

That Nerd Show



WEEKLY NEWS



MAY 2 / MAY 9, 2021

VOL.5

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



"A GAME CHANGER"

MLB THE SHOW ON

XBOX AND
XBOX GAME
PASS



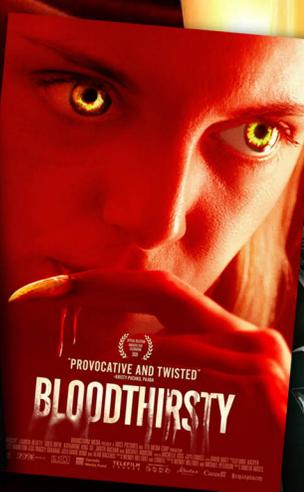
A MESSAGE
FROM YOUR

SQUAD LEADER
*THE GREATNESS OF
ZOMBIE ARMY 4*

WHO GIVES A F#%K ABOUT THE OSCARS!

WHEN THE OSCARS GET IT WRONG & THE MOST UNDESERVING WINS IN OSCAR HISTORY

BY **MARCUS BLAKE, ALEX MOORE, AND CHLOE JAMES**



**MORTAL KOMBAT
BLOODTHIRSTY
AND STOWAWAY
MOVIE REVIEWS**

PLUS

OTHER REVIEWS
FROM OUR STAFF

**WHAT YOU SHOULD
BINGE-WATCH**



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MARVEL STUDIOS

JULY 9

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Who Gives a F@#k About the Oscars! <i>by Marcus Blake, Alex Moore, and Chloe James</i>	Pg. 4
Film and TV News	Pg. 9
Mortal Kombat Review <i>by Alex Moore</i>	Pg. 16
Bloodthirsty Review <i>by Violet Ravotti</i>	Pg. 17
“Stowaway” Review <i>by Marcus Blake</i>	Pg. 18
Concrete Cowboy Review <i>by Julie Jones</i>	Pg. 19
Falcon and the Winter Soldier Season 1 Review <i>by Chloe James</i>	Pg. 22
My Hero Academy Season 5 Review...So Far <i>by Aclairic Ambrosio</i>	Pg. 23
“The One” Review <i>by Danielle Butler</i>	Pg. 24
Gaming News	Pg. 27
“MLB the Show 21” Review <i>by Marcus Blake</i>	Pg. 31
PlayStation Plus Free Games April 2021	Pg. 32
XBOX Free Games with Gold for May 2021	Pg. 34
A message from the Squad Leader <i>by K. Scott Cooper</i>	Pg. 38
Comic Book News	Pg. 39
The Nerd Opinion	Pg. 47
Behold! A Godzilla Trilogy in the 21 st Century <i>by Alex Moore</i>	Pg. 49
XBOX is Finally #1 <i>by Marcus Blake</i>	Pg. 51
I Thought This Movie was Supposed to Be Funny <i>by Allison Costa</i>	Pg. 52
Music Stuff	Pg. 55
It Still Snows in April : Remembering Prince <i>by Chad Womack</i>	Pg. 57
Cosplay - Featured: DFW Wonder Woman	Pg. 61
DFW Wonder Woman Cosplay and Interview	Pg. 62
Science News	Pg. 65
Storytellers	Pg. 73
The Men in White Coats <i>by Clint Stutts</i>	Pg. 75
Magnolia Desert (Poem) <i>by Robin McNamara</i>	Pg. 78
Word Games	Pg. 79
The Mandalorian Crossword Puzzle	Pg. 81



WHO GIVES A F@#\$ ABOUT THE OSCARS!

WHEN THE OSCARS GET IT WRONG AND THE MOST UNDERSERVING WINS IN OSCAR HISTORY

By Marcus Blake , Alex Moore, and Chloe James



Who gives a F@#\$ about the Oscars anymore! Seriously, are they really the perfect metric for judging the best films that come out of Hollywood every year? How many controversies have there been with the Oscars where a movie, an actor, or director who won, didn't deserve to win?! It seems like every year there's a ridiculous controversy with the Oscars, but it's the "All-Star Award Show" in Hollywood so we put up with it and it still garnishes way too much attention. They feel that because of their title as "artists" that they are validated on which films are good and which aren't good enough. Isn't it really the audience who should determine which movies are the best every year? Who deserves a best actor award? Or the best director award? How are we supposed to believe that this is logical validation for what's good when studios and distributors lobby for their film like it's some kind of political campaign?! The truth is, and this may shock some of you, but the Oscars don't always get it right. In fact, most of the time they don't get it right. So, with the 2021 Oscars in the books we take a look at some of the biggest controversies in Oscar history were they blatantly got it wrong and then ask you if you should trust the Oscars anymore. I mean, it's cool to say that you're an Oscar winner, but hey, haven't we all gotten a gold star once when we were in school that we didn't really deserve, but that gave us the validation we needed to know that we did a good job? Frankly, winning an Oscar is only good enough to get actors more

work and sometimes it can't even do that. We at "That Nerd Show" take a look at some of the biggest miscarriages of justice when it comes to those who should have won but didn't.

Saving Private Ryan Loses Best Picture to Shakespeare in Love

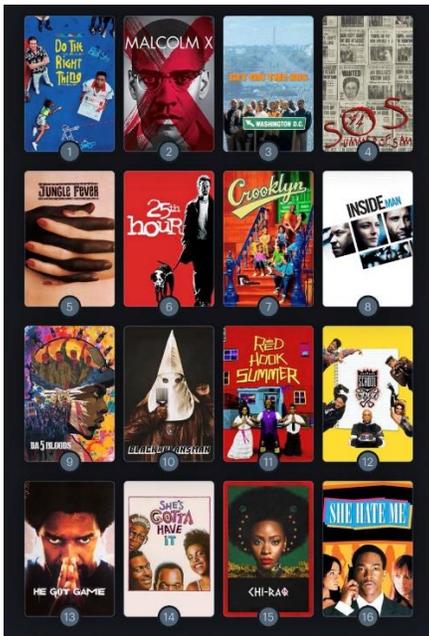
Let's start with films that SHOULD have won Best Picture. The biggest controversy for us goes back to the 1999 Oscars when

"Shakespeare in Love" won best picture over "Saving Private Ryan". First of all, no way in a logical world is Shakespeare in Love anywhere near as good of a movie as Saving Private Ryan. The Steven Spielberg-directed war film starring Tom Hanks was a shoo-in to win many awards especially the coveted Best Picture award. Not only is it one of the best war films ever made (and the first 24 minutes the most intense!) that we have never seen anything like that on film even to this day. This was a movie that made World War II veterans cry for the emotionality. Does anybody really remember Shakespeare in Love? Any memorable lines from the film? It's not even that funny nor is the concept even that original. A woman dressing up as a man to be an actor or some other job that was only reserved for men. We've seen that old gag before and in better films with more emotion. How about Yentl with Barbara Streisand? And even though Dustin Hoffman was a man dressing up as a woman the juxtaposition of that film is still funnier and a better story than Shakespeare in Love. Saving Private Ryan didn't even get any bad reviews and it inspired Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg to



produce two Great World War II miniseries "The Band of Brothers" and the "Pacific" on HBO. The story of why Shakespeare in Love won Best Picture truly shows how controversial the Academy Awards really are and how unfair they can be when it comes to those who vote on the winners. Especially with how easily they can be influenced or bribed through Oscar campaigns while listening to whispers and rumors about the competition. That's essentially what Harvey Weinstein really did to make sure his film won. You think political campaigns are bad with shameful ads that distort the truth, Harvey Weinstein defined what a grotesque Oscar campaign can be to ensure that certain films win and if that doesn't work then you can resort to mudslinging and innuendos about your competition. Harvey Weinstein spread a lot of false rumors about Steven Spielberg that turned off a lot of voters. Is that fair? Is that how films should be judged? Because when it comes to awards, shouldn't someone or something win on its own merit because it truly is the best and not win because of some erroneous influence buy a studio who can't play fair? Yeah, that might be asking too much, but that's essentially what happened when it came to an Oscar campaign for Shakespeare in Love. I've seen Chicago and New York politics be more honest than what the Weinstein film company did to ensure a win for their crappy movie. And if we really look back at these two films, which one do you remember more or have watched more than once? Of course, it's Saving Private Ryan because it's one of the best films ever made and Steven Spielberg generally makes great films. Every one of his films are emotional and inspiring no matter the subject matter. While plenty of egregious Oscar controversies go way back before 1999, this is really the first time in the modern era where we started to realize that we shouldn't care about the Oscars because it's not the perfect metric for determining greatness in films and filmmakers.

Spike Lee vs. the Academy for Motion Picture Arts and Sciences



This isn't the first time that undue influence or what we commonly referred to as the "popularity contest" with the awards have determined who should win. Sometimes voters just don't like a director, even if their films are generally better than the competition. A common phrase that goes around every year regarding films is "Oscar bait." Does it check all the boxes? Especially when it comes to the right political views, the Oscars try to show how diverse they can be and that they're really in touch with what's really going on in the world. That's why, sometimes, politically-charged films will win Best Picture or the Academy will pick a film that they think perfectly touches on the political issue of the day. Let's take race relations for example. It seems like every few years there is a film that deals with race relations or reminds us of how humanity can be evil. How many times do we get a movie about slavery that reminds moviegoers that slavery is bad and that there is still racism in the world. For example it was obvious that "12 Years a Slave" was going to win in 2014 and Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom was largely ignored when it came to nominations because it was another movie about Nelson Mandela or as Ben Child with "The Guardian" commented, "12 Years a Slave sucked up all the guilt about black people that year." However, when you're dealing with movies about race relations there are two different times that the Academy Awards

have blatantly got it wrong and ignored the better filmmaker, Spike Lee. What does he have to do for one of his films to finally win Best Picture?? Not that he gets nominated every time he makes a movie like Steven Spielberg, but in 1990 he lost out on the Best Picture award for his film "Do the Right Thing", when "Driving Miss Daisy" won. Driving Miss Daisy maybe a good film and have superb acting by Morgan Freeman and Jessica Tandy, but Do the Right Thing is clearly the better film with its in your face complexities of race and the human condition when a neighborhood filled with different races is a powder keg about to explode on one of the hottest days in New York City. Showing us the true nature of tolerance and misunderstanding in race relations, not some film about a black driver and old southern white lady who become friends that don't really live in the same world. Do the Right Thing showed an honest portrayal of race relations in the neighborhood it was set in that can be seen in every major city in America. But I guess the academy voters weren't willing to accept that kind of raw, honest storytelling because it wasn't a feel-good film. Let's circle back 29 years later when there are two films that deal with race relations up for Best Picture, Green Book about a white driver who drives a black musician all throughout the South on a concert tour, and then another film (which is also based on a true story) that deals with the only black cop in a police department and how he works with fellow cops to infiltrate the Ku Klux Klan. Both are good films, but Green Book is so inaccurate that it's hard to comprehend what they're really trying to say. On the surface it just looks like yet again a black man needed a white savior. Yep, that's the story you really want to tell about race relations...nothing racist about that! Blackkkklansman deals not only with race relations between a black cop and white cops but also systemic racism within police forces which is a more relevant topic today. And it's also about how the main character was still a proud black man, but also proud to be a cop and despite the differences in race and religion, the cops only goal one was to bring down a fascist and local terrorist organization. If the lesson from both these two movies is to show us that we shouldn't judge someone based on the color of their skin and we should just respect the individual then Blackkkklansman definitely does it better. All while also showing those same ideals in law enforcement, which are more relevant today than some white man driving a black man

around the south and trying to protect him. But I guess Green Book is a little bit more important because the black man was also gay, which is never even really touched on in the film. Two different times when Spike Lee definitely had the better film and should have won for Best Picture, but the Academy Awards voters have a way of shying away from his films because they deem "too honest" and only want films that whitewash these kinds of issues to win. Maybe one day they will allow one of his films to win...after all, they eventually let Martin Scorsese win.

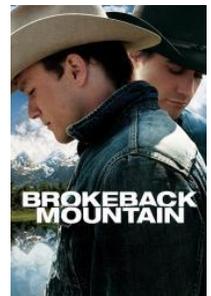
Films That are Too Politically Charged to Win Best Picture

Remember in

2006 when CRASH won Best Picture?

The film that everybody expected to win and won at all the other Award shows

was about two gay cowboys who fell in love. Were the sensibilities of the voters too fragile if they just couldn't vote for a film about two gay cowboys falling in love over a film that sort of scratches the surface about race relations and judging folks based on the color of their skin? If there was ever a more politically charged film that should have won, wouldn't it have been Brokeback Mountain? 15 years later we call a film like this Oscar bait and it would be an obvious choice to win like in 2017 when the movie Moonlight win because it checked all the boxes about a gay black team coming of age story. The great films should be raw and edgy. They should Inspire us and also make us feel guilty. They're usually films that we can't watch over and over but have such a powerful message that it resonates throughout the years like Schindler's List. At least Steven Spielberg won for Best Picture that year, but he's been largely ignored since so many of his films have been nominated but he's never won again. Is Titanic really better than Amistad when it comes to Best Picture at the 1998 Oscars? Was Argo really better than Lincoln in 2013? Then again, they've been ignoring him all of his career like when Out of Africa seem to be a better story than The Color Purple and deserve to win best picture. We know that just doesn't seem possible in a logical world!



The Wrong Lord of the Rings Film Wins



One of the greatest tragedies regarding the Oscars is after recognizing their long-tenured mistakes, the academy gives a movie, director, or an actor an award that they didn't really deserve that year. Rectifying their mistakes can deny other great films a chance to win. For example, nobody can deny how fantastic the Lord of the Rings movies were. 20 years later they're still ahead of their time when it comes to filmmaking. For Peter Jackson to pull off such a monumental task of filming out J.R.R. Tolkien's audacious trilogy is worthy of any award. But maybe the greatest tragedy of it all is that the academy failed to recognize the Fellowship of the Ring as best picture in 2002. It was easily the best film of 2001, but yet *A Beautiful Mind*, about a great mathematician suffering from mental illness, won Best Picture. Not even an original story. Fast forward 2 years and it's like the academy decides to fix their mistake by giving *Return of the King* Best Picture. Of course, it's worthy of the Best Picture award, but it wasn't the best movie of that trilogy and it wasn't even the best movie of 2003. *Fellowship of the Ring* should have been the easy choice 2 years before, but in 2003 you had movies like *Mystic River* and *Master and Commander* that in a lot of ways were the better films. If the academy wanted to truly recognize *Lord of the Rings* (and it should have) then it should have given the entire Trilogy a special award for groundbreaking filmmaking. Why? Because all three films are Best Picture caliber films and the trilogy should be recognized as a whole.

Martin Scorsese Finally Wins, But for the Wrong Film!

Another shining example is how Martin Scorsese could never win an Oscar for best director and his films couldn't win best picture either. It seemed like for over 30 years he was constantly being snubbed. At the 1981 Oscars, *Raging Bull* should have been a shoo-in for best picture and Scorsese

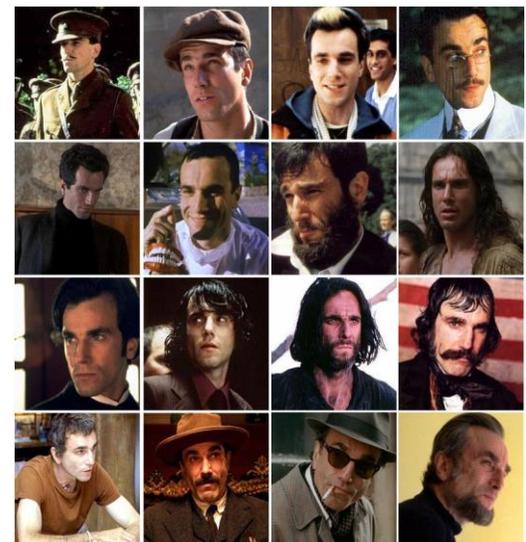


should have easily gotten the award for best director. *Raging Bull* is recognized as one of the greatest sports movies ever made as well as one of the most honest portrayals of the human condition when it comes to the ups and downs of an athlete's life. But the Best Picture award went to *Ordinary People* and the Best Director award went to Robert Redford. Nobody denies that he's not worthy of those awards, but for that movie...no, he's directed better films. It wasn't the first time that we had seen a movie about a dysfunctional family and a kid in therapy trying to deal with the weight of the world, we've seen better films that touch on the same subject. But when the academy decided to finally award Martin Scorsese with the Best Director award, it was for one of his lesser films called *The Departed*. To add injury to insult that movie even won the academy award for original screenplay, which was far from the truth considering *The Departed* is just a remake of a Korean film from 4 years before called *Internal Affairs*. It's great that Martin Scorsese finally won, but it's a little too late to fix the mistake of how the Academy never recognized his genius in filmmaking until 2006. If they really wanted to recognize him then just give him an honorary Academy Award like they've done so many times before with actors or directors who have never won but should have.

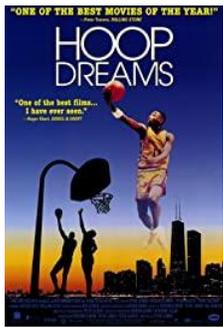
Daniel Day-Lewis Should Have Won More Best Actor Awards

Of course, you can always make a case for Daniel Day-Lewis winning the award for Best Actor when he shouldn't have. Yeah, that's a

little hard to say because pretty much anytime he takes on a role, it's worthy of the Best Actor Award because of the way he immerses himself into that character. And while I agree that his portrayal of Lincoln in 2012 is definitely worthy of the best actor award, one of the biggest mistakes the Academy Awards ever made was not giving him the award in 2003 for playing Bill the Butcher in *Gangs of New York*. He should have just won that year like all other years. But 2003 was another year of feeling guilty about the Holocaust so the Academy Award had to recognize *The Pianist*. We're not saying it's not a great movie and that Adrien Brody wasn't great in his role and deserved the Best Actor award, but was it really any better than Daniel Day-Lewis as Bill the Butcher in *Gangs of New York*? Roman Polanski even won the Best Director award for that film. A director so renowned in Hollywood he couldn't even come to Los Angeles to accept the award or he would be arrested for statutory rape. And of course it was another year where Martin Scorsese got snubbed for his great epic about how gangs and corrupt politics truly ruled New York and shaped it what it would become in the 19th century. The story of immigrants and nationalists and how they fought to carve out a piece of home for themselves in the underbelly of New York City while the rich only got richer and stayed out of the Civil War by buying themselves out of the Civil War draft. It's one of the most honest and dramatic stories how about New York that has ever been made. But I guess you can't give Daniel Day-Lewis and Academy Award for basically playing a bad guy. Oh wait, they did for a film called *There Will Be Blood*!



Hoop Dreams in 1994 Doesn't Even Get Nominated for an Academy Award



1994, *Hoop Dreams*, a feature-length documentary, which garnered widespread acclaim and rare appeal to a wider, prospective audience, is denied a nomination for Best Documentary. Gene Siskel and Roger

Ebert, among others in the press at the time, led a public outcry to discover why this movie was snubbed in the way that it was. Further investigation seemed to show that five, specific projects were given the highest marks, while the rest were given the lowest available marks, from a certain segment of voters. The rest of the voters consistently gave the highest mark to one, specific film, but due to the section of voters that purposefully gave it the lowest marks. Yes, I am still talking about *Hoop Dreams*, why! Because it's one of those great films that got the "shaft" by the Academy. However, what it did do was inspire a new generation of documentaries and change how documentaries were shot to make them feel more personal and authentic. The Academy Awards may not have recognized *Hoop Dreams* as being a great film, but history has and history is more credible.

Kim Basinger wins Best Supporting Actress over Julianne Moore.

1997, *Kim Basinger*, who was nominated for Best Supporting Actress in her role of Lynn Bracken of the movie *L.A. Confidential*, was victorious over Julianne Moore for her performance as Amber Waves in *Boogie Nights*. Why when Julianne Moore, clearly she had the better performance even if it was a film about the porn industry. All I can surmise is that *L.A. Confidential* was more of a classic type of American cinema, while *Boogie Nights* was edgy and fresh in its day...maybe too edgy for the voters. Basinger was also more-experienced and usually considered



more appealing, compared to Moore, as well. Reputations and "paying dues" have historically mattered, significantly, in the voting process around Hollywood. But should that really matter. At least Julianne Moore did win an Oscar, eventually, though it came years on down the road and with a lesser film compared to *Boogie Nights*.

Clint Eastwood Mistakenly Wins the Best Director Award.



2004, Clint Eastwood, nominated for the eventual Best Picture, *Million Dollar Baby*, wins over Alexander Payne, nominated in *Sideways*, for the category of Best Director. Who doesn't like Clint Eastwood? He is

probably one of the greatest filmmakers of all time. However, he had won two Academy Awards prior to this year and took home a third when *Million Dollar Baby* won the ultimate award of the evening. For those that would defend this choice by concluding that it is typical for the winner of Best Picture to also win Best Director, that was the case for nearly a decade, up until 1998, but after that, the two awards had been "broken up" an average of every other year. In other words, it was a new trend; one that had taken us by surprise in the recent past, but no longer, by 2004. However, Payne was a relative newcomer, in terms of being a moviemaker and he had also won an Oscar earlier in the evening for Best Screenplay. Still, while there is no issue with *Million Dollar Baby* winning Best Picture, when it comes to Best Director on that particular occasion, *Sideways* was more-deserving for many reasons. It was better written. The story was more complex than just your typical feel-good sports movie that easily inspires audiences. The humor was more honest and natural. It's hard to direct a film like that and if one can achieve success with film like *Sideways* then they deserve to win the Best Director Award.

City of Stars" (La La Land) beating "How Far I'll Go (Moana) for Best Original Song We may put a little too much importance on the "Best Original Song" Oscar category. But for people who take a lot of their contextual cues from music in media, this category may as well be "Best Director". We can't remember a bigger upset than in 2017 when *La La Land's*

"City of Stars" beat *Moana's* "How Far I'll Go". This may be a bit of unfair bias considering how much we love animation and Disney, but we are big fans of live action musicals...and *La La*



Land just wasn't it for us. We can forgive and still love many musicals without much plot substance...if they have catchy songs. But "City of Stars" is just slow, boring, featuring the mediocre crooning of Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone. It didn't even work as a "gentle, blossoming love theme" for me. In contrast, "How Far I'll Go" is beautiful, epic, with a great build-up. It's not like the immensely talented Lin-Manuel Miranda won't get his Oscar one day. We're positive that he will one day since *In the Heights* is coming out in 2021

Doug Jones not even being nominated for his performance in Shape of Water



We are always incredibly happy when a "favorite film of the year" actually wins the "Best Motion Picture" category. Especially when it's a Sci-fi/Fantasy type of film like 2017's *Shape of Water*. If the

Academy is finally acknowledging films like this, then why is it so hard to nominate the actors who were responsible for so much of why they are so magical? Actor Doug Jones, who is best known for his portrayals as non-human, creature characters, was absolutely brilliant as the "Amphibian Man" in *Shape of Water*. Yet, he didn't even get nominated for Best Supporting Actor, (though one could say, he played the lead role in the film.) Why is it so difficult for the Academy to recognize the hard work of actors who are heavily costumed or even, *gasp* motion captured? Just because you aren't portraying a human, and we can't see your human face, doesn't make your performance any less brilliant.

Howl's Moving Castle losing to Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit for "Best Animated Feature"



This may be the topic in which our bias, especially for legendary animation director Hayao Miyazaki may affect our judgment. We have nothing against stop motion/claymation, nor the Wallace and Gromit franchise. *Curse of the Were-Rabbit* was a pretty cute, decent film. Just comparing it to the epic, detailed, and gorgeous *Howl's Moving Castle*, and it comes up a bit short. We do realize that a few years prior, Miyazaki won for *Spirited Away*, but it's not like the Academy hasn't given awards to the same person consecutive years in a row. Our only guess is that for some, *Howl's Moving Castle* may be less approachable, as it's longer and difficult to follow for younger children and has classic Miyazaki slower pacing.

Peter Sellers Not Winning for his Performances in *Dr. Strangelove*



This one is definitely nothing to do with bias this time. The "Best Actor" award for 1965 went to Rex Harrison for his performance in *My Fair Lady*. We can confidently say *My Fair Lady*

was one of our favorite movies as musical fans. Harrison was very entertaining in his portrayal of Professor Higgins. But as an adult, We can't help but to appreciate the subtle brilliance of Peter Sellers, especially while playing 3 very different characters in *Dr. Strangelove*. This Stanley Kubrick film was definitely ahead of its time, and owes much of

it's dark, ironic comedy to the efforts of Sellers. One has to wonder who truly inspired Eddie Murphy to play all those characters in *Coming to America*. Sadly Peter Sellers never won an Oscar and like Peter O'Toole, that is one of the greatest tragedies regarding the Oscars. How does Peter Sellers never win an Oscar is the Oscars are supposed to be fair and unbiased?

Star Wars Loses to Annie Hall for Best Picture... WTF!

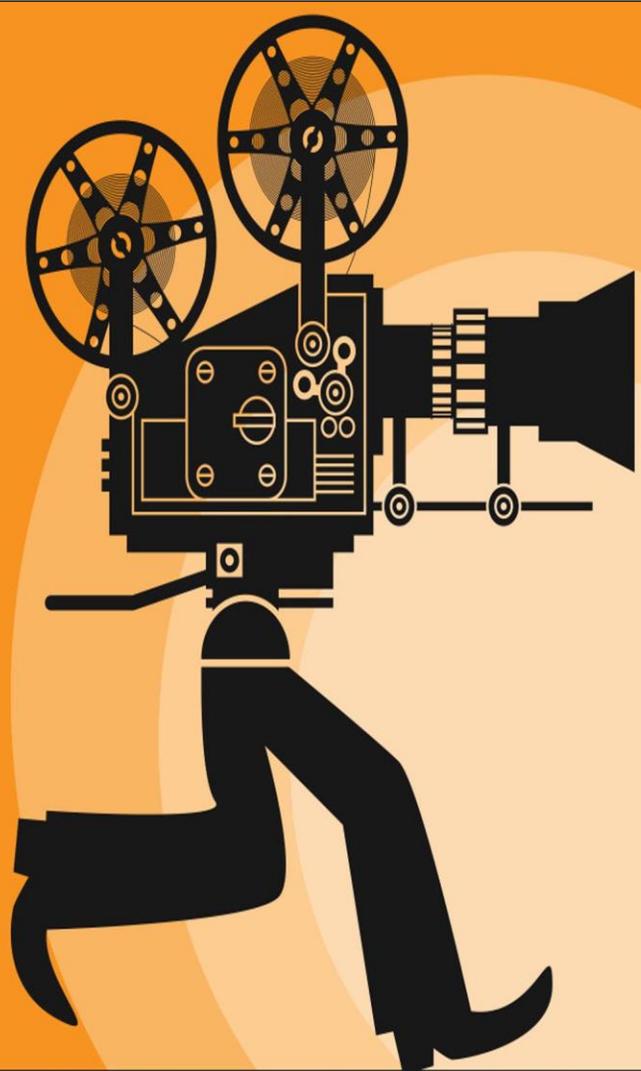
There has always been one film that has suffered the greatest tragedy for nerds when it comes to the Academy Award or as we like to call the, greatest WTF moment in Oscar history! It's a science fiction film like so many other science fiction films that are more worthy of the Best Picture award, but the Academy Awards has never recognized a science fiction film as Best Picture. At least they get nominated and recognized, but it's more like a consolation prize where they're just trying to fill a slot for nominees. The film I'm talking about is *Star Wars*, the original *Star Wars* film that came out in 1977 and was up for Best Picture, but lost to a film that nobody really remembers and you definitely can't quote from like *Star Wars*. It certainly doesn't have as many memorable lines as *Star Wars*, if it has any at all. That's right, *Star Wars* lost to *Annie Hall* by Woody Allen. *Annie Hall* f@#\$ing *Hall*. In fact, any movie from the Academy Awards that year should have won best picture over *Annie Hall*. *The Goodbye Girl*, *Julia*, *The Turning Point*, and even *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* would have been how much better choice. The only people that like *Annie Hall* are pretentious film snobs who think they understand what great films are, but never truly understand that even big Hollywood blockbusters or explosion fueled action films have their place and can be just as meaningful. But *Annie Hall* is not even that funny or that original. It's a film about a comedian and his complicated relationship with a girl that he can never get in real life, but it's so original because Woody Allen



breaks the fourth wall with his witty commentary. It wasn't even the first time that was ever done, and many other comedians have done it better in their movies or shows like Garry Shandling. *Annie Hall* winning best picture is snobbery at its best with the Academy Awards who just can't recognize that a science fiction blockbuster might be the better film, never mind that is just a classic myth story told in a new format. It's the same kind of mythical story that Hollywood has seen in films like *Clash of the Titans* or *Ben-Hur* or the Ten Commandments. But over 40 years later most people can't tell you anything about *Annie Hall*, however, *Star Wars* has made one of the greatest impacts in filmmaking history.

Star Wars changed filmmaking, not only from the ability to tell a great story with the use of props and models and give us these Great Space Battles. But also the fact that it became a revival in the study of mythology by the general public. People can understand that this was a classic myth being told in a new way, and that the elements of those kinds of stories essentially these great morality tales that Hollywood generally loves in film from westerns to war films. The greatest stories are morality tales and usually make the best movies. Can *Annie Hall* claim that? Has that movie inspired more sequels and stories in a greater universe or a genre that everybody has seen or been a part of? No, of course not. How is *Star Wars* not Best Picture over *Annie Hall*?! Seriously, probably the greatest tragedy for nerds when it comes to the Academy Awards. So yeah, who gives a f*** about the Oscars! Instead of letting a few thousand Academy members vote on the winners, maybe it's time that world decides who the real winners are. Let everybody vote. One bog online or phone in vote for the Oscar nominees and winners. If every American can decide who plays in Major League Baseball's All-Star game by voting online as if it's a national election, then we can vote for the Oscars. And it's not like anyone can't call a phone number and vote for the contestants in *Dancing with the Stars*. We can do the same for the Oscars...it's not that hard! Maybe then, the Oscars will be fair and unbiased, and without controversy. Let the fans decide who the true winners are, their voices should be the only ones who count

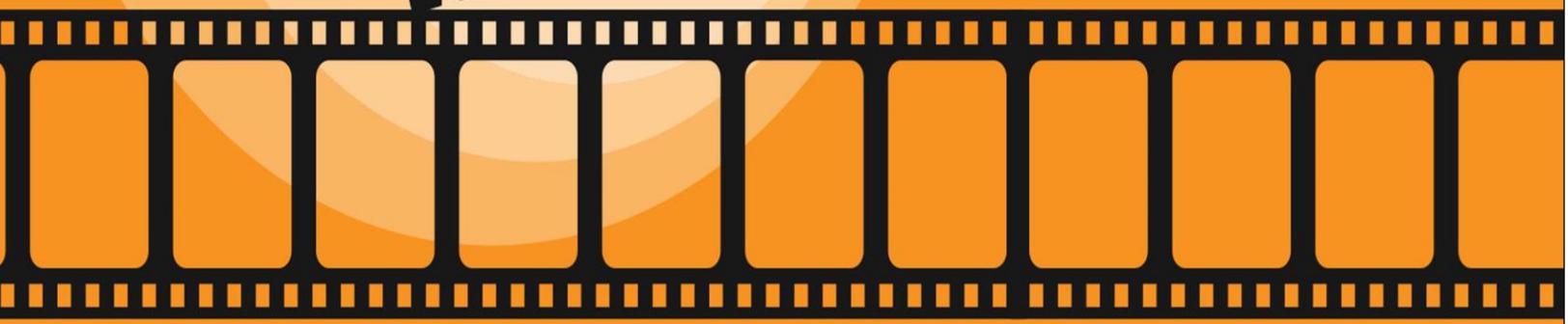




Film

and

TV



What's Happening This Week...

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INDIANA JONES 5 NEWS

Phoebe Waller-Bridge Lands Female Lead In Next Installment Opposite Harrison Ford



Following the confirmation at the Disney Investors Presentation in December that the next film was a go, Lucasfilm and director James Mangold look to have their sights set on Harrison Ford's first new co-star in the next installment of the *Indiana Jones* franchise. Sources tell Deadline that *Fleabag* Emmy winner Phoebe Waller-Bridge is set to co-star opposite Ford in the fifth installment, with

Ford returning as everyone's favorite fedora-wearing, whip-slinging archaeologist. Mangold is taking over directing reins from Steven Spielberg, who still is serving as a producer and is very much involved in various elements of the film. Kathleen Kennedy, Frank Marshall and Simon Emanuel will join Spielberg as producers. John Williams, who has worked on every score in the 40-year-old franchise including its iconic theme, also will return as composer. The hope is to start production this summer, with Mangold meeting with other talent for other roles in preparation for production. Plot details are still vague on what new adventure awaits Jones, as are details behind who Waller-Bridge will play. The film is set to bow on July 29, 2022. Waller-Bridge has had quite run after her TV show *Fleabag* became a

critical darling, eventually sweeping the 2019 Emmys including wins for Best Actress and Best Comedy Series. Since then she has been busy on the TV and film front, serving as an exec producer on the hit BBC show *Killing Eve* as well as serving as a writer on the next James Bond pic *No Time to Die*. She also is set to co-star with Donald Glover in the Amazon series *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*, where she will also serve as an exec producer and writer. This would mark a sort of pseudo-reunion for Waller-Bridge and Lucasfilm, having voiced L3-37 in *Solo: A Star Wars Story*.

Reported by Deadline.com
<https://deadline.com/2021/04/phoebe-waller-bridge-harrison-ford-indiana-jones-5-1234672236/>

'INDIANA JONES 5': Mads Mikkelsen Joins Harrison Ford and Phoebe Waller-Bridge In Sequel



Following the news that Phoebe Waller-Bridge had landed the female lead in the next *Indiana Jones* movie, Lucasfilm has found Harrison Ford's next co-star in Mads Mikkelsen, who is set to join the next installment. James Mangold is taking over directing reins from Steven Spielberg, who

still is serving as a producer and is very much involved in various elements of the film. Kathleen Kennedy, Frank Marshall and Simon Emanuel will join Spielberg as producers. John Williams, who has worked on every score in the 40-year-old franchise including its iconic theme, also will return as composer. The hope is to start production this summer, with Mangold meeting with other talent for other roles in preparation for production. Plot details are still vague on what new adventure awaits Jones, as are details behind who Mikkelsen will play. The film is set to bow on July 29, 2022. The film marks another major franchise Mikkelsen is boarding after coming on to the *Fantastic Beasts* movies; he replaces Johnny Depp as Grindelwald after Depp parted ways with the part earlier this year

following his recent legal troubles. Mikkelsen is also coming off some of the best reviews of his career in the Danish film *Another Round*, which earned a handful of Oscar nominations including Best International Feature and Best Director. At the BAFTAs, where Mikkelsen was nominated for best actor, the film took home the award for Best Film Not in the English Language. Next up for him is the *Riders of Justice*.

Reported by Deadline.com
<https://deadline.com/2021/04/indiana-jones-5-mads-mikkelsen-joins-harrison-ford-and-phoebe-waller-bridge-in-sequel-1234732751>

"THE TOMORROW WAR" STARRING CHRIS PRATT LAUNCHING EXCLUSIVELY WORLDWIDE ON AMAZON PRIME VIDEO ON JULY 2, 2021



Amazon Studios has acquired worldwide rights to Skydance Media's *The Tomorrow War* from director Chris McKay and starring Chris Pratt, who also executive produced. The global sci-fi actioner will launch exclusively on Prime Video in over 240 countries and territories on July 2, 2021. In *The Tomorrow War*, the world is stunned when a group of time travelers arrive from the year 2051 to deliver an urgent message: Thirty years in the future mankind is losing a global war against a deadly alien species. The only hope for survival is for soldiers and civilians from the present to be transported to the future and join the fight. Among those recruited is high school teacher and family man Dan Forester (Pratt). Determined to save the world for his young daughter, Dan teams up with a brilliant scientist (Yvonne Strahovski) and his estranged father (J.K. Simmons) in a desperate quest to rewrite the fate of the planet.

"*The Tomorrow War* will be a global event that will surprise and delight our customers around the world," said Jennifer Salke, Head of Amazon Studios. "Director Chris McKay has brilliantly crafted this unique, action-packed sci-fi escape that will keep audiences on the edge of their seats and tug on their heart strings with its father-daughter storyline. We couldn't be happier to continue our relationship with Chris Pratt – who brings such dynamic star power to the film – along with David Ellison and the Skydance team, as we share this exciting film with fans." "I'm so proud of this incredible cast and crew who worked under challenging circumstances to create a unique, original sci-fi action movie... something that's increasingly rare. Watching this team of actors and artisans effortlessly blend action, horror, comedy, and drama was a dream come true for me ... and I hope will thrill audiences this summer," said director Chris McKay.

"It is fantastic to once again partner with Amazon to release another film from the Skydance canon," said Skydance CEO David Ellison. "Jen and the marketing team have had great success in making film premieres on the Amazon platform must-see events and with Chris Pratt headlining, everything goes up to another level." *The Tomorrow War* also stars Yvonne Strahovski, Betty Gilpin, Sam Richardson, Edwin Hodge, and Academy-

Award winner J.K. Simmons. Directed by Chris McKay and written by Zach Dean, the film was produced by David Ellison, Dana Goldberg, Don Granger, Jules Daly, David Goyer, and Adam Kolbrenner. Executive producers are Rob Cowan, Chris Pratt, Brian Oliver, and Bradley J. Fischer with Samantha Nisenboim serving as co-producer. The movie is from Amazon Studios, Skydance, and Paramount Pictures in association with New Republic Pictures. Pratt recently appeared in the record-breaking *Avengers: End Game* that grossed over \$2.7 billion worldwide, which was a follow up to *Avengers: Infinity War*, grossing more than \$2 billion at the global box office. Pratt also starred in Marvel's *Guardians of the Galaxy* franchise, with the first installment grossing over \$770 million at the global box office in 2014; *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2* trounced every other film that opened in the summer of 2017 by surpassing \$860 million worldwide. Pratt headlined *Jurassic World* – the seventh highest grossing film of all time – in 2015, and he returned to his role as Owen in *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* in June 2018. Recently, Pratt wrapped production on the franchise's third installment, *Jurassic World: Dominion*, slated for release in June 2022.

Netflix And Sony Break Ground With Film Licensing Deal Replacing Starz Pact, Including First Look At New Direct-To-Streaming Titles.



Netflix and Sony Pictures Entertainment have set a significant new licensing deal giving the streaming giant an exclusive window for the studio's theatrical titles starting in 2022. The agreement, which replaces an output arrangement with Lionsgate-owned Starz dating back to 2005, provides Netflix with an 18-month exclusive window for Sony films. Multiple bidders had been angling for the rights for some time, with Netflix emerging the winner. Terms were not officially disclosed, but Netflix prevailed with an offer of \$1 billion over four years, according to sources familiar with the deal. There is a degree of flux in terms of when exactly the Netflix exclusive will kick in on each film given fast-evolving theatrical window strategies. Nevertheless, dozens of top titles are confirmed to stream there exclusively after they

play in theaters and are released on home entertainment platforms. The slate will kick off with tentpoles like *Morbius*, *Uncharted*, *Where the Crawdads Sing* and *Bullet Train*. Two subsequent windows will keep films circulating on Netflix as they reach other platforms across TV and streaming. In addition to the main film lineup, Netflix will also have a first-look deal for any direct-to-streaming titles Sony is contemplating and has committed to making "a number" of those, per the official release, in reality likely just a couple a year and a minority of the studio's overall slate. During Covid-19, the studio opted to sell Tom Hanks movie *Greyhound* to Apple TV+ while theaters in many territories were closed. Under the new deal, Netflix would get the first opportunity to release such projects. The two companies have done similar deals in recent months for films like the Kevin Hart drama *Fatherhood*. The companies have also had an existing relationship via an output deal for Sony Pictures

Animation. The new agreement adds all other labels and genres from the studio. Select library rights are also included. As Sony plans installments of franchises like *Spider-Man*, *Venom*, *Jumanji* and *Bad Boys*, Netflix will be able to gain rights to prior entries. Another high-profile sequel is a followup to Oscar-winning animated title *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*. The pact comes as rival studios like Universal and Fox are considering a shift soon-to-expire output deals with HBO to instead fill their own streaming pipelines. It is a boost for Netflix, which continues to face investor worries that it has lost key draws like Marvel and Pixar films, *Friends* and *The Office*. It also has plenty of upside for Sony, which has no subscription service of its own to feed, certainly from a revenue standpoint.

Reported by Deadline.com

<https://deadline.com/2021/04/netflix-sony-pictures-licensing-deal-streaming-starz-spider-man-1234730124/>

Apple Original Films announce multiple Sundance Award winner **“CODA”** to premiere in theaters and on Apple TV+ on Friday, August 13, 2021!



Apple Original Films announced today that the critically acclaimed, award-winning film “CODA” will debut in theaters and on Apple TV+ on Friday, August 13. Written and directed by Siân Heder (“Tallulah,” “Little America”), “CODA” was presented in the US Dramatic

Competition category at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival and went on to be honored with an unprecedented four awards at the festival: the Special Jury Award for Ensemble Cast, the Directing Award, the Audience Award and the Grand Jury Prize. “CODA” stars Emilia Jones (“Locke & Key”), Eugenio Derbez (“The Casagrandes”), Troy Kotsur (“The Number 23”), Ferdia Walsh-Peelo (“Vikings”), Daniel Durant (“Switched at Birth”), Amy Forsyth (“Beautiful Boy”), Kevin Chapman (“City on a Hill”), and Academy Award winner Marlee Matlin (“Children of a Lesser God”), who will be serving as a presenter at the upcoming 93rd Academy Awards ceremony on Sunday, April 25. “CODA” is produced by Vendome Pictures and Pathé, with Philippe Rousselet, Fabrice Gianfermi, Patrick Wachsberger and Jérôme Seydoux serving as producers, and Ardavan Safaee and Sarah Borch-Jacobsen as executive producers. Seventeen-year-old Ruby (Emilia Jones) is the sole hearing member of a deaf family – a CODA, child of deaf adults. Her life revolves around acting as interpreter for her parents (Marlee Matlin, Troy Kotsur) and working on the family’s struggling fishing boat every day before school with her father and older brother (Daniel Durant). But when Ruby joins her high school’s choir club, she discovers a gift for singing and soon finds herself drawn to her duet partner Miles (Ferdia Walsh-Peelo). Encouraged by her enthusiastic, tough-love choirmaster (Eugenio Derbez) to apply to a prestigious music school, Ruby finds herself torn between the obligations she feels to her family and the pursuit of her own dreams.

Apple TV+ is home to award-winning and critically acclaimed Apple Original films “On The Rocks,” from Academy Award winner Sofia Coppola, and starring Rashida Jones and Bill Murray; Oscar, BAFTA, People’s Choice and Critics Choice Super Award-nominated “Greyhound” written by and starring Tom Hanks; Academy Award-nominated, AFI Fest winning animated film

“Wolfwalkers”; the Sundance Film Festival Grand Jury Prize winner “Boys State, which also won two Critics Choice Documentary Awards and the SXSW Louis Black “Lone Star” Award; NAACP Image Award-winner “The Banker,” a film tackling racial injustice, starring Anthony Mackie and Samuel L. Jackson; the Cinema for Peace Award-winning; Anthony and Joe Russo’s new film “Cherry,” starring Tom Holland and Ciara Bravo; “Palmer” starring Justin Timberlake, directed by Fisher Stevens; global hit film “Billie Eilish: The World’s A Little Blurry” from director R.J. Cutler; and Critics Choice Documentary Award-nominated “The Elephant Queen”; and Werner Herzog’s Critics Choice Documentary Award-nominee “Fireball: Visitors from Darker Worlds.” Apple TV+ is available on the Apple TV app in over 100 countries and regions, on over 1 billion screens, including iPhone, iPad, Apple TV, iPod touch, Mac, select Samsung, LG, Sony and VIZIO smart TVs, Amazon Fire TV and Roku devices, Chromecast with Google TV, PlayStation and Xbox consoles, and at tv.apple.com, for \$4.99 per month with a seven-day free trial. For a limited time, customers who purchase a new iPhone, iPad, Apple TV, Mac or iPod touch can enjoy one year of Apple TV+ for free. This special offer is good for three months after the first activation of the eligible device.

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‘47 Ronin’ Sequel Sets ‘Lucifer’**s** Aimee Garcia & NYT Bestselling Author AJ Mendez As Scribes



Lucifer actress Aimee Garcia and *New York Times* bestselling author AJ Mendez have been brought on to pen the upcoming untitled *47 Ronin* sequel for Universal 1440 Entertainment. The action-fantasy pic, which is being directed by *Mulan*’s Ron Yuan as we first told you, is the follow to the 2013 Universal Keanu Reeves movie which grossed over \$151M WW. The original film was directed by Carl Rinsch and

written by Chris Morgan and Hossein Amini from a story conceived by Morgan and Walter Hamada. Also starring in that pic were HiroYuki Sanada, Tadanobu Asano, Rinko Kikuchi and Ko Shibasaki. Based on *Chūshingura*, *47 Ronin* tells a fictionalized account of the titular 47 rōnin, a real-life group of samurai in the 18th century who set out to avenge the death of their master who was killed by a merciless shogun. “AJ and I are excited to write a diverse and inclusive action film,” said Garcia. “Director Ron Yuan’s vision to blend martial arts, horror, cyber-punk and action was inspiring and we’d like to thank the team at 1440 for being so supportive.”

“As creators of color, we’re honored to be part of a modern, multicultural story with powerful female leads,” said Mendez. Garcia currently stars on Netflix’s *Lucifer*, new episodes of which are dropping on May 28, and she’ll also star in

Marvel’s *MODOK*, premiering on Hulu May 21. Mendez’s pilot script *Home* landed on The Black List’s inaugural Latinx TV List in 2020. She is a former championship wrestler with the WWE. Garcia and Mendez are the co-authors of the comic book series *Glow*, based on the Netflix property, and *Dungeons and Dragons* for IDW Publishing, as well as *Wonder Woman* for DC Comics coming out in July. The duo recently launched Scrapy Heart Productions to create diverse stories with universal themes across all media. Currently, Scrapy Heart is adapting *Crazy Is My Superpower* based on Mendez’s bestselling memoir.

Reported by Deadline.com

<https://deadline.com/2021/04/aimee-garcia-aj-mendez-47-ronin-sequel-writers-1234740406/>

Michael Keaton Confirmed to Return as **BATMAN** in *The Flash* Movie



The actor will reprise the superhero role next to Ezra Miller in director Andy Muschietti's upcoming *Flash* film. It's official. Michael Keaton, who played the Dark Knight in Tim Burton's era of Batman movies, will return to don the cape and cowl again in the upcoming *Flash* movie.

The Flash director Andy Muschietti stated in August that he had big plans with a "substantial" role for Keaton's Batman, even though Ben Affleck is also set to reprise his Caped Crusader after debuting in Zack Snyder's *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*. But Keaton's casting seemed in doubt when he told *Deadline* he's keeping tabs on the

COVID-19 situation. But, no, EW can confirm the actor never left the project.

The Flash takes inspiration from the *Flashpoint* arc from DC Comics, which sees the Scarlet Speedster running so fast using the speed force that he actually teleports to different parallel realities. It's a concept teased in Snyder's *Batman v Superman* and the recently released Snyder Cut of *Justice League* on HBO Max. That explains the multiple Batmen. Muschietti, who previously directed *It* and *It Chapter Two* for Warner Bros., announced this week that *The Flash* is starting production. He also shared the film's official logo treatment, which sees various lighting streaks jetting off of the Flash symbol — likely a nod to the parallel dimensions

Barry Allen (Ezra Miller) will traverse. The last time Keaton portrayed Batman was nearly 29 years ago in 1992's *Batman Returns*, which featured Michelle Pfeiffer as Catwoman and Danny DeVito as Penguin. In 2014, Keaton starred in *Birdman* about an actor known for playing a popular superhero in film trying to making a comeback on the stage. Art (somewhat) imitating life. *The Flash* will also feature *Young and the Restless* Daytime Emmy nominee Sasha Calle as Supergirl, making the actress the first Latina to portray the character.

Reported by EW.com .

<https://ew.com/movies/michael-keaton-batman-the-flash-movie/>



THE 93RD ACADEMY AWARDS: 2021 Oscars Winners!



Best Picture

Nomadland
Frances McDormand, Peter Spears, Mollye Asher, Dan Janvey and Chloé Zhao, Producers

Best Actor

Anthony Hopkins
The Father

Best Actress

Frances McDormand
Nomadland

Music (Original Song)

"Fight For You" from Judas and the Black Messiah
Music by H.E.R. and Dernst Emile II; Lyric by H.E.R. and Tiara Thomas

Music (Original Score)

Soul
Trent Reznor, Atticus Ross and Jon Batiste

Film Editing

Sound of Metal
Mikkel E. G. Nielsen

Cinematography

Mank
Erik Messerschmidt

Production Design

Mank
Production Design: Donald Graham Burt; Set Decoration: Jan Pascale

Actress in a Supporting Role

Yuh-Jung Youn
Minari

Visual Effects

Tenet
Andrew Jackson, David Lee, Andrew Lockley and Scott Fisher

Documentary Feature

My Octopus Teacher
Pippa Ehrlich, James Reed and Craig Foster

Documentary Short Subject

Colette
Anthony Giacchino and Alice Doyard

Animated Feature Film

Soul
Pete Docter and Dana Murray

Animated Short Film

If Anything Happens I Love You
Will McCormack and Michael Govier

Live Action Short Film

Two Distant Strangers
Travon Free and Martin Desmond Roe

Sound

Sound of Metal
Nicolas Becker, Jaime Baksht, Michelle Couttolenc, Carlos Cortés and Phillip Bladh

Directing

Nomadland
Chloé Zhao

Costume Design

Ma Rainey's Black Bottom
Ann Roth

Makeup and Hairstyling

Ma Rainey's Black Bottom
Sergio Lopez-Rivera, Mia Neal and Jamika Wilson

Actor in a Supporting Role

Daniel Kaluuya
Judas and the Black Messiah

International Feature Film

Another Round
Denmark

Writing (Adapted Screenplay)

The Father
Screenplay by Christopher Hampton and Florian Zeller

Writing (Original Screenplay)

Promising Young Woman
Written by Emerald Fennell

“MORTAL KOMBAT!...” is Back on the Big Screen

Review by Alex Moore



Oh, the '90s! For some of us, they were the “good ole days,” but as the great Billy Joel once sang, “the good ole days weren’t always good,” and in the simplest terms imaginable, that includes the entertainment industry. As a child of the '90s, so to speak, I was enamored with video games, as many of my other peers were, as well. It was never just about having the latest and greatest of technology for your home consoles; it was also about keeping up with the latest and greatest at the local arcades. At the time, hand-to-hand fighting games were in vogue and virtually every company with a pulse was trying to take advantage of it. While ‘Street Fighter II’ is probably considered by most as not only the best of this sub-genre of arcade gaming, but also the one that revolutionized it, another, similar outfit soon staked a similar claim: ‘Mortal Kombat’ (MK). Yes, it is true that the popularity of MK led to the eventual creation of the ESRB, but it did not go away, either, as a result of its controversy. In fact, just three years after the release of the original arcade, a feature-length, live-action movie was presented to prospective filmgoers (and fans of all ages). At the time, I really enjoyed it, as did many others, including the immortal Gene Siskel, of all hardened critics. However, while some had complained of the graphic nature of the arcade, itself, ironically it was the fans of that game who now complained of the LACK of graphic violence within this movie. Over the years, some still enjoy this film for its nostalgic value and “Enter the Dragon-like” storyline, which I happen to concur with, but many still see it as another weak, yet early attempt by movie studios to cash in on the popularity of the gaming industry, which was (and still is) at large.

I wish I knew why anyone waited until 2021 to reboot the storied franchise of MK to the big screen, but either way, I was somehow looking forward to this production, which is a rarity for me, I must say. As always, I did not look into any of the details to see what I might expect and I think that

has really paid off over the years. You might be happy to know that THIS example paid off in a positive way...The opening takes place in Asia during the 15th century. You might not completely understand what is happening, but fear not, you will, shortly. It comes down to two, great warriors: one who is pitted as the antagonist and another who appears to be the protagonist, at least for now, but that all truly comes down to perspective, does it not? Fast-forward to our present day and we are introduced to a seemingly washed-up martial artist combatant by the name of Cole Young (played by Lewis Tan, “Deadpool 2”). He is approached by a man who should look familiar to anyone who knows the MK franchise well: Jax, played by Mehcad Brooks (“A Fall From Grace”). They share at least one, very important thing in common, which leads to their immediate journey toward a very important tournament, though there is not much of an explanation as to why or how, at this point. Eventually, Young meets Sonya Blade, our first of the original arcade characters to appear in the film, who is played by Jessica McNamee (“The Meg”). She then goes on to explain what is at stake for everyone who is involved, but in the same space is the infamous Kano, played by Josh Lawson (“Holly Slept Over”). Now, you have your nucleus ready for the rest of the story...

As the fighters make their way to where they must go to get prepared for what lies ahead, more familiar MK characters come forward: Liu Kang (played by Ludi Lin, “Son of the South”), Kung Lao (played by Max Huang) and Lord Raiden (played by Tadanobu Asano, “Minamata”). Not long after, the presence of the enemies, from the Outworld, try to bring the fight to these supposed under-powered battlers, who are trying to protect this world from the impending destruction of: Sub-Zero (played by Joe Taslim, “The Swordsman”), Mileena (played by Sisi Stringer), Reiko (played by Nathan Jones, “The Scorpion King: Book of Souls”) and Kabal (voiced by Damon Herriman, “Judy and Punch”). They are led, of course, by Shang Tsung (played by Chin Han, “Skyscraper”). Just be ready for a few surprises along the way, too. To me, what makes this reboot excel as an engaging movie is in its storytelling. Instead of getting a campy rendition of a classic martial arts film, we are handed something that resembles the framework of a ‘Marvel’ movie. The key difference is the element of a ‘Star Trek-type’ element involving the discovery of your inner strength or drive, which leads to a unique set of skills and powers. Regardless of what motivated this idea for the film, it worked as a guide through the story, for me, and I had no qualms about whether or not it was faithful to the original source material of this particular franchise.

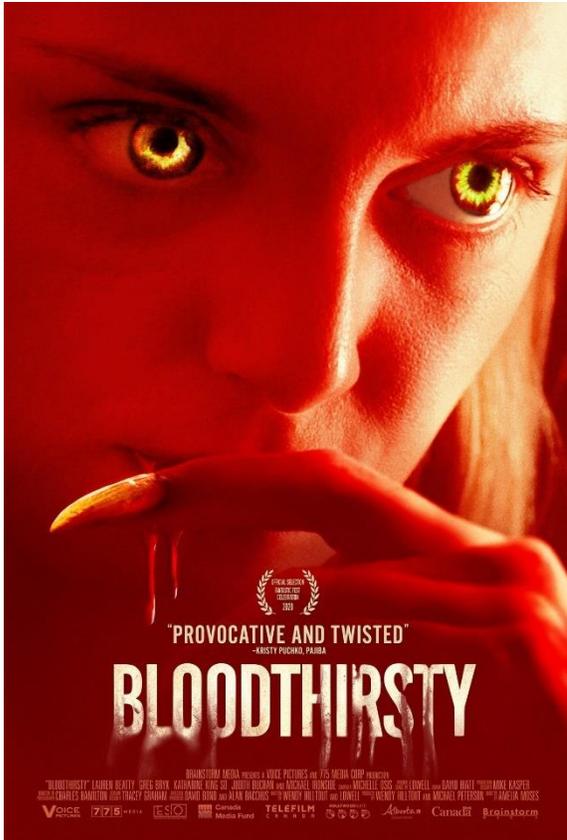
The fight scenes are bloody and full of the requisite gore you would expect, opposed to the restraint we all saw some 26 years ago. However, it is performed in a way that I did not find at all offensive. It was almost comically over-the-top and it was appealing to look at, as well. I even liked some of the original music, which does not happen very often to me, either. I found it to be somewhat in the vein of James Horner, if that still means anything to anyone.

I can safely say that the fans of MK ought to be more than pleased with this reboot. In hindsight, it was not perfect, but it was a solid effort for all those who were involved. There were clever references made to the games, throughout, and it struck the right balance between serious elements and comedic jabs. All I can add is that you need to be ready for much more in the near future and please do not be upset if one of your favorite characters is dead by the end of this entry. Who knows? Maybe you will still see them again in one of the sequels. I am looking forward to those, either way.

Final Grade: 7 / 10 (Okay)

It's Time to Get Primal with "Bloodthirsty"

Review by Violet Ravotti



Psychologically stirring and suspenseful, this supernatural Canadian thriller unleashes a tale about what it's like to battle primal instincts as an artist when faced with horrifying urges. Grey, a passionate and dedicated singer is unrelenting in the pursuits to advance her career. She makes the risky decision to receive assistance in collaborating on her album with the renowned and experienced producer, Vaughn. She embarks out to the woods to stay in Vaughn's isolated, vast estate with her girlfriend, Charlie despite being aware of some dark rumors regarding the producer's involvement in previous collaborations with a singer named Greta who died there while working with him.

The film is captivating with its suspenseful audio and horrific sequences as Grey experiences flashbacks and moments where she hallucinates that she is turning into a werewolf. *Bloodthirsty* is certainly one of more interesting takes on werewolf stories. It has a unique take on these kinds of stories which is refreshing. Grey has a natural gift for singing and it shows in her work as she chooses to allow Vaughn's influence transform both her mental and emotional self in the pursuit of her art. Her singing feels tragically beautiful. As the film progresses you can see the evolution of her singing change and grow darker. I connected with her sense of stubborn passion but it was truly horrifying to witness Grey lose sense of herself due to being changed by the influence and suggestions of Vaughn. It's also startling to see as the movie progresses some of the missing pieces start to make sense, but there are still a lot of unanswered questions

about Greta. The film could have answered more questions to make the ending more satisfying, but that is not uncommon in horror films when leaving a little mystery.

This movie is a worthwhile and chilling film to see at home and it has some predictable, rookie moments that your classic character makes in a horror film and make you realize you should listen to your gut instincts in these sorts of scenarios. This werewolf horror film had some skillful audio that made Grey's transformations even more horrifying as the ricocheting sound of her bones shifting and changing, stretching out when she began her transformations truly made me cringe in horror. I give this film a B rating, since I felt the plotline isn't terribly deep, felt it was missing details and it was a bit too predictable at times. Sometimes, that comes down to how a film is edited. Perhaps there could have been more to this film that added to the backstory of the characters, but it doesn't take away from how good the film is. Overall, a worthwhile watch for the fear factor of primal, psychological impulses and the instincts that compel devious werewolf natures. If you're a horror fan and like werewolf films, then you should check out *Bloodthirsty* on Amazon Prime.

Final Grade: 7 / 10 (Okay)

The Next Great Space Movie on Netflix: **STOWAWAY** Film Review

By **Marcus Blake**



Stowaway, the latest movie about space travel on Netflix, I feel should be more appropriately titled, "The Impossible Choice." Sometimes titles can be a little misleading. Even though this film does center around a stowaway on a space mission, it's not so much about the stowaway as it is about the choices the astronauts are going to make regarding survival. This film is more about a character study than it is about space travel, the same danger and choices that human beings would have to make to survive when facing dwindling resources could be played out in any survival story. But with the popularity of space travel movies, it seems almost perfect to tell this kind of story against the backdrop of space. Starring Toni Collette, Daniel Dae Kim, and Anna Kendrick, *stowaway* is a great movie about the human condition. It may not be the best movie ever regarding space travel, but if you're looking for a film that takes an honest look at humans and what they're willing to do to survive, then this is it.

I'm not going to say that it's a great film, there are far better movies regarding space travel and in fact when it comes to Netflix, the show "Away" starring Hilary Swank had a much better story. But I definitely enjoyed this film for what it is. The performances by the actors are fantastic. They're raw and their honest and I feel that this would be very true if real astronauts were put into the situation that the characters are in. The story is about three astronauts on a mission to Mars who discover an engineer or a stowaway. They can't turn back and drop him off and they don't have enough resources for astronauts, barely enough for three. So what do you do? What are you willing to do to survive and ensure that the mission is a success? Are you willing to kill one person so that everybody else can survive including the mission? These are the questions that these astronauts have to ask. So it makes it an interesting character study. Anna Kendrick has never been in a space movie before and I

felt like she had the most honest performance regarding an astronaut having to make an impossible choice. Her character is the one that struggles most with her humanity towards the stowaway that she may or may not have affections for. I think this is one of the most grown-up performances she's done. The performances that we know her from, she is playing a young character, sometimes immature and not knowing how life really works. Her performance in this movie is very different. You know that you're going to get a great performance from Toni Collette and Daniel Dae Kim because they're both incredible actors. And the reason I talk about performances is this movie is driven by the performances of the actors. You can almost have written this as a very intimate play about space travel. But what makes this film incredible are the raw and honest performances. Raw and honest performances.

But there are a few things that make this film less than perfect. It has some problems with pacing. While I understand that the film is about character study when trying to survive, there are moments that drag on too much, especially your characters wallow in their own indecision. Moments like these can be nice when you examine the raw honesty in your characters, but I think the camera lingers too long on some of this instead of focusing on trying to solve the overall problem when it comes to survival. After all, this is a survival movie and about the choices they make so you can't ignore too much of the problem-solving aspects. It should be a fair balance of characters dealing with their choices while also trying to solve the problem. That's where the pacing it's a little off. Another big issue is these lingering scenes of trying to solve the problem like you're in real time. It may be taking hours to complete a task for the character, but shouldn't feel like it's taking hours when watching this movie. Sometimes I felt like the director and the editor couldn't make up their mind about what kind of film they wanted to make. Is this a space survival movie or complete study of the human condition when faced with survival? The answer is it should be both, and it has to be balanced and I don't always feel like they accomplish that which can make the movie feel longer than it should be. The last thing I have a gripe about regarding this film is the use of voice overs. There is a really nice voice over that sums up everything at the end of this film, but it doesn't feel personal when it should be. We just hear a character speaking on why they joined the program. But it's supposed to be this personal moment that brings everything together for this character after dealing with all those impossible choices they had to make. The voice-over is nice, but to make it more personal, shouldn't we have seen a scene of this character talking to a video diary. Even just a brief scene so we know why they are saying these things instead of wondering if we're hearing their subconscious. My point is it doesn't feel as personal as it could be with this voice over and that's a shame because it was well written. Maybe it seemed more personal on the script than how it played out in the film.

Overall, *Stowaway* is a good movie. It is absolutely worth watching on Netflix. It almost feels like a perfect Netflix film, although I would have really enjoyed seeing this on the big screen so you could feel the full effect of a space travel movie. Good space movie should be seen on a big screen. The film is not perfect and sometimes it feels like it's dragging, but the performances by the four actors in this film are incredible and you really feel for their plight. Their performances will make you ask your own questions on what you're willing to do in order to survive. And any movie that can put you right in the place of the characters and feel their pain and self-doubt is a good film. It may not be the best film regarding space travel or survival, but the performances are worth watching because it's like you're getting a clinic in great acting. *Stowaway* is a good 7 and definitely something you should watch on Netflix this weekend. You won't be disappointed!

Final Grade: 7/10 (Okay)

Idris Elba Does It Again in "Concrete Cowboy!"

By Julie Jones



Just when you think that you know every coming-of-age story, you tend to find something that will change your mind. Sure, you have the general idea. But, the twists and turns in the journey make it just as fun as the lesson. And I think that in this case there is a new facet to a story we all know. The fact that it is based on a true story just makes it that much more delicious. The plot focuses on a boy who is constantly in trouble and ends up having to live with the father he never knew. Here is how the movie is described

Sent to live with his estranged father for the summer, a rebellious teen finds kinship in a tight-knit Philadelphia community of Black cowboys. *Concrete Cowboy* is a American Western drama film directed by Ricky Staub from a screenplay by Staub and Dan Walser. Its story is based upon the novel *Ghetto Cowboy* by Greg Neri, which is a fictionalization of the Fletcher Street Urban Riding Club, an urban African-American horseriding culture in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The film stars Idris Elba, Caleb McLaughlin, Jharrel Jerome, Byron Bowers, Lorraine Toussaint and Clifford "Method Man" Smith.

While there aren't a lot of scenes between Caleb McLaughlin and Idris Elba, they both shine in a way that exhibits them well. The story is something a little different from the trope we are used to, giving you another way to think about growing up. The acting in the film isn't horrible, but it feels like it just falls short. We all know what Idris Elba is capable of and so many people were excited to see what

Caleb McLaughlin can do. While you can see that they are putting in effort, it falls just short and it is hard to tell if it is the writing or something holding the actors back.

There is nothing new or innovative about the film direction, cinematography or mood manipulation of the film. But, the story carries a newness that makes up for it. The basis on real life is unknown to me, but by the end we find out that there are actors who are actually Concrete Cowboys, which lends it a bit more credibility. The end scenes tell so many stories that tie in and how people are affected. Overall, I thought it was a decent film. It was something I think kids would learn well from, if they will actually pay attention and try to absorb it. And it isn't bad for bored adults or anyone who wants to see Idris Elba in a skimpy white shirt. I would give it a seven, because it wasn't something I truly enjoyed or would watch again. But, if you are bored or need to get through a bottle of wine it is something you can have one while you surf your phone!

Final Grade: 7/10 (Okay)

Emilia Clarke Joining Marvel's 'Secret Invasion' Series For *Disney+*



“*Game of Thrones*” alum Emilia Clarke will join Samuel L. Jackson and Ben Mendelsohn in *Secret Invasion*, the upcoming Marvel series for Disney+,

sources close to the project confirm to Deadline. In *Secret Invasion*, Jackson and Mendelsohn reprise their MCU characters Nick Fury and the Skrull Talos, respectively, who first met in *Captain Marvel*. The crossover comic event series showcases a faction of shape-shifting Skrulls who have been infiltrating Earth for years. Cast also includes Kingsley Ben-Adir as the likely villain, and Olivia Colman. Further plot details are being kept under wraps and it's not clear what role Clarke would

play. Marvel and Disney+ would not comment on the casting, first reported by Variety. Clarke received four Emmy nominations for her role as Daenerys Targaryen on HBO's *Game of Thrones*. On the film side, she'll next be voicing the role of Malicia in the animated film *The Amazing Maurice*.

Reported by Deadline.com
<https://deadline.com/2021/04/emilia-clarke-marvel-secret-invasion-series-for-disney-1234740367/>

'How I Met Your Father': Hulu Hands 'How I Met Your Mother' Spinoff Straight-To-Series Order With Hilary Duff To Star, Isaac Aptaker & Elizabeth Berger To Run



How I Met Your Father, a spinoff to long-running CBS comedy *How I Met Your Mother*, is finally set to make it to air. [Hulu](#) has given the project, which will star [Hilary Duff](#), a straight-to-series order from creators [Isaac Aptaker](#) and [Elizabeth Berger](#). It is a long road to air for the project. Back in 2014, *HIMYM* creators Craig Thomas & Carter Bays and Emily Spivey wrote [a pilot for CBS](#) that starred Greta Gerwig and Drew Tarver, but it wasn't picked up. Two and a half years later, Aptaker and Berger [created a new take](#), but after the pair were elevated to co-showrunners of NBC's *This Is Us* they were no longer available. Studio 20th Television [tried again](#) in the 2017-18 development season with *You're the Worst* writer Alison Bennett, but again it did not move forward. Enter Hulu. The streamer has given the sequel series a 10-episode order with Aptaker and Berger back as creators, writers and exec producers. *Younger*'s Duff stars as Sophie, who is telling her son the story of how she met his father, much like Josh Radnor (and Bob Saget's) Ted Mosby did in the original series. The story starts in 2021 where Sophie and her close-knit group of friends are in the midst of figuring out who they are, what they want out of life, and

how to fall in love in the age of dating apps and limitless options. Duff will also produce the series, which will use a multi- and single-camera approach similar to its predecessor. Carter Bays and Craig Thomas, who created *How I Met Your Mother*, will also exec produce the series, which is produced by 20th Television. Adam Londy will serve as co-executive producer.

Craig Erwich, president of Hulu Originals and ABC Entertainment, called *How I Met Your Mother* one of the “most innovative and beloved comedies” on TV. “Isaac and Elizabeth have an inspired take on this new version that honors what Carter and Craig created with the original and moves the franchise forward. Isaac and Elizabeth have proven to be rich storytellers and great partners to us at Hulu Originals and across the Walt Disney Company family.

Coupled with the passion and infectious energy Hilary brings to every role she takes on, we can't wait to suit up and bring audiences *How I Met Your Father*,” he added. Karey Burke, who is now President of 20th Television, called *How I Met Your Mother* a “crown jewel” in the studio's library. “Its fans have clamored for more ever since [our final broadcast](#) seven years ago,” she said. “Our genius producers Isaac and Elizabeth who are – wait for it – legendary within our halls, have created a spectacular new take which both honors the original and is entirely their own. Carter and Craig will return as executive producers, and who better to star as the central character than the incredible Hilary Duff? Many thanks to Craig Erwich and everyone at Hulu Originals for loving the script as much as we did and to our fantastic team who helped put this all together. I could not be more excited. Let the speculation as to who the father is commence.” Bays and Thomas said: “Kids, I'm going to tell

you an incredible story: It's the story of how two writers got lucky enough to make their dream TV show for nine seasons and now get to pass the torch to an inspired new creative team with their own incredible story to tell, the story of *How I Met Your Father*. We are honored by their passion and vision, and look forward to helping them tell a legendary new story. Thanks to all the *HIMYM* fans out there who waited for it.” Added Aptaker and Berger: “We are beyond excited to be bringing *How I Met Your Father* to Hulu. Carter and Craig's iconic original series revolutionized the half-hour comedy, and we are so honored to be carrying the torch forward for the next generation – and with Hilary Duff no less. We can't wait for audiences to meet Sophie and her crew, and watch them come into their own and find love in modern-day New York City. And we hope nobody thinks it's weird that Bob Saget will be playing old Hilary Duff's voice.” Said Duff: “I've been incredibly lucky in my career to play some wonderful characters and I'm looking forward to taking on the role of Sophie. As a huge fan of *How I Met Your Mother*, I'm honored and even a little nervous that Carter and Craig would trust me with the sequel of their baby. Isaac and Elizabeth are brilliant, and I can't wait to work alongside them and all of their genius. Just fangirling over here getting to join the Hulu Originals and 20th families. I realize these are big shoes to fill and I'm excited to slip my 6 1/2's in there.”

Reported by Deadline.com
<https://deadline.com/2021/04/how-i-met-your-father-hulu-how-i-met-your-mother-spinoff-hilary-duff-1234741018/>

'Doom Patrol': HBO Max Adds Five In Recurring Roles To Season 3 Cast



Micah Joe Parker, Wynn Everett, Miles Mussenden, Anita Kalathara and Gina Hiraizumi will join the cast of **HBO Max's *Doom Patrol*** in recurring roles. The recurring quintet adds to the season 3 cast, which features Michelle Gomez, Diane Guerrero, April Bowlby and Matt Bomer. In *Doom Patrol*, the ragtag group consists of superhero outcasts Cliff Steele aka Robotman (Brendan Fraser), Larry Trainor aka Negative Man (Bomer), Jane aka Crazy Jane (Guerrero), Rita Farr aka Elasti-Woman (Bowlby), and Victor Stone aka Cyborg (Joivan Wade). All of them have experienced trauma that gave them their special abilities, but with the guidance of The Chief (Timothy Dalton), they

come together to help investigate phenomena as unique as them. When The Chief disappears, they spring into action when Cyborg presents them with a mission they can't refuse Madalyn Horcher, Ty Tennant and Sebastian Croft will guest star in the third season. *Doom Patrol* is produced by Berlanti Productions in association with Warner Bros. Television, with Jeremy Carver, Greg Berlanti, Sarah Schechter, Chris Dingess, Geoff Johns and Tamara Becher-Wilkinson serving as executive producers. The series is based on characters created for DC by Arnold Drake, Bob Haney and Bruno Premiani. Parker, whose credits include *Into The Dark*, *The Flash* and *The Vampire Diaries* will play Malcolm, part of the Sisterhood of Dada. He is a quiet, sensitive and thoughtful soul who would often rather be invisible than face this unforgiving world. The actor is represented by Zero Gravity Management.

Palmer, *Teenage Bounty Hunters* and *Agent Carter* actor Wynn Everett will recur as Shelley Byron aka The Fog, part of the Sisterhood of Dada. Supposedly a deadly terrorist, Shelley is charming, seductive,

poetic and a bit mad. Everett is represented by Gersh, Principal Entertainment LA and People Store. Mussenden joins as Lloyd Jefferson aka Frenzy, part of the Sisterhood of Dada. A sculptor of strange life-like masks who is covered with tattoos and scars – the memories and injustices that immortalize his life – he is cryptic and stoic with a capacity for extreme devastation. *The Swagger*, *Cloak & Dagger* and *The Good Lord Bird* actor is represented by Buchwald, Luber Roklin Entertainment and People Store. *Room 104* and *MacGyver* actress Anita Kalathara will play Holly McKenzie aka Sleepwalk, part of the Sisterhood of Dada. A light-hearted ne'er do well, Holly knows where the best parties are. After a wild night of partying, she usually takes a nice long nap in the ice cream truck where she works, and if she is awoken mid-nap, there is hell to pay.

Reported by Deadline.com
<https://deadline.com/2021/04/doom-patrol-hbo-max-five-recur-season-3-1234742555/>

'The Last Of Us': Gabriel Luna To Play Tommy In HBO Series Based On Video Game



Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D. alum Gabriel Luna has been tapped as a lead opposite Pedro Pascal and Bella Ramsey in *The Last of Us*, HBO's high-profile series adaptation of the Sony Playstation franchise from *Chernobyl* creator Craig Mazin and Neil Druckmann. Your Complete Guide to Pilots and Straight-to-Series orders Based on the critically acclaimed video game *The Last of Us*,

the story takes place twenty years after modern civilization has been destroyed. Joel (Pascal), a hardened survivor, is hired to smuggle Ellie (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.

Luna will play Tommy, Joel's (Pascal) younger brother, a former soldier who hasn't lost his sense of idealism and hope for a better world. Kantemir Balagov is directing the pilot episode of *The Last Of Us*, a co-production with Sony Pictures Television. PlayStation Productions, Word Games, The Mighty Mint, and Naughty Dog produce the TV series, based on the video game developed by Naughty Dog exclusively for the PlayStation

platforms. Druckmann and Mazin write and executive produce; Carolyn Strauss also executive produces along with Naughty Dog president Evan Wells, Asad Qizilbash and Carter Swan of PlayStation Productions as well as Rose Lam. This marks Luna's return to HBO where he recurred on the second season of *True Detective*. Luna is probably known for his roles as Robbie Reyes/Ghost Rider on ABC's Marvel series *Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.* and as Gabriel/REV-9 in *Terminator: Dark Fate*. His series credits also include the title role in *Matador* and a lead in *Wicked City*.

Reported by Deadline.com
<http://thatnerdshow.com/site/2021/04/15/the-last-of-us-gabriel-luna-to-play-tommy-in-hbo-series-based-on-video-game/>

The Second MCU Series Scores Big with

“The Falcon and the Winter Soldier”

By Chloe James



Alright fellow nerds, the second Disney+ entry into the MCU is officially done. While WandaVision came out of left-field for many with its unique narrative and surprising twists (much to our delight), The Falcon and the Winter Soldier gets things back to formula with the MCU action we all know and love. Six months after the events of Avengers: Endgame, Sam Wilson (Anthony Mackie) hands over the Captain America shield to the Smithsonian Museum, while the rest of the world is suffering from the societal and economic repercussions of The Blip. Bucky Barnes (Sebastian Stan) is trying to make amends for his actions as the Winter Soldier. A new anti-patriotism group is raising up, The Flag Smashers, led by Karli Morgenthau (Erin Kellyman), who has come in contact with a new recreation of the super soldier serum. This causes the Falcon and Winter Soldier to work together and with old acquaintances like Sharon Carter (Emily VanCamp) and old enemies like Helmut Zemo (Daniel Brühl), while the United States government counteracts by introducing John Walker (Wyatt Russell) as our new Captain America.

The MCU continued their reputation of giving individuals chances. This time, we got the writer and first time showrunner Malcolm Spellman (Empire, Hip Hop Uncovered) and singular directorial duties to veteran director Kari Skogland (The Walking Dead, The Handmaid's Tale). The reason why I included Kari Skogland there is because while she has directed some very impressive works, mostly she's only directed one or two episodes of said shows. Disney gave her the entirety of The Falcon and the Winter Soldier to direct and mold to her vision. Henry Jackson is back as composer (Captain America: The Winter Soldier, Captain America: Civil War) while P.J Dillon (Game of Thrones, Vikings) serves as

cinematographer. I can definitely say that while WandaVision felt like a television show (and rightfully so, as it was a loving homage to tv in general) The Falcon and the Winter Soldier somehow didn't. Not that that's a compliment or complaint. Something about the pacing of this series just didn't feel as episodic as your average Marvel (or otherwise) superhero show. And this is coming from someone who didn't binge it. This show just has this very limbo quality of not quite a show, and not quite a long movie. Again, it's not a major complaint, but they attempted to throw in quite a lot of subplot for such a short series. And you know what? Most of it worked. While I enjoy some well written subplots and side character arcs, too many in too condensed amounts of time can be exhausting, if not annoying.

What's more frustrating in a show than the main plot being delayed for 5 different points of diversion, only to have many of those subplots never even go anywhere? But as much as the pacing of The Falcon and the Winter Soldier felt different to me, they somehow managed to address and resolve quite a few issues in the time they were given. I actually did find myself caring about Sam's sister and their struggles to save the family fishing boat, Bucky's interactions with people in his goal for self atonement, and even what Sharon Carter has been doing in this time. I can even say my favorite moment was in episode 5, "Truth", in which Sam and Bucky stop bickering for once and work together to fix Sam's boat. I would like to give a special shout-out to Wyatt Russell in his portrayal of John Walker. It's rare that I encounter a character I want to punch in the face that badly, but also kind of feel really bad for as well. It would have been easy for anyone to go full jerkass with this character and make him completely hateable, but Russell managed to add just enough vulnerability and conflict in his performance to where I only 85% dislike him. Hey that's quite generous given the absolute prat John Walker is written to be.

Another thing about this series that may throw people off is the amount of social commentary it contains. Yes, I'll admit much of the social commentary in the media is forced, irrelevant, and cringey (see my review of The Craft: Legacy.) But in this story, it was absolutely necessary. And also yes, the moral lessons of this story were not delivered subtly. For once, I'm glad they weren't. It would have been willfully ignorant to gloss over the internal struggles of Sam, a black American, as he wonders how the nation can accept anything other than a white, blue-eyed, blonde haired Captain America. I'll save most of my sermon as the show does a much better job conveying this point, but I absolutely love its driving message: even if you are a sympathetic person, you'll never fully be able to understand someone else's struggles -- because you aren't them.

While it didn't fully immerse me as much as WandaVision, The Falcon and the Winter Soldier is a very satisfying second entry into Disney+'s MCU lineup. The one thing it did even better than WandaVision was renew my interest in a post Avengers: Endgame MCU world, hyping me up for the next generation of Avengers and the new challenges that await them.

Final Grade: 8/10 (Good)

MY HERO ACADEMY SEASON 5 REVIEW...SO FAR!

By Aclairic Ambrosio



Lots of great anime has come out for the Spring releases of 2021, but one that is on many people's lips is the *My Hero Academia* (*Boku no Hero Academia* for those Japanese title included) Season Five release. At this writing, this season is only five episodes in, but there's plenty to talk about if you know exactly what is about to go down. This season is the Joint Training Arc, the battle between Class 1-A and 1-B. Most of us are already quite familiar with Class 1-A's powers, as they are the class *My Hero Academia* primarily focuses on, but there are several characters within the main class that we still don't get enough background detail on, or really understand the entire scope of their powers (unlike our protagonist screen-hoggers like Izuku, Bakugo, and Todoroki). For example, the Navel Laser Quirk user Aoyama has been little more than a comedic character for quite some time, a novelty that feels more like filler for Class 1-A. Season Five should allow Class 1-A's minor characters to shine a little more, as they will be pitted against the class in equal number. The first two episodes focus primarily on the Pro Hero Endeavor and his encounter with the League of Villains member, Dabi. There had been a lot of fan focus on these two, with plenty of rumors swirling about whether or not these two are related due to their similar powers and Endeavor's broken family dynamic. These episodes finally start shedding a little more light on these theories, though manga readers are already getting more information on the validity of this assessment. In these episodes, Endeavor finally seems to come to the long-known realization that he can't expect forgiveness from his family on the things he's done. He has to work towards atonement. It's quite nice to see him come to this revelation. I feel as though it's something that people who have grievances with their own family can relate to, or understand, as it's a very complicated dynamic.

The first two episodes also shine some light on what Izuku and Class 1-A are doing. It focuses on a training episode where U.A. High School's Big Three are helping them with some more hero dynamics. Mirio plays a civilian in distress, while his classmates Nejire and Amajiki pose as the villains against the class. It had been seen in earlier seasons just how powerful these three are (mainly with a focus on Mirio and how it was believed he should have been chosen as All Might's successor), but it's always a treat to jump back to them. Their dynamic with one another as friends and classmates is wholesome and also fun to watch, and to see them team up against 1-A is great to watch. It isn't until Episode Three that we get to the battle between Class 1-A and 1-B. Class 1-A has consistently been in the spotlight, both show-wise, but also in their own universe. There were not many contenders from 1-B during the U.A. Sports Festival Arc. There was even in-show commentary about how it was essentially a Class 1-A showcase when it came to the final part where there was tournament fighting. So it's great to really be able to see more of the powers that come from the class. The teams are split up, so that it's always 4 against 4 matches, with one exception: Shinsou, who is attending form General Studies because he wants to become part of the hero course, will join a team twice, giving one team five members. At first, people feel that the team he is on will give the others an advantage since they have an extra member... but the rules of the matches are based on the number of people captured during the time period. With the extra member to be captured, it puts that team at a slight disadvantage, especially since Shinsou doesn't have the hero training experience the other students have. The first teams to be chosen are from Class 1-A: Tsuyu Asui, Denki Kaminari, Eijiro Kirishima, and Koji Koda (which ends up including Shinsou), against Class 1-B: Ibara Shiozaki, Kosei Tsuburaba, Hiryu Rin, and Jurota Shishida. There is an interesting note to make about the resulting battles, but I'll first start with this. In Japan, the high school division is sorted based upon performance. In U.A. High School's case, this means the A-class students performed higher than the B-class students when it came to the entrance examination. So, loosely, you could say Class A students are stronger, or smarter, or show the ability to become incredibly Pro Heroes more than Class B.

This particular arc is great, because it clearly shows *just how small* the margin is between classes. The first match immediately starts out with two of the Class A members getting completely overwhelmed by the performance of Class B. It shows that Class 1-A still has a ways to go, but also, just how close our castmates *could have not been main characters at all*. In a way, maybe plenty of Class 1-B members could have been swapped for 1-A members as we would have been working with different characters altogether. Hard to believe...

In the end, with the help of Shinsou (who still remarks he has a long way to go to be a stand-alone hero), the first group of Class 1-A defeats their opponents. The rest of the line-up is as follows: **Match 2:** (Class 1-A) Momo Yaoyorozu, Fumikage Tokoyami, Toru Hagakure and Yuga Aoyama VS (Class 1-B) Itsuka Kendo, Shihai Kuroiro, Manga Fukidashi and Kinoko Komori.

Match 3: (Class 1-A) Shoto Todoroki, Mashirao Ojio, Tenya Ida, and Mezo Shoji VS (Class 1-B) Pony Tsunotori, Sen Kaibara, Juzo Honenuki, and Tetsutetsu Tetsutetsu. **Match 4:** (Class 1-A) Katsuki Bakugo, Kyoka Jiro, Hanta Sero, and Rikido Sato VS (Class 1-B) Yosetsu Awase, Setsuna Tokage, Kojiro Bondo, and Togaru Kamakiri.

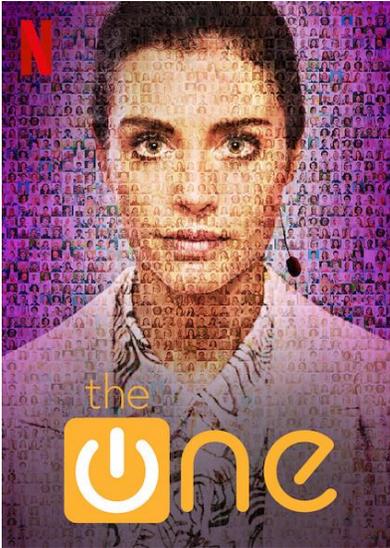
Match 5: (Class 1-A) Izuku Midoriya, Ochaco Uraraka, Mina Ashido, and Minoru Mineta VS (Class 1-B) Neito Monoma, Yui Kodai, Nirengeki Shoda, and Reiko Yanagi.

They were smart to separate the power trio of Izuku, Bakugo, and Todoroki into separate matches... forces you to watch more episodes, haha. I'm most excited for Match 5, mainly because Izuku is my favorite character, and I also am crazy about Mina. Mineta is a funny character to watch too, and I don't mind seeing him when it's a serious sort of light. Despite him also being more of a gag character, his power is interesting and I'm curious to see it implemented in various ways. What match up against the classes are you most excited to see? We'd love to hear from you at That Nerd Show!

Final Grade: 9/10 (Great)

FINDING "THE ONE" ON NETFLIX

Review by Danielle Butler



A brilliant scientific new way to find your one true love. "We deserve the fairytale." The person who's biologically meant to be with you. It's in your DNA. "A single strand of hair." Or so it is according to British Founder/CEO Rebecca Webb (Hannah Ware.) Sounds too good to be true! This company, The One, seems like the perfect cutting-edge match-making company until a body is discovered submerged in water. The body corpse Ben Naser. Rebecca Webb's old roommate. "The police came to see me. There's going to be an investigation," states Rebecca Webb.

The storyline follows a few different clusters of characters that cross paths every so often. This English series is somewhat like a modern-day *Love Actually*, *Valentine's Day*, or *Crazy Stupid Love* expect with a sinister spin on it. A beautiful cast of English and European actors including the beautiful Eric Kofi-Abrefa (Mark - Journalist), Albano Jerónimo, and Pallavi Sharda.

We get to see just how chaotic and messy the idea of finding "The One" can be. There is a couple (Mark and Hannah) already married struggling with the idea of whether their love is valid if it does in fact counteract science and finding Mark's "One" Megan. Love stories, cover ups, and scandals swept under the rug. The plot line thickens as who's who: lover, spouse, "one" get more complicated, messy, and dangerous in this eight-episode story.

I pegged the Villain from the beginning. I don't know if that is a good thing. Some mysteries should take longer to figure out. The complicated, misunderstand genius who just wanted true love and to have it all. One of the detectives in this series also has a love interest. Protected by lawyers and money, Rebecca Webb, is reluctant to speak with police. SPOILER ALERT: Rebecca is willing to do whatever it takes to protect herself and her image including taking down best friend and CO-Founder James Whiting (played by Dimitri Leon) or maybe even kill him.

The story has flashbacks to see what Rebecca, James, and Ben were a year ago, which is great so we have some context when it comes to their backstory. It also shows things through the lens of the detective's which was nice to see as they try to crack the case and get justice for Ben Naser. I would give this series a 6 out of 10. It was fairly predictable ending and took a while for me to get invested however, I greatly enjoyed watching the perfect match-making company crumb and reveal just how big of a monster Rebecca Webb truly is. If you have watched everything else new on Netflix, give "The One" a try.

Final Grade: 6/10 (Adequate)





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4-20-2021

WARFRAME'S 'CALL OF THE TEMPESTARI' TO STORM ONTO XBOX SERIES X|S AND ALL OTHER PLATFORMS AVAILABLE NOW!



Debating on Microsoft's next-generation Xbox Series X|S and due on all other platforms today, Digital Extremes' robust new *Warframe*® *Call of the Tempestarii* update puts players at the helm of a colossal new Railjack experience for the ultimate space fantasy. Available on Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One, PC, PS5™, PS4™, and Nintendo Switch™, console players gain access to *Corpus Proxima & The New Railjack* while all players will receive the ghostly, quest-driven *Call of the Tempestarii* for free. "When we launch *Call of the Tempestarii* on all platforms today, we'll reach a new defining moment for *Warframe*," said COO Sheldon Carter. "Yes, we'll take that very big second step into the next generation on Xbox Series X|S, but what's really driving this new content is the new Railjack. Railjack is maturing, growing more robust and becoming the dynamic space adventure we originally imagined it would become."

Heed The Call of the Tempestarii and Discover Sevagoth *Call of the Tempestarii* steers players' down an eerie path of unfulfilled prophecies and ghostly disturbances in an all new lore-based quest. Heeding a strange beacon call, Railjack AI Cephalon Cy charts a course through harrowing Void Storms and new Corpus boss battles to unveil a haunting story introducing the specter of death, Sevagoth. Completing this Quest sets the stage for even bigger battles later this year. The powerful 46th *Warframe* blends heavy damage and team support characteristics into a magnificent reaper form. Sevagoth's Abilities Reap, Sow, and Gloom contribute to a unique "death well" meter, building to launch Sevagoth's second form, the fierce all-melee Shadow. Sevagoth's spectral Shadow glides across the battlefield reaping souls, bearing extended, sharpened talons that slash and tear enemies asunder. Beware the Reaper!

Build, Board and Battle With this retrofitted Railjack update, console players get to experience *Corpus Proxima & The New Railjack* for the first time. Every aspect has been redesigned to embody the core *Warframe* experience. With our players' feedback in mind to improve the Railjack experience, this update was renovated and simplified to produce less grind and less

reliance on matchmaking, giving Tenno ample opportunities to more easily engage in epic spaceship battles, slingshot into enemy ships, and collect, fight and explore. Railjack missions now combine *Warframe*'s fluid parkour combat with epic space battles. Ramped up core reward loops -- such as hunting and collecting valuable Arcanes in Void Storms -- unlock hard-to-get *Warframes* and *Warframe Primes*, such as Ash Prime! Reworked, improved Command Intronics and Avionics Systems, and a hire-able NPC AI crew give battle-ready Tenno more control, more gametime, and less waiting around. NPC crews can be recruited, leveled up, and customized for improved single-player missions. Two new game modes "Volatile" and "Orphix", plus ultra-powerful mech gameplay, round out a new robust, satisfying experience.

Experience Next-Generation Warframe By launching *Call of the Tempestarii* on Xbox Series X|S, Xbox players instantly get access to *Warframe*'s all new story, new *Warframe*, and new gameplay in impressive next-gen visual and audio fidelity. *Warframe*'s significantly improved loading times hurl Tenno seamlessly into the action complete with impressive 4K resolution and 60fps and offers cross-system play on Xbox Series X|S and Xbox One.

The Black Orcs are Invading Blood Bowl 3



Four brand-new teams are taking the *Blood Bowl* video game pitch in the famous franchise's highly-anticipated third entry.

Amongst the teams is a race that is not entirely unknown to fans: the Black Orcs! NACON and Cyanide Studio are giving you the opportunity to watch a gameplay video of this race so you can admire their crushing physical superiority. Tired of the amateur performance of the other Greenskins, the Black Orcs have decided to create their own teams. Forget about passing, dodging and speed: above all, the Black Orcs are shining examples of how to methodically and brutally grind opposing players into the dirt. Lining up next to a Troll, whose extraordinary wild strength is only equalled by its striking stupidity, and Goblins that carry the ball and

flood the pitch, the Orcs' favourite tactic involves reaching the endzone by viciously crushing any opponents foolish enough to try to bar their way! As violent as they are powerful, the Black Orcs are a formidable race in *Blood Bowl 3*. Additional videos will be released soon to highlight more teams, showing their strengths, weaknesses and the strategies they use in the game.

Planned for release in **August 2021**, *Blood Bowl 3* will be available on PlayStation®4, PlayStation®5, Xbox One, Xbox Series X|S, Steam, and Nintendo Switch™.

Firewalk Studios, a ProbablyMonsters Studio, Reveals Publishing Partnership with Sony Interactive Entertainment for AAA Multiplayer Game



ProbablyMonsters™ Inc., a new category of game company that builds sustainable game studios through a people-first culture, proudly announces that **Firewalk Studios™**, a AAA studio focused on delivering world-class multiplayer experiences, has entered into an agreement with Sony Interactive Entertainment as the exclusive publishing partner for its inaugural multiplayer game. This publishing partnership is the first to be announced for a member of the ProbablyMonsters family of studios. Founded in 2018, Firewalk Studios is led by Tony Hsu (Studio Head, previously GM and SVP of *Destiny* at Activision), Ryan Ellis (Game Director, previously Creative Director at Bungie) and Elena Siegman (Executive Producer, previously at Harmonix, Irrational Games, and Bungie). The team includes a deep roster of highly talented developers who have helped deliver top-selling, culturally impactful titles, including the *Destiny* franchise, where all three leads worked successfully together on both development and publishing, as well as *Call of Duty*, *Apex Legends*, *Mass Effect*, and *Halo*. This collected expertise allows this team to focus on delivering a rich multiplayer game experience rooted in great core gameplay and inspired art.

Firewalk continues to **recruit top talent** for its team, which is built on collaboration, inclusion, and respect. ProbablyMonsters CEO and founder Harold Ryan continues his vision for building and sustaining a family of AAA game studios and original IP through a people-first culture. The company's inclusive approach has attracted senior-level talent who have collectively worked on dozens of blockbuster franchises from over 60 major companies. Its unique development model empowers its studios to concentrate on game creation while the company's business team focuses on leadership mentoring, funding, publishing negotiations, staffing, administration, and technology for every studio. ProbablyMonsters builds game studios so they can focus on their team, culture, and games while enjoying stable careers, and thriving as game developers. Firewalk Studios exemplifies how the groundbreaking model ProbablyMonsters has built is succeeding: studios enjoy the creative and financial freedom to transform their imagination into exceptional player experiences.

"ProbablyMonsters has created an extraordinary team at Firewalk Studios with remarkable

industry talent, and their original multiplayer game will be an exciting addition to our portfolio," said **Hermen Hulst, Head of PlayStation Studios at Sony Interactive Entertainment**. "We're committed to bringing a wide range of diverse gaming experiences to our platform, and we're thrilled to partner with a visionary studio like Firewalk to bring their truly ambitious experience to life." "I am proud of the sustainable model we have created for our AAA studios to grow and flourish," said **Harold Ryan, CEO and founder of ProbablyMonsters**. "Firewalk Studios' strategic partnership with PlayStation is a great match for the studio's world-class pedigree and creative vision." "Our goal at Firewalk Studios is to create awesome shared experiences through multiplayer games," said **Tony Hsu, Studio Head at Firewalk Studios**. "This goal is supported both by the world-class operations team at ProbablyMonsters and by a team at SIE who love games and are huge supporters of our project and studio."

ProbablyMonsters has announced and fostered the growth of three game studios in different genres, including Firewalk Studios, Cauldron Studios, developing a narrative-driven AAA game, and a next gen co-op RPG studio. More details on ProbablyMonsters and its family of studios will be shared in the coming months. To learn more about Firewalk Studios, visit firewalkstudios.com.

ASPHALT FRANCHISE Crosses One Billion Downloads Across All Platforms; Additionally, Asphalt 9: Legends Coming to Xbox Platforms



Acclaimed Racing

Franchise Asphalt Hits Major Milestone, and Xbox Series X|S and Xbox One Port Announced With Windows 10 Cross-Play

Gameloft, leader in the creation and publishing of games, is

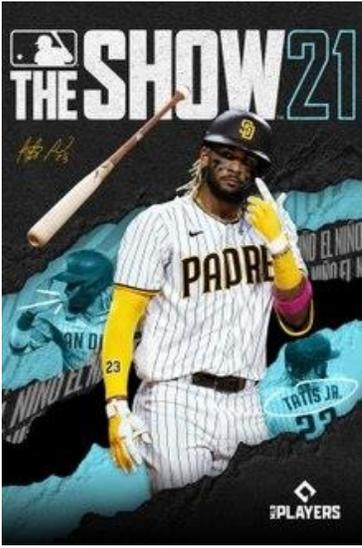
thrilled to announce that the *Asphalt* franchise, one of the longest-standing, world's most downloaded, multi-awarded arcade racing franchise, has reached the milestone of one billion downloads across all platforms. Entering into its 16th Anniversary, the *Asphalt* franchise launched

in 2005 with *Asphalt Urban GT*, originally made available on Java-based feature phones, the N-Gage, and Nintendo DS, with the most recent addition being the latest smash hit *Asphalt 9: Legends*, available on the App Store, Google Play, Microsoft Store, Nintendo Switch, and macOS. In addition, Gameloft is thrilled to announce that *Asphalt 9: Legends* will soon be launching, free-to-play, on Xbox Series X|S and Xbox One Consoles with cross-play and cross-save support for players on Windows 10. More details to be announced soon. Additionally, *Asphalt 8: Airborne* and *Asphalt 9: Legends* will release dedicated time-limited events, starting April 26th, celebrating this impressive milestone where

players would be able to stack-up amazing rewards and prizes! "For over 20 years, Gameloft has been on the forefront of what players could experience on mobile devices, and just over 15 years ago we kicked off a franchise that has remained a core series to us, *Asphalt*," said Thomas Aurick, VP of Creation at Gameloft. "In the years since, we transformed *Asphalt* into the most readily-accessible racing franchise in the world. This is only just the beginning for *Asphalt*, and with the impending launch of *Asphalt 9: Legends* on the Xbox platform, we further commit to bring anyone, on whatever gaming platform a racing experience beyond imagination. This is the Gameloft of today."

It's a New Baseball Season and That Means a New *MLB the Show!*

MLB the Show 21 Review by Marcus Blake



We have a new baseball season, which means we have another year of MLB The Show, the best baseball video game around and the 21 version brought a lot of new changes that are going to make this game better. So, let's get right down to it. If you're already a fan of the series, you're going to love this version, but there aren't many changes from last couple of years. However, this year's MLB the Show is the first one for the Next Generation consoles. It plays fantastic on the PlayStation 5 and also the Xbox Series X. That's right MLB the Show for the first time since its inception in 2006 is now available on Xbox so a whole new demographic of Gamers will get a chance to play this glorious baseball game. Also, this is the first year that I have reviewed the game on Xbox so it feels extremely weird, but also very gratifying because I do think the new Xbox has the better hardware which will make the gameplay experience better. I have started my season in Franchise Mode and after 10 games in, of course, I'm loving it but I'm also seeing some changes that are driving me nuts, which we're going to get to that later. MLB the Show 21 has all the familiar modes such as Franchise, Road to the Show, Diamond Dynasty, and being able to create your own League. There have been improvements on each mode and the game will certainly play better with the new consoles and faster hardware.

One of the new modes is Stadium Creator where you can make your own major league baseball stadium. It's an interesting mode if you are into customizing your own kind of Stadium and having your team play there. It gives fans a chance to build a classic Stadium if they want to go back to the way baseball used to be or to make a more modern Baseball Stadium for the future. What's cool about it is you can make some pretty wild stadiums, but it's not the best future of MLB The Show. Road to the Show will help you get to the playoffs faster than ever before while still giving you those key moments throughout the season. However, if you're like me and you want to actually play a season then franchise mode is where it's at and there have been some improvements. First, I want to say that the graphics are absolutely incredible on the Next Generation consoles. It really does feel like you are playing a real baseball game. I honestly have to say that the look of the fields and baseball players are probably more realistic than any other sports

game. There is a general improvement in fielding that makes it easier to pull off great defense. There is good improvement in being able to locate your pitches better if you are the pitcher. For me, I'm a huge fan of pitching inside to players so my changeups and cut fastballs can hit the corners a lot better and if you're really good, you can place that curve right on the corner and get pretty much any batter out. But the one thing that I have to complain about is hitting. I feel like even with these new generation consoles we still have a problem with timing. I understand that players want to be more authentic with their timing, but you also want to enjoy the game. I've never been a huge fan of the dynamic heading setting even though MLB the Show says it's the most authentic setting. Maybe that's true, but after playing 10 games on Dynamic mode, I constantly get my hitting to be too early even when the ball is pretty much up at my face and I can't seem to put the ball into play. Using the sliders to adjust a more fair experience improves it somewhat. I'm not saying that you should want to win every game by 10 runs, but you also don't want average pitchers in MLB the Show throwing a no-hitter against you when the timing is so off that you can't hit the ball out of the infield. For the first time ever playing this game I can honestly say that the veteran hitting mode is probably more authentic and your timing is better. But with a combination of adjusting the sliders, between rookie and Veteran mode you'll find a more satisfying hitting experience especially with hits that you know should be home runs, but somehow you're always magically getting out because the outfielder gets the ball on the warning track. If that's constantly happening, there's something wrong with the game. I am impressed with MLB The Show, but I also freely admit that you will have to adjust Sliders in different modes to find the hitting experience that works for you. This is a video game, you don't have to be perfect and the aim of the game is to have fun even if you lose a game by one run because some days you're going to lose. But once you fine-tune your adjustments the game is going to be a great experience for you. The other thing to keep in mind is even with your average pictures, the ability to properly locate your pictures will turn them into all stars. One thing that has made MLB the Show 21 probably the best sports game of the year is it is the first sports game to have cross-play capabilities. I can now play my cousin in MLB the Show who plays on PlayStation while I'm playing it on Xbox. That is a huge game changer because sports games have never really allowed Gamers to play each other from PlayStation to Xbox to PC. We constantly talk about how the future of gaming is through cross-play, well MLB the Show is setting the standard for sports games. There isn't much that I can complain about regarding MLB the Show 21. It probably is the best version ever made especially with it being ready for the next generation of consoles. The one thing that I really did notice is the online gameplay experience. In years past the internet lag has made the experience of playing online almost unbearable. After playing the other night from an Xbox series X versus a first-generation Xbox, we can honestly say that we have the best online experience ever in MLB The Show. Maybe there were two moments of lag in between pitches, but when it came to swinging through and hitting the ball to pitching and fielding, it was smooth and that's not even with high-speed internet. This was the best experience we had with online play and soon as we got done with the first game, we immediately had to play two. I couldn't say that before with other versions. The only downside to online gameplay is we still haven't figured out how to do an online Home Run Derby, maybe that's just not available in the standard mode. If it's not working, that's understandable and will happily wait for the update to fix it, but if not then we can't tell you how to actually do a home run derby online unless you're in public and just let the game matchmake you with anybody. But let's be honest it's much more fun to play a home run derby with your friends than some random stranger.

Only a small handful of quirks makes this game less than perfect. But the overall improvements to MLB the Show especially for the Next Generation consoles makes this easily one of the best sports games ever played. It's sad that you will have to make a few tweaks and adjustments to get the proper hitting experience, but that's not uncommon when dealing with fast improvements to a sports game especially one that's made for better consoles. And it'll probably take a couple of patches to improve that throughout the year. But you got plenty of time to work out those kinks as you start a long season in Franchise Mode. The graphics are almost perfect and for the new stadiums, the game makes them look gorgeous. The other night we played Cubs versus Rangers at the new Rangers ballpark, Global Life Field. We had a closed roof in July and the game was fabulous. I say that despite getting used to Xbox controls where sending all Runners can be a little tricky and you need to get one runner back to base. I did experience my first triple out when tagging up with two Runners on base. but that was more of a fluke and I haven't experienced the same thing again. The biggest adjustments will come for players who are playing MLB the Show on Xbox after so many years on PlayStation. It's taking about 10 games to the season for me to really feel comfortable, but it's not all bad because I have won more games than lost and I'm leading the division. The biggest drawback is the hitting experience so the game isn't quite as perfect as it can be, but it is damn good and being able to play it on Xbox especially having it on Xbox Game Pass for free, it's as perfect as it can be and easily at 9

Final Grade: 9/10 (Great)

OUTRIDERS

A Game with So Much Potential!

Review by Marcus Blake, K. Scott. Cooper, and Beth Currier

Marcus Blake



In completing the game Outriders, the new space multiplayer available on PlayStation and Xbox, but also on Xbox Game Pass from day one, the best way to describe this game is, a game with so much potential, but falls short and I'm glad that I didn't buy it. Thank God it was free on Xbox Game Pass. It's a fun game and definitely more fun when you're playing with friends, although, it has its limitations and suffered immensely from the fact that from day one, it had server problems and the game kept crashing. Like so many games that get released, they're always full of potential, but problems with the launch, to not quite delivering with the original vision can sometimes leave a bad taste with a gamer. Outriders falls in between. This is not a great game that you should run out and buy, and if you do spend money on it, wait for a discount. Now, we did have fun playing, but it may not be one of those that we go back and play. So far, it doesn't have much replay value. The basic story is about a bunch of colonists trying to settle an Earth-like planet having left Earth 83 years before. They will deal with an anomaly that they didn't anticipate that, let's just say, warp things a bit on the planet. They will also jump in the middle of a civil war between other colonist who had arrived before and alien inhabitants that want the planet for themselves. The main subject of the game, the player you create is supposed to discover the anomaly and help stop a civil war

while also finding the big bad guy who was changed by the anomaly. I can't say that the story is very original and in many ways feels like a Mass Effect game or even a Borderlands game. I honestly feel like, I'm playing a Borderlands game that's not cartoonish. That's not a bad thing, but it doesn't make this game new or unique. And when it comes to a first-person shooter, you may not necessarily care about the story, you may just want to shoot things. But if they were really trying to make this great story with a lot of fantastic lore, I feel like the developers fell short or maybe this is just the beginning for some great expansion packs. Maybe this is their way of making a game like the Division or Destiny. But I don't feel like gamers play this game for the story.

If you've ever played any of the Tom Clancy Division games, you will recognize right off the bat that Outriders use same mechanics from targeting to crouching and rolling to your next position. I actually like this because Tom Clancy games have some of the best mechanics, they're not always smooth, but they make more sense from a strategic standpoint. The one thing that Outriders gets right is that the mechanics are a lot smoother compared to a Tom Clancy game. You basically have four different classes that you can choose from and each one of them have their own unique abilities. That's cool, but in a multiplayer loot shooter, your biggest weapons are always going to be the SMG machine gun you pick up and keep modifying and a really good sniper rifle. I found myself using more of those than I did any special abilities although the special abilities do come in handy when you're facing the big bad guys or the Captain's. It helps to have their version of a drone gun or a rocket launcher. The biggest problem with Outriders is it's not always balanced when it comes to facing off against lots of bad guys. There are times when you can use the perfect strategy to get everybody down who are spread out especially using a sniper rifle and then there are times when they just all swarm on you and there's nothing you can do except keep moving and try to use special abilities to stay alive. I found myself facing that more and more as I got towards the end of the game and there were a few times I literally had to drop the game difficulty just to get through certain points. Maybe this can be improved with enough patches and updates, but coming right out of the gate it made the game hard to play. It basically took away from this great concept that the Developers had any game and then made it not fun to play. And it only gets worse when you're playing with friends and the bad guys are so relentless that you feel like you can't defeat anything even having a good strategy. You want a game to challenge you, but not be so difficult that you feel like you can't win and therefore don't want to keep playing the game. Unfortunately, that's what Outriders does.

The bottom line is, Outriders is an okay game, but had the potential to be great. Too many server issues and unbalanced gameplay especially in multiplayer makes it too easy just to walk away from this game and not give-a-damn anymore. I'm certainly glad that I did not pay for it and that it was a free Xbox Game Pass game, because it's worth playing on Game Pass. But as much as they want this to be a multiplayer game, right out of the gate they've limited what they could do. You can only have a 3-person squad. The gameplay gets more unbalanced in multiplayer compared to running the campaign solo, which makes me wonder whether they wanted to truly make this a multiplayer game a single player game. This is where it has all the potential in the world to be a space version of Tom Clancy's Division games or the next Destiny. Now I would still rather play Outriders compared to Destiny, but I found myself more and more, wanting to go back and play WarFrame than I did Outriders and that doesn't bode well for a new game. The one thing that I can praise the developers on is the smooth transition from targeting crouching and being able to get in a good line of sight with a sniper rifle, which is greatly approved over games like in the Tom Clancy series and Outriders is basically what they copied. It's a fun enough game that if you want to download it for free and play with some friends one afternoon, you won't be entirely disappointed. But if you paid full price for this game, you'll probably be demanding a refund. However, it's not a game that we're going to completely give up on. We at That Nerd Show are anxious to see what

improvements they might make on it. But then again, they could make a sequel or have some really good DLC and let that be the difference between something like Division 1 vs. Division 2 in the Tom Clancy series because when they made The Division 2 it was vastly superior the first game and that's the version we always go back and replay. So, we hope that there are enough Improvement made to make this better game than what it is, but right now it isn't worth \$60 and the best it can be is just an okay "free" game on Xbox Game Pass. Since it's a FREE game on Game Pass and I didn't have to pay for it, it's a 7 /10. If I had to pay for it then my grade would be much lower

K. Scott Cooper

So lets talk about Square Enix's lates cock-up Outriders, add it to the long list of good ideas turned horrible time for gamers. Now don't get me wrong there are some minor notes of delight scattered through out the curdled mass that is the game, the game world is interesting and the concept of scientifically horrifying storms that can give various stages of powers that is fatal for the rest of humanity. My biggest argument against this is why release a half finished game and expect people to pre-order it off you? It does not make any sense, you cant even argue it making sense from a business stand point because that like a burger shop saying pre order our mega burger that will kill you if you eat it all, only to give you a sample size of the possible idea of what the burger might be. Why do gamers keep allowing companies to pull this kind of hot garbage and not hold them accountable for what is in fact fraud, so my heart goes out to you if were inexperienced enough to pre-order this game and doubly so if you pre-ordered it through any Microsoft platform to watch it become instantly free on Game Pass. Which begs the questions off this conversation which could be a whole damn thing unto itself and I don't have enough time or drugs to currently rate getting involved with that happy horse shit. Instead lets discuss the massive storyline holes that don't really make sense and the fact that script writers and storyline writer clear don't know how to do basic math or how to cobble together a background narrative that can support the world the gamers are in. here are some of the biggest questions. What ended earth? Who paid and built the shops? Where was the worlds governments? Who made all the supplies needed for the massive undertaking that would be this project? Where did they go? How is this war going on at the rate in which it is with the limited population on Enoch? How is a seeming healthy but limited gene pool handling the stresses of this world and harsh world? The list goes on and on, you may be asking what any of this has to do with the game? Its simple, if Square Enix cant bother to employ writer that think through these narrative questions to solid structure and pair that with the ignorant rate in which the writers kill off NPCs, then how is the storyline or gameplay going to hold up to the hours of play they hope gamers will put in. it wont and that means that after most people play through the basic chunk of the stale and basic storyline, gamers wont have the want to put in that sort of time in. where the game has potential to be this interesting Diablo meets Borderlands meets The Division, but has all that potential sucked away by shit servers (Square Enix, it's a multiplayer game, this is day one shit you learn in school!), broken character builds, broken world system, and overall shit loot for hard work. So if you are looking for a game to play with your mates this summer, don't waste your time with Outriders. Maybe in 2 or 3 years the game might be worth revisiting, but until then I rate this game 3/10 and recommend looking into any of the number of amazing games that have been or are going to be brought out by Rebellion.



Beth Currier



This is a great Xbox Game Pass download. The difficulty settings of Outriders are encapsulated within the World Tier system, ranging from Tier 1 (Story) to Tier 15 (Madness). Each tier increases the level of enemies, increases the level of the loot (dropped by enemies and discovered in chests), and increases the likelihood that loot will be legendary level. XP gained from killing enemies is how the World Tier is leveled up; however, if you die then a small chunk of XP is lost. Once you unlock a World Tier it is permanently unlocked. You will never be bumped down a World Tier, there is a cap to the XP you can lose from dying. The great thing about this system is that you can change your World Tier at any time. If a boss fight is really just kicking you in the teeth then you can drop the World Tier by a level or two for that one fight and then bump it back up. You can always go back and play a mission at the higher World Tier once you have better gear because all missions and side missions are available for replay. Mod-ing and crafting gear is your best friend. Mods on your armor and guns will enhance your powers, the

amount of damage you give, and a whole host of other things. You want to make sure that the mods you're using are complimentary to the powers you have equipped. The game gives you every opportunity to get that edge but you need to be willing to keep your armor and guns updated. The gameplay takes a little bit to figure out when it comes to fighting enemies. One style of fighting does not work for all enemies. For humans, dodging can be useful because most of the human enemies will be in cover at a distance. For the Enoch beasts, dodging is not your friend. The beasts run at you and never stop so the best way to avoid them is sprinting. Sprinting keeps them at a distance so you can avoid damage while reloading or waiting for powers to reset. The Altered enemies require all of it, dodge, sprint, and cover are all going to benefit you once you figure out when to use them. Sometimes dying a couple times is useful because you can figure what type of enemies you'll encounter and when so you can plan out which guns and powers to use and when.

Overall, I don't think I would want to spend full price money on this game but if you have an Xbox then that's not an issue. As a free game on Game Pass, I believe this game has delivered on what it promised. It did have some egregious sever issues at the very beginning of its release, but at almost a month later those issues seem to be resolved. This game is definitely worth a play through, just know that its not played like every other game but finding that groove gets easier and easier the more you play. It's a good 7 /10

Average Final Grade: 6 / 10 (Adequate)

XBOX FREE GAMES: New Games with Gold for *May 2021*

GAMES WITH GOLD

With \$79.96 in value and 4000 in Gamerscore



May 1 – May 31
\$19.99 Free



May 16 – Jun 15
\$29.99 Free



May 1 – May 15
\$19.99 Free



May 16 – May 31
\$9.99 Free



The *May Games* with Gold lineup is here! On the Xbox One and Xbox Series X|S, battle to claim the throne in *Armello*, and uprising and take over the overworld in *Dungeons 3*. And for our classic lineup via [Backward Compatibility](#), put on the cowl and fight crime in *Lego Batman*, and rule and manage your island nation in *Tropico 4*. 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.

[Armello](#)

A grim fairytale board game comes to life, this swashbuckling adventure brings together the deep tactics of card games and the rich strategy of tabletop games, all combined into a character-building RPG. As the hero, you'll wage epic

battles, explore the vast kingdom, cast spells, and vanquish monsters, all with the ultimate goal of becoming the next King or Queen of Armello.

[Dungeons 3](#)

Help the Dungeon Lord succeed in conquest in this dungeon building, real time strategy game. Head the frontlines under the guidance of his chief lieutenant, the dark elf Thalya, and command the most terrifying army the world has ever seen. Choose among orcs, succubae, zombies, and more, and use every trick in the book to take down the do-gooders of the overworld once and for all!

[Lego Batman](#)

He is vengeance... He is the night... He is Lego Batman. Build, drive, swing, and fight your way through Gotham as the caped crusader and his sidekick, Robin. And, in a gameplay twist, play as the villains in story mode and help in their nefarious plans to take over the city.

[Tropico 4](#)

As El Presidente, the ruler of your small island nation, it is your job to gain the support of the people, negotiate with foreign superpowers, and even deal with any natural disasters which threaten your country. Test your political mettle and remember that everyone has an agenda, so while it's good to keep your friends close, it's better to keep your enemies closer.

[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 MAY 2021

PRODUCT	COMPANY	FORMAT	RELEASE DATE
Holostar Command: Quantum Alliance	Holostar Command	PC	01/05/2021
Small Press Tycoon	Inpatient Interactive	Mac, PC	02/05/2021
Golf Impact	Neowiz Games	An, iOS	03/05/2021
Dark Nights with Poe and Munro	D'Avekki Studios	PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	04/05/2021
Sayri: The Beginning	Crytivo	PC, XSX	04/05/2021
The Colonists	Mode 7 Games	NS, PS4, XO	04/05/2021
Almighty: Kill Your Gods	Runwild Entertainment	PC, PS4, XO	05/05/2021
Nongünz	Sindiecate Arts	PS4	05/05/2021
Pathfinder: Wrath of the Righteous	Owlcat Games Studio	PC	05/05/2021 (Open beta)
Demeo	Resolution Games	Oculus Rift, PC, Quest	06/05/2021
Football Drama	Open Lab	NS	06/05/2021
Galactic Crew II	Benjamin Rommel	PC	06/05/2021 (Early access)
Highrisers	Solar Powered Games	PC	06/05/2021
Nongünz	Sindiecate Arts	NS	06/05/2021
Skate City	Agens AS	NS, PC, PS4, XO	06/05/2021
Guillotine	Felipe Rodrigues	PC	07/05/2021
Nongünz	Sindiecate Arts	PC, XO	07/05/2021
Total Arcade Racing	CasualGames.nu	NS	07/05/2021
Hood: Outlaws & Legends	Focus Home Interactive	PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	10/05/2021
Bibi & Tina at the Horse Farm	GS2 Games	PS5	11/05/2021
Bless Unleashed	Bandai Namco	PC	12/05/2021 (Closed beta)
Retro Machina	Super.com	NS, PC, PS4, XO	12/05/2021
Hundred Days	Broken Arms Games	PC, Stad	13/05/2021

PRODUCT	COMPANY	FORMAT	RELEASE DATE
Lost Ruins	Altari Games	PC	13/05/2021
RWBY: Grimm Eclipse - Definitive Edition	Aspyr Media	NS	13/05/2021
Space Commander: War and Trade	7LEVELS	NS	13/05/2021
Sunblaze	Bonus Stage Publishing	PC	13/05/2021
Endocrisis	Endocrisis	PC	14/05/2021
Famicom Detective Club: The Girl Who Stands Behind	Nintendo	NS	14/05/2021
Famicom Detective Club: The Missing Heir	Nintendo	NS	14/05/2021
Galactic Mining Corp	Windybeard Games	PC	18/05/2021
Geminose: Animal Popstars	Majesco	NS	18/05/2021
Leisure Suit Larry - Wet Dreams Dry Twice	Assemble Entertainment		18/05/2021
Open Country	505 Games	PC	18/05/2021
SnowRunner	Focus Home Interactive	NS	18/05/2021
Aerial_Knight's Never Yield	Aerial_Knight	NS	19/05/2021
Elite Dangerous: Odyssey	Frontier Developments	PC	19/05/2021
Void Terrarium	NIS America	PS5	19/05/2021
Color Your World	Mindscape B.V.	NS	20/05/2021
Frozenheim	Hyperstrange	PC	20/05/2021 (Early access)
Grand Casino Tycoon	Aerosoft	PC	20/05/2021
Not Another Weekend	Dionous Games	PC	20/05/2021
Puzzle Bobble VR: Vacation Odyssey	Taito	Quest	20/05/2021
Knockout City	EA	NS	21/05/2021
Kowloon High-School Chronicle	PQube	NS	21/05/2021
Miitopia	Nintendo	NS	21/05/2021
Shin Megami Tensei® III Nocturne HD Remaster	SEGA	NS, PC, PS4	21/05/2021

PRODUCT	COMPANY	FORMAT	RELEASE DATE
An Airport for Aliens Currently Run by Dogs	Strange Scaffold	PC, XSX	25/05/2021
Biomutant	THQ Nordic	PC, PS4, XO	25/05/2021
Erica	Flavourworks	PC	25/05/2021
Shin Megami Tensei® III Nocturne HD Remaster	SEGA	NS, PS4	25/05/2021
Strangeland	Wadjet Eye Games	PC	25/05/2021
Wraith: The Oblivion - Afterlife	Fast Travel Games	HTC Vive	25/05/2021
Earth Defense Force: World Brothers	D3 Publisher	NS, PS4	27/05/2021
Horse Club Adventures	Wild River	NS	27/05/2021
Solasta: Crown of the Magister	Tactical Adventures	PC	27/05/2021
Warhammer Age of Sigmar: Storm Ground	Focus Home Interactive	NS, PC, PS4, XO	27/05/2021
Weaving Tides	Crytivo	Mac, NS, PC	27/05/2021
7 Years From Now	PQube	NS, PC	28/05/2021
Beautiful Desolation	The Brotherhood	NS, PS4	28/05/2021
World's End Club	NIS America	NS	28/05/2021



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR SQUAD LEADER!



ZOMBIE ARMY 4: DEAD WAR. EPIC FUN IN THE SHADOW OF 2020

By K. Scott Cooper

As we reach the closer to the halfway point of 2021, I would say that it is now safe to go back to do some recaps from the modern dark ages. Yep, I am about to toot the preverbal horn of Rebellion Developments, one of the studios/gaming devs that keep giving gamers, great games, and great titles. For the older gamers out there, we remember all of the glory that was Rogue Trooper, one of the best titles to come out of Rebellion today and everyone

knows of the ever-veiny victory that has become the Sniper Elite series. From which our article topic is born from, Zombie Army started as ever other cult classic does, it was a fun little simple idea that blew up on contact. It was that super effective hit that comes scream out of a unassuming Pokémon in a gym battle. Originally bonus standalone DLC for Sniper Elite V2, the popularity of the content was to grow into becoming its own spin off game of the Sniper Elite series (HEY! Activision, take some notes! You're F*@kin up!) in 2015 titled Zombie Army Trilogy that not just combined the two DLC releases, it also introduced the 3rd installment of the story as a whole game unto itself.

By the time 2020 rolls around Rebellion took the time to master craft a cult classic that not only makes gamers feel like they are getting an exciting take on an old theme but throws in those elements of cheeky 80's action films that thrived in the pop culture zombie craze of the era. Not to mention all the easter eggs, nods to past projects, and tributes to the great zombie titles of the past from various mediums. I personally get a kick from searching out the zombie hands that are hidden through-out the map, which I feel are nods to Evil Dead 2 and Idle Hands. Both films that have cult followings and are two must watch films if you in fact have a pulse, trust me when I say "older gamer" that you will feel like a kid again. The concept of the game is straight forward and simple, the story offers that fair balance of cheek mixed with horror, combat feels smooth and yet is chaotic in nature, and who doesn't enjoy that feeling of stomping a gore whole into the chest of that punk ass bitch Hitler. Yes, its as basic a white girl from Beverly Hills, but its "basic" done right. Not to mention you can run a full four body crew for the campaign, not just horde mode or DLC additional missions. The game can still be played solo and still offers a feeling of balanced combat despite the number of players in a party, which is in part to how Rebellion allows players to host and customize gameplay for the team assembled.



Rebellion has also done well to add additional DLC for Zombie Army 4: Dead War that furthers out the storyline after the main campaign has been completed and with-it giving players new ways to challenge themselves through added weapons and how those weapons are upgraded via combat requirements for the weapon. Giving veteran player that feeling of challenge and reward, balanced with their hard-earned abilities through perk leveling. Which is another thing I will have to give Zombie Army 4 credit for, is perks once unlock background upgrade despite if the perk is active or not. Which I think gamers can all agree is super enjoyable because it removes that feeling of the grind and chores, no one really likes grinding shitty perks one at a time. Now, I know what you are currently thinking, something is up because I am all sunshine and rainbows over a game, there are issues in the game and yeah, not being able to dodge is a touch maddening. But the all-in-all of Zombie Army 4 is that all its bugs are minor and so small its not even really A bother or even encountered 98% of the time. Yeah, the game is that fine polished and well combed over. So do you and your friends a favor, go out and get yourself a copy of this game, some nibbles and age-appropriate libations, because you are in for one hell of a time. No pun intended, but some-how happened. I give this game a solid 9/10 and will be giving this game many, many, hours of my life. I was wrong to think this game couldn't be good!



COMIC BOOK NEWS

Your Place To Talk!



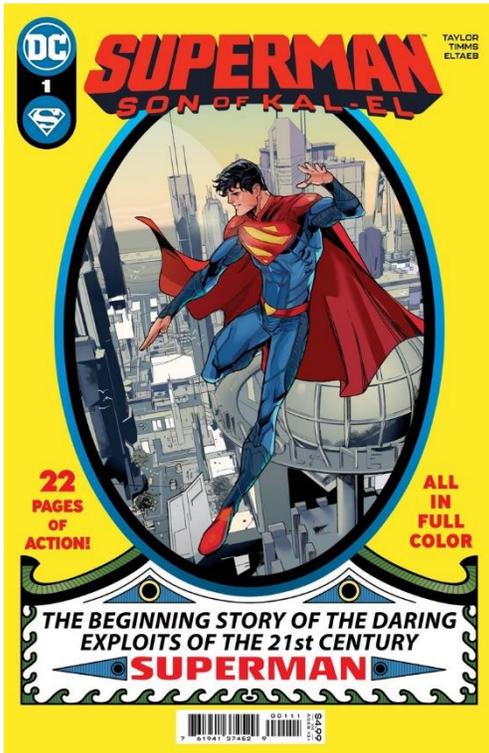
DISCORD



DC ANNOUNCES BIG CHANGES FOR THE SUPERMAN FAMILY IN JULY

Superman: Son of Kal-El by Tom Taylor and John Timms

Features Jonathan Kent Protecting the Earth as the new Man of Steel!



This July, DC has big changes in store for members of the Superman Family, as a new, yet familiar Man of Steel is entrusted to protect Earth, Supergirl pursues a murderous fugitive across the galaxy in a cosmic bus, and Clark Kent continues his fight to liberate Warworld, both on the front lines and with a new team of covert operatives.

Superman: Son of Kal-El

The action begins on July 13 as a new ongoing monthly series, *Superman: Son of Kal-El*, replaces the current *Superman* monthly title. Written by Tom Taylor (*Nightwing*, *DCeased*, *Suicide Squad*) with art by John Timms (*Young Justice*, *Harley Quinn*), this

series follows the new adventures of the son of Superman as he's entrusted with the protection of Earth. Jonathan Kent has experienced a lot in his young life. He's fought evil with Robin (Damian Wayne), traveled across galaxies with his Kryptonian grandfather, and lived in the future with the Legion of Super-Heroes, who were intent on training him for the day his father could no longer be Superman. There is a hole in the Legion's history that prevents Jon from knowing exactly when that will happen, but all signs point to it being very soon. It's time for the son to wear the cape of his father and continue the never-ending battle as a symbol of hope for his home planet.

Supergirl: Woman of Tomorrow

Arriving July 20, issue #2 of this eight-issue limited series by Tom King (*Batman*, *Batman/Catwoman*, *Mister Miracle*) and artist Bilquis Evely (*The Dreaming*, *Wonder Woman*) continues Kara Zor-El's journey of self-discovery and emergence from the shadow of her famous cousin.

Supergirl, Krypto, and their new friend Ruthye find themselves stranded with no way to pursue Krem, the murderous kingsagent. Each moment this fugitive roams free, the more beings come dangerously close to dying by his hand. There is no time to lose, so our heroes must now travel across the universe the old-fashioned way...by cosmic bus! Little do they know their journey will be a dark one, filled with terrors that not even the Maid of Might is prepared to face!

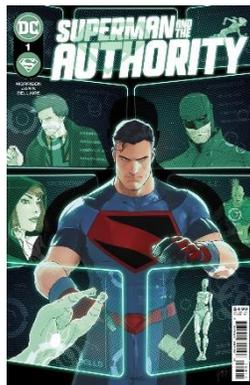
Action Comics #1033

Writer Phillip Kennedy Johnson and artist Daniel Sampere keep Superman on the front lines in his battle to aid a group of Warworld refugees in *Action Comics* #1033, on sale

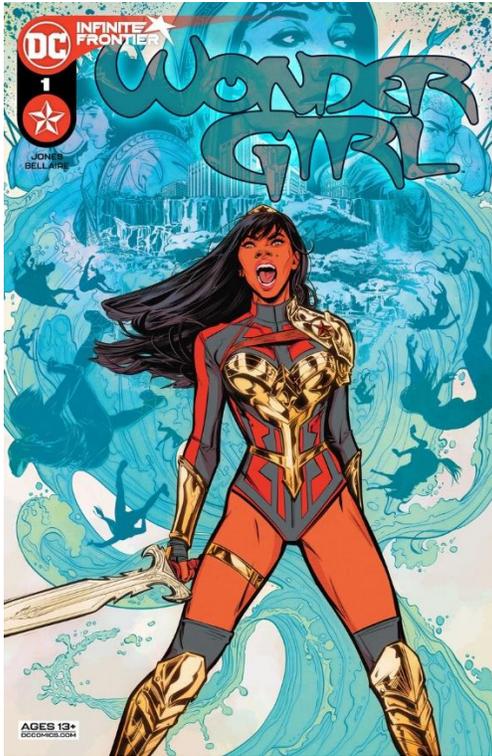
Tuesday, July 27. This issue takes the action to Atlantis and the Fortress of Solitude, where Warworld refugees have taken possession of dangerous Warworld tech, bringing it to Aquaman's undersea kingdom and risking an all-out war that even Superman may not be able to prevent. Meanwhile, some of the escaped Warworld prisoners have found the Fortress of Solitude...and along with it, Lois Lane! And in this 40-page blockbuster's second feature, Midnighter has gone deep into the Trojan compound and found a very unexpected guest whose path he crossed in *Future State*—none other than Shilo Norman, a.k.a. Mister Miracle!

Superman and the Authority

If Superman is to get to the bottom of what's happening on Warworld, he's going to need help, the kind of help that doesn't scream "Justice League." Fortunately, multi-Eisner Award-winning writer Grant Morrison (*Wonder Woman: Earth One*, *The Green Lantern*) and fan-favorite artist Mikel Janín (*Batman*, *Future State: Superman: Worlds of War*) have the solution in the form of a new four-issue limited series, *Superman and The Authority*. Launching July 20, this new team will be led by Manchester Black, and combine original members Midnighter and Apollo with new members Enchantress and Natasha Irons, as well as new versions of Lightray and O.M.A.C. This new team will have to learn to work together, and fast, as the Ultra-Humanite has formed his own team of villains to take out the Man of Steel. This new limited series will help launch an all-new status quo for Superman, setting up story elements that will impact both *Action Comics* and *Superman: Son of Kal-El* in the months to come.



'Wonder Girl' #1 by Joëlle Jones and Jordie Bellaire Launches May 18!



All covers for 'Wonder Girl' #1 through #3 now revealed – including TEAM variant by Rafael Grampá!

From her breakout appearances in *Future State: Wonder Woman* and *Infinite Frontier* #0, a young Yara Flor begins the search for her destiny and connection to the Amazons! In *Wonder Girl* #1 on May 18, acclaimed writer/artist Joëlle Jones makes a triumphant return to the character of Yara Flor! “The story picks up with a brief vignette of Yara saying goodbye to her aunt at the Boise airport,” says Jones, “and then it's straight on to Brazil! This trip opens up a huge world to her full of exciting characters. It's incredibly exciting for her, but full of challenges both fun and dangerous.” Raised in the far-off land of Boise, Idaho, Yara has always felt something has been missing from her life – and now she is headed to Brazil to find it. Little does she know her arrival will set off a series of events that will change the world of Wonder Woman forever. Her return has been prophesied, and with that prophesy comes the undivided attention of benevolent gods from pantheons beyond. Danger lurks around every corner – but is this young hero ready for her journey? Find out in a debut issue you absolutely cannot miss – including the moments where Hera chooses Yara as her new

champion and Yara receives her first golden, magical, gift from the gods! *Wonder Girl* #1 by writer, artist and cover artist Joëlle Jones, with colors by Jordie Bellaire and lettering by Clayton Cowles, arrives on May 18 with a variant cover by Bilquis Evely & Mat Lopes, a 1:25 variant cover by J. Scott Campbell & Sabine Rich and a TEAM variant by Rafael Grampá! *Wonder Girl* #2 arrives on June 15 with a main cover by Jones & Bellaire with a card stock variant cover by Will Murai. After receiving a sacred gift from the gods of Brazil, our hero seems destined for great things. Little does she know, another pantheon has been watching her as well. Hera, queen of the Greek gods, has chosen Yara to become her latest champion. But what need does the goddess have for a warrior of her own? Find out in this stirring second issue! *Wonder Girl* #3 arrives on July 20 with a main cover by Jones and Bellaire with a card stock variant cover by Matteo Scalera. Let the training commence! Now crowned Hera's champion, Yara needs to start acting like one. Enter Eros, the goddess's favorite grandson and god of love. Can Yara resist his charms long enough to master her unpredictable new powers? All the gods are watching...are you?

Yara Flor's heroic journey begins deep in the heart of Brazil's Amazon Rainforest!

Hera chooses her champion, and Wonder Girl receives her first gift from the gods!



Kick Off the Next Era of **MARVEL** 's Greatest Fighter with New 'Shang-Chi' #1 Covers - New era of **Shang-Chi** kicks off on *May 19!*



On May 19, award-winning writer Gene Luen Yang and rising star artist Dike Ruan continue their bold transformation of the Shang-Chi mythos in a brand-new ongoing series. To celebrate this exciting new chapter, SHANG-CHI #1 has a collection of spectacular variant covers by superstar artists like J. Scott Campbell, Superlog, Junggeun Yoon, and Benjamin Su. After the events of his last series, Shang-Chi has finally taken his place as the leader of the Five Weapons Society but using an evil secret organization as a force for good won't be easy. And it's about to get a lot harder when Marvel's biggest heroes start to question his motives! Each issue of the action-packed first arc will pit Shang-Chi against a different Marvel hero including Spider-Man, Captain America, and Wolverine. In addition, the series will introduce new villains

with sinister goals for Shang-Chi and his newfound family of warriors. The new series is perfect for longtime fans of the character and newcomers eager to learn more about Marvel's greatest fighter! See all the variants in the gallery below! And retailers, don't forget to order your copies by Monday, April 26!

SHANG-CHI #1

Written by GENE LUEN YANG

Art by DIKE RUAN

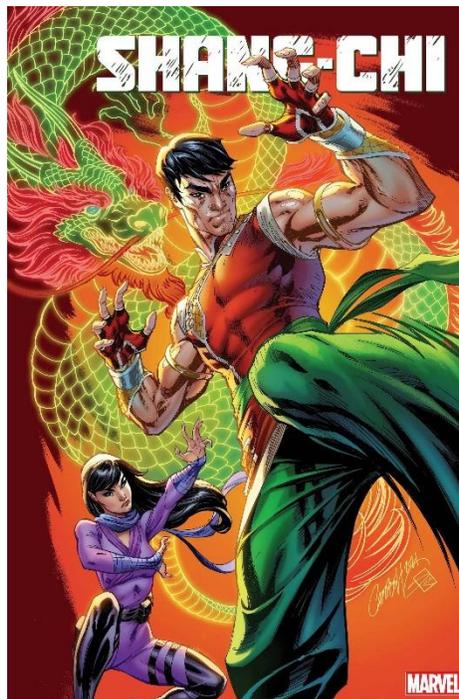
Variant Cover by J. SCOTT CAMPBELL (MAR210560)

Variant Cover by SUPERLOG (MAR210557)

Variant Cover by JUNGGEUN YOON (MAR210558)

Variant Cover by BENJAMIN SU (MAR210559)

On Sale May 19!



Olivier Coipel Spotlights Marvel's Brightest LGBTQ+ Stars on New 'Marvel's Voices: Pride' #1 Cover

Prodigy, Iceman, America Chavez, Karma, and more are front and center on this celebratory new cover!



This June, Marvel Comics is proud to honor Pride Month with a historic celebration of LGBTQ+ characters and creators in **MARVEL'S VOICES: PRIDE #1**. Marvel's first-ever queer-centered special will get a special

variant cover by legendary artist Olivier Coipel. Coipel's joyful piece depicts spotlighting Marvel's growing tapestry of LGBTQ+ characters, spotlighting the current stars of hit titles like **AMERICA CHAVEZ: MADE IN THE U.S.A.**, **X-FACTOR**, and **GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY**.

Since 1992's revolutionary **ALPHA FLIGHT #106** proudly confirmed Northstar's sexuality, Marvel has represented LGBTQ+ identities with a wide array of characters and stories. **MARVEL'S VOICES: PRIDE #1** will continue this legacy with thrilling adventures starring **Mystique** and **Destiny**, **Nico Minoru** and **Karolina Dean**, **Iceman**, **Daken**, **Karma**, and more. Plus, writer **Allan Heinberg** and artist **Jim Cheung** make their long-awaited return to Marvel Comics with a new chapter in the love story of their hit creations: **Wiccan** and **Hulking!** **MARVEL VOICES: PRIDE #1** will also revisit some of Marvel's

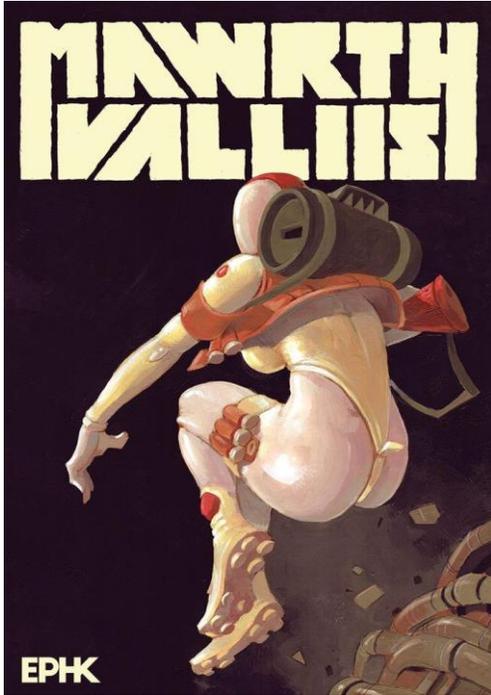
groundbreaking moments and explore the history of LGBTQ+ inclusion and storytelling at Marvel Comics.

Don't miss this extraordinary one-shot when **MARVEL'S VOICES: PRIDE #1** hits stands on June 23!

MARVEL'S VOICES: PRIDE #1
Written by **KIERON GILLEN**, **ALLAN HEINBERG**, **ANTHONY OLIVEIRA**, **STEVE ORLANDO**, **TINI HOWARD**, **LEAH WILLIAMS**, **MARIKO TAMAKI**, **TERRY BLAS**, **CRYSTAL FRASIER**, **VITA AYALA**, **J.J. KIRBY**, **LUCIANO VECCHIO & MORE!**
Art by **JAVIER GARRÓN**, **JIM CHEUNG**, **KRIS ANKA**, **JEN HICKMAN**, **PAULINA GANUCHEAU**, **JETHRO MORALES**, **BRITNEY WILLIAMS**, **J.J. KIRBY**, **LUCIANO VECCHIO**, **JAN BAZALDUA & MORE!**
Variant Cover by **OLIVIER COIPEL**
(APR210819)
On Sale 6/23



ORIGINAL GRAPHIC NOVEL **MAWRTH VALLIIS** PROMISES SCI-FI ADVENTURE THROUGH MARS' MYSTERIES THIS JULY



Writer/artist **EPHK** will take readers on a pulse-pounding, sci-fi journey through Mars' mysteries in the forthcoming *MAWRTH VALLIIS*. This original graphic novel will land in stores this July from Image Comics. This unique story is a fast-paced, 128-page, full-color, pocket-format experience all told in its original Martian language.

"[*MAWRTH VALLIIS* is] Inspired by my new found love for the storytelling format of Mexican historietas and my never ending adoration of classic '70s European sci-fi narratives," said **EPHK**. "I think anyone who's into classic sci-fi adventure but also interested in new ways to discover it, would enjoy reading *MV*." During a skirmish with an opposing Martian faction, a fighter pilot disobeys orders to pursue a fleeing foe. Guided by her determination and curiosity, she is led into a dangerous chase through Mars's forbidden valley where she will be

confronted with the red planet's darkest of secrets.

MAWRTH VALLIIS is a visceral, immersive experience perfect for fans of Jesse Lonergan's *Hedra* and Rick Remender and Matteo Scalera's *Black Science*. *MAWRTH VALLIIS* original graphic novel (ISBN: 978-1534320543, Diamond Code MAY210093) will be available on Wednesday, July 21 and in bookstores on Tuesday, July 27. It can be pre-ordered at your local comic book shop or independent bookstore via Bookshop or IndieBound, or it can be pre-ordered on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-a-Million, and Indigo. *MAWRTH VALLIIS* will also be available for purchase across many digital platforms, including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, comiXology, and Google Play.

HIGGINS & WATANABE TO LAUNCH CENTURIES-SPANNING EPIC SCI-FI/FANTASY SERIES – **ORDINARY GODS** – THIS JULY



On the heels of sales beast *Radiant Black*, Kyle Higgins courts divinity in upcoming collaboration with *The Flash*'s Felipe Watanabe, *Ordinary Gods*. This centuries-spanning epic sci-fi/fantasy series is set to launch from Image Comics in July. Perfect for fans of Greg Rucka and Leandro Fernández's *The Old Guard* and Donny Cates and Geoff Shaw's *God Country*, this monumental new series of mythic proportions will debut with an extra-length first issue. Each issue will also feature stunning, wraparound cover art from such artists as Dave Johnson, Nicola Scott, Declan

Shalvey, Rod Reis, Tula Lotay, Dan Panosian, and series artist Watanabe, all with colors by the Eisner Award winning Matt Wilson." Sometimes an idea is so good, it's impossible to ignore. Even if it initially seems impossible to *crack*, you circle back to it time and time again, bringing with you new life experiences and concepts learned from other projects. And even if it takes ten years before you're ready to announce the book to the world, that's okay. Because, as *Ordinary Gods* will be exploring, everything's connected for a reason," said Higgins in an exclusive scoop on the announcement with *SYFYWIRE*. "This is a book that I've been working on for many years, alongside an incredible cast of artistic partners and collaborators, to try to tell a generational action epic that spans eras, worlds, dimensions and the connections between them all. And that's just issue one." The Luminary. The Prodigy. The Brute. The Trickster. The Innovator. Five gods from a realm beyond our own, leaders in the "War of Immortals." At least, they were – before they were trapped, sent to a planet made into a prison, forced into an endless cycle of human death and reincarnation." After the first conversation with Kyle about the *Ordinary Gods*, I already knew I was facing

something powerful. And it happened to be a brilliant idea, which took a long way to get to my hands, though right on time to get the best of me," said Watanabe. "Getting closer to the release of *Ordinary Gods* just enhances the feeling I have of how amazing it has been being part of the process of creation of such universe, among such talented people, over the past few years. I mean, since the beginning of the story, there were so many cool things, with characters who seemed to be common like us, but who held within themselves the power that was unknown until then."

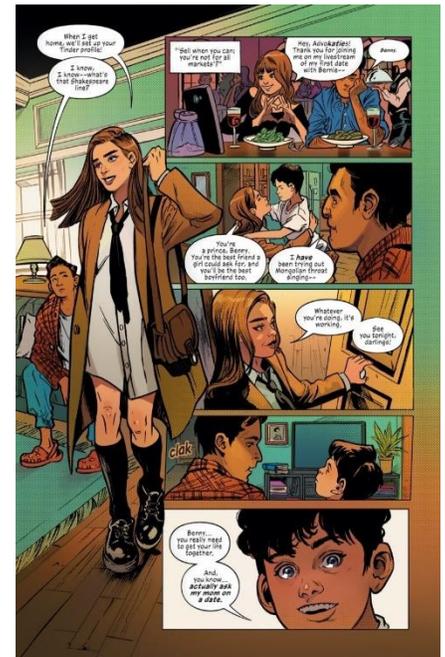
Ordinary Gods follows 22-year-old Christopher. He's got two loving parents and a 12-year-old sister. He works at a paint store. He's in therapy. He's one of the Five. Which means, in order to save everyone he cares about, Christopher will have to reconnect with his past lives and do the unthinkable: become a god again. *Ordinary Gods* #1 (Diamond Code MAY210060) will be available at comic book shops on Wednesday, July 7. *Ordinary Gods* #1 will also be available for purchase across many digital platforms, including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, comiXology, and Google Play.

GAME OF THRONES SUPERSTAR EMILIA CLARKE LAUNCHES IMAGE COMICS SERIES **M.O.M.: MOTHER OF MADNESS WITH** MARGUERITE BENNETT & LEILA LEIZ THIS JULY



Multiple Emmy award nominated actress Emilia Clarke (*Game of Thrones*, *Me Before You*) will debut her first comic book series – the forthcoming *M.O.M.: Mother of Madness* – at Image Comics this July. This new, three-issue superhero series will be co-written by the GLAAD Media Award nominated Marguerite Bennett (*Josie and the Pussycats*, *Angela*) with art by Leila Leiz (*Horde*). In *M.O.M.: Mother of Madness*, the mayhem begins with Maya, under-the-weather scientist by day, over-the-top superhero by night, and badass single mom 24/7. “We’re always calling mothers superheroes, and I’m like, what if they were? What if they legitimately were superheroes?” said Clarke in an exclusive scoop on the announcement with *Entertainment Weekly*. “Maya has had a very hard life, and she finds herself in a place where everything that makes her unique, she hates and is ashamed about. It’s only in the discovery of her powers that she finds her true acceptance of who she is.” *Deadpool* action collides with *Fleabag* comedy when Maya

activates her freakish superpowers to take on a secret sect of human traffickers. Each installment of the series will be an extra-length issue filled to the brim with comedy and chaos. *M.O.M.: Mother of Madness #1* will showcase a cover A by Jo Ratcliffe, a renowned artist whose work has been featured by a number of globally recognized brands and magazines including the likes of *Vogue UK* and *Juxtapoz*. The Cover B for this first issue will be provided by Eisner award winning Jen Bartel, whose clients have included such global brands as Netflix, MONDO, Adidas, LucasFilms, and more. *M.O.M.: Mother of Madness #1* by Ratcliffe (Diamond Code MAY210009) and *M.O.M.: Mother of Madness #1* by Bartel (Diamond Code MAR218051) will be available at comic book shops on Wednesday, July 21. *M.O.M.: Mother of Madness #1* will also be available for purchase across many digital platforms, including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, comiXology, and Google Play.



The

INTERD

Opinion

**Change fees?
Who am I, some
other airline?**



Alphonso T. 

Southwest 

Fare differences may apply.

BEHOLD! A GODZILLA TRILOGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

By Alex Moore



As a child, I grew up watching and enjoying the experience of certain iconic figures in the entertainment world. The first one that comes to mind is probably Freddy Krueger, followed by Batman, or, the original Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. However, I DO distinctly remember the first time (as far back as my memories can recollect) that I watched a Godzilla film and it was equally fun to view. He was fighting a giant blob, officially known in The States as the “Smog Monster” (and in Japan as “Hedorah”). Yes, the movie was around 20 years old by the time I first saw it, but it left a lasting impression on me, especially that scene in which Godzilla could be seen mounting a rocket of some kind and riding through the air to save Japan from potential destruction. For the record, *Godzilla vs. the Smog Monster* is widely considered a bit of a mixed bag in the minds of most Godzilla fans, but it was once cited as a personal favorite of the franchise by none other than famed film critic Roger Ebert, for what it is worth.

Somewhere in the mix of my early childhood memories is the experience of playing *Godzilla: Monster of Monsters* on the Nintendo

Entertainment System (NES). Although Mothra was a playable character, as well, there was nothing better than swinging that tail and breathing radiant beams throughout the space planets and against all of the great and legendary foes from the history of the movie franchise. In a way, playing this game, even with all of its flaws, opened a door to the curiosity I began to experience, surrounding Godzilla. You see, in the annals of time, Godzilla had become a creative outlet for some filmmakers in Japan and each story and character seemed to represent a symbol of what was going on at that time, not just in Japan, but in America, as well. I only wish, in retrospect, that I had explored this aspect a bit more-closely when I was much younger, but I digress...For those of us in these United States, there was little to latch onto, directly, as far as Godzilla goes, in the realm of traditional theater experiences, for several decades. Yes, there was an American tread of the original *Gojira* movie, which improved upon that story greatly, but did not lead to any additional films independently made in this country. It is understandable as to why, since this was a major production from a Japanese studio. However, in 1998, Godzilla made his debut as an American-made production, with permission from Toho. Despite all the great efforts to even get this project off the ground, the results were not too positive as far as critical reaction goes. It was made on a large budget of something like \$140M and earned back around \$380M, worldwide. Still, it would seem that the general, negative consensus was too much to warrant a direct sequel and, so, the American “franchise” was put on hiatus, if you will... for 16 years!!! Fast-forward to 2014 and we received a reboot of the previous American-made movie, *Godzilla*. I must say that it was a success in terms of its quality, overall. The effects had always been strong, but the same could NOT be said for the story. Despite my recollection of enjoying the film, I cannot recall too many of the actual details, some seven years later. So, how good can it truly be? Well, improving upon a disastrous entry is not saying as much as I had originally thought, apparently. Did I think it would lead to any sequels? I do not remember that, either, but when I found out about a direct sequel upcoming in 2019, I was pumped. Somewhere between the years of 2014 and 2019, my nostalgic interest in the iconic character had grown. So, even though I typically enter a movie theater with zero to little expectations (for the sake of objectivity), the eight-year old child in me had taken over just long enough to feel somewhat excited...Wow, was I ever let down!!! The stupid dialogue annoyed me, the overacting infuriated me and the unimpressive special effects underwhelmed me, all at the same time. I can picture specific moments a lot more-easily, but not for any good reasons. Upon viewing *Godzilla: King of the Monsters*, I found myself far less enthusiastic for another return of the titular character. I was expecting something of a rehash of *Destroy All Monsters*, but received something far below satisfaction for either my grownup self OR my inner childhood state.

With all that said, I returned to my neutral expectancy, as a critic, as I prepared to watch another reboot, of sorts. THIS time, it would be of the 1960s classic, *King Kong vs. Godzilla*, though no connection to that movie has really been claimed by the filmmakers of *Godzilla vs. Kong*. It should be noted that there is an additional movie from 2017, *Kong: Skull Island*, which is directly connected to this film, as well. With the combination of the previous two Godzilla entries, these four films now make up the newly-minted multimedia franchise known as “MonsterVerse.” There is no doubt that the extended success of Marvel and DC is what led to this creation. Specific details within the latest film seem to borrow from those franchises, such as the inclusion of a special, mythological axe, wielded by King Kong, himself. I was pleased to keep my expectations in check. For the first half of the movie, I was largely unimpressed. I thought the attempts at comic relief were weak and tiresome and I saw virtually nothing in the story that looked original. I only found myself thinking aloud, since I was watching from home, “This isn’t quite as bad as the previous movie.” To my somewhat happy chagrin, things did turn around during the second half of the film. Godzilla began to play a larger role in the overall story and King Kong started to behave more like a strong protagonist. I found myself wondering if these new films are meant to make any sociopolitical statements, like the old Toho productions often did. Then I realized that my fundamental problem was that these monsters (or “kaijus,” as they are known in Japan) are not playing in the same type of movies as they used to. You see, Toho tended to take on a comedic tone with the bulk of their Godzilla films, while also making some serious points, which I find clever, in retrospect. I have no knowledge of there being a similar approach in the classic Universal King Kong movies, though I can definitely point to some fairly obvious messages from the yesteryears. However, the tone was never as light. It was typically tragic and dramatic, which is more along the lines of what this new entry was trying to grasp, at least in the first half of the film. That did not strike my fancy and I would prefer it if the future MonsterVerse movies could go for a more nostalgic, lighter tone, in a more consistent kind of way. Of course, I am saying this from the point-of-view of a Godzilla fan and the King Kong fans might have something to say about that, as they should. Actually, I have one idea that I think could make for an interesting premise, though I am at least halfway joking, as well: why not go to the source material of the 1988 NES video game that I mentioned earlier and make a new Godzilla entry based on that? Perhaps this could turn into the reboot sequel that I was hoping for a couple of years ago. After all, making movies based on video games has become a highly marketable sub-genre of moviemaking, right? They are finally gaining some respectably as real films, and hey, 2023 will mark the 25th anniversary of its original release in Japan. I guess they had better hurry things up, huh? What more can I say? Dreams are what sometimes make real life tolerable. I promise you, I was only inspired by a cheesy sports film from the 1990s when I thought of saying that. What is next? A remake of our favorite sports movie(s)? That might truly be the pinnacle of ultimate cash grabs in Hollywood. Oh, no! I might be giving them more ideas!!!!...



XBOX IS FINALLY #1

THE "GAME CHANGING" EVENT THAT PUSHED THE CONSOLE TO THE TOP

BY MARCUS BLAKE



A constant theme in the gaming industry is what we call game changers. It's when something is so profound that it changes the way the gaming industry will be for the future. It can be as simple as a new game and how its played or a new console or new hardware for a gaming PC. The next generation of consoles are always game-changers because they're bigger and better than the previous generation, that's just a given! But one areas that never gets talked about enough when it comes to a game changer is exclusive titles. On April 20, 2021, we experienced a monumental event that will define the Xbox console going forward. For the first time in its history, MLB The Show, which had previously been an exclusive title to PlayStation was available to Xbox gamers. And to make things even better for Xbox gamers, MLB the Show21 became available on Xbox Game Pass for subscribers. I have played MLB the Show since it first came out and it felt strange to play it on Xbox, but I was Overjoyed because I have become more of an Xbox player compared to PlayStation in recent years. But the fact that I got to download MLB the Show21 on Game Pass without having to pay full price for is the epitome of a game changer!

For years, one thing that made PlayStation so attractive in the console industry was the fact they always have the best exclusive titles including one of the best sports games ever made. I have to admit, I'm still a PlayStation guy. I want to be a PlayStation gamer because the last three out of five exclusive PlayStation titles have been Game of the Year at That Nerd Show. Playing MLB the Show every year on PlayStation has been one of the highlights every year as a gamer. As a huge baseball fan, it's the one sports game I can completely playthrough and gives me more satisfaction than all the rest except maybe NHL. But the fact that I don't have to play it on PlayStation anymore and the best version I've ever played is on the

Xbox Series X proves just how far Xbox has come in the console Wars. Now that MLB the Show is on Xbox, PlayStation can't claim superiority. It can't be number one because it's losing one of one of the best exclusive titles it ever had. To say that MLB the Show going to Xbox will send shock waves throughout the gaming industry is a bit of an understatement. When it comes to gaming tournaments, we've always felt that we had to have both consoles to really get all the games that we want to have for the best tournaments. That is no longer the case for there is no game that we need that is solely on a PlayStation anymore. Having MLB the Show for Xbox was the last nail in the coffin to completely doing away with PlayStation for gaming tournaments. There's no reason for us to go back because every fighting game and every sports game is now available on Xbox. But it isn't just having the best baseball game ever made on Xbox, it's the fact that it's available on Xbox Game Pass.

For the last couple years, are continuing conversation with That Nerd Show has been what is the best value in gaming. For tournaments if we can get every fighting game and sports we're ever going to use Xbox Game Pass because they have a variety of great fighting games and EA Play has pretty much every sports game included in the game pass, we get all that we need for gaming tournaments at one low price. Now we have MLB the Show and all at a low price of \$14.99 a month, which also includes Xbox Gold. For us to have a Game Pass subscription and a premium subscription through PlayStation, we would be paying \$20 a month and that doesn't even include being able to get MLB the Show21. We still have to pay for it if we play the game on PlayStation. So. this is it for Xbox, this is how they claim victory in the gaming industry as being the best value not only for home consoles, but for gaming tournaments. It was one thing to have the better Hardware as we explored at That Nerd Show in a featured article, but all the games that we could possibly want to play except for a few exclusive titles, we can get them all on Xbox. And for us when it comes to gaming tournaments, there's no turning back, we won't have a PlayStation anymore, it's all just Xbox. I never thought that I would ever say that. I had only considered getting an Xbox years ago because I wanted to play Halo and I used a bunch of Trade Credit from old games at a GameStop just to get a refurbished first-generation Xbox. It was worth it. I have enjoyed Xbox even if I like the exclusive titles on PlayStation better. But I have enjoyed it more especially with the new console and the Ultimate Game Pass for basically \$15 a month. Don't get me wrong, I still love PlayStation and we'll still own one. I love my PlayStation 5, but it just may be the last PlayStation I ever buy for personal use because everything that I want to do in gaming is on Xbox especially for a gaming tournament. Oh and let's not forget that MLB the Show21 is probably the best version ever made even if it isn't perfect and for the first time ever it has cross-play capabilities among different consoles so I can still play my cousin who has it on PlayStation in an online game. When we look back in the future at that defining moment when Xbox finally surpassed PlayStation, it won't be because they made better Hardware. Unfortunately, PlayStation still has better name recognition. But that defining moment will be when the best exclusive sports game finally became available on Xbox and on Xbox Game Pass. When the CEO of PlayStation was asked why they were allowing MLB the Show to be available on Xbox and their game pass, but not making it available PlayStation's gaming subscription, he simply said that he didn't see it as a viable option. Well, he couldn't have been more wrong and now because of this one game being available on Xbox, it is the beginning of the end for PlayStation being the number one console on the market. It may be the best-selling console because of name recognition, but it will no longer have the best value or the best hardware or even the best exclusive titles. So there you have it gamers, Xbox is number one and while it has been a long time coming, it was made official on April 20,2021 when Gamers like me were able to download MLB the Show 21 on Xbox Game Pass. I won't tell Gamers not to buy the new PlayStation, but I can say that if you have to choose between the new Xbox are the new PlayStation, choose Xbox. As a PlayStation guy that's hard to say, but there's no denying the truth.



Now, it's time for me to play some more MLB the Show 21 on Xbox!

“I Thought This Movie Was Supposed to be Funny!”

THE THUNDER FORCE FILM REVIEW

BY ALLISON COSTA



I can't believe what I just watched. It wasn't good. The movie fell flat, big time. In April, Melissa McCarthy's new super hero movie, "Thunder Force" dropped on Netflix. Despite it starring the hilarious talents of Melissa McCarthy and Octavia Spencer, sadly this super hero farce just falls flat on the comedic spectrum. Although it does have some funny moments and one-liners, overall the movie is just too ridiculous and not clever enough to gain much of a positive opinion. Even the addition of the hysterical Jason Bateman, does nothing for the film as they make him *spoiler* half-crab/half-man--which isn't funny, it's just weird. I get that they were going for that ridiculous element in an effort to be more comedic, but they just overshot. It was definitely ridiculous, but it was not funny.

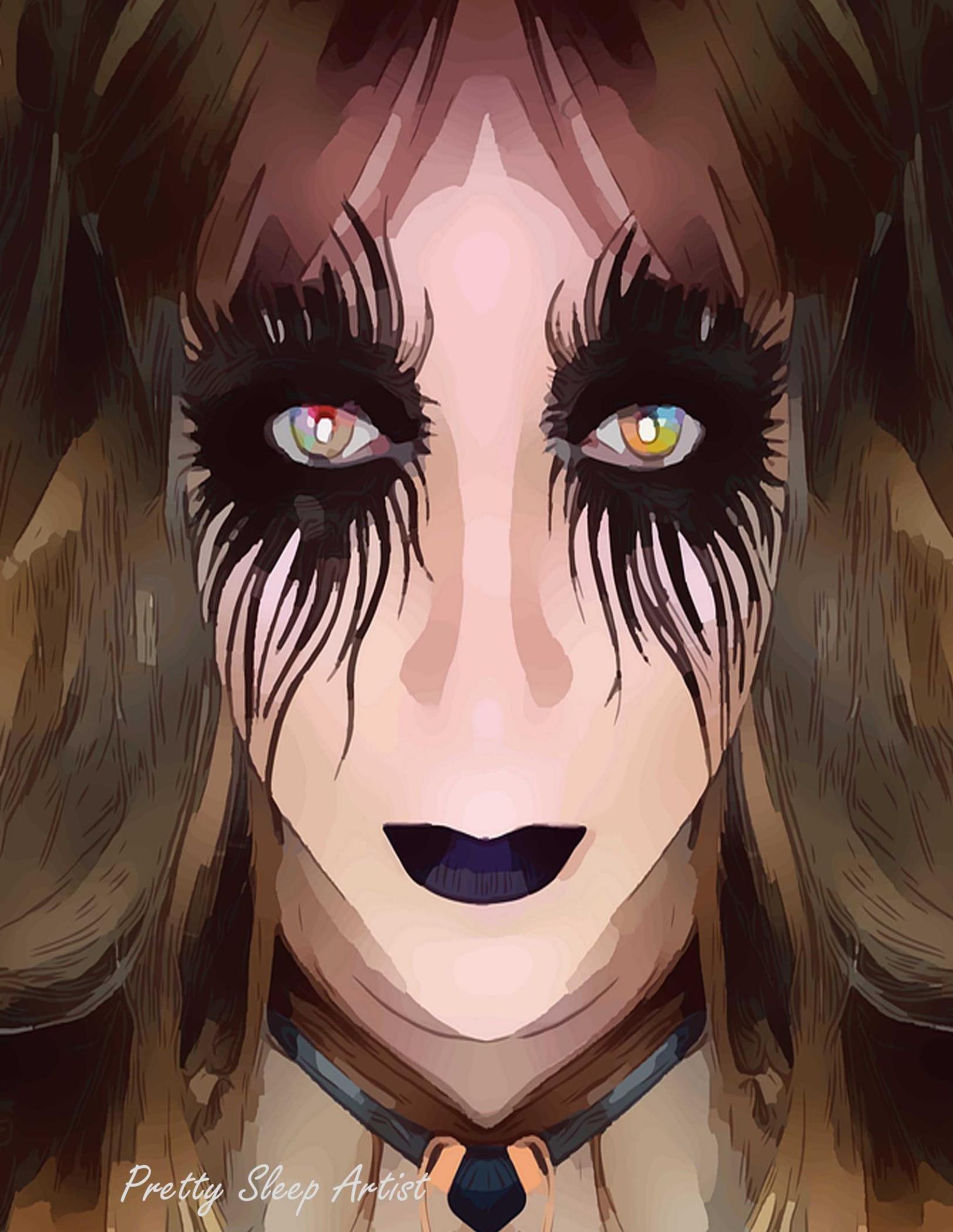
The movie has a decent premise, rogue super-villains and a need for super heroes, and it could have ended up being humorous, but there was just too much cheesiness and not enough story or depth to make it engaging. Even the funny moments were swallowed up in the lame puns, over-the-top physical humor and straight up stupidity. The idea of people being given super powers is definitely intriguing (and has been used many times in other formats for a very engaging story!), but it just didn't work this time. If we compare "Thunder Force" to a similar movie, say "Shazam!", we can see how this kind of plot and style could go well. Although "Shazam" was not an amazing film, it had a similar plot and was at least interesting to watch. Again the main character was given super powers by accident. Again it was supposed to be funny and comedic and have a lot of silly elements. And again there was supposed to be some decent action and story plot. It was also a family-friendly film and although it had humor, it was not over-the-top cheesy and ended up being fairly cute. If we compare the two films, although "Thunder Force" had bigger names, it was ONLY the big name stars that give this film any credence at all. Were it not for McCarthy, Spencer and Bateman, this film would not even have been made and would immediately be tossed in the junk pile.

Sorry Ladies! I really, really, wanted to love it! It should have been funnier with that level of comedic talent, but I can only give it 3 out of 10





Space_Dragon



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IT STILL SNOW'S IN APRIL!

REMEMBERING PRINCE

By Chad Womack



We had it Great Didn't We! With this line from the often derided "Under The Cherry Moon" Prince's 1986 cinematic follow up 2 his spectacularly successful debut film "Purple Rain", Prince's character, Christopher Tracy, dies in his lover Mary Sharon's arms, cueing a powerful moment on the soundtrack. As the somber, mournful chords of the heart wrenching ballad "Sometimes It Snows In April" emanate from a solo piano, followed soon after by an acoustic guitar and Prince's own voice, intoning an almost choir like intro. This introduced us to a song that, while extremely effective in the moment, strikes an ever deeper meaning now that Prince has left us all behind and moved on to a greater plane of existence.

While sitting in Studio 3 at Sunset Sound in L.A., Prince, Wendy & Lisa scratched the song out of a tune Prince had written earlier in his career but never got around to using, thinking it would fit the mood and tone of the moment in the film when his onscreen persona met an untimely end. The tune came together rather quickly, as was common 4 Prince and his to closest collaborators at the time...Wendy & Lisa always seemed to bring out the absolute best out of Prince almost effortlessly. Prince tended to record songs with deep spiritual meaning on Sundays, and this song was no exception. What DOES make this Sunday recording exceptional is the date itself. April 21st, 1985. 31 years to the exact day that Prince transitioned.



As most of the world reacted 2 the shocking news that Prince was no longer with us on that cold day in 2016, radio stations exploded with an avalanche of his most beloved songs, particularly "Purple Rain" as landmarks all across the globe bathed in a royal purple glow, but for the fans that loved him the most, they were drawn to the beautiful ballad from "Parade - Music From The Motion Picture: Under The Cherry Moon" as it detailed the story of losing a dear friend "soon after a long fought civil war" and springtime reminding him of his friends tears...that no one could cry the way HE did. It truly became the song that Prince's fans rallied behind, much like Lennon's "Imagine" did when he was taken at such an early age. The chorus sums up our feelings the best... "Sometimes I wish...that life was never-ending...but all good things they say...never last."

So sad...but SO true.

Hard to believe it has already been 5 years...

And love isn't love...until it's past."

R.I.P. Prince

1958-2016

KoRn Confirms They Wrote a New Album During Lockdown



KoRn worked on a new album during lockdown, the band's frontman Jonathan Davis has confirmed. The band last released an album in 2019 with 'The Nothing'. That record was their 13th studio album since forming in 1993. Speaking to *Kerrang!*, Davis said the group had used the enforced downtime brought about by

The coronavirus pandemic to work on a new album. "We just got done writing a record," he said. "The band is in different spots all over the place now, too. I'm in Bakersfield, a couple of guys are in LA and a couple of guys are in Nashville. "It's like an act of God to get us all together to do anything. We have to plan that all out. I'm sure there are a bazillion

other bands with new music to release, too. In the meantime, let's just go out, play live and have some fun."

Reported by NME.com

<https://www.nme.com/news/music/korn-confirm-wrote-new-album-during-lockdown-2926836>

Manic Street Preachers say new album sounds like **"The Clash playing Abba"**



Manic Street Preachers have shared some new details about their upcoming new album. The Welsh rock veterans had previously confirmed that they had been at work on the follow-up to 2018's acclaimed 'Resistance Is Futile' during last year's lockdown. After sharing a list of nine potential potential song titles back in January, followed by an Instagram post teasing a few lyrics, the band have now given another update on their 14th LP. Speaking in the latest print edition of *MOJO* (via *Contact Music*), the Manics recalled their time recording the album at Rockfield studios in Wales last year. "I recorded my entire fucking bass parts with a mask on,"

said bassist and lyricist Nicky Wire. "But it's the most rehearsed we've ever been for an album." Describing the sound of the album, he added: "The catchphrase was 'like The Clash playing Abba' - The Clash when you felt they could play in any style." "It's quite a subtle record. There are, always, guitars, but it's very restrained for us, and really tasteful," he continued. "It's the usual thing, miserable lyrics and great pop." On the first day of recording at Rockfield it began to snow; frontman, James Dean Bradfield took this as a good omen. "It was snowing. And when the first snowflake came down and you wake up to a beautiful blanket of snow, it was, 'Yeah, this is going to be a really good record,'" he said. The pair went on to explain that the songs they laid down were influenced by the ongoing **coronavirus** pandemic. "I had a very smug idea of how I saw the world, but I've realised I'd undervalued absolutely everything in my life," said Bradfield. "I think that's what the album became about," he continued. "That's what the music did, it found a way out of lockdown." "There's a lot of exploring the internal galaxies of the mind on this album, and

understanding," said Wire. "It didn't feel like the right time for spite. It's more internalised, bathed in a comforting melancholia, rather than a self-defeating one." He added: "I certainly feel like these are some of the best words I've ever written." Meanwhile, the Manics will play their rescheduled Cardiff Arena shows for the NHS in July 2021. The concerts were originally due to take place this December at Cardiff Motorpoint Arena, with one free for healthcare workers and the other a fundraiser for health service charities. They've also announced more details of a show at at Halifax Piece Hall on Friday September, with support from British Sea Power, Adwraith and The Anchoress. The latter recently released acclaimed second album 'The Art Of Losing', featuring guest vocals and guitar from Bradfield.

Reported by NME.com

<https://www.nme.com/news/music/manic-street-preachers-say-new-album-sounds-like-the-clash-playing-abba-2927272>



Pretty Sleep Art



XBOX

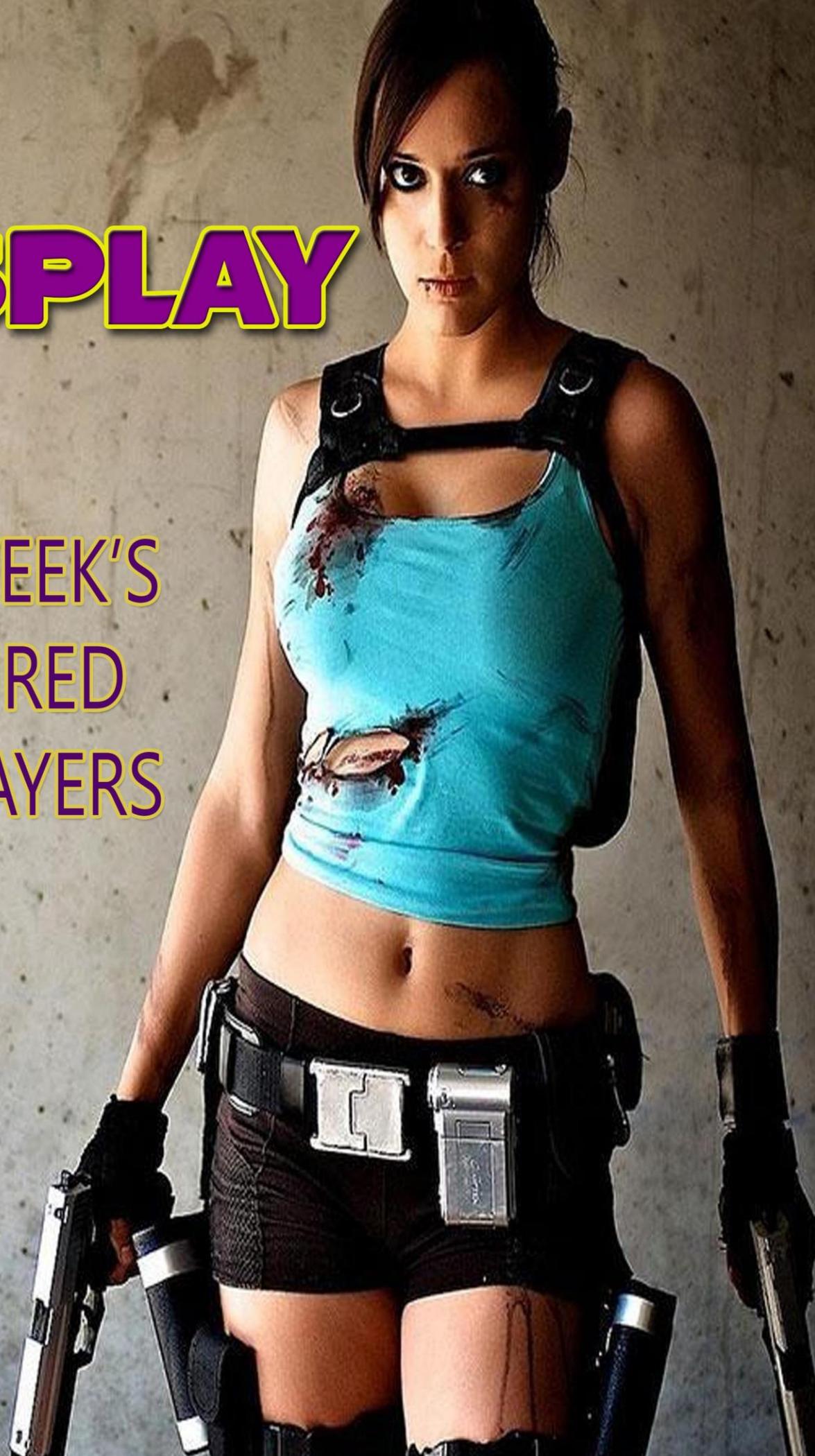
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ToxiCassie

ABOUT DFW WONDER WOMAN



IN 2016 I started volunteering as Wonder Woman in Dallas Children's Hospital. Towards the middle of the year I was at an event and was amongst Cosplayers who volunteered for a charity event. I thought hmmm this looks fun. So I applied to that charity and was accepted. In 2017 is when I went to my first ComicCon and brought 3 obscure Wonder Woman builds. I was bit by the bug for sure. Started doing mashups and other characters. Today I have over 60 versions of Wonder Woman that I portray as well as other characters. I recently debuted The Cheetah (comic book version), and Queen Atlanna. In my arsenal 3 versions of Captain Marvel, Princess Leia, Sleeping Beauty and soon BlackWidow new movie version. One of my favorite characters is Diana The Wonder Fish where I have taken my mermaid cosplay and mashed it up with Wonder Woman. Nothing better than being a

WonderFish. I adore cosplay and how you can bring your artistry. This world has enabled me to be creative with photoshoots. That is a huge area that I get to bring some magic to the character with the help of talented photographers. For my day job I am a Director of Business Development for a Digital Transformation company. In my free time I run a charity Cause to Play where we suit up for the sick, needy, disabled and children with special needs in the DFW area.

INTERVIEW

How did you get into cosplay?

Was volunteering for Dallas children's hospital as Wonder Woman and found a charity during that time and learned about cosplay.

Who is your favorite character to cosplay and why?

Wonder Woman because she is just good. She is one of the only superheroes that nothing happened to her to cause her to have powers. She was born with innate abilities and has been driven by her inner good to fight for those who cannot fight for themselves. Who doesn't dig her lasso?!?!?!?

What tips do you have on making a costume?

Well, I am not crafty. I commission my suits out. My tips are to do your research and find a maker who can do the suit justice and make it for your measurements.

What is your favorite memory of being a cosplayer?

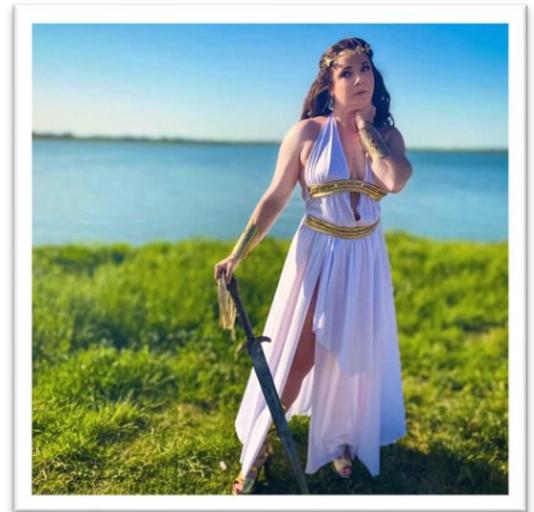
For me my first convention. I was being asked for pics throughout the day. I had 2 sisters who were so wanting me to do an action pose. Was my very first one. I will never forget the joy and excitement they had that I was "playing" with them.

What advice do you have for fans getting into cosplay?

Do it for you! If it makes you happy, that is all that matters. Have fun. This world is a blast. Don't be shy. and ask for help if you need it. This community is rich with tips and knowledge.

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

That is so easy. Lasso of Truth!





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MARS has right ingredients for present-day microbial life beneath its surface, study finds...



NASA's *Perseverance* rover begins its search for ancient life on the surface of Mars, a new study suggests that the Martian subsurface might be a good place to look for possible present-day life on the Red Planet. The study, published in the journal *Astrobiology*, looked at the chemical composition of Martian meteorites -- rocks blasted off of the surface of Mars that eventually landed on Earth. The analysis determined that those rocks, if in consistent contact with water, would produce the chemical energy needed to support microbial communities similar to those that survive in the unlit depths of the Earth. Because these meteorites may be representative of vast swaths of the Martian crust, the findings suggest that much of the Mars subsurface could be habitable. "The big implication here for subsurface exploration science is that wherever you have groundwater on Mars, there's a good chance that you have enough chemical energy to support subsurface microbial life," said Jesse Tarnas, a postdoctoral researcher at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory who led the study while completing his Ph.D. at Brown University. "We don't know whether life ever got started beneath the surface of Mars, but if it did, we think there would be ample energy there to sustain it right up to today." In recent decades, scientists have discovered that Earth's depths are home to a vast biome that exists largely separated from the world above. Lacking

sunlight, these creatures survive using the byproducts of chemical reactions produced when rocks come into contact with water. One of those reactions is radiolysis, which occurs when radioactive elements within rocks react with water trapped in pore and fracture space. The reaction breaks water molecules into their constituent elements, hydrogen and oxygen. The liberated hydrogen is dissolved in the remaining groundwater, while minerals like pyrite (fool's gold) soak up free oxygen to form sulfate minerals. Microbes can ingest the dissolved hydrogen as fuel and use the oxygen preserved in the sulfates to "burn" that fuel. In places like Canada's Kidd Creek Mine, these "sulfate-reducing" microbes have been found living more than a mile underground, in water that hasn't seen the light of day in more than a billion years. Tarnas has been working with a team co-lead by Brown University professor Jack Mustard and Professor Barbara Sherwood Lollar of the University of Toronto to better understand these underground systems, with an eye toward looking for similar habitats on Mars and elsewhere in the solar system. The project, called Earth 4-D: Subsurface Science and Exploration, is supported by the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research. For this new study, the researchers wanted to see if the ingredients for radiolysis-driven habitats could exist on Mars. They drew on data from NASA's Curiosity rover and other orbiting spacecraft, as well as compositional data from a suite of Martian meteorites, which are representative of different parts of the planet's crust. The researchers were looking for the ingredients for radiolysis: radioactive elements like thorium, uranium and potassium; sulfide minerals that could be converted to sulfate; and rock units with adequate pore space to trap water. The study found that in several different types of Martian meteorites, all the ingredients are present

in adequate abundances to support Earth-like habitats. This was particularly true for regolith breccias -- meteorites sourced from crustal rocks more than 3.6 billion years old -- which were found to have the highest potential for life support. Unlike Earth, Mars lacks a plate tectonics system that constantly recycles crustal rocks. So these ancient terrains remain largely undisturbed. The researchers say the findings help make the case for an exploration program that looks for signs of present-day life in the Martian subsurface. Prior research has found evidence of an active groundwater system on Mars in the past, the researchers say, and there's reason to believe that groundwater exists today. One recent study, for example, raised the possibility of an underground lake lurking under the planet's southern ice cap. This new research suggests that wherever there's groundwater, there's energy for life. Tarnas and Mustard say that while there are certainly technical challenges involved in subsurface exploration, they aren't as insurmountable as people may think. A drilling operation wouldn't require "a Texas-sized oil rig," Mustard said, and recent advances in small drill probes could soon put the Martian depths within reach. "The subsurface is one of the frontiers in Mars exploration," Mustard said. "We've investigated the atmosphere, mapped the surface with different wavelengths of light and landed on the surface in half-a-dozen places, and that work continues to tell us so much about the planet's past. But if we want to think about the possibility of present-day life, the subsurface is absolutely going to be where the action is." The research was supported by the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research.

J.D. Tarnas, J.F. Mustard, B. Sherwood Lollar, V. Stamenković, K.M. Cannon, J.-P. Lorand, T.C. Onstott, J.R. Michalski, O. Warr, A.M. Palumbo, A.-C. Plesa. *Earth-like Habitable Environments in the Subsurface of Mars*. *Astrobiology*, 2021; DOI: [10.1089/ast.2020.2386](https://doi.org/10.1089/ast.2020.2386)

How **BRAIN CELLS** repair their DNA reveals 'hot spots' of aging and disease...



Neurons lack the ability to replicate their DNA, so they're constantly working to repair damage to their genome. Now, a new study by Salk scientists finds that these repairs are not random, but instead focus on protecting certain genetic "hot spots" that appear to play a critical role in neural identity and function. The findings, published in the April 2, 2021, issue of *Science*, give novel insights into the genetic structures involved in aging and neurodegeneration, and could point to the development of potential new therapies for diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and other age-related dementia disorders.

"This research shows for the first time that there are sections of genome that neurons prioritize when it comes to repair," says Professor and Salk President Rusty Gage, the paper's co-corresponding author. "We're excited about the potential of these findings to change the way we view many age-related diseases of the nervous system and potentially explore DNA repair as a therapeutic approach."

Unlike other cells, neurons generally don't replace themselves over time, making them among the longest-living cells in the human body. Their longevity makes it even more

important that they repair lesions in their DNA as they age, in order to maintain their function over the decades of a human life span. As they get older, neurons' ability to make these genetic repairs declines, which could explain why people develop age-related neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. To investigate how neurons maintain genome health, the study authors developed a new technique they term Repair-seq. The team produced neurons from stem cells and fed them synthetic nucleosides -- molecules that serve as building blocks for DNA. These artificial nucleosides could be found via DNA sequencing and imaged, showing where the neurons used them to make repairs to DNA that was damaged by normal cellular processes. While the scientists expected to see some prioritization, they were surprised by just how focused the neurons were on protecting certain sections of the genome. "What we saw was incredibly sharp, well-defined regions of repair; very focused areas that were substantially higher than background levels," says co-first and co-corresponding author Dylan Reid, a former Salk postdoctoral scholar and now a fellow at Vertex Pharmaceuticals. "The proteins that sit on these 'hot spots' are implicated in neurodegenerative disease, and the sites are also linked to aging." The authors found approximately 65,000 hot spots that covered around 2 percent of the neuronal genome. They then used proteomics approaches to detect what proteins were found at these hot spots, implicating many splicing-related proteins. (These are

involved in the eventual production of other proteins.) Many of these sites appeared to be quite stable when the cells were treated with DNA-damaging agents, and the most stable DNA repair hot spots were found to be strongly associated with sites where chemical tags attach ("methylation") that are best at predicting neuronal age. Previous research has focused on identifying the sections of DNA that suffer genetic damage, but this is the first time researchers have looked for where the genome is being heavily repaired. "We flipped the paradigm from looking for damage to looking for repair, and that's why we were able to find these hot spots," Reid says. "This is really new biology that might eventually change how we understand neurons in the nervous system, and the more we understand that, the more we can look to develop therapies addressing age-related diseases." Gage, who holds the Vi and John Adler Chair for Research on Age-Related Neurodegenerative Disease, adds, "Understanding which areas within the genome are vulnerable to damage is a very exciting topic for our lab. We think Repair-seq will be a powerful tool for research, and we continue to explore additional new methods to study genome integrity, particularly in relation to aging and disease."

Dylan A. Reid, Patrick J. Reed, Johannes C. M. Schlachetzki, Ioana I. Nitulescu, Grace Chou, Enoch C. Tsui, Jeffrey R. Jones, Sahaana Chandran, Ake T. Lu, Claire A. McClain, Jean H. Ooi, Tzu-Wen Wang, Addison J. Lava, Sara B. Linker, Anthony S. Ricciardulli, Shong Lau, Simon T. Schafer, Steve Horvath, Jesse R. Dixon, Nasun Hah, Christopher K. Glass, Fred H. Gage. Incorporation of a nucleoside analog maps genome repair sites in postmitotic human neurons. Science, 2021; 372 (6537): 91 DOI: [10.1126/science.abb9032](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abb9032)

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Tarantula's ubiquity traced back to the Cretaceous

Tarantulas are among the most notorious spiders, due in part to their size, vibrant colors and prevalence throughout the world. But one thing most people don't know is that tarantulas are homebodies. Females and their young rarely leave their burrows and only mature males will wander to seek out a mate. How then did such a sedentary spider come to inhabit six out of seven continents?



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then time-calibrated their tree with fossil data. Tarantula fossils are extremely rare, but the software used in the study managed to estimate the ages of older tarantulas relative to the ages of fossils from other spiders. They found that tarantulas are ancient, first emerging in the piece of land now considered the Americas about 120 million years ago during the Cretaceous period. At that time South America would have been attached to Africa, India and Australia as part of the Gondwana supercontinent. The spiders ultimately reached their present destinations due to continental drift, with a few interesting departures. For example, the nature of their entry into Asia suggests tarantulas may also be surprisingly proficient dispersers. The researchers were able to establish two separate lineages of



tarantulas that diverged on the Indian subcontinent before it crashed into Asia, with one lineage being predominantly ground dwelling and the other predominantly arboreal. They found that these lineages colonized Asia about 20 million years apart. Surprisingly, the first group that reached Asia also managed to cross the Wallace Line, a boundary between Australia and the Asian islands where many species are found in abundance on one side and rarely or not at all on the other. "Previously, we did not consider tarantulas to be good dispersers. While continental drift certainly played its part in their history, the two Asian colonization events encourage us to reconsider this narrative. The microhabitat differences between those two lineages also suggest that tarantulas are experts at exploiting ecological niches, while simultaneously displaying signs of niche conservation," said Foley. Additional study authors include Willam H. Piel and Dong-Qiang Cheng of the Yale-NUS College in Singapore and Henrik Krehenwinkel of Universität Trier in Germany

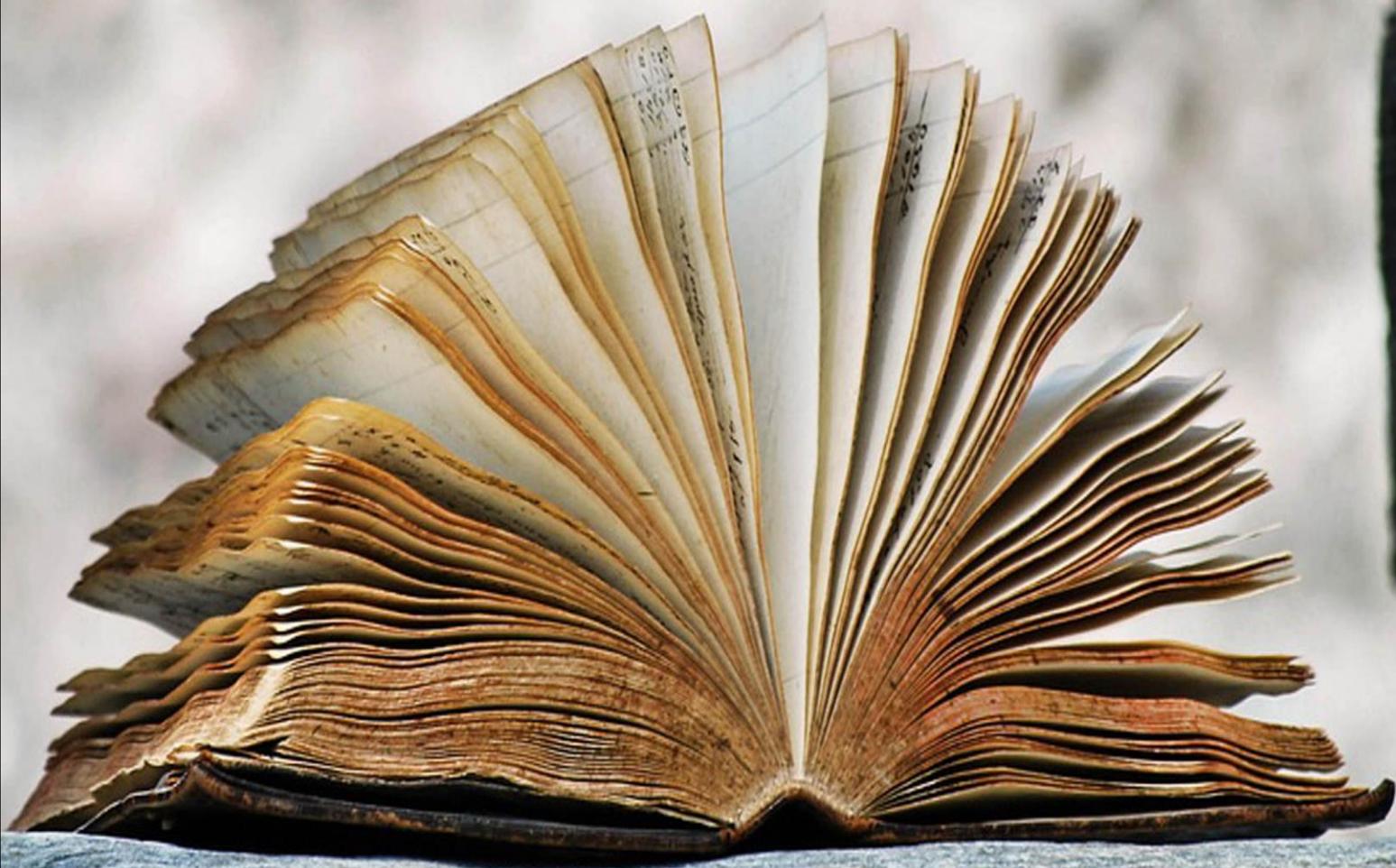
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The Men In White Coats

by Clint Stutts

Parker looked at his watch for the fifth time since he'd arrived at the property. The realtor was an hour late, and wasn't answering his cell phone. The house was a fixer upper, but Parker knew it would eventually sell for at least three times what he would be investing in it.

Located on the outskirts of Baton Rouge, the house was all by itself among the surrounding swamps and willow trees. The driveway extended nearly half a mile from the main road, and the house itself couldn't be seen by passers by unless they drove almost all the way down it. Parker liked that aspect of it. He'd always wanted a secluded home, away from the polluted sights and sounds of civilization. One day, he thought, one day I'll have enough dough put back so I can own a place like this for myself.

He glanced at his watch for yet another time and decided to try the realtor's cell again. The voice mail picked up again, and this time Parker left a message.

"Fritz, this is Parker Davies. If you do happen to show up today, you better have one heck of an excuse for making me wait so long. In fact, consider this the last house you'll ever show me. I can find another realtor who keeps his appointments."

All things considered, Parker thought he'd kept his cool quite well. Fritz Dietrich had sold Parker seven properties over the past three months, and he had always been professional and punctual. Parker had thought Fritz would be good to work with for the long haul, but today's performance crushed that hope. Parker made a mental note to start looking for another realtor first thing Monday morning.

As he cranked his car and began to leave, something made him stop. He'd driven twenty miles to see the house, and see it he would. Sure, Fritz knew more about the house, but Parker could get a feel for its value just by giving it a good once over. Besides, Fritz had given him the combination he used on all the lockboxes for his listings. He killed the engine, got out of the car, and walked to the front of the house. The lockbox hung over the doorknob, and Parker dialed in the combination and unlocked it. He removed the key to the front door and simply dropped the lockbox onto the porch.

The key was terribly old, one that could not possibly be copied, and the lock could easily be picked by an amateur thief. He would have to put new locks and deadbolts on the doors before selling the house. He put the key into the keyhole and turned it. The lock seemed jammed at first, but then it gave in and Parker entered the house.

As soon as he shut the door behind him, the old wood graininess of the door changed to stainless steel. The creaky wood floor that he'd been standing on changed into a solid white floor. Parker wasn't the least bit surprised

by these strange happenings, however. He knew deep down that it was going to happen, somehow. A voice called to him from the middle of the room.

"Parker, please have a seat. I'm afraid I have some bad news for you."

Parker turned around to see where the voice had come from. He was ancient, but it wasn't reflected in his bodily features, at least not exactly. It was his eyes. His eyes revealed that the man behind them was older than anything, and he knew everything that could ever be known. Aside from his eyes, the man looked to be in his early forties, with a bit of gray trying to shine through his short black hair. The table he was sitting behind was solid steel, as shiny on top as a mirror. Parker sat.

"Who are you?" Parker asked.

"Who I am is of no consequence. The duty I perform is."

"Alright then, what duty do you perform?" asked Parker.

"I take lives."

Parker's breath left him. The man began to smile as if he were amused by Parker's reaction.

"No, Parker. I'm not going to kill you. You're already dead." Along with being breathless, Parker was now speechless. The man continued: "You died in your car just over an hour ago. Massive coronary, very unpleasant. At the moment you expired, you slipped into the next phase of your existence. You thought your realtor was late for your meeting, but in reality he arrived only moments after your untimely death, and he was right on time. Right now, he's speaking with local law enforcement about how he found you, and the ambulance is about to take you to the morgue."

A plethora of thoughts raced through Parker's mind, but the one he most wanted to cling to was that he was dreaming. He had fallen asleep in his favorite chair while reading some stupid novel, and he was dreaming.

"You're not dreaming, Parker," the man said.

The cat finally let go of his tongue, and Parker spoke up. "Who are you?" he asked. "Why am I here if I'm dead?"

"I am what you might commonly refer to as the Grim Reaper. I meet every person who dies, and I process each of them myself."

"Do you have a name?" asked Parker.

"No, I do not. I hardly have a use for one."

"So do you actually sit here and dream up ways to make people die?" asked Parker.

"Of course not," the man replied. "I had nothing to do with your death. When I said I take lives, I meant that I take possession of the life that left your body."

"How can you personally meet and process, whatever that means, everyone who dies? It seems to me that would be physically impossible."

"Ah, you are referring to time constraints. You lived in a world where time was always lacking. Here, there is nothing *but* time, and there is nothing to do with that time. Processing refers to assigning a living unit to the dead person in question." Parker almost laughed at the paradox of a living unit for a dead person, but then realized it really wasn't funny because he was the dead person being assigned to one.

"Wait a minute. What about heaven and hell? What about God? Where is He?"

"Heaven, hell, and God are all concepts that exist only in the minds of those who have not yet died. They are ideas that serve only as a crutch to those who cannot face the difficulties of life in your world. Now, Parker, although I have nothing but time, I do not wish to entertain you any longer. You cannot imagine how many times I've answered these questions."

Uncertainty gripped Parker. He'd always expected heaven or hell. He never thought he'd go to heaven, but at least he had counted on the certainty of hell before.

“Your unit is ready for you. You will be now be escorted to it, and you will exist there until further notice.” As if on cue, two men in solid white coats that ran all the way to their heels came through a set of double doors behind the table. Parker hadn’t noticed the doors before, but decided that wasn’t surprising, given the circumstances.

“What will I do?” asked Parker.

“There is nothing *to do*,” said the Reaper. “You will simply exist until further notice.” Parker wanted to ask what he meant by “further notice”, but the Reaper motioned to the men in the white coats, and they took hold of Parker’s arms and began to take him through the double doors down a solid white hallway. They held on to him in such a way that he didn’t feel like he was being manhandled, but they made it known that they could do so if the need arose.

The hallway was apparently endless, and along the walls Parker could barely make out seams where doors might be. He assumed his “unit” would be windowless. As they walked down the hallway, Parker noticed with some amusement that he wasn’t getting tired, even though by his guess they had been at it for a couple of hours. His amusement waned, however, when a day passed, and then a week, and a month. As they walked on, Parker tried to remember what food tasted like, what water felt like going down his throat. He tried talking to his escorts, but they acted as if they didn’t hear him. He even named them Moron and Idiot, but they didn’t seem to care. He therefore settled for talking to himself, but that only lasted several days before he grew tired of it.

Years passed, but Parker didn’t know exactly how many. He burst into laughter at one point, tickled by the realization that whatever imbecile had designed the hallway had apparently not designed it for efficiency. He imagined there were other dead people being escorted not all that far behind him, but just far enough back that no conversation could be had.

Finally, Moron and Idiot stopped Parker in front of one of the seams in the wall. It slid open, revealing a white room, five feet by five feet. There were no furnishings and no windows, only a floor and four walls. Moron and Idiot released Parker’s arms, as if to say it was time for him to leave their company. He stepped into the room.

“What’s after this?” Parker asked before the door closed. He didn’t know what prompted the question, but the dull expression on Moron’s face changed for a moment. Parker thought he saw an eyebrow lift up, ever so slightly.

“We don’t know,” said Moron in a monotone voice. Then the door closed on Parker, presumably forever. Parker sat down on the floor, then realized he hadn’t sat down in countless years. Then he noticed something peculiar. The surface of the floor and walls wasn’t solid white, not exactly. If he got close enough, he could actually see tiny pores in the surface. They were hard to see, but they were there.

“Ha! Nothing to do, he says. Well, I beg to differ.”

Parker picked a corner of the room to start in and got flat on his stomach. Then he started counting the tiny pores. One, two, three, four...

Magnolia Desert

Blood the pen
Upon sorrows
Of tears of broken
Promises.

Crime of lies,
The poem dies.

Magnolia desert
Of an unwatered
Heart.

Flood the pen,
Upon tomorrow's
Fears of barren
Promises.

Turned to dust,
In this Magnolia desert.

~ Robin McNamara

WORD

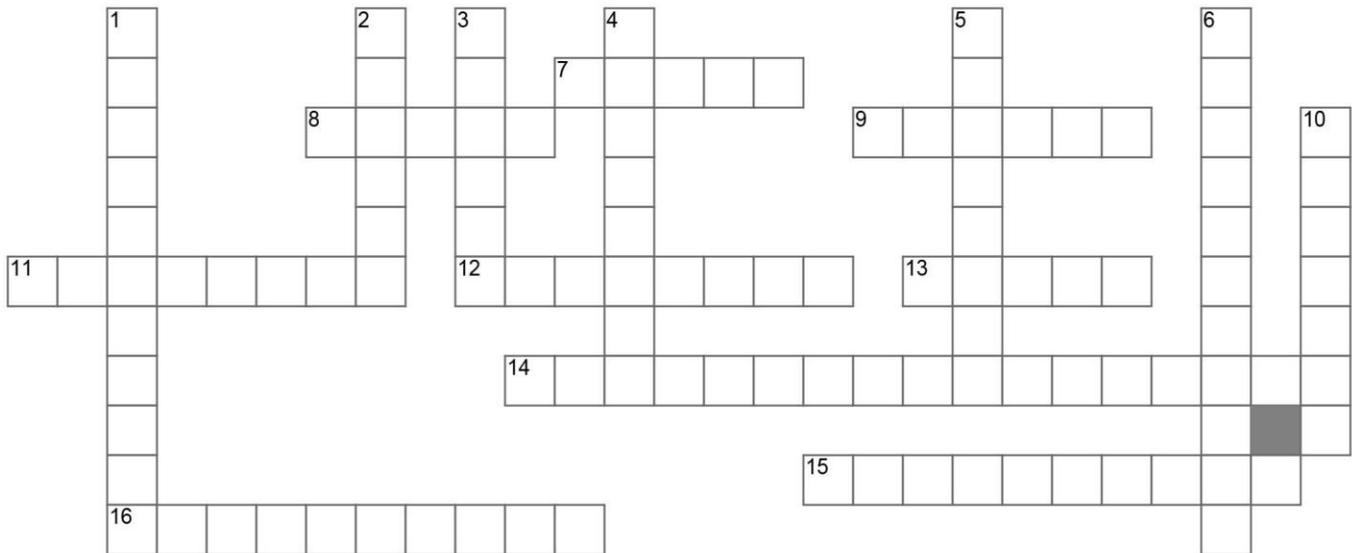
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ACROSS

7. They just dismantled Mando's ship.
8. Institution that regulate the bounty-hunting trade.
9. Mando seeks refuge in this small farming planet.
11. That Doctor that is doing some kind of experiments on Baby Yoda.
12. With his ship leaking fuel, Mando must head to this planet for repairs.
13. Ugnought moisture farmer.
14. The Mandalorian rifle.
15. Mandalorian woman who forges The Mandalorian's armor.
16. The Mandalorian ship.

DOWN

1. Transport vehicle used by Jawas.
2. Creature The Mandalorian need to ride to complete the mission.
3. Mandalorians cannot remove them in front of any other person.
4. The Child
5. Former rebel trooper-turned-mercenary who fought for the Rebel Alliance.
6. Mandalorian Armor material.
10. Large horned creature that almost kill Mando.

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