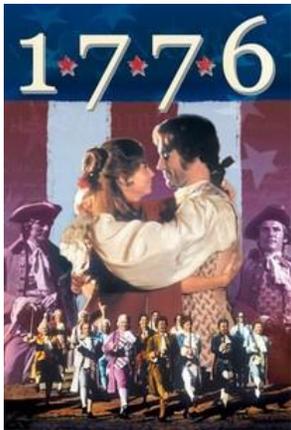


# THE 5 BEST MOVIES YOU SHOULD WATCH ON THE 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY

By Marcus Blake

*There* are movies for every occasion. For example, Christmas movies are meant to be watched at Christmas and Baseball movies are better to watch during the summer. But what about 4<sup>th</sup> of July, a truly American Holiday. What are the most patriotic movies that you can watch during 4<sup>th</sup> of July? Well, I have a few to suggestions and to be even more specific they are movies whose story was on American Soil. There are a lot of great war movies like Saving Private Ryan or Sands of Iwo Jima that are patriotic, but they are about American soldiers in foreign lands. So let us talk about the films on whose story resides on American soil.

## # 1 - 1776



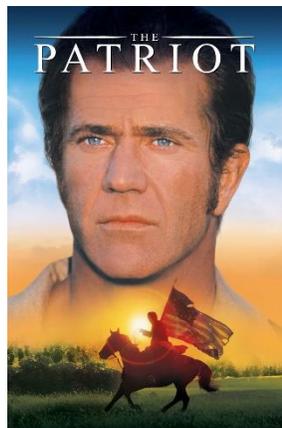
*I have never found a movie that captures the intensity, the comedy, and the inspiration of what it took to write and sign the Declaration*

*of Independence. And a movie that does it in such great fashion like a music. As serious as the occasion was there was a bit comedy to it because it wasn't easy to get all of the colonies to*

*ratify the Declaration of Independence and thank god for the profound wit of Benjamin Franklin to help lighten the mood. 1776 captures that beautifully. If you want a serious tone to this story then I suggest watching John Adams miniseries. William Daniels, Howard Da Silva, and Ken Howard star in the movie adaptation of the musical and all of them are absolutely brilliant. The songs are just as memorable as with Jersey Boys or Les Miserables especially "Sit Down John." This year is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the movie and should be watched at least a few times because the music is so good that you will sing the songs more than once. And yes, this musical and movie is better than Hamilton...deal with it!*

## #2 - The Patriot

*This was before Mel Gibson went crazy so naturally it's a great movie. Has he ever really made a bad movie before he went crazy and the racism came pouring out. Also, this is how I like to*



*remember Mel Gibson, a patriotic father, fighting for a good cause, and not blaming the Jews. Set at the beginning of the American Revolution. Mel Gibson's character is reluctant to fight, but becomes the patriot when the Red Coats capture and try to kill his son. The movie features a lot of great action and some historical lessons on colonial warfare. The movie has its seriousness, but is mostly lighthearted and inspirational. Sure, it may be Hollywood fluff and American Propaganda, but it does it in the right way. It's a great movie that you can't help but love and feel patriotic when you watch it on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.*

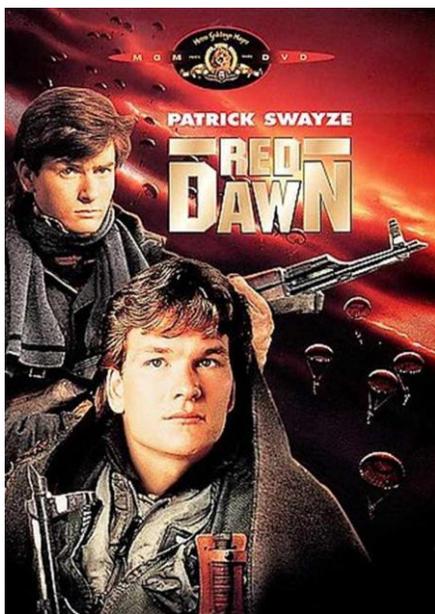
## #3 - Independence Day

*Who doesn't like the idea of Aliens invading America and we fight back, reclaiming our land. This movie was never meant to be great drama just a bit of summer fun. For me this movie is a bit*



of nostalgia because it came out the summer I graduated High School. The special effects and the action still stand up after twenty years and damnit, the movie is just a lot of fun. It was the movie that made Will Smith a star and like all the movies on this list, the cast is what made this movie. It has Bill Pullman (who gives one of the greatest speeches in the movies), Jeff Goldblum, Randy Quaid, and dozens of others. Now while this wasn't the first movie to feature an enemy invading America, it certainly was the most fun like what if Star Wars didn't happen in a galaxy far, far away, but in America. Now, admit it, if this movie is on TV you will stop what you're doing and watch it.

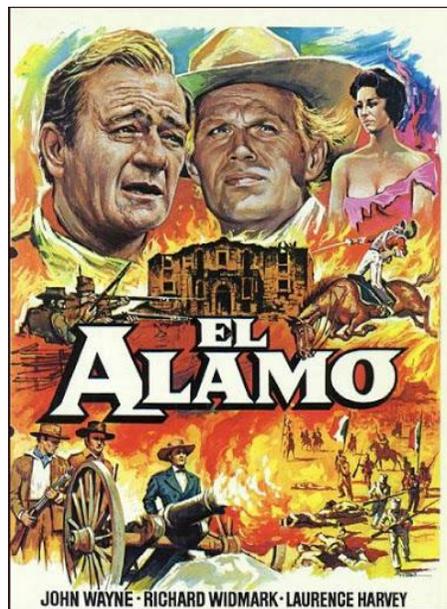
#### #4 - Red Dawn (1984)



*Now*, this is one of the greatest patriotic movies ever made. No country has ever been invaded and occupied America, but what if the

Russians had done it during the cold war. Would we stand idly by and let it happen? Fuck No...because we're Americans and always fight back even when it's a bunch of high school kids using guerrilla tactics to disrupt the enemy. This is basically the plot of Red Dawn and the cast is fantastic. It has a young Patrick Swayze, Charlie Sheen, Lea Thompson, Jennifer Grey, and Powers Booth. Plus, it was written and directed by John Milius one of the most underrated writers and directors in Hollywood...this was the guy who wrote the screenplay for Dirty Harry and Apocalypse Now in case you were wondering. Maybe this movie should be higher on my list, but it's on here because there's nothing more patriotic than when we stand up to tyranny and fight for our freedom. Themes from the American revolution are all over this movie, making this a perfect movie for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

#### # 5- The Alamo (1960)



The Alamo might just be for Texans, but I think it resonates with America, after all, the Texas Revolution is basically the American Revolution, 50 years later. What makes this movie great is it's about a battle where the men knew they were going to die, but fought anyway to give the Texas Army more time to mobilize and fight what would become the deciding battle and win Texas it's freedom from Mexico. I prefer the John Wayne version because simply, it's John Wayne and when it came to Westerns, he was the ultimate man. The 2004 version was not that bad of a movie, but how can Billy Bob Thornton every compare to John Wayne. Plus as an added bonus, John Ford was basically a Co-Director on this movie and John Ford with John Wayne never made a bad movie. So for me a movie about the Texas Revolution is just as important as a movie about the American Revolution.

#### HONORABLE MENTIONS

Some are fun and some just need to be seen if only once....

1. National Treasure
2. Forrest Gump
3. The Sandlot
4. The Right Stuff
5. Jaws
6. Bo





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# PRINCE WROTE THIS SONG?

**“Six o’clock already...I was just in the middle of a dream...”**

*By Chad Womack*



You ever hear a song 4 the very 1<sup>st</sup> time and u feel intimately familiar with it somehow? Something about the melody or a particular lyric just sticks with u and u just cannot shake the feeling that “DANG...somehow I KNOW I’ve BEEN here before.” When most of us heard The Bangles singing “Manic Monday” on the radio 4 the 1<sup>st</sup> time in early 1986...it sparked a not-so-subtle feeling of instant familiarity...and if u ever heard it played back to back with Prince’s classic “1999”, u immediately realize y it does. A few years before when Prince was assembling tracks for his “girl’s group” Apollonia 6 as a companion piece to the “Purple Rain” album, a song came to him “in the middle of a dream” that lifted the melody from the opening lines of his hit from a few years before. The next day he laid down the track with his own vocals and had the ladies lay down their vocal tracks the day after, with every intention of including it on their self-titled debut, but, as things usually happened with Prince, nothing was ever etched in stone.

After assembling the configuration of the album and recording a handful of other tracks, the song was shelved in favor of “Happy Birthday, Mr. Christian.” We all remember that tune, right? No??? Yeah, I did not think so. Though it might have made a much better choice song wise, it just did not fit the aesthetic that Prince was going for with the group overall. Sadly for Apollonia 6, the song was shelved and the album it was originally intended for peaked at #62 on the Billboard 200. After guesting onstage with Prince and the Revolution several times on the mammoth tour in support of “Purple Rain” the girls disbanded, thus making their debut album their ONLY album. Apollonia 6 was no more...but what of “Manic Monday?”

In early 1985, a few weeks after Prince had released his follow up album to “Purple Rain”, “Around the World in a Day” he and Apollonia caught the video for “Hero Takes A Fall” by The Bangles and he immediately became fascinated by up and coming all girls group from L.A. with the very Beatlesque vibe. After receiving a cassette copy of the song originally intended for the Apollonia 6 project, the ladies dove in to the track with unbridled delight, recording it from scratch and crafting a truly memorable pop classic out of it, hitting #2 on the U.S. charts bested only by Prince’s own chart topping “Kiss” .... but the story of “Manic Monday” does not end there.

On Prince’s birthday June 7, 2019, the Prince Estate and NPG/WB Records released “Originals” on the streaming platform Tidal followed by a wider release of various physical configurations a few weeks later. “Originals” is a collection of tracks that Prince had offered to various musicians over the course of his historic career but focused primarily on songs from the 80s and 90s that were basically not much more than glorified demos. Among these tracks r such classics as Prince’s original versions of “The Glamorous Life” and “Nothing Compares to You” and of course, the original guide vocal for “Manic Monday” thus bringing the song full circle, winding up on a posthumous release under the name of the man that started it all. What a long, strange trip it’s been, but, like the song says, “Time it goes so fast...when you’re having fun!”



# Noel Gallagher lands number one for High Flying Birds Best of Album



Noel Gallagher has landed a number one album for his best of High Flying Birds album, 'Back The Way We Came Vol 1 (2011-2021)'.

The former Oasis rocker released the first greatest hits collection chronicling his post-Oasis career under Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds last week, and the record has

already earned the star chart success, as it topped this week's Official Albums Chart on Friday (18.06.21). Noel's success was partly due to the album racking up the most physical sales for both CD and vinyl sales over the weekend, including a limited-edition vinyl for Record Store Day. The chart topper marks Noel's fourth under High Flying Birds, and his 12th when including his work with Oasis. Elsewhere in the album charts, Olivia Rodrigo's record 'Sour' has retained its second-place spot from last week, when it dropped from the top spot after spending two weeks there. The rest of the top five this week is comprised of brand-new entries, with Garbage's 'No Gods No Masters' taking

third, 'What's Your Pleasure' by Jessie Ware coming in at number four, and number five being occupied by Polo G's record 'Hall of Fame'. While Olivia is at number two in the album charts, she has clung on to the top spot in the Official Singles Chart, which sees her single 'Good 4 U' at number one for the fourth week running. The Weeknd's single 'Save Your Tears' is at number two, while 'Kiss Me More' by Doja Cat ft Sza is third. 'Heartbreak Anthem' by Galantis, Guetta, and Little Mix is fourth, and Olivia is on the chart again at number five with 'Déjà vu'.

# Brian May to re-release Debut Solo Album

Brian May is to re-release his debut solo album. The Queen rocker was "nervous" about revisiting his back catalogue but is now excited for new fans to hear 'Back to the Light' - which he first released in September 1992 - when a remastered version of the record is released on 6 August. Brian said of the record: "I was a little nervous at the beginning, thinking what is this going to dredge up in me? But I loved getting back in there. I'm really just hoping it will connect with people who have never heard this stuff before. "They know me as guitarist for Queen. Some know me as an



astronomer. Some know me as a campaigner for animal rights. I'm a sort of evangelist for 3-D Victorian Stereoscropy. But very few people have heard my solo output. So I'm excited to see how this turns out. "I found it fascinating going back in there and rediscovering why I wrote certain things. What they meant to me. How we recorded. Some of it is so massive in the recording I can hardly believe we pulled it off - it's very epic, some of it. And I like that. "And at the same time, there's little corners of it which are very simple, very understated, very emotionally naked. I discovered so much of what I'm saying in the album I still feel. I still feel those dangers, those fears, those hopes, those dreams." The album will be released as part of a Collector's Edition box set - which will include an exclusive white-vinyl LP, two

CDs, a 32-page book, a 12" art print, a download card and an enamel badge all presented in a lift-lid box- as well as 1LP black vinyl, 1CD, deluxe 2CD, cassette and digital formats. A limited-edition box-set is available exclusively on Queen Online Store with a signed 12" art print, as is a limited-edition 1LP picture disc. And Brian has revealed the record is the first in a series he's got planned. He said: "This is part of a series. The Brian May Gold Series. Each of them will have a little gold stamp on. And each one of them will give me the opportunity to rediscover the road that I travelled." 'Back to the Light' is available to pre-order now from <https://BrianMay.Ink.to/BackToTheLight>

# Neil Young gives Crazy Horse Album Update



Neil Young has admitted Crazy Horse have shed "more than a few tears" as they got back in the studio. The 75-year-old singer - who announced the band's upcoming record earlier this month - has given fans an update on the follow-up to 2019's 'Colorado. In a

blog post on his website the Neil Young Archives, he wrote: "Crazy Horse recording is under way. The Horse is back in the barn now, shaking off the rust. "We have the world's best crew with us for these sessions! Larry Cragg is tending the instruments and amps, while Jeff Pinn maintains amplifiers and the electronics inside them. "Bob Rice is caring for the pianos and other keyboards. Paul Davies is handling of Ralph's drums. "It has been a long time since we have been together and more than a few tears have been shed." Neil also opened up on the location for the sessions, and described the environment as "magic". He added: "We are so happy to be back in the barn, a barn built to replicate the 1850s barn that had collapse

in exactly the same place, high in the mountains of Colorado! "It's an exact replica of the original, built with Ponderosa pines by Ted Moews and his great crew of artisans. It is magic inside." He hinted that the "songs and feelings" have been inspired by the pandemic. He continued: "Mark Humphries is doing our monitors, continuing a near fifty year tradition. "Mark notes that his is our 'new barn' to replace Plywood Analog on Broken Arrow Ranch, where we did 'Ragged Glory', 'Freedom' and other albums. "These are new times, with new songs and feelings after what our world has been through and continues to face. "This music we are making for our souls. It's like fresh water on a desert. Life is going on."

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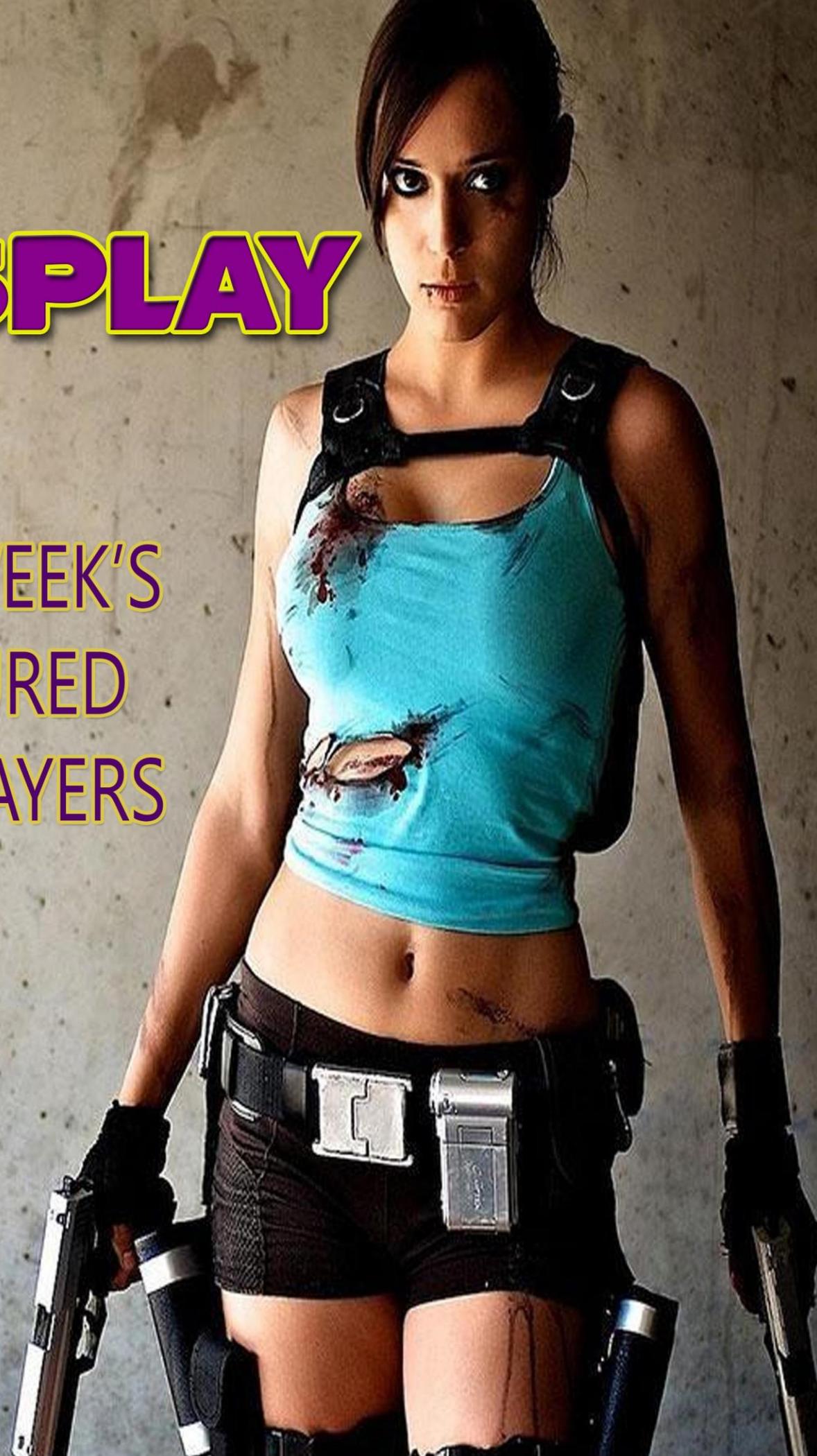
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# ABOUT JOY BUNSO COSPLAY

Cosplayer, Gamer, Nerd! Joy Busno is the queen of bootleg cosplay! She loves trying to transform upcycled and thrifted materials into amazing cosplays for the most affordable price possible. It may not be screen accurate, but my average cost of a full cosplay is \$50. Cosplaying characters from Borderland to X-Men to Raya and the Last Dragon, Joy is a force to be reckoned with on the Cosplay scene as blends some of the most detailed cosplay at the most affordable costs while cosplaying some of the most interesting characters in the nerd universe.



**Raya** from  
*Raya and the Last Dragon*

## -INTERVIEW-

How did you get into cosplay?

*Do* you remember that magazine *Animerica*? What a throwback! I loved seeing pictures of people cosplaying their fandoms in the early 2000's and didn't know that was something I could do. Interestingly enough, I didn't start cosplaying until 2015 when I had this dope thing called disposable income. It was a good time to finally give cosplay a go and I'm glad that I did.

Who is your favorite character to cosplay and why?

*Truthfully*, it's hard to pick one because it really depends on the season and the event. Generally, I think I would say my favorite character to cosplay is Ema Skye from the Ace Attorney game series. She's a detective with a speciality in forensics. She's incredibly clever but she is also a bit of a dork. Ace Attorney is such a niche fandom and I feel like cosplaying Ema is a great billboard for people to start talking to me and freaking out about any and all Ace Attorney news and memes.

What tips do you have on making a costume?

*First*, give yourself a budget and doable timeline. It's super important to have @&!\$%! (AKA mess ups) included in your budget in timelines. Second, download the Google Sheets app on your mobile device. Divide your cosplay into 3+ parts / columns (I usually do something like pants, top, outerwear and accessories) and list out everything you will need to make each portion. Utilize the checkbox function in Google Sheets. It will help you keep organized

What is your favorite memory of being a cosplayer?

*During* Momocon 2018, there was an impromptu Overwatch cosplayer parade that started with like 30 but grew to around 80-100. Whenever we saw an Overwatch cosplayer we would yell things like, "get on the payload," or "watch you six." It eventually turned into one of the biggest meetups I have ever gone to and it was full of jokes, laughter and a whole lot of sweat.

What advice do you have for fans getting into cosplay?

*My* advice is to basically befriend cosplayers. Great and talented friends are an amazing source of knowledge and they will hype and help you on every step on the journey.

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

*So*, I am not a fighter and that's completely fine. It takes all types of collaboration to fight the forces of evil and I want to have healing abilities. Whether the evil be an actual tangible thing or something like despair or disease, a healer is a necessity.

# Jubilee

## *X-MEN*



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# 'Dragon man' fossil may replace Neanderthals as our closest relative!



A near-perfectly preserved ancient human fossil known as the Harbin cranium sits in the Geoscience Museum in Hebei GEO University. The largest of known *Homo* skulls, scientists now say this skull represents a newly discovered human species named *Homo longi* or "Dragon Man." Their findings, appearing in three papers publishing June 25 in the journal *The Innovation*, suggest that the *Homo longi* lineage may be our closest relatives -- and has the potential to reshape our understanding of human evolution.

"The Harbin fossil is one of the most complete human cranial fossils in the world," says author Qiang Ji, a professor of paleontology of Hebei GEO University. "This fossil preserved many morphological details that are critical for understanding the evolution of the *Homo* genus and the origin of *Homo sapiens*." The cranium was reportedly discovered in the 1930s in Harbin City of the Heilongjiang province of China. The massive skull could hold a brain comparable in size to modern humans' but had larger, almost square eye sockets, thick brow ridges, a wide mouth, and oversized teeth. "While it shows typical

archaic human features, the Harbin cranium presents a mosaic combination of primitive and derived characters setting itself apart from all the other previously-named *Homo* species," says Ji, leading to its new species designation of *Homo longi*. Scientists believe the cranium came from a male individual, approximately 50 years old, living in a forested, floodplain environment as part of a small community. "Like *Homo sapiens*, they hunted mammals and birds, and gathered fruits and vegetables, and perhaps even caught fish," remarks author Xijun Ni, a professor of primatology and paleoanthropology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Hebei GEO University. Given that the Harbin individual was likely very large in size as well as the location where the skull was found, researchers suggest *H. longi* may have been adapted for harsh environments, allowing them to disperse throughout Asia. Using a series of geochemical analyses, Ji, Ni, and their team dated the Harbin fossil to at least 146,000 years, placing it in the Middle Pleistocene, a dynamic era of human species migration. They hypothesize that *H. longi* and *H. sapiens* could have encountered each other during this era. "We see multiple evolutionary lineages of *Homo* species and populations co-existing in Asia, Africa, and Europe during that time. So, if *Homo sapiens* indeed got to East Asia that early, they could have a chance to interact with *H. longi*, and since we don't know when the Harbin group disappeared, there could have been later encounters as well," says author Chris Stringer, a

paleoanthropologist at the Nature History Museum in London. Looking farther back in time, the researchers also find that *Homo longi* is one of our closest hominin relatives, even more closely related to us than Neanderthals. "It is widely believed that the Neanderthal belongs to an extinct lineage that is the closest relative of our own species. However, our discovery suggests that the new lineage we identified that includes *Homo longi* is the actual sister group of *H. sapiens*," says Ni. Their reconstruction of the human tree of life also suggests that the common ancestor we share with Neanderthals existed even further back in time. "The divergence time between *H. sapiens* and the Neanderthals may be even deeper in evolutionary history than generally believed, over one million years," says Ni. If true, we likely diverged from Neanderthals roughly 400,000 years earlier than scientists had thought. The researchers say that findings gathered from the Harbin cranium have the potential to rewrite major elements of human evolution. Their analysis into the life history of *Homo longi* suggest they were strong, robust humans whose potential interactions with *Homo sapiens* may have shaped our history in turn. "Altogether, the Harbin cranium provides more evidence for us to understand *Homo* diversity and evolutionary relationships among these diverse *Homo* species and populations," says Ni. "We found our long-lost sister lineage."

## THE GOLDILOCKS SUPERNOVA

### The discovery of a new type of supernova illuminates a medieval mystery!



A worldwide team led by UC Santa Barbara scientists at Las Cumbres Observatory has discovered the first convincing evidence for a new type of stellar explosion -- an electron-capture supernova. While they have been theorized for 40 years, real-world

examples have been elusive. They are thought to arise from the explosions of massive super-asymptotic giant branch (SAGB) stars, for which there has also been scant evidence. The discovery, published in *Nature Astronomy*, also sheds new light on the thousand-year mystery of the supernova from A.D. 1054 that was visible all over the world in the

daytime, before eventually becoming the Crab Nebula. Historically, supernovae have fallen into two main types: thermonuclear and iron-core collapse. A thermonuclear supernova is the explosion of a white dwarf star after it gains matter in a binary star system. These white dwarfs are the dense cores of ash that remain after a low-mass star (one up to about 8 times the mass of the sun) reaches the end of its life. An iron core-collapse supernova occurs when a massive star -- one more than about 10 times the mass of the sun -- runs out of nuclear fuel and its iron core collapses, creating a black hole or neutron star. Between these two main types of supernovae are electron-capture supernovae. These stars stop fusion when their cores are made of oxygen, neon and magnesium; they aren't massive enough to create iron. While gravity is always trying to crush a star, what keeps most stars from collapsing is either ongoing fusion or, in cores where fusion has stopped, the fact that you can't pack the atoms any tighter. In an electron capture supernova, some of the electrons in the oxygen-neon-magnesium core get smashed into their atomic nuclei in a process called electron capture. This removal of electrons causes the core of the star to buckle under its own weight and collapse, resulting in an electron-capture supernova. If the star had been slightly heavier, the core elements could have fused to create heavier elements, prolonging its life. So it is a kind of reverse Goldilocks situation: The star isn't light enough to escape its core collapsing, nor is it heavy enough to prolong its life and die later via different means. That's the theory that was formulated beginning in 1980 by Ken'ichi Nomoto of the University of Tokyo and others. Over the decades, theorists have formulated predictions of what to look for in an electron-capture supernova and their SAGB star progenitors. The stars should have a lot of mass, lose much of it before exploding, and this mass near the dying star should be of an unusual chemical composition. Then the electron-

capture supernova should be weak, have little radioactive fallout, and have neutron-rich elements in the core. The new study is led by Daichi Hiramatsu, a graduate student at UC Santa Barbara and Las Cumbres Observatory (LCO). Hiramatsu is a core member of the Global Supernova Project, a worldwide team of scientists using dozens of telescopes around and above the globe. The team found that the supernova SN 2018zd had many unusual characteristics, some of which were seen for the first time in a supernova. It helped that the supernova was relatively nearby -- only 31 million light-years away -- in the galaxy NGC 2146. This allowed the team to examine archival images taken by the Hubble Space Telescope prior to the explosion and to detect the likely progenitor star before it exploded. The observations were consistent with another recently identified SAGB star in the Milky Way, but inconsistent with models of red supergiants, the progenitors of normal iron core-collapse supernovae. The authors looked through all published data on supernovae, and found that while some had a few of the indicators predicted for electron-capture supernovae, only SN 2018zd had all six: an apparent SAGB progenitor, strong pre-supernova mass loss, an unusual stellar chemical composition, a weak explosion, little radioactivity and a neutron-rich core. "We started by asking 'what's this weirdo?'" Hiramatsu said. "Then we examined every aspect of SN 2018zd and realized that all of them can be explained in the electron-capture scenario." The new discoveries also illuminate some mysteries of the most famous supernova of the past. In A.D. 1054 a supernova happened in the Milky Way Galaxy that, according to Chinese and Japanese records, was so bright that it could be seen in the daytime for 23 days, and at night for nearly two years. The resulting remnant, the Crab Nebula, has been studied in great detail. The Crab Nebula was previously the best candidate for an electron-capture supernova, but its status was uncertain

partly because the explosion happened nearly a thousand years ago. The new result increases the confidence that the historic SN 1054 was an electron-capture supernova. It also explains why that supernova was relatively bright compared to the models: Its luminosity was probably artificially enhanced by the supernova ejecta colliding with material cast off by the progenitor star as was seen in SN 2018zd. Ken Nomoto at the Kavli IPMU of the University of Tokyo expressed excitement that his theory had been confirmed. "I am very pleased that the electron-capture supernova was finally discovered, which my colleagues and I predicted to exist and have a connection to the Crab Nebula 40 years ago," he said. "I very much appreciate the great efforts involved in obtaining these observations. This is a wonderful case of the combination of observations and theory." Hiramatsu added, "It was such a 'Eureka moment' for all of us that we can contribute to closing the 40-year-old theoretical loop, and for me personally because my career in astronomy started when I looked at the stunning pictures of the Universe in the high school library, one of which was the iconic Crab Nebula taken by the Hubble Space Telescope." "The term Rosetta Stone is used too often as an analogy when we find a new astrophysical object," said Andrew Howell, a staff scientist at Las Cumbres Observatory and adjunct faculty at UCSB, "but in this case I think it is fitting. This supernova is literally helping us decode thousand-year-old records from cultures all over the world. And it is helping us associate one thing we don't fully understand, the Crab Nebula, with another thing we have incredible modern records of, this supernova. In the process it is teaching us about fundamental physics: how some neutron stars get made, how extreme stars live and die, and about how the elements we're made of get created and scattered around the universe." Howell also is the leader of the Global Supernova Project, and lead author Hiramatsu's Ph.D. advisor.

# Scientists detect signatures of life remotely!



***It*** could be a milestone on the path to detecting life on other planets: Scientists under the leadership of the University of Bern and of the National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) Planets detect a key molecular property of all living organisms from a helicopter flying several kilometers above ground. The measurement technology could also open up opportunities for remote sensing of the Earth. Left hands and right hands are almost perfect mirror images of each other. But whatever way they are twisted and turned, they cannot be superimposed onto each other. This is why the left glove simply won't fit the right hand as well as it fits the left. In science, this property is referred to as chirality. Just like hands are chiral, molecules can be chiral, too. In fact, most molecules in the cells of living organisms, such as DNA, are chiral. Unlike hands, however, that usually come in pairs of left and right, the molecules of life almost exclusively occur in either their "left-handed" or their "right-handed" version. They are homochiral, as researchers say. Why that is, is still not clear. But this molecular homochirality is a characteristic property of life, a so-called biosignature. As part of the MERMOZ project, an international team led by the University of Bern and the National Centre of Competence in Research NCCR Planets, has now succeeded in detecting this signature from a distance of 2 kilometers and at a

velocity of 70 kph. Jonas Kühn, MERMOZ project manager of the University of Bern and co-author of the study that has just been published in the journal *Astronomy and Astrophysics*, says: "The significant advance is that these measurements have been performed in a platform that was moving, vibrating and that we still detected these biosignatures in a matter of seconds."

**An instrument that recognizes living matter:** "When light is reflected by biological matter, a part of the light's electromagnetic waves will travel in either clockwise or counterclockwise spirals. This phenomenon is called circular polarization and is caused by the biological matter's homochirality. Similar spirals of light are not produced by abiotic non-living nature," says the first author of the study Lucas Patty, who is a MERMOZ postdoctoral researcher at the University of Bern and member of the NCCR Planets,

Measuring this circular polarization, however, is challenging. The signal is quite faint and typically makes up less than one percent of the light that is reflected. To measure it, the team developed a dedicated device called a spectropolarimeter. It consists of a camera equipped with special lenses and receivers capable of separating the circular polarization from the rest of the light.

Yet even with this elaborate device, the new results would have been impossible until recently. "Just 4 years ago, we could detect the signal only from a very close distance, around 20 cm, and needed to observe the same spot for several minutes to do so," as Lucas Patty recalls. But the upgrades to the instrument he and his colleagues made, allow a much faster and stable detection, and the strength of the signature in circular polarisation persists even with distance.

This rendered the instrument fit for the first ever aerial circular polarization measurements.

**Useful measurements on earth and in space:** Using this upgraded instrument, dubbed FlyPol, they demonstrated that within mere seconds of measurements they could differentiate between grass fields, forests and urban areas from a fast moving helicopter. The measurements readily show living matter exhibiting the characteristic polarization signals, while roads, for example, do not show any significant circular polarization signals. With the current setup, they are even capable of detecting signals coming from algae in lakes.

After their successful tests, the scientists now look to go even further. "The next step we hope to take, is to perform similar detections from the International Space Station (ISS), looking down at the Earth. That will allow us to assess the detectability of planetary-scale biosignatures. This step will be decisive to enable the search for life in and beyond our Solar System using polarization," says MERMOZ principal investigator and co-author Brice-Olivier Demory, professor of astrophysics at the University of Bern and member of the NCCR Planets says. The sensitive observation of these circular polarization signals is not only important for future life detection missions. Lucas Patty explains: "Because the signal directly relates to the molecular composition of life and thus its functioning, it can also offer valuable complementary information in Earth remote sensing." It can for instance provide information about deforestation or plant disease. It might even be possible to implement circular polarization in the monitoring of toxic algal blooms, of coral reefs and the effects of acidification thereon.

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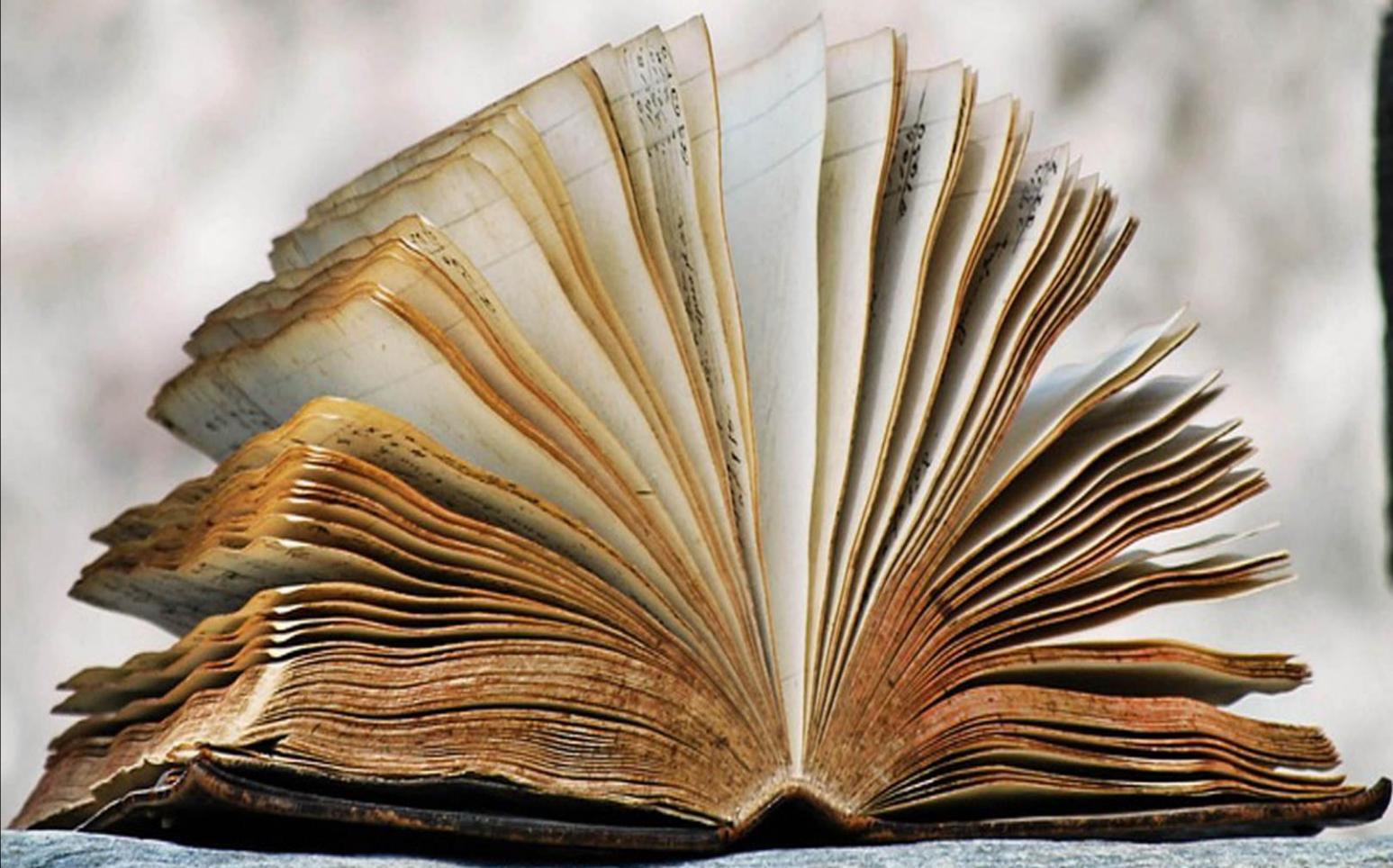


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# Storytellers





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# Sev7n

By

Tyler Berg

**I**t was two years ago that the people of Hudsonville and the people who lived all around me that I was an evil man; they eventually proved to be fools. One night on Halloween in 2001 three children went missing and when the people of this small town heard of this they decided to take justice into their own hands. The justice they would take would be on me and as I found out the hard way justice for an innocent man doesn't exist. There were seven of them and as they bombarded my home they kidnapped me, tied me up, and dragged away to they graveyard near by. Now mind you I had done nothing wrong for I was only a hermit in my mid-thirties, but still a hermit none the less. These horrible people took away my life and they basically lynched me right there even though I had done nothing wrong. They all contributed to my death in some way and I suppose it was a "if we go down we all go down scenario." While I was swinging from the tree they hung me from and as I slipped into the wraths cold icy grip I saw an image that would haunt me every second, minute, hour, and month of my hibernation six feet under. I saw the three missing children, the same three children I supposedly killed and the same children of the ruthless people who killed me. That is now forever burned into my mind and my memories. I looked at all these ruthless people hoping that they would cut me loose, but I was wrong.

I continued to swing helplessly and as my last breath slipped from my body I saw seven mangled and horrible reflections of these inner monsters that killed me. The same spirits of the three missing children that I had seen before told me that in exactly two years after today I would arise and consummate my revenge. Oh, how patiently I waited for that instant when I could get my revenge.

730 long agonizing days went by in a hollowed out box randomly dug amongst the already somber graveyard and then it happened. This would be the night when I would take vengeance upon these miserable souls. It's funny because I consider myself a postmodern angel of death and tonight death would come for those same mangled spirits that were before me before I died. Now this isn't a merry little tale to tell because I am not human anymore; I am death itself.

I saw the first spirit that guided me from the graveyard which showed me where my first victim was residing at the time. I appeared before his humble little abode amongst a slum of many desolate, empty boarding houses on a littered filled street. It was the perfect scene for a grizzly murder on Halloween night. On that desolate street a faint echo of that vile pigs name could be heard by only me. Slowly I entered the boarding house remembering every little thing that they that all seven did to me and the little dance they did upon my grave; all I could think about was that vengeance would be mine. As I walked up the stairs they made a faint little noise whispering the sound of relief knowing that I would soon justify what they did to me. 336 was the number of the room that my first victim slept in and he was somebody that didn't have any common sense whatsoever because his door was unlocked, which made this the easiest justice served. As I walked into the room I snickered under my breath and then placed my thumb and

middle finger on each of his temples squeezing with all my might until my fingers touched each other. The first one was dead now

I exited the boarding house and another spirit appeared before me to show me where the next victim resided at with his family of two kids and a wife, despite his family he still had to pay for what he did. I walked nearly 3 miles to where his house was; he lives at 811 McLean Roads. I entered slowly through the basement window and walked up the stairs to this house that had already experienced its share of hostility. I could sense this hostility in the air and walking past the rooms where his daughter and son slept; I felt pity for them. I picked both children up out of their beds and took them downstairs placing them on the sofa. I went into their parent's room and saw his wife sleeping next to him, she turned over and I could sense that he was beating her. She awoke and saw me, but didn't scream. I calmly told her that I was about to take the life of her husband and without fear she didn't object. Mr. Nickerson woke up and when he saw me he immediately started to hit his wife thinking that she had let me in and as he brought his hand down I grabbed his throat. He started gagging and while he was squirming around in my hands I took his tongue and pulled it out of the back of his head and watched him choke on his own blood.

Now the next two victims worked the midnight shift at the local docks. I crept along towards the docks where my little "friends" were and where vengeance was on my mind the other thing that consumed me was the smell of dying salty fish, which I absolutely hated. I quietly moved behind a wall near where the two were standing and I could hear them talking about my death. There was not any sound as I sneaked up behind them except for the evil sound of their laughter and there soon to be last breath. I grabbed a gaffing stick and jumped out from behind the wall swinging it with all my might. The one on the left felt my pain as I swung a viscous blow and caught him in his neck. I swung him around until only small pieces of his neck were on my stick. The other one grabbed a machete that was near by and when he tried to hit me with it I swung it down with all my power and my stick bringing with it nothing but burning hatred. I turned the second one into twins and while both of them lied before me dead I then wrote beside them on the ground with their own blood "Now I'm only down to three."

The mayor had always been funny about Halloween and for the longest time the people of this town though nothing of it. His mother had been committed to a mental institution for talking of things that never happened and saying things that did not make sense. One of the things that she said as she was being committed was "2 years to the day that you take the life of a man he will come back to take your life." for the mayor that was all he need to hear to make him fear Halloween. Two years ago, the mayor was the mob leader who had fueled on the rage of the seven and so because of that most of the blood fell upon his hands; ever since then nothing but guilt grew inside of him. He asked his assistant who was standing next to him while he was looking out the window "Do you believe in revenge after death Riverton?" Riverton replied "it depends on what you mean sir." "Nothing, I don't mean anything" replied the mayor as he solemnly stared out the window.

While he continued to stare out the window the television was blaring in the background; the next report from the late evening news that followed on the TV was that four brutal murders had taken place that night. The victim's names were read aloud, William Browning, Jacob Russell, Benjamin Nickerson, and Jackson Workers. The report over the TV also said that the police had no details at this time but as they were investigating and that the police found the message written on the ground "Now I'm down to only three." When hearing the news the mayor felt like he had been hit with a sledgehammer for he knew what was coming after him and why it was coming.

I crept along the rain slicked roads with the odd sense of righteousness for the things I had done. I had committed simple vengeance and had taken no prisoners. The next victim was a night nurse as the local hospital and the hospital was pretty much empty because everyone was off for Halloween night, except for the nurse and me. I found her cleaning up in a room and when she was getting ready to leave I grabbed a scalpel while from the tray nearby while chanting an incantation. I knew that the incantation had no meaning in any realm, but it sounded menacing when murder was about to be done and that's where the incantation had its power. When she turned around after hearing me she let out a scream that could be heard from the bowls of an abyss; that's when I carved

her face like pumpkin. She started to run away after I was done and after the last of her motor reflexes were leaving her body for it was too late, she was already dead.

The next to last victim was up for grabs now and worked as a taxi driver. As luck would have it he was making his rounds near the hospital and as he was driving I stepped in front of his car. The man got out of his car after coming to a screeching halt to see who might be dumb enough to step in front of his car. He took one look at me and in fearful rage started to scream "we killed you, we-we-we killed you." I simply replied, "well allow me to return the favor." He started to scream even louder and nothing's worse than hearing a grown man scream to spare his life. He continued to scream and then I pinned him up against a brick wall with a piece of his muffler and gear shaft from his car to shut him up. While he continued to scream for his life I punctured a vein to let his blood run out of his body. The man did nothing, but scream and beg with all the energy he had left for his life. I looked at him with a vengeful look and said to him "hopefully the paramedics will arrive before you bleed to death." The man with the last breaths of his life started to laugh and cry at the same time for remorse for he knew that justice had been served and he had paid for his sins. I slowly turned my back to him and walked across the street with the sounds of laughter and sorrow growing fainter. For one more act of justice the sounds of the Man's laughter and agony ceased when I threw the steering wheel from his car at him and hit him square in his neck. The steering wheel was the only thing holding his head up at that point.....

To be continued

# Words

Words sweep softly out the mouths of doves  
And nestled neatly, on some park bench or cushioned seat form a blanket of trust

Quick light and fleeting, whispers form, and dance around the ears of lovers in a car, holding hands as they talk. Alone in their world, Alone in plain view.

Words creating private rooms and shelters against storms of stress.  
An empty gaze, cold and devoid, brightens at a word, a song, a story

Angst and fears are sent sailing away on the tides of a solitary sentiment.  
Momentary, motionless, more than a lifetime, met gazes mold lips against each other.

And in the beat of a heart and breath taken, echo out the words “I love you”  
Words upon words, begin lifetimes of memories, opened hearts, open arms, open lives.

Words, that give, that create, that build  
Words, that heal, that protect, that save

But words are imperfect, they may decay, may hurt, may scar.  
Words may tear, rip and claw

Torrents and tirades, red tinged regret, stinging at the soul of a dove.  
With wings like Icarus two beings fall, weightless, heavy, and cold.

Words trap, tempt, and take  
Like chains on the ankles of a man, who crawling against fate

Pulling himself up and banging at the door of a girl  
Breathlessly whispers “I won’t give up”

Words are the response, and somewhere, among the angst, among the stress and fear  
A dove whispers back. “Neither will I”

~ Brooks Ordich

**WORD**

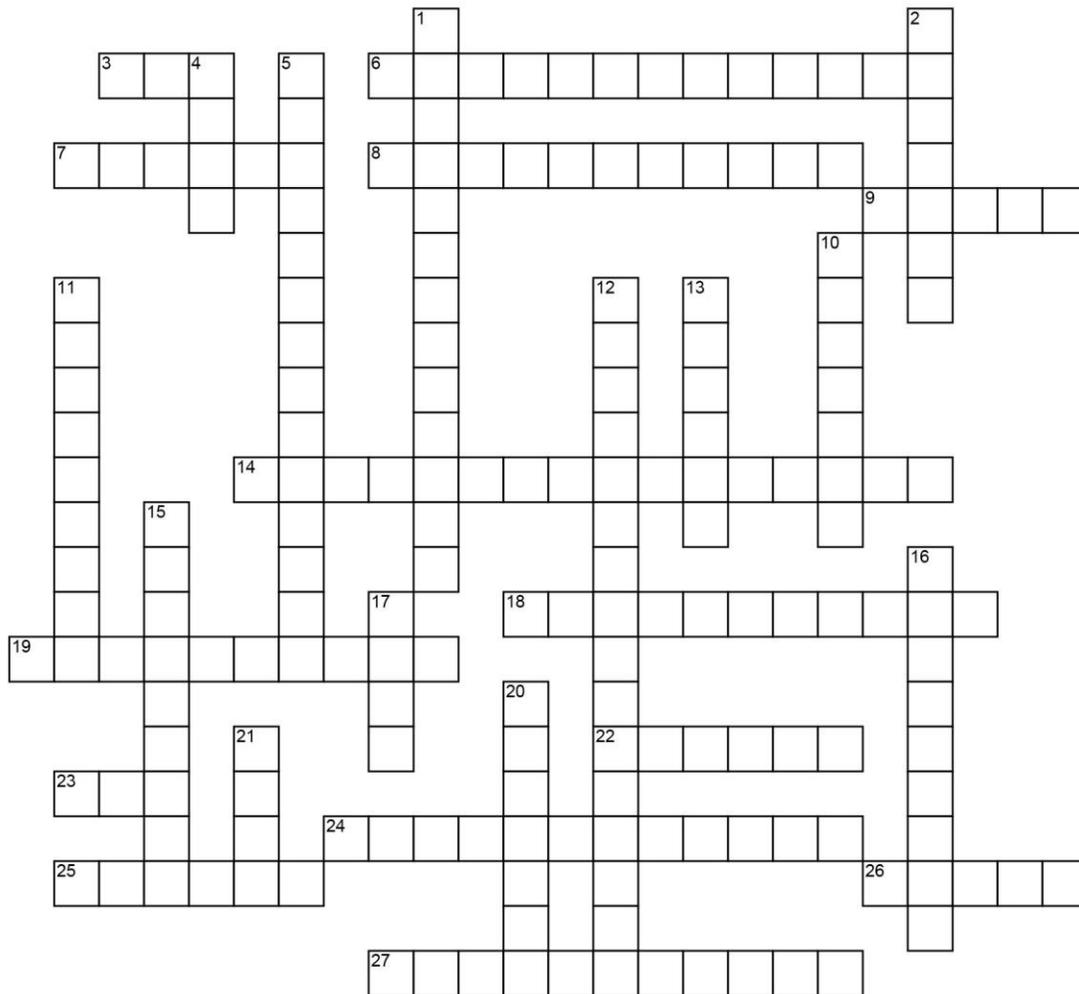
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- 18 Siam musical
- 19 Hitchcock peep show
- 22 Thompson in the Longest Day
- 23 Animation frame
- 24 Kurosawa's septet
- 25 Share the spotlight
- 26 Coveted golden guy
- 27 Born Frances Ethel Gumm

## DOWN

- 1 Revolutionary Russian love
- 2 Played Smith in Washington
- 4 The Ghost and Mrs. \_\_\_
- 5 Director of 1925's Gold Rush
- 10 Famous film sled
- 11 Animated 1937 Disney heroine
- 12 Epic Peter O'Toole role
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