

What to Watch: Feb. 18-24, 2014

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on February 18, 2014 - 1:05pm

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What an amazing week for TV fans. As if you didn't have enough stacking to do with the new, brilliant season of "House of Cards" on Netflix, there are four other full seasons in this week's What to Watch that you really should watch front to back. And then there's the still-amazing "Darkman," a cult classic that perfectly captures Sam Raimi's skill at controlled chaos. Finally, we have two '80s horror flicks in one set in "Bad Dreams" and "Visiting Hours." Check 'em all out (OK, you can skip the genre stinkers).



Game of Thrones: The Complete Third Season

Photo credit: HBO

“Game of Thrones: The Complete Third Season”

One of the best shows on TV gets the glorious, fantastic, always-perfect HBO treatment, complete with absolutely perfect HD transfers and

enough special features to stop a TV fan in their tracks. 12 audio commentaries! The HD transfers and the audio tracks alone would warrant a purchase but they're just the start here. No one in the market does TV like HBO - both in original broadcast and on Blu-ray and DVD. This is the best TV on Blu-ray release to date (and likely will be for months to come).

From my [TV review](#) [26]: *"There's a sense in the first few episodes that what is happening is being built on carnage. Burned bodies fill a square, family relationships are shattered, stone walls have crumbled — the world is reflecting the power struggle that has defined the show. Whoever is going to take power is going to have to climb a hill of bodies to do so. And legions of loyal TV fans will be watching."*

Synopsis:

In the third season of the hit HBO series Game Of Thrones, the Lannisters barely hold on to the throne after a savage naval onslaught from Stannis Barathcon, while stirrings in the north threaten to alter the overall balance of power. Robb Stark, King in the North, faces major calamity in his efforts to build on his victories over the Lannisters while beyond the Wall, Mance Rayder and his huge army of wildlings continue their inexorable march south. Across the Narrow Sea, Daenerys Targaryen - reunited with her three fast-maturing dragons - attempts to raise an army to sail with her from Essos, in hopes of eventually claiming the Iron Throne. In Season 3 of this original series based on George R.R. Martin's bestselling books, the battling families of Westeros continue to clash as bonds are strained, loyalties are tested, and cruel fates are met.

Special Features:

- o In Episode Guide: In Feature Resource That Provides Background Information About On-Screen Characters, Locations, And Relevant Histories
- o The Rains Of Castamere Unveiled: Get An In-Depth Look At The Creation Of The Most Pivotal Episode Of Season 3 In This Comprehensive Expose Featuring Cast And Crew
- o Histories And Lore: Learn About The Mythology Of Westeros As Told From The Varying Perspectives Of The Characters Themselves
- o Roots Of Westeros: Explore The Interconnected Web Of Relationships, Rivalries, and Conflicts Between The Noble Houses of Westeros With This Interactive Guide
- o A Gathering Storm: Look Back At The Stormy Events Of Season 2 In This 14-Minute Recap With Cast And Crew
- o Audio Commentaries: 12 Audio Commentaries With Cast And Crew Including David Benioff, D.B. Weiss, George R.R. Martin, Lena Headey, Emilia Clarke, Michelle Fairley, Kit Harington, Richard Madden, and More
- o The Politics Of Marriage: The Concept Of Matrimony In Westeros Is All About Making Power Plays and Political Alliances. Cast And Crew Examine This Ancient Institution And Its Place In Game Of Thrones
- o Inside The Wildlings: Go Beyond The Wall With This Introduction To The Wildlings To Gain A Better Understanding Of Their Backstory
- o New Characters: Meet The New Faces In Season 3: Olenna Tyrell, Missandei, Mance Rayder, Tormund Giantsband, Orell, Jojen & Meera Reed, Blackfish & Edmure Tully, Thoros of Myr, And Beric Dondarrion
- o Deleted Scenes/Extended Scenes: Five Deleted and Extended Scenes

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



Darkman

Photo credit: Shout Factory

“Darkman”

My God, I love “Darkman.” Before Raimi would revolutionize the Marvel universe with “Spider-man” and when Liam Neeson was still more of

a dramatic actor than an action star, the two collaborated on one of the weirdest mainstream movies of all time. There's such a beautiful combination of Raimi's stunning attention to detail and his by-the-seat-of-his-pants aesthetic. It looks chaotic and crazy but it takes control to make it look that way. And the Shout Factory Collector's Edition is beautiful with one of the best HD transfers I've seen so far this year. They're starting to challenge Criterion visually. Great special features, a movie that gets better every time I see it, and a perfect transfer — horror fans, take note. Scratch that, MOVIE fans, take note.

Synopsis:

Liam Neeson (Taken) and Oscar winner Frances McDormand (Fargo) star in Darkman - this explosive, action-packed thriller from director Sam Raimi (Spider-Man trilogy).

Dr. Peyton Westlake (Neeson) is on the verge of realizing a major breakthrough in synthetic skin when his laboratory is destroyed by gangsters. Having been burned beyond recognition and forever altered by an experimental medical procedure, Westlake becomes known as Darkman, assuming alternate identities in his quest for revenge and a new life with a former love (McDormand).

Also starring Colin Fries (Dark City), Larry Drake (Dr. Giggles), Danny Hicks (Evil Dead 2) and Nicholas Worth (Swamp Thing), Darkman is “a frenetic funhouse ride that has you laughing and screaming at the same time” (The Washington Post)!

Special Features:

- o New Interview With Frances McDormand
- o Audio Commentary With Director Of Photography Bill Pope
- o That Will Be Just Fine - An Interview With Actor Larry Drake
- o Durant's Men - Interviews With Actors Dan Bell and Danny Hicks
- o Darkman's Design - Interviews With Production Designer Randy Ser and Art Director Philip Dagort
- o The Face Of Revenge - An Interview With Special Make-Up Creator Tony Gardner
- o Original Storyboards
- o Theatrical Trailer
- o TV Spots
- o Vintage Electronic Press Kit
- o Vintage Cast & Crew Profiles: Sam Raimi, Liam Neeson, Frances McDormand, and Larry Drake

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



Sherlock: Season Three

Photo credit: BBC

“Sherlock: Season Three”

How awesome that BBC/WB releases “Sherlock” so quickly after the end of each new season? Message boards are still alight with comments on the third and final episode of the third season of one of the best shows on TV and you can already own it on Blu-ray and DVD. It may not be quite as perfect as the masterful season two but it's darn close. While everyone is talking about “True Detective” and “House of Cards,” don't let the great “Sherlock” go unnoticed. And tell your friends.

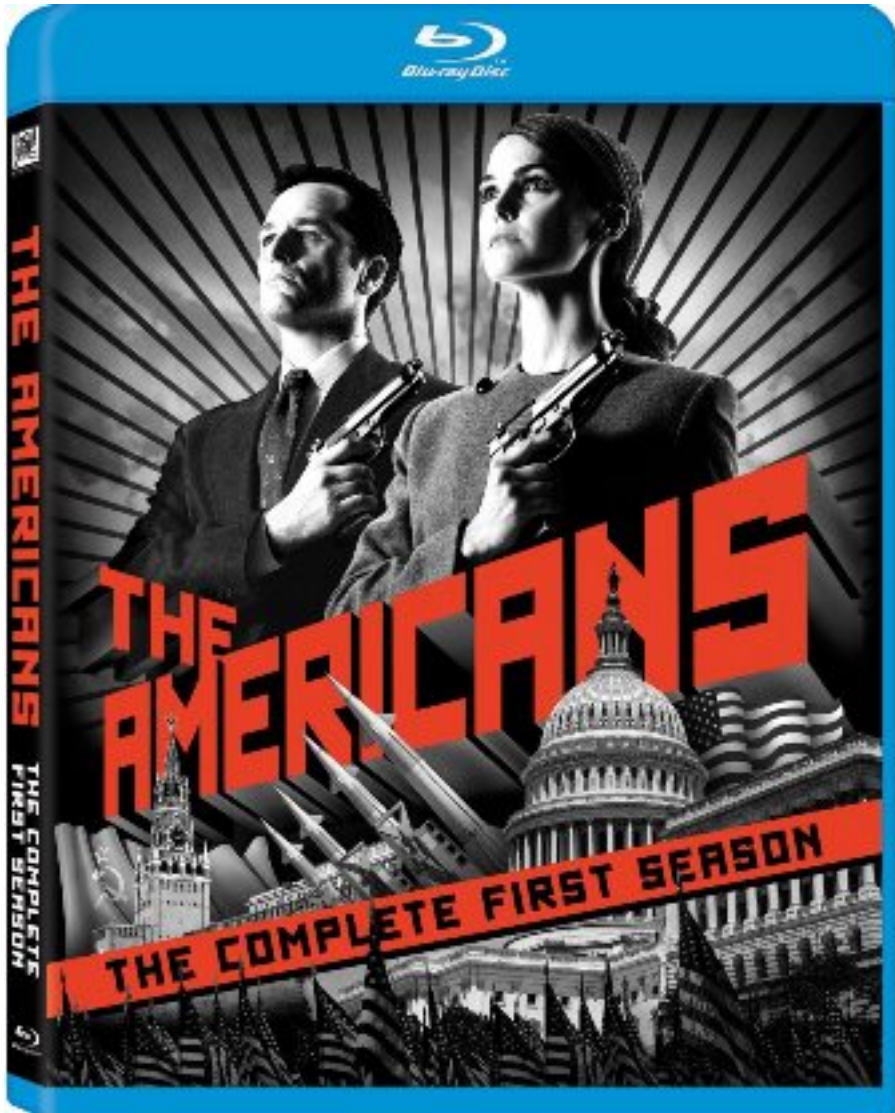
Synopsis:

The question on everyone's lips is finally answered as the hugely popular Sherlock returns in three brand new action-packed adventures. With the demise of Moriarty, Sherlock (Benedict Cumberbatch, Star Trek Into Darkness) finds himself locked in another mind battle with the powerful Charles Augustus Magnussen, who is holding the secrets of the world at his fingertips. Once again, the game is on for Sherlock and John (Martin Freeman, The Hobbit) in The Empty Hearse, The Sign Of Three and finally, His Last Vow.

Special Features:

- o The Fall
- o Fans, Villains & Speculation
- o Shooting Sherlock

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



The Americans: The Complete First Season

Photo credit: Fox

“The Americans: The Complete First Season”

FX's “The Americans” was a bit inconsistent over the first season but trust me when I tell you that season two of the show, premiering on 2/26, is almost perfect. The show is even more confident and engaging, and you need to watch season one to understand how these characters got there. I wish Fox's TV season releases were a bit tighter - HBO-caliber transfers, more special features, etc. - but “The Americans” is a show that I really feel is on the verge of taking off. It's going to be a program that people are talking about in 2014 and you'll want to get in on the conversation.

From my [theatrical review](#) [27]: “*With incredible attention to period detail, strong performances, and a killer concept that has echoes of both “Breaking Bad” and “Homeland,” “The Americans” will almost surely be another hit for one of the most important networks on cable TV.*”

Synopsis:

Secrets can be deadly in this suspenseful thriller about undercover Russian spies in 1980s Washington, D.C. Philip (Matthew Rhys) and Elizabeth Jennings (Keri Russell) seem to be a typical suburban couple, but they're actually lethal KGB agents plotting to bring down America. As the Cold War escalates, Philip and Elizabeth must take extreme measures to continue their mission and keep their true identities hidden. But when an FBI agent moves in across the street, they become ensnared in a pulse-pounding game of cat and mouse.

Special Features:

- o Deleted Scenes
- o Commentary On The Colonel By Joseph Weisberg, Joel Fields and Noah Emmerich
- o Gag Reel
- o Executive Order 2579: Exposing The Americans
- o Perfecting The Art Of Espionage
- o Ingenuity Over Technology

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



Nurse Jackie: Season Five

Photo credit: Lionsgate

“Nurse Jackie: Season Five”

Showtime’s “Nurse Jackie” shouldn’t still be working. It’s a concept that should have lost steam a year or two ago (such as “Weeds” did around S4) and yet great performances and rich characterizations keep it alive. Any conversation on the best actresses in the history of television that doesn’t include Edie Falco is incomplete. And it’s nice that Lionsgate is still loading these up with commentaries and featurettes. There is a LOT of TV this week but don’t ignore “Nurse Jackie”.

Synopsis:

Nurse Jackie returns for a fifth season with Edie Falco as Jackie Peyton, a role that has earned Falco her third consecutive Primetime Emmy nomination. After leaving rehab early, Jackie finds sobriety and relative happiness - but that is the calm before the storm. With her marriage coming to an end, a careless accident sends Jackie to her own All Saints Hospital for emergency care. While recovering, she meets NYC policeman Frank Verelli (Adam Ferrera), whose flirtatious advances may lead Jackie into uncharted territory: dating. Stepping out of her usual comfort zone, challenged by new colleagues, Jackie faces the one-year anniversary of her sobriety.

Special Features:

- o Sober Jackie Featurette
- o Cast And Crew Commentaries
- o New To The Floor Featurette
- o Gag Reel
- o Deleted Scenes

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, iTunes



Bad Dreams/Visiting Hours

Photo credit: Shout Factory

“Bad Dreams/Visiting Hours”

Having not seen the derivative “Bad Dreams” in years, I wondered how it held up. Not good. Not good at all. It’s a flat, boring mess. “Visiting Hours” is slightly better, largely thanks to a great, game cast that includes William Shatner and Michael Ironside. Neither is worth a look for people unfamiliar with them. This is a double feature release for hardcore Scream Factory fans only. If you’re a casual one, go buy “Darkman” instead. Or about three dozen other SF releases.

Synopsis:

Bad Dreams

In the mid-1970s the members of the love cult Unity Fields sought “the ultimate joining” by dousing themselves with gasoline and committing mass suicide. A young girl blown clear of the fiery explosion was the only survivor. Thirteen years later, Cynthia (Jennifer Rubin, *Screamers*) awakens from a coma inside a psychiatric hospital with only buried memories of that horrific day - but now her fellow patients are each being driven to their own violent suicides. Has the sect’s leader (Richard Lynch, *Deathsport*) returned to claim his final child? Bruce Abbott (Re-Animator) costars in the intense shocker *Bad Dreams* from director Andrew Fleming (*The Craft*) and producer Gale Anne Hurd (*Punisher: War Zone*, *The Incredible Hulk*).

Visiting Hours

Academy Award® winner Lee Grant (1975 Academy Award winner for Best Supporting Actress, *Shampoo*) stars as outspoken TV journalist Deborah Ballin, whose crusade against domestic violence enrages a creepy loner (a truly disturbing performance by Michael Ironside of *Starship Troopers* and *Top Gun*). He brutally attacks the anchorwoman in her home, but Ballin survives and is hospitalized. Her assailant is enraged: He is haunted by a horrific childhood trauma. He enjoys inflicting torture and slow death. And now he has hidden inside the hospital to finish what he started. Can anybody - including her concerned boss (the one and only William Shatner), a frantic nurse (Linda Purl of *Happy Days*) or Deborah herself - stop the psycho’s killing spree before it reaches sick new extremes?

Special Features (all on *Bad Dreams*):

- o Commentary With Writer/Director Andrew Fleming
- o Interviews With Actors Jennifer Rubin, Bruce Abbott, Richard Lynch and Dean Cameron
- o The Special Effects of *Bad Dreams*
- o Behind The Scenes of *Bad Dreams*
- o Theatrical Trailer

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

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