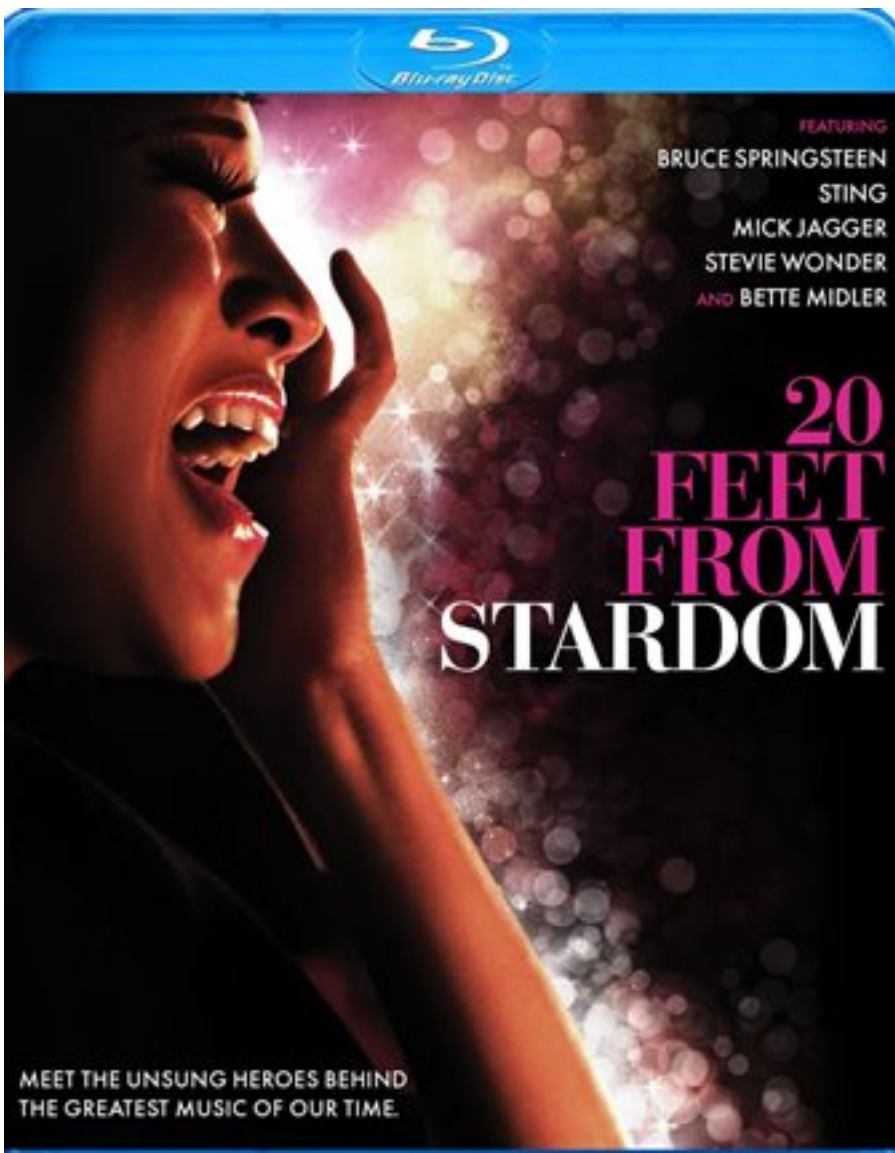


What to Watch: Jan. 14-27, 2014

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 14, 2014 - 5:29pm

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We're breaking form this week and going alphabetical instead of preference order because of the INCREDIBLE diversity of product available for you to rent, buy, or stream over the next ten days. How does someone really compare "Sunrise" to "You're Next"? Why bother? If you need to know, "Closed Circuit" and "Runner Runner" aren't really worth your time and "A.C.O.D." and "Riddick" are flawed but everything else in here comes with varying degrees of recommendation, particularly the quiet beauty of "Sunrise" and the incredible charm of "Enough Said". We're also loading you up since we'll be off next week seeing flicks in Park City at the Sundance Film Festival. There's plenty in here to tide you over. Pick your favorites.



20 Feet From Stardom

Photo credit: The Weinstein Company

“20 Feet From Stardom”

One of the most crowd-pleasing documentaries in years is likely to find an even bigger audience through word-of-mouth on the home market. And it's one of several 2013 Sundance hits making their home debut the same week as the launch of the 2014 edition (this one, "Fruitvale

Station,” “The Spectacular Now” [which we’ll cover separately], and “A.C.O.D.”). I remember when “20 Feet” premiered last year, Park City loved the movie. We could tell it would be a hit immediately. And it doesn’t hurt that the GREAT Judith Hill from “The Voice” is one of the subjects. These are incredibly talented people who deserve a bit of attention. I’m happy there’s a movie to give it to them.

From Patrick McDonald’s [theatrical review](#) [22]: “*And therein lies the centerpiece emotion in the documentary, and what sets it apart from just a music history lesson. That a hit record, a breakout as a front-and-center artist, is a right-place-right-time twist of fate. Springsteen, Jagger, Bette Midler, Stevie Wonder are all praising these singers to the heavens, but the fickle nature of name recognition and “the hit record” eludes their grasp. If that’s not a life lesson, then what is?*”

Synopsis:

While the lead singers in rock, pop, and R&B are the ones who get the glory, knowledgeable music fans will tell you the backing vocalists often add the touches that make a performance truly memorable, and though many backup singers have the respect of their peers in the music business, they’re all but unknown to the average listener. Twenty Feet From Stardom pays homage to some of these unsung heroes, including Darlene Love (the un-credited lead voice on some of Phil Spector’s most memorable productions of the 1960s), Merry Clayton (who contributed a striking vocal cameo on the Rolling Stones’ “Gimme Shelter”, Lisa Fischer (who has appeared on albums by Sting, Tina Turner, and Aretha Franklin, as well as touring with the Rolling Stones), and the Waters Family (they sang with Michael Jackson on the album Thriller and lent their voices to the films The Lion King and Avatar).

Special Features:

- o Deleted Scenes
- o Short Film - The Buddy System
- o Q&A with Darlene Love, Merry Clayton, Lisa Fisher, & Director Morgan Neville

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Amazon Instant Streaming, Vudu, iTunes



A.C.O.D.

Photo credit: Paramount

“A.C.O.D.”

A lackluster script holds back a fantastic comedy ensemble but there are enough talented people involved in “A.C.O.D.” and occasional laughs that you might want to take a look on a snowy January night. Fans of “Parks and Recreation” especially. I wish “A.C.O.D.” was as smart as its cast and it suffers from the common problem of the 2013 Sundance comedy (weak final act) but you could make worse comedy choices this Blu-ray season.

From my [theatrical review](#) [23]: “*The incredibly talented men and women who make up the cast of “A.C.O.D.” make the relative failure of its script easier to bear. Just hearing brilliant actors like Richard Jenkins and Catherine O’Hara at each other’s throats or watching remarkably likable stars like Adam Scott and Mary Elizabeth Winstead figure out their relationship has enough charm to get one from lights down to credits roll. And the first hour of “A.C.O.D.” is pretty damn funny, allowing one to hope that it will develop into something truly memorable.*”

Synopsis:

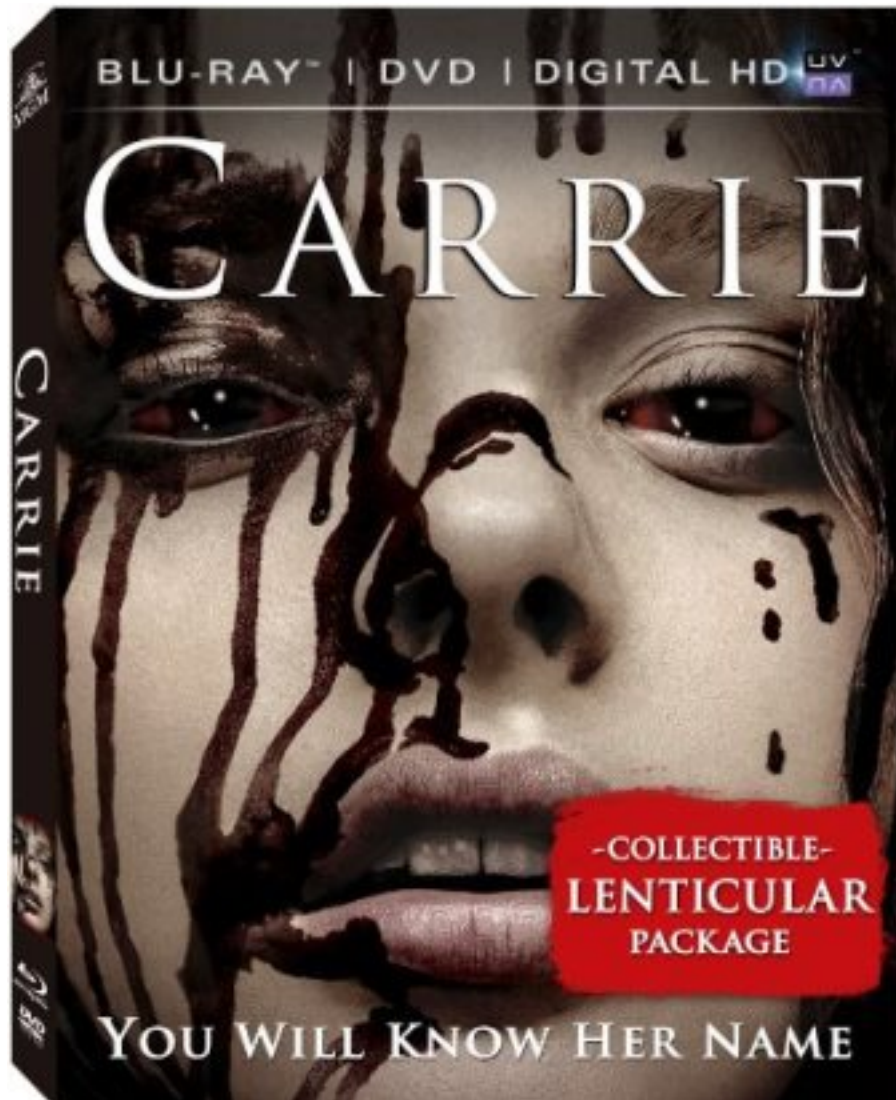
A.C.O.D. follows Carter (Adam Scott), a seemingly well-adjusted Adult Child of Divorce. Having survived the madness of his parents (Richard Jenkins and Catherine O’Hara) divorce, Carter now has a successful career and supportive girlfriend (Mary Elizabeth Winstead). But when his

younger brother (Clark Duke) gets engaged, Carter is forced to reunite his bitterly divorced parents and their new spouses (Amy Poehler and Ken Howard) for the wedding, causing the chaos of his childhood to return including his wacky therapist (Jane Lynch).

Special Features:

- o Cast and Crew Discussions About A.C.O.D.
- o “Coping with A.C.O.D.” and Other Hilarious Public Service Announcements
- o Amy Poehler Outtakes

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Amazon Instant Streaming, Vudu, iTunes



Carrie

Photo credit: MGM

“Carrie”

Too many critics and film goers immediately write off remakes as having no creative value. If you're one of those, don't bother here. Kimberley Peirce's admittedly-flawed remake of the Stephen King classic doesn't bring enough new to the game to win over those automatically against remakes but I found enough interesting in the central performances to justify a look. Leave your expectations at the door and you may do the same.

From my [theatrical review](#) [24]: “Director Kimberly Peirce (“Boys Don’t Cry”) doesn’t convey the dread or atmosphere of Stephen King’s “Carrie” to a degree that elevates it to the source material’s true potential but she does handle performance in a way that’s rare in the genre, making this remake one of the best horror films of the season. It won’t soon supplant the De Palma version but it brings King’s story to another generation, finding the relatable truth in the story of a girl pushed too far by religion, adolescence, bullying, and society.”

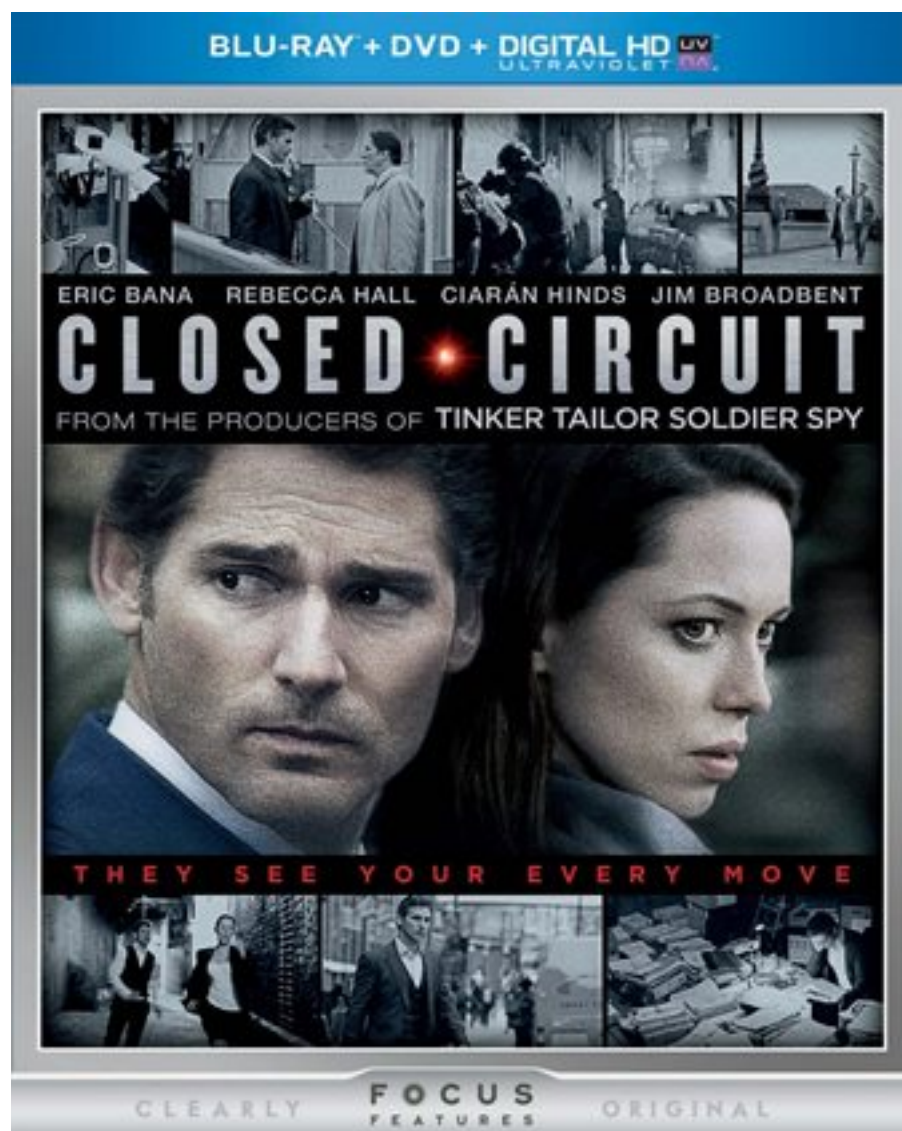
Synopsis:

Chloe Grace Moretz and Oscar nominee Julianne Moore star in this exhilarating reimagining of Stephen King’s iconic best seller. After merciless taunting from classmates and abuse at the hand of her religious fanatic mother (Moore), Carrie’s (Moretz) anger - and her telekinetic powers - are unleashed. And when a prom prank goes horribly wrong, events spiral out of control until the terrifying conclusion of this powerful, pulse-quickenning horror story.

Special Features:

- o Alternate Ending Not Shown In Theaters
- o Deleted/Alternate Scenes
- o Creating Carrie
- o The Power Of Telekinesis
- o Commentary By Director Kimberly Peirce
- o Telekinetic Coffee Shop Surprise

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Amazon Instant Streaming, Vudu, iTunes



Closed Circuit

Photo credit: Universal

“Closed Circuit”

Such a stunning cast of talented actors just totally wasted on an inert spy thriller script that goes nowhere quickly. It starts with such promise but just fizzles out before long.

Patrick McDonald liked it way more than I did in his [theatrical review](#) [25]: “*The performances are top drawer and the cast is deep with veteran players. Eric Bana is more character-driven than leading man in the story, and is able to communicate the frustration of the circumstance. Rebecca Hall is too young and too physically striking to embody an intellectual defense attorney, but she pulls it off by creating gravitas and vulnerability. And what is a British bureaucrat film without the impressive Jim Broadbent, and the essential Ciarán Hinds? Both men know what they’re doing in approach to stoic characterizations.*”

Synopsis:

From the producers of Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy comes a riveting and suspenseful mystery starring Eric Bana and Rebecca Hall. A high-profile terrorism case unexpectedly brings two exceptional lawyers (Bana and Hall) with a romantic past together on the defense team. They soon realize they’ve stepped into a dangerous web of cover-ups and lies, and their knowledge of the government’s top-secret classified evidence has put their reputations and lives at stake. Co-starring Ciarán Hinds, Julia Stiles and Jim Broadbent, it’s a non-stop, heart-racing guessing game that critics call “an entertaining conspiracy thriller.” (Jocelyn Noveck, Associated Press)

Special Features:

- o Secrets Behind the Camera: Closed Circuit

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Amazon Instant Streaming, Vudu, iTunes



Enough Said

Photo credit: Fox

“Enough Said”

A beautiful, heartfelt script from the great Nicole Holofcener allows great actors like Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Toni Collette, Catherine Keener, and the late James Gandolfini to do some of their career-best work. This is one of those movies that people like to claim doesn't get made any more. The next time that someone asks you why there are no more romantic comedies for adults that treat them like intellectual, emotional people, point them to the fantastic “Enough Said,” one of my favorite films of 2013.

From my [theatrical review](#) [26]: “*It gets to the heart of some very rarely explored concepts in relationship films like the idea that just because a person isn't right for one spouse doesn't mean he won't be right for another. Holofcener and her ridiculously talented cast find truth about love and second chances not in their set-up but in the honesty of the characters placed within it. I love this movie.*”

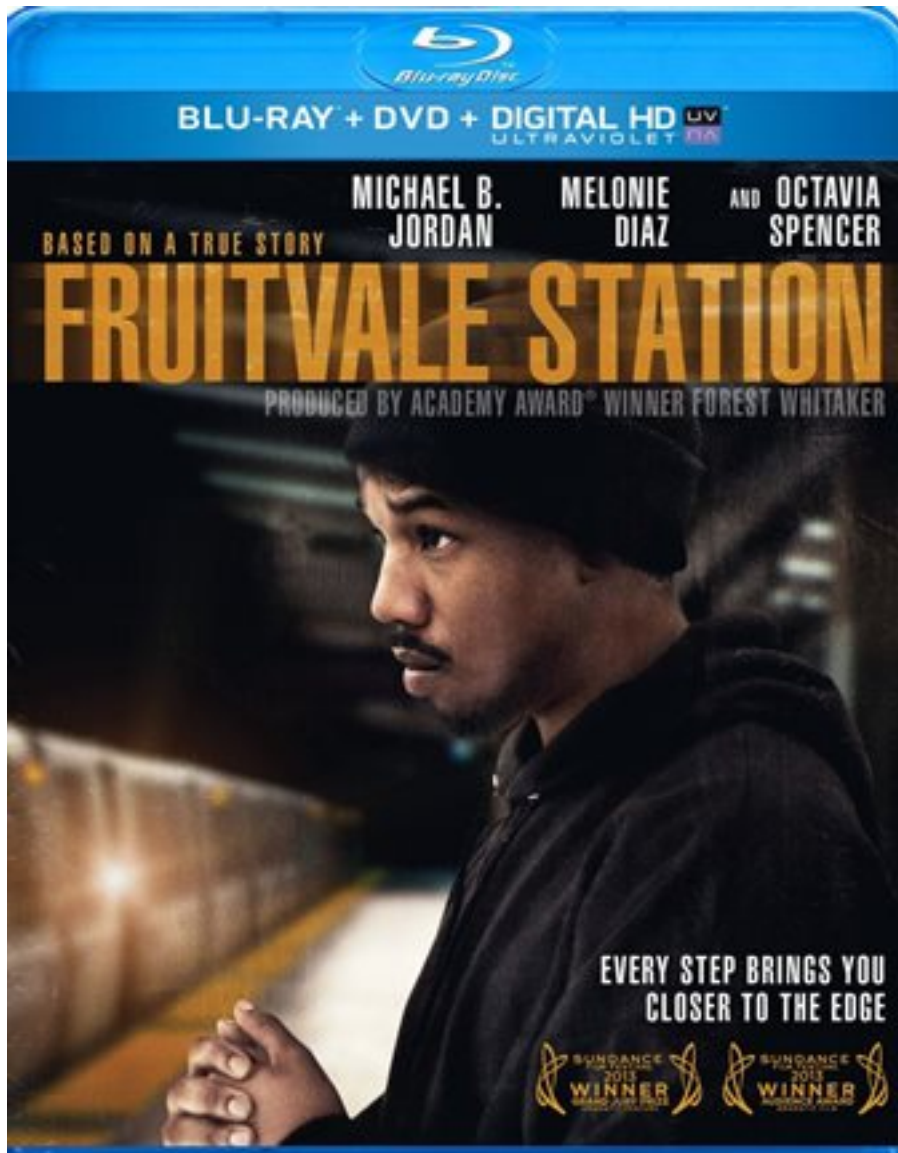
Synopsis:

Divorced mom Eva (Louis-Dreyfus) may be falling for Albert (Gandolfini), a sweet, funny, like-minded divorcÃ©. But as their relationship blossoms, Eva befriends Marianne (Keener), who's always complaining about her ex-husband. When Eva realizes that Albert is the target of Marianne's rants, she begins to question her own perceptions about first impressions and second chances.

Special Features:

- o Second Takes
- o Promotional Featurettes: Cast, Story, Meet Eva and Albert, Nicole Holofcener, Julia

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Amazon Instant Streaming, Vudu, iTunes



Fruitvale Station

Photo credit: The Weinstein Company

“Fruitvale Station”

The biggest winner from Sundance 2013 is coming home a year later. I have some issues with the dramatic structure of Coogler’s debut but I get why so many people love it and most admire the great performance from future star Michael B. Jordan and strong supporting work from Octavia Spencer and Melonie Diaz. This is an important story and while I may have some issue with the way it’s told here, I think there’s value in the telling. And, man, you’re ALL going to know Michael B. Jordan’s name soon, if you don’t by now.

Synopsis:

Filmmaker Ryan Coogler makes his feature directorial debut with this drama centered on the tragic shooting of Oscar Grant (Michael B. Jordan), a vibrant 22-year-old Bay Area father who was senselessly gunned down by BART officers on New Year’s Day in 2009, and whose murder sent shockwaves through the nation after being captured on camera by his fellow passengers. Academy Award winner Octavia Spencer, Melonie Diaz, and Kevin Durand co-star.

Special Features:

- o Fruitvale Station: The Story Of Oscar Grant
- o Q&A With Cast & Filmmakers

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Amazon Instant Streaming, Vudu, iTunes



Lee Daniels' The Butler

Photo credit: The Weinstein Company

“Lee Daniels’ The Butler”

A well-intentioned melodrama, Lee Daniels’ film seems to be one of the most polarizing of 2013. Some love it. Some hate it. I’m more in the middle, appreciative of what Daniels was trying to do here but concerned about the shallow approach to civil rights required by his storytelling. See where you fall on the spectrum now that this surprising hit is on Blu-ray and DVD.

From Patrick McDonald’s [theatrical review](#) [27]: “*The timeline of the story is too extensive. What begins in the late 1920s ends in 2008, and there is too much territory to cover to make the narrative cohesive. It works because the butler’s family makes it work. It is the emotions of that tumultuous era that are played through them, and it was refreshing to see how a divided African American family might have weathered the sharp breakdown of their social culture in the 1960s.*”

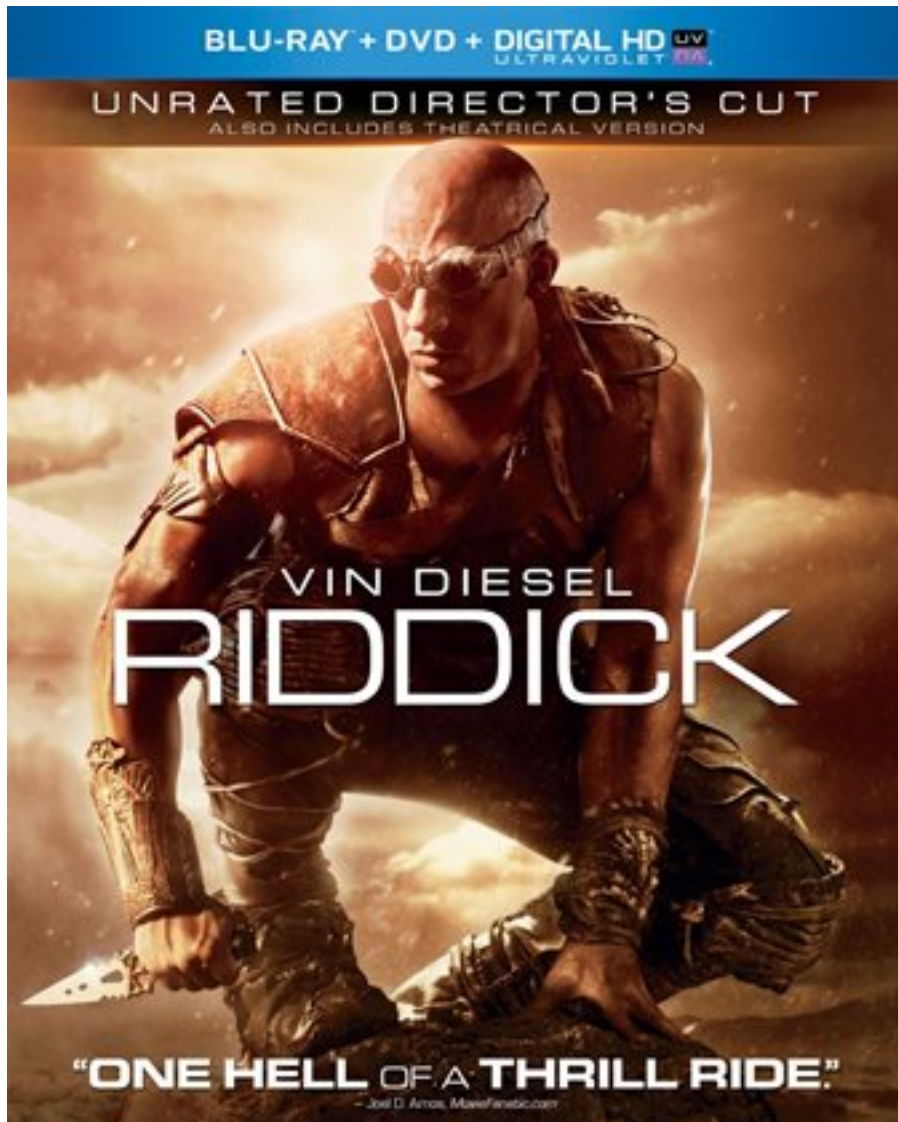
Synopsis:

Lee Daniels’ The Butler tells the story of a White House butler who served eight American presidents over three decades. The film traces the dramatic changes that swept American society during this time, from the civil rights movement to Vietnam and beyond, and how those changes affected this man’s life and family. Forest Whitaker stars as the butler with Robin Williams as Dwight Eisenhower, John Cusack as Richard Nixon, Alan Rickman as Ronald Reagan, James Marsden as John F. Kennedy, Liev Schreiber as Lyndon B. Johnson, and many more. Academy Award® nominated Lee Daniels (Precious) directs and co-wrote the script with Emmy®-award winning Danny Strong (Game Change).

Special Features:

- o Lee Daniels’ The Butler: An American Story
- o The Original Freedom Riders
- o Deleted Scenes
- o “You and I Ain’t Nothin’ No More” Performed by Gladys Knight and Lenny Kravitz
- o Gag Reel

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Amazon Instant Streaming, Vudu, iTunes



Riddick

Photo credit: Universal

“Riddick”

David Twohy’s sci-fi sequel has a rocky opening act and ends in kind of a silly manner but that mid-section is a beauty. When the film essentially becomes a remake of “Pitch Black” and Twohy and Diesel are allowed to play at what they do best in that second act, “Riddick” connects. You may have to fast-forward through a bit of the first half-hour to get there but it’s worth the wait.

From my [theatrical review](#) [28]: “When it embraces that low-budget, B-movie, John Carpenter-esque aesthetic, it works enough to recommend as a late-Summer bit of escapism but the movie is too bloated to stand next to the first. Still, more than after “Chronicles,” I’d happily see a fourth “Riddick” film. Why not at this point?”

Synopsis:

Vin Diesel reprises his role as the antihero Riddick in the latest chapter of the groundbreaking saga. A dangerous, escaped convict wanted by every bounty hunter in the known galaxy, Riddick has been left for dead on a sun-scorched planet that appears to be lifeless. Soon, however, he finds himself fighting for survival against alien predators more lethal than any human he’s encountered. The only way off is for him to activate an emergency beacon and alert mercenaries who rapidly descend to the planet in search of their bounty. With time running out and a deadly storm on the horizon that no one could survive, his hunters won’t leave the planet without Riddick’s head as their trophy. Also starring Katee Sackhoff (Battlestar Galactica), Karl Urban (Star Trek Into Darkness) and Dave Bautista (WWE). Experience the Riddick: Unrated Directors Cut with an alternate ending!

Special Features:

- o The World Of Riddick
- o Riddickian Tech
- o The Twohy Touch
- o Vin’s Riddick
- o Meet The Mercs
- o Riddick: Blindsided

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Amazon Instant Streaming, Vudu, iTunes



Runner Runner

Photo credit: Fox

“Runner Runner”

Ugh. Every line in this awful thriller is either a play on betting against the house, pushing all in, etc. or an explanation of exactly who each character is, what they’re doing, and why they’re doing it. This is one of the worst scripts in a very long time, only minorly rescued by the star power of its cast. Affleck makes it out clean but JT is horrendously miscast here, not allowed at all to use his notable screen charm. Just a monstrous waste of time.

From Patrick McDonald’s [theatrical review](#) [29]: “Off shore internet gambling sites, tons of money, glorious glamorous women, parties all the time – how the heck can all of that be dull? The new film “Runner Runner” found a way. Ben Affleck phones it in and Justin Timberlake is name recognition window dressing in this limp drama.”

Synopsis:

Justin Timberlake and Ben Affleck star in this high-stakes crime thriller where the lure of easy money is the riskiest bet of all. When Princeton grad student Richie Furst (Timberlake) believes he’s been swindled by an online poker site, he heads to Costa Rica to confront gambling tycoon Ivan Block (Affleck), the man he thinks is responsible. But Richie will soon face the ultimate power play as he finds himself caught between Block’s promises of unlimited wealth and the zealous FBI agent (Anthony Mackie) trying to bring him down.

Special Features:

- o Deleted Scenes
- o House Of Cards: The Inside Story Of Online Poker

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Amazon Instant Streaming, Vudu, iTunes



Sunrise

Photo credit: Fox

“Sunrise”

Nearly every list of the most influential and downright best films of all time includes this 1929 silent film, a true classic making its Blu-ray debut courtesy of Fox. While one wishes that a studio like Criterion or Cohen had their hands on this one, it’s nice to be able own a film widely acknowledged to be one of the most important of all time. Stretch your understanding of film history earlier than 1970. MUCH earlier.

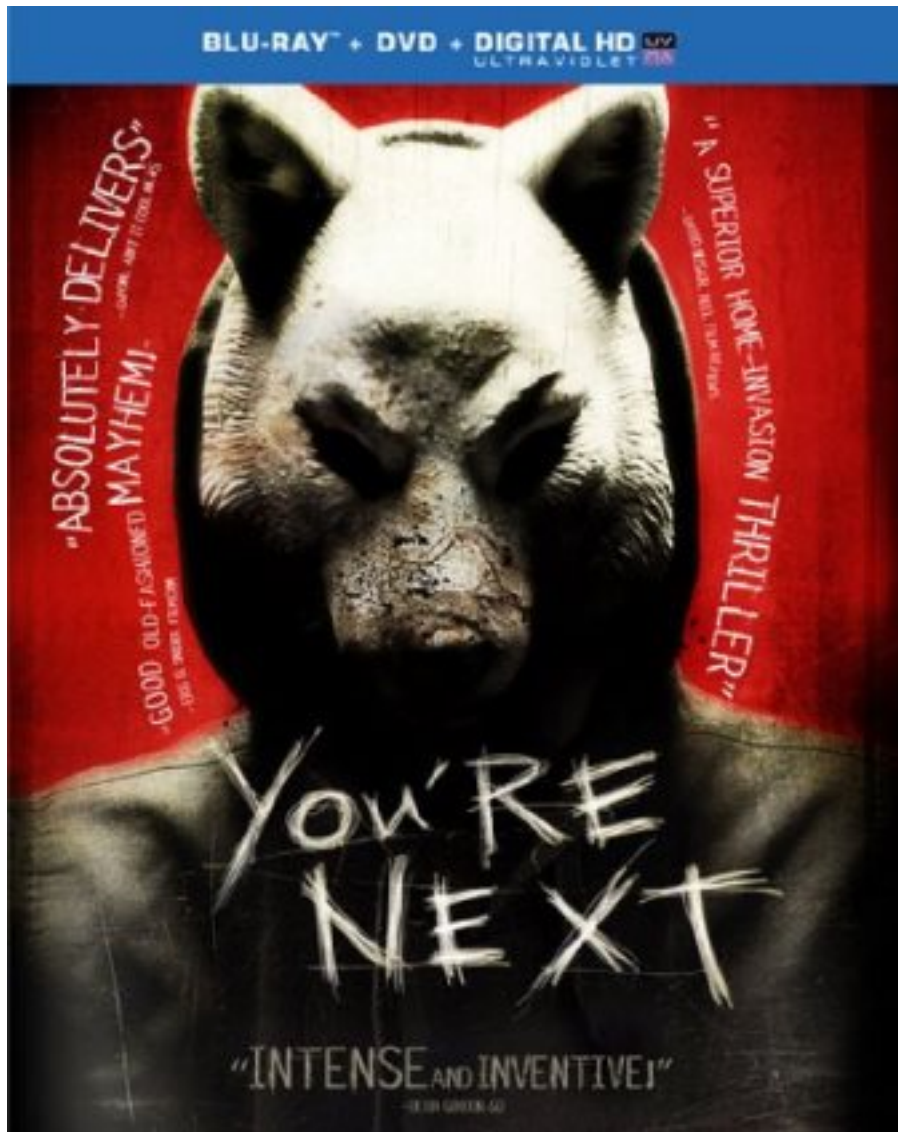
Synopsis:

This story of betrayal and redemption earned Oscars at the first Academy Awards ceremony in 1929 for the most “Unique And Artistic Picture,” Best Actress (Janet Gaynor) and Best Cinematography. The love and loyalty of a farmer and his wife are put to the ultimate test in this classic silent film.

Special Features:

- o Original Fox Movietone Version and European Silent Version
- o Commentary by ASC Cinematographer John Bailey
- o Outtakes with Commentary by John Bailey
- o Original Theatrical Trailer
- o Original Scenario by Carl Mayer with Annotations by F.W. Murnau
- o Original Sunrise Screenplay
- o Restoration Notes

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD



You're Next

Photo credit: Lionsgate

“You’re Next”

What a fun movie. Horror/thrillers are too often referred to as thrill rides but this one qualifies, thanks to a smart script by Simon Barrett, tight direction by Adam Wingard, and, most of all, a breakthrough performance from Sharni Vinson. Remember that name. You’re going to hear it a gain. “You’re Next” is a smart, clever thriller that will almost certainly gain a GIANT following on Blu-ray and DVD. Watch it before one of your friends Tweets about how you should.

From my [theatrical review](#) [30]: “*I wish the set-up was a bit more engaging and the tone more consistent but there’s a lot to like here, especially for fans of the genre looking for something that doesn’t need a supernatural twist to stay scary. Every issue I had with “You’re Next” was beat into bloody submission by what works about it – it’s a primal force of a movie, a sledgehammer to a genre in need of waking up.*”

Synopsis:

Aubrey and Paul Davison decide to celebrate their wedding anniversary by inviting their four children and their significant others to a family reunion at their remote and slightly rundown weekend estate. But the family reunion goes awry when their home comes under siege by a mask-wearing team of crossbow-bearing assailants. The family has no idea who’s attacking them, why they’re under attack, or if the attackers are inside or outside the cavernous, creaking house. All they know for certain is that nobody is safe.

Special Features:

- o No Ordinary Home Invasion: The Making Of You’re Next Featurette
- o Audio Commentary With Director Adam Wingard and Write Simon Barrett
- o Audio Commentary With Director Adam Wingard, Writer Simon Barrett and Actors Sharni Vinson and Barbara Crampton
- o Theatrical Trailer

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Amazon Instant Streaming, Vudu, iTunes



[31]

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- [25] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/22342/closed-circuit-is-a-tense-reminder-of-our-times><br
- [26] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/22557/romantic-comedy-enough-said-is-a-sweet-gentle-gem><br
- [27] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/22243/family-emotions-uplift-lee-daniels-the-butler><br
- [28] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/22389/vin-diesel-returns-to-iconic-character-in-b-movie-riddick>
- [29] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/22612/ben-affleck-can-t-save-limp-runner-runner><br
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