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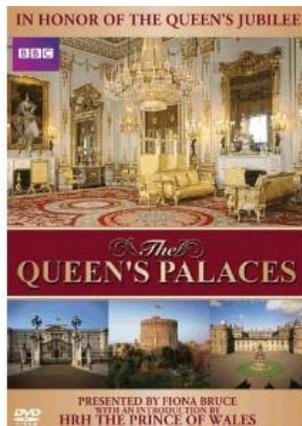
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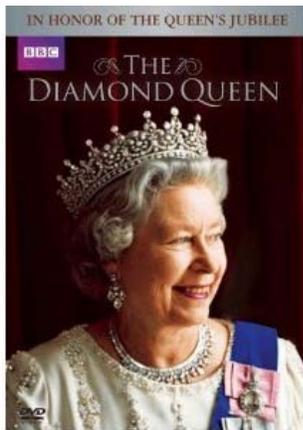
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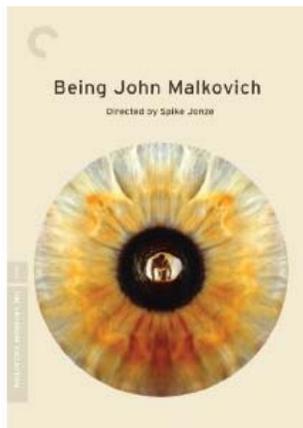
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The Queen's Palaces (\$19.98; BBC/Warner Bros.)

The Diamond Queen (\$19.98; BBC/Warner Bros.)

Sherlock: Season Two (\$39.98 Blu-ray; BBC) -- Have you been soaking up all the hoopla over Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee? Well, until they release a DVD set of all the goings-on in the UK, here are some other titles to tide you over. *The Queen's Palaces* is strictly for hardcore monarchists and people who love stately homes. It delves into the history and current treasures they contain. *The Diamond Queen* is appealing to far more casual Anglophiles, using the reign of the Queen as a way into the story of the UK throughout much of the 20th century and beyond. And if you just want to soak up London, check out the modern updating of Sherlock Holmes with Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman very good indeed as the detective and his sidekick Dr. Watson in *Sherlock: Season Two*. Frankly, I'm not wowed by it as a drama on its own terms, but they're having fun and the contemporary twists on the plot elements of the original stories are often clever. If you're not going to read the Conan Doyle stories or watch Jeremy Brett for the umpteenth time, by all means enjoy.



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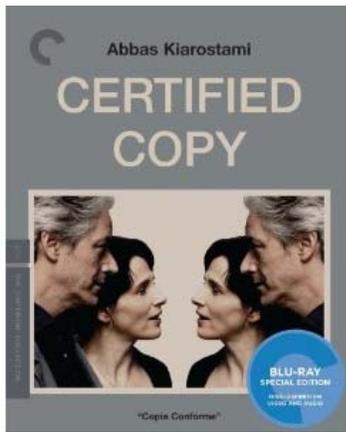
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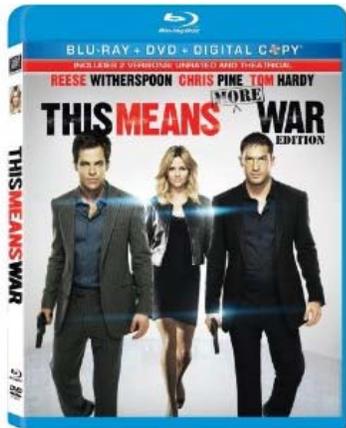
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Being John Malkovich (\$29.95; Criterion)

Certified Copy (\$39.95 BluRay; Criterion) -- I've always found *BJM* a little too self-consciously quirky to embrace it fully. But that shouldn't obscure what a truly bizarre idea for a movie this is, with people able to take over the body of actor John Malkovich for minutes at a time just the beginning of the absurdity. Spike Jonze and Charlie Kaufman had a field day with this one and Criterion does justice to what is now a very notable film indeed. You get a new documentary about the film, Malkovich interviewed by John Hodgman, short films, a look at puppeteering and more. I was also less enamored of *Certified Copy* than most, mainly because I found opera star William Shimell stiff and boring. If you can't wake up when acting next to the luminous Juliette Binoche, buddy, check your pulse. Still, like *BJM*, this is an intriguingly high concept project from the great Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami with Binoche and Shimell playing lovers or perhaps playing people who are playing at being lovers. The extras include a real treat: *The Report*, an extremely rare 1977 film by Kiarostami that was his second feature and which starred Shohreh Aghdashloo (of *24* fame). It's a scratchy, lo-fi print but since this festival award winner has been unseen and virtually unavailable (the original negative was destroyed during the Iranian Revolution), it's wonderful to catch up on one of this major director's early work.



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Madonna's Message For Americans: 'Don't Get Fat And Lazy'



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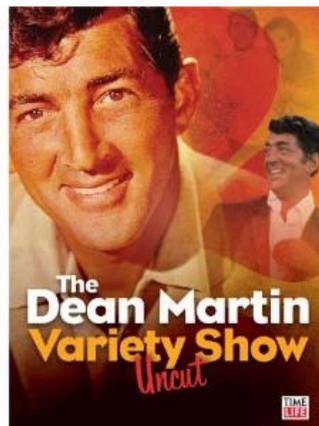


This Means War (\$39.99 Blu-ray; Fox)

Red Tails (\$39.99 BluRay; LucasFilm/Fox)

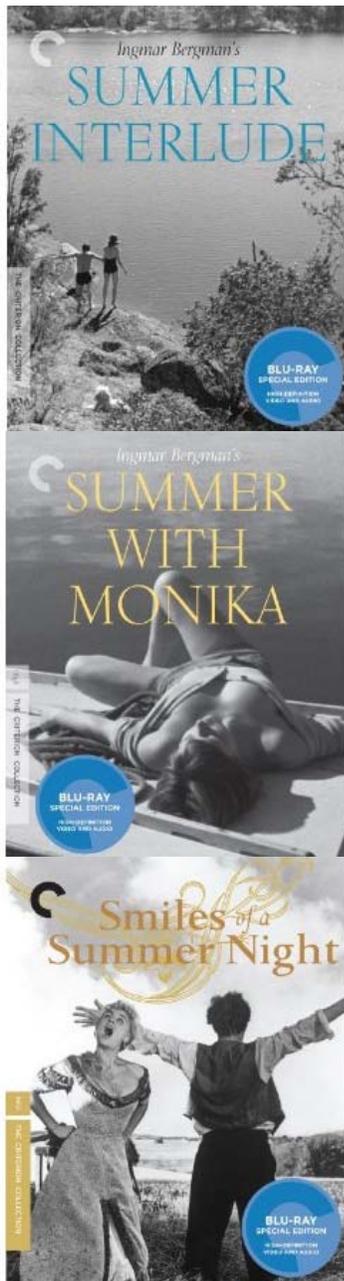
Man on a Ledge (\$30.49 Blu-ray; Summit)

Goon (\$34.98 Blu-ray; Magnolia) -- Four disappointing movies. *This Means War* may be the biggest disappointment since I found the premise so clever and commercial. Two spies who use all their wiles and all the technology at their disposal to try and woo the same woman -- now THAT'S a Hollywood movie. Plus, I was looking forward to seeing Chris Pine prove his star power after breaking out in *Star Trek*. But what a dreadful, dumb, lazy film they produced from all those promising materials (which also include cute as a button Reese Witherspoon and cute as a... well, not a button, but perhaps cute as a cuddly toy Tom Hardy as Pine's rival. Really, the level of stupidity and wasted opportunity was high even by LA standards. George Lucas certainly had good intentions when making *Red Tails*, the story of black American heroes who fought as fighter pilots in WWII. Lucas clearly spent a lot more energy on the frenetic aerial battles instead of the script. Obviously he forgot long ago that special effects do not a movie make. *Man On A Ledge* costars Jamie Bell, one of the best young actors around. But this complicated and unsatisfying thriller is yet another example of his poor taste in commercial movies. Perhaps the most unappreciated element in being a successful actor is picking good projects and Bell clearly lacks it. Quick, get a new management team or call me, Jamie! Finally, *Goon* is the story of a bruiser who gets a break and joins a hockey team. It seems like typecasting for Seann William Scott but the twist is that his character is actually a mild-mannered polite dude. But everything here was done with much more wit long ago with *Slap Shot*.



The Dean Martin Variety Show Uncut (\$29.98; Time Life) -- This three DVD set contains six complete episodes stretching from 1966 through 1971 when the coolest member of the Rat Pack enjoyed

a Top 20 hit (peaking at #8 for two seasons) during an extended primetime run. It was one of a gazillion variety shows on TV at the time, including stars like Red Skelton, Carol Burnett, Jimmy Dean, Steve Lawrence, Glenn Campbell, Lawrence Welk, Jackie Gleason and, of course, Ed Sullivan, just to name a few. Of all of them, Martin was surely the laziest, insisting on not showing up until the day of taping and doing no virtually no rehearsals. It shows, though surely the ultra-casual atmosphere provides much of the appeal. It certainly wasn't the lame humor or skits or anonymous dancers. Guests ranged from the talented (Zero Mostel, Buck Owens) to the pretty (Joey Heatherton was a staple) to the comic (Bob Newhart). It's all pretty awful but fascinating in a time capsule sort of way. If you watched it at the time, the flood of memories for an entire era will be strong (boy is television better today!). Moments of genuine artistry survive, like Martin delivering a fairly intense "Talk Of The Town" and -- out of nowhere -- Orson Welles performing a subtle, fascinating monologue from *The Merchant Of Venice*. His magic tricks? Not so special.

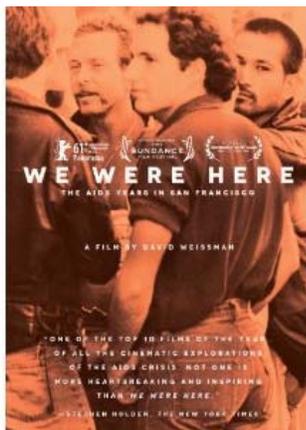


Summer Interlude (\$29.95 Blu-ray; Criterion)

Summer with Monika (\$39.95 Blu-ray; Criterion)

Smiles of a Summer Night (\$39.95 Blu-ray; Criterion) -- For anyone intimidated by the reputation of director Ingmar Bergman, the "summer" movies are a great introduction. Start with *Summer Interlude*, the film Bergman himself saw as an artistic breakthrough. It was his tenth film and focuses on a ballet dancer escaping from the drudgery of her demanding career by remembering the sweet innocence of her romance with a beautiful young student one summer. Follow that with *Summer With Monika*, the serious drama about two young lovers who run away from home featuring a ravishing Harriet Andersson. The extras include coverage of the "naughtier" version edited into being by U.S. distributors, along with other substantial bonus features. Finish with Criterion's *Smiles Of A Summer's Night* (his

most purely delightful film) and you'll suddenly find yourself a fan for life.



We Were Here (\$29.95; Docurama)

The Pruitt-Igoe Myth (\$27.95; First Run Features)

Harry Belafonte -- Sing Your Song (\$29.95; Docurama)

Cold War: The Complete Series (\$68.92; Warner Bros.)

Carol Channing: Larger Than Life (\$24.95; EOne)

Into the Abyss (\$29.98 Blu-ray; MPI)

The War (\$129.99 Blu-ray; PBS?Paramount) -- *We Were Here* is one of the most acclaimed documentaries in years, though it happened so quietly almost no one noticed. Focusing on the AIDS epidemic in San Francisco, I'm not sure what's more impressive -- making this tragedy seem new again or doing so in a trim, satisfying 90 minutes. *The Pruitt-Igoe Myth* convincingly makes you rethink your attitude towards public housing but taking a new look at one of its most famous "failures," the public housing complex built in 1956. *Sing Your Song* is earnest, but since it's about singer and actor, and above all, activist Harry Belafonte, that's perfectly appropriate. He's been carrying the banner for liberal causes so long Belafonte couldn't switch out of pioneering mode if he tried. It obscured and sidelined his serious talents as a singer, unfortunately. *Cold War* is probably the most ambitious documentary series ever produced by a 24-hour news channel and it holds up well years later as a work of substance. Carol Channing enlivens any film or show she appears in and her own story is no exception, though this gentle valentine *Larger Than Life* is far from revelatory. Director Werner Herzog's devotion to documentaries continues to pay dividends with *Into The Abyss*, a look at a man on death row and the people whose lives he fractured with his violent act. Ken Burns does his thing for WWII, though this 15 hour effort feels a little rote because we're so familiar with his approach to such material. Still, it's good to have *The War* on BluRay and available to instruct those unfamiliar with the broad outlines of the last war everyone but ardent pacifists could rally behind.

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Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the cohost 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](#) for 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.

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