

Some interesting films on US television, May 15-21

Marty Jonas (MJ), David Walsh (DW)
15 May 1999

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

Burn! (1969)--William Walker (Marlon Brando), covertly acting as an agent for the British government, helps lead a revolt of slaves in the Caribbean, then cynically betrays them. A powerful film, it is virtually a textbook on the machinations of British colonialism. Directed by Gillo Pontecorvo. (MJ)

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, May 15

6:00 a.m. (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)

6:30 a.m. (HBOS)-- *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)

9:00 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)

1:55 p.m. (TBS)-- *Groundhog Day* (1993)--Bill Murray plays a weatherman who must live the same day over and over and over in a very dull town. Funny and somewhat disturbing. Directed by Harold Ramis. (MJ)

2:15 p.m. (HBOS)-- *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)

5:00 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. (Cinemax)-- *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)

8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Gaslight* (1944)--Charles Boyer tries to drive Ingrid

Bergman mad in George Cukor's period thriller. (DW)

8:00 p.m. (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)

10:00 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)

10:45 p.m. (HBOP)-- *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)

11:00 p.m. (HBOS)-- *John Grisham's the Rainmaker* (1997)--See 2:15 p.m.

*12:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *The Conversation* (1974)--A security specialist involved in bugging and other surveillance begins to have qualms about his profession. Francis Coppola's detailed, disturbing look at the milieu and practices of the security business is one of his best films. Starring Gene Hackman and the late John Cazale. (MJ)

*12:30 a.m. (Showtime)-- *Raging Bull* (1980)--Martin Scorsese directed Robert De Niro in this film biography of the boxer Jake La Motta. An interesting work, even if its themes are somewhat obscure. With Cathy Moriarty, Joe Pesci. (DW)

*1:35 a.m. (Cinemax)-- *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)

*4:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *High Sierra* (1941)--Wonderful, hard-boiled Raoul Walsh film about an ex-convict (Humphrey Bogart) and the two women in his life, a lame girl, Joan Leslie, whose treatment he pays for, and the tough, no-nonsense Ida Lupino. Final chase sequence in the mountains captures something essential about America. Written by John Huston and W.R. Burnett. (DW)

Sunday, May 16

*5:35 a.m. (Starz)-- *Last Action Hero* (1993)--Arnold Schwarzenegger vehicle that proves to be a delight. A boy goes to a movie theater and meets his idol--an action hero--who steps out of the screen and takes him back in. A good action film that spoofs the genre and plays with the tension between movies and reality. It also includes hilarious send-ups of Olivier's *Hamlet* and Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*. Directed by John McTiernan. (MJ)

*6:20 a.m. (Cinemax)-- *The Shootist* (1976)--John Wayne unrehearsed playing drunk, in Billy Wilder's bleak film. With Howard da Silva as a bartender, Jane Wyman and Frank Faylen. (DW)

*1:15 p.m. (Cinemax)-- *Zardoz* (1973)--Odd saga spanning thousands of years in the future, with Sean Connery and Charlotte Rampling. A good-bad film bursting with half-baked ideas and marvelous images. Directed by John Boorman, an exceptional director who takes chances. (MJ)

4:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *The Valley of Decision* (1945)--Tay Garnett directed this interesting film about romance and labor strife. Greer Garson is a maid who becomes involved with Gregory Peck; his family owned a mine in which her father and brother were killed. Set in Pittsburgh in 1870. (DW)

6:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *Seven Sinners* (1940)--Lively film, with Marlene Dietrich and John Wayne, about US sailors somewhere in the tropics. Dietrich is definitely one of the sinners. With an excellent supporting cast, including Broderick Crawford, Mischa Auer, Billy Gilbert. (DW)

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

8:00 p.m. (Starz)-- *Everyone Says I Love You* (1996)--Woody Allen at his most romantic and artificial. In this, Allen's only musical, people break into song (not unnaturally) and seem to have a genuinely good time, in a cliquish kind of way. The locales are Venice, Paris, and (of course) the Upper West Side of Manhattan, and very quickly the upper-crust, smug liberal values of the jet set characters become insufferable. With Edward Norton, Goldie Hawn and Alan Alda. (MJ)

8:00 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)

*9:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *An American in Paris* (1951)--Classic MGM musical directed by Vincente Minnelli and built around its Gershwin score; Alan Jay Lerner wrote the screenplay. Gene Kelly is an artist torn between gamine Leslie Caron and wealthy Nina Foch. With the irrepressible Oscar Levant. (DW)

10:30 p.m. (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)

12:00 a.m. (FXM)-- *Julia* (1977)--See 10:00 a.m.

12:30 a.m. (AMC)-- *Seven Sinners* (1940)--See 6:00 p.m.

2:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *He Who Gets Slapped* (1924)--Swedish Victor Seastrom, possibly "the world's first great director, even before Chaplin and Griffith," made this silent film in Hollywood, based on Leonid Andreyev's despairing play, about a brilliant scientist who becomes a circus clown. With Lon Chaney, Norma Shearer, John Gilbert. (DW)

Tuesday, May 18

5:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *Captain Horatio Hornblower* (1951)--See Monday at 10:30 p.m.

*6:10 a.m. (HBOS)-- *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)

*7:30 a.m. (TCM)-- *The Cameraman* (1928)--A late silent film with Buster Keaton as a love-sick newsreel cameraman. Edward Sedgwick directed, and this is not considered one of Keaton's major films, but none of his films should be missed. (DW)

*8:35 a.m. (TMC)-- *Notorious* (1946)--One of Alfred Hitchcock's best. American counterespionage agents convince the patriotic daughter of a convicted Nazi spy to marry a Nazi agent in South America. Very suspenseful (especially the sequence with the dwindling champagne bottles), and with complex characterizations. Wonderful chemistry

*6:20 a.m. (Cinemax)-- *The Shootist* (1976)--John Wayne unrehearsed playing drunk, in Billy Wilder's bleak film. With Howard da Silva as a bartender, Jane Wyman and Frank Faylen. (DW)

*7:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940)--John Ford's version of the John Steinbeck classic novel, about the Joad family, driven from their home in the 1930s "Dust Bowl." Henry Fonda plays Tom Joad. With Jane Darwell, John Carradine. (DW)

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

10:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *D.O.A.* (1950)--Rudolph MatÄ© directed this film noir about a man (Edmond O'Brien) who discovers he has been poisoned and attempts to find out why and who has done it in the time he has left. With Pamela Britton, Luther Adler. (DW)

*12:30 p.m. (IFC)-- *Crumb* (1994)--Remarkable portrait of family of cartoonist Robert Crumb. His two dysfunctional brothers prove to be considerably more interesting than he. Directed by Terry Zwigoff. (DW)

3:15 p.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)

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

*4:00 p.m. (Starz)-- *Last Action Hero* (1993)--See 5:35 a.m.

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)

6:45 p.m. (HBOP)-- *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)

8:00 p.m. (Encore)-- *Frantic* (1988)--Roman Polanski's failed attempt to make a Hitchcock-type suspense film. With Harrison Ford. (MJ)

*10:45 p.m. (TMC)-- *Last Action Hero* (1993)--See 5:35 a.m.

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

*4:00 a.m. (IFC)-- *Crumb* (1994)--See 12:30 p.m.

4:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Anna Karenina* (1935)--A superficial and turgid version of the Tolstoy novel. But anything with Greta Garbo is of interest. Clarence Brown, for some reason Garbo's favorite, directed the film. (DW)

Monday, May 17

10:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Morning Glory* (1935)--Katharine Hepburn is a small-town girl who tries to make it as an actress in New York City. Hepburn, according to one critic, displays "a self-mocking irony and delirious rapture that few actresses have ever attempted, much less achieved." Directed by Lowell Sherman. (DW)

10:00 a.m. (FXM)-- *Julia* (1977)--Vanessa Redgrave won an Oscar for her performance as the anti-fascist Julia based on Lillian Hellman's autobiographical work, *Pentimento*. With Jane Fonda, Jason Robards; directed by Fred Zinnemann. (DW)

12:30 p.m. (AMC)-- *The Lost Weekend* (1945)--Ray Milland is a drunk,

between Cary Grant and Ingrid Bergman, and an oddly sympathetic performance by Claude Rains as the Nazi agent. (MJ)

10:15 a.m. (HBOS)-- *Against All Odds* (1984)--See Sunday at 6:45 p.m.

12:30 p.m. (AMC)-- *Seven Sinners* (1940)--See Monday at 6:00 p.m.

*1:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Dinner at Eight* (1933)--A collection of individuals from various social classes, all facing a crisis, prepare to dine at eight. George Cukor directed this MGM version of the George Kaufman-Edna Ferber play, with Jean Harlow, Marie Dressler, Wallace Beery and John Barrymore. (DW)

*3:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *The Thin Man* (1934)--The first of the films featuring husband-and-wife detection team of Nick and Nora Charles, with more than a touch of madcap comedy. With William Powell and Myrna Loy as the duo. Directed by W.S. Van Dyke. (MJ)

4:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *The Glenn Miller Story* (1954)--By no standard a great film--it is burdened with a sentimental and largely fictitious story, as well as insipid June Allyson as Miller's wife--but everything by Anthony Mann of this period is worth seeing. Beautifully done. James Stewart is fine as Miller. (DW)

5:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1935)--Charles Laughton is memorable as the abominable Captain Bligh on board a British ship bound for the South Seas. Clark Gable is Fletcher Christian. Directed by Frank Lloyd. (DW)

*6:00 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)

*8:00 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. (Bravo)-- *Charley Varrick* (1973)--A modest, intelligent Don Siegel action picture, superior to most films of the 1970s. Varrick is a smalltime crook who robs money from the Mob by accident. With Joe Don Baker, as a menacing hit man, Sheree North and John Vernon. (DW)

*11:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *12 Angry Men* (1957)--Gripping film that takes place in only one room as 12 jurors struggle to reach a verdict. During the process each reveals his character. Great cast headed by Henry Fonda, Lee J. Cobb and E.G. Marshall. Directed by Sidney Lumet. (MJ)

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. (Bravo)-- *Charley Varrick* (1973)--See 8:00 p.m.

*4:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *12 Angry Men* (1957)--See 11:00 p.m.

4:35 a.m. (TCM)-- *Ninotchka* (1939)--Greta Garbo is an unlikely Soviet official in Paris, who gets seduced by Melvyn Douglas and the pleasures of capitalism, in Ernst Lubitsch's comedy. (DW)

Wednesday, May 19

*6:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *To Be or Not to Be* (1942)--Ernst Lubitsch's classic black comedy about an acting troupe in Nazi-occupied Warsaw. Jack Benny is superb as the conceited ham who heads the troupe, and Carole Lombard is his faithless wife. Not to be missed. (MJ)

6:30 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)

7:00 a.m. (Cinemax)-- *The Late Show* (1977)--An amusing twist on the private eye film, with Art Carney as an aging detective, who has to take a bus to get around, hooked up with Lily Tomlin as a slightly loopy client. Robert Benton directed, with Bill Macy. (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)

9:15 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)

10:00 a.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 stagey, pseudo-profound, high-proletarian language. With Paul Newman, Piper Laurie, George C. Scott and Jackie Gleason. (MJ)

10:15 a.m. (Cinemax)-- *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. (MJ)

11:15 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)

12:00 p.m. (IFC)-- *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* (1989)--The tall tales of the German baron are retold by Terry Gilliam in his typical brilliant but sprawling style. With John Neville and too much Robin Williams. (MJ)

*12:30 p.m. (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)

*12:30 p.m. (Bravo)-- *Charley Varrick* (1973)--See Tuesday at 8:00 p.m.

*1:00 p.m. (HBOS)-- *Rosemary's Baby* (1968)--See Sunday at 3:45 p.m.

1:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *To Each His Own* (1946)--Wartime drama, with Olivia de Havilland as an unwed mother giving up her child and pretending to be his aunt. John Lund plays both her lover and her son. Directed by Mitchell Leisen with some finesse. (DW)

2:30 p.m. (TCM)-- *Gaslight* (1944)--See Saturday at 8:00 p.m.

8:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *Reap the Wild Wind* (1942)--Cecil B. DeMille directed this intriguing film about nineteenth century salvagers off the coast of Georgia. Ray Milland and John Wayne fight over Paulette Goddard, as a spirited Southern belle. (DW)

*8:00 p.m. (Encore)-- *Five Easy Pieces* (1970)--Early Jack Nicholson film that helped define his sardonic screen persona. He plays a concert pianist from a wealthy family who opts to work on an oil rig. Watch for the memorable scene in the diner between Nicholson's character and a waitress. Directed by the underappreciated Bob Rafelson. With Karen Black, Billy "Green" Bush, and Susan Anspach. (MJ)

*9:00 p.m. (HBOS)-- *Rosemary's Baby* (1968)--See Sunday at 3:45 p.m.

10:15 p.m. (TCM)-- *Little Women* (1949)--Mervyn LeRoy directed this, the second version of Louisa May Alcott's novel about a quartet of sisters growing up in New England during the Civil War. This version is inferior to George Cukor's 1933 film. June Allyson, Margaret O'Brien, Elizabeth Taylor and Janet Leigh co-star. (DW)

*11:30 p.m. (HBOS)-- *Barbarians at the Gate* (1993)--James Garner is outstanding in this saga of the 1980s, about the corporate piracy that led to the takeover of RJR Nabisco. Larry Gelbart wrote the witty screenplay for the made-for-cable film. (MJ)

12:00 a.m. (FXM)-- *The Hustler* (1961)--See 10:00 a.m.

*12:30 a.m. (TCM)-- *On the Town* (1949)--Memorable 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)

1:45 a.m. (AMC)-- *Reap the Wild Wind* (1942)--See 8:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 20

*6:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *The Glass Key* (1942)--Stuart Heisler directed this version of the Dashiell Hammett novel about a hard-nosed operator (Alan Ladd) who tries to defend his boss (Brian Donlevy), a wardheeler, against murder charges. Veronica Lake is the object of Ladd's affections. (DW)

*7:30 a.m. (TCM)-- *Singin' in the Rain* (1952)--Is there anyone who hasn't seen this film by now? Anyway, it's a remarkable musical, with Gene Kelly, Debbie Reynolds, Donald O'Connor, about the days of silent film. Stanley Donen and Kelly directed. (DW)

8:55 a.m. (Encore)-- *Love with the Proper Stranger* (1963)--Natalie Wood is pregnant and Steve McQueen is her musician boyfriend in this occasionally affecting film shot on location in New York's Greenwich Village. Directed by Robert Mulligan. (DW)

*9:30 a.m. (TCM)-- *The Band Wagon* (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)

9:45 a.m. (IFC)-- *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* (1989)--See Wednesday at 12:00 p.m.

12:10 p.m. (TMC)-- *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)

*12:35 p.m. (AMC)-- *Winchester '73* (1950)--Remarkable Western, directed by Anthony Mann, about a man (James Stewart, in the first of his films with Mann) tracking down a stolen Winchester rifle and the man who took it. The gun is the connection between the different episodes. With Shelley Winters, Dan Duryea and Stephen McNally. Script by Robert L. Richards and Borden Chase. (DW)

3:30 p.m. (TCM)-- *The Blackboard Jungle* (1955)--Glenn Ford is a high school teacher in an inner-city school in this social realist film. He deals with violence, racism and threats against his family. With Anne Francis, Vic Morrow, Sidney Poitier, Louis Calhern, Richard Kiley; directed by Richard Brooks. (DW)

4:00 p.m. (Comedy)-- *National Lampoon's Vacation* (1983)--See Monday at 8:00 p.m.

*5:20 p.m. (TMC)-- *The Boys in Company C* (1978)--One of the better realistic films about the Vietnam War. Avoids the cliches of most other war films. With James Whitmore, Jr. and Stan Shaw. Directed by Sidney J. Furie. (MJ)

*5:30 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)

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

10:30 p.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)

11:15 p.m. (Showtime)-- *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)

*1:10 a.m. (Encore)-- *The Wanderers* (1979)--Philip Kaufman's film is an excellent adaptation of Richard Price's fine novel about youth gangs in the Bronx in 1963. With Ken Wahl. (MJ)

2:25 a.m. (HBOS)-- *Alien* (1979)--See Saturday at 10:45 p.m.

2:30 a.m. (Bravo)-- *Things Change* (1988)--See 8:00 p.m.

Friday, May 21

*5:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Bells Are Ringing* (1960)--Delightful Jule Styne-Betty Comden-Adolph Green musical about an operator at a telephone answering service who falls in love with one of her clients. Starring Judy Holliday, whose early death robbed us of a significant musical talent. With Dean Martin. Directed by Vincente Minnelli. (MJ)

5:10 a.m. (TMC)-- *A Place in the Sun* (1951)--See Thursday at 12:10 p.m.

5:30 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)

7:15 a.m. (Showtime)-- *Hombre* (1967)--See Sunday at 7:45 a.m.

7:30 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)

7:45 a.m. (AMC)-- *The Flame of New Orleans* (1941)--One of French director Ren   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)

1:00 p.m. (HBOS)-- *Tucker: The Man and His Dream* (1988)--See Saturday at 6:30 a.m.

4:00 p.m. (Bravo)-- *Things Change* (1988)--See Thursday at 8:00 p.m.

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

*4:00 p.m. (HBOS)-- *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. (Showtime)-- *Reds* (1981)--Warren Beatty's account of the life and times of John Reed, American socialist and author of *Ten Days that Shook the World*, the authoritative chronicle of the October Revolution of 1917. With Diane Keaton and others. (DW)

*10:30 a.m. (TCM)-- *Lolita* (1962)--Relatively daring film version of the Vladimir Nabokov novel about a middle-aged English academic who develops a passion for a young girl. Stanley Kubrick directed James Mason, Sue Lyon, Shelley Winters and Peter Sellers. (DW)

*12:45 p.m. (AMC)-- *Phantom Lady* (1944)--Unsettling film noir, perhaps emblematic of the genre, about a man convicted of a murder and the search for an elusive witness. With Franchot Tone, directed by Robert Siodmak. (DW)

4:15 p.m. (AMC)-- *The Naked Jungle* (1954)--Above-average jungle adventure directed by Byron Haskin, with Charlton Heston and Eleanor Parker. (DW)

*6:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *Double Indemnity* (1944)--Billy Wilder's marvelous and sinister version of the James M. Cain novel about a wife (Barbara Stanwyck) who connives with an insurance agent (Fred MacMurray) to murder her husband. Devastating picture of greed and amorality. Scripted by Raymond Chandler. (DW)

*8:00 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)

9:00 p.m. (HBOS)-- *Against All Odds* (1984)--See Sunday at 6:45 p.m.

*10:30 p.m. (AMC)-- *Laura* (1944)--A murder mystery about a woman believed to be dead who suddenly makes an appearance. Otto Preminger directed an extraordinary cast, including Gene Tierney, Dana Andrews, Vincent Price and Clifton Webb. (DW)

*12:05 a.m. (AMC)-- *Double Indemnity* (1944)--See 6:00 p.m.

*2:30 a.m. (AMC)-- *The Killers* (1946)--See 8:00 p.m.

4:00 a.m. (A&E)-- *Harper* (1966)--Competently made private eye film, with Paul Newman as detective hired by Lauren Bacall to find her missing millionaire husband. With Julie Harris, Shelley Winters, Arthur Hill, Pamela Tiffin. Directed by Jack Smight, based on Ross Macdonald's *The Moving Target*. (DW)

*4:30 a.m. (AMC)-- *Laura* (1944)--See 10:30 p.m.



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