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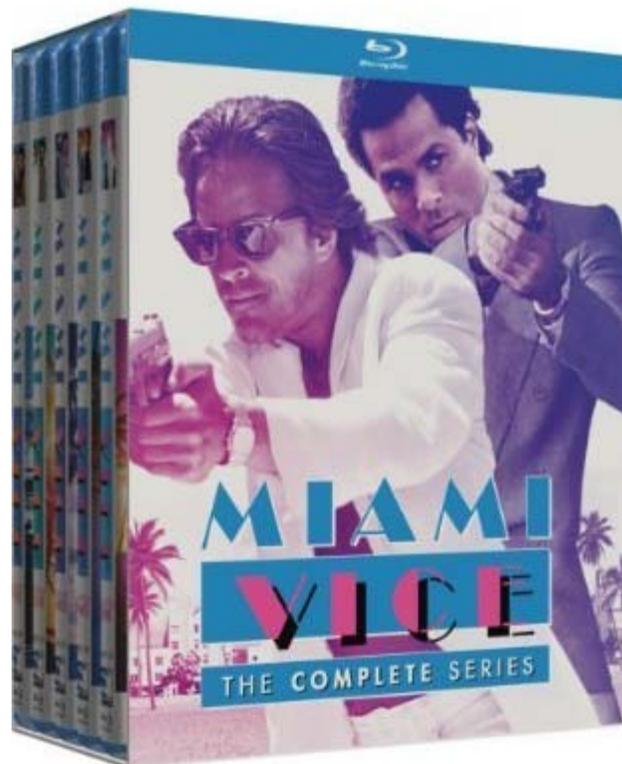


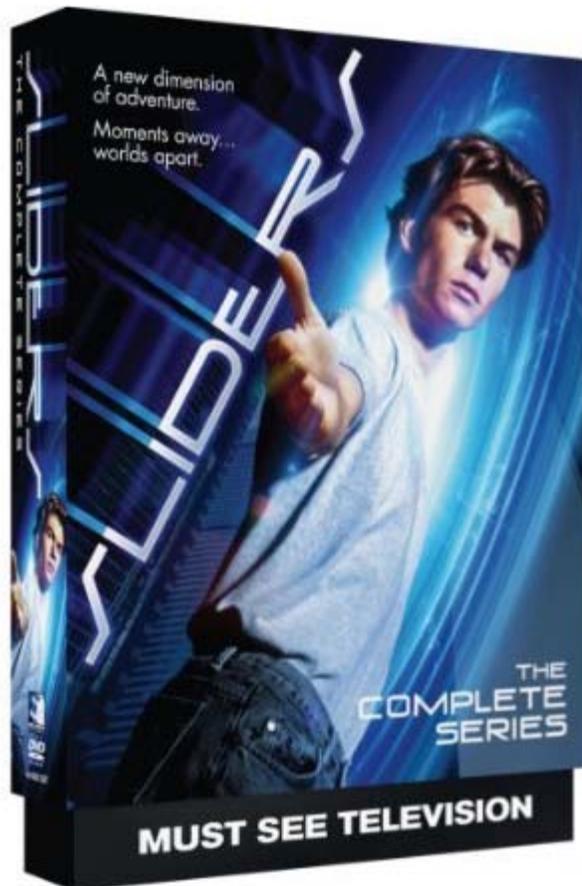
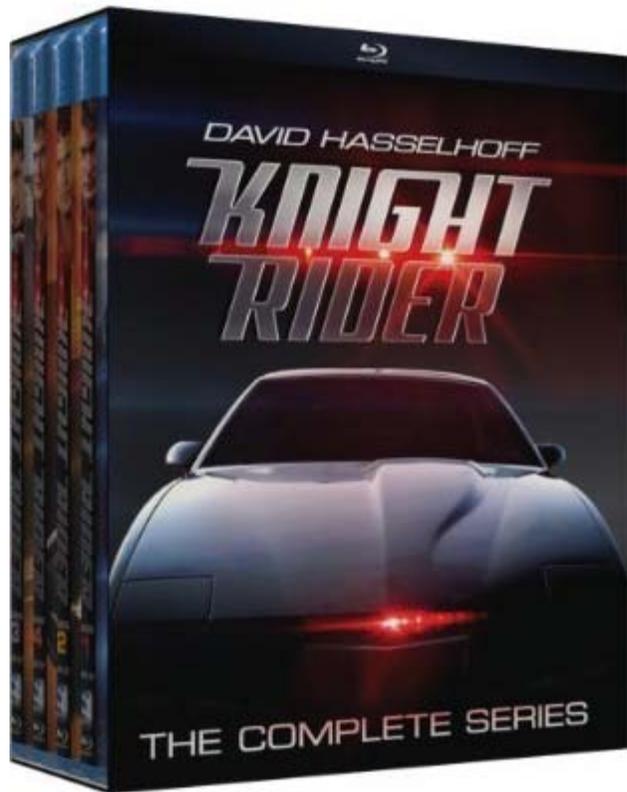
Michael Giltz, ContributorBookFilter creator

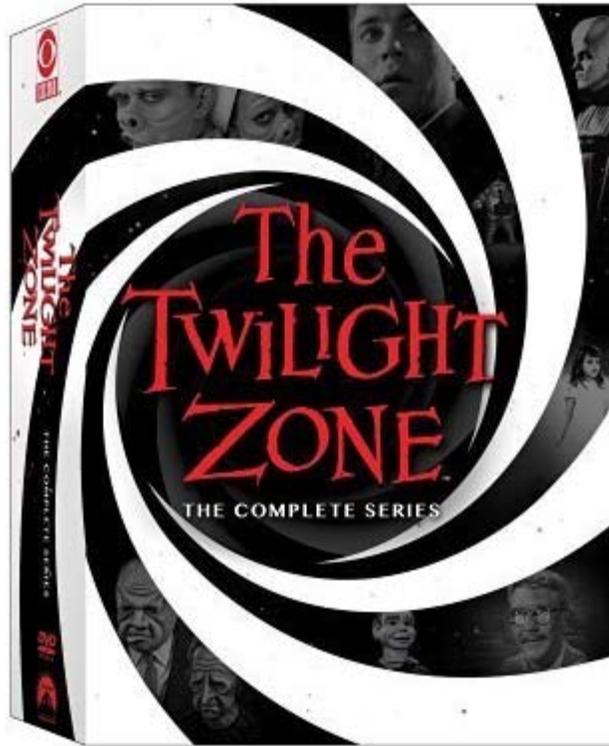
## DVDs: Spiffy "Miami Vice," Flabby "Tarzan," Mumbling "McCabe," And Weak Woody

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The TV boxed sets keep tumbling out, which is pretty great for those who prefer to proudly display a favorite series on their coffee table. (Did anyone ever say, "Check out my streams?" No, they did not. But now we're mostly getting repackaged sets at lower prices (which is great) instead of collections of the many, many shows that haven't come out yet (which is not). Oh *I'll Fly Away*, I still dream about you.







**MIAMI VICE COMPLETE SERIES** (\$99.98 BluRay; Mill Creek Entertainment)

**KNIGHT RIDER COMPLETE SERIES** (\$99.98 BluRay; Mill Creek Entertainment)

**SLIDERS COMPLETE SERIES** (\$44.98 DVD; Mill Creek Entertainment)

**THE TWILIGHT ZONE COMPLETE SERIES** (\$79.99 DVD; Paramount)

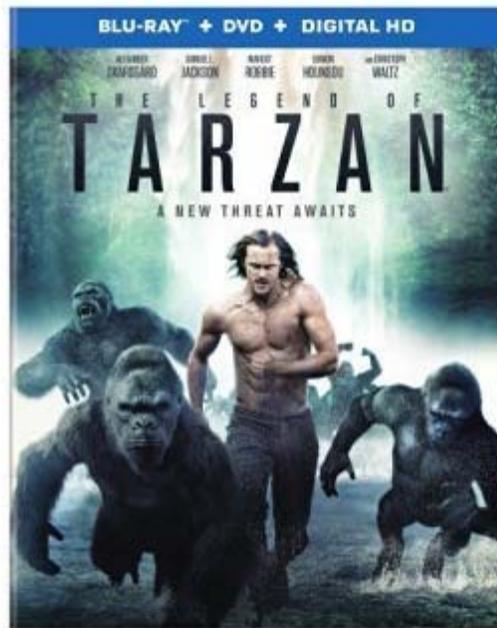
Four sporadically impressive boxed sets. *Miami Vice* raised the highest hopes because once upon a time it set lavish standards for a TV show, with movie quality cinematography and music. (Plus Edward James Olmos glowered like no one ever before.) The drama hasn't dated well on a series once taken quite seriously. But it's still flashy as hell. This new BluRay set looks darn good, thanks to a show that was shot on film. I've only listened to the audio in the original stereo mix though others have said they've had issues with the more elaborate sound options. So it looks terrific and is compactly presented; if sound is your thing, you might want to check online to see what audiophiles say.

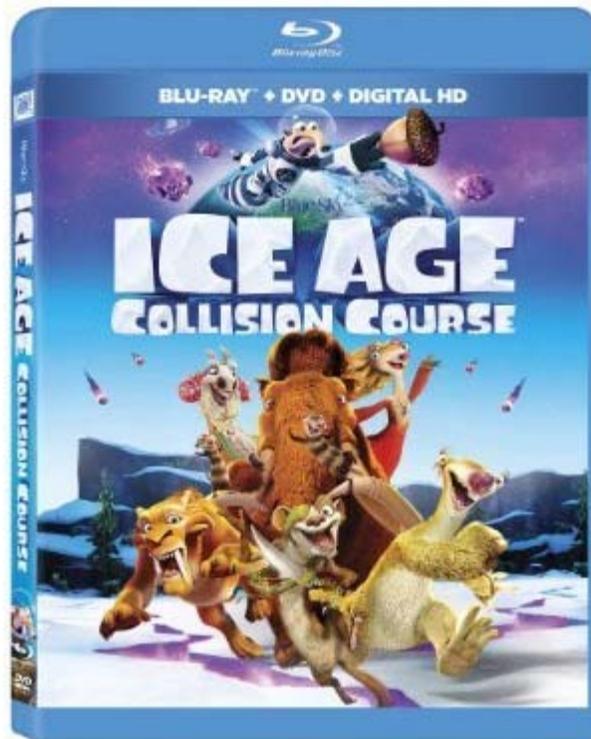
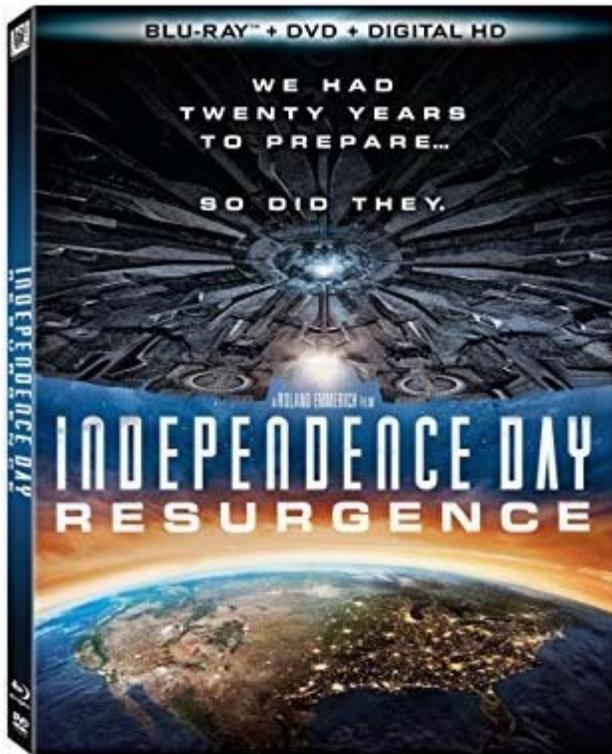
In contrast, *Knight Rider* didn't raise much expectations since its most lavish effect is a voice over. Always a silly show, it's in a similar set to *Miami Vice* — no muss, no fuss, but looking better than it did back when you watched it on a "massive" 34 inch TV. David Hasselhoff remains an acquired taste.

Not so *Sliders*, which was mostly ignored except by sci-fi geeks and aficionados of Jerry O'Connell, the goofily charming lead of this nutty time travel series. One can't argue *Knight Rider* took itself seriously, but

*Sliders* doubled down on the daffiness to prime effect. If you're a fan of the current modest hit *Timeless*, this one is right up your alley.

Finally, there's *The Twilight Zone*, one of the all time great TV shows. It was always taken seriously by smart people and its stock has only risen over the years. It has also set benchmarks in quality for DVD and BluRay releases. If you want the most lavish, most complete versions of these episodes, look elsewhere. If you're happy with a compact DVD set at an exceptional price, you're in luck. Probably the ideal way to sell someone on this anthology is to present them with the twenty greatest hits. But taking it in season by season can only impress on you the yeoman's work accomplished by Rod Serling when a TV season meant about thirty episodes a season. My god, look at *Black Mirror* positively wilt under the weight of producing six episodes in a season...and they had three years to prepare!







**THE LEGEND OF TARZAN** (\$35.99 BluRay; Warner Home Video)

**INDEPENDENCE DAY: RESURGENCE** (\$39.99 BluRay; 20th Century Fox)

**ICE AGE: COLLISION COURSE** (\$39.99 BluRay; 20th Century Fox)

**ALICE THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS** (\$39.99 BluRay; Walt Disney Studios)

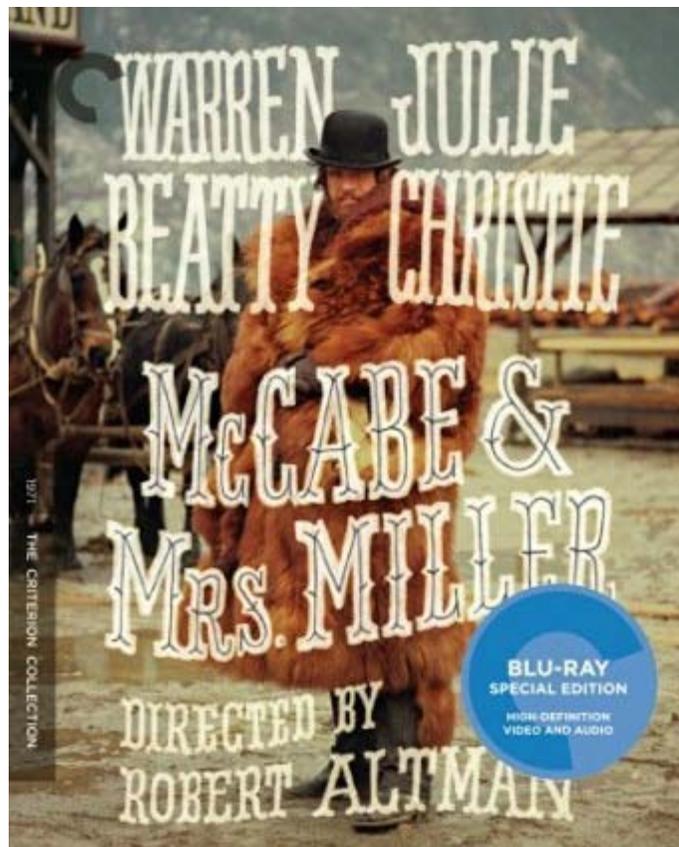
Poor Tarzan. At this stage, they've produced a lot more bad Tarzan movies and TV shows than they have good ones. And yet they keep trying because the myth crafted by Edgar Rice Burroughs in that initial book is so compelling. And when it's good, like *Tarzan and His Mate* or much of *Greystoke: The Legend Of Tarzan, Lord Of The Apes*, it's very good indeed. But it's been a long, long time since they got it right in a live action version. (The Disney spin on the tale was actually a peak as well.) And *The Legend Of Tarzan* (2016) goes wrong in so many ways it's hard to begin. I'd start to list them, but would the next person to tackle it actually listen? One thing I know for certain: they will remake Tarzan again. And I'll watch it.

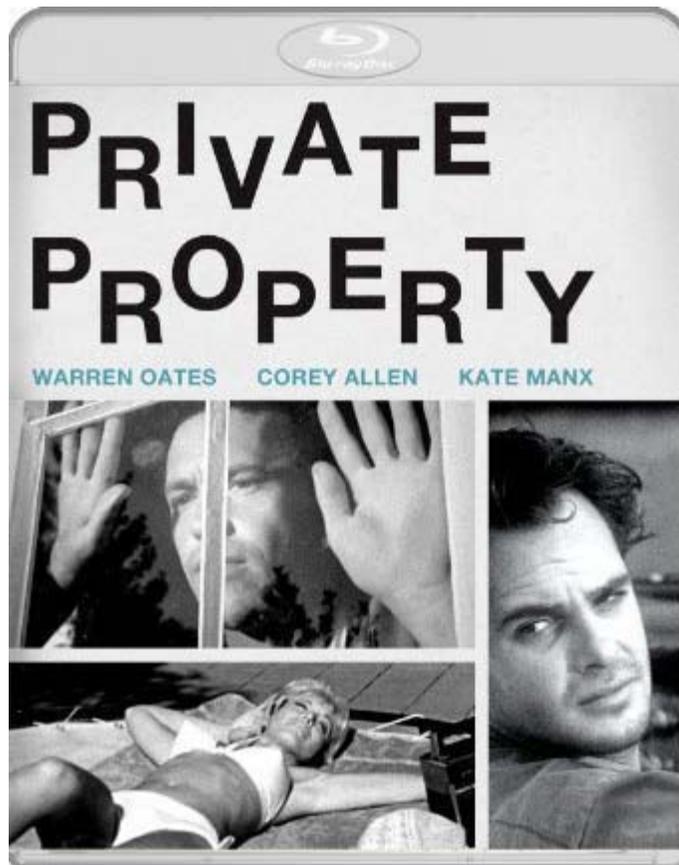
Now why they made a sequel to *Independence Day* is harder to fathom. I could imagine them making a sequel a year or two later, sure. But they waited 20 years, didn't pony up to include Will Smith and then tempted fate by using the tagline "We had twenty years to prepare...and so did they." Um, I guess we should have used that twenty years more wisely, but working on the script wasn't the solution. Realizing the time for *ID4* to be rebooted had long passed.

*Ice Age: Collision Course* makes much more (depressing) sense. It's the fifth in a series and the first four made

a LOT of money. So of course they delivered yet another shaggy story of prehistoric creatures cavorting about in the snow. Creatively, it ran out of steam somewhere around the trailer that included the cute bit wit the squirrel and the nut that previewed the first film. Commercially, this one fell off a cliff, but they had made so much money on IA4 that everyone will be fine. But it's going to be a long time before they lower the bucket into this well again.

I could never even figure out why LEWIS CARROLL made a sequel to *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland*. Money, obviously, since he didn't add much to his masterpiece by repeating himself. Similarly, Disney had such a monster hit with Johnny Depp in *Alice* (though not, unfortunately, AS Alice) that of course they made a sequel no one was really clamoring for, this time without Tim Burton directing. But...but...it's so bonkers in a visually stunning way, that if you get into a sort of stoner mindset and let the set design and cinematography madness wash over you, why it's still bad but you won't mind as much.





**MCCABE AND MRS MILLER** (\$39.95 BluRay; Criterion)

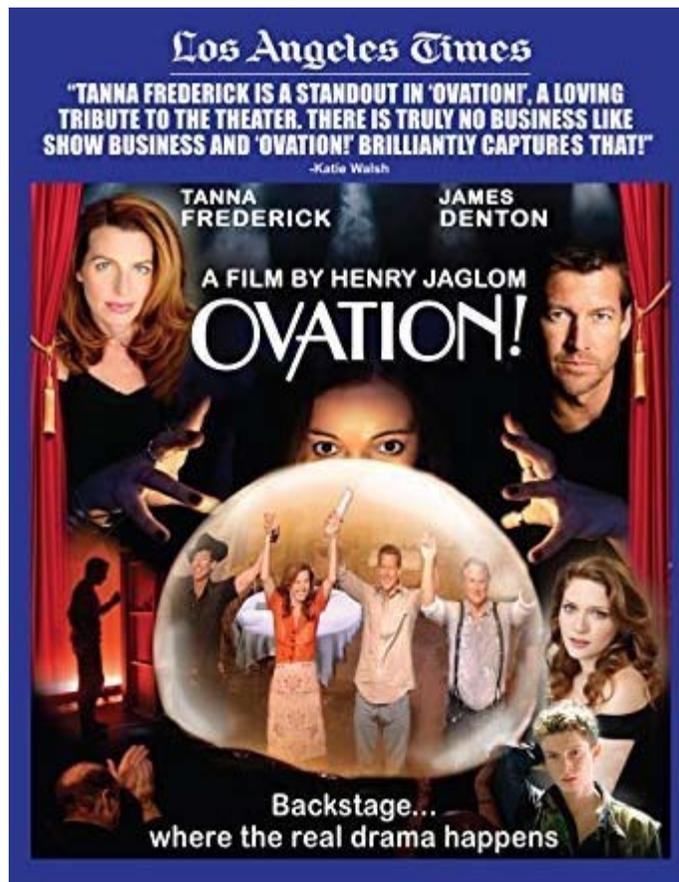
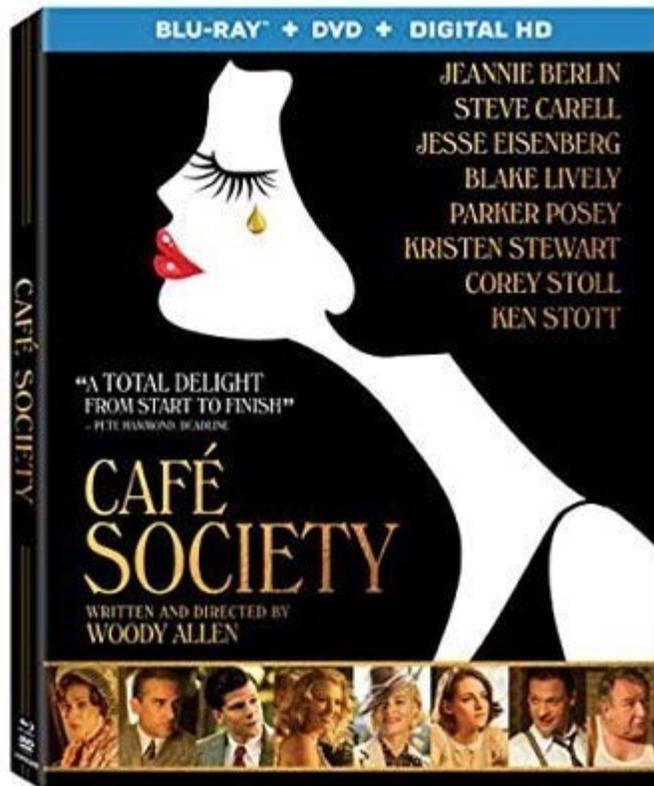
**PRIVATE PROPERTY** (\$34.99 BluRay; Cinelicious Pics)

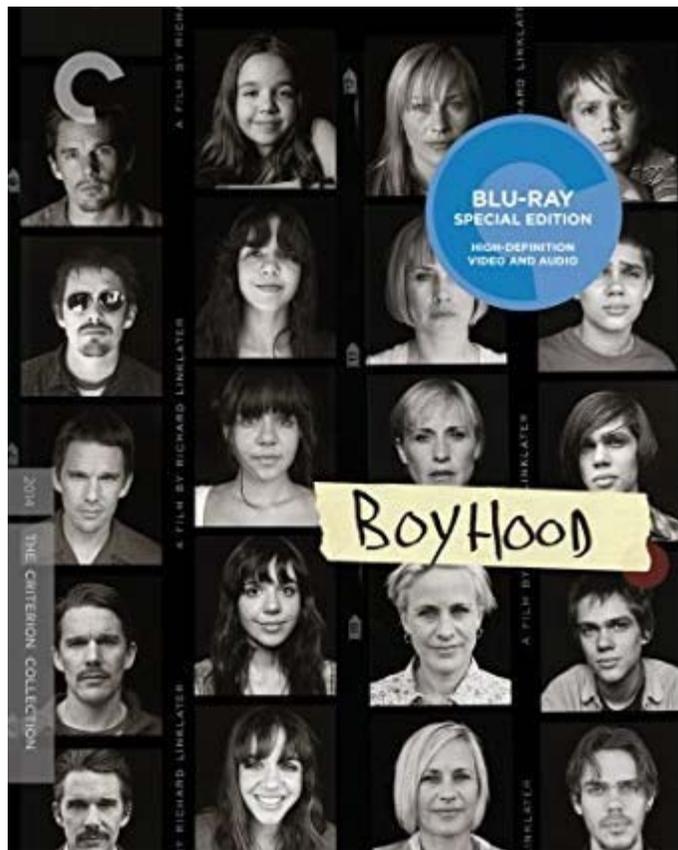
**THE MARX BROTHERS SILVER SCREEN COLLECTION** (\$59.98 BluRay; Universal Studios Home Entertainment)

Dear God, *McCabe & Mrs. Miller* is a great movie. It's stark raving mad, in a way, with the dialogue muddled in that Robert Altman-esque way and the tale so downbeat and dour you can't believe it was made in Hollywood. Warren Beatty is determined to work against his pretty boy looks and by does he succeed. Julie Christie can't do anything about her looks short of prosthetics and a lot of makeup but she sure can act. A great western, a great drama, a launching pad of sorts for Leonard Cohen, it's so good in so many ways it leaves you gasping. Criterion does a marvelous job presenting this very unpolished film exactly as it should be, loaded with extras and commentary to inform and entertain you while demonstrating all that's going on here with verve and passion. I had such a great time when I first saw *Nashville*, but this may be the definitive Altman film.

Now *Private Property* is new to me, a cult favorite that has languished in obscurity for years. But thanks to the presence of Warren Oates, the discovery of a print worth restoring and a homoerotic subtext that's always good for a hook to sell to those sexually fluid millennials looking for a new movie to champion, here it is probably looking better than ever. It was written and directed by Leslie Stevens, the creator of *The Outer Limits*, which some claim is better than *The Twilight Zone*, but some are wrong. However, this tale of two drifters stalking a beauty is a good double bill with *In Cold Blood* and worth reappraising.

The Marx Brothers need no reappraising: they are giants of cinematic comedy. I know someone who doesn't love *Duck Soup*, but I don't talk to them anymore and if they don't love *Duck Soup* I guess I didn't really know them in the first place, because why would I be friends with someone who doesn't love *Duck Soup*? Here you get five key early films remastered, including *The Cocoanuts*, *Monkey Business*, *Horse Feathers*, their masterpiece *Duck Soup* and the real draw here, a newly restored *Animal Crackers*. The long sought after segments return the film to its original 1930 length rather than the shortened version created for the 1936 reissue.





**CAFE SOCIETY** (\$39.99 BluRay; Lionsgate)

**OVATION!** (\$21.99 DVD; Breaking Glass/Rainbow Releasing)

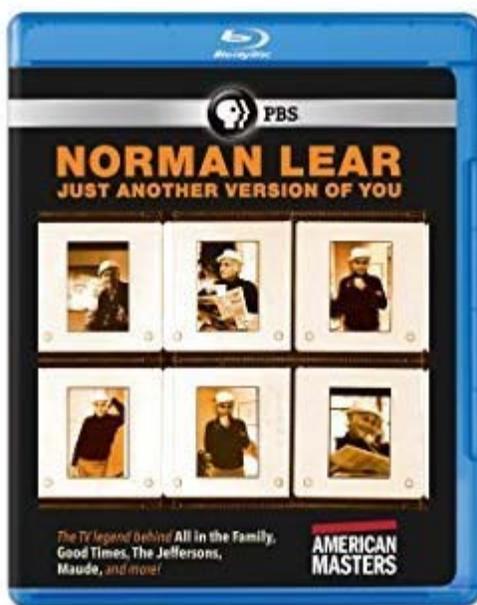
**BOYHOOD** (\$39.95 BluRay; Criterion)

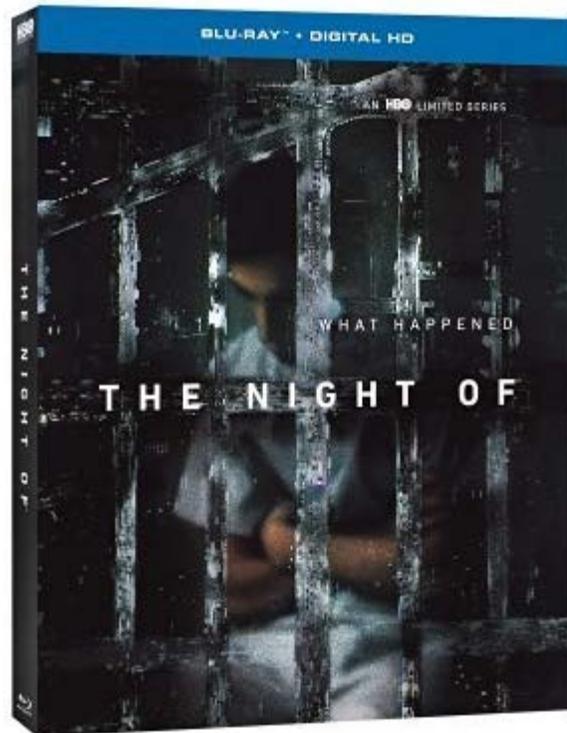
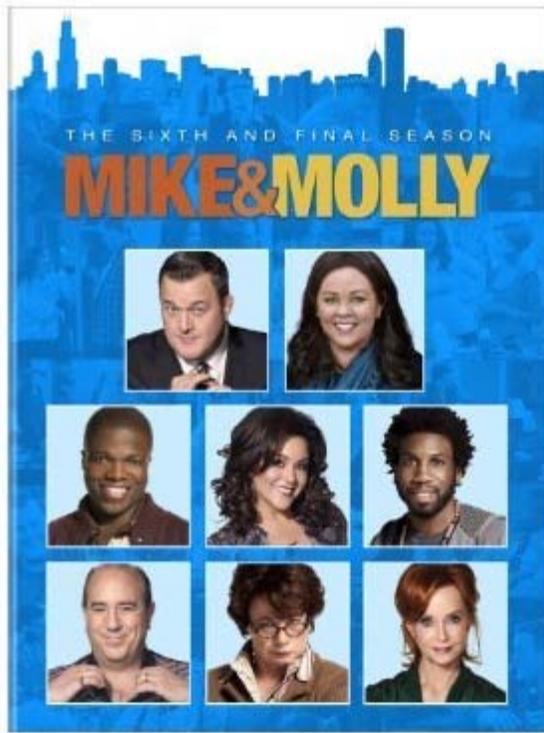
Oh auteurs, what a lonely life you lead. Woody Allen long entered the Bob Dylan post-motorcycle accident phase, that period where your best work is behind you but you keep working since that's what you do and yet people rather rudely say, "Oh if only you'd died in that motorcycle accident and left your legacy pure and intact!" I guess sitting through so many so-so Woody Allen movies in recent years, I understand better why critics turned against Fellini. He made a string of absolute masterpieces but critics of the 1970s and on can't forgive him for making them sit through all the movies that came *after*. I think Allen's stock will rise once we can put his career in context, appreciate again that brilliant run from his sketchy but hilarious early films to the tremendous work from *Annie Hall* to his last great work *Husbands & Wives*, without you know, having to sit through ALL the bad ones before during and after that. *Cafe Society* is one of those painless but unmemorable pieces that will slip by with barely a mention. Maybe *Sweet and Lowdown* will gain a little juice because Sean Penn is just so good. Maybe *Match Point* will get pegged down because it was more of a relief than a really good movie. And so on and so forth. But Allen remains a major talent, even if *Cafe Society* wouldn't convince anyone of that on its own.

In contrast, Henry Jaglom has been an auteur with more money than sense, turning out movies that only his

very faithful audience turns out for. And yet, once in a while he gets lucky. Here is *Ovation!*, an ode to the theater that has good notices from both the New York Times *and* the Los Angeles Times and for Jaglom, that's a happy day indeed. Allen would take good notices as his due. Or more accurately, he would probably be as bemused by good notices as bad ones, wondering why critics suddenly liked this and not that. Jaglom will enjoy this peak for a good while to come and probably agree with the critics wholeheartedly. Wouldn't you?

Then there's the auteur Richard Linklater. Allen was a weird combination of Groucho Marx and Ingmar Bergman. Jaglom loved Orson Welles but was more in the Cassavetes vein perhaps. But Linklater is Linklater and follows his own drum. Never more defiantly than with *Boyhood*, a labor of love made over many years by a tiny core group of actors and crew that proved a triumph in every way. I'm actually more excited by his current release *Everybody Wants Some!!*, a spiritual sequel to *Dazed & Confused* that is definitely one of the best movies of 2016. But if any movie of his deserves the Criterion treatment, it's certainly this uniquely ambitious work and they do it proud.







**NORMAN LEAR: JUST ANOTHER VERSION OF YOU** (\$29.99 BluRay; PBS)

**MIKE & MOLLY: THE SIXTH AND FINAL SEASON** (\$24.98 DVD; Warner Home Video)

**THE NIGHT OF** (\$59.99 BluRay; HBO Studio)

**ADVENTURE TIME: THE COMPLETE SIXTH SEASON** (\$39.99 BluRay; Cartoon Network)

Norman Lear is one of the giants of television, defiantly producing work that was so bold and ambitious it can still take your breath away. (Just watch the first few seasons of *All In The Family* if you don't believe me.) It only worked because they also made a lot of money for a lot of people. But his iconoclastic career is celebrated in a documentary made for PBS called *Norman Lear: Just Another Version Of You*. It's only 90 minutes but if they doubled it by stuffing in more clips from more shows, you'd swear it was shorter.

Is Lear happy with what he wrought? I doubt *Mike & Molly* gives him any pleasure. A TV show about an overweight couple that never graduated beyond fat jokes, *Mike & Molly* was everything Lear was not: comforting rather than confrontational; lowbrow rather than high-minded. But he would surely have appreciated the talent of leads Melissa McCarthy and Bill Gardell and written some much better material for them. Now that the sixth and final season has come to a close, maybe it's not too late.

HBO's *The Night Of* would definitely be much more up Lear's alley. Based on a British miniseries, it challenged

viewers over their complacent ideas of good and evil, upping the ante by questioning the easy assumption that a person of color portrayed in a series like this today surely must be innocent.... It may have bobbed a bit at the end but it's a very well acted work of drama that shakes things up while entertaining mightily. And Lear enjoyed some of his biggest hits by taking British shows and remaking them in his own image, so he'd applaud the creative rejiggering as well.

And I like to think Lear would love the offbeat charm of *Adventure Time*. It's a stretch to see his creative influence in this "kid's" cartoon, perhaps. But Lear's essential tearing up of the rules once and for all can surely be a precursor to an animated series with season long arcs and the sense that anything is possible. They've got two more seasons to go before calling it a day, a luxury of building to a finale that Lear could have only dreamed of back in the day. Here's hoping they make the most of it.

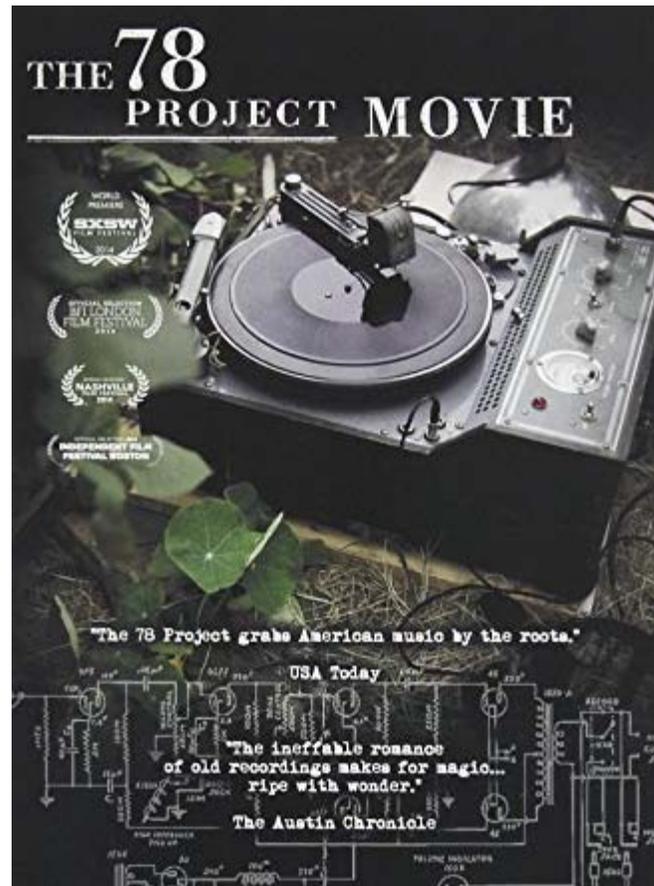
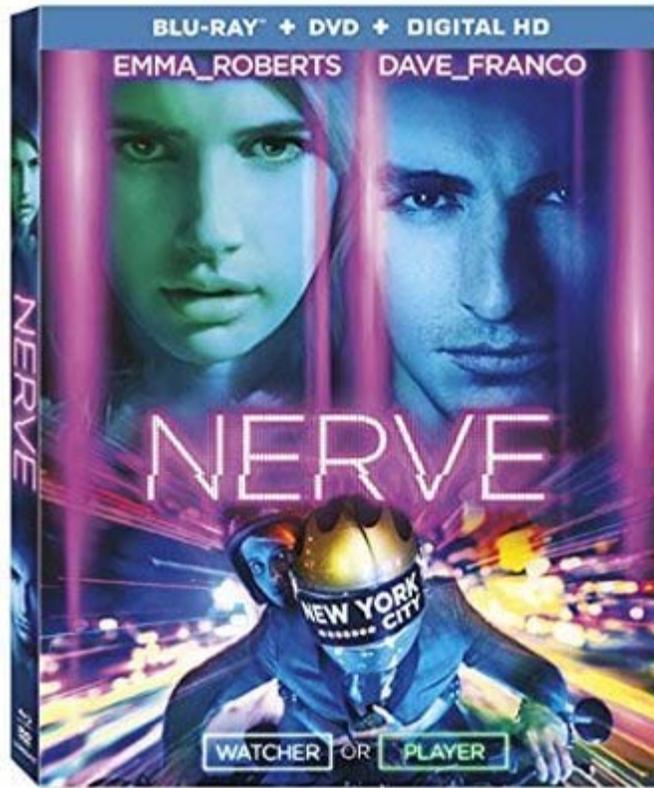


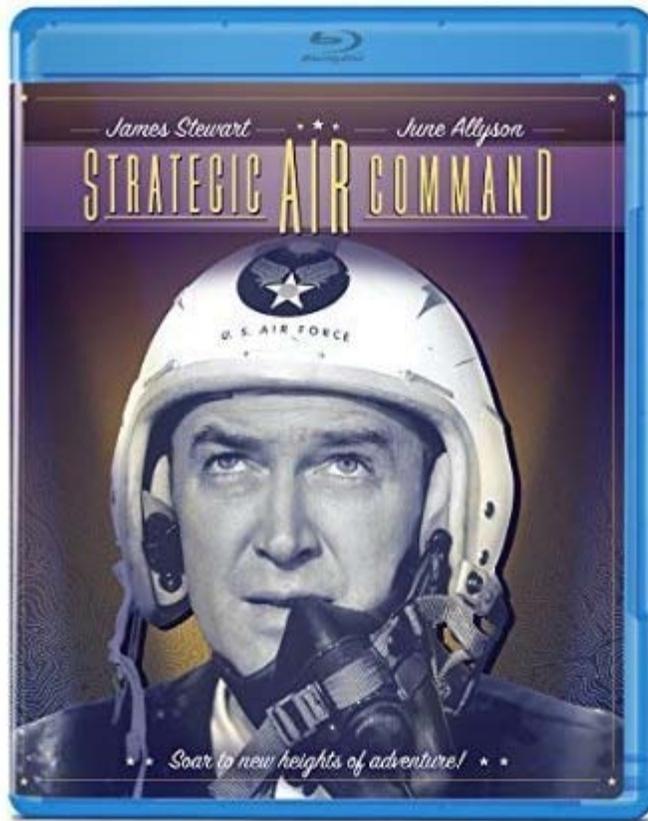


**CARRIE COLLECTOR'S EDITION** (\$34.93 BluRay; Shout! Factory)

**TRILOGÍA DE GUILLERMO DEL TORO** (\$99.95 BluRay; Criterion)

Just in time for Halloween, two releases to creep you out. Brian De Palma's *Carrie* was never a keeper for me. But it's earned its status as a perennial shocker, thanks to the great cast and that prom finale. Shout! presents poor Sissy Spacek in all her tremulous glory here. I saw no promise in De Palma by watching *Carrie*. On the other hand, I saw all the promise in the world in Guillermo Del Toro with his Mexican creep shows. *Cronos* and *The Devil's Backbone* were not my cup of tea but anyone could see a unique talent developing. Then came his masterpiece *Pan's Labyrinth*, a film of rare beauty and depth wrapped in a dark fairy tale. I thought it announced a world class talent. instead, it seems to have been more of a fluke, with Del Toro turning to Hollywood and making one disappointing movie after another, from a dull *Hellboy* sequel to *Pacific Rim* and *Crimson Peak*. I suppose he was wise to back out of the rushed *Hobbit* movies but god knows, if he'd made them they couldn't have been worse. Has he really only made three movies in the past ten years? He desperately needs to get back on track and maybe Del Toro could refresh his memory by diving into this boxed set of his early peak. It's an absolutely gorgeous package, including encomiums from Neil Gaiman and a lovely presentation all around. Marvelous as one expects from Criterion. Here's hoping Del Toro doesn't allow this to be the only set fans of his ever really need.





**NERVE** (\$39.99 BluRay; Lionsgate)

**THE 78 PROJECT MOVIE** (\$24.98 DVD; The 78 Project)

**STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND** (\$29.95 BluRay; Olive Films)

I can't think of any excuse for lumping these final three flicks together but here they are. *Nerve* is a classic B movie with the premise of two people caught up in a social media style game (people watching online vote to tell them what to do next) that turns weirdly deadly. It's dumb fun of a sort. *The 78 Project Movie* is not particularly good but it is a document capturing the cool idea of traveling around the country and getting artists to record one-take 78s just like they did in the old days. All you really need is the companion album but at this stage I'll follow Jack White anywhere so here I am. Finally, there's *Strategic Air Command* which commands attention for two reasons. One, Jimmy Stewart is just a great actor, here showing again how he can hold the screen with close-ups. Two, it boasts some of the best aerial photography ever seen in the movies and that makes this BluRay a treat for those who geek out on such things. June Allyson is along for the ride and doesn't weep quite as much as usual, which is a treat as well.

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