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THE BEDLAM FILES

Right now, in the second month of Coronavirus quarantine, I'm sure we're all about ready to go stir crazy.

Hence, having already **explored disease movies** at some length, I find I'm now concentrating on themes of isolation and claustrophobia—subjects upon which all of us are now experts!

Streaming Now



1. **THE PLATFORM** (EL HOYO)

Any number of meanings can be read into this quasi-futuristic horror story about a high rise prison whose sole source of nourishment is a platform piled with food that's lowered down from the top floor each day, and picked clean long before it reaches the unfortunate denizens of the bottom floors. The film is a powerful and impacting gut-wrencher regardless of how you choose to see it. NETFLIX

Adam's Picks



1. **ATRAPADOS** (TRAPPED)

From the director of the eighties cult favorite HIDER IN THE HOUSE, a Spanish language study of a man and woman stuck in a sealed-off underground room in the wake of some unspecified catastrophe. An ERASERHEAD-worthy exercise in otherworldly strangeness, and one of the great unknown cult films of our time. FILM



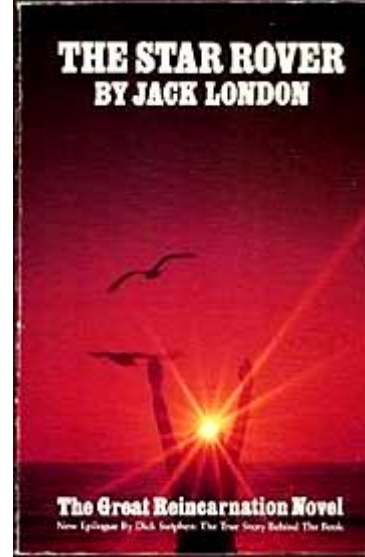
2. PARASITE (GISAENGCHUNG)

I found this South Korean made Oscar darling vastly overrated. Among last year's films it wasn't my first choice (nor my **second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth or seventh**), but it IS a stylish, absorbing and very dark exploration of haves and have nots in an eastern-centric milieu that could just as easily be our own. HULU



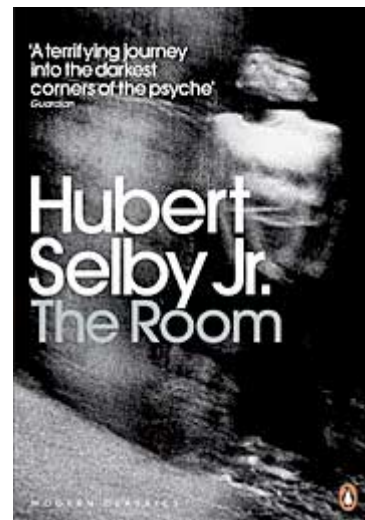
3. THE DECLINE (JUSQU'AU DECLIN)

This crisp and efficient French-Canadian thriller, about murder and madness in a survivalist camp, mixes a number of DELIVERANCE-esque themes into a paranoid framework that's quite appropriate to our present reality. NETFLIX



2. THE STAR ROVER By JACK LONDON

In which a prisoner mentally escapes the bonds of a straightjacket by accessing his past lives. An odd and imaginative phantasmagoria by an author who believed quite passionately in reincarnation. BOOK



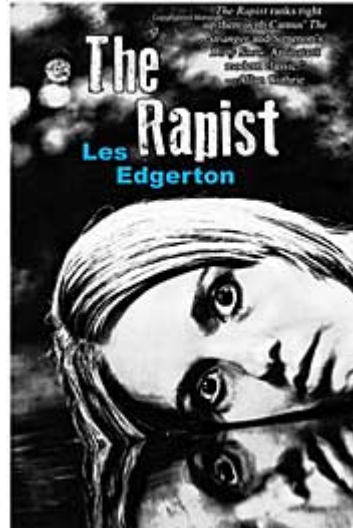
3. THE ROOM By HUBERT SELBY, JR.

Essentially the psychotic inverse of London's classic, a depiction of an incarcerated prisoner who gives himself over to depraved and psychotic fantasies. A profoundly disturbing novel that, needless to add, is not recommended for the easily offended. BOOK



4. SWALLOW

This horror fest is about a young woman (Haley Bennett) suffering from Pica eating disorder, i.e. a compulsion to imbibe inedible things. A powerful film, although its third act needs serious work. AMAZON



4. THE RAPIST

By LES EDGERTON

Another riff on THE STAR ROVER, this one about an incarcerated rapist caught up in a narrative that functions as a stark crime procedural, a gritty account of prison life and a near-psychedelic depiction of the whorls of a deranged mind, all contained in an economic 142 pages. BOOK



5. THE WANDERING EARTH (LIU LANG DI QIU)

This was China's attempt at Hollywood blockbuster moviemaking, an irrepressibly noisy and chaotic special effects blowout in which the Earth is essentially steered out of the way of an oncoming planet (Jupiter, to be exact). Makes ARMAGEDDON look like high art. NETFLIX

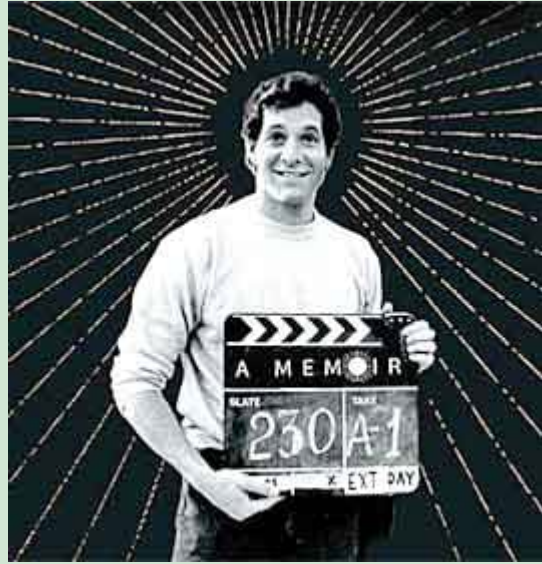


5. IN THE HIGHEST OF SKIES (NEL PIU' ALTO DEI CIELI)

Not a very good movie, truth be told, but this Italian exploiter is perhaps the ultimate trapped-in-an-elevator film. Here we have a dozen people stuck in a Vatican lift, leading to murder, wonton sex, rampant brutality and cannibalism. FILM

NEW on the Site!

- [Brian De Palma's Films Ranked](#)
- [Are Snakes Necessary?](#)
- [The Guttenberg Bible](#)
- [Disease Movies, An Informal History](#)
- [The Eternal Mask](#)
- ***And much more.***



Alan Garfield



Brian Dennehy

R.I.P.

Finally, this month we bid goodbye to two great Hollywood character actors: Allen Garfield (aged 80) and Brian Dennehy (81). The former was felled by the coronavirus and the latter by natural causes--although given Mr. Dennehy's legendary off-screen excesses (how he made to 81 I'll never figure out), I'd have to question just how "natural" his death truly was. Anyway, these men have been longtime fixtures of my movie-going life, and both will be greatly missed.

I'm done reading. To the website!

The Bedlam Files

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