

Some interesting films on US television, February 27-March 5

Marty Jonas (MJ), David Walsh (DW)
27 February 1999

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

A&E=Arts & Entertainment, AMC=American Movie Classics, FXM=Fox Movie Channel, HBOF=HBO Family, HBOP=HBO Plus, HBOS=HBO Signature, IFC=Independent Film Channel, TCM=Turner Classic Movies, TMC=The Movie Channel, TNT=Turner Network Television

Saturday, February 27

*10:15 a.m. (AMC)-- *The Lady Eve* (1941)--Barbara Stanwyck, as a con man's daughter, and Henry Fonda, as a rich young man who happens to love snakes, slug it out in this battle of the sexes directed by Preston Sturges. "Snakes are my life," says Fonda. "What a life!" replies Stanwyck. (DW)

11:35 a.m. (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)

11:40 a.m. (Starz)-- *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery* (1997)--Mike Myers plays a double role in this consistently amusing send-up of James Bond movies and the manners and styles of the 1970s. (MJ)

*12:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *The Killers* (1946)--Robert Siodmak directed this film adaptation of the Ernest Hemingway story about a gangster waiting for two hit men to kill him. The film explains why. With Burt Lancaster in his film debut, Ava Gardner, Edmond O'Brien, Albert Dekker, Charles McGraw, Sam Levene. John Huston, uncredited, contributed to the script. (DW)

12:00 p.m. (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)

12:00 p.m. (Sundance)-- *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)

*12:45 p.m. (HBO)-- *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)

1:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Monkey Business* (1952)--Cary Grant and Ginger Rogers in Howard Hawks' comedy about a chemistry professor who comes up with youth serum. Marilyn Monroe and Charles Coburn costar. (DW)

3:45 p.m. (HBOS)-- *Marathon Man* (1976)--Exciting, convoluted spy thriller about stolen jewels, Nazis hiding out in the US, and the CIA. Starring Dustin Hoffman and Roy Scheider. Laurence Olivier is particularly effective as a sadistic Mengele-type dentist. Directed by John

Schlesinger. (MJ)

4:00 p.m. (TNT)-- *Spaceballs* (1987)--Mel Brooks' send-up of the Star Wars saga. Rick Moranis is Dark Helmet and Daphne Zuniga is Princess Vespa. Other characters include Pizza the Hut. (DW)

5:30 p.m. (Cinemax)-- *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)

6:00 p.m. (HBOS)-- *A Place in the Sun* (1951)--A George Stevens film based on Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*. Not very faithful to the book, but valuable in its own right. Elizabeth Taylor is extraordinary as Montgomery Clift's dream girl. (DW)

8:00 p.m. (IFC)-- *Mississippi Masala* (1992)--Mira Nair's story of cross-cultural romance between Denzel Washington and Indian-born Sarita Choudhury, set in Greenwood, Mississippi. (DW)

8:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *The Naked Jungle* (1954)--Above-average jungle adventure directed by Byron Haskin, with Charlton Heston and Eleanor Parker. (DW)

9:35 p.m. (Starz)-- *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery* (1997)--See 11:40 a.m.

10:30 p.m. (TCM)--*3:10 to Yuma* (1957)--A modest, yet suspenseful western with Glenn Ford as an outlaw and Van Heflin as the farmer, in need of money, who agrees to watch him until the train arrives. Directed by Delmer Daves. (DW)

*11:00 p.m. (Bravo)-- *Blue Collar* (1978)--Paul Schrader (screenwriter of *Taxi Driver*, among other films) wrote and directed this work about corruption in an auto union in Detroit. Richard Pryor and Harvey Keitel co-starred. (DW)

*12:00 a.m. (IFC)-- *Brazil* (1985)--Brilliant, undisciplined satire by Terry Gilliam about a future dystopia that strangely resembles the Great Depression of the 1930s and other bleak periods of the recent past. Starring Jonathan Pryce and Michael Palin. (MJ)

1:15 a.m. (IFC)-- *Police* (1984)--Gerard Depardieu and Sophie Marceau star in this film about a brutal policeman who falls for Marceau, involved in the narcotics trade. Directed by talented French director Maurice Pialat. (DW)

1:30 a.m. (HBO)-- *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)

2:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *The Naked Jungle* (1954)--See 8:00 p.m.

2:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *The Badlanders* (1958)--A minor, but well-made Delmer Daves Western, with Alan Ladd and Ernest Borgnine planning a gold robbery in Arizona at the turn of the century. Each attempts to outsmart the other. With Katy Jurado and Claire Kelly. (DW)

2:25 a.m. (IFC)-- *Mississippi Masala* (1992)--See 8:00 p.m.

*3:30 a.m. (Bravo)-- *Blue Collar* (1978)--See 11:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 28

6:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Clash by Night* (1952)--Fritz Lang directed this melodrama which sees Barbara Stanwyck, as a woman bored with her fisherman husband Paul Douglas, suddenly taken with Douglas' cynical friend (Robert Ryan). Clifford Odets wrote the story. (DW)

*6:30 a.m. (AMC)-- *Follow the Fleet* (1936)--One of the more mediocre Rogers-Astaire films, with a plot involving a double romance (Randolph Scott and Harriet Hilliard (Nelson) form the other pair). The film's highlight is Irving Berlin's "Let's Face the Music and Dance." Directed by Mark Sandrich. (DW)

7:00 a.m. (A&E)-- *The Drowning Pool* (1975)--Paul Newman, as private detective Harper, becomes entangled in a murder case. Joanne Woodward is his ex-wife. Based on the Ross McDonald novels. Directed by Stuart Rosenberg. (DW)

10:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Undercurrent* (1946)--In the *Gaslight* genre: a woman (Katharine Hepburn) discovers her husband is evil and conniving. Robert Mitchum is her ultimate savior. Directed by Vincente Minnelli. (DW)

10:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *People Will Talk* (1951)--Odd film, directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz, with Cary Grant as a philosophizing doctor, married to Jeanne Crain. He is accused of malpractice and has to defend himself. (DW)

10:30 a.m. (Showtime)-- *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)

*12:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Cape Fear* (1962)--Robert Mitchum is the best thing about this film, playing a menacing ex-convict in a Southern town who blames lawyer Gregory Peck for his jailing and plots revenge. Directed by J. Lee Thompson; with Polly Bergen and Martin Balsam. Based on a John D. MacDonald novel, music by Bernard Herrmann. (DW)

12:00 p.m. (Comedy)-- *History of the World--Part I* (1981)--An example of Mel Brooks' 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)

12:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *Niagara* (1953)--Marilyn Monroe is an adulterous wife planning to kill her husband (Joseph Cotten) on their honeymoon at Niagara Falls, in this somewhat overwrought, but tense film, directed by Henry Hathaway. (DW)

*2:30 p.m. (HBOS)-- *Barry Lyndon* (1975)--An intelligent adaptation of William Thackeray's novel about an eighteenth century scoundrel, directed by Stanley Kubrick. (DW)

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

3:30 p.m. (TCM)-- *I Remember Mama* (1948)--George Stevens, in his first film after returning from war, directed this saga of Scandinavian immigrants in San Francisco. With Irene Dunne, Barbara Bel Geddes and Oskar Homolka, among others. (DW)

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

8:00 p.m. (Comedy)-- *History of the World--Part I* (1981)--see 12:00

p.m.

8:30 p.m. (TCM)-- *Of Human Bondage* (1934)--Bette Davis stars as the waitress with whom doctor Leslie Howard becomes "inexplicably" enamored. An interesting film, directed by John Cromwell, but W. Somerset Maugham's story is pretty stupid and insensitive. (DW)

*10:45 p.m. (HBOS)-- *Barry Lyndon* (1975)--See 2:30 p.m.

2:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Love with the Proper Stranger* (1963)--Natalie Wood is pregnant and Steve McQueen is her musician boy-friend in this occasionally affecting film shot on location in New York's Greenwich Village. Directed by Robert Mulligan. (DW)

4:00 a.m. (A&E)-- *The Drowning Pool* (1975)--See 7:00 a.m.

Monday, March 1

9:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *The Major and the Minor* (1942)--Remarkable film by Billy Wilder, with Ginger Rogers, posing as a 12-year-old to save train fare, becoming involved with Ray Milland. (DW)

11:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *The Actress* (1953)--The film is based on the experiences of Ruth Gordon struggling to be a stage performer in the early part of the century in Massachusetts. With Jean Simmons, Spencer Tracy and a youthful Anthony Perkins. George Cukor directed. (DW)

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

*12:00 p.m. (IFC)-- *Breaker Morant* (1979)--Australian film, directed by Bruce Beresford, about three soldiers in Boer War court-martialed for murdering prisoners. With Edward Woodward and Bryan Brown. (DW)

*12:30 p.m. (HBOS)-- *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)

*6:00 p.m. (IFC)-- *Breaker Morant* (1979)--See 12:00 p.m.

6:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *After the Thin Man* (1936)--Nick and Nora Charles (William Powell and Myrna Loy), the urbane detectives, go after a murderer in San Francisco. Based on the characters created by Dashiell Hammett. James Stewart is in this one, one of the better in the series. Directed by W.S. Van Dyke. (DW)

8:00 p.m. (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.

8:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *Imitation of Life* (1959)--Douglas Sirk directed this work, "A big, crazy film about life and death. And a film about America." Lana Turner is a career-driven actress; Juanita Moore is her black maid. Moore has a daughter (Susan Kohner) who wants to pass for white. The characters' thoughts, wishes and dreams "grow directly out of their social reality or are manipulated by it" (R.W. Fassbinder). (DW)

*9:00 p.m. (HBOS)-- *The Ice Storm* (1997)--See 12:30 p.m.

10:00 p.m. (FXM)-- *Wall Street* (1987)--Oliver Stone directed this film about Wall Street sharks and their comeuppance with his usual subtlety and restraint. With Charlie Sheen, Martin Sheen and Michael Douglas. (DW)

1:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Alfie* (1966)--Somewhat unpleasant film about cockney playboy, played memorably by Michael Caine, from the play by Bill Naughton. With Shelley Winters, Jane Asher and Eleanor Bron, among others. Directed by Lewis Gilbert. (DW)

*1:15 a.m. (Showtime)-- *Chinatown* (1974)--The best example of modern film noir. A convoluted tale of incest, corruption and the fight over access to southern California water. Jack Nicholson plays the private

detective. With Faye Dunaway, John Huston. Directed by Roman Polanski. (MJ)

2:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *Imitation of Life* (1959)--See 8:00 p.m.

3:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Alice Doesn't Live Here Any More* (1975)--Martin Scorsese directed this film about a widow, with a young son, who longs for a singing career and ends up a waitress in Phoenix. With Ellen Burstyn, Kris Kristofferson, Harvey Keitel, Jodie Foster. (DW)

Tuesday, March 2

6:00 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)

*8:00 a.m. (HBOP)-- *Mr. and Mrs. Bridge* (1990)--See Saturday at 12:45 p.m.

*8:00 a.m. (Sundance)-- *Hamlet* (1996)--Kenneth Branagh starred in and directed this long, unabridged film of Shakespeare's play. It is exciting and lucid and it dispenses with the oedipal nonsense of other recent versions. Branagh is strong in the part and Derek Jacobi is the definitive Claudius. Also starring Julie Christie and Kate Winslet. (MJ)

10:00 a.m. (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)

12:30 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. (DW)

3:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959)--Otto Preminger directed this absorbing courtroom drama. James Stewart is the defense lawyer; Ben Gazzara, Lee Remick and Arthur O'Connell co-star. Duke Ellington wrote the score. Rather daring in its day. (DW)

4:30 p.m. (AMC)-- *Love Letters* (1945)--Joseph Cotten plays a soldier writing letters to his friend's fiancée, Jennifer Jones. Later he cures her amnesia. Directed by William Dieterle. Ayn Rand wrote the script! (DW)

*8:00 p.m. (Sundance)-- *Hamlet* (1996)--See 8:00 a.m.

8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Angels with Dirty Faces* (1938)--Michael Curtiz directed this story of gangsters and slum kids. James Cagney is the gangster who pretends to be a coward on his way to the electric chair to scuttle his reputation with the kids. (DW)

8:00 p.m. (IFC)-- *Mississippi Masala* (1992)--See Saturday at 8:00 p.m.

9:00 p.m. (HBOS)-- *A Clockwork Orange* (1971)--Stanley Kubrick's brilliant but thoroughly nasty film about a sadistic young street thug (Malcolm McDowell) in the near future turned into a passive, spiritless citizen by means of a cruel form of aversion therapy. In the process, he also loses his ability to enjoy Beethoven. Kubrick adapted this from the novel by Anthony Burgess and Burgess always hated the result. (MJ)

10:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Anna Christie* (1930)--Greta Garbo is charming, in her first speaking part, as the woman with a past who returns to her father and the sea and falls in love. Based on the Eugene O'Neill play. Directed turgidly by Clarence Brown; with Charles Bickford. (DW)

*12:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Annie Hall* (1977)--Woody Allen's first serious effort, a semi-autobiographical film about his life and loves, likes and dislikes. Diane Keaton memorably plays his girlfriend. (DW)

1:30 a.m. (HBOS)-- *The Devil's Advocate* (1997)--See Saturday at 1:30 a.m.

1:45 a.m. (IFC)-- *Mississippi Masala* (1992)--See Saturday at 8:00 p.m.

*2:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *The Apartment* (1960)--Billy Wilder's cynical-sentimental comedy-drama about a corporate lackey (Jack Lemmon) who tries to climb the company ladder by loaning his apartment to his bosses for their trysts. He falls for Shirley MacLaine. Fred MacMurray is memorable as a particularly unpleasant company executive. (DW)

*4:00 a.m. (A&E)-- *The Fallen Idol* (1948)--A young boy idolizes a

household servant accused of killing his wife in this valuable film by Carol Reed, with Ralph Richardson as the butler. From a story by Graham Greene. (DW)

4:15 a.m. (TCM)-- *Autumn Sonata* (1978)--Ingrid Bergman (in her last film) is a concert pianist who faces the daughter she's neglected in this somewhat tired and cliched work by Swedish director Ingmar Bergman. (DW)

Wednesday, March 3

6:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *The Awful Truth* (1937)--Classic screwball comedy. Cary Grant and Irene Dunne divorce and plan to re-wed. Each does his or her best to interfere in the other's life. Ralph Bellamy is memorable as Dunne's would-be Oklahoman of a husband. Perhaps Leo McCarey's best film. (DW)

*6:30 a.m. (HBOP)-- *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1969)--Sergio Leone's drawn-out classic anti-Western, with Claudia Cardinale as the owner of land made valuable by the impending arrival of the railroad. Henry Fonda is a cold-blooded killer. With Jason Robards and Charles Bronson. Memorable score by Ennio Morricone. (DW)

*9:00 a.m. (HBOS)-- *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice* (1969)--Paul Mazursky's comic, perceptive look at the sexual mores of the American middle class in the 1960s. With Robert Culp, Natalie Wood, Elliott Gould and Dyan Cannon. (MJ)

*9:30 a.m. (Sundance)-- *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961)--Alain Resnais' enigmatic film is one of the classics of French cinema. It asks questions (never answered) about the nature of time and memory. A marvelous film to watch, with its energetically mobile camera and lengthy tracking shots down ornate corridors. (MJ)

10:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Babes in Arms* (1939)--One of the original "Hey, kids, let's put on a show" movies, with Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland as teenagers of vaudeville parents. Busby Berkeley directed with his customary energy. (DW)

1:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *The Flame of New Orleans* (1941)--One of French director René Clair's American films. Marlene Dietrich, the principal reason to watch the film, has to choose between wealthy Roland Young and hard-working Bruce Cabot. (DW)

*2:00 p.m. (TBS)-- *The Horse Soldiers* (1959)--Another classic John Ford western, with John Wayne as a cavalry officer leading Union troops into Confederate territory during the Civil War. (DW)

*3:25 p.m. (TMC)-- *All About Eve* (1950)--Joseph Mankiewicz wrote and directed this classic about backstabbing in the world of the theater. The dialogue is nonstop witty and incisive. Memorable performances by George Sanders and Bette Davis. (MJ)

5:15 p.m. (HBOP)-- *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)

5:30 p.m. (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)

*5:30 p.m. (Sundance)-- *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961)--See 9:30 a.m.

*6:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *The Bandwagon* (1953)--Superior Fred Astaire vehicle about a film star trying to make a comeback on Broadway. This is the film that featured the song "That's Entertainment!" Some sharp satire on Broadway pretensions of the time. Directed by Vincente Minnelli. With Cyd Charisse and Jack Buchanan (particularly good). (MJ)

8:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *The Shepherd of the Hills* (1941)--One of Henry Hathaway's more unusual efforts. An Ozark Mountain man lives under a curse: he has promised to kill the man who left his mother. With John Wayne, Berry Field, Harry Carey and Beulah Bondi. (DW)

8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *The Barefoot Contessa* (1954)--A trashy effort by

Joseph L. Mankiewicz that pretends to tell some hard truths about Hollywood. Great fun, though, and some memorable lines. With Ava Gardner, Humphrey Bogart and Edmond O'Brien. (MJ)

*9:00 p.m. (TMC)-- *The Godfather* (1972)--Francis Coppola's classic film about the Mafia as a form of capitalist endeavor. With Marlon Brando, Al Pacino, James Caan and Robert Duvall. (MJ)

*10:00 p.m. (IFC)-- *The Rapture* (1991)--In this strange, compelling film, writer-director Michael Tolkin considers the Apocalypse literally but non-religiously. A promiscuous woman joins a religious cult, marries, has a child and awaits the Second Coming in the desert. With David Duchovny. (MJ)

10:15 p.m. (TCM)-- *Battleground* (1949)--William Wellman directed this dramatic reenactment of World War II's Battle of the Bulge. The large cast includes Van Johnson, John Hodiak, Ricardo Montalban and George Murphy. (DW)

11:05 p.m. (TBS)-- *For a Few Dollars More* (1966)--The sequel to *A Fistful of Dollars*. One of the more memorable "spaghetti Westerns"; with Clint Eastwood, Lee Van Cleef and Gian Maria Volonte, directed by Sergio Leone. (DW)

*1:05 a.m. (HBOS)-- *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice* (1969)--See 9:00 a.m.

1:30 a.m. (Showtime)-- *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)

2:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *The Shepherd of the Hills* (1941)--See 8:00 p.m.

*3:00 a.m. (TMC)-- *The Godfather* (1972)--See 9:00 p.m.

3:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945)--If you can bear the sentimentality of this Leo McCarey film about the doings of priests and nuns, it has its pleasures. With Bing Crosby and Ingrid Bergman. The sequel to *Going My Way*. (DW)

*3:45 a.m. (IFC)-- *The Rapture* (1991)--See 10:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 4

*5:30 a.m. (Sundance)-- *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961)--See Wednesday at 9:30 a.m.

6:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Ben-Hur* (1959)--Turgid retelling of Lew Wallace's "epic." Charlton Heston stars as the Jew Ben-Hur and Stephen Boyd as Messala, who remains loyal to Rome. Famous for its chariot-race. Directed by William Wyler. (DW)

*6:45 a.m. (Showtime)-- *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* (1957)--Spirited acting (by Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas) and direction (by John Sturges) make this one of the more memorable films of this legendary clash. (MJ)

10:00 a.m. (FXM)-- *The Big Trail* (1930)--An early sound picture, with John Wayne, in his first starring role, shepherding a flock of pioneers westward. Somewhat stiff and awkward, but with very nice touches. Directed with his customary vigor by Raoul Walsh. (DW)

*12:00 p.m. (IFC)-- *Breaker Morant* (1979)--See Monday at 12:00 p.m.

*12:30 p.m. (HBOS)-- *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)

12:30 p.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)

2:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *The Big House* (1930)--Called by one critic "the most powerful prison movie of all time," the film, directed by George Hill, stars Wallace Beery and Chester Morris. Prisoners stage such a powerful revolt that army tanks have to be called in. The censors would never again allow "such massive violence in the screen's penal system." (DW)

*6:00 p.m. (IFC)-- *Breaker Morant* (1979)--See Monday at 12:00 p.m.

Barton Fink:00 (1991)--**Open** of the (IFC)--Coen 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 p.m. (Cinemax)-- *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 clever heroines in modern film. With Yaphet Kotto, Tom Skerritt, Ian Holm and John Hurt. (MJ)

*9:00 p.m. (HBOS)-- *Mr. and Mrs. Bridge* (1990)--See Saturday at 12:45 p.m.

*9:00 p.m. (TMC)-- *The Godfather, Part II* (1974)--A rarity--a sequel that measures up to its predecessor. The origins of the enterprising, murderous Corleone family. With Robert De Niro, Marlon Brando, Al Pacino and Diane Keaton. Directed by Francis Coppola. (MJ)

12:00 a.m. (FXM)-- *The Big Trail* (1930)--See 10:00 a.m.

12:30 a.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. (DW)

1:55 a.m. (HBOP)-- *The Devil's Advocate* (1997)--See Saturday at 1:30 a.m.

2:15 a.m. (IFC)-- *Barton Fink* (1991)--See 8:00 p.m.

Friday, March 5

*8:00 a.m. (IFC)-- *The Baron of Arizona* (1950)--In the great Samuel Fuller's intense film, a swindler tries to use forged land grant documents to grab the entire Arizona Territory. With Vincent Price, Ellen Drew and Reed Hadley. (MJ)

*10:00 a.m. (IFC)-- *Breaker Morant* (1979)--See Monday at 12:00 p.m.

*2:00 p.m. (HBOP)-- *The Ice Storm* (1997)--See Monday at 12:30 p.m.

4:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *Artists and Models* (1955)--An extravagant Frank Tashlin cartoon, with Jerry Lewis, Dean Martin, Dorothy Malone and Shirley MacLaine. (DW)

4:00 p.m. (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 boyfriend. Not a great film, but it has its moments. Directed by Jonathan Demme. (DW)

5:45 p.m. (HBOP)-- *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 p.m. (FXM)-- *The Hustler* (1961)--Basically a boxing film, but set among serious pool sharks. Robert Rossen's movie is beautifully shot and capably acted, but the dialogue is full of stagy, pseudo-profound, high-proletarian language. With Paul Newman, Piper Laurie, George C. Scott and Jackie Gleason. (MJ)

*10:00 p.m. (A&E)-- *Cracker: Best Boys* (1995)--One of the remarkable British-made crime series starring Robbie Coltrane as "Fitz," a police psychologist whose own personal problems are vast. Coltrane is amazing in the role--incisive, often intuitive, but always precise in interrogation of a suspect. (MJ)

10:00 p.m. (Comedy)-- *Something Wild* (1986)--see 4:00 p.m.

10:30 p.m. (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)

10:30 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. (DW)

12:00 a.m. (Bravo)-- *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975)--Based on a true story about a man who held up a Brooklyn bank to raise the money for his lover's sex-change operation. With Al Pacino, John Cazale, Charles Durning. Directed by Sidney Lumet. (DW)

*2:00 a.m. (A&E)-- *Cracker: Best Boys* (1995)--See 10:00 p.m.

2:00 a.m. (Comedy)-- *Heaven Help Us* (1985)--On-the-mark depiction of life in a Catholic high school in 1960s Brooklyn. With Donald Sutherland, Andrew McCarthy and Wallace Shawn. Directed by Michael Dinner. (MJ)

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

*3:35 a.m. (TMC)-- *Rosemary's Baby* (1968)--John Cassavetes is excellent as ambitious actor who involves himself in diabolical activities to advance his career. Mia Farrow is his unsuspecting wife. Roman Polanski wrote the screenplay, based on the Ira Levin potboiler, and directed. (DW)

*4:15 a.m. (IFC)-- *The Baron of Arizona* (1950)--See 8:00 a.m.

4:15 a.m. (AMC)-- *Don't Bother to Knock* (1952)--See 10:30 p.m.

Video pick of the week--find it in your video store:

Man on the Roof (1973)--Swedish director Bo Widerberg adapted one of the excellent series of left-wing police procedural novels written by the husband-and-wife team of Per Wahloo and Maj Sjowall. In a bloody act of vengeance, a brutal cop is killed and the police then stage a manhunt in Stockholm. In the course of the film, the dark side of Swedish society is exposed. Well directed, with fine characterizations. (MJ)



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