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Freelance writer

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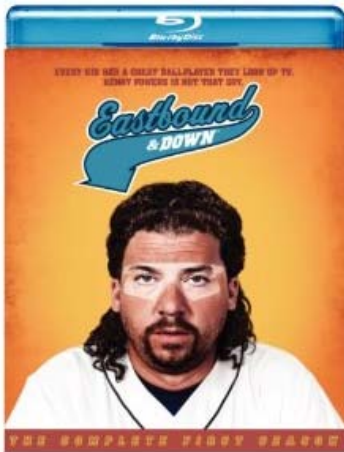
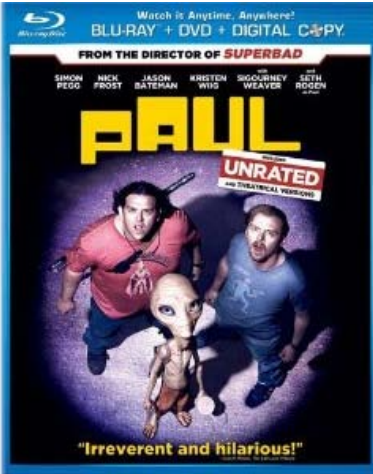


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- STAKE LAND** (\$34.98 BluRay or \$27.98 DVD; Dark Sky)
- PAUL** (\$34.98 BluRay combo or \$24.98 DVD; Universal)
- YOUR HIGHNESS** (\$39.98 BluRay combo or \$29.98 DVD; Universal)
- EASTBOUND & DOWN SEASONS 1 AND 2 ON BLURAY** (\$39.98 BluRay; HBO)
- GROW LIKE A PRO** (\$19.95 DVD; High Times)
- AMERICAN GRINDHOUSE** (\$19.95; Lorber) -- Ah, cult films. Is the easy description for any oddball movie that flops at the box office. But "cult" is also tossed around for movies that were rather big box office successes but simply don't follow the usual formula, not to mention movies that simply didn't work on any level.

Stake Land is a grim, deadly serious vampire movie that has all the makings of a future cult classic. It honors the genre it is set in. It features a strong cast (including an excellent Connor Paolo of *Gossip Girl* and the terrific Michael Cerveris has a villain). It's the work of a very talented co-writer and director named Jim Mickle who will have future success, thus shining a light back on his earlier work. it didn't click at the box office but it was beloved and championed by hardcore horror fans like Colin Geddes, the mastermind behind *Midnight Madness* at the Toronto International Film Festival. Cult in the making? You bet. *Paul* looks similarly promising. It stars the two leads from cult classics *Shaun of the Dead* (almost too successful to be a cult, really) and *Hot Fuzz* (which flopped and definitely does deserve cult status). It's an offbeat comedy mashing up aliens and road trip movies to stellar results. Nobody could quite figure it out or how to market the movie; but that's exactly what DVD is made for. *Your Highness* would love to be a cult movie. But this stoner medieval comedy starring Danny McBride and James Franco can only hope the high cannabis quotient makes it a must-see for stoners. In an entirely unrelated note, High Times presents *Grow Like A Pro*, a straightforward documentary about cultivating marijuana for those with the legal right to do so. Ultra-violet lights and secret hot rooms that can be spotted via thermal imaging are so 20th century. I'm not a McBride fan, but for those who still miss Arliss, HBO has McBride in a comedy about a washed up pro baseball player who becomes a high school coach in season one and heads to Mexico to coach a local baseball team in season two. Not for me, but McBride's character is enjoyable asinine. Finally, fans of cult movies can dive into *American Grindhouse*, one of those impossible to resist looks at the grindhouse genre that has loads of clips, interviews with John Landi, Joe Dante and the like and is even narrated by Robert Forster. What's not to like?

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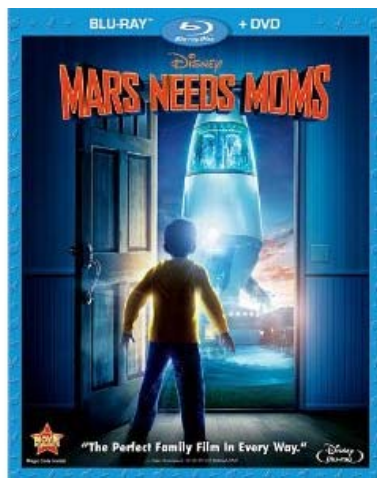
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So tell us, what is your favorite cult film of all time? Me, I'm partial to the wildly quotable British comedy *Withnail & I*. Thanks Cyndi, for recommending it to me!



THE FOX AND THE HOUND I AND II (\$39.99 BluRay combo or \$29.99 DVD; Disney)
MARS NEEDS MOMS (\$39.99 BluRay combo or \$29.99 DVD; Disney) -- How times change. Back in 1981, *The Fox and the Hound* was a fascinating movie from the moribund Disney animation department. It was gentle and quiet, not based on any well-known property or bursting with action. Just a simple tale, beautifully told. It wasn't classic Disney, but it showed there was life in the old fella. That was reassuring since it had been 14 years since the great score for *The Jungle Book*, 20 years since the smash hit *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* and a quarter of a century since their last undisputed classic *The Lady and the Tramp*. (Nope, I don't consider *Sleeping Beauty* a classic but even that was 22 years in the past. *The Fox and the Hound* gave you hope, with *The Great Mouse Detective* (an even better movie) just five years away and then the dramatic debut of *The Little Mermaid* in 1989. Now here it is in 2011. Disney needed reviving again. Pixar is a wonder for the ages (and deep in Disney's debt creatively). But Disney itself had floundered badly in animation. It came roaring back with *Tangled*, their best film since *Tarzan* more than a decade earlier. And hoping to build on that success was *Mars Needs Moms*, another unconventional film that didn't seem to follow a formula, this one created by Robert Zemeckis, who has grown passionate about animation. And yet, it was almost toxic, with audiences staying away with that instinctive sense for a movie that just doesn't work. Sadly, they were right but hopefully Disney can build on *Tangled* instead of gettin sidetracked by *MNM*.



Scarlett's naked pics, Tyler Perry is highest paid

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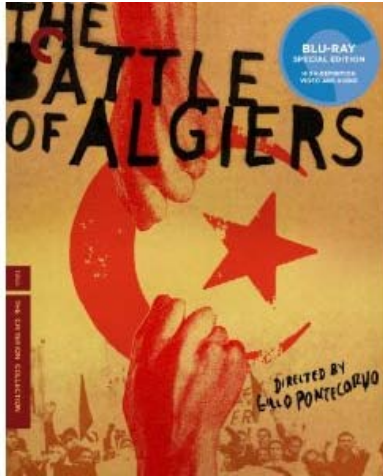
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Music



Film



OUTSIDE THE LAW (\$27.98 BluRay or \$24.98 DVD; Palisades Tartan)

THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS (\$49.95 BluRay; Criterion) --Outside The Law is a very conventional movie about three brothers fighting for the independence of their country in different ways. But in France it's almost shocking to see these brothers as heroes since the country they want to free is Algiers, a country France had been occupying. But unless you're French and have a special attachment to Algiers, the movie is utterly routine. One brother fights for the French army in Indochine, reasonably expecting his courage to be rewarded. Another fights in the Algerian resistance/independence movement. The third makes a shady living in Paris. It's quite ho-hum unless the politics punch your buttons. On the other hand, the modern classic The Battle of Algiers is a stunning, gripping movie about the same battle for freedom. It somehow manages to show the French occupying Algiers but without demonizing them. It also manages to show resistance fighters employing methods we'd soon despise (suicide bombing, etc.) but without denouncing them. And it's all so excitingly done, this doesn't feel like a political film so much as a thriller. Indeed, it remains a training film for soldiers around the world who want to mount or fight a resistance movement. The Criterion edition looks terrific and is bursting with historical data, a fascinating documentary about the making of the movie and much more.



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Astronomy

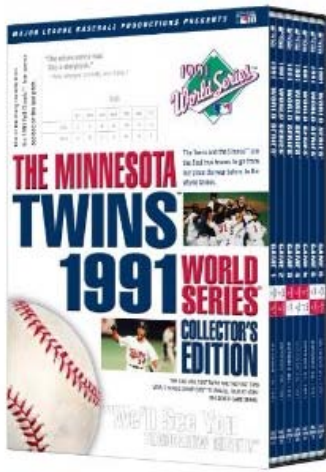


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THE MINNESOTA TWINS 1991 WORLD SERIES COLLECTOR'S EDITION (\$69.95; A&E) -- ESPN calls the 1991 World Series the greatest of all time and no wonder, with both teams coming from last place the season before to the World Series in 1991. Four games were decided on the last pitch, five games were won by one run, three went into extra innings -- heck, it probably also set a record for most fans heading to the hospital with high blood pressure. The Twins versus the Braves are seen complete, with fans getting to choose between the national TV broadcast or the Twins radio call. (Really, couldn't they include the Braves radio call as well? Isn't that just salt in the wound?) It's manna from heaven for baseball fans. Now bring on the Miracle Mets!



JUMPING THE BROOM (\$35.99 Blu-ray and \$30.99 DVD; TriStar/Sony)
SOUL SURFER (\$38.99 BluRay combo or \$30.99 DVD; Sony) -- Tyler Perry isn't the only game in town. Producer T.D. Jakes (who also has a small role) brings in the quiet moral grounding of this comedy about a self-made millionaire from Brooklyn marrying a Martha's Vineyard rich girl and the culture clash of their two families. Angela Bassett is no pushover, but I think Loretta Devine as the groom's mother can take her down. A strong cast with Paula Patton and Laz Alonso up front make this go down easy. An

even stronger message about the power of faith is present in *Soul Surfer*, a family friendly movie about the surfer who had her arm bitten off by a shark but found the strength to get back in the water and start competing right away. Helen Hunt and Dennis Quaid are the supportive parents and Carrie Underwood certainly has a better vehicle here in a supporting role than Kelly Clarkson ever selected.



CLASH (\$19.97; Vivendi) -- Just as Ong-Bak showed Thailand cinema was ready for primetime, the Vietnamese box office smash *Clash* shows Vietnam has the ability to match Hollywood in stunts and action. The tale of a mother whose daughter is kidnapped and must therefore track down an all-important harddrive is too silly for words. But it's just an excuse for some inventive stunts and the hard-boiled antics of the mysterious but ferocious Johnny Tri Nguyen. Puts Nam on the map.



ZEN: VENDETTA/CABAL/RATKING (\$39.98 BluRay or \$34.98 DVD; BBC/2Entertain) -- I haven't caught up with this new mystery series. But friends who gobble up those shows on PBS and the like say this adaptation of the best-selling novels about Italian detective Aurelio Zen are top-notch and a great fit for actor Rufus Sewell. They know what they're talking about so I'm looking forward to watching these three tv movie-length episodes.



HEY ARNOLD! SEASON 1 (\$29.93; Shout) -- I always bemoan the repackaging of kid's TV, with studios teasing out a season of episodes over three or four discs released in waves. It means tons of cost and bulky packaging and bad karma all around. This is the way to present a TV series: the entire season in one set, with four discs nicely packaged by Shout and at a reasonable price. As a bonus, the show is good enough to deserve some extras like audio commentaries, but let's not get greedy. It looks very good, by the way and that's what matters most -- the shows themselves.

Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the co-host of Showbiz Sandbox, a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's available free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his website and his daily blog. Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called Popsurfing and also available for free on iTunes. Link to him on Netflix and gain access to thousands of ratings and reviews.

NOTE: Michael Giltz is provided with free copies of DVDs to consider for review. He typically does not guarantee coverage and invariably receives far more screeners and DVDs than he can cover each week.

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