

Some interesting films on US television, November 28-December 4

Marty Jonas (MJ) and David Walsh (DW)
28 November 1998

Asterisk indicates a film of exceptional interest. All times are EDT.

Saturday, November 28

*7:00 am (HBO Signature)-- *The Year of Living Dangerously* (1983)--Love story set against the background of the military bloodbath against the Communist Party in Indonesia in 1966. The political scenes are very powerful. Linda Hunt is marvelous as the diminutive photographer Billy Kwan, for which she deservedly won an Academy Award. Starring Mel Gibson and Sigourney Weaver. Directed by Peter Weir. (MJ)

7:30 am (AMC)-- *Nothing Sacred* (1937)--Fredric March is a cynical reporter who sets out to make headlines with the story of a Vermont girl (Carole Lombard) supposedly dying from radium poisoning. Ben Hecht wrote the script and William Wellman directed. (DW)

*10:00 am (Sundance)-- *Harlan County, U.S.A.* (1977)--Powerful documentary by Barbara Kopple about the mineworkers strike in Harlan County, Kentucky. (MJ)

10:00 am (HBO Plus)-- *The Godfather, Part III* (1990)--Not the best of the GODFATHER trilogy, but a cut above most current films. This time, the Corleone family, led by Michael (Al Pacino), gets involved with the sinister machinations of the Vatican and international finance. With Andy Garcia, Diane Keaton, and Sophia Coppola. Directed by Francis Coppola. (MJ)

*10:30 am (AMC)-- *The Gunfighter* (1950)--Gregory Peck is a gunslinger trying to live down his past. Henry King directed, from a script by William Bowers and Andre de Toth. (DW)

11:00 am (TCM)-- *They Died with Their Boots On* (1941)--Hollywood's version of the George Custer story. Surprisingly sympathetic to the Indians, in fact. Custer is made out to be an opponent of the campaign that led to his death. The last of the Errol Flynn-Olivia de Havilland cycle of films; directed vividly by Raoul Walsh, with a score by Max Steiner. (DW)

12:00 pm (AMC)-- *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930)--Film adaptation of Erich Maria Remarque's anti-war novel about German youths' experiences as soldiers in World War I. Some memorable sequences, although the overall effect is not as strong as one would like. Directed by Lewis Milestone, with Lew Ayres. (DW)

1:30 pm (TCM)-- *Little Caesar* (1930)--Mervyn LeRoy directed Edward G. Robinson as a smalltime hood who rises to the top of the crime world. From the novel by W.R. Burnett. (DW)

2:00 pm (Comedy)-- *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975)--A cult film that is actually quite good, in a campy way. The performance by Tim Curry is particularly outrageous. (MJ)

2:30 pm (Bravo)-- *Things Change* (1988)--A poor Italian-American shoemaker willingly takes the rap for a mobster. David Mamet wrote and directed this disappointing, poorly resolved film that is distinguished by a remarkable performance by the elderly Don Ameche. With Joe Mantegna. (MJ)

3:00 pm (USA)-- *Sea of Love* (1989)--New York City cop searches for

serial killer. Directed by Harold Becker from an excellent screenplay by novelist Richard Price, this was Al Pacino's comeback film after a long period of unwise role choices. (MJ)

*4:00 pm (FXM)-- *The Gang's All Here* (1943)--Delightful Busby Berkeley film, with the usual lush and intricate musical sequences, but this time in rich Technicolor. Watch for the not-so-subliminal chorus line of bananas in Carmen Miranda's 'The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat' number. (MJ)

*5:00 pm (Sundance)-- *Harlan County, U.S.A.* (1977)--See 10:00 am.

5:00 pm (TCM)-- *The Man from Laramie* (1955)--Top-notch Anthony Mann Western, with James Stewart looking for the man who killed his brother. Morally ambiguous, as Mann's best films generally are. With Arthur Kennedy, Donald Crisp, Cathy O'Donnell, Alex Nicol. (DW)

5:30 pm (Cinemax)-- *Contact* (1997)--An intelligent, refreshingly non-xenophobic film on the search for extraterrestrial intelligence. Jodie Foster plays the single-minded astrophysicist in this adaptation from the novel by the late Carl Sagan. Unfortunately, toward the end the film becomes mushy-minded and tries to make its peace with religion. (MJ)

5:45 pm (HBO Signature)-- *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977)--Steven Spielberg's special-effects-filled take on UFO sighting as a religious experience. Starring Richard Dreyfuss. (MJ)

8:00 pm (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. (DW)

*8:00 pm (FXM)-- *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951)--A visitor from another galaxy visits our planet to issue a stern warning. Robert Wise's film is a liberal plea for peace and understanding; as such, it defied the McCarthyite xenophobia and bellicosity dominating Hollywood at the time. It stands up surprising well almost 50 years later. Starring Patricia Neal and Michael Rennie. (MJ)

8:00 pm (Encore)-- *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery* (1997)--Mike Myers plays a double role in this consistently amusing sendup of James Bond movies and the manners and styles of the 1970s. (MJ)

8:05 pm (AMC)-- *Hombre* (1967)--Martin Ritt directed, from an Elmore Leonard story, this film about Indian-raised Paul Newman trying to survive in Arizona in the 1880s. With Diane Cilento, Fredric March, Richard Boone. (DW)

9:00 pm (HBO Plus)-- *The Godfather, Part III* (1990)--See 10:00 am.

9:00 pm (HBO)-- *Gattaca* (1997)--In this future capitalist society, your place in the productive process is determined by your genetic makeup--which is mapped at birth and stays with you as your main ID for life. One man rebels against the system. Andrew Niccol wrote and directed this intelligent film, highly derivative of the fiction of Philip K. Dick. (MJ)

9:35 pm (Encore)-- *Ishtar* (1987)--One of the most famous failures in recent Hollywood history, Elaine May directed this \$40 million picture,

which stars Warren Beatty and Dustin Hoffman. Interesting as an historical curiosity. (DW)

11:30 pm (Bravo)-- *Things Change* (1988)--See 2:30 pm.

12:00 am (Comedy)-- *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975)--See 2:00 pm.

1:45 am (HBO Plus)-- *Face/Off* (1997)--Hong Kong action director John Woo lets out all the stops in this exciting, humorous, and (of course) preposterous film about a government agent (John Travolta) and his terrorist nemesis (Nicolas Cage) exchanging faces. (MJ)

3:00 am (USA)-- *Sea of Love* (1989)--See 3:00 pm.

3:10 am (Encore)-- *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery* (1997)--See 8:00 pm.

4:00 am (Bravo)-- *Things Change* (1988)--See 2:30 pm.

4:00 am (TCM)-- *Sylvia Scarlett* (1935)--Disconcerting, interesting film about a father (Edmund Gwenn) and daughter (Katharine Hepburn), who take to the road with a touring show, which later includes Cary Grant. Hepburn disguises herself as a boy, which turns all sorts of social and sexual relationships upside down. George Cukor directed. (DW)

5:00 am (HBO)-- *Gattaca* (1997)--See 9:00 pm.

Sunday, November 29

*6:00 am (FXM)-- *The Gang's All Here* (1943)--See Saturday, at 4:00 pm.

8:45 am (HBO Family)-- *The Court Jester* (1956)--Classic Danny Kaye farce of confused identities in the Middle Ages. Lots of witty verbal humor. Directed by Melvin Frank and Norman Panama. (MJ)

*10:00 am (FXM)-- *How Green Was My Valley* (1941)--John Ford's powerful film about Welsh coal miners. With Walter Pidgeon, Maureen O'Hara, Donald Crisp, and Roddy McDowall. (MJ)

*12:00 pm (TCM)-- *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944)--Vincente Minnelli's sentimental, but very evocative musical about turn-of-the-century family life in St. Louis, set during the World's Fair of 1903. Judy Garland is memorable; she sings 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas' and 'The Trolley Song,' among others. Margaret O'Brien is her younger sister. With Leon Ames and Mary Astor. (DW)

1:55 pm (Encore)-- *The Great Gatsby* (1974)--A pallid, but occasionally interesting film, based on the F. Scott Fitzgerald novel about the 'careless' rich and their gangster friend, on Long Island in the 1920s. Robert Redford is too placid as Jay Gatsby, Mia Farrow too jittery as Daisy Buchanan. (DW)

2:00 pm (Comedy)-- *Something Wild* (1986)--Melanie Griffith, in one her rare performances of substance, turns out to be trouble for Jeff Daniels, an uptight businessman. Ray Liotta is her psychotic boy-friend. Not a great film, but it has its moments. Directed by Jonathan Demme. (DW)

2:00 pm (AMC)-- *A New Leaf* (1971)--Elaine May's first directing effort in which she also co-starred as a clumsy, introverted heiress wooed by Walter Matthau, a playboy who has run through his fortune. The final cut was taken out of May's hands and she disclaimed it. (DW)

*3:45 pm (TCM)-- *Meet John Doe* (1941)--Gary Cooper as John Doe, the barefoot Everyman, suspicious of ideas and doctrines, in Frank Capra's populist fable. (DW)

4:25 pm (Encore)-- *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery* (1997)--See 8:00 pm.

5:00 pm (Bravo)-- *Barton Fink* (1991)--One of the Coen Brothers' weakest and most inadvertently 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. (DW)

8:00 pm (Comedy)-- *Something Wild* (1986)--See 2:00 pm.

8:00 pm (Family)-- *Lost in America* (1985)--Yuppies, played by Albert Brooks (who also directed) and Julie Hagerty, give up their good corporate jobs to tour the country in an RV, with disastrous (and funny) results. (MJ)

Fargo (1996)--A kidnapping goes terribly wrong in Minnesota, and a pregnant, low-key, small-town sheriff (Frances McDormand) tries to solve it. Grotesque, satirical, sometimes cartoonish, often funny, this is one of the Coen Brothers' best films. With Steve Buscemi, William H. Macy, Peter Stormare, and Harve Presnell. (MJ)

10:00 pm (TCM)-- *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1954)--A lively musical directed by Stanley Donen. When Howard Keel decides to find a wife, his brothers follow suit. With Jane Powell, Russ Tamblyn, Virginia Gibson. A Johnny Mercer-Gene DePaul score and Michael Kidd's choreography. (DW)

*10:00 pm (TNT)-- *Fargo* (1996)--See 8:00 pm.

*12:00 am (TNT)-- *The Hudsucker Proxy* (1994)--In this madcap comedy (with many fantasy elements) by the Coen Brothers, an office boy (Tim Robbins) is promoted to head of a gigantic company. Hilarious satire on capitalist intrigue. Paul Newman is interestingly cast against type as a corporate villain. (MJ)

*12:00 am (FXM)-- *How Green Was My Valley* (1941)--See 10:00 am.

3:30 am (Bravo)-- *Barton Fink* (1991)--See 5:00 pm.

3:45 am (HBO Family)-- *John Grisham's the Rainmaker* (1997)--Francis Coppola took a John Grisham potboiler and made it into an engrossing but pedestrian film. Nonetheless, it is rich in characters, with particularly good work by Danny DeVito and Mickey Rourke (in a surprising standout performance as an ultra-sleazy lawyer) Also starring Matt Damon, John Voight, and Claire Danes. (MJ)

*5:20 am (Cinemax)-- *The Ice Storm* (1997)--Excellent film by Ang Lee of aimlessness and disillusionment in the 1970s. As the middle class disintegrates in suburbia, we see the disintegration of the White House playing out in the background as the Watergate crisis runs its course. The fine cast includes Kevin Kline, Sigourney Weaver, Joan Allen, Jamey Sheridan, and Christina Ricci. (MJ)

Monday, November 30

10:30 am (HBO)-- *John Grisham's the Rainmaker* (1997)--See Sunday, at 3:45 am.

1:30 pm (HBO Signature)-- *Serpico* (1973)--Al Pacino plays a loner cop taking on corruption in the New York Police Department. As always, director Sidney Lumet captures the texture of New York City. (MJ)

2:30 pm (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. (DW)

3:00 pm (HBO Plus)-- *The Godfather, Part III* (1990)--See Saturday, at 10:00 am.

4:15 pm (AMC)-- *His Girl Friday* (1940)--Marvelous film version of Ben Hecht-Charles MacArthur's *The Front Page*, co-scripted by Hecht, with Cary Grant as scheming editor and Rosalind Russell as his star reporter trying to get married to Ralph Bellamy. Directed by Howard Hawks. (DW)

4:15 pm (Cinemax)-- *The Fifth Element* (1997)--Vacuous, silly science fiction film in which the future of the universe hinges on a Brooklyn cabdriver (played in proletarian style by Bruce Willis) finding something called 'the fifth element.' Worth seeing only for its imaginative settings and special effects. Typical scenery-chewing villainy by Gary Oldman. Directed by Luc Besson. (MJ)

*6:00 pm (TCM)-- *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1946)--John Garfield and Lana Turner play the illicit and doomed lovers in the film based on James M. Cain's novel. They kill her husband, the owner of a roadside diner, and suffer the consequences of nearly getting away with it. Tay Garnett directed. (DW)

6:00 pm (AMC)-- *I Was a Male War Bride* (1949)--Cary Grant is a French officer marrying a WAC (Ann Sheridan) and encountering a series of dilemmas. The film is very funny, and it also provides director Howard Hawks an opportunity to examine sexual roles, and subvert them. (DW)

8:00 pm (HBO)-- *John Grisham's the Rainmaker* (1997)--See Sunday, at 3:45 am.

10:30 pm (HBO Family)-- *Gattaca* (1997)--See Saturday, at 9:00 pm.

11:45 pm (Encore)-- *Endless Love* (1981)--Franco Zeffirelli made a very bad film out of Scott Spencer's very good novel. With Brooke Shields, Martin Hewitt, Shirley Knight, and Richard Kiley. (MJ)

1:00 am (TCM)-- *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938)--Lively, eye-catching version of the Robin Hood story, with Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland, Basil Rathbone, and Claude Rains. Directed by Michael Curtiz and William Keighley, with an award-winning score by Wolfgang Korngold. (DW)

*1:45 am (Encore)-- *Taxi Driver* (1976)--Paul Schrader wrote and Martin Scorsese directed this bleak, obsessive classic that looks at the underside of New York City. Starring Robert De Niro, Jody Foster, and Harvey Keitel. Great score by Bernard Hermann. (MJ)

2:05 am (AMC)-- *Hombre* (1967)--See Saturday, at 8:05 pm.

3:00 am (Cinemax)-- *Breakdown* (1997)--Suspenseful thriller in which the wife of a meek computer programmer (played by Kurt Russell) disappears during a cross-country trip. One of the last performances by the late, great character actor J.T. Walsh. (MJ)

3:15 am (HBO)-- *The Firm* (1993)--Another film that takes a shot at the legal profession. In this paranoid potboiler, a young, ambitious lawyer finds out that his high-toned firm is totally owned by organized crime. An unremarkable film is saved by a remarkable performance by Gene Hackman (always dependable), playing a cynical partner. From the bestseller by John Grisham.

Tuesday, December 1

6:00 am (HBO Signature)-- *John Grisham's the Rainmaker* (1997)--See Sunday, at 3:45 am.

*7:30 am (AMC)-- *Murder, My Sweet* (1944)--Worthy, hardboiled adaptation of Raymond Chandler's *Farewell My Lovely*, with Dick Powell as Philip Marlowe. Directed by future HUAC informer Edward Dmytryk. (DW)

8:00 am (TCM)-- *Caged* (1950)--In the words of one critic, a 'minor classic of repression.' A prison drama, with Eleanor Parker, Agnes Moorehead and Hope Emerson. Directed by John Cromwell. (DW)

11:30 am (HBO)-- *Gattaca* (1997)--See Saturday, at 9:00 pm.

2:30 pm (HBO Plus)-- *Against All Odds* (1984)--Decent remake of the 1947 film noir *Into the Past*. Good performances by Jeff Bridges, Rachel Ward, and James Woods. Directed by Taylor Hackford. (MJ)

6:00 pm (AMC)-- *A New Leaf* (1971)--See Sunday, at 2:00 pm.

6:00 pm (TCM)-- *Jezebel* (1938)--Bette Davis again, as an antebellum Southern belle causing trouble with her willful behavior. Also Henry Fonda. Directed by William Wyler. (DW)

7:00 pm (HBO Signature)-- *Kansas City* (1996)--Uneven 1930s period piece by Robert Altman. Worth seeing for the fine jazz music playing throughout, and for the excellent performances by Miranda Richardson and Harry Belafonte (as a mellow but bitter black mobster who utters trenchant comments about racism in America). But the plot is ridiculous, and Jennifer Jason Leigh provides the annoying grimaces and mannerisms we have come to expect from her. (MJ)

8:00 pm (HBO)-- *Gattaca* (1997)--See Saturday, at 9:00 pm.

10:35 pm (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. (DW)

11:30 pm (AMC)-- *Gentlemen's Agreement* (1947)--Gregory Peck is a writer who pretends to be Jewish to gauge anti-Semitism. Moss Hart wrote the relatively tame script; Elia Kazan directed. (DW)

12:20 am (Cinemax)-- *Face/Off* (1997)--See Saturday, at 1:45 am.

1:00 am (TNT)-- *The French Connection* (1971)--Gene Hackman is fine as a New York City policeman chasing drug traffickers. William Friedkin

directs the proceedings at a breakneck pace. His subsequent work shows that this film was overrated at the time. With Roy Scheider, Tony LoBianco. (DW)

1:30 am (AMC)-- *A New Leaf* (1971)--See Sunday, at 2:00 pm.

*5:15 am (AMC)-- *Sherlock Jr.* (1924)--A work of genius, made by Buster Keaton. A projectionist walks into a movie screen and becomes part of the action. Not to be missed. (DW)

Wednesday, December 2

6:00 am (TCM)-- *Camille* (1937)--Perhaps Greta Garbo's finest film. She plays Dumas' tragic courtesan, forced to give up her love, a young man from a 'good family,' for the sake of his family's honor. Robert Taylor and Lionel Barrymore are adequate, but Henry Daniell enlivens the proceedings as the villain. Directed by George Cukor. (DW)

8:00 am (TCM)-- *Queen Christina* (1933)--Greta Garbo is memorable as the 17th-century Swedish queen who gave up her throne for love. John Gilbert, one of her real-life amours, plays her aristocratic lover. Rouben Mamoulian directed. (DW)

*10:00 am (FXM)-- *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951)--See Saturday, at 8:00 pm.

10:00 am (TCM)-- *The Champ* (1931)--Wallace Beery is an over-the-hill boxer and Jackie Cooper his adoring son in this sentimental, but very moving work, directed by King Vidor. (DW)

11:30 am (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. (DW)

12:00 pm (HBO Signature)-- *Night Falls on Manhattan* (1997)--Another of Sidney Lumet's tales of police corruption. They are usually incisive, with a good feel for urban realities, but this one, with Andy Garcia as a cop turned crusading DA, is a bit paint-by-numbers. (MJ)

12:10 pm (TMC)-- *The Cotton Club* (1984)--Richard Gere stars in Francis Ford Coppola's sometimes successful attempt to capture the music and gangster violence of Harlem in the 1930s. The production was riddled with problems and the often rewritten screenplay is by novelists William Kennedy and Mario Puzo. (MJ)

*12:30 pm (Bravo)-- *Foreign Correspondent* (1940)--Joel McCrea is the correspondent caught up in a spy intrigue in Alfred Hitchcock's film, with George Sanders, Robert Benchley, Herbert Marshall, Laraine Day. (DW)

1:30 pm (TCM)-- *Victor/Victoria* (1982)--Julie Andrews masquerades as a man to make a career for herself in Paris night-clubs in the 1930s. Director Blake Edwards wants to say something about sexual roles, but the results seem a little weak. With James Garner. Lesley Ann Warren is painful to watch. (DW)

*2:30 pm (Cinemax)-- *Saturday Night Fever* (1977)--A hardware store salesman in Brooklyn becomes a champion disco dancer at night. This is the film that launched John Travolta's film career, and he is a marvel as a dancer. Music by the Bee Gees. Directed by John Badham. (MJ)

*4:00 pm (TCM)-- *Pennies from Heaven* (1982)--Excellent, daring musical adapted by the great British television writer Dennis Potter from his TV miniseries. During the Great Depression, an unhappy traveling salesman of sheet music and the rural schoolteacher he seduces sustain themselves on dreams and illusions, which they express by pantomiming recordings of the popular tunes of the period--to remarkable effect. Starring Steve Martin and Bernadette Peters in fine performances. Directed by Herbert Ross. (MJ)

4:15 pm (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. (DW)

*6:00 pm (HBO Plus)-- *Romeo + Juliet* (1996)--Inventive and exciting modern-dress version of William Shakespeare's play. Starring Claire

Danes and Leonardo DiCaprio. (MJ)

6:15 pm (HBO Signature)-- *The Firm* (1993)--See Monday, at 3:15 pm.

*8:00 pm (HBO)-- *Alien* (1979)--A bloodthirsty alien creature pursues the crew members of a merchant space vessel. Beautifully done, among the most frightening films ever made. Sigourney Weaver plays Ripley, one of the first smart and clever heroines in modern film. With Yaphet Kotto, Tom Skerritt, Ian Holm, and John Hurt. (MJ)

*12:00 am (FXM)-- *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951)--See Saturday, at 8:00 pm.

12:05 am (TMC)-- *The Tall Guy* (1989)--Moderately funny film about an American actor (Jeff Goldblum) trying to make it in British theater. Highlights are the daffy musical version of *The Elephant Man* and Rowan Atkinson's inspired mugging. Also with Emma Thompson. Directed by Mel Smith. (MJ)

Thursday, December 3

7:35 am (AMC)-- *Love Happy* (1949)--A sad end to the Marx Brothers' film career. The comedy routines are tired (except for one with Harpo on New York City rooftops), and Groucho never appears in the same scenes as Chico and Harpo; but anything with the Marx Brothers is worth seeing. Directed by David Miller. (MJ)

8:00 am (TCM)-- *Now, Voyager* (1942)--A well-done melodrama with a remarkable cast. Bette Davis is an isolated, neurotic woman helped by psychiatrist Claude Rains, and falling in love with Paul Henreid. Directed by Irving Rapper. (DW)

*9:00 am (Cinemax)-- *The Year of Living Dangerously* (1983)--See Saturday, at 7:00 am.

10:00 am (History)-- *Merrill's Marauders* (1962)--It's questionable how much this has to do with real history, but engrossing war film directed by Samuel Fuller; Jeff Chandler as commander of US soldiers fighting Japanese in Burmese jungle. (DW)

3:00 pm (History)-- *Merrill's Marauders* (1962)--See 10:00 am.

6:00 pm (AMC)-- *Captain Horatio Hornblower* (1951)--Raoul Walsh directed this sea epic set in the Napoleonic wars, based on the C.S. Forester novels, in his vivid, muscular style. Some remarkable sequences. The normally dull Gregory Peck is well-cast as Hornblower. (DW)

8:00 pm (TNT)-- *Rain Man* (1988)--Barry Levinson's anti-Reaganite work, with Dustin Hoffman as an autistic man and Tom Cruise, a 1980s Babbitt, as his yuppie hustler brother. (DW)

*8:00 pm (TCM)-- *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1935)--Famed German theater director Max Reinhardt oversaw this oddity, with James Cagney as Bottom and Mickey Rooney as Puck in Shakespeare's magical play. (DW)

9:00 pm (HBO Plus)-- *John Grisham's the Rainmaker* (1997)--See Sunday, at 3:45 am.

10:00 pm (HBO Signature)-- *Tucker: The Man and His Dream* (1988)--The pioneer auto-maker (played by Jeff Bridges) and his company are destroyed by the giants of the auto industry. Director Francis Coppola obviously meant this as a parable about the independent artist versus the film industry, with Tucker standing in for Coppola. The whole thing seems oversimplified. Good performance by Martin Landau. (MJ)

*2:05 am (HBO Signature)-- *The Ice Storm* (1997)--See Sunday, at 5:20 am.

2:45 am (TCM)-- *In This Our Life* (1942)--John Huston's second effort at directing. Bette Davis steals her sister's husband and eventually ruins her own life. Based on the novel by Ellen Glasgow. With Olivia de Havilland and George Brent. (DW)

Friday, December 4

7:05 am (TMC)-- *Rebecca* (1940)--Alfred Hitchcock's first US-made film, with Joan Fontaine as the second wife of nobleman Laurence Olivier. The first wife's presence hovers over the place. Judith Anderson is memorable as the sinister housekeeper, loyal to the first wife. (DW)

7:45 am (AMC)-- *A Face in the Crowd* (1957)--Andy Griffith, in his

film debut, as country boy made into a huge television star. With Lee Remick, also in her debut. Directed by Elia Kazan, script by Budd Schulberg (same team as *On the Waterfront*). (DW)

*8:50 am (Encore)-- *Sorcerer* (1977)--Three trucks driven by desperate men run all kinds of hazards to bring volatile shipments of explosives to an oil field fire in Latin America. William Friedkin directed this underrated, highly suspenseful remake of the French classic *The Wages of Fear*. Starring Roy Scheider. (MJ)

10:35 am (AMC)-- *Days of Wine and Roses* (1962)--Blake Edwards' somber film about alcoholic Jack Lemmon who drags Lee Remick into his orbit. (DW)

11:00 am (TCM)-- *How the West Was Won* (1963)--An 'epic' saga, with more weaknesses than strengths, about three generations of western pioneers. Henry Fonda, Carroll Baker, Gregory Peck, George Peppard, and countless others stars. Co-directed by John Ford, Henry Hathaway, and George Marshall. (DW)

12:30 pm (HBO)-- *Ishtar* (1987)--See Saturday, at 9:35 pm.

2:30 pm (AMC)-- *Springfield Rifle* (1952)--Andre de Toth's film about a Union officer (Gary Cooper) who goes undercover to expose a Confederate horse-stealing ring. Dark and spare, with an exemplary performance by Paul Kelly as the chief villain. (DW)

*4:15 pm (AMC)-- *Stagecoach* (1939)--Famed western, directed by John Ford, about a group of disparate passengers thrown together on the same eventful journey. Starring John Wayne, Claire Trevor, Thomas Mitchell, John Carradine. Dudley Nichols wrote the script. (DW)

*5:55 pm (Encore)-- *Sorcerer* (1977)--See 8:50 am.

*10:00 pm (FXM)-- *Lifeboat* (1944)--Alfred Hitchcock's tale of shipwreck survivors during World War II. With Tallulah Bankhead, William Bendix, and Walter Slezak as a Nazi taken aboard. (DW)

*11:50 pm (HBO Signature)-- *The Name of the Rose* (1986)--A murder mystery set in a medieval monastery (the McGuffin is a lost book by Aristotle). Though lacking much of the rich detail of Umberto Eco's fine novel, the film stands well on its own. Sean Connery is perfect as the monk-detective, John of Baskerville. With Christian Slater, F. Murray Abraham, and William Hickey. Directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud. (MJ)

3:05 am (HBO)-- *Alien* (1979)--See Wednesday, at 8:00 pm.

3:45 am (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. (DW)



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