

Some interesting films on US television, March 6-12

Marty Jonas (MJ), David Walsh (DW)
6 March 1999

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

The Queen of Spades (1949)--Beautiful, lush rendition by British director Thorold Dickinson of the Alexander Pushkin story about a Russian officer obsessed with learning the secrets of winning at cards. Excellent costumes, sets, black-and-white photography, and acting come together in this rarely shown masterpiece. With Edith Evans, Anton Walbrook, and Ronald Howard. (MJ)

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

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

Saturday, March 6

6:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *Mister Cory* (1957)--Tony Curtis is excellent as poor boy turned rich gambler in Blake Edwards's drama. (DW)

7:00 a.m. (A&E)-- *The Left-Handed Gun* (1958)--Based on a television play by Gore Vidal, Arthur Penn directed this off-beat version of the Billy the Kid legend. (DW)

7:35 a.m. (AMC)-- *Bright Leaf* (1950)--Michael Curtiz directed this interesting saga about the tobacco industry in the nineteenth century. Gary Cooper, seeking revenge on old enemies and old lovers, builds a cigarette empire. With Lauren Bacall, Patricia Neal, Jack Carson. (DW)

8:00 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)

*8:00 a.m. (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)

*8:45 a.m. (HBOS)-- *The Producers* (1968)--Mel Brooks wrote and directed his funniest film, about two producers whose plan--to mount a deliberately awful Broadway musical that will flop and thereby bring them a tax bonanza--backfires. Starring Gene Wilder and the great, rarely seen (because of blacklisting) Zero Mostel. (MJ)

11:45 a.m. (Cinemax)-- *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)

11:45 a.m. (TCM)-- *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1936)--Historically distorted, but surprisingly moving account of British soldiers in colonial India and Crimean War. With Errol Flynn and Olivia de Havilland, directed by Michael Curtiz. (DW)

4:00 p.m. (Comedy)-- *Heaven Help Us* (1985)--See 8:00 a.m.

6:00 p.m. (Family)-- *National Lampoon's Vacation* (1983)--Chevy Chase and Beverly D'Angelo star in this often hilarious low comedy about a quintessentially middle-class family's cross-country trip to the Wally

Land theme park. The sequences with Imogene Coca are especially funny. Directed by Harold Ramis. (MJ)

6:00 p.m. (TNT)-- *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982)--A lightweight film, but some lively performances by a remarkable group of young actors: Sean Penn, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Robert Romanus, Phoebe Cates, Forest Whitaker, Anthony Edwards, Nicholas Cage. (DW)

*6:00 p.m. (IFC)-- *Ju Dou* (1990)--Young peasant woman (Gong Li) is forced to marry an elderly factory owner and commences an affair with his nephew, in this story about China in the 1920s. Directed by Zhang Yimou, the film was banned in China. (DW)

*6:00 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)

6:10 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)

6:20 p.m. (Starz)-- *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)

8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Cimarron* (1931)--Dated early sound Western epic; a version of Edna Ferber's account of an American family living on the frontier in Oklahoma 1890-1915. Wesley Ruggles directed; with Richard Dix hamming it up, and Irene Dunne. (DW)

9:00 p.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)

10:00 p.m. (TNT)-- *Carrie* (1976)--Director Brian De Palma can never entirely restrain himself, but this film is more interesting than most of his others. Sissy Spacek plays a high school misfit, equipped with telekinetic powers, who wreaks revenge on her tormentors. Piper Laurie, a fine actress, is memorable as her mother. (DW)

*11:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Citizen Kane* (1941)--Orson Welles's classic work, the tragic story of a newspaper tycoon with delusions of grandeur. Based loosely on the life of millionaire William Randolph Hearst, the film was essentially suppressed when it came out. (DW)

11:30 p.m. (HBOS)-- *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)

1:30 a.m. (TCM)-- *Coal Miner's Daughter* (1980)--Sissy did her own singing, is excellent in this slightly sanitized biography of country singer Loretta Lynn, born in poverty in Kentucky. Tommy Lee Jones as her husband, Beverly D'Angelo as Patsy Cline and Levon Helm as her coal-miner father also stand out. Directed by Michael Apted. (DW)

2:00 a.m. (Bravo)-- *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975)--See 9:00 p.m.

*2:00 a.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)

4:00 a.m. (A&E)-- *The Left-Handed Gun* (1958)--See 7:00 a.m.

Sunday, March 7

6:20 a.m. (TMC)-- *Duel in the Sun* (1946)--King Vidor's intense Western psychodrama. Jennifer Jones, a "half-breed," is caught between two brothers (Gregory Peck and Joseph Cotten). With Lionel Barrymore, Lillian Gish, Herbert Marshall, Charles Bickford and Walter Huston. (DW)

8:00 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)

9:00 a.m. (Sundance)-- *Lone Star* (1996)--John Sayles wrote and directed this well-done, politically astute film about the ethnic divisions in Texas. Unfortunately, it suffers from a contrived, hard-to-believe ending. With Chris Cooper and Elizabeth Pena. (MJ)

9:45 a.m. (HBO)-- *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)

10:00 a.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 stand-out performance as an ultra-sleazy lawyer) Also starring Matt Damon, John Voight, and Claire Danes. (MJ)

10:00 a.m. (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)

10:30 a.m. (History)-- *In Which We Serve* (1942)--Noel Coward and David Lean directed this patriotic war film, told in flashback, about a crew on a British destroyer and on leave. Coward co-stars, with John Mills, Bernard Miles, Celia Johnson and Richard Attenborough (the latter two making film debuts). (DW)

*12:00 p.m. (IFC)-- *Ju Dou* (1990)--See Saturday at 6:00 p.m.

1:00 p.m. (A&E)-- *Blazing Saddles* (1974)--Mel Brooks's western parody, with Cleavon Little, Gene Wilder and Madeline Kahn. (DW)

2:00 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)

4:00 p.m. (TNT)-- *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982)--See Saturday at 6:00 p.m.

4:00 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)

5:00 p.m. (Bravo)-- *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975)--See Saturday at 9:00

Spanek, who

5:30 p.m. (Sundance)-- *Lone Star* (1996)--See 9:00 a.m.

6:00 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. (DW)

*8:00 p.m. (Encore)-- *Fearless* (1993)--Jeff Bridges experiences the eerie effects of having survived a jetliner crash. Stunning performance by Rosie Perez. Directed by Peter Weir. (MJ)

8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *The Dirty Dozen* (1967)--Twelve convicts, serving life sentences, are recruited for a suicidal commando raid in Robert Aldrich's film. (DW)

*2:30 a.m. (TCM)-- *Dr. Strangelove* (1963)--Classic satire on nuclear annihilation. Though heavy-handed in parts, it still retains its incisive humor and impact. Peter Sellers is incredible playing several parts, including the President of the United States. Memorable line: "You can't fight in here--it's the War Room!" Directed by Stanley Kubrick. (MJ)

Monday, March 8

5:00 a.m. (Cinemax)-- *Modern Romance* (1981)--Occasionally amusing film, directed by and starring Albert Brooks as a neurotic film editor obsessed with Kathryn Harrold. (DW)

*7:45 a.m. (IFC)-- *I Shot Jesse James* (1949)--Samuel Fuller's remarkable film--done mostly in close-ups--about the shooting of Jesse James by Robert Ford, "that dirty little coward." With Reed Hadley and John Ireland. (MJ)

8:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Elmer Gantry* (1960)--Burt Lancaster is the salesman who becomes a fire-and-brimstone preacher, joining evangelist Jean Simmons's crusade, in this critical look at fundamentalism and fakery in 1920s America. Richard Brooks directed, based on the novel by Sinclair Lewis. (DW)

*8:30 a.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)

10:30 a.m. (TCM)-- *Executive Suite* (1954)--A power struggle erupts after the death of a major executive. Interesting to compare the corporate culture of the 1950s (and Hollywood myths about them) with today's. With William Holden, Barbara Stanwyck, June Allyson, Fredric March, Walter Pidgeon. Robert Wise directed. (DW)

*12:00 p.m. (FXM)-- *The Culpepper Cattle Company* (1972)--An unjustly forgotten film about a naive young man joining up with a cattle drive. Grittily realistic depictions of the daily working life of cowboys--the kind of detail rarely shown in Westerns. A gem. With Gary Grimes, Billy "Green" Bush, and Geoffrey Lewis. Directed by Dick Richards. (MJ)

*1:15 p.m. (AMC)-- *Brute Force* (1947)--Jules Dassin's prison drama with Burt Lancaster, Charles Bickford, Yvonne DeCarlo and Hume Cronyn as brutal prison official. Scripted by Richard Brooks. (DW)

3:45 p.m. (HBOS)-- *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)

*3:45 p.m. (Cinemax)-- *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)

*4:30 p.m. (HBOP)-- *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)

*6:30 p.m. (HBOS)-- *The Producers* (1968)--See Saturday at 8:45 a.m.

8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Father of the Bride* (1950)--Spencer Tracy is the father and Elizabeth Taylor the bride in Vincente Minnelli's look at the American marriage ritual. Amusing, and sometimes pointed. With Joan Bennett. (DW)

8:30 p.m. (IFC)-- *House of Games* (1987)--Disappointing film about the world of con artists. David Mamet wrote and directed, and (as usual) his characters talk in a peculiar, stilted way. Much promise, but short on delivery. With Lindsay Crouse and Joe Mantegna. (MJ)

*10:00 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. (DW)

11:45 p.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)

*1:00 a.m. (HBOS)-- *A Clockwork Orange* (1971)--See Saturday at 2:00 a.m.

1:15 a.m. (IFC)-- *House of Games* (1987)--See 8:30 p.m.

*2:00 a.m. (FXM)-- *The Culpepper Cattle Company* (1972)--See 12:00 p.m.

*3:50 a.m. (HBOS)-- *The Ice Storm* (1997)--See Saturday at 6:00 p.m.

4:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *A Shot in the Dark* (1964)--See 10:00 p.m.

*4:30 a.m. (IFC)-- *I Shot Jesse James* (1949)--See 7:45 a.m.

Tuesday, March 9

7:30 a.m. (AMC)-- *Make Way for Tomorrow* (1937)--A remarkable portrait of an aging couple (Victor Moore and Beulah Bondi) in the Depression years, shunted aside by their ambitious children. Directed by Leo McCarey. (DW)

*8:05 a.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)

*10:45 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)

*12:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *The Fortune Cookie* (1966)--Billy Wilder's ultra-cynical story about a television cameraman (Jack Lemmon) injured during a football game and the attempts by his shyster lawyer (Walter Matthau) to sue for millions. (DW)

2:15 p.m. (TCM)-- *Four Daughters* (1938)--The Lane Sisters, with Claude Rains as their musical father, star in this film about small-town life. The four young women have their lives changed by four young men. Directed by Hungarian émigré Michael Curtiz. (DW)

*5:20 p.m. (TMC)-- *Spellbound* (1945)--Psychiatrist Ingrid Bergman attempts to unravel patient Gregory Peck's dilemmas. Has he committed a murder? Alfred Hitchcock directed. (DW)

*7:00 p.m. (HBOP)-- *The Ice Storm* (1997)--See Saturday at 6:00 p.m.

8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Friendly Persuasion* (1956)--William Wyler directed this film about a family of Quakers and, therefore, pacifists, trying to survive with dignity during the Civil War. With Gary Cooper, Dorothy McGuire and Anthony Perkins. (DW)

8:00 p.m. (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)

9:45 p.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)

10:00 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)

11:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *Gypsy* (1962)--Unfortunate film adaptation of the great Jule Styne-Stephen Sondheim-Arthur Laurents 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)

*11:15 p.m. (TMC)-- *Men of Respect* (1991)--Fascinating but largely unsuccessful attempt to translate Macbeth into a modern gangster milieu. Starring John Turturro, Peter Boyle, and Rod Steiger. Directed by William Reilly. (MJ)

12:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Gaslight* (1944)--Charles Boyer tries to drive Ingrid Bergman mad in George Cukor's period thriller. (DW)

12:30 a.m. (HBO)-- *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)

*12:35 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)

1:00 a.m. (VH1)-- *This Is Spinal Tap* (1984)--Rob Reiner directed this mock documentary about a fading rock band on its final tour. He also appears as filmmaker Marty DiBergi, with Harry Shearer, Christopher Guest, and Tony Hendra playing members of the band, in this hilarious parody of all the solemn, pretentious films about rock groups. (MJ)

3:15 a.m. (IFC)-- *Police* (1984)--See 9:45 p.m.

4:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *Gypsy* (1962)--See 11:00 p.m.

4:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *The Gay Divorcee* (1934)--One of the Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers musicals. Not famous for its plot, but for its musical numbers, including "Continental" and Cole Porter's "Night and Day." Directed by journeyman Mark Sandrich. (DW)

Wednesday, March 10

5:00 a.m. (Starz)-- *At Long Last Love* (1975)--Burt Reynolds and Cybill Shepherd can neither sing nor dance--they are definitely not Astaire and Rogers. Still, it's fun to watch them mangle Cole Porter's beautiful music and lyrics. Peter Bogdanovich's glitzy, expensive film proves that a warm affection for 1930's film musicals is not enough. One of the great bombs. With Madeline Kahn (often funny, despite her material) and John Hillerman. (MJ)

*6:00 a.m. (Showtime)-- *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)

*6:45 a.m. (Cinemax)-- *Barry Lyndon* (1975)--An intelligent adaptation of William Thackeray's novel about an eighteenth century scoundrel, directed by Stanley Kubrick. (DW)

9:30 a.m. (HBO)-- *The Fifth Element* (1997)--See Sunday at 9:45 a.m.

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)

4:00 p.m. (FXM)-- *At Long Last Love* (1975)--See 5:00 a.m.

5:45 p.m. (HBO)-- *The Fifth Element* (1997)--See Sunday at 9:45 a.m.

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

*3:00 a.m. (TMC)-- *The Godfather, Part II* (1974)--A 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)

Thursday, March 11

6:00 a.m. (FXM)-- *At Long Last Love* (1975)--See Wednesday at 5:00 a.m.

6:00 a.m. (HBOS)-- *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (1965)--Cold War melodrama of double- and triple-agents, based on the John Le Carre novel, with Richard Burton as the embittered British agent and Oskar Werner. Directed by Martin Ritt. (DW)

*8:00 a.m. (HBOS)-- *The Producers* (1968)--See Saturday at 8:45 a.m.

9:15 a.m. (IFC)-- *Breaker Morant* (1979)--See Wednesday at 12:00 p.m.

*11:00 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)

3:00 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)

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 boy-friend. Not a great film, but it has its moments. Directed by Jonathan Demme. (DW)

4:00 p.m. (Cinemax)-- *John Grisham's the Rainmaker* (1997)--See Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

*4:15 p.m. (IFC)-- *Ju Dou* (1990)--See Saturday at 6:00 p.m.

8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Gunga Din* (1939)--If one sets aside the history and politics of this film, about the heroic British army fighting off thuggee cult in nineteenth century India, "the most entertaining of the juvenile Kipling movies." Directed by George Stevens. (DW)

8:00 p.m. (Comedy)-- *Something Wild* (1986)--See 4:00 p.m.

8:00 p.m. (TNT)-- *The Sting* (1973)--A pair of con men (Paul Newman and Robert Redford) pull an intricate scam on a gangster during the Depression. Good, playful, with lots of surprises. Memorable score made up of Scott Joplin ragtime music. With Robert Shaw. Directed by George Roy Hill. (MJ)

10:15 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)

*10:50 p.m. (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)

*11:30 p.m. (Sundance)-- *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961)--See 11:00 a.m.

1:15 a.m. (TNT)-- *The Sting* (1973)--See 8:00 p.m.

1:30 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)

*3:00 a.m. (Cinemax)-- *The Last Detail* (1973)--Hal Ashby directed this sometimes moving and amusing account of the last days of freedom of a young sailor (Randy Quaid) who faces years in the brig for a minor infraction. Jack Nicholson and Otis Young are the career sailors who decide to show him a little fun. (DW)

4:00 a.m. (IFC)-- *Mississippi Masala* (1992)--See 10:15 p.m.

rarity--a sequel *Hallelujah!**4:00 (1929)--"A.m. classic" (TCM)--"humanistic museum period," according to one critic. Story of cotton-picker who finds religion. (DW)

Friday, March 12

6:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *Love Letters* (1945)--Joseph Cotten plays a soldier writing letters to his friend's fiancee, Jennifer Jones. Later he cures her amnesia. Directed by William Dieterle. Ayn Rand wrote the script! (DW)

*8:00 a.m. (IFC)-- *Ju Dou* (1990)--See Saturday at 6:00 p.m.

8:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *My Little Chickadee* (1940)--W.C. Fields costars with Mae West in this odd western, directed by Eddie Cline. One critic suggested that the pairing "was more funny/peculiar than funny/ha ha." (DW)

8:10 a.m. (Starz)-- *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)

*9:30 a.m. (AMC)-- *The Big Clock* (1948)--Reporter investigating murder case finds he is actually hunting himself; the murderer, his publisher, has set him up. Excellent suspense film, directed by John Farrow (father of Mia), adapted from the novel by poet Kenneth Fearing. With Ray Milland, Charles Laughton, and Maureen O'Sullivan, and George Macready. (MJ)

*10:30 a.m. (HBOS)-- *The Ice Storm* (1997)--See Saturday at 6:00 p.m.

12:30 p.m. (Cinemax)-- *Contact* (1997)--See Sunday at 2:00 p.m.

*2:15 p.m. (IFC)-- *Ju Dou* (1990)--See Saturday at 6:00 p.m.

*2:30 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)

2:55 p.m. (TMC)-- *One-Eyed Jacks* (1961)--Marlon Brando's only directing effort. He plays an outlaw seeking revenge on Karl Malden, a former friend, now a sadistic sheriff. (DW)

3:00 p.m. (Starz)-- *Ishtar* (1987)--See 8:10 a.m.

3:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *Interlude* (1957)--A soap opera, but executed with style. Unfortunately, June Allyson stars as an American falling in love with a European composer Rossano Brazzi. Directed by Douglas Sirk. (DW)

*4:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Henry V* (1989)--Kenneth Branagh's exuberant production of the great Shakespeare historical play about Britain's warrior-king. "He which hath no stomach to this fight,/Let him depart..." (DW)

*5:30 p.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)

6:15 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 Ernst Lubitsch's 1943 *Heaven Can Wait*. (DW)

*8:00 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)

8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *High Noon* (1952)--Gary Cooper stars in this Fred Zinnemann-directed Western about a sheriff who, on his wedding and retirement day, has to confront a gunman seeking revenge. With Grace Kelly, Thomas Mitchell, Lloyd Bridges, Katy Jurado et al. (DW)

10:00 p.m. (TNT)-- *The French Connection* (1971)--Gene Hackman is fine as a New York City policeman chasing drug traffickers. William Friedkin directed the proceedings at a breakneck pace. His subsequent work shows that this film was overrated at the time. With Roy Scheider, Tony LoBianco. (DW)

10:00 p.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)

*12:00 a.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)

2:30 a.m. (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 star. Co-directed by John Ford, Henry Hathaway, and George Marshall. (DW)

2:45 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. (DW)

4:00 a.m. (HBO)-- *Frantic* (1988)--Roman Polanski's failed attempt to make a Hitchcock-type suspense film. With Harrison Ford. (MJ)



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