

Some interesting films on US television, August 1-7

David Walsh
1 August 1998

Asterisk indicates a film of exceptional interest

Saturday, August 1

11:00 a.m. (Bravo)--*Barton Fink* (1991)--One of the Coen Brothers' weakest and most revealing efforts, a cynical look at a socially conscious playwright working in Hollywood in the 1930s, and the American 'reality' he uncovers. With John Turturro, John Goodman.

*2:15 a.m. (AMC)--*The Far Country* (1955)--James Stewart, Ruth Roman, Walter Brennan and John McIntire co-star in this Anthony Mann western about a cattleman who brings his herd to Alaska and encounters many difficulties. As always with Mann, the Albert Bierstadt of movie directors, the exteriors are magnificent.

3:00 p.m. (TCM)--*One Sunday Afternoon* (1948)--Raoul Walsh directed this musical version of the 1933 Gary Cooper vehicle of the same name and his own *The Strawberry Blonde* (1941), the genial story of a turn-of-the-century dentist in love with a glamorous girl.

11:00 p.m. (AMC)--*Julia* (1977)--Vanessa Redgrave won an Oscar for her performance as the anti-fascist Julia based on Lillian Hellman's autobiographical work, *Pentimento*. With Jane Fonda, Jason Robards; directed by Fred Zinnemann.

11:00 p.m. (Bravo)--*Living in Oblivion* (1995)--Sometimes amusing look at the making of a (relatively) low-budget film, with Steve Buscemi as the harassed director. James Le Gros as a spoiled, self-important rising star (allegedly based on director Tom DiCillo's experiences with Brad Pitt) is the highlight of the film.

Sunday, August 2

12:50 a.m. (TNT)--*Duel* (1971)--Steven Spielberg's first major film effort, about a businessman (Dennis Weaver) on a lonely stretch of highway who realizes a truck driver is determined to drive him off the road. Empty, but entertaining.

*3:00 a.m. (AMC)--*Leave Her to Heaven* (1945)--Extraordinary melodrama by John Stahl, about a woman (Gene Tierney) consumed by jealousy and possessiveness, to the point of madness and murder. With Cornel Wilde and Vincent Price.

*7:30 a.m. (AMC)--*Heaven Can Wait* (1943)--Don Ameche stars as a dead man seeking entry to hell, who recounts in flash back what he thinks has been a life full of sin. With Gene Tierney and Charles Coburn. Directed by Ernst Lubitsch.

8:00 a.m. (TCM)--*Confessions of a Nazi Spy* (1939)--One of Hollywood's first anti-Nazi films. Edward G. Robinson is a government agent investigating spy ring in the US. Paul Lukas is a pro-Nazi German-American. With George Sanders and Francis Lederer, directed by Anatole Litvak.

*10:00 a.m. (TCM)--*Out of the Past* (1947)--'A civilized treatment of an annihilating melodrama,' in one critic's words, Jacques Tourneur's elegant *film noir* is the story of Robert Mitchum, a decent man, who gets mixed up with the wrong girl (Jane Greer) and the wrong guy (Kirk Douglas).

11:15 (AMC)--*The Crimson Pirate* (1952)--A swashbuckling adventure, with Burt Lancaster at his most athletic. The German émigré Robert

Siodmak directed.

2:00 p.m. (TCM)--*The Blackboard Jungle* (1955)--Glenn Ford is a high school teacher in an inner-city school in this social realist film. He deals with violence, racism and threats against his family. With Anne Francis, Vic Morrow, Sidney Poitier, Louis Calhern, Richard Kiley; directed by Richard Brooks.

2:30 p.m. (AMC)--*My Favorite Wife* (1940)--Amusing film, directed by Garson Kanin, with Irene Dunne, thought dead, returning to find husband Cary Grant married to another woman (Gail Patrick). Produced and co-written by Leo McCarey.

4:00 p.m. (TCM)--*The Defiant Ones* (1958)--Stanley Kramer, 'the most extreme example of thesis or message cinema,' directed this tale of two escaped convicts, one black and one white, chained together as they try to make their way in the South. With Tony Curtis and Sidney Poitier.

5:30 p.m. (AMC)--*A Shot in the Dark* (1964)--Blake Edwards directed the second of the Inspector Clouseau films, starring the inimitable Peter Sellers. With Elke Sommer, George Sanders and Herbert Lom.

*6:00 p.m. (TCM)--*An American in Paris* (1951)--Classic MGM musical directed by Vincente Minnelli and built around its Gershwin score; Alan Jay Lerner wrote the screenplay. Gene Kelly is an artist torn between gamine Leslie Caron and wealthy Nina Foch. With the irrepressible Oscar Levant.

8:00 p.m. (AMC)--*An Affair to Remember* (1957)--Leo McCarey directed this remake of his own 1939 *Love Affair* (Irene Dunne and Charles Boyer), this time with Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr. A shipboard romance has unexpected complications on land. Sentimental, but it has something.

8:00 p.m. (TCM)--*Local Hero* (1983)--Peter Riegert is an American oil company agent commissioned to buy up a Scottish village whose land is needed for an oil refinery. Directed by Bill Forsyth; with Burt Lancaster, Fulton MacKay.

Monday, August 3

12:00 a.m. (TCM)--*Regeneration* (1915)--An historical curiosity, a very early silent film directed by Raoul Walsh. An Irish hood is influenced by a young woman who has given up a life of ease to toil as a social worker in the slums. Filmed on location in New York City's Bowery district.

1:00 a.m. (AMC)--*An Affair to Remember* (1957)--See Sunday, at 8:00 p.m.

7:45 a.m. (TCM)--*His Kind of Woman* (1951)--A lively tale, as Robert Mitchum heads off to Mexico for a routine pay-off and finds out a gangster boss (Raymond Burr) has plans to kill him and take his identity. Jane Russell is in top form and Vincent Price is amusing as a ham actor. Directed by John Farrow.

8:15 a.m. (AMC)--*The Set-Up* (1949)--Dull Robert Wise directed this story about a washed-up fighter refusing to give up or throw a fight. Robert Ryan, an underrated actor, is excellent as the boxer. With Audrey Totter, George Tobias and Wallace Ford.

11:00 a.m. (AMC)--*No Highway in the Sky* (1951)--James Stewart gives

a remarkable performance as an aviation engineer who tries to persuade the authorities that planes should be grounded after a given time. With Marlene Dietrich.

*3:00 p.m. (TCM)--*Out of the Past* (1947)--See Sunday, at 10:00 a.m.

*5:00 p.m. (TCM)--*The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1939)--Not a great, but a remarkable, sensual and disturbing film. Charles Laughton is Victor Hugo's Quasimodo, the deformed bell-ringer. Maureen O'Hara is unforgettable, in her US film debut, as Esmerelda.

6:30 p.m. (AMC)--*Them* (1954)--One of the extraordinary 1950s black-and-white science fiction films, products of Cold War paranoia and insecurity, among other things. This one is about giant ant mutations terrorizing the Southwest and ultimately Los Angeles. Directed by Gordon Douglas. James Whitmore and Edmund Gwenn co-star.

Tuesday, August 4

12:45 a.m. (TCM)--*Gilda* (1946)--Rita Hayworth is spectacular (singing 'Put the Blame on Mame') in Charles Vidor's drama about a love triangle in postwar South America. George Macready is a shady casino owner, Hayworth his restless wife and Glenn Ford a new employee.

1:30 a.m. (AMC)--*Champion* (1949)--Effective boxing drama, with Kirk Douglas as selfish, ambitious fighter determined to get to the top and stay there. Paul Stewart is his friend whom he betrays. Directed by Mark Robson.

4:15 a.m. (TCM)--*Gentleman Jim* (1942)--Errol Flynn makes a dashing Jim Corbett, early boxing champion, in this biography directed by Raoul Walsh. Ward Bond plays John L. Sullivan with panache. Scripted by Vincent Lawrence and Horace McCoy (author of *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*, among other hard-boiled works).

8:00 a.m. (TCM)--*Act of Violence* (1949)--Fred Zinnemann directed this well-meaning effort. Robert Ryan is a crippled, former soldier in pursuit of a former officer who betrayed his men while a prisoner. With Van Heflin, Janet Leigh, Mary Astor.

12:00 p.m. (TCM)--*Vacation from Marriage* (1945)--Robert Donat and Deborah Kerr are a married couple whose wartime adventures have woken them from a deep emotional sleep. Directed by Hungarian émigré Alexander Korda. With Glynis Johns and Ann Todd.

1:00 p.m. (TBS)--*American Graffiti* (1973)--A film that probably had a negative effect on the course of American film-making, this is director George Lucas's entertaining fantasy about teenage life in California in the 1950s. With Richard Dreyfuss, Ron Howard, Paul LeMat, Cindy Williams, Candy Clark.

8:00 p.m. (TCM)--*Ben-Hur* (1959)--William Wyler's monumental and monumenally boring epic about ancient Rome, based on Gen. Lew Wallace's novel. Charlton Heston, Stephen Boyd, Jack Hawkins starred.

10:30 p.m. (TBS)--*Rio Lobo* (1970)--Howard Hawks's last film (he died in 1977), something of a disappointment. John Wayne is an ex-Union colonel who discovers a gold shipment and uncovers a traitor. Jennifer O'Neill was not up to the task in this film.

Wednesday, August 5

*12:00 a.m. (TNT)--*An American in Paris* (1951)--See Sunday, at 6:00 p.m.

12:30 a.m. (AMC)--*Drums Along the Mohawk* (1939)--The story of American colonials in upstate New York during the Revolutionary War. With Henry Fonda and Claudette Colbert, in one of John Ford's more modest works.

*1:45 a.m. (TCM)--*Moonfleet* (1955)--A Fritz Lang film, with Stewart Granger as an eighteenth century smuggler seeking a lost gem. With Jon Whiteley, George Sanders, Viveca Lindfors and Joan Greenwood.

2:15 a.m. (TBS)--*Two Rode Together* (1961)--James Stewart and Richard Widmark are an army officer and a marshal negotiating with Comanches about the return of some prisoners. John Ford directed.

*2:30 a.m. (TNT)--*Casablanca* (1942)--The Michael Curtiz classic about life and love in wartime Morocco, with Humphrey Bogart and

Ingrid Bergman.

4:15 a.m. (AMC)--*The Light That Failed* (1939)--Ronald Colman is an artist going blind, determined to finish the portrait of his love, in this version of the Rudyard Kipling story. Directed by William Wellman. With Walter Huston and Ida Lupino.

7:45 a.m. (TCM)--*Air Force* (1943)--An early American World War II film, about the inner workings of a bomber crew. Typical Howard Hawks concern with a group of professionals at work. With Arthur Kennedy, John Garfield, George Tobias, Harry Carey.

*2:15 p.m. (TNT)--*Buchanan Rides Alone* (1958)--Another of the renowned Budd Boetticher-Randolph Scott-Harry Joe Brown westerns. This time Scott battles a corrupt family in a town on the Mexican border.

4:00 p.m. (TCM)--*My Favorite Year* (1982)--Richard Benjamin directed this uneven look at early television. In 1954 a young man has the job of chaperoning the star (Peter O'Toole) of that week's show. Joseph Bologna plays a Sid Caesar type.

6:30 p.m. (AMC)--*This Gun for Hire* (1942)--Alan Ladd and Veronica Lake are striking in this adaptation of the Graham Greene novel, about a hit man who goes after the big-shots who hired him. Frank Tuttle directed; script by W.R. Burnett and Albert Maltz.

*8:00 p.m. (AMC)--*Strangers on a Train* (1951)--Hitchcock classic, with Farley Granger as a callow tennis player and Robert Walker as a psychopath, based on the Patricia Highsmith novel, co-scripted by Raymond Chandler.

8:00 p.m. (TCM)--*The Miracle Worker* (1962)--Patty Duke and Anne Bancroft co-starred in this version of William Gibson's play about the early life of Helen Keller. Arthur Penn directed with his normal sensitivity to acting performances.

*9:45 p.m. (AMC)--*Shadow of a Doubt* (1943)--Teresa Wright is a young girl who comes to realize that her amiable uncle is the Merry Widow murderer, in this remarkable Alfred Hitchcock work. Playwright Thornton Wilder helped write the script.

11:45 p.m. (AMC)--*I Confess* (1953)--Alfred Hitchcock's tale of priest, played by Montgomery Clift, who hears a confession of a murder and later becomes accused of the crime. Filmed in Quebec.

Thursday, August 6

*1:30 a.m. (AMC)--*Saboteur* (1942)--Excellent Alfred Hitchcock film, with Robert Cummings as an innocent munitions plant worker accused of sabotage. With Priscilla Lane.

*3:30 a.m. (AMC)--*Strangers on a Train* (1951)--See Wednesday, at 8:00 p.m.

*5:15 a.m. (AMC)--*Shadow of a Doubt* (1943)--See Wednesday, at 9:45 p.m.

7:15 a.m. (AMC)--*Mary of Scotland* (1936)--John Ford's sympathetic and largely fanciful, from an historical point of view, account of the last years in the life of Mary Queen of Scots, Catholic queen and rival of Elizabeth I of England. Based on the play by Maxwell Anderson. Katharine Hepburn is Mary.

*2:00 p.m. (AMC)--*Angel Face* (1952)--An extravagant Otto Preminger melodrama, about a murderous girl who does in her father and stepmother. With Jean Simmons, Robert Mitchum, Herbert Marshall. Described as 'a lyrical nightmare' by one critic.

6:30 p.m. (AMC)--*Don't Bother to Knock* (1952)--Marilyn Monroe, in an early role, is a demented baby-sitter who threatens to kill the child in her care. With Richard Widmark, Anne Bancroft, Jim Backus. Directed by Roy Ward Baker.

8:00 p.m. (AMC)--*River of No Return* (1954)--Otto Preminger directed this interesting, relatively somber story. Robert Mitchum rescues a man (Rory Calhoun) and a woman (Marilyn Monroe) from drowning. Calhoun promptly steals his horse and takes off. Vengeful Mitchum, with his young son, and Monroe pursue him by raft.

9:35 p.m. (AMC)--*Niagara* (1953)--Marilyn Monroe is an adulterous

wife planning to kill her husband (Joseph Cotton) on their honeymoon at Niagara Falls, in this somewhat overwrought, but tense film, directed by Henry Hathaway.

Friday, August 7

*12:30 a.m. (TNT)--*Band of Angels* (1957)--A remarkably complex look at black-and-white relations in Civil War America. Clark Gable plays a Southern gentleman with a past as a slave trader, Yvonne DeCarlo is a Southern belle who discovers she has black ancestors and Sidney Poitier is an educated slave. Directed by Raoul Walsh, from the novel by Robert Penn Warren.

*6:00 a.m. (AMC)--*Limelight* (1952)--Chaplin is a washed-up music hall comic who saves Claire Bloom from suicide in this exquisitely painful look at the art of performance. Chaplin and Buster Keaton, two immortals, team up in one memorable scene.

6:00 a.m. (TCM)--*The Search* (1948)--In postwar Germany, an American GI (Montgomery Clift) looks after a child; meanwhile his mother desperately searches for him. Fred Zinnemann directed.

*12:00 p.m. (TCM)--*Black Fury* (1935)--A fascinating film, a little bit of Proletarian Culture created in Hollywood. Paul Muni is a immigrant coal miner at war with the union. In the end, he stages his own one-man sit-down strike. With Karen Morley, Barton MacLane, J. Carroll Naish. Directed by Michael Curtiz.

1:30 p.m. (AMC)--*Battle Cry* (1955)--Raoul Walsh World War II melodrama, about the lives and loves of a group of Marines getting ready for battle, with Van Heflin, Aldo Ray, Tab Hunter and Dorothy Malone.

4:00 p.m. (AMC)--*Arch of Triumph* (1948)--Charles Boyer and Ingrid Bergman falling for each other in wartime France, from the novel by Erich Maria Remarque. Directed by the stolid Lewis Milestone.

*4:00 p.m. (TCM)--*She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949)--The second part of John Ford's cavalry trilogy, with John Wayne as an officer about to retire, drawn into campaign against a group of Indians. With Joanne Dru, Ben Johnson, Victor McLaglen.

*6:30 p.m. (AMC)--*All That Heaven Allows* (1955)--Extraordinarily perceptive view of postwar America. Jane Wyman plays a rich woman in love with a gardener. Her children and friends do everything to disrupt the relationship. The scene in which her children give her a television as a present is a classic. Directed by Douglas Sirk, the basis for R.W. Fassbinder's *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*.

8:00 p.m. (TCM)--*The Great Escape* (1963)--Steve McQueen and James Garner stand out in this World War II prisoner of war escape film. Routine in many ways, directed by John Sturges.



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