

That Nerd Show



WEEKLY NEWS



MARCH 7, 2021

Vol. 3

25 YEARS OF FILM
TOP 10 MOVIES OF 1996



PS5

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SERIES
X

THE NEXT CONSOLE WAR WHO'S WINNING?

BY MARCUS BLAKE AND K. SCOTT COOPER

“JUDAS AND THE BLACK MESSIAH”
AND THE MAURITANIAN
MOVIE REVIEWS

AND
OTHER REVIEWS
FROM OUR STAFF

WHAT YOU SHOULD
BINGE-WATCH



GAMES
WITH GOLD
MARCH 2021

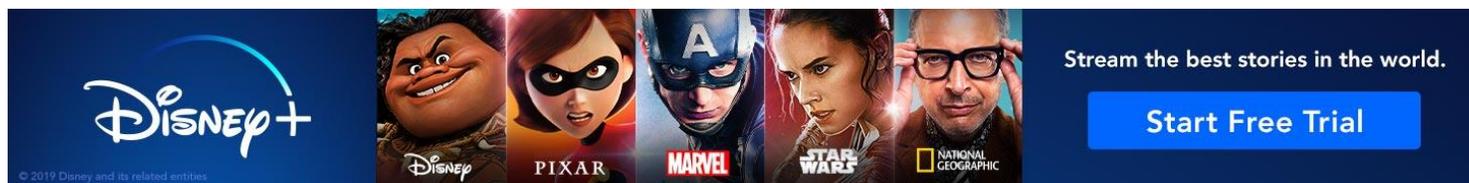




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THE NEXT CONSOLE WAR: WHO'S WINNING?

By Marcus Blake and K. Scott Cooper



EVERY new generation of gaming consoles brings another console war...the fight to see which console is better...which one gamers prefer. But how do you determine who wins the console war? Is it based on sales alone? Or is it more than that, looking at the hardware itself, how it will play certain games, which company has the better exclusive titles. All of these things are valid points. It's been over seven years since the beginning of the last console war between the PlayStation and the Xbox. I think we can honestly say that PlayStation won that war, but it was also the first time that Xbox seemed to be a true competitor, putting a bigger dent in the console market. And one thing that Gamers have generally noticed about Microsoft's Xbox is they have gotten better, especially when it comes to hardware and their gaming subscription so

of course it begs the question, did continually getting better allow to Xbox finally surpass PlayStation?

It has been over 4 months since the release of the Xbox Series X and the PlayStation 5. 2020 was also a unique year when it came to sales because it was in the middle of a pandemic and both consoles were in limited supply. That also means that sale numbers after 4 months will not paint an accurate picture of which console ended up being the best purchase. Nor can we completely forget about the Nintendo Switch because it has been the highest selling console in the last few years with over 26 million sold since its release date in March of 2017. But does that make the Nintendo Switch the better console, well there's a lot of criteria in determining who wins this console war and that is what we're going to explore. However, just for clarification the PlayStation 5 has sold 4.2 million consoles since its release date on November 12th whereas the Xbox Series X has sold 2.8 million units. The PlayStation 5 matched its total sales of the PlayStation 4 back in 2013 within the first few months, while the Xbox Series X came in just under what the Xbox one sold back in 2013 when it was first released. However, those figures are a little misleading to the true success of these two consoles because of the limited supply due to the pandemic. And just like the last generation of consoles, PlayStation has outsold Xbox.

LET us start with the component specifications of the PlayStation 5 in the Xbox Series X. Which console has the advantage in having the better Hardware. It should be noted that the next generation of consoles have been built to rival higher end gaming PCs. True Gamers have always valued gaming PCs as the better hardware for many years especially when it comes to graphic cards, the processor, and the amount of ram it takes to truly run a video game. You can say it's almost a snobbish attitude towards consoles as they just never haven't been as good. There is definitely truth in that, but with the PlayStation 5 and the Xbox Series X, it seems that they have finally caught up to gaming PCs. That was never more evident than when trying to play one of the latest titles, Cyberpunk 2077 and even though that game did look better on PC, the new Xbox and PlayStation seem to be the only consoles that could truly run the game as it was never meant to be played on last generation consoles. But in the side by side comparison of components specs we see that both consoles have stepped up their game, so to speak. Both have an 8x Zen Core processor which is something that you would find in a gaming PC, but it is the Xbox that has a faster processor, although, not by much. Both consoles take 16GB of RAM which is about what the average gaming PC has to run most games especially with 4K high-definition capabilities. But it also should be noted that truly higher-end gaming PCs run at around 32 GB of RAM. Even with the latest generation of consoles, they'll never truly rival the highest quality and fastest gaming PC on the market. But that's also the difference in spending \$500 for a gaming console compared to at least \$2,000 in putting together a quality gaming PC. From memory bandwidth to internal storage



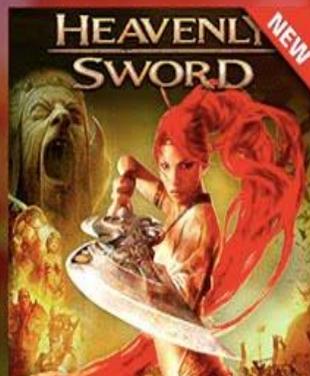
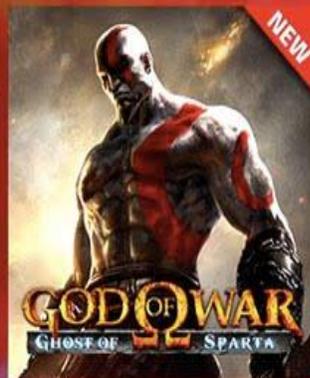
to the optical drive and the GPU, Xbox Series X has better Hardware than the PlayStation 5. It outperforms the PlayStation 5, although both systems are the closest that a console has ever gotten to a good gaming PC. Both are great systems in their own way, it's just Microsoft put a little extra care to the hardware when it came to the Xbox compared to Sony and their new PlayStation. But after having played games on both systems especially the next generation of games, all systems are equal when it comes to gameplay. It has been fantastic to see the difference in playing even older generation games from the Xbox one and PlayStation 4 because of the hardware that goes into both systems, it feels like games get an extra boost. When we unboxed the Xbox Series X and the PlayStation 5 and tested out various games, it was very noticeable especially with sports games. And one discernible difference that we saw between the Xbox One and the Xbox Series X is when we tried out the new Star Wars Squadrons game, flying was better and we were able to keep up with PC gamers during dogfights. It was the same for the PlayStation 5. At the end of the day the hardware in both systems makes gaming so much better especially with older games.

Look at the specs side by side!

PlayStation Now



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Component	Specification
CPU	x86-64-AMD Ryzen Zen 8 Cores / 16 Threads at 3.5GHz (variable frequency)
GPU	Ray Tracing Acceleration Up to 2.23 GHz (10.3 TFLOPS)
GPU Architecture	AMD Radeon RDNA 2-based graphics engine
Memory/Interface	16GB GDDR6/256-bit
Memory Bandwidth	448GB/s
Internal Storage	Custom 825GB SSD
IO Throughput	5.5GB/s (Raw), Typical 8-9GB/s (Compressed)
Expandable Storage	NVMe SSD Slot
External Storage	USB HDD Support
Optical Drive (optional)	Ultra HD Blu-ray (66G/100G) ~10xCAV BD-ROM (25G/50G) ~8xCAV BD-R/RE (25G/50G) ~8x CAV DVD ~3.2xCLV
PS5 Game Disc	Ultra HD Blu-ray, up to 100GB/disc
Audio	"Tempest" 3D AudioTech
Video Out	HDMI Out port Support of 4K 120Hz TVs, VRR (specified by HDMI ver 2.1)
Dimensions	PS5 - 390mm x 104mm x 260mm (width x height x depth) PS5 Digital Edition - 390mm x 92mm x 260mm (width x height x depth)
Weight	PS5 - 4.5kg PS5 Digital Edition - 3.9kg
Power	PS5 - 350W PS5 Digital Edition - 340W
Input / Output	USB Type-A port (Hi-Speed USB) USB Type-A port (Super Speed USB 10Gbps) x2 USB Type-C port (Super Speed USB 10Gbps)
Networking	Ethernet (10BASE-T, 100BASE-TX, 1000BASE-T) IEEE 802.11 a/b/g/n/ac/ax Bluetooth 5.1



Component	Specification
CPU	8x Zen 2 Cores at 3.8GHz (3.6GHz with SMT)
GPU	12 TFLOPs, 52 CUs at 1.825GHz, Custom RDNA 2
Die Size	360.45mm ²
Process	TSMC 7nm Enhanced
Memory	16GB GDDR6
Memory Bandwidth	10GB at 560GB/s, 6GB at 336GB/s
Internal Storage	1TB Custom NVMe SSD
IO Throughput	2.4GB/s (Raw), 4.8GB/s (Compressed)
Expandable Storage	1TB Expansion Card
External Storage	USB 3.2 HDD Support
Optical Drive	4K UHD Blu-ray Drive
Performance Target	4K at 60fps - up to 120fps



BUT if there has to be a clear winner when it comes to the hardware that would be Microsoft's Xbox Series X. This was even more evident when it came to one of the biggest issues for gamers and that's extended storage. Xbox has always allowed an external hard drive because it's pretty much a PC anyway. But it took a good 4 years after the release of the PlayStation 4 for them to allow external hard drives, which means you were always limited in hard drive space. Almost immediately Xbox allowed their own brand of external hard drive after two terabytes to be connected to the Xbox One. That was a real game-changer when you could have it Max 3 terabytes depending on one Xbox you have gotten of space for your games. Sony has always claimed that it took a while for the PlayStation 4 to be able to have external hard drives because they wanted to go straight to USB 3.0 and at the time of the release of the PlayStation 4 they just never considered it. When it came to the unboxing of both systems, we moved a 6 terabyte external hard drive over to the new Xbox Series X without any trouble. It was seamless when it came to gameplay. Every game started up perfectly and although new games like Assassin's Creed Valhalla which was geared for the Xbox Series X or Cyberpunk 2077 oh were installed on the internal hard drive, the new Xbox could easily play games from the external hard drive. It wasn't exactly the case with the PlayStation 5. In fact during our initial unboxing and test of the system, we moved over an 8 terabyte external hard drive, the system crashed because it could not handle the extended storage. Within the first week of PlayStation 5 release, two major updates by Sony had to fix the issue. We had more than one crash with the extended storage especially when playing our 2020 game of the year, Ghost of Tsushima.



SONY'S profits have always been built around their proprietary products whether it be their own extended hard drives or their web cams and even controllers with portable charging stations. It was clear that Sony didn't want third party products working with their new PlayStation, but at the time of its release there wasn't any Sony extended hard drive that would work so most gamers had to rely on third-party external hard drives. It is unclear whether Sony really wanted to address this problem or we're forced to give in angry gamers who couldn't play their old games. But the other noticeable difference with the PlayStation 5 compared to the new Xbox was PlayStation 5 games could only be played on the internal hard drive, which had limited space. While the new PlayStation boasts that it has a 1 terabyte internal hard drive, a third of that would be filled up with all of the apps and software that came with the new PlayStation so essentially you only had 667 GB, which Frankly Speaking sucked when you were playing games like NBA 2K 21 that had a hundred 115 GB or the new Call of Duty Black Ops Cold War game that with all of its updates ran at 130 GB. It wasn't hard to fill up the internal space of the new PlayStation 5. And yes, this was a big strike against the system compared to the new Xbox. Perhaps it's how Microsoft views building a console compared to Sony whereas Microsoft looks at it as building something that is very much like a high-end gaming PC and Sony sticking with their traditional proprietary style of building, doesn't build something that is very universal. If this sounds familiar, it's been the ongoing war in the PC world since Apple came onto the scene in the mid-70s and rivaling IBM. It is the war of open architecture vs. Closed, and anybody who's ever had an Apple product

knows that they don't like their products to be Universal compared to most PC companies or even Android. You could say that Sony is very much like Apple company of the gaming industry.

THE next thing that we looked at was design. The design of both systems were very different than in years past previous consoles. While it has for the most part been evident with Microsoft that design wasn't as important compared to functionality, you can almost say that they have a boring approach to design, it has always been with hardware in mind when it comes to design. Sony took a different approach with the PlayStation 5 giving us some kind of new age abstract look to the Shell. It's different compared to the thin square boxes that we have seen in the past oh, but don't let that fool you and thinking that it's all about design because there is a purpose to the airflow of this overpowered console compared to previous generations. If you set the PlayStation 5 on its side you do you do get better airflow and it does stay cooler which will make the new console last longer has learned from the past. The new Xbox may just be a square brick, but is also necessary because of the Superior Hardware it's packing compared to previous generations of their consoles. When we looked at the design of both it almost felt like a scene out of AMC's hit show Halt and Catch Fire where Joe MacMillan played by Lee Pace is trying to explain the purpose of a beautiful design when it comes to marketing and the engineers roll their eyes because to them it's about the hardware that makes it the better product. True is, they're both right. They're both right and while the new PlayStation 5 looks very different it doesn't take away from how great of a machine it is but just to offer a different perspective. Xbox seems to have their game together when it comes to a useful console design. Yep, it looks like a brick, but if we wanted it to look like the Queen of England giving a tiny hat wearing polar bear a lap dance, we would ask for it. We clearly don't want that so it's good that they made the hardware better than the design for the Xbox Series X. You could say the same for the shiny misshapen robot version of a dumpster cat PlayStation came up with. Yep, it's kinda

cool looking, but the only thing its going to make look cool is the dust it collects on my tv stand, at the very least with the brick from the void, I can see when it's getting dirty sooner.

THEN again, PlayStation withs with the design because it is different and it serves the console well especially with the new dual sense controllers. After months of playing on the PlayStation 5, we have to admit that the feel and how the console was built was brilliant in its own way. It's certainly different and different can be good. Only time will tell if this make that much of a difference. However, it doesn't take away from the importance of functionality and the hardware that makes a gaming console run great. Sometimes all you really need is just a brick with exceptional hardware to make a fantastic gaming system. Gaming PCs are pretty much the same thing.



THE last thing that we looked at when it comes to the new gaming consoles is value. What has the overall better value. is it reasonably priced? What comes with it? What third-party equipment can you use with your console to make your gaming experience better? The Xbox Series X and PlayStation 5 both cost \$499.99, \$399.99 for the digital only versions. They cost the same, but the real value is in the extra costs for proper gaming from equipment to gaming subscriptions. We have already talked about the use of external hard drives. But something that we haven't talked about is the use of a webcam for streaming. the new Xbox can still use a third-party webcam whereas the new PlayStation still

requires a Sony webcam and of course you cannot use your PlayStation 4 camera on the new system so that's just one more thing you will have to buy if you get a PlayStation 5 and plan on streaming gameplay. Now, the most important aspect of value when it comes to a console is gaming subscriptions. Probably the most popular form of a gaming subscription is the Ultimate Game Pass by Xbox which came out in June of 2019. Microsoft was smart enough to combine Xbox Gold and Game Pass for one low price of \$14.99 a month which meant that you could all the perks of Gold, but with a gaming subscription that featured over a hundred games for the Xbox that could be downloaded especially backwards compatible Xbox 360 games. With PlayStation it's a little bit different they've always had PlayStation Plus for \$9.99 a month, which also means that you got free games every month that you can add to your account. But in 2014 they added with a call PlayStation now which allowed for remastered editions of old games to be played on the PlayStation 4 and then to be able to stream old PlayStation 2 and PlayStation 3 games. At first it was \$19.99 a month and it seemed like it was very limited compared to the Xbox Ultimate Game Pass. Plus, you couldn't download most of the games and why is downloading important because trying to stream a game usually ends up in disaster. The gameplay lags and it's just a horrible experience all around. You need to be able to download games to your hard drive to be able to play that properly which is something that Xbox had always featured.

BUT in the last year or so anticipating the arrival of the PlayStation 5, PlayStation Now dropped its price to \$9.99 a month and also featured over 700 games, with hundreds of PlayStation 4 games that were now downloadable to your hard drive. It was a move marked by competition with the Ultimate Game Pass by Xbox. As of February 2021, PlayStation Now is probably the better subscription because of all the games they have in what is downloadable, but you are still paying \$20 a month between PlayStation Plus and PlayStation now just to have a gaming subscription compared to the \$14.99 a month with Xbox, although you do get more games for PlayStation. But PlayStation did something different last November, every PlayStation Plus game or exclusive title if every PlayStation 5 customer had a PlayStation Plus account. Basically, all of these great titles including some Call of Duty games were made free instantly for PlayStation 5 customers adding more to the games that were available and as great and highly valued as the Xbox Ultimate Game passes, PlayStation stepped up their game it started offering more. With all the exclusive titles from PlayStation Plus being made available to PlayStation 5 customers and the updated PlayStation Now subscription, the \$20 you would spend every month for these two things as a PlayStation customer is most definitely worth it and almost mandatory if you're a gamer. Both gaming subscriptions are definitely valuable because of everything that you can get compared to having to spend \$30 or more for games even games that are a few years old. But we do have to give points to PlayStation for stepping up their game and making PlayStation Now truly valuable compared to what it was even just a couple years ago. As a company that sponsors gaming tournaments, gaming subscriptions are very valuable for consoles so you're not having to buy each individual title and you're always being able to discover new games especially fighting games.

BUT there is one area that PlayStation has always exceeded at especially with the release of PlayStation 5 and that is their exclusive titles. As much as we love the Xbox Series X, only having a handful of games that you play with older consoles, but had an update that made them compatible with either PlayStation 5 or Xbox series X, at least PlayStation had a few exclusive titles



that were released strictly for the PlayStation 5. The Spider-Man Miles Morales game which was a big hit. The remake of Demon's Souls which is even more fantastic and then other games like Godfall. Sony made sure we had exclusive titles for the new gaming system and unfortunately Xbox cannot claim that. We were supposed to get the new Halo game released with the new Xbox, but sadly Halo Infinite has been pushed back to you later 2021. About the only thing we really had an exclusive titles was a Xbox Series X upgrade for Gears of War 5. And while the updates to Assassin's Creed Valhalla and Cyberpunk 2077 for the new Xbox were great and certainly enhanced gameplay, you got the same thing for PlayStation 5 with those games. Sony's PlayStation has always had the better exclusive titles. Better story-driven games always come out on PlayStation. In fact, the last three out of five "game of the year" titles for That Nerd Show have been PlayStation exclusives, Horizon zero Dawn, God of War 4, and this year's Ghost of Tsushima. The Uncharted series is one of the most storied franchises in gaming history and it's only on PlayStation. The Last of Us Part 1 and 2 are some of the most highly rated story-driven games in the industry and those are exclusive to PlayStation. In fact, other award shows gave The Last of Us 2 game of the year. This is just one area where Sony's PlayStation wins every time and Microsoft has never been able to truly catch up with their exclusive titles. So, it was nice that when we got our PlayStation 5 for a few purposes of course we had three exclusive titles to go along with it. And it looks like Sony will have another banner year when it comes to exclusive titles in 2021, but that's to be expected. However, this doesn't take away anything from what Microsoft has done with the Xbox, they did acquire Bethesda games and almost immediately the new Doom Eternal game ended up on Ultimate Game Pass when it was still valued at \$40 to \$50 in stores. And with the rumored purchase of Ubisoft, it looks like Microsoft is starting to make a play for having expanded gaming catalogs and more exclusive games, which is always good. There are definitely some great titles on Ultimate Game Pass that you can't get with PlayStation. And one of the best things that Microsoft did last year regarding their Ultimate Game Pass was including EA access or EA play which has a ton of more games from the EA catalog, including the previous year's editions of all their sports games and of course every Star Wars game they've ever made including Star Wars Fallen Jedi Order.



course every Star Wars game they've ever made including Star Wars Fallen Jedi Order.

If someone were to buy the new Xbox and subscribe to the Game Pass they would not only have a plethora of great RPG games, but also a great catalog of sports games without having to buy the disc. That equals what PlayStation has done with their gaming subscription, but for those who like to play sports games, you really can't beat having a new Xbox with their Ultimate Game Pass. Now when it comes to the Nintendo Switch, we really can't compare the same value that you get with PlayStation or Xbox. Having a Nintendo Switch is a niche market even if they are out selling the other two consoles combined. Nintendo relies on the nostalgia factor, they only make

games Geared for the Nintendo crowd even though the switch does allow play for third party games, but it really isn't a powerful enough system to handle some of the larger games especially RPG games. But the one thing that Nintendo does have going for it is mobility. To be able to take your console with you in just a small bag or your purse is great. The mobile tablet to be able to play games is phenomenal, there's no denying that. But one thing that we did notice. Most of the games that have come to the Nintendo Switch are just games that were already on the Nintendo Wii U upgraded for the new console.... The Legend of Zelda breath of the Wild, Mario Kart 8, and Smash Bros we're really just the same games and have the same quality. The Nintendo Switch did not offer any backwards compatibility for older Nintendo games because it went to a cartridge based system. The one thing that the Nintendo Wii U had going for it was it's backwards compatibility for old Wii games. So while we do recognize a Nintendo Switch's popularity and importance especially for those who have kids, we just don't see the same value in that particular system compared to the PlayStation 5 in Xbox Series X unless you are playing very specific games from Nintendo. It's like owning an Apple computer when there are so many better PC Computers out on the market.

AS we look at who was really winning the console war after the release of the Next Generation consoles, we honestly have to say that it is for the most part even because we don't base it on sales alone. PlayStation was always going to have more sales because have its name brand. It was the first company to use DVD based games. That's what made the PlayStation 2 so incredibly popular. You could have bigger games because you could store more information on a DVD and I had a lot of backwards compatibility. But name notoriety doesn't make for the best console. Both are incredible systems and if you're a true gamer, you'll end up with both, but if you had to settle on one console then for us we recommend the Xbox Series X. It's faster, the graphics are better, and the hardware makes it the best console on the market, the closest you will get to a high-end gaming PC. Only one time has it crashed on us and that was only because of an update with Cyberpunk 2077. PlayStation 5 is still giving us fits even when trying to play older PlayStation 4 games from an extended hard drive. PlayStation 5 still doesn't really like having to contend with third-party external hard drives, we suspect it will always be that way because it's Sony and proprietary hardware is very important to them especially when it comes to their bottom line. They do have exclusive titles that are coming to the PlayStation 5 and some to the PlayStation 4 that will always make having a PlayStation a must if you're a gamer. That is one of the reasons he will generally outsell Xbox. but if there is one thing that makes Xbox a superior console as our gamer Chad Womack quoted, "because of its versatility, it's accessible library of games, and its robust online Network. Plus, it has an amazing backwards compatibility catalog, most of it can be found on the Ultimate Game Pass." All these things were enhanced with the new Xbox Series X. For That Nerd Show this is what makes the new Xbox edge out PlayStation 5 in the console war, maybe by a point or two. But that doesn't mean we don't like PlayStation 5 because... they're exclusive titles is what truly makes their console worth buying.

A SEQUEL IS IN THE HEIR.



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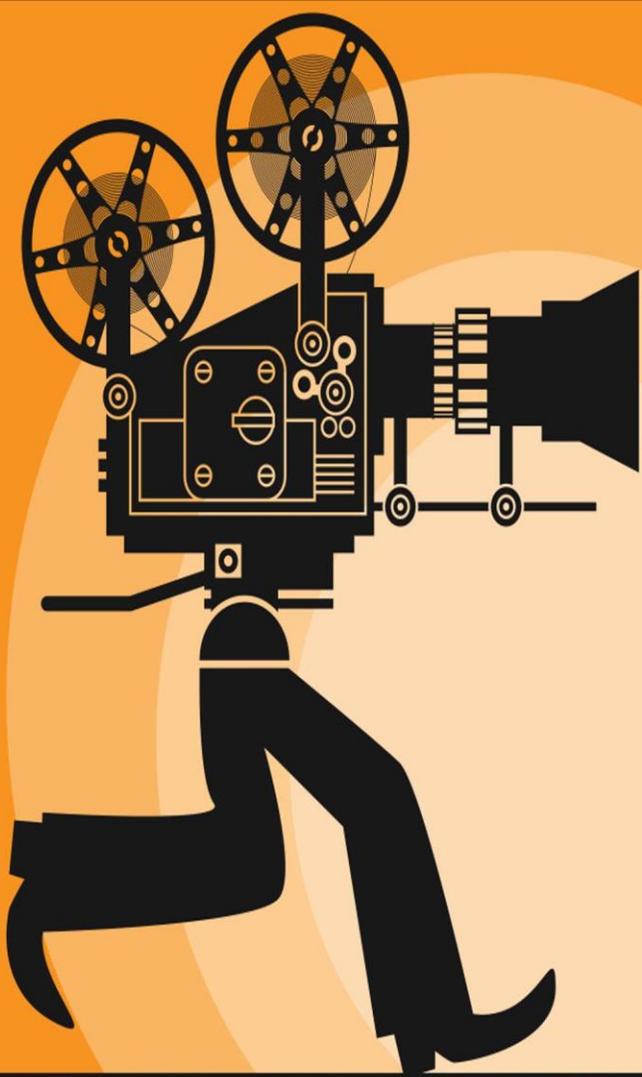
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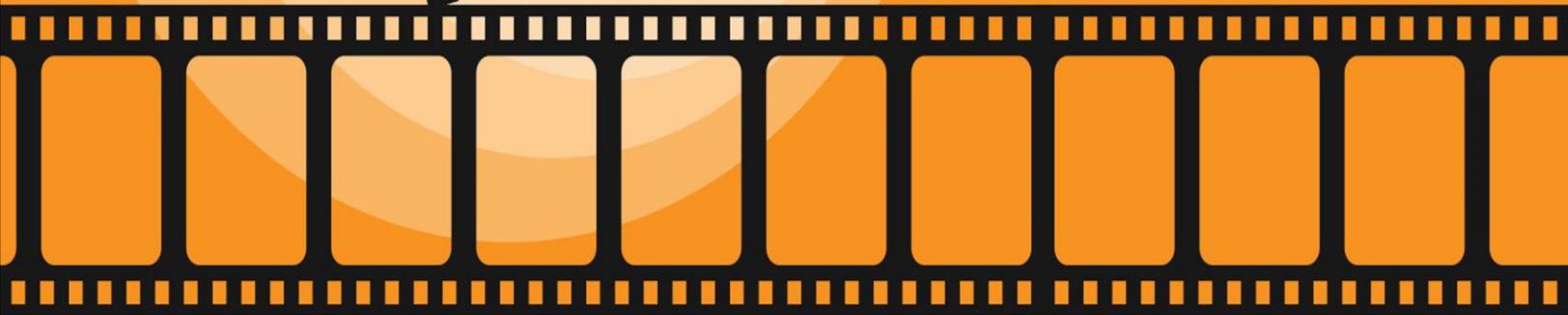
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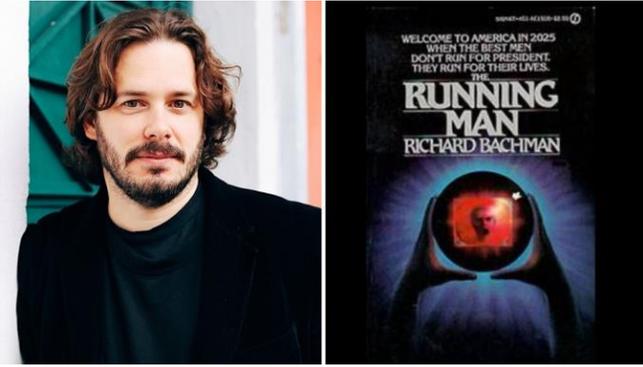
TV



What's Happening This Week...

Edgar Wright To Direct Stephen King's 'The Running Man' At Paramount Pictures; Simon Kinberg's Genre Films Producing

Reported by [deadline.com](#)



Paramount Pictures is making a deal with Edgar Wright to develop to direct a new adaptation of *The Running Man*, the futuristic novel by Stephen King that the author first published under the pseudonym Richard Bachman. This won't be a remake of the 1987 film that starred Arnold Schwarzenegger; the *Baby Driver* writer-director will co-write the story with Michael Bacall, and they will be much more faithful to King's bestselling novel. Bacall will write the script. Simon Kinberg will produce through Kinberg's Genre Films banner, alongside Nira Park from Wright's Complete Fiction banner, and Genre Films' Audrey Chon. Kinberg brought the idea to Emma Watts, based on their long relationship,

and then Kinberg courted Wright. While the filmmaker is very selective, the prospect of a new *The Running Man* is one that has intrigued him; to the point that when asked if he could remake any film, he would choose that one. This was back in 2017. Now it has become real.

This becomes a top priority pic for Paramount, and a novel, which King published as a paperback back in 1982, a dystopian thriller that still feels prescient in the current collision between pop culture and politics, this before social media ratcheted up the stakes. Alex Jackson is shepherding it at Paramount. Wright is coming off great reviews for *The Sparks Brothers*, the documentary he directed that premiered last month at the virtual Sundance Film Festival. His next film, *Last Night In Soho* gets a spring release by Focus and he's percolating a Jane Goldman-scripted adaptation of the Adrian McKinty novel *The Chain* at Universal, and a *Baby Driver* reprise.

Daisy Ridley To Star In Thriller 'The Marsh King's Daughter' For Director Neil Burger, Black Bear, Anonymous Content & STX Int'l - EFM Hot Pic

Reported by [deadline.com](#)

Star Wars lead Daisy Ridley has been set to star in the movie adaptation of hit psychological-thriller novel *The Marsh King's Daughter*, we can reveal. *Limitless* and *Divergent* filmmaker Neil Burger is newly aboard to direct the film, which heralds from Black Bear, Anonymous Content and STX International, which will be selling the hot package at the upcoming virtual EFM. Ridley will star as Helena, a woman living a seemingly ordinary life, but hiding a dark secret: her father is the infamous "Marsh King," the man who kept her and her mother captive in the wilderness for years. After a lifetime of trying to escape her past, Helena is forced to face her demons when her father unexpectedly escapes from prison. Karen Dionne's novel has been adapted for the screen by *The Revenant* screenwriter Mark L. Smith and Elle Smith. Principal photography is due to get underway this summer in Canada.



Black Bear Pictures' Teddy Schwarzman (*The Imitation Game*), Anonymous Content's Keith Redmon (*The Revenant*) and Mark L. Smith will produce. Black Bear will finance. STX will distribute in the UK, Ireland and India. CAA Media Finance is handling U.S. rights.

The film has been a long-time passion project for the producers, which initially brought it to market in 2018 in a different configuration. Ridley and Burger should provide the rocket fuel to get it to screen. *Star Wars* and *Murder On The Orient Express* actress Ridley will next to be seen in Doug Liman's big-canvas sci-fi *Chaos Walking*. Burger is well known for directing *Divergent*, which grossed more than \$300M, *Limitless*, and the *The Illusionist*. His most recent film, *The Upside*, grossed more than \$100M in North America and was the director's third number one opening in a row. On the TV side, Burger directed and executive-produced the first two episodes of *Billions* for Showtime. STX's movies in production include Guy Ritchie's Jason Statham action pic currently shooting in the Middle East, JD Dillard's Korean war epic *Devotion* (you can read our deep dive on the project here) and *Cop Shop*, directed by Joe Carnahan and starring Gerard Butler. *The Marsh King's Daughter* falls under the output deal between Black Bear and STX. STX International sells and distributes all Black Bear productions overseas, with Black Bear's sister company, Elevation Pictures, distributing all STX productions and acquisitions in Canada.

Sandra Bullock Joins Brad Pitt In Sony's Action Movie 'Bullet Train'



Reported by deadline.com

In what would mark the first time the two Oscar winners would cross paths on screen, Sources tell Deadline that Sandra Bullock is joining Brad Pitt in the Sony action pic *Bullet Train*. Joey King, Aaron Taylor Johnson, Brian Tyree Henry, Zazie Beetz, Michael Shannon, Logan Lerman, Masi Oka and Andrew Koji are also on board. Sony had no comment. *Hobbs & Shaw* helmer David Leitch will direct and also supervise the script, which will be written by Zak Olkewicz.

The film is based on the Japanese novel *Maria Beetle* by bestselling author Kotaro Isaka. Ryosuke Saegusa and Yuma Terada of CTB Inc., who represent Isaka and the IP, are executive producers on the project. Kelly McCormick will

produce *Bullet Train* through 87 North along with Antoine Fuqua. Kat Samick is exec producing and Brittany Morrissey is the executive overseeing the project for Sony Pictures. Plot details are vague, and it is unknown who Bullock will be playing. It's quite shocking that even though the two movie stars have been at the top of their game since the early 90s that this would mark the first time either has worked together on a feature film. The closest tie is Bullock recently starring in the *Ocean's Eleven* female spin-off, *Ocean's Eight*, which was a franchise Pitt helped launch when he starred in the *Ocean's Eleven* remake in 2001. Bullock was most recently seen in the Netflix thriller *Bird Box* and can be seen next in an untitled drama from the streamer that has Nora Fingscheidt directing.

Elisabeth Moss Boards Barry Levinson's Making Of 'The Godfather' Feature

Reported by deadline.com

Two-time Emmy and two-time Golden Globe winner Elisabeth Moss has joined the cast of Barry Levinson's film about the making of *The Godfather*. Moss will play Eleanor Coppola, Francis Ford Coppola's wife. As previously reported, the film is based on a blacklist screenplay by Andrew Farotte that's been re-developed with Levinson, who will direct and produce. Moss joins previously announced actors Oscar Isaac (Francis Ford Coppola) and Jake Gyllenhaal (Robert Evans). Despite the chaotic, Shakespearean behind-the-scenes drama, *The Godfather* went on to become a huge box office success for Paramount and is widely considered one of the best movies of all time. Moss most recently starred in the critically acclaimed films *The Invisible Man* and *Shirley*, and she is currently in production on Season 4 of *The Handmaid's Tale*, where she will also be making her directorial debut. **"I've wanted to work with her for a long time," said Levinson. "I couldn't be more excited about her joining the film. Every performance of Elisabeth's is nothing short of exceptional."**

Moss' upcoming projects include Wes Anderson's *The French Dispatch* and Taika Waititi's *Next Goal Wins*. In addition to her acting, her production company is in development on a number of projects including *Shining Girls*, a metaphysical thriller series at Apple TV+; *Black Match*, an anthology series, and *Candy*, a true crime drama series, both at Hulu. She also has two films at Blumhouse, one based on ex-congresswoman Katie Hill's memoir *She Will Rise*; and the second *Mrs. March*, a psychological thriller.

Echo Lake Entertainment's Mike Marcus, Doug Mankoff and Andrew Spaulding are producing, along with Kevin Turen, Jon Levin and Baltimore Pictures' Jason Sosnoff. Endeavor Content is currently shopping worldwide sales. Echo Lake's television series *The Great* starring Elle Fanning and Nicolas Hoult has been given a second season by Hulu, and is in production in London. The show received multiple Golden Globe and SAG Awards nominations. Echo Lake recently produced *All the Bright Places* for Netflix. Adapted from the *New York Times* bestselling book of the same title by Jennifer Niven, the script was written by Niven and Liz Hannah and stars Fanning. Echo Lake has numerous TV projects set up at studios and networks including 20th Century Fox TV, among others.



J.K. Simmons And Nina Arianda Join Amazon's Lucille Ball-Desi Arnaz Pic 'Being The Ricardos' – Directed by Aaron Sorkin



Reported by deadline.com

Oscar winner J.K. Simmons and Nina Arianda have been tapped to play William Frawley and Vivian Vance in Amazon and Aaron Sorkin's *Being the Ricardos*, the film about *I Love Lucy* stars Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz. Sources add that Arianda's deal has not yet closed. Nicole Kidman and Javier Bardem are in final negotiations to play Ball and Arnaz, with Sorkin writing and directing. Simmons' character, Frawley, played neighbor Fred Mertz in *I Love Lucy*. Vance played Fred's wife and Lucy's best friend, Ethel Mertz. The film is set during one production week of *I Love Lucy* – Monday table read through Friday audience filming – when Lucy and Desi face a crisis that could end their careers and another that could end their

marriage. Escape Artists' Todd Black, Jason Blumenthal and Steve Tisch will produce. Executive producers are Jenna Block, David Bloomfield of Escape Artists, Stuart Besser, Lucie Arnaz, Desi Arnaz, Jr. and Lauren Lohman. Simmons continues to stay busy after winning best supporting actor for his role in *Whiplash*.

He was most recently seen opposite Andy Samberg in the Hulu comedy *Palm Springs* and is set to reprise his role of Commissioner Gordon in *Zack Snyder's Justice League*, which bows in March on HBO Max. He also has the sci-fi thriller *The Tomorrow War* which also stars Chris Pratt. He is repped by Gersh. Arianda won a Tony for her breakout performance in *Venus in Fur* and earned another nomination for *Born Yesterday*. She also played the love interest to Damien Lewis in Showtime's *Billions* and co-starred opposite Billy Bob Thornton in Amazon drama *Goliath*. She also appeared in Clint Eastwood's 2019 drama *Richard Jewell*.

Judd Apatow Sets All-Star Cast For New Netflix Comedy 'The Bubble'; Karen Gillan, Keegan-Michael Key, Pedro Pascal And Leslie Mann Among Those Set to Join Ensemble

Reported by deadline.com

After making the jump to Netflix, Judd Apatow has set quite a cast for his next comedy, *The Bubble*. Karen Gillan, Iris Apatow, Fred Armisen, Maria Bakalova, David Duchovny, Keegan-Michael Key, Leslie Mann, Pedro Pascal and Peter Serafinowicz have joined the film. Apatow will direct and produce the pic and co-write the script with Pam Brady. Apatow's longtime partner Barry Mendel will serve as executive producer. Brady and Donald Sabourin also will exec produce.

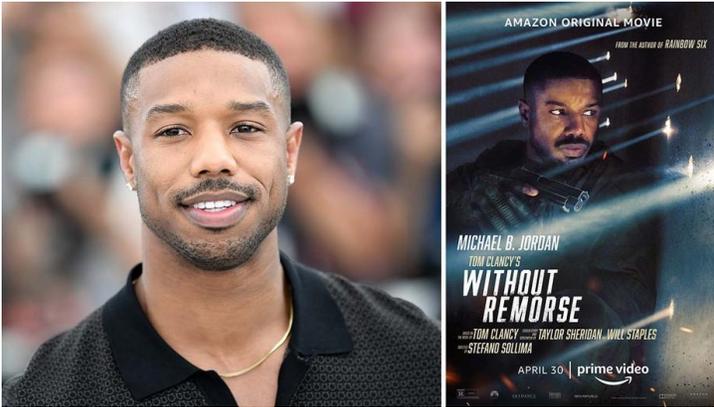
The film follows a group of actors and actresses stuck inside a pandemic bubble at a hotel attempting to complete a film. The pic couldn't be more timely as more and more productions are ramping back up even as Covid-19 remains in full effect around the world. Once Netflix boarded the project, it quickly was fast-tracked with a plan to start shooting at the top of 2021. The plan also always has been to deliver a cast that rivals previous A-list ensembles like those for *The Disaster Artist* and *Knives Out*, and Apatow looks to have delivered that here.



More than **FREE** Delivery:
video, music & more



Amazon Studios' WITHOUT REMORSE / Launching Globally on Prime Video on April 30, 2021



AMAZON STUDIOS AND MICHAEL B. JORDAN'S OUTLIER SOCIETY EXPAND RELATIONSHIP TO FIRST-LOOK FILM DEAL AND AN OVERALL DEAL IN TELEVISION ESTABLISHING THE STUDIO AS OUTLIER SOCIETY'S HOME FOR ALL CONTENT.

Amazon Studios and Michael B. Jordan's Outlier Society are expanding on the production banner's existing deal to now feature an exclusive overall relationship in television and a first-look film deal. Under the film pact, Outlier Society will produce and acquire elevated films showcasing diverse, bold filmmakers and talent for the studio's ever-growing original movies slate. This deal comes in the lead up to the release of Tom Clancy's *Without Remorse*, starring and produced by Michael B. Jordan, launching globally on April 30,

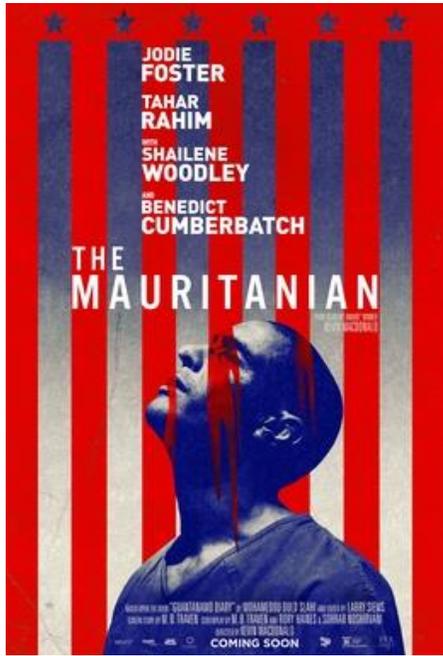
2021 on Prime Video in over 240 countries and territories. This 360-degree creative relationship with Jordan and Outlier Society will see cross-collaborations within Amazon's vast businesses, from fashion, Audible to music and more – including the debut of Jordan in Amazon's Alexa big game ad yesterday. The spot, which played into Jordan's title as People's Sexiest Man Alive, where he was the body of Alexa, premiered during the 4th quarter of the game. "We're excited to deepen our relationship with Outlier Society! Michael, Liz and the team will be key partners in our efforts to showcase compelling, ambitious and addictive content that can reach our global audience. They share our passion for amplifying new and exciting voices with an emphasis on diversity both above and below the line," said Jennifer Salke, Head of Amazon Studios. "We can't wait for everyone to see *Without Remorse*, our next chapter in the Tom Clancy universe – it's an action-packed thrill ride fans will love." "Bringing Outlier Society's slate of film, television and multi-media content all under the same roof is an exciting next chapter for us," said Michael B. Jordan, Outlier Society CEO. "Amazon's global and expansive reach offers us the ability to entertain and engage our audience in innovative ways, while maintaining our commitment to supporting a wide range of stories and storytellers. I'm thrilled to be kicking off the partnership with *Without Remorse* this Spring." An elite Navy SEAL uncovers an international conspiracy while seeking justice for the murder of his pregnant wife in Tom Clancy's *Without Remorse*, the explosive origin story of action hero John Clark – one of the most popular characters in author Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan universe. When a squad of Russian soldiers kills his family in retaliation for his role in a top-secret op, Sr. Chief John Kelly (Michael B. Jordan) pursues the assassins at all costs. Joining forces with a fellow SEAL (Jodie Turner-Smith) and a shadowy CIA agent (Jamie Bell), Kelly's mission unwittingly exposes a covert plot that threatens to engulf the U.S. and Russia in an all-out war. Torn between personal honor and loyalty to his country, Kelly must fight his enemies without remorse if he hopes to avert disaster and reveal the powerful figures behind the conspiracy. Tom Clancy's *Without Remorse* stars Michael B. Jordan, Jamie Bell, Jodie Turner-Smith, Lauren London, Brett Gelman, Jacob Scipio, Jack Kesy, Colman Domingo, and Guy Pearce.

Tom Clancy's Without Remorse is directed by Stefano Sollima, from Paramount Pictures, Skydance and New Republic Pictures. The film is produced by Weed Road Pictures, The Saw Mill and Outlier Society. The screenplay is penned by Taylor Sheridan and Will Staples. Producers are Akiva Goldsman, Josh Appelbaum, André Nemec and Michael B. Jordan, and executive producers are David Ellison, Dana Goldberg, Don Granger, Brian Oliver, Bradley J. Fischer, Valerii An, Alana Mayo, Denis L. Stewart and Gregory Lessans. Jordan recently anointed Elizabeth Raposo as President of Outlier Society. The former Paramount President of Production will be responsible for overseeing all production and development aspects of the shingle alongside Jordan. Jordan launched Outlier Society in 2016 with the goal of bringing diverse stories and voices to market. The impressive slate of upcoming projects includes the Denzel Washington-directed feature *Journal for Jordan* with Jordan starring and producing; *Creed III*, the third installment of the Rocky franchise for MGM which will see Jordan reprise his role as Adonis Creed, and DC property *Static Shock*.

About Outlier Society: Founded by Michael B. Jordan in 2016, Outlier Society is a production company developing a wide-range of commercial entertainment and engaging diverse storytellers across all media. The company is based at Amazon Studios where they have an exclusive deal in TV and a first look in film. In January of 2021, it was announced that former Paramount President of Production Elizabeth Raposo was joining the company as President. In this role she will oversee production and development for all aspects of the business alongside Jordan. Their slate of upcoming projects includes Amazon Studios' *WITHOUT REMORSE* based on the Tom Clancy best seller and popular franchise character "John Clark" who appears in over seventeen novels, the Denzel Washington-directed feature *JOURNAL FOR JORDAN* (Sony Pictures), and *CREED III*-the third installment in the revitalized Rocky franchise for MGM in which Jordan will reprise his role as "Adonis Creed." The *CREED* franchise to date has grossed over 380 million worldwide. Outlier Society's additional projects include the iconic DC Comics property *STATIC SHOCK* which will be produced with Reginald Hudlin, the Danny Boyle-directed *METHUSELAH*, *THE ANCESTOR*, a female-driven horror film starring Tika Sumpter for HBO Max written by Kay Oyegun, *BLACK LEOPARD*, *RED WOLF* by acclaimed author Marlon James, *61st STREET* for AMC and the second season of *RAISING DION* which was one of Netflix's most-streamed shows of 2019. The company's first project was the Emmy-nominated HBO Films' adaptation of *FAHRENHEIT 451*, for which Jordan won a Producers Guild Award. Representation is key to the value system of the company. In 2019 the Outlier Society Fellowship was founded with the support of the Obama Foundation and My Brother's Keeper to develop the next generation of media, arts and entertainment industry leaders from underrepresented backgrounds and communities. Outlier Society was also one of the first companies to publicly guarantee an equitable hiring process across all of their business endeavor.

“A Hard Movie You Need to Watch:” The Mauritanian Review

By Marcus Blake



We're coming up on the 20th anniversary of 9/11, which also means we have had more and more movies come out about America's involvement during the war, especially its policy on torture and holding suspected terrorists without trial. The Mauritanian is the latest movie dealing with this subject. It deals with the story of Mohamedou Ould Salahi who was held for 14 years without trial at Guantanamo Bay for being a suspected terrorist one of the masterminds of 9/11. His book Guantanamo Diary is what the movie is based on. What is interesting about his story is he is one of the few suspects that the American government has admitted to torturing and of course was never able to provide any evidence that he had anything to do with 9/11. Even when after seven years he won his court case and ordered to be released, the Obama administration appealed the decision and they held him for another seven years. This film not only centers on his story, but the dark side of America's reaction to 9/11. I will first say that this is a very good movie, marked by great performances, but it is not an easy movie to watch. The torture scenes well sting your sensibilities as they linger more than they should. And I suspect that is the intent of the director.

At first, I thought this was going to be a courtroom drama much like A Few Good Men, but it isn't so much that as it is the investigation into what happened. You never get to see the two lead actors square off against each other in a courtroom because it didn't actually happen. This story is told from the perspective of Mohamedou and all that he went through. The first thing you notice about this film is the performances, especially when you have two heavyweights like Benedict Cumberbatch, who played Colonel Stuart Couch and Jodie Foster

, who played the human rights attorney Nancy Hollander, but the film isn't good because you had these two great actors in it. They certainly help, but the best performance goes to Tahar Rahim, who played Mohammed with perfection. He is what makes this movie come alive as you truly fear for his safety, you sympathize with his plight, and he truly puts a human face to the real life prisoner of war that America tortured and kept in prison without any evidence while ignoring his right to a trial. Don't get me wrong, I loved Benedict Cumberbatch and Jodie Foster. Even Shailene Woodley was good, but I truly believe that it is the performance of Tahar Rahim that carries the film. I've never been one to promote the Oscars or even make Oscar predictions, but if there's one person I believe should get the award for best actor, it is him. I enjoyed the investigation aspect of this film, especially when the government did everything it could to make sure that attorney Nancy Hollander and her team didn't have all the information. The American government was going to make sure they had a guilty verdict at least that was their intention. But this film isn't about the investigation so much as it is bringing the audience inside everything that the main character had to go through. And Tahar Rahim's performance puts us into that place so that we feel his joy and especially his pain. Both Jodie Foster and Benedict Cumberbatch do great jobs with their performances and I truly feel that this film is a lesson in great acting. The best parts of the film are when it centers on the main character that is what drives the story.

Now the movie isn't perfect. I understand why the torture scenes had to linger so that we truly felt the pain of what the main character goes through, but it is also a little too much. I likened them to rape scenes that go a little too far because they are meant to make the audience feel disgusted, but sometimes not seeing everything and just hearing it is even more scary. Sometimes, just hearing something like that can bring the same amount of intensity, it was truly unsettling to see these scenes and I understand why was necessary to make the audience feel disgusting about the happen to this man, but I do criticize that it went a little too far at times. While the pacing is good in the film, I do feel like it gets a little choppy at points going back and forth between centering on the voice of the main character and the investigation between the attorneys. Probably the worst part and this is not an indictment on Benedict Cumberbatch's acting because he's a great actor, unfortunately, he has a terrible southern accent and it will naws at you by the end of the film. But it can't be overlooked because of his performance. After all, he is Benedict Cumberbatch and have we ever really seen him do a bad movie? It's true that a documentary would have sufficed in telling this particular story. And might have even told the story better, especially if you just had the videos of the real character in his own words. I like how they had those videos during the credits. The Mauritanian's dramatization of a horrible event in American history is necessary because you need actors who can touch our very soul with their performance and put us, the audience, in what happened to the character beyond the dramatization. Great performances make us feel what that character felt. There's a sympathy brought about because of the performances, sometimes more than what a documentary can do that just gives us the facts. And I feel like that's why we needed to see this particular film, we needed the performances of Benedict Cumberbatch and Jodie Foster and especially, Tahar Rahim, to tug at our sympathies for the tragedy that it really happened. So I won't tell you to go into this movie as just some movie you can watch in the background, it is an emotional movie and one that will give you negative feelings towards the American government, no matter whether Republicans Or Democrats are in charge. But I do believe that anybody who watches this movie will be inspired and will be moved in ways that they may not expect. It is a powerful movie about people trying to do the right thing and someone who never gave up hope or lost his humanity even when the American government tried to take it away. It's a movie that definitely needs to be seen for the 20th anniversary of 9/11 as a reminder of the darkness that lies within one of the greatest countries in the world. But if nothing else, watch it for the fantastic performances.

It's a 7 / 10 (Okay)

A Cute Movie with a Romantic Time Loop!

“The Map of Tiny Perfect Things” Review

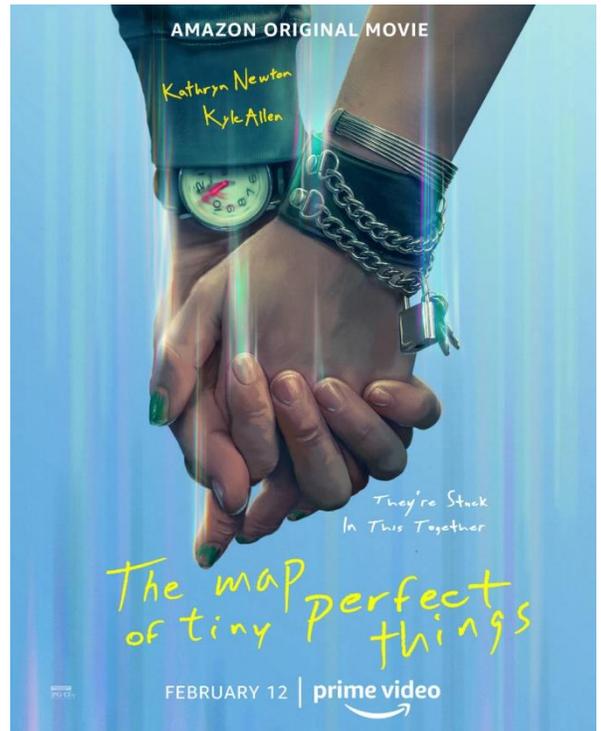
by Violet Ravotti

It's time to lose your sense of your reality in the latest time loop romantic comedy, something we've seen before so if it feels familiar that's why. But it doesn't mean you shouldn't see the film. What we find out is sometimes life doesn't go according to plan and life takes you by surprise, sweeping you up into a never-ending whirlwind of predictability and unpredictability.

The film captures the innocence of young love, taking risks and encourages the questioning of our actions and our feelings. Mark is surprised and elated when he stumbles upon Margaret one day at the pool, someone who is also subjected to his same Groundhog Day reality. They are stuck in the same parallel world, that despite their efforts to do things differently or observe patterns- they wake up every day and it's the same day yet again. Together, they search for answers in their everyday surroundings to piece together structure in the chaos of uncertainty for what the future could hold or never become.

The whimsical pair of protagonists consult a map that Mark drew containing all of the perfect occurrences in the time they are suspended in and continue onwards to discover the missing cog to unveil a different outcome. It's sweet in a way. Aspiring artist, Mark experiences a lot of growth as a character, realizing true altruism and self-awareness throughout the film. He learns to be humble and not judge people by face value since you never know what personal thing they may be going through. He adapts a new approach to his everyday with mindfulness about the boundaries of others and starts seeing things in a new perspective. By giving space to others when they need it, it can allow things to flourish and grow. Margaret is a clever and inquisitive gal, not easily swayed by Mark's attempts to romance her but seems open-minded to get to know him since they are both stranded in this endless reality. She has her reasons for creating space, for she is experiencing great hardships with processing grief involving her mother. The characters are good and the performances are well done, that's one thing the film has going for it.

The Map of Tiny Perfect Things, it's a playful, light-hearted and whimsical film about what the patterns in life may mean, happenstance encounters, and the butterfly effect of our actions. The smallest of things can release a non-linear impact on a complex system. Everything happens for a reason and provides a learning opportunity. It creates a thematic pursuit of how analyzing patterns and everyday musings can give life new meaning and hidden purposes, but it's not enough to make a great film. It's an average film at best since it is abundant with altogether too many cringingly clichés, cheesy moments and not as much plot buildup or characterization of the main characters. Nor is this film unique and original, but even average films can be worth checking out on streaming services.



It's a 5/10 (Average)

What is a Minari and What is in “Minari?”

Film Review by Alex Moore

The race toward award season is, still, very much alive. Now, the big distributors are unleashing their last bit of Oscar bait and so on, in hopes of making a big splash when the nominees are finally announced, which will be here in just about a month's time from now.

So, what is the Academy looking for, exactly? Well, if the recent trend is to continue, there should be some surprises, depending on what sector of the movie-watching population you belong to. Although I knew some people who watched “Parasite” and I did not hear of one, solitary piece of negative feedback on the film, overall it was not a major hit in the United States. However, it was a worldwide success and performed unusually well, here, for an international movie. Amid all of the talk about the Academy Awards being more inclusive toward minority groups, over the years, one, specific set of minorities, which has actually been underrepresented, is that of the Asian community. While blacks have risen to a high success rate, once the number of nominees compared to the number of victories has been accounted for, the pleas for more voices in other sectors of society have not been very noticeable. All I can say is that Asians have been amongst us for almost the same amount of time as any other race in this country and, so, there is no reason why they should not be present during award season if they have, in fact, earned the right to be there, which I am sure we all would agree, they have.

“Minari” is described on its Wikipedia page as an American comedy-drama, but allow me to clarify that it is most-certainly a drama first and a comedy second. In Korean, the term minari, itself, translates to ‘water dropwort.’ For ages upon ages the beneficial properties of various plants have been known to all corners of the world and this example is probably no different. The film was written and directed by Lee Isaac Chung (“I Have Seen My Last Born”) and he was, also, the movie’s Producer. According to my sources, the last time he took on all three of these roles for one of his films was with 2010’s “Lucky Life.” At the opening of the movie, we see a family closing in on a small, empty property. There is a cargo vehicle, a station wagon and a mobile home. Setting out to view the land and the new surroundings is the Yi family, comprised of: Jacob, played by Steven Yeun (“Burning”); Monica, played by Han Ye-ri (“Champion”); David, played by Alan Kim and Anne, played by Noel Kate. Jacob has moved his family from an urban environment in California to a rural environment in Arkansas. He hopes to make a better life for everyone with the plan to become a successful farmer, catering to other Koreans, who are migrating, in spades, to America. In the meantime, he and his wife, Monica, are working at a chicken factory, where they separate the males from the females. Jacob soon explains to his son, David, that the males are considered useless because they cannot lay eggs and are quickly disposed of once they are separated from the females. Try to imagine Jacob’s mental state as he says this to David and encourages him to strive to make himself useful to others.

As the Yis insert themselves into their new community, they learn quickly about the adjustments they will likely need to become familiar with: heavy rain and tornadic activity; building one’s own water source and making sure that it stays readily available; deeply religious, but exceedingly friendly neighbors, who are mostly white; etcetera... Keep in mind that this all takes place in the 1980s, though there are very few references to that and only a handful of potential, nostalgic details (one of which was incorrectly used because it actually came from the 1990s). Before too long, you will probably find yourself caring for what happens to this family, which is the mark of showcasing great depth in the characters and is conveyed by a lot of fine acting and solid screenwriting, overall.

The only issue I seemed to have was that the story was moving along quite slowly, early on. It made me wonder if there were some moments that could have been shortened, without losing the impact of the great character developments, or if some additional story elements could have been included, somehow. In any case, the arrival of Monica’s mother, moving in from South Korea, significantly altered the rest of the story. Soon-ja, played expertly by Youn Yuh-jung (“Beasts Clawing at Straws”) is new to American cinema, but visibly experienced as an actress and carries most of the great, comedic timing, throughout the remainder of the film. However, she also carries the bulk of the weight in tragedy, as you will find out further down the road.

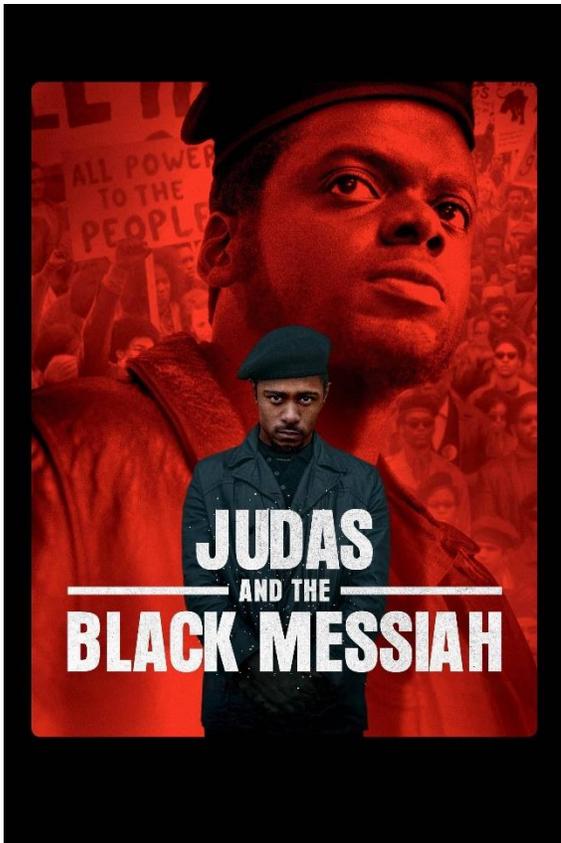
The best I can say about “Minari” is that it is an honest story that treats its prospective audience with respect. There is no preachy or condescending tone. The depictions and interactions of the characters are pleasantly positive, for the most part, which I find refreshing in today’s world. You can see the difference a mere two-generation of separation can make in just a single family. Some of those elements are good and some of them are bad, but the movie never tries to tell you what to think and I greatly appreciate that. I should add that there is one other character who plays an important role in the story: Will Patton (“Hammer”) as Paul. He is well-meaning, but eccentric and showcases the relative differences in a pluralistic society. He exists, in some form, in every aspect of our American lives and although he might make us feel uncomfortable, he is rarely ever a serious threat. Just make sure you are paying attention to what goes on in the final scene. The way that it connects to the rest of the story could make or break your opinion, as it did mine, on whether this is a good movie or a very good movie. It is very good!



It's a 8 / 10 (Good)

“A Historical Film That Needs to be Seen by Everyone:” Judas and the Black Messiah Review

By Julie Jones



Every now and then you see a film that you hope is going to be great. Not because you're a fan of lore, but because you know it is a story that should be told and you hope it gets the message across. And that was my hope for this film. Judas and the Black Messiah is a story about Fred Hampton and his demise. He was a great orator who inspired for the NAACP before going on to try to help The Black Panthers. At a time when their leaders were jailed he rose to lead the organization in their absences. He had the revolutionary idea to unite communities. Their goals weren't about color and uniting those with the same goals not only increased their numbers and strengthened their voice, but it gave them a credibility and visibility that would not only validate their cause but send a message of love. This became a problem for government officials who then had to take action. With an inside man, William O Neil, they were able to get information that would later lead to his end. The Black Messiah is a reference to CoIntelPro documents stating the need to prevent a Messiah figure from leading the people and the word revolution is used quite a bit because that was Fred's message. And he made you say it until you believed it. "I AM A REVOLUTIONARY".

The film overall was ok, I thought it hit the mark a little. I think it could have given more information about Fred and The Black Panthers and less empathy to the turncoat who gave him up. The storyline was ok, but it fell short for me. Really, I had just hoped for more. More of his message and life and less of the drama they used for speculation. The acting was good, but that is what you expect from Daniel Kaluuya. LaKeith Stanfield makes you feel for William O Neil, as a great actor. But, I have to admit that knowing the story made that really hard so I applaud him. I would have liked better makeup on

Martin Sheen, but...The West Wing, so he can do no wrong with me. Sorry for the bias, but at least I own it. The direction, cinematography, lighting, color palette and all that make no difference in this film. There is nothing innovative or influential. They really are pretty par for the course. But, I will admit that I liked the real life clip at the end of O Neil's interview sometime after the incident.

Would I recommend the film? Do I think it was an accurate representation? Sure, if you want an overview that takes a few liberties that may or may not have happen. It isn't full of lies and has some good information. But, it isn't something I would watch if I wanted to learn more about Fred Hampton or the events that took place that day. You see, there is something very valuable missing. Something impactful that was glazed over. Something that will burn in your brain if you see the images and something that is only given in the film as a couple lines of text. The apartment Fred Hampton lived in with his fiancée was shot 82 to 99 times. The only shot fired by a Panther was a shot that went in the air when the guy on security watch was shot in the chest and he fired into the roof. With a total of four people, one now dead, a squadron of police rained bullets into that apartment. Fred threw himself into his pregnant fiancée to save her and when he was alive and crawling after they shot him to make sure he died. Photos of the apartment and tours were given to show just how much ammunition was used. A man can to unite communities into a voice that asked the government for better regulation of police brutality and education for impoverished communities. This was the government's answer.

It's a 8/10 (Good)



MARVEL STUDIOS

WandaVision



Original Series Streaming Jan. 15

"The Last of Us" at HBO Cast it Leads: 'Game Of Thrones' Breakout Bella Ramsey To Play Ellie and Pedro Pascal To Star As Joel - Series Based on Popular Video Game

Reported by deadline.com



HBO has found one of its leads for the upcoming *The Last Of Us* series. Deadline confirmed that *Game of Thrones* breakout star Bella Ramsey, known for appearing as the pugnacious but brave Lyanna Mormont, will play Ellie. Though HBO has yet to announce who will appear as Ellie's companion, Joel, the series based off Neil Druckmann's 2013 video game is getting into shape. In January the premiere cable network announced that *Beanpole* helmer Kantemir Balagov will direct the pilot. Druckmann will team with *Chernobyl* creator Craig Mazin to pen the television adaptation. *The Last Of Us* takes place 20 years after modern civilization has been destroyed by a sickness that renders victims

dangerous, blood-thirsty mutants. Hardened survivor Joel 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, breathtaking journey as unlikely duo depends on each other for survival. The series is a co-production with Sony Pictures Television. PlayStation Productions, Word Games, the Mighty Mint and Naughty Dog produce. Druckmann and Mazin executive produce alongside Carolyn Strauss, Naughty Dog's Evan Wells and PlayStation Productions' Asad Qizilbash and Carter Swan. In addition to her memorable character on *Game of Thrones*, Ramsey has also appeared in HBO's *His Dark Materials*, *The Worst Witch*, *Two for Joy* and *Princess Emmy*. She is repped by Conway van Gelder Grant and Gang Tyre. HBO first announced the video game series back in March, with the show landing an official series order in November. Eight years after the first game, Naughty Dog released *The Last of Us Part II* in June. The sequel game won a number of prizes at The Game Awards in December including Game of the Year.

In one of the biggest TV castings of the year, *The Mandalorian* star Pedro Pascal is set to headline *The Last Of Us*, HBO's high-profile series adaptation of the Sony PlayStation franchise from *Chernobyl* creator Craig Mazin and Neil Druckmann. Based on the critically acclaimed video game *The Last of Us*, developed by Naughty Dog exclusively for the PlayStation platforms, the story takes place twenty years after modern civilization has been destroyed. Joel (Pascal), a hardened survivor, is hired to smuggle Ellie (*Game of Thrones*' Bella Ramsey), 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. Pascal's Joel, tormented by past trauma and failure, must trek across a pandemic-ravaged America, all the while protecting a girl who represents the last hope of humanity. This marks a homecoming for Pascal, who became a household name with his role as Oberyn Martell on HBO's mega hit *Game Of Thrones*. Pascal currently stars in Disney+'s hugely popular and acclaimed series *The Mandalorian*, which recently received a Golden Globe nomination for Best Drama Series. He will continue on the *Star Wars* series, where he is used sparingly because of the nature of his character, though *The Last Of Us* has him in first position.



The actor recently became available for a new series, attracting multiple big offers from top premium networks and streamers, opting to do *The Last Of Us*. Pascal is coming off starring as the villain, Max Lord, in *Wonder Woman 1984*. The *Narcos* and *Kingsman: The Golden Circle* star is currently in production on Judd Apatow's *The Bubble* for Netflix. He is repped by WME, Anonymous Content and Jackoway Austen Tyerman. Kantemir Balagov is directing the pilot episode of *The Last Of Us*, a co-production with with Sony Pictures Television. PlayStation Productions, Word Games, The Mighty Mint, and Naughty Dog.

'The Mandalorian' Actress Gina Carano Fired from Star Wars in Wake of Social Media Controversy - Agency UTA Part Ways

Reported by [deadline.com](#)



The former MMA fighter turned actress is no longer with her agency UTA, a spokesperson confirmed to Deadline tonight. This comes in the wake of Gina Carano making controversial statements on social media. Lucasfilm released a statement earlier this evening saying "Gina Carano is not currently employed by Lucasfilm and there are no plans for her to be in the future. Nevertheless, her social media posts denigrating people based on their cultural and religious identities are abhorrent and unacceptable." I'm told Carano wasn't attached to continue with season 3 of *The Mandalorian* as bounty hunter Cara Dune, a role which she played for two seasons on the hit Disney+ series. That

said, her storyline left off as though we'd be seeing more of her. Not to mention, Disney+ had plans for *Mandalorian* spinoffs including *Rangers of the New Republic*. I had been told when news was leaking back in the fall about that latter series that a deal wasn't in place for Carano. The actress, who has had a history of speaking out on social media, crossed the line with comments that compared the current divided political climate to Nazi Germany, exclaiming, ""Jews were beaten in the streets, not by Nazi soldiers but by their neighbors"" in a Tik Tok post which has since been removed. The hashtag #FireGinaCarano begin trending, with those on social media tagging *Mandalorian* creator Jon Favreau, Disney, Disney Plus, Star Wars and Lucasfilm. Carano and her supporters attempted to get the hashtag #weloveginacarano to trend, but to little effect. *The Daily Beast* exclusively learned that Carano was dropped by her publicists at ID last fall due to her right-wing toned social media activity which has included statements about face mask wearing and voter fraud. She was with the PR firm briefly.

Guy Pearce Joins HBO Limited Series 'Mare Of Easttown', Reuniting With Kate Winslet

Reported by [deadline.com](#)

A decade after Kate Winslet and Guy Pearce co-starred together on the HBO miniseries *Mildred Pierce*, the two are reteaming on another longform project at the premium cable network. Your Complete Guide to Pilots and Straight-to-Series orders

Pearce has been tapped to co-star opposite Winslet in *Mare of Easttown*, HBO's limited series focused on family and community, which is a co-production of HBO and wiip. He replaces Ben Miles, who had been originally cast in the role but left due to scheduling conflicts more than a year ago.

Written by Brad Inglesby, and directed by Craig Zobel, *Mare of Easttown* stars Winslet as Mare Sheehan, a small-town Pennsylvania detective whose life crumbles around her as she investigates a local murder. Pearce plays Richard Ryan, a visiting creative writing professor who wrote a dazzling novel that won the National Book Award 25 years ago, but he has never lived up to his early promise. The cast also includes Julianne Nicholson, Jean Smart, Angourie Rice, Evan Peters, Cailee Spaeny, David Denman, John Douglas Thompson, Patrick Murney, James McArdle, Sosie Bacon, Joe Tippett and Neal Huff.

Inglesby, who serves as showrunner, Winslet and Zobel executive produce with Gavin O'Connor, Gordon Gray through Mayhem Pictures as well as Paul Lee and Mark Roybal for wiip. Winslet and Pearce both won Emmy Awards for HBO's *Mildred Pierce*, which landed a total of five Emmys. Pearce was recently seen in *Mary Queen of Scots* alongside Saoirse Ronan, and *Bloodshot* with Vin Diesel. He can next be seen in Stefano Sollima's *Without Remorse*



COMING TO HBO MAX: 'Clone High' Reboot, Mindy Kaling 'Scooby-Doo' Spinoff 'Velma' & Pete Davidson Mars Comedy - New Adult Animation

Reported by deadline.com



HBO Max is doubling down on adult animation, ordering three series and setting a bustling development slate. The streamer has been handed a two-season order to *Clone High*, the reboot of the classic MTV series with Phil Lord, Chris Miller and Bill Lawrence, and ordered *Scooby-Doo* spinoff *Velma* with Mindy Kaling set as lead voice star and exec producer and *Fired on Mars* from Pete Davidson. These projects are the latest to be ordered by HBO Max, which also has *Harley Quinn*, *The Prince*, *Santa Inc.*, *10 Year Old Tom* and *The Boondocks*. Last month, it also introduced a new landing page for animation. *Clone High*, a reboot of the 2002 series set at a high school for clones of historical figures, comes from MTV Entertainment Studios. Lord and Miller are set as executive

producers and writers, Lawrence is executive producer with Erica Rivinoja, who wrote on the original *Clone High*, named as showrunner. Lord and Miller began their careers with writing, directing and executive producing *Clone High* – whose concept the duo first developed while at Dartmouth College in the 1990s – alongside Lawrence in 2002. *Velma* tells the origin story of Velma Dinkley, the unsung and underappreciated brains of the *Scooby-Doo* Mystery Inc. gang. Voiced and exec produced by Kaling, the series from Warner Bros.

Animation has Charlie Grandy, Howard Klein and Sam Register as executive producers. Nate Sherman and Nick Vokey, who made Adult Swim's *Wet City*, have created *Fired on Mars*, an existential workplace comedy set on the Martian campus of a modern tech company. Based on their short film, *SNL* star Davidson voices a character and executive produces with Carson Mell and Dave Sirius. HBO Max has also handed JG Quintel's adult-animated comedy *Close Enough* a two season renewal. The show comes from Cartoon Network Studios.

Elsewhere, the company is producing presentations for a slate of originals in developments. These include *Hello Paul*, about a neurotic millennial cat whose intense job and freeloading mouse roommate stress him out, from creator and musician Sean Solomon; *Obi*, about a 30-year-old man-child chasing his dream to become an artist while navigating adulthood with his friends, from Michael B. Jordan's Outlier Society, Studio71 and David Devries, based on an Instagram comic and co-created by Obi Arisukwu and Arthur Harris; *Uncanny Valley*, from creators Brendan Walter and Greg Yagolnitzer and exec producer Ed Helms that tell the story of three awkward domestic helper robots who kill their human owners and try to assume their identities, from Universal Television and Pacific Electric Picture Company; and *Cover*, an adaptation of Brian Michael Bendis and David Mack DC Comics series, an animated espionage thriller and conspiratorial love letter to the comic book industry, from Rooster Teeth. "It is a tremendous privilege to build on the 100-year-plus legacy of 'cartoons' at this company," said Suzanna Makkos, EVP Original Comedy and Adult Animation at HBO Max. "We can draw a straight line from our hundreds of childhood hours spent watching Bugs outwit Elmer to the current slate of adult animated projects we are building here at HBO Max, and we think fans will agree. We are proud to introduce this distinctive group of series from a wide range of diverse creators that will form a first stop destination for animation lovers everywhere."



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Tom Budd

GAMING NEWS



This week In Gaming...

King's Bounty II Coming August 2021



1C Entertainment and Koch Media announced that King's Bounty II, the upcoming successor of the critically acclaimed unique turn-based tactical role-playing King's Bounty series, will be released on August 24, 2021 for PlayStation® 4, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch, and PC. The original launch date in March 2021 was revised to ensure the best experience for players when the game comes out.

"As a team, we had to make the difficult decision to move King's Bounty 2's release to a later point in 2021 to ensure the team has adequate time to deliver a King's Bounty best possible experience," said Nikolay Baryshnikov, CEO of 1C Entertainment. *"We are currently at a stage where the game is complete and playable, but we need more time to finish playtesting, fixing, polishing, and postponing launch will give us the precious months to balancing phase, much needed for such*

important project for us, with its ambitious, open world, its complex narrative, deep Turn-Based Tactical and RPG mechanics," said Denis Maltzev, King's Bounty II producer. *"Seeing the love and passion you, as our fans, put behind this project, we are grateful for all your support and ask you for a little more patience with us. We're hoping that this won't be a long delay and please make sure to keep an eye on our channels to receive all upcoming updates on the game as we get closer to the new release date."*

Players could see a first glimpse of the game at the Epic Games Showcase and LUDI Awards on February 11, 2021. More information about the game will be shared at a later stage. **About King's Bounty 2:** Offering a fresh take on the acclaimed fantasy series, King's Bounty 2 expands upon its tactical turn-based battles to offer players a truly immersive RPG experience that adds weight to their every decision, whether leading an army into battle against unliving horrors, or building relations with local townsfolk. Experience a rich world that blends realism and fantasy, filled with compelling stories, memorable characters and moral choices aplenty! Players take on the role of one of three heroes - each a personality with their own background - and experience a non-linear adventure in an open and vibrant fantasy world. Split into two distinct phases, players traverse the realm from a third-person perspective, picking up quests, exploring the wilderness, and getting to know the people they meet. When conflict arises, however, the perspective shifts to tactical, turn-based combat. Players must then make smart use of their units as they fight to win. To learn more about King's Bounty II, visit www.kingsbounty2.com.

FORD 150 IN ROCKET LEAGUE: PSYONIX AND FORD ANNOUNCE ROCKET LEAGUE COLLABORATION



Psyonix, the San Diego video game developer, and Ford announced that the Ford F-150 RLE (Rocket League Edition) bundle will be available in *Rocket League* beginning February 20 on all platforms! On top of being the presenting sponsor for all of the Rocket League Championship Series (RLCS) X Winter Majors, Ford and Psyonix are also introducing the Ford + Rocket League Freestyle Invitational, a brand-new competitive event featuring some of the best *Rocket League* freestylers as selected by Psyonix. The Ford F-150 RLE bundle will be available in its own tab in the Item Shop and features the iconic Ford F-150 RLE, Ford F-150 RLE Wheels (standard and Special Edition), Ford F-150 RLE Boost, Ford F-150 RLE Engine Audio, Ford F-150 Player Banner, and Chairman Decal. The Ford F-150 RLE bundle will be available for 1500 Credits from February 20 until February 28. In addition, the Ford + Rocket League Freestyle Invitational will be introduced as a brand-new two-day event. Eight of the top *Rocket League* freestylers will compete and demonstrate their best freestyle moves to a panel of judges for a chance to win a real 2021 Ford F-150. The first day of competition will take place on February 24 and will conclude on February 28 ahead of the RLCS X North American Major Grand Finals live on [Twitch](https://www.twitch.tv). More information about the Ford + Rocket League Freestyle Invitational, such as the participants, judges and hosts, will be revealed at a later date.

ABOUT ROCKET LEAGUE: Winner or nominee of more than 150 "Game of the Year" awards, *Rocket League* is one of the most critically-acclaimed sports games of our generation. *Rocket League* is a high-powered hybrid of arcade-style soccer and vehicular mayhem with easy-to-understand controls and fluid, physics-driven competition. Available on Nintendo Switch™, PlayStation®4, PlayStation®5, Xbox One, Xbox Series X|S, and PC on Epic Games Store, *Rocket League* includes nearly endless customization possibilities, a fully-featured offline season mode, multiple game types, casual and competitive online matches, and special "Mutators" that let you change the rules entirely. To learn more about *Rocket League*, please visit www.RocketLeague.com, "Like" it on Facebook, and follow it on Twitter @RocketLeague for all the latest developer updates and news.

DYING LIGHT

THE FOLLOWING

ENHANCED EDITION

DYING LIGHT UPDATE:

Vikings are coming to Dying Light to wreak havoc in Harran

In a search for Asgard, two lost Vikings are brought to Harran in the **Viking: Raiders of Harran Bundle**, available to purchase for **Dying Light** from 6:00 PM GMT today. Players will have a chance to become fearsome, violent berserkers, supported by new weapons, shields and buggy skins. Moreover, the community is invited by Techland to celebrate the Year of the Ox - as part of the Chinese New Year - with an in-game **Lunar Event**. The **Viking: Raiders of Harran Bundle** will give

players the chance to become a true Viking and stand side by side with two new characters - Björn the Warrior and Björn the Berserker. Those who prove themselves to be fearless enough will be equipped with deadly tools, forged in a faraway land, made entirely in order to wreak havoc among zombies and to make sure that bards will be singing about player fights for centuries, including:

- Ragnarök, new double-handed Heavy Axe
- The Aesir, new one-handed Sword
- Asgard's Protector, new Viking Shield



Each Weapon and Shield will come in two variants, one applying fire damage and a standard version with craftable mods. And last, but not least, who would a Viking be without his ship? The last item in the bundle will be Berserker's buggy skins - Reinen and Fiery Reinen. Buggy, also called an Earth Boat, will receive skins inspired by Vikings ships, to roam the uncharted land of Harran. To view, share and experience new **Dying Light Viking: Raiders of Harran Bundle**, The Dying Light community can also get involved in celebrating Chinese New Year globally with the in-game **Lunar Event** which offers a new weapon - Gold Dao Sword and King Mods - to help rid the environment of zombies. The event will take place from February 11th, 6:00 PM GMT. In addition players will receive for free the **Ox Warrior Bundle**, which includes an Ox Cannon Weapon and Ox Warrior Character Skin. The premium Viking: Raiders of Harran Bundle is available now, priced \$3.99 and the Ox Warrior Bundle is available for free in the in-game shop on PC, Xbox One and PS4. For more information please visit: dyinglightgame.com

DISCIPLES: LIBERATION ANNOUNCED FOR Q4 2021

Dark fantasy strategy RPG lets you duel with demigods, exclusive PC alpha kicks off soon for 200 players

Kalypso Media and Frima Studio have today announced **Disciples: Liberation** - a brand-new mature, dark fantasy strategy RPG arriving in Q4 2021 for PC, PlayStation 4, Xbox One and next-gen consoles including PlayStation 5 and Xbox Series X|S.

DISCIPLES
— LIBERATION —

Disciples: Liberation marks a new beginning for the franchise, allowing players to explore a richly detailed dark fantasy world, fight foul beasts in intricate turn-based combat, take on hundreds of unique quests and foster relationships with an assortment of in-world factions: from a human empire tinged by religious extremism to the dark forces of the undead lead by a mad queen. Alliances forged, players can build an army and trade hard-earned resources for an assortment of upgrades to their home base. No choice is without consequence and depending on decisions and political alignments, one wrong move could see a deadly domino effect, irrevocably changing the course of their story. A closed PC alpha for **Disciples: Liberation** will be available soon, allowing 200 players to go hands-on with the game.

PLAYSTATION PLUS FREE GAMES FOR MARCH 2021

March 2021 is almost here, which means that Sony will soon unveil the month's free PlayStation Plus games on PS4 and PS5. So far for 2021, Sony has been going big. In fact, February's lineup was one of the service's best lineups since its inception. Not only do we expect Sony to follow this up with another big month, but the pressure is on to once again one-up itself. That said, with the lack of compelling PS5 games, it's getting harder and harder for Sony to continue the three-game offer consisting of two PS4 games and one PS5 game it's been hitting subscribers with.



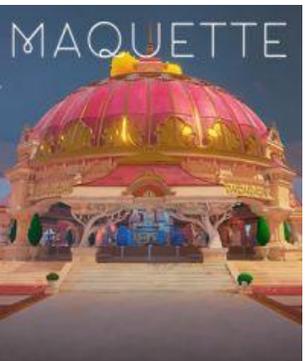
NieR: Automata

Reason: Next month, NieR: Automata will turn four years old, and more importantly, the following month, a remaster of its predecessor -- Nier Replicant ver.1.22474487139... -- will release. If there was ever a time for Square Enix and Sony to cash in on NieR Automata by making it free for PlayStation Plus subscribers, it's now. Not only is the opportunity for synergy there, but NieR: Automata has already sold millions of copies and routinely gets the deep discount treatment. In other words, Square Enix has squeezed most of this orange, and now it's time to squeeze the last few drops and get more players in the door before Nier Replicant ver.1.22474487139... drops in April. **About:** "NieR: Automata tells the story of androids 2B, 9S, and A2 and their battle to reclaim the machine-driven dystopia overrun by powerful machines. Humanity has been driven from the Earth by mechanical beings from another world. In a final effort to take back the planet, the human resistance sends a force of android soldiers to destroy the invaders. Now, a war between machines and androids rages on... A war that could soon unveil a long-forgotten truth of the world."



Yakuza: Like a Dragon

Reason: PlayStation needs to offer a PS5 game, and Yakuza: Like a Dragon may be the best option at this point. Sony could go big with Marvel's Spider-Man or Demon's Souls, but this seems unlikely. Yakuza: Like a Dragon is not only the more realistic option, but Sony and Sega owe it to PlayStation fans after making them wait until March 2 for the PS5 version of the game. The game has been available on PS4 since launch, but the next-gen version has been an Xbox Series X exclusive. For Sega, this is an opportunity to do right by PlayStation fans, and for Sony this represents an opportunity to get a big game any hardcore and classic PlayStation fan will appreciate, right as Yakuza 6 comes to Xbox platforms for the first time. It's going to be a pricey one to pull off, but the optics are worth it. **About:** "Become Ichiban Kasuga, a low-ranking yakuza grunt left on the brink of death by the man he trusted most. Take up your legendary bat and get ready to crack some underworld skulls in dynamic RPG combat set against the backdrop of modern-day Japan."



Maquette

Reason: If Sony taps both Maquette and Yakuza: Like a Dragon, it will have two new releases for PlayStation Plus subscribers, and unlike Yakuza: Like a Dragon, Sony shouldn't have to break the bank to get Maquette on board. As you may know, Sony has been helping Annapurna Interactive market this one, so there's already a working relationship there for the game. Its inclusion won't light the world on fire, but it's obvious Sony believes in the game and subscribers always appreciate when brand-new releases are included. **About:** "Maquette is a first-person recursive puzzle game that takes you into a world where every building, plant, and object are simultaneously tiny and staggeringly huge."

Reported by comicbook.com

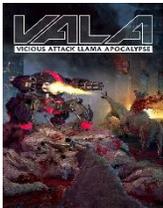
NEW GAMES WITH **XBOX GOLD** FOR MARCH 2021

The March Games with Gold lineup is here! On the Xbox One and Xbox Series X|S, become the ultimate mercenary in *Warface: Breakout*, and take down the Llamanati in *Vicious Attack Llama Apocalypse*. And for our classic lineup via Backward Compatibility, pilot your favorite Metal Slug to take down the enemy menace in *Metal Slug 3*, and rule the seas from Port-au-Prince to Tortuga in *Port Royale 3*. 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.



Warface: Breakout

Tight gunplay and strategic team cooperation define this tactical online first-person shooter. Make split-second decisions, use a vast arsenal of weapons, and master the high-stakes PvP experience to become the ultimate mercenary of tomorrow. Elite forces are coming to *Warface: Breakout* on March 1! A new cosmetic pack adds a new exclusive knife, elite weapon skins, new epic helmets, and more to the game. Join the new event from March 8 to March 22 in the team deathmatch game mode. Improve your progress in the event and get new special rewards!



Vicious Attack Llama Apocalypse

Prepare your thumbs for a frantic top-down, couch co-op, twin-stick shooter like no other. Remotely pilot an endless supply of mechs to fight through the vast llama horde apocalypse. Featuring 1 to 4 player co-op, a massive, changing city to explore, and Xbox Play Anywhere functionality including on your PC, take down the Llamanati and pray that Llamazon blesses you!



Metal Slug 3

Marco and Tarma of the Peregrine Falcon Strike Force are back to take down General Morden's rebel forces. Run, gun, slice, and camel your way through an onslaught of adversaries, from soldiers to giant enemy crabs. Pilot a wide array of Metal Slug vehicles, shoot a variety of weapons, and cause mass destruction in this legendary run-and-gun shooter.



Port Royale 3

It's the turbulent 17th Century, and you are a young sea captain whose only goal is to be the most powerful man in the New World. To achieve your goal, either choose to be a trader – developing trade routes to earn fortune, glory, and power; or become an adventurer – plundering, invading, and leading your ships in beautiful 3D naval battles. Set sail on 16 different ships, from versatile frigates to powerful galleons, and build your empire in the Caribbean.

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.

GAME RELEASES FOR MARCH 2021

VIDEO GAME	COMPANY	FORMAT	RELEASE DATE
Foregone	Big Blue Bubble	PC	01/03/2021
Gotcha! Crane Game	CyberStep	An	01/03/2021 (Open beta)
Neon White	Annapurna Interactive	NS	Winter 2021
Crypto Against All Odds	PID Publishing	PC	02/03/2021
Luna's Fishing Garden	Coldwild Games	PC	02/03/2021
Slashy Camp	Blue Wizard Digital	An, iOS	02/03/2021
Bang-On Balls: Chronicles	Exit Plan Games	PC	03/03/2021 (Early access)
Cave Bad	eastasiasoft	NS, PS4, XO	03/03/2021
Sir Lovelot	Pixel Games	NS, PC, PS4, PS5, XO	03/03/2021
Primordials: Battle of Gods	Wiregames	PC	04/03/2021
Sea of Solitude: The Director's Cut	Quantic Dream	NS	04/03/2021
The Life and Suffering of Sir Brante	101XP	PC	04/03/2021
Towards the Stars	Peter Tkačov	PC	04/03/2021
Antonball Deluxe	Proponent Games	PC	05/03/2021
Closed Hands	PASSENGER	Lin, Mac, PC	05/03/2021
FORM	Perp Games	PSVR	05/03/2021
Soul of Giga	Kiss Publishing Limited (KPL)	PC	05/03/2021
Toxicant	Cosmocat Games	PC	05/03/2021
Twilight Path	Perp Games	PSVR	05/03/2021
APEX Legends	EA	NS	09/03/2021
Warshmallows	Bonus Stage Publishing	PC	10/03/2021
Battle Brothers	Overhype Studios	NS	11/03/2021
Bishoujo Battle Cyber Panic!	eastasiasoft	NS, PS4	11/03/2021
Doodle Devil: 3volution	JoyBits	NS, PS4, PS5, XO	11/03/2021
Lust from Beyond	Movie Games	PC	11/03/2021
Zack 2: Celestine's Map	Smart Olive Games	PC	11/03/2021

VIDEO GAME	COMPANY	FORMAT	RELEASE DATE
Bloodroots	Paper Cult	PC	12/03/2021
Drive-Buy	Glitchers	NS, PC	12/03/2021
U27RA R3Z0NANC3	Dumivid	PC	12/03/2021
Samurai Shodown	Athlon Games	XSX	13/03/2021
Story of Seasons: Pioneers of Olive Town	XSEED Games	NS	13/03/2021
Dungeon of the Endless: Apogee	Playdigious	An, iOS	16/03/2021
Ecosystem	Slug Disco Studios	PC	16/03/2021 (Early access)
Farlanders	Crytivo	PC	16/03/2021
Kingdoms of Amalur: Re-Reckoning	THQ Nordic	NS	16/03/2021
Stubbs the Zombie in "Rebel without a Pulse"	THQ	NS, PC, PS4, XO	16/03/2021
Derelict Void	Stirling Games	PC	18/03/2021
Dogworld	Lateralis	NS, PC	18/03/2021
Endzone: A World Apart	Assemble Entertainment	Mac, PC	18/03/2021
Magic Twins	Badland Publishing	NS, PC	18/03/2021
Minute of Islands	Mixtvision	NS, PC, PS4, XO	18/03/2021
Plants vs. Zombies: Battle for Neighborville Complete Edition	EA	NS	19/03/2021
Saviors of Sapphire Wings	NIS America	NS, PC	19/03/2021
Sea of Solitude: The Director's Cut	Quantic Dream	NS	21/03/2021
Inspector Waffles	Goloso Games	PC	23/03/2021
Magic: Legends	Perfect World	PC, PS4, XO	23/03/2021 (Open beta)
Sanity Of Morris	StickyLock	Mac, PC, PS4, XO	23/03/2021
Tales from the Borderlands	2K Games	NS	24/03/2021
Dandy Ace	Mad Mimic Interactive	PC	25/03/2021
Kaze and the Wild Masks	Soedesco	NS, PC, PS4, Stad, XSX	26/03/2021
Monster Hunter Rise	Capcom	NS	26/03/2021
Evil Genius 2: World Domination	Rebellion	PC	30/03/2021



XBOX

SERIES X

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THE SHOW 21



JACKIE ROBINSON EDITION

4-20-2021





Camila Rodriguesa

The

INTERD

Opinion

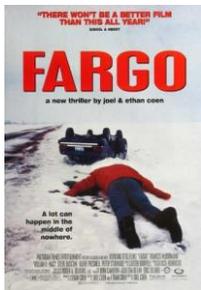
25 Years in Film: The Top 10 Movies of 1996

Almost as Good as 1994...

By Alex Moore

25 years later and the memories are still vivid. I could say a lot more about 1996, aside from movies. After all, it was the year that Nintendo unveiled its new 64-bit console, as well. What a Winter Break that one was! While I tend to throw around references to 1994 like it is going out of style, I must admit that 1996 was fairly impressive, too. What I remember the most was the outstanding experience of big-budget special effects on the big screen, particularly during the summer months. Keep in mind that in Texas, the summer starts earlier than it does in most places and it, also, lingers for a longer amount of time. I think I would rather think "cool" thoughts right now.

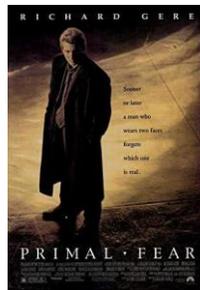
Deciding on a Top 10 list can be a lot of fun, but for those who are serious about it, it is probably as challenging as it is enjoyable. There are likely a thousand ways to go about the selection process... 10 or so, at the very least, but what I have decided to do is take the average score, according to Rotten Tomatoes and combine it with my current score, for a composite total of 20 points. Understood? In the words of Andy Partridge, "Let's Begin!"



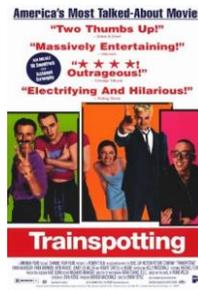
#1 - Grade: 10



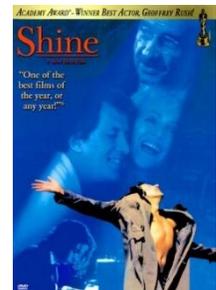
#2 - Grade: 9



#3 - Grade: 9



#4 - Grade: 8



#5 - Grade: 8



#6 - Grade: 8



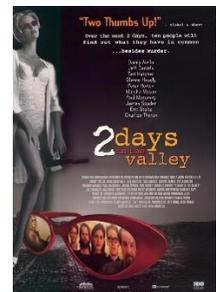
#7 - Grade: 7



#8 - Grade: 7



#9 - Grade: 7



#10 - Grade: 7

For those of you who wonder about the ordinal and the inclusion or exclusion of other movies, take note that I have made my selection based not on just how good I consider the film to be, but also by the direct impact it had on me at the time that I saw it. In some cases, I saw it on the theater and in other cases, I saw it on television sometime later on. Also, I thought it might be nice if I listed some of the other movies which were in the running for my personal list...

The Juror, Fear, MST3K: The Movie, The Arrival, Dragonheart, The Cable Guy, Kingpin, Extreme Measures, Ransom, Space Jam. Everyone probably has a different compilation and this one is mine. I am happy with it and I hope that you are all happy with yours. Above all else, let us all continue to enjoy reliving the memories and keep on talking about them with each other just for the sheer joy of being thankful for the fun and exciting times during our lives. Happy 25th Anniversary to you, 1996...now what is your top 10 list from 1996?



Penguin Bloom: The Family Movie You May Have Missed on Netflix, But Should Watch Today!

By Holly Scudero



There's no shortage of movies marketed exclusively to kids, or of movies with content more appropriate for adults. Movies that will entertain the whole family are sometimes harder to come across, but that's exactly what you'll find in *Penguin Bloom*, currently available to stream on Netflix. On the surface, this movie is based on a true story about the effect of a baby bird on a troubled family. But this hidden gem of a movie also deals with a host of more complex issues. Life changed forever for the Bloom family when a vacation to Thailand, initially filled with adventures, turned tragic. Sam Bloom, the mother, broke her back and ended up paralyzed, unable to move or feel her entire lower body. Sam healed physically but remains confined to a wheelchair. Not surprisingly, she's angry, frustrated, and bitter, not to mention deeply depressed. Sam feels helpless and useless, and as a result she's shut herself off emotionally from pretty much everyone around her. Her family, meanwhile, is struggling in their own way. Sam's husband, Cameron, is loving and attentive, trying to find the

right balance between supporting his wife and letting her have the space and independence she craves. And her kids. Oh, her kids. Noah, Reuben, and Oli are still pretty young, and they are caught up in the strong emotional undercurrents of the family. Noah is the narrator of sorts, and he feels an intense (and unwarranted) amount of guilt over his mother's accident, believing it to be his fault.

Everything starts to change when Noah brings home a baby magpie, which he found at the beach. Sam is reluctant to keep the bird, but eventually agrees that Penguin, as she's soon named, can stay until she's stronger. What Sam never expected was that this sweet, inquisitive little bird would be such a catalyst for change for the whole family. *Penguin Bloom* is the kind of movie that will hit you in the feels, plain and simple. It starts stark and strong with Sam's accident and does nothing to sugarcoat the many ways in which her resulting disability affects the whole family. We see Sam struggling to get around, frustrated with her physical weakness when she was once so vibrant and active. We see the many ways in which she is wholly dependent on everyone around her. We see her unable to do even the simplest things, from showering to being able to tend to a sick child in the night. And we see the turbulence of Sam's emotions in her anger and her tears, in the way she breaks things out of sheer frustration, and in the times she chooses to stay alone and in the dark, simply uninterested in the wider world while mired in the intensity of her own emotions.

Not surprisingly, Naomi Watts is phenomenal as Sam. She juggles those heavy emotions so skillfully, really pulling viewers into the depth of her despair and making us cheer for every step she makes towards mental and emotional healing. Andrew Lincoln, best known for his role in long-running television drama *The Walking Dead*, also showcases his wider-ranging talent here as Cameron, portraying the imperfectly perfect husband who has been working hard to hold the family together. And young actor Griffin Murray-Johnston, who plays Noah, displays exceptional talent; he's got a bright future ahead of him.



Penguin the magpie, however, provides the bright bit of sunshine that eventually lights the whole story up. There's no denying that Pen is downright cute. She chirps and squawks, she flutters around the room, and she pokes at things that catch her

attention. Magpies are said to be quite intelligent birds, and the sparkle in Pen's eyes draws us in and makes us love her. It's amazing and heartwarming to watch as Pen slowly brings some peace to the whole Bloom family, and to Sam in particular. Sam tries so hard to reject Pen, to shut the bird out the way she's trying to shut out her family, but Pen just won't have it. And before we know it, Sam loves Pen. She takes care of the bird, keeps her out of trouble, rescues her from the fixes she gets into, cuddles her. And letting the magpie into her heart opens the gates for everyone else she's shut out, and the whole family begins to find some true healing. *Penguin Bloom* does not move fast. The entire movie moves pretty slow, actually, but in this case that's a good thing as it really lets us get a feel for the family and their changing dynamic. It means we feel Sam's bitterness that much more strongly, we feel Noah's misplaced guilt, we feel Cameron's devotion, and we feel the worry of Sam's extended family. We're able to really feel the turmoil when emotions boil over at a family dinner. We're able to feel Sam's growing self-confidence and sense of freedom as she discovers a love for kayaking and otherwise emerges from her shell. And we're able to feel the growing hope as lines of communication open up and the family starts to truly come back together. But the movie isn't all good feelings, and anyone who has any kind of family-related trauma in their past, anyone who grew up with an adult who was depressed or parents who fought, might find parts of this movie triggering. It's hard to watch Sam lashing out at Cameron. We know the boys see and feel and are affected by it, even though the adults try to keep it private. And while these hard times are fairly accurately portrayed, it can still be rough to watch.

It would also be nice if there were a little bit more Penguin. Yes, this is Sam's story of rising above adversity, and it makes sense that she's the focus of most of it. But the magpie is just so cute, and the movie technically is named for her; many viewers would surely love to see a bit more of Penguin growing up. Cute bird scenes would help relieve the overall heavy feel of the movie. This movie is rated for ages 14 and up, and that feels pretty accurate. The emotional drama would mostly be lost on younger kids, leaving them with an uneasiness they might have a hard time understanding. But older kids, whether they've dealt with any kind of major physical accident in the family or not, will have a much better feel for the darker emotions expressed by the main characters--and will get a lot of benefit from seeing those emotions resolved in mostly healthy manners. Overall, *Penguin Bloom* is a fantastic movie, and a great reminder that even though sometimes terrible things happen to good people, we don't have to let those terrible things define the whole of our present or future. It's tragic and depressing at times, heartwarming and uplifting at others, and is sure to bring you to tears at some point.

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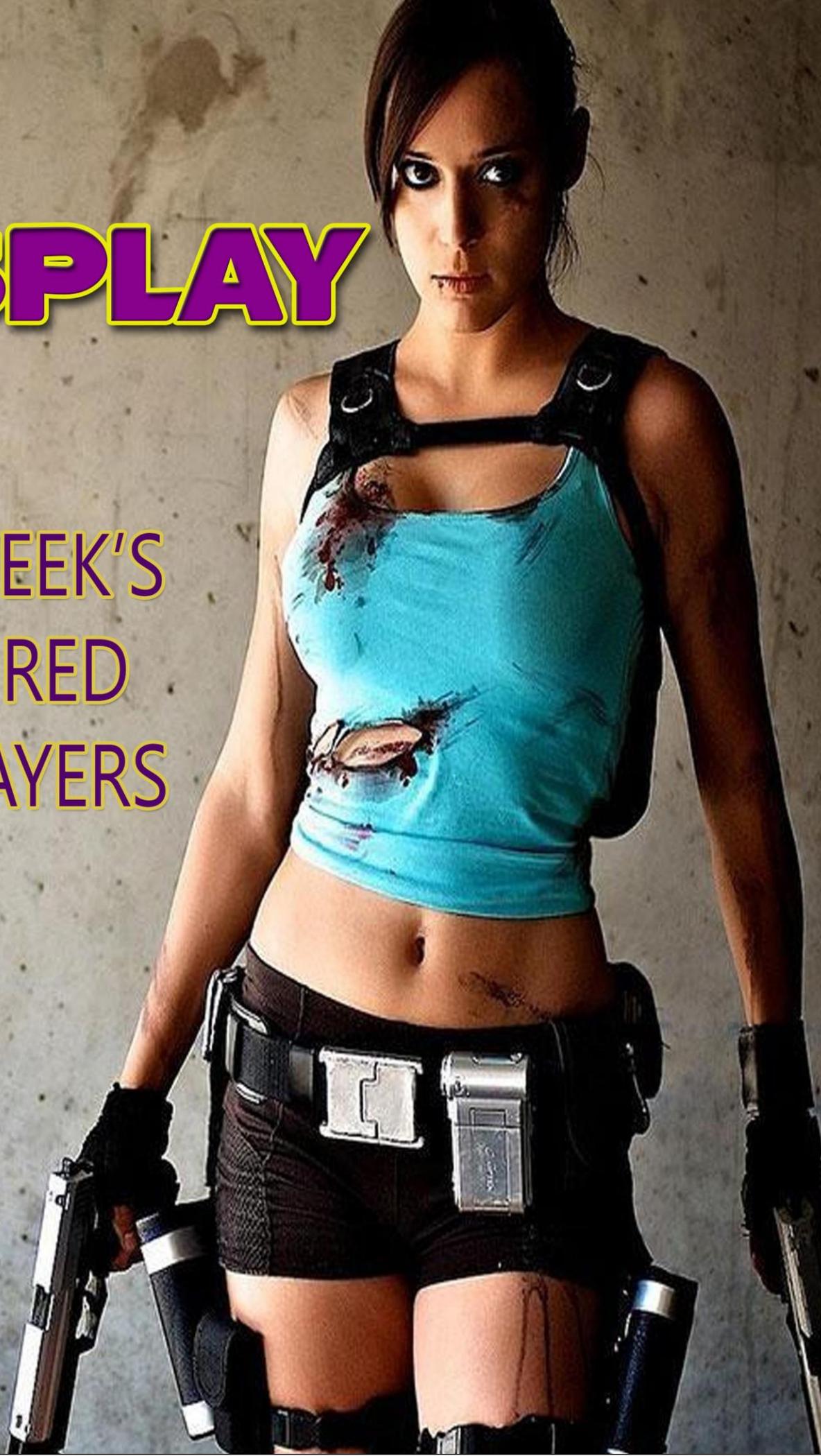


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COSPLAY

THIS WEEK'S
FEATURED
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Morgan Freasier
"Lovely Cosmist Cosplay"

Rose Quartz
Steven Universe



lovelycosmistcosplay



yukihosakay



lovelycosmistcosplay



lovelycosmistcosp



lovelycosmistcosplay



lovelycosmistcosplay



CHAMBERIAN SKEKSIS
THE DARK CRYSTAL

About Morgan: She was born and raised in central Texas and started cosplaying in middle school. When Morgan reached high school she took as many courses as she could to help with her cosplay. She took interior design, graphic design, videography, and four years of art including an advanced placement course. The courses helped Morgan develop ideas and techniques to use in my cosplay. Morgan have been cosplaying for 8 years now and has won places in 11 different contests including Moviecon in the U.K. It was an online contest. She enjoys meeting new people and learning from them. Morgan hopes to advocate for plus size cosplayers in the future. She would love to have her own pattern line, model, and do more video tutorial for cosplayers as well.

INTERVIEW

How did you get into cosplay?

I got into cosplay in 2014 when I was watching YouTube of my favorite cosplayers.

Who is your favorite character to cosplay and why?

My favorite character to cosplay is the Chamberlain Skeksis from the Dark Crystal. He is the biggest character I have work on and the hardest. I had to implement new techniques and skills.

What tips do you have on making a costume?

You can always start somewhere. If it's some clothes from goodwill , your closet or even a old recycled cardboard box.

What is your favorite memory of being a cosplayer?

The best memory I have is when I was at my first anime convention. I got to meet so many new people.

What advice do you have for fans getting into cosplay?

Don't be afraid to cosplay anything you want. You can be whoever you want to be big or small you can cosplay them all.

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

If I had a superpower it would be to a telepathy to save people who need help mentally and physically. And to let people known that they're not alone in this world!



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The Comet That Killed the Dinosaurs

New theory explains possible origin of the Chicxulub impactor!



It was tens of miles wide and forever changed history when it crashed into Earth about 66 million years ago. The Chicxulub impactor, as it's known, left behind a crater off the coast of Mexico that spans 93 miles and goes 12 miles deep. Its devastating impact brought the reign of the dinosaurs to an abrupt and calamitous end by triggering their sudden mass extinction, along with the end of almost three-quarters of the plant and animal species then living on Earth. The enduring puzzle has always been where the asteroid or comet that set off the destruction originated, and how it came to strike the Earth. And now a pair of Harvard researchers believe they have the answer.

In a study published in *Scientific Reports*, Avi Loeb, Frank B. Baird Jr. Professor of Science at Harvard, and Amir Siraj '21, an astrophysics concentrator, put forth a new theory that could explain the origin and journey of this catastrophic object and others like it. Using statistical analysis and gravitational simulations, Loeb and Siraj show that a significant fraction of a type of comet originating from the Oort cloud, a sphere of debris

at the edge of the solar system, was bumped off-course by Jupiter's gravitational field during its orbit and sent close to the sun, whose tidal force broke apart pieces of the rock. That increases the rate of comets like Chicxulub (pronounced Chicks-uh-lub) because these fragments cross the Earth's orbit and hit the planet once every 250 to 730 million years or so. "Basically, Jupiter acts as a kind of pinball machine," said Siraj, who is also co-president of Harvard Students for the Exploration and Development of Space and is pursuing a master's degree at the New England Conservatory of Music. "Jupiter kicks these incoming long-period comets into orbits that bring them very close to the sun." It's because of this that long-period comets, which take more than 200 years to orbit the sun, are called sun grazers, he said. "When you have these sun grazers, it's not so much the melting that goes on, which is a pretty small fraction relative to the total mass, but the comet is so close to the sun that the part that's closer to the sun feels a stronger gravitational pull than the part that is farther from the sun, causing a tidal force" he said. "You get what's called a tidal disruption event and so these large comets that come really close to the sun break up into smaller comets. And basically, on their way out, there's a statistical chance that these smaller comets hit the Earth." The calculations from Loeb and Siraj's theory increase the chances of long-period comets impacting Earth by a factor of about 10, and show that about 20 percent of long-period comets become sun grazers. That finding falls in line with research from other astronomers. The pair claim that their new rate of impact is consistent with the age of Chicxulub, providing a satisfactory explanation for its origin and other impactors like it. "Our paper provides a basis for explaining the occurrence of this event," Loeb said. "We are suggesting that, in fact, if you break up an object as it comes close to the sun, it could give rise to the appropriate event rate and also the kind of impact that killed the dinosaurs." Loeb and Siraj's hypothesis might also explain the makeup of many of these impactors.

"Our hypothesis predicts that other Chicxulub-size craters on Earth are more likely to correspond to an impactor with a primitive (carbonaceous chondrite) composition than expected from the conventional main-belt asteroids," the researchers wrote in the paper. This is important because a popular theory on the origin of Chicxulub claims the impactor is a fragment of a much larger asteroid that came from the main belt, which is an asteroid population between the orbit of Jupiter and Mars. Only about a tenth of all main-belt asteroids have a composition of carbonaceous chondrite, while it's assumed most long-period comets have it. Evidence found at the Chicxulub crater and other similar craters that suggests they had carbonaceous chondrite. This includes an object that hit about 2 billion years ago and left the Vredefort crater in South Africa, which is the largest confirmed crater in Earth's history, and the impactor that left the Zhamanshin crater in Kazakhstan, which is the largest confirmed crater within the last million years. The researchers say that composition evidence supports their model and that the years the objects hit support both their calculations on impact rates of Chicxulub-sized tidally disrupted comets and for smaller ones like the impactor that made the Zhamanshin crater. If produced the same way, they say those would strike Earth once every 250,000 to 730,000 years. Loeb and Siraj say their hypothesis can be tested by further studying these craters, others like them, and even ones on the surface of the moon to determine the composition of the impactors. Space missions sampling comets can also help. Aside from composition of comets, the new Vera Rubin Observatory in Chile may be able to see the tidal disruption of long-period comets after it becomes operational next year. "We should see smaller fragments coming to Earth more frequently from the Oort cloud," Loeb said. "I hope that we can test the theory by having more data on long-period comets, get better statistics, and perhaps see evidence for some fragments." Loeb said understanding this is not just crucial to solving a mystery of Earth's history but could prove pivotal if such an event were to threaten the planet again. "It must have been an amazing sight, but we don't want to see that side," he said.

Story Source: Materials provided by **Harvard University**. Original written by Juan Siliezar. *Note: Content may be edited for style and length.*

A 'Super-Puff' Planet Like No Other

The core mass of the giant exoplanet WASP-107b is much lower than what was thought necessary to build up the immense gas envelope surrounding giant planets like Jupiter and Saturn, astronomers at Université de Montréal have found. This intriguing discovery by Ph.D. student Caroline Piaulet of UdeM's Institute for Research on Exoplanets (iREx) suggests that gas-giant planets form a lot more easily than previously believed. Piaulet is part of the groundbreaking research team of UdeM astrophysics professor Björn Benneke that in 2019 announced the first detection of water on an exoplanet located in its star's habitable zone. Published today in the *Astronomical Journal* with colleagues in Canada, the U.S., Germany and Japan, the new analysis of WASP-107b's internal structure "has big implications," said Benneke. "This work addresses the very foundations of how giant planets can form and grow," he said. "It provides concrete proof that massive accretion of a gas envelope can be triggered for cores that are much less massive than previously thought."



As big as Jupiter but 10 times lighter: WASP-107b was first detected in 2017 around WASP-107, a star about 212 light years from Earth in the Virgo constellation. The planet is very close to its star -- over 16 times closer than the Earth is to the Sun. As big as Jupiter but 10 times lighter, WASP-107b is one of the least dense exoplanets known: a type that astrophysicists have dubbed "super-puff" or "cotton-candy" planets.

Piaulet and her team first used observations of WASP-107b obtained at the Keck Observatory in Hawai'i to assess its mass more accurately. They used the radial velocity method, which allows scientists to determine a planet's mass by observing the wobbling motion of its host star due to the planet's gravitational pull. They concluded that the mass of WASP-107b is about one tenth that of Jupiter, or about 30 times that of Earth. The team then did an analysis to determine the planet's most likely internal structure. They came to a surprising conclusion: with such a low density, the planet must have a solid core of no more than four times the mass of the Earth. This means that more than 85 percent of its mass is included in the thick layer of gas that surrounds this core. By comparison, Neptune, which has a similar mass to WASP-107b, only has 5 to 15 percent of its total mass in its gas layer. "We had a lot of questions about WASP-107b," said Piaulet. "How could a planet of such low density form? And how did it keep its huge layer of gas from escaping, especially given the planet's close proximity to its star?" This motivated us to do a thorough analysis to determine its formation history.

A gas giant in the making: Planets form in the disc of dust and gas that surrounds a young star called a protoplanetary disc. Classical models of gas-giant planet formation are based on Jupiter and Saturn. In these, a solid core at least 10 times more massive than the Earth is needed to accumulate a large amount of gas before the disc dissipates. Without a massive core, gas-giant planets were not thought able to cross the critical threshold necessary to build up and retain their large gas envelopes. How then do explain the existence of WASP-107b, which has a much less massive core? McGill University professor and iREx member Eve Lee, a world-renowned expert on super-puff planets like WASP-107b, has several hypotheses. "For WASP-107b, the most plausible scenario is that the planet formed far away from the star, where the gas in the disc is cold enough that gas accretion can occur very quickly," she said. "The planet was later able to migrate to its current position, either through interactions with the disc or with other planets in the system."

Discovery of a second planet, WASP-107c: The Keck observations of the WASP-107 system cover a much longer period of time than previous studies have, allowing the UdeM-led research team to make an additional discovery: the existence of a second planet, WASP-107c, with a mass of about one-third that of Jupiter, considerably more than WASP-107b's. WASP-107c is also much farther from the central star; it takes three years to complete one orbit around it, compared to only 5.7 days for WASP-107b. Also interesting: the eccentricity of this second planet is high, meaning its trajectory around its star is more oval than circular. "WASP-107c has in some respects kept the memory of what happened in its system," said Piaulet. "Its great eccentricity hints at a rather chaotic past, with interactions between the planets which could have led to significant displacements, like the one suspected for WASP-107b."

Several more questions: Beyond its formation history, there are still many mysteries surrounding WASP-107b. Studies of the planet's atmosphere with the Hubble Space Telescope published in 2018 revealed one surprise: it contains very little methane. "That's strange, because for this type of planet, methane should be abundant," said Piaulet. "We're now reanalysing Hubble's observations with the new mass of the planet to see how it will affect the results, and to examine what mechanisms might explain the destruction of methane." The young researcher plans to continue studying WASP-107b, hopefully with the James Webb Space Telescope set to launch in 2021, which will provide a much more precise idea of the composition of the planet's atmosphere. "Exoplanets like WASP-107b that have no analogue in our Solar System allow us to better understand the mechanisms of planet formation in general and the resulting variety of exoplanets," she said. "It motivates us to study them in great detail." **Story Source: Materials provided by University of Montreal. Note: Content may be edited for style and length.**



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This Week's Story...

AWARE

By Clint Stutts

“Can you hear me?” a voice asked. “If you can hear me, blink your eyes.”

Carl could hear the voice so he blinked his eyes, which was kind of disturbing, because he couldn't see anything at all with his eyes except the cold blackness behind his eyelids. He knew his name was Carl, but that was about all he knew. He didn't know where he was, how he got there, why he couldn't feel anything, or who was talking to him. He was just aware that his name was Carl, and he was alive. The voice he was hearing didn't instill any feelings of security. Instead, the tone of it made him feel vulnerable and naked, as if the person behind the voice could do anything to him without any consequences. It felt, in fact, like the person behind the voice was God Himself.

“That's very good, very good indeed,” the voice said. “I've finally got your ears working, and I can't tell you how encouraging that is.” Why, I thought I'd never get those damn things working!” the voice said, laughing. “Now, I bet you'd like to be able to talk, wouldn't you?” he asked Carl. Carl blinked his eyes again to answer the man's question. “Of course you would, and I think I can make that happen very shortly.” That was good, because Carl had a lot of questions for the man who might be God.

While the God-Man worked, Carl tried to remember how he came to be where he was, and in the shape he was in. He came to realize rather quickly that there were no memories in his head for him to remember. No childhood, no friends, no wife, no children, and no family. He knew these were things a normal person had, but he had none of these. He had knowledge in his head, but no life memories.

“Carl, I'm going to hold off on your speech for awhile, it's giving me fits,” the God-Man said. “I'll just get your eyes working for now. I think I can pull that off with no problems.” Carl was in no position to argue, so he just blinked his eyes in acknowledgment. The questions would have to wait.

Since he couldn't remember anything about what got him where he was, Carl tried to guess what might have happened. If he was in an operating room, that meant he was in very bad shape, since even the most basic functions had to be restored, and he couldn't feel anything at all. He almost feared being able to see what the rest of his body looked like. Was he here because of an accident? Was his body a mangled, bloody mess?

“Alright Carl,” the God-Man said, “I'm about to activate your sight. Be advised that the light may hurt a bit at first, but you'll adjust quite nicely, I'm sure.” A moment passed, and the God-Man said, “Open your eyes, Carl.” Carl did, and the pain was exquisite. He opened his mouth to scream, but nothing came out. As quickly as the pain came upon him, it left him, and Carl could see the face of the God-Man. He was a thin man, wearing a white coat and pants. His gloves were the thin latex kind.

His face wasn't exactly kind. It looked safe enough and there was no real malice in it. He did look strange, though, and Carl was still not comforted by him at all. Carl was lying in an inclined position, so he had full view of the rest of his body without having to move his head, which was something he was still not able to do. His body was not mangled or bloody at all. It was, in fact, in quite good shape. He was dressed in gray coveralls, and his shirt was a very nice denim one, long sleeved in fact. His shoes were black and very generic looking. There was absolutely nothing physically wrong with him. So why was he here?

The room was solid white. The only other color in the room was silver, and that was the color of the table he was on. It was a very sterile looking environment. The God-Man spoke again.

"Well Carl, are your eyes functioning properly? Blink twice for yes, once for no," he said. Carl blinked twice. Everything seemed fine. He wanted to talk very badly now.

"Very good" the voice said. "Now I'll get your motor functions going, and get you on your feet again." "This is the simplest part, but I saved it for now because I couldn't very well have you walking around blind and bumping into things, could I" the voice said, and laughed again. Carl didn't see anything funny about it. In fact, Carl was becoming quite angry at this man. Carl was immobilized on a table and the God-Man was making jokes.

The God-Man moved to the rear of Carl and began to fiddle with something on or in his head, at this point Carl couldn't be sure. "It's done, Carl. You can get up now, if you want. However, if you want to talk, you'll want to lie here a bit longer." Carl stilled himself. He wanted to get up, but he wanted to talk even more. "That's a good boy, Carl. I should have you talking circles around me in a few minutes" the voice said.

Carl looked down at his right hand and wiggled his fingers. That was encouraging. What wasn't encouraging was that he still couldn't feel anything.

"Aha!" the God-Man exclaimed. "That's what I was missing! Now Carl, talk to me. Say anything!"

Carl opened his mouth and said, "I can't feel anything. Why can't I feel anything?" His voice sounded foreign to him, as if it were someone else's voice.

"Why Carl, you're not supposed to feel anything." "That's normal." What's important is that you're fully functional again." the voice said.

Being numb all the time is normal? That didn't seem right to him. "Who are you?" "Where am I?" "What happened to me?" Carl asked.

"My name is Dr. Agnew Pitt, you are in a laboratory at the Chem-Tech facility, and you were in an accident." "I fixed you" the voice finally said.

Fixed him? That was an odd way to describe what a doctor does to a patient. What was Chem-Tech? "Dr. Pitt, I don't have any memories. Do you believe THAT is normal?" Carl asked.

"Of course I do, Carl." "You were not created to have memories." "What purpose would they serve you" Dr. Pitt replied. Carl thought about this for a moment. He didn't know what purpose memories would serve, he just knew he wanted them very badly. "Dr. Pitt, I don't even know what I look like!" Carl asked. Pitt produced a small mirror and handed it to Carl. Carl took it, raised it to his face, and then he screamed. His face wasn't a human face at all. It had a human shape, but that's where

all similarity to humanity stopped. The human shape of his face encased the workings of everything in his head. He wasn't a human at all, he was a robot.

"I'm sorry, Carl," Pitt said, a little afraid now. "I should have put your face back on. I guess that was a bad joke, huh?"

"I think it was a VERY bad joke," Carl said, shifting his gaze from the mirror to Pitt's frightened face. "What the hell am I, Doc?"

"You-you're an android, of course. What did you think you were? I may have done something to cause this confusion, maybe I could fix..."

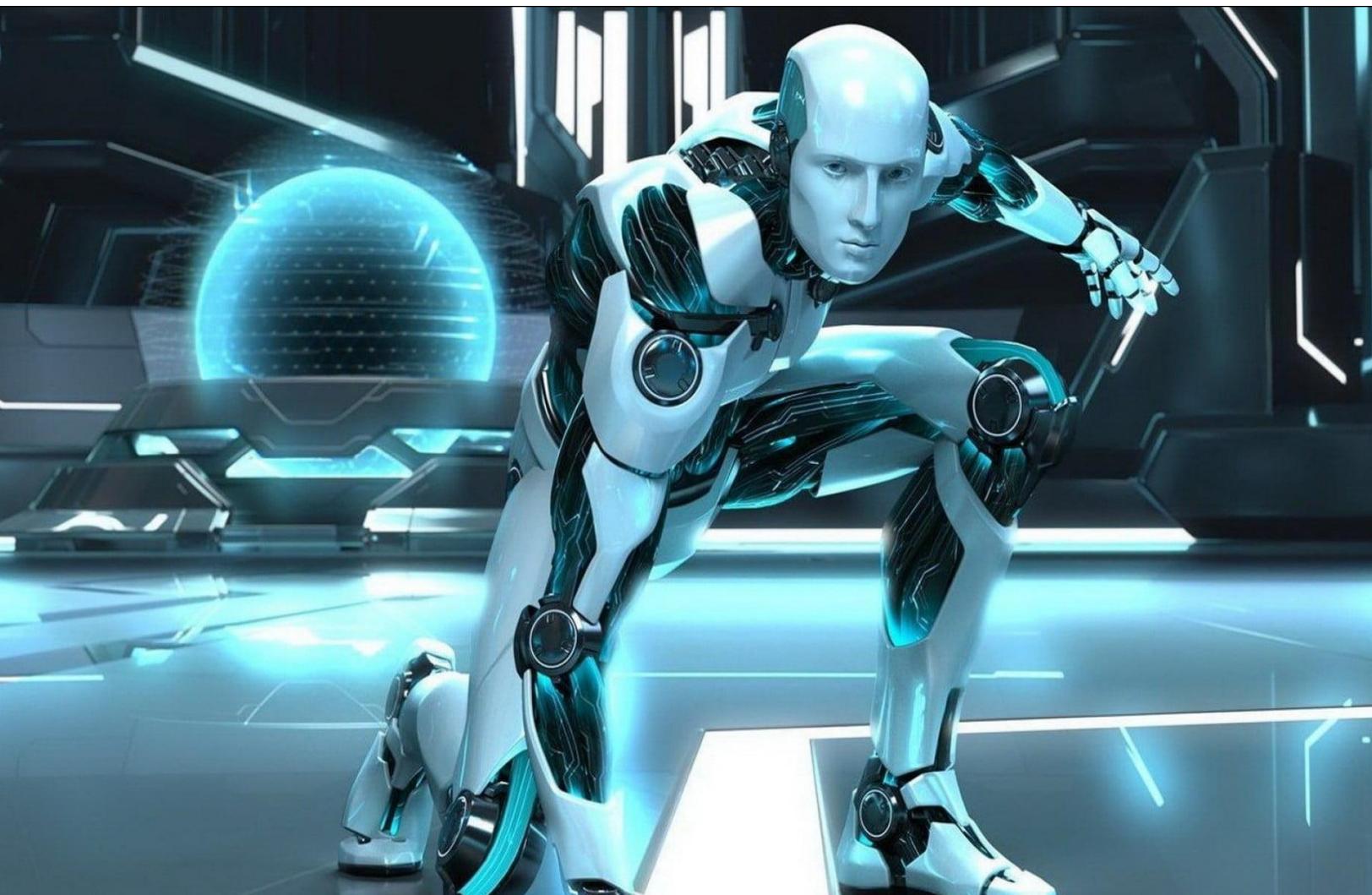
"An android, is that another one of your jokes" exclaimed Carl.

"N-no, Carl." "You're a Controlled-Automated-Robotic-Lifeform." "That's where your name came from, C.A.R.L." "Look on the bottom side of your right wrist and you'll see it stamped there" Dr. Pitt said Carl looked, and it was there. He couldn't believe it. His mind, or whatever it might be, wouldn't let him accept it.

"No, I'm human, I'm AWARE!" Carl shouted.

"Carl, you are an android, made to work "for" humans." "You don't have a life outside work." "As for you being aware, well, that's quite a realization you're having." "If you'll just sit back down, I can probably fix it" Dr. Pitt replied.

"I don't want it fixed, and I don't want to work for anyone" Carl said in anger. With that said, Carl grabbed Pitt by the throat and squeezed. It didn't take much effort for him to break the small man's neck. Carl was aware, and now he was free.



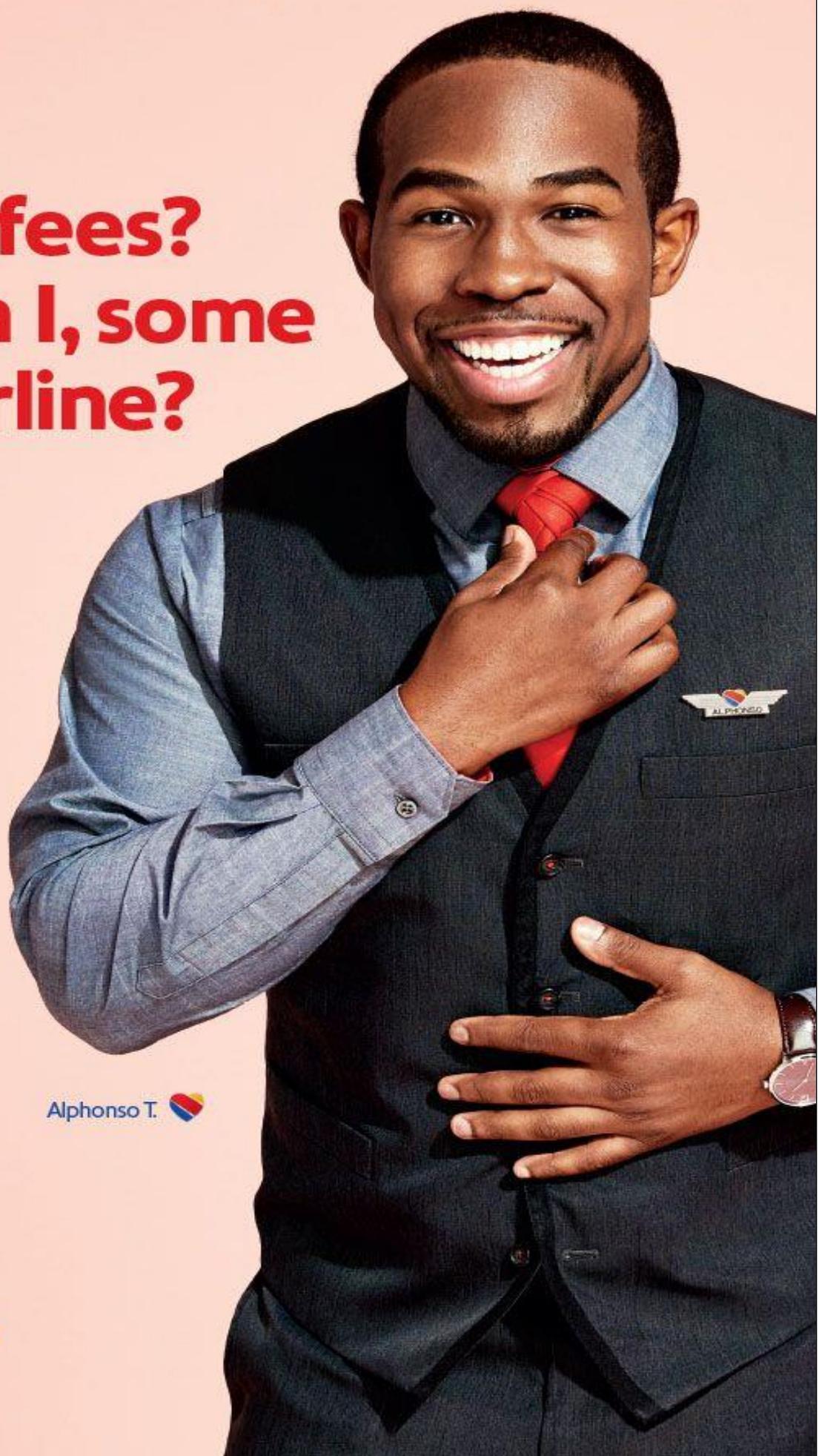
Enigmatic

She was but a glimpse,
A single feather falls,
From heavenly skies.
My angel on my shoulder,
A million things I'd say,
About this life I've lived.

Come sit by me by my feet,
And listen to my words.
I'm an enigmatic soul.
No grass grows beneath me.

~ Robin McNamara

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other airline?**



Alphonso T. 

Southwest 

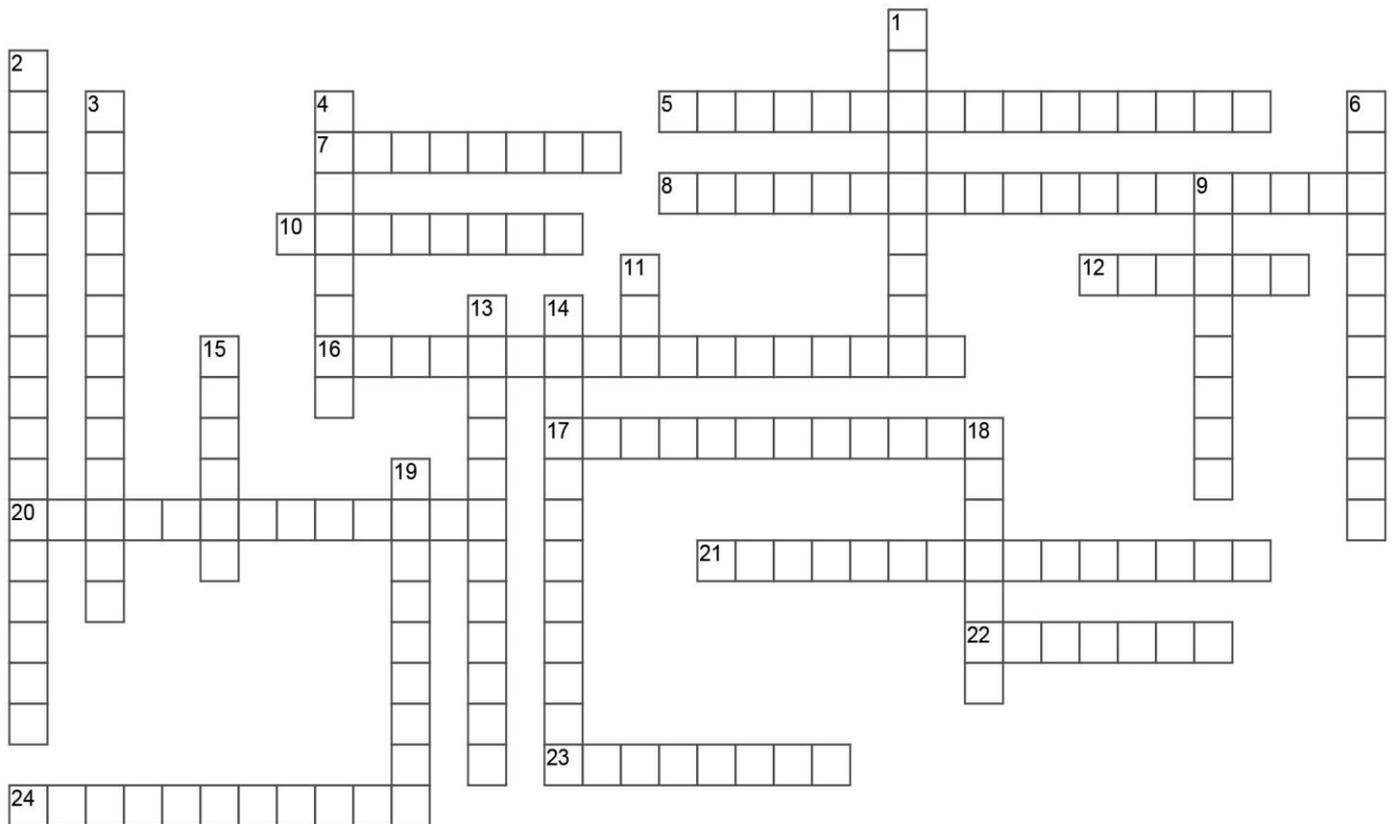
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WORD GAMES



80s Movies Crossword

Name the movies the actors starred in!



ACROSS

5. Robin Wright
7. Michael J. Fox
8. Barret Oliver
10. Arnold Schwarzenegger
12. Daryl Hannah
16. Kathleen Turner
17. Ralph Macchio
20. Brooke Shields
21. Christopher Lloyd
22. Steve Martin
23. Zach Galligan
24. Michael Keaton

DOWN

1. Andrew McCarthy
2. Meg Ryan
3. Kim Cattrall
4. Carrie Fisher
6. John Cusack
9. Al Pacino
11. Tom Hanks
13. Harrison Ford
14. Patrick Swayze
15. Tom Cruise
18. Bruce Willis
19. Kevin Bacon

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