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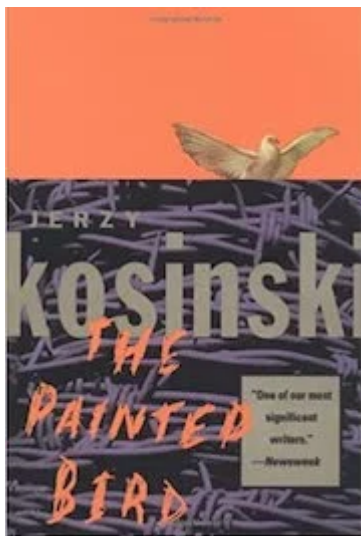
THE BEDLAM FILES

With Adam Groves

New Films for a New Shutdown

Uh, oh: it seems that, for those of us living in the US, we're essentially shut down again. I'll politely refrain from providing my take on our current predicament (although I can assure you I've got a lot of thoughts about it) and get right to what everybody's here for: film and book reviews, of which I've got some strong picks.

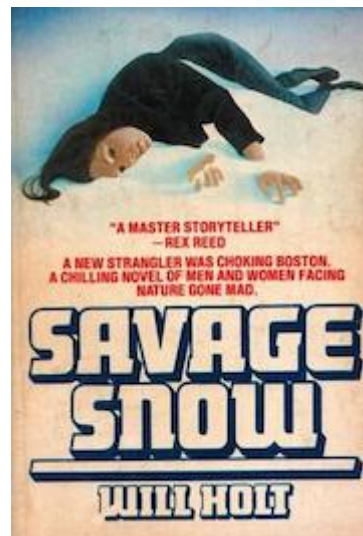
Streaming Now



1. **THE PAINTED BIRD**

This adaptation of [Jerzy Kosinski's classic novel](#) is 2020's answer to the likes of [SALO](#) and [IN A GLASS CAGE](#). THE PAINTED BIRD is, in other words, a prime example of artsploitation, containing a gorgeously photographed litany of horrors in its depiction of a young boy's WWII-era wanderings through an unidentified

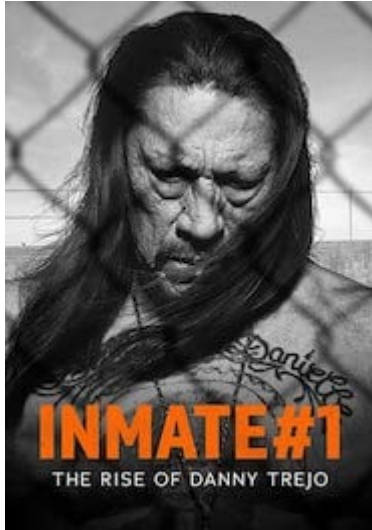
Adam's Picks



1. **SAVAGE SNOW** by **WILL HOLT**

A 1980 novel whose overall theme is more resonant today than when it was initially published: The breakdown of civilization when its populace is placed under unusual duress. The story's driving engine is a massive blizzard that hits Boston on the day before Mardi Gras, leading to power outages, mass chaos and an orgy. It all adds up to a satisfying and

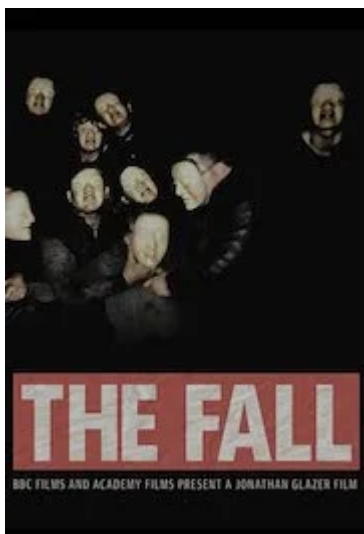
Eastern European country. AMAZON



2. INMATE #1: THE RISE OF DANNY TREJO

A documentary profile of onetime criminal Danny Trejo, who spent eleven years behind bars. Now a free man, Trejo is a prolific actor with (no joke) 384 screen credits.

Unabashedly pro-rehabilitation (a pretty radical stance nowadays), this film powerfully evokes both the ugliness of prison life and the capacity for change in a life that's truly like no other. AMAZON



3. THE FALL

This, a peerlessly nightmarish 2019 short by **UNDER THE SKIN**'s Jonathan

absorbing read that, as recent events have demonstrated, actually gets quite a few of its details right. BOOK



2. LA CABINA

A man trapped in a phone booth is the subject of this 35 minute Spanish freak-out. The idea of being stuck in place while the surrounding world goes about its business unaffected (or at least seems to) is one to which we can all relate, in a film that no longer seems like the farfetched allegorical fantasy it once did; allegorical documentary now seems more accurate! FILM



3. A QUIET PLACE IN THE COUNTRY

Glazer, is said to have been inspired in equal parts by Goya and Donald Trump's sons. A wordless parable of primitive justice and mob rule, THE FALL was previously viewable only in the UK. Now everyone can watch it. UNIVERCINE



4. FAMILY ROMANCE, LLC

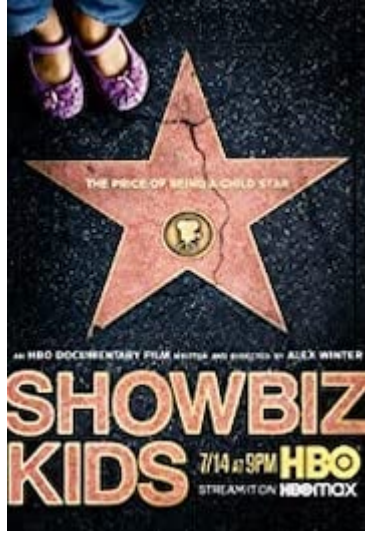
This drama from the great Werner Herzog plays like a particularly bizarre flight of fancy, but is based on fact. The setting is Japan, where a company specializes in hiring out actors to impersonate family members, wedding dates, paparazzi, etc. The film may be fictional, but the company at its center is real, as is its CEO Ishii Yuichi, who plays himself. MUBI

In which Franco Nero goes mad(der) in a haunted country house. A favorite theme of Stephen King is given a notably hallucinatory and oppressive Euro-centric treatment. Once again: this film is old (1968), but has taken on a new resonance in a time when insanity and oppression appear to be everyday realities. FILM



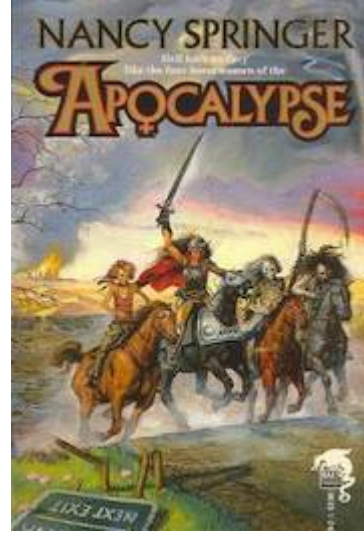
4. WHY DOES HERR R. RUN AMOK?

From the incomparable Rainer Werner Fassbinder, an exploration of the uneventful existence of a suburban man who becomes a homicidal lunatic for no evident reason but I think now, in the Covid era, we may have a better idea of why it is that Herr R. runs amok. The trick is to keep ourselves from doing the same. FILM



5. **SHOWBIZ KIDS**

A documentary that doesn't quite live up to the grandiose prerelease claims made about it (meaning it's far from a "bombshell expose"), but succeeds nonetheless as a touching and upsetting look at the travails of child actors in Hollywood, as recounted by Will Wheaton, Evan Rachel Wood, Jada Pinkett Smith, Mara Wilson and others. The writer and director was Alex Winter (a.k.a. Bill of the BILL AND TED flicks), a former child actor who really knows the milieu he's taking to task. HBO

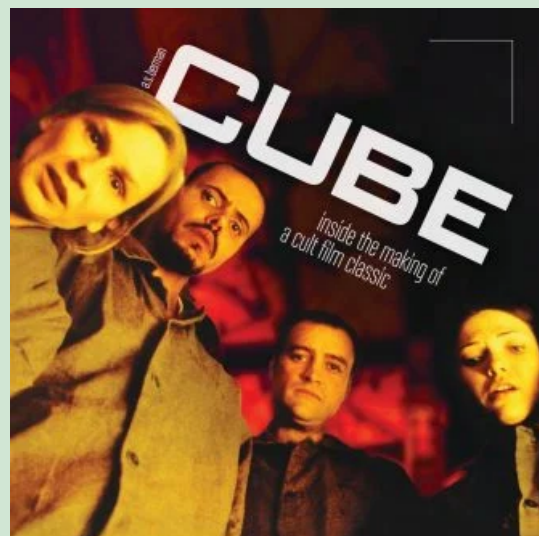


5. **APOCALYPSE** by **NANCY SPRINGER**

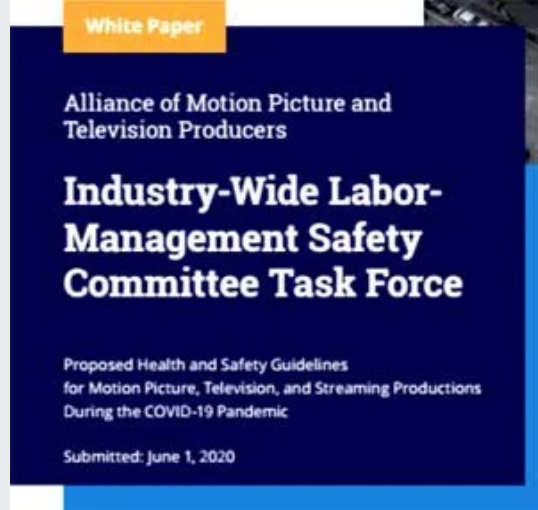
An early novel by the popular fantasist Nancy Springer that reads like a more fanciful WITCHES OF EASTWICK. The title isn't without some real significance in a book containing four horsewomen of the apocalypse, nightmarish visions, cicadas with human heads and a narrative that grows increasingly chaotic and disaster-filled. BOOK

Also NEW on the Site!

- **The Demolished Man**
- **The Number 23**
- **CUBE: Inside the Making of a Cult Classic**
- **Chasing the Light**
- **And Much More!**



One part of the world that has been allowed to resume functioning in this unsettled age is the motion picture and television industry, albeit with some pretty major restrictions. [Online production guidelines](#) have been released, with the [ones for Los Angeles County](#) running a full 12 pages, and those of the [Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers](#) a whopping 22.



Among the guidelines:

“Any work, including scenes, requiring cast or crew to be closer than six (6) feet must be as brief as possible and cast must be as silent as possible to avoid spreading droplets through talking.”

Also: “Scenes with direct prolonged physical contact between cast (intimate scenes, fight scenes) are discouraged at this time” and “All off-camera staff must wear facial covering throughout the workday.”

Obviously the porn industry is having an especially difficult time with these new rules, and mainstream cinema isn't doing too well either. What might movies look like in the coming months/years? Your guess is as good as mine.

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The Bedlam Files

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