

Some interesting films on US television, December 12-18

Marty Jonas (MJ), David Walsh (DW)
12 December 1998

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

Saturday, December 12

7:45 a.m. (TCM)-- *Take Me Out to the Ball Game* (1949)--The last film made by famed musical extravaganza director Busby Berkeley. A relatively restrained work about a baseball team, with Frank Sinatra and Gene Kelly as its stars, taken over by Esther Williams. (DW)

*12:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *On the Town* (1949)--Memorable MGM musical--three sailors with 24 hours' leave in New York City. Based on the show by Betty Comden-Adolph Green-Leonard Bernstein, with Gene Kelly, Frank Sinatra, Vera-Ellen and Betty Garrett. Directed by Stanley Donen and Kelly. (DW)

2:00 p.m. (HBO Signature)-- *Tucker: The Man and His Dream* (1988)--The pioneer automaker (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)

4:00 p.m. (USA)-- *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)

*8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Some Came Running* (1958)--Remarkable melodrama, directed by Vincente Minnelli, about disillusionment in a small town after World War II; more generally, this is an extraordinary film about disillusionment with postwar America. With Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Shirley MacLaine, Martha Hyer. (DW)

*8:00 p.m. (TNT)-- *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)

10:15 p.m. (AMC)-- *Land of the Pharaohs* (1955)--Howard Hawks's historical epic is full of the typical Hollywood hokum, but the scenes of the building of the pyramids are truly impressive. William Faulkner helped write the screenplay. With Jack Hawkins and Joan Collins. (MJ)

10:30 p.m. (TCM)-- *From Here to Eternity* (1953)--Fred Zinnemann directed this generally overrated work, based on the James Jones novel, about life on an army post in Hawaii on the eve of Pearl Harbor. With Burt Lancaster, Montgomery Clift, Deborah Kerr, Donna Reed, Frank Sinatra. (DW)

12:00 a.m. (HBO Signature)-- *Tucker: The Man and His Dream* (1988)--See 2:00 p.m.

2:10 a.m. (HBO Signature)-- *Alien* (1979)--A bloodthirsty alien creature pursues the crew members of a merchant space vessel. Beautifully done, one of the most frightening films ever made. Sigourney Weaver plays Ripley, one of the first smart and brave heroines in modern film. With

Yaphet Kotto, Tom Skerritt, Ian Holm and John Hurt. (MJ)

4:05 a.m. (AMC)-- *Land of the Pharaohs* (1955)--see 10:15 p.m.

4:45 a.m. (Cinemax)-- *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)

Sunday, December 13

6:00 a.m. (HBO Signature)-- *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 stand-out performance as an ultra-sleazy lawyer) Also starring Matt Damon, John Voight and Claire Danes. (MJ)

7:45 a.m. (AMC)-- *The Far Country* (1955)--James Stewart, Ruth Roman, Walter Brennan and John McIntire costar 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)

10:00 a.m. (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)

*12:00 p.m. (Cinemax)-- *North by Northwest* (1959)--One of Alfred Hitchcock's wondrous late-1950s color pieces, with Cary Grant as an ad executive turned into a wanted and hunted man. (DW)

12:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* (1941)--Amusing tale of a boxer (Robert Montgomery) called to heaven too soon, who has to return to earth in another body. With Evelyn Keyes, Claude Rains, Edward Everett Horton. Confusingly, Warren Beatty and Buck Henry's 1978 *Heaven Can Wait* is a remake of *this* film and not of Ernst Lubitsch's 1943 *Heaven Can Wait*. (DW)

12:00 p.m. (Comedy)-- *History of the World--Part I* (1981)--An example of Mel Brooks's scattershot humor. Many jokes are forced and lame, and most routines just limp along, but the Spanish Inquisition sequence, staged as a Busby Berkeley water ballet, is hilarious and worth staying for. (MJ)

2:00 p.m. (Sci-Fi)-- *The Andromeda Strain* (1971)--One of the first techno-thrillers, by veteran director Robert Wise, about an extraterrestrial virus that could wipe out humankind. (MJ)

3:00 p.m. (HBO Signature)-- *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.

4:15 p.m. (HBO Plus)-- *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 p.m. (TCM)-- *Dark Victory* (1939)--Bette Davis is a socialite who learns she has a terminal illness. George Brent is her brain surgeon husband. Directed by Edmund Goulding. (DW)

6:00 p.m. (Comedy)-- *History of the World--Part I* (1981)--See 12:00 p.m.

6:15 p.m. (Showtime)-- *The Naked City* (1948)--A 'neo-realist' treatment of a murder case, filmed self-consciously on the streets of New York. Barry Fitzgerald and Howard Duff play leading roles. The film provided the basis for the subsequent television series. Directed by Jules Dassin and co-scripted by Albert Maltz, both soon to be blacklisted. (DW)

*8:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *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. (DW)

9:00 p.m. (HBO Plus)-- *William Shakespeare's 'Romeo + Juliet'* (1996)--Inventive and exciting modern-dress version of the play. Starring Claire Danes and Leonardo DiCaprio. (MJ)

10:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *Call Northside 777* (1948)--A solid, matter-of-fact drama about a reporter (James Stewart) righting a wrong: proving that a convicted killer is innocent. With Richard Conte and Lee J. Cobb. (DW)

*10:00 p.m. (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)

*10:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Mildred Pierce* (1945)--Powerful melodrama, directed by Michael Curtiz, about a woman (Joan Crawford) who goes from rags to riches and her ungrateful daughter. Based on the novel by James M. Cain. (DW)

*1:30 a.m. (TCM)-- *Humoresque* (1946)--A remarkable performance by John Garfield, as a classical violinist from the slums, who falls for a wealthy society lady. With Joan Crawford, Oscar Levant. Directed by Jean Negulesco. (DW)

2:00 a.m. (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)

2:30 a.m. (AMC)-- *Call Northside 777* (1948)--See 10:00 p.m.

Monday, December 14

*6:00 a.m. (TMC)-- *Spellbound* (1945)--Psychiatrist Ingrid Bergman attempts to unravel patient Gregory Peck's dilemmas. Has he committed a murder? Alfred Hitchcock directed. (DW)

8:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *A Guy Named Joe* (1943)--Spencer Tracy is a World War II pilot who is killed and comes back to earth to whisper advice in the ear of his replacement, Van Johnson, in the affections of Irene Dunne. Sentimental as can be, but affecting. Directed by Victor Fleming. (Also, Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.) (DW)

10:30 a.m. (AMC)-- *Shall We Dance* (1937)--A Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers film, directed by Mark Sandrich. A tedious story-line, but graced by such Gershwin melodies as 'Let's Call the Whole Thing Off,' 'They Can't Take That Away from Me' and 'They All Laughed.' (DW)

11:30 a.m. (HBO Plus)-- *John Grisham's the Rainmaker* (1997)--See Sunday at 6:00 a.m.

12:00 p.m. (Sci-Fi)-- *The Andromeda Strain* (1971)--See Sunday at 12:00 p.m.

12:30 p.m. (AMC)-- *Unfaithfully Yours* (1948)--Not Preston Sturges at his best, but still amusing. Rex Harrison is a symphony conductor convinced of his wife's (Linda Darnell's) infidelity. (DW)

1:45 p.m. (HBO Plus)-- *The Firm* (1993)--See Sunday at 3:00 p.m.

story set in the context 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)

*6:15 p.m. (HBO Plus)-- *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)

8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961)--Four unhappy people spend a summer together on a remote island. A study of mental disintegration, by famed Swedish director Ingmar Bergman. (DW)

9:30 p.m. (FXM)-- *All That Jazz* (1979)--Choreographer/director Bob Fosse's overwrought autobiographical film about his mental and physical crackup. Not strictly speaking a musical, but it is filled with musical numbers--including a bizarre one occurring during the main character's open-heart surgery. With Roy Scheider and Ben Vereen. (MJ)

10:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Wild Strawberries* (1957)--The life, filled with disappointments, of an elderly professor (Victor Sjöström), told in flashbacks. One of Ingmar Bergman's most renowned works. (DW)

10:15 p.m. (AMC)-- *A New Leaf* (1971)--Elaine May's first directing effort in which she also costarred 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)

10:40 p.m. (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 mugging. Also with Emma Thompson. Directed by Mel Smith. (MJ)

*11:00 p.m. (Sundance)-- *Bound* (1996)--A fine first film by brothers Andy and Larry Wachowski. Cinematically, it's a bit of a show-off, but it all works, re-mining familiar film noir elements. A mob money launderer's mistress and her ex-con lesbian lover conspire to run off with the mobster's loot. Played broadly, and often with humor, by Jennifer Tilly, Gina Gershon and Joe Pantoliano. (MJ)

*12:00 (TCM)-- *The Seventh Seal* (1957)--This is the film, much-parodied, in which Max von Sydow, a knight returning from the Crusades, plays Death in a chess game. Somewhat ridiculous, but still fascinating. Directed by Ingmar Bergman. (DW)

*2:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *The Virgin Spring* (1959)--One of Ingmar Bergman's most somber works. A girl from a religious family is raped and murdered by itinerants, in medieval Sweden. With Max von Sydow, Brigitta Valberg, Gunnel Lindblom. (DW)

*2:50 a.m. (HBO Signature)-- *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)

3:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *Leave Her to Heaven* (1945)--See 8:05 p.m.

4:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Cries and Whispers* (1972)--A drama about a dying woman, her sisters and a servant, directed by Ingmar Bergman. With Harriet Andersson, Ingrid Thulin, Liv Ullmann. (DW)

4:15 a.m. (AMC)-- *A New Leaf* (1971)--See 10:15 p.m.

5:00 a.m. (Showtime)-- *Touch* (1987)--Interesting but disappointing film written and directed by Paul Schrader about faith healing in the South. With Christopher Walken and Bridget Fonda. (MJ)

Tuesday, December 15

10:00 a.m. (History)-- *The Spirit of St. Louis* (1957)--James Stewart, a

little long in the tooth, plays Charles Lindbergh in this mediocre Billy Wilder film about the first trans-Atlantic flight in 1927. (DW)

11:00 a.m. (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)

2:40 p.m. (TMC)-- *The Cotton Club* (1984)--Richard Gere stars in Francis 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)

3:00 p.m. (History)-- *The Spirit of St. Louis* (1957)--see 10:00 a.m.

4:15 p.m. (HBO Plus)-- *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)

6:00 p.m. (HBO Plus)-- *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)

6:30 p.m. (HBO Signature)-- *John Grisham's the Rainmaker* (1997)--See Sunday, at 6:00 a.m.

7:00 p.m. (TMC)-- *Kansas City* (1996)--Uneven 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)

10:00 p.m. (Cinemax)-- *The Devil's Advocate* (1997)--Satan (portrayed in an over-the-top performance by Al Pacino) runs a white-shoe law firm in New York City. Keanu Reeves, as an ambitious young lawyer, makes a Faustian bargain and suffers for it. A very funny horror film that trades on the public's distrust of the legal profession. (MJ)

3:25 a.m. (HBO Signature)-- *Alien* (1979)--See Saturday at 2:10 a.m.

Wednesday, December 16

*6:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *The Blue Angel* (1930)--Josef von Sternberg's classic, adapted from a novel by Heinrich Mann, about a middle-aged professor (Emil Jannings) who falls for a nightclub singer (Marlene Dietrich). (DW)

8:00 a.m. (HBO)-- *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)

9:00 a.m. (Sundance)-- *Arizona Dream* (1993)--Yugoslav director Emir Kusturica (*Underground*) directed this self-consciously offbeat film about a drifter (Johnny Depp), his car salesman uncle (Jerry Lewis), and an oddball mother and daughter (Faye Dunaway and Lili Taylor). (DW)

10:00 a.m. (Encore)-- *Gypsy* (1962)--Unfortunate film adaptation of the great Jule Styne-Stephen Sondheim musical. Rosalind Russell does not have the necessary fire in her belly for the role of Mama Rose. Worth seeing for the music, but look for the recent, far better, made-for-TV version with Bette Midler. Directed by Mervyn LeRoy. Also starring Natalie Wood and Karl Malden. (MJ)

12:00 p.m. (HBO Plus)-- *Tucker: The Man and His Dream* (1988)--See Saturday, at 2:00 p.m.

12:15 p.m. (HBO Signature)-- *The Firm* (1993)--See Sunday, at 3:00 p.m.

*2:30 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. (DW)

3:00 p.m. (HBO Signature)-- *Against All Odds* (1984)--Decent remake of the 1947 film noir *Out of the Past*. Good performances by Jeff Bridges, Rachel Ward and James Woods. Directed by Taylor Hackford. (MJ)

*4:00 p.m. (Bravo)-- *The Dead* (1987)--John Huston's deeply felt adaptation of James Joyce's short story, one of the best in the English language. This was Huston's last film; it ended his great career on a high note. With Anjelica Huston and Donal McCann. (MJ)

*6:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *The Big Sleep* (1945)--Howard Hawks's version of the Raymond Chandler novel, with a script again by Faulkner. Detective Philip Marlowe (Bogart) becomes involved with wealthy girl (Bacall) and her spoiled, irresponsible sister. Don't bother to figure out who did the murders, the director reportedly wasn't certain. (DW)

8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Take Me Out to the Ball Game* (1949)--See Saturday at 7:45 a.m.

9:00 p.m. (Sundance)-- *Arizona Dream* (1993)--See 9:00 a.m.

*10:00 p.m. (HBO Signature)-- *The Name of the Rose* (1986)--See Monday at 6:15 p.m.

4:00 a.m. (Sundance)-- *Arizona Dream* (1993)--See 9:00 a.m.

*4:00 a.m. (Bravo)-- *The Dead* (1987)--See 4:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 17

6:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936)--Gary Cooper and Jean Arthur play the leading roles in one of Frank Capra's Depression parables. Longfellow Deeds (Cooper) has \$20 million and wants to give it away to those in need; Arthur is the hard-boiled reporter trying to figure him out. (DW)

8:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *Union Pacific* (1939)--Cecil B. DeMille's epic about railroad building, with Barbara Stanwyck, Joel McCrea, Robert Preston and many others. (DW)

8:30 a.m. (Sundance)-- *Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead* (1995)--Bizarre crime thriller about horrific revenge exacted by mob boss (played with extreme creepiness by Christopher Walken in a motorized wheelchair) upon local hoods. With Andy Garcia and Steve Buscemi. Directed by Gary Fleder. (MJ)

10:00 a.m. (HBO)-- *Gattaca* (1997)--See Tuesday at 4:15 p.m.

12:00 p.m. (FXM)-- *Man Hunt* (1941)--Suspenseful film directed by Fritz Lang about a hunter who gets Hitler in his sights but doesn't pull the trigger; from that point on, he himself is hunted by the Nazis. With Walter Pidgeon, Joan Bennett, and George Sanders. (MJ)

3:30 p.m. (HBO Signature)-- *Kansas City* (1996)--See Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.

4:00 p.m. (Cinemax)-- *Mr. and Mrs. Bridge* (1990)--James Ivory directed this touching film that follows a reserved Kansas City couple through several decades, revealing much of what really goes on under the surface of their long, seemingly placid relationship. Starring real-life husband and wife Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward in quiet, sensitive performances. Adapted--with inevitable changes and abridgements--from the brilliant but unfilmable pair of novels by Evan S. Connell, Jr. (MJ)

6:00 p.m. (HBO)-- *Gattaca* (1997)--See Tuesday, at 4:15 p.m.

7:00 p.m. (Sundance)-- *Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead* (1995)--See 8:30 a.m.

*8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *The Shop Around the Corner* (1940)--James Stewart and Margaret Sullavan are coworkers who, unbeknownst to themselves, have entered into a romance through letters. Marvelous Ernst Lubitsch film, occasionally precious, but deeply felt. (DW)

9:00 p.m. (USA)-- *Casino* (1995)--Martin Scorsese directed this story about gambling and thugs in Las Vegas in the 1970s. The first 10 minutes are spectacular. The drama never really gets going, in the director's typical fashion. With Robert De Niro, Sharon Stone, Joe Pesci, James Woods. (DW)

9:00 p.m. (HBO Plus)-- *Alien* (1979)--See Saturday, at 2:10 a.m.

9:40 p.m. (Encore)-- *The Wanderers* (1979)--Philip Kaufman's excellent adaptation of Richard Price's fine novel about youth gangs in the Bronx in 1963. With Ken Wahl. (MJ)

10:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *In the Good Old Summertime* (1949)--This musical remake of *The Shop Around the Corner* is one of the fine films from MGM's Golden Age. With Judy Garland and Van Johnson. Directed by Robert Z. Leonard. (MJ)

12:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *The Philadelphia Story* (1940)--George Cukor directed this film adaptation of Philip Barry's stage play about a spoiled mainline socialite yearning for--well, what exactly? One critic calls it 'simply the breaking, reining, and saddling of an unruly thoroughbred,' i.e., Katharine Hepburn. (DW)

1:30 a.m. (HBO)-- *Serial Mom* (1994)--Middle-aged suburban mom (played with relish by Kathleen Turner) kills to preserve traditional American values, like rewinding before you return your tape to the video store and not wearing white shoes after Labor Day. This hilarious satire was directed by John Waters. (MJ)

2:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *High Society* (1956)--Glossy musical version of *The Philadelphia Story* has music and lyrics by the great Cole Porter. Starring Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, Grace Kelly and Louis Armstrong. Directed by Charles Walters. (MJ)

Friday, December 11

*7:45 a.m. (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)

11:30 a.m. (HBO Plus)-- *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)

*12:00 p.m. (FX)-- *The Stepfather* (1987)--Gruesome slasher film that is actually a clever attack on the values of the Reagan era. A psychotic killer goes from city to city, marrying widows with children. When they fail to meet his high standards of a perfect family, he slays them all and moves on. A sleeper that shouldn't be missed. Starring Terry O'Quinn as the stepfather. Directed by Joseph Ruben. (MJ)

*6:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *Sergeant Rutledge* (1960)--Woody Strode plays a black US cavalry officer charged with rape and murder in post-Civil War America. John Ford directed. With Jeffrey Hunter, Constance Towers. (DW)

8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T* (1953)--Charming fantasy film based on designs by children's book author Dr. Seuss. With Peter Lind Hayes, Mary Healy, Tommy Rettig and the manic Hans Conried. (MJ)

*12:00 a.m. (TCM)--*2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968)--Stanley Kubrick's science fiction epic. A space vehicle heads for Jupiter in search of aliens. One critic, somewhat unfairly, called it a project 'so devoid of life and feeling as to render a computer called Hal the most sympathetic character in a jumbled scenario.' Despite silly ending, the film is worth seeing. (DW)

*2:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *Sergeant Rutledge* (1960)--See 6:00 p.m.

2:10 a.m. (HBO)-- *Ishtar* (1987)--See Wednesday at 8:00 a.m.

2:45 a.m. (Encore)-- *Blue Velvet* (1986)--This is the quirky film that launched director David Lynch's career. It was then a short jump to his influential, idiosyncratic TV series 'Twin Peaks.' And then he flickered out like a shooting star. With Dennis Hopper. (MJ)

*3:50 a.m. (Starz)-- *Heavenly Creatures* (1994)--Odd, compelling film, based on fact and set in 1950s New Zealand. Two inseparable teenage girls kill the mother of one to prevent their being parted. Directed by Peter Jackson. With Melanie Lynskey and Kate Winslet. (MJ)

*4:20 a.m. (HBO Plus)-- *The Name of the Rose* (1986)--See Monday at



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