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# THE BEDLAM FILES

*With Adam Groves*

“I don't think you should necessarily listen to a celebrity just because he is one. But if you can marshal your celebrity and really steep yourself in whatever issue you're trying to promote, it can actually move the ball forward, and we've done that.”

—Rob Reiner

**Check out Adam's commentaries: THE BEST AND WORST of 2025!**

## Streaming Now

### 1. **DUNE (1984)**



Make no mistake: David Lynch's **DUNE** was and is a four-alarm disaster, but my affection for it has been steadily increasing. The film's problematic nature is evident in its opening moments, consisting of a lengthy exposition dump spoken directly to the audience (by a character, moreover, who's barely in the film); it only gets worse narratively speaking,

## Adam's Picks

### 1. **THE MAJESTIC**



The film that's believed by many to have been the main catalyst for the 2002 dissolution of the Rob Reiner instituted Castle Rock Entertainment. **THE MAJESTIC** was a sizeable flop, to be sure, but it's far from the worst Castle Rock release. About the refurbishment of an old movie theater by a Jim Carrey played amnesiac screenwriter, it's also a fish-out-of-water comedy, a nostalgic period

feeling more like a disconnected highlight reel than a proper story. The dreamlike air and peerlessly bizarre imagery, however, showcase the fact that although this **DUNE** may have been subjected to all manner of compromise, it's still very much a **David Lynch** film.

NETFLIX

## 2. **RUDY**



There's never been a football movie quite like this **fact-based** drama whose athletically-challenged hero doesn't get to play much football, with the title character's major victory being that he was allowed to take the field in the final twenty seconds of a game whose outcome was already decided (and then being carried off the field, which in reality was a joke at Rudy's expense). Furthering the unlikeliness is the (mis)casting of Sean Astin, who, unlike the real Rudy Ruettiger, can evidently handle himself on a football field (Jon Favreau, who plays his nerdy best friend, would have been a better choice). Yet for all that the film is consistently watchable and bizarrely inspirational, and contains one of Jerry Goldsmith's greatest-ever scores.

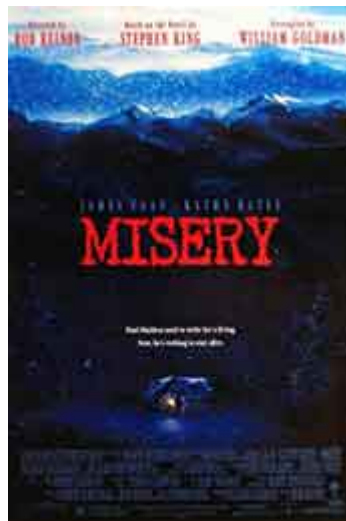
PARAMOUNT PLUS

## 3. **THE RIP**

piece and a message movie with the framework of an old school Hollywood epic. The film is, in short, unique and multi-faceted, which functions in its favor; many of its components don't work, but they're offset by those that do.

FILM

## 2. **MISERY**



I admittedly have issues with this 1990 Stephen King adaptation from the late Rob Reiner. It stars James Caan as a novelist paralyzed in a car accident who's held hostage by a nurse (Kathy Bates) bearing an impressive range of psychological issues, with her major demand being that he writes a new novel resurrecting a character he killed off. The film could have done with a more adventurous treatment (talented though he may have been, Reiner wasn't exactly a cinematic innovator), but the skillfully wrought suspense and grand guignol flourishes make for a consistently entertaining watch.

FILM

## 3. **THE HORDE**



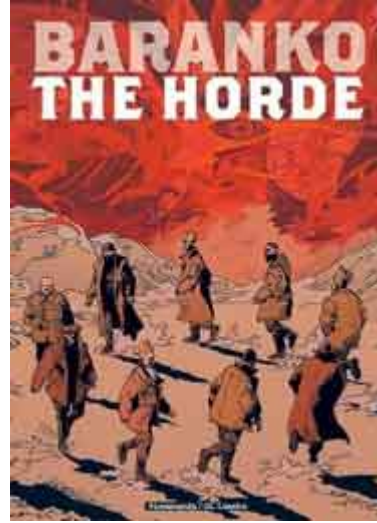
The latest pairing of Matt Damon and Ben Affleck was this flashy Netflixer about Miami cops drawn to a “rip” (leftover drug cash) in a cartel-owned neighborhood. The rip turns out to consist of tens of millions of dollars, leading to mistrust and sabotage in the cops’ inner circle, and ominous threats from without. Damon and Affleck are both quite strong, and the film, in common with many of the previous efforts of its writer-director Joe Carnahan, has a great first hour. After that it grows increasingly shrill and implausible, in route to a forced happy ending.

NETFLIX

#### 4. **VIGILANTE**



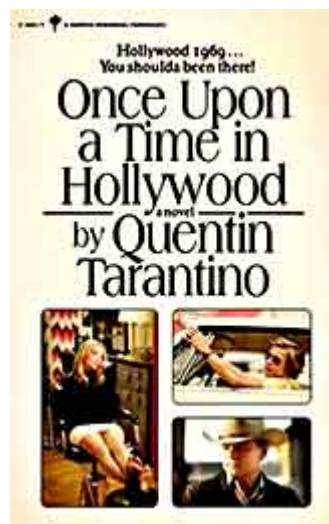
A surprise from the upscale Criterion Channel: a block of films from NYC sleazemeister (and **Blue Underground** founder) William Lustig, who according to the Criterion website makes “thrillingly intense, shockingly visceral plunges into the darkest



With the Jodorowsky-Moebius INCAL steadily gaining in popularity and Caza’s **ARKADI AND THE LOST TITAN** having recently made its English language debut, I say this similarly oriented 2004 graphic novel by writer/illustrator Igor Baranko deserves a look. About the attempted resurrection of Genghis Khan in a future Russia, this is lunacy of an extremely high order (and requires at least two readings to be fully understood): the artwork is bold and compelling, and the narrative rich and inventive, with an audacious amalgamation of culture and religion. Yet **THE HORDE** also contains plenty of gore, ghosts and monsters, making for a product that’s trashy and intellectual in equal measure.

BOOK

#### 4. **ONCE UPON A TIME IN HOLLYWOOD**



Quentin Tarantino has created a veritable mini-industry around his

chasms of urban existence.”  
VIGILANTE (1982) is my favorite  
Lustig film, a hyperviolent "revenge-o-  
matic" of a type I'd expect to see  
emerging from 1970s Italy (with  
Sergio Martino or Enzo Castellari  
credited as director). Fun fact: this  
film once played on a double bill with  
E.T.: THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL!

CRITERION CHANNEL

## 5. **FOUR ROOMS**



The “lost” **Quentin Tarantino** movie, a failed anthology project in which Tarantino and his filmmaking pals Alison Anders, Alexander Rockwell and Robert Rodriguez each created a short film set in an LA Hotel on New Years Eve, all depicted in a funny/ironic retro-1960s style, and tied together by Tim Roth as a goofy bellboy (inspired by the 1960 Jerry Lewis film of that title). A misunderstood masterwork **FOUR ROOMS** definitely isn't, but it has its moments, mostly in Rodriguez's segment about bratty kids laying waste to a hotel room after their parents leave, and also Tarantino's, a portrayal of several guys coming off a bender (and acting mighty stupid) that will resonate with anyone who's ever been in that situation.

PARAMOUNT

ninth film **ONCE UPON A TIME...IN HOLLYWOOD** (2019): last year saw the publication of **Jay Glennie's landmark making-of volume**, and 2026 promises the bow of a David Fincher helmed prequel; appearing prior to both was this 2021 Tarantino penned novelization. It takes the material for quite a ride, mixing fictional extrapolation with passionate dissertations on movies, music and celebrity, related in a narrative voice that's nobody's idea of refined (“Rick hates wearing this furry fucking caterpillar stuck to his face”) and chronology that's anything but linear.

BOOK

## 5. **THE DEVIL'S RAIN**



Recently given a 4K digitization by Severin, **THE DEVIL'S RAIN** (1975) was a key entry in the 1970s Satanic Panic film cycle. Director Robert Fuest assembled an impressive cast-- Keenan Wynn, Eddie Albert, Ernest Borgnine, John Travolta, William Shatner, etc.--in an unabashedly trashy depiction of satanists loose in a desert community who (in what was advertised as the “most incredible ending of any motion picture ever”) cause people to melt. Outside that scene, alas, the movie sucks.

FILM

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(Commentary)
- **2025: THE YEAR IN BEDLAM**  
(Commentary)
- **2025: BEDLAM IN PRINT**  
(Commentary)
- **STAND BY ME** (Film)
- **THE SHROUDS** (Film)
- **NUTZOID HORROR FICTION**  
(Commentary)
- **THE HITCHER** (Film)
- **INSOMNIA** (NonFiction)
- **TV FLASHBACK: IJON TICHY, SPACE PILOT** (Film)
- **AND MORE!**



## Insider Info

The major news story in entertainment right now is, of course, **the impending sale of Warner Bros.** Will Netflix get its wish and acquire Warners, and so create the world's biggest monopoly? Will Paramount succeed in blocking the merger? Will Hollywood survive the tumult? Given that the events in this case are proceeding at lightning speed, with new developments occurring every day, I won't bother analyzing the details. I do, however, have three points to make.



1. My overall take on a prospective Netflix-Warners merger is identical to that of most everyone else: I think it's everything bad, with the potential to stifle competition, innovation and job security, and end theatrical exhibition as we know it. Furthermore, if approved the Netflix-Warners merger will very likely lead to **industry strikes** that promise to rival those of 2023.
2. I'm glad that people have woken up to the dangers posed by excess media consolidation, but I can't help but wonder where all those dissenting voices were **when Disney purchased Pixar, Marvel, Lucasfilm and, in 2019, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fox**, mergers that had deleterious effects on those

companies (with Lucasfilm's STAR WARS and INDIANA JONES franchises now all-but dead) and the industry as a whole. I know hindsight is 20-20, but it didn't take Nostradamus to foresee that no good could have possibly come from Disney's engulf-and-devour strategy.

3. All this hand wringing may well be for nought. Hollywood's current issues go far deeper than a single merger, and those issues may well take down the industry. For that matter, the merger, if it occurs, may turn out to be a good thing, as it will hasten the demise of an industry whose days are numbered, and accelerate the coming of the phoenix that will hopefully rise from its ashes.



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