

EDGAR ALLAN POE DAY, OCT 7!

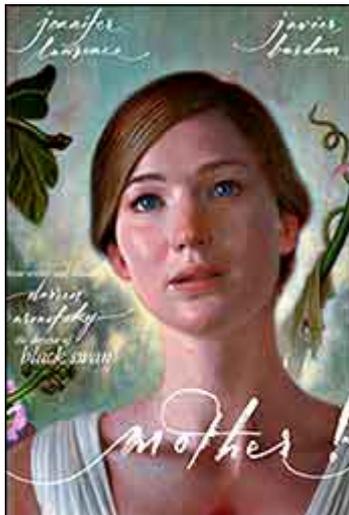
THE BEDLAM FILES

With Adam Groves

“Financial considerations within the industry have taken *entertainment*, which means something that is emotional, cerebral, amusing, exhilarating, and made it mean simply *distracting*.”

— Nicholas Roeg

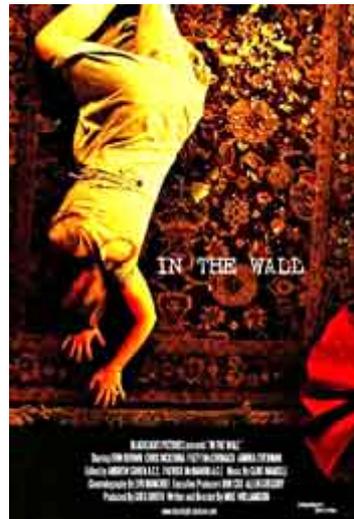
Streaming Now



1. MOTHER!

I continue to insist that this film, one of the most notorious flops of the 2010s, is a misunderstood masterpiece. It features Jennifer Lawrence as the too-devoted wife of a renowned poet (Javier Bardem) who resides in a seriously creepy house wherein a host of bizarre occurrences take place that are best left for the viewer to experience directly. The film is notable for writer-director Darren Aronofsky's impressively orchestrated play of apprehension

Adam's Picks



1. IN THE WALL

I contend that this was one of the finest horror shorts of the aughts, and now it's [available to stream on YouTube](#). About a loser (Chris McKenna) who accidentally kills his pregnant wife (Erin Brown) and tries to cover up the crime by walling up the corpse, the film is impeccably visualized and edited. There are some overdone aspects, such as the heavily filtered illumination (with one of the characters commenting on the “mood lighting”), but the expertly wrought

and unease, which all-but explodes in a twenty-minute denouement that is, frankly, completely batshit.

PARAMOUNT PLUS



2. SUZZANNA: THE QUEEN OF BLACK MAGIC

The first and only English language documentary about the late Indonesian horror icon [Suzzanna](#) (1942-2008). Director David Gregory does a good job guiding us through Suzzanna's early years as a soft-core porn star, her rise to the top of the Southeast Asian horror pyramid (an unmatched icy stare being her major attribute) and her personal life, which was nearly as horrific as her onscreen exploits.

SHUDDER

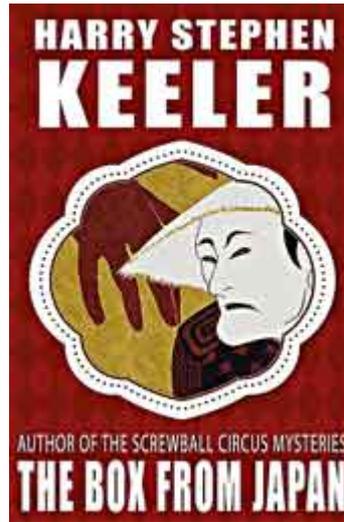


3. 2095

A pretty astonishing (and depressing) attempt by ["The Flo Factory" YouTube channel](#) at imparting "A Visual Timeline of Humanity's Collapse" via

filmmaking maintains attention throughout.

FILM



2. THE BOX FROM JAPAN

It wasn't too long ago that the only way to get ahold of this 1932 book, one of the wildest mysteries by the incomparable Harry Stephen Keeler, was by purchasing an ungodly expensive vintage copy. Now the 700-plus page BOX FROM JAPAN, which incorporates science fiction in addition to Keeler's standard obsessions (skulls, strange wills, foreign dialect-infused dialogue, etc.), is readily available in e-book format. Exasperating, outrageous and irredeemably nutty this novel may undeniably be, but just as undeniable is the cockeyed genius suffusing its every page.

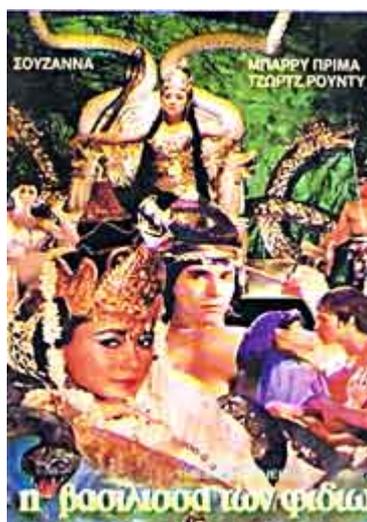
BOOK



3. THE QUEEN OF BLACK MAGIC

an AI crafted 9½ minute montage. Contained are brief clips of various awful calamities befalling the Earth (any one of which would have cost Hollywood tens of millions of dollars to create): fertility collapse, mass migration, rogue AI, water riots, falling satellites, global plague and famine, which result in a completely uninhabitable planet. Cheery this video isn't, with the fact that it was created by AI, which is portrayed as the main agent of Armageddon, being quite significant.

YOUTUBE



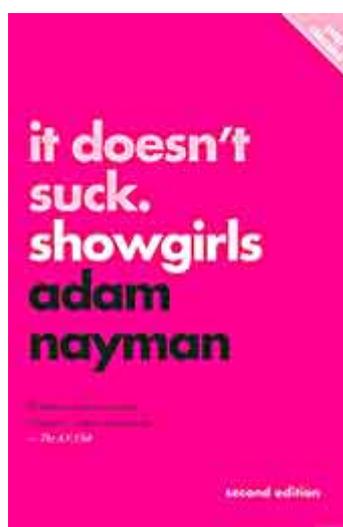
4. NYI BLORONG

This agreeably nutty **Suzzanna** vehicle is little known in the US. Suzzanna plays the Snake Queen, a popular figure in Indonesian folklore that's often portrayed in the region's film exports (such as **LADY TERMINATOR**). NYI BLORONG contains all the nuttiness any Southeast Asian film fan could want, with levitation, mutation, a zoom in on a maggot-ridden corpse and a gaudily decked out Suzzanna as the aforementioned queen, who wears a helmet festooned with live snakes and travels in a heavenly coach accessible via a flashing neon staircase.

SHUDDER

It may not be the best film to feature Suzzanna, but this 1981 horror fest is great fun nonetheless. Furthermore, as one of the first such films to achieve any recognition in the US, **THE QUEEN OF BLACK MAGIC** (Ratu Ilmu Hitam) marked many a cult movie fan's premiere exposure to the mind-boggling joys of Indonesian cinema. Featured are a Suzzanna essayed witch, deadly fly swarms, masses of snakes, exploding boils and a guy's head ripped from his body and made to fly around biting people. In short: a blast!

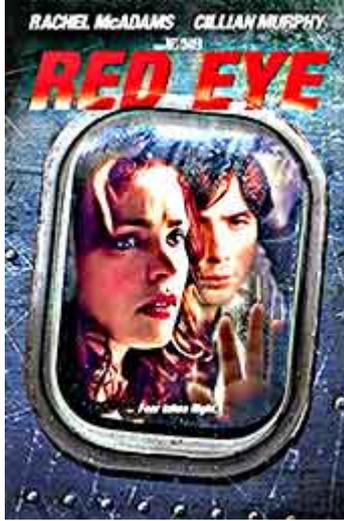
FILM



4. IT DOESN'T SUCK: SHOWGIRLS

A fun book offering a scene-by-scene exploration of Paul Verhoeven's notorious **SHOWGIRLS** (1995). Author Adam Nayman is frank about the film's ridiculousness, noting "classic" lines of dialogue like "It must be weird not to have people coming on you" and the performance of Elizabeth Berkley, whose "acting," Nayman correctly observes, sets the tone for the overall movie. Like many mainstream film critics, Nayman tends to over-intellectualize, and perhaps delves a bit too deeply into a film that, enjoyable though it may be, is total crap from virtually any standpoint.

BOOK



5. RED EYE

I'll always remember seeing **Wes Craven** speak at a **2005 FANGORIA Convention**, in which he all-but begged us to see his new film RED EYE. It's a shame Craven died before the ascension of streaming, on which the film (a minor hit in its day) has gained newfound popularity. No, it hasn't gotten any better in the ensuing 20 years, although the headliners Rachel McAdams and Cillian Murphy (both considered up-and-comers in '05) are obviously far more iconic. McAdams plays a sweet young woman on a red eye flight whose seemingly suave and upstanding seat partner (Murphy) turns out to be a terrorist-affiliated scumbag. Involving, but also overwrought and implausible.

PARAMOUNT PLUS



5. LAST NIGHT IN SOHO

Not a particularly great movie in my view, but one that marked the recently deceased **Terence Stamp's** final role, for which LAST NIGHT IN SOHO deserves a shout-out. Stamp's part, alas, is pretty small (he's credited as "Silver Haired Gentleman"), with the film pivoting on a London-based fashion designer (Thomasin McKenzie) travelling back in time to the swinging sixties, where **Dario Argento**-esque horror awaits.

FILM



Celebrate with us, Oct 7th!

It's EDGAR ALLAN POE Day

Edgar Allen Poe died mysteriously on Oct 7, 1849. Our new mug, *Ten Stories and a Poem by Edgar Allan Poe*, illustrates his most famous works with eleven (11) original pen-and-ink panels: 11oz and 15oz.

Subscribers get FREE shipping until Oct 7th with code CELEBRATEPOE.

Coffee and Poe on Oct 7. It's a date.

Also New

- **TERRENCE STAMP R.I.P.** (Tribute)
- **WAR OF THE WORLDS (2025)** (Film)
- **NO TEARS IN HELL** (Film)
- **R.I.P. HOWARD STERN** (Commentary)
- **PERFORMANCE** (Film)
- **WHORE vs SHOWGIRLS** (Commentary)
- **HELL HOUSE LLC LINEAGE** (Commentary)
- **GENTLEMAN JUNKIE AND OTHER TALES OF THE HUNG-UP GENERATION** (Fiction)
- **RAIDERS!** (Film)
- **AND MORE!**



Insider Info

Sydney Sweeney and **William Shatner**: it's a comparison that's not as far-fetched as it might seem. In fact, it's not inappropriate to say that Sydney Sweeney is the female William Shatner.

Admittedly, there are some pretty stark differences between the two. Sydney Sweeney is a 27-year-old American actress known primarily for her sex appeal, and William Shatner a 94-year-old Canadian whose sexiness faded around the time the initial run of **STAR TREK** went off the air. But the similarities...

Shatner may be known primarily for one role, but that didn't stop him from racking up an impressive 256 acting credits (according to the imdb) and appearing in more commercials than I can count. Nowadays (with the Hollywood cash flow running much lower than it previously did) doing commercials is a requisite for actors looking to stay housed, but in Shatner's heyday it was considered crass. That didn't slow him down a bit, and nor did the controversy that



often accompanied his actions (including a pre-Katy Perry [space tour that upset many](#)), with Shatner still in the spotlight, and [still causing controversy](#).

Sydney Sweeney likewise boasts an impressive resume, with 59 acting credits since her 2009 debut and lots and lots of commercials (obviously not as many as Shatner, but give her time). As I'm sure you're at least tangentially aware, a few of those ads, for American Eagle Jeans—bearing the slogan "*Sydney Sweeney Has Great Jeans*"—inspired a [furor](#).

I'm stumped at all the attention. The ads in question aren't too far removed from those [Brie Larson Nissan](#) spots (both pivot on pretty ladies utilized to make inanimate objects look sexy), with Nazis and eugenics, which [according to some are the major subjects](#), not seeming to figure into it. The fact that Sweeney [isn't a real blonde](#) (with the [verdict still out](#) on the authenticity of her other attributes) suggests to me that the use of the word "jeans" in place of "genes" may have been a sly joke, positing that genes are something that can be bought and sold.

Ultimately, I believe Sweeney will soldier on in a very Shatner-like manner. This means those of you who think the controversy will do her in, or that she'll be gone when her sex appeal fades, need to think again. She's already established herself behind the scenes, accruing producing credits on two of her most recent films (and five more that have yet to be released), meaning that, like William Shatner, Sydney Sweeney is undoubtedly going to be with us for a very, very long time.



Check out Adam's recommendations in the ***NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE***.

I'm done reading. [To the website!](#)

The Bedlam Files, August 2025, Issue 25-07

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