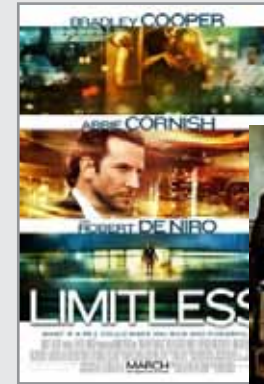


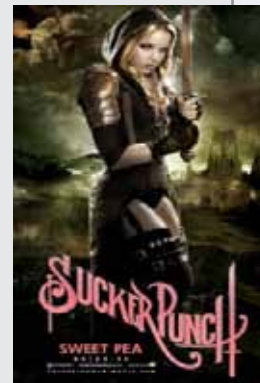


# Movies and Culture Report

## High Concepts



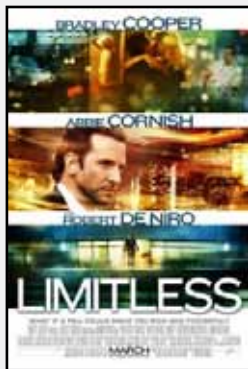
## Low Morals





# THEATRICAL RELEASES

March 18

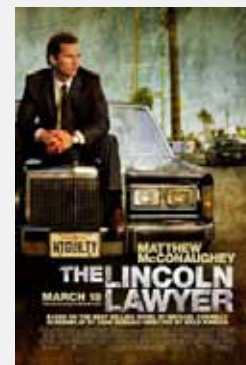


**Limitless** (PG-13 for language, adult situations – Relativity) Eddie, a lowly copywriter, gets the opportunity to take a drug which allows for him to use the full extent of his brain. Of course there's a downside, such as where the drug comes from and the motives of those who feed it to him. ([Watch the trailer.](#)) Bradley Cooper, Robert De Niro, Abbie Cornish, Anna Friel.

An 'Outer Limits' plotline stretched into a full-length movie—it feeds into our shared desire to be impressive without all the pesky work involved. Magical dreaming isn't new to our generation but, with technology's explosion and the lightning pace of current culture, our desire for instant gratification has become desire for instant understanding.

The problem, of course, is they suggest we actually use only ten percent of our brain. Could it be we actually use 100% and over-estimate the amount actually usable?

Highly unlikely to be something we must see in the theaters.



**The Lincoln Lawyer** (R for violence, sexual content, language – Lionsgate) Sleazy criminal defense lawyer Mick Haller conducts business from the back of his Lincoln Town Car. He takes on a high-price murder case and is drawn into a world of evil and death. ([Watch the trailer.](#)) Matthew McConaughey, Marisa Tomei, Ryan Phillippe, William H. Macy, Josh Lucas.

Author Michael Connelly is one of the greatest pulp writers ever. With his punchy, intelligent mysteries, he was born to help us endure long waits in airport terminals. The previous attempt to adapt Connelly (*Blood Work* with Clint Eastwood) didn't go well, but while I wait for *The Poet* to make it to the big screen, I'm more than happy to consume this production.

McConaughey is probably a good choice for this role; the story is stock, but strong. I'd suggest waiting a few days to get a good look at the overall reviews before seeing it since this one could go either way. Expect sexuality, violence, and coarse language—it is a modern murder mystery.





## THEATRICAL RELEASES, continued



**Paul** (R for language, sexual references, drug use — Relativity) A couple of losers discover an alien in Area 51. ([Watch the trailer.](#)) Simon Pegg, Nick Frost, Mia Stallard, Jason Bateman, Jane Lynch, Seth Rogen.

*Paul* stars Simon Pegg and Nick Frost (*Shawn of the Dead*, *Hot Fuzz*). This may seem like a lighthearted comedy, but parents should be aware that the film is

Rated-R for a reason and includes sexual content and drug-use.

The film also sports a blatant anti-Christian stance, as pointed out by [Obsessed With Film](#):

The best and the worst, however, comes with the introduction of Bible-Belt babe Ruth Buggs (Kristen Wiig), who the trio liberate from her devout and overbearing father in a trailer park somewhere in the deep south. What she brings in the comedy stakes is a risqué series of attacks on Christianity that will be as unpopular among some sector of American audiences (Paul: “My existence doesn’t

necessarily disprove religion, just all Judaeo-Christian denominations.”) as it is popular among sci-fi fans and atheists (I challenge anyone not to laugh at the ‘Evolve this’ t-shirt).

*Also*

**Winter in Wartime** Dutch film; a 14-year-old boy joins the resistance against the Nazi invaders during WWII

**Cracks** Irish film; lives and relationships among girls at an elite British boarding school (contains nudity)

**Win Win** part-time wrestling coach discovers new, star high-school wrestler and hopes to cash in





## THEATRICAL RELEASES, continued

March 25



**Sucker Punch** (PG-13 for violence and language – Warner Bros.) A young girl named Baby Doll in a mental asylum is scheduled to undergo a lobotomy. She retreats into her imagination, along with other residents of the asylum, and plots an adventurous escape. ([Watch the movie trailer.](#)) Emily Browning, Abbie Cornish, Jena Malone, Jamie Chung, Jon Hamm, Scott Glenn, Carla Gugin.

Zack Snyder is a genius when it comes to design. His films *300* and *Watchmen* are rich, visual marvels, though *Watchmen* was a mishap when it came to storyline. Take a look at the trailer (above) and it's clear Snyder knows his strengths; he has stuck with delivering fantastic, arresting graphics to the screen.

**But** while this may seem an uber-cool, surreal flick, note the elephant in the room: the young age of the characters. The film is cast with a bevy of attractive, young actresses decked out in sleek, skimpy costumes designed to highlight their sexuality. Clips and stills from the film also emphasize the overt sexuality of the production. This may not seem

like much to modern audiences, but stop and think about this for a moment. There is a definite pedophilic vibe to the whole production—the lead character's name is Baby Doll for a reason. She is committed to the asylum by her wicked step-father and is described in all of the marketing material as being a “young girl.” The director, himself, referred to this film as “Alice in Wonderland with machine guns”—but Alice was not a woman, she was a young girl.

Why hasn't Snyder been held accountable, even questioned about his using underage female characters in an highly sexualized and violent film? How is the sensationalism of this production going to further erode morality within our culture—to the further detriment of what should be one of our society's greatest treasures: our young women?





## THEATRICAL RELEASES, continued



***The Lion of Judah*** (PG for slight adult material — Sunrise Productions) Animated flick about a lamb and his friends who try to avoid the sacrificial altar the week preceding the crucifixion of Christ. Ernest Borgnine, Michael Madsen, Georgina Cordova.

Seeing release in some theaters, but in spite of this distribution accomplishment the production images I've seen aren't comforting. Unfortunately it looks like a straight-to-video production that over-reached. If you're thinking of seeing this in the theaters, I strongly recommend you check it out online before going. Christian or not, you don't want to spend hard-earned money on something that isn't up to snuff. ([Movie website.](#))

*Also*

***Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodick Rules*** based on the popular children's book; PG for mild rude humor and mischief

***Bal*** Turkish film about a family's struggle for survival in the remote Turkish countryside

***The 5th Quarter*** docudrama; after his younger brother is killed in a car wreck, a Wake Forest football player leads his team to the best season they've ever had





# DVD RELEASES

March 15



**The Fighter** (R for language, drug content, violence, sexuality - Paramount Pictures) Boxer “Irish” Micky Ward’s struggle to go pro in the 1980s. ([Watch the trailer.](#)) Mark Wahlberg, Christian Bale, Melissa Leo, Amy Adams, Jack McGee.

With two Oscar wins, this is clearly a movie to see if you love great acting. Both Christian Bale and Melissa Leo walked away with Best Supporting Actor statues for their work backing up Mark Wahlberg.

A gritty drama loaded with adult content, but that doesn’t mean it isn’t worth seeing. For Christians, I think it’s good for us to see measured approaches to displays of sinful living. Drug use, sexuality, and violence should not be avoided in our art but, instead, should be handled with respect. This production contains some good examples of how to show the sin without cherishing it—to see sin and its impact on the soul of the sinner.



**Hereafter** (PG-13 for mature thematic elements, strong language – Warner Bros.) This is a movie about death. It hints at being about the afterlife but fails to deliver on the concept. Three stories display people dealing with the idea of death and the hereafter. Clint Eastwood has a boring streak in him that he lets loose every once in a while. This is one of those times. ([Watch the trailer.](#))

If you’re looking for Biblical substantiation of an afterlife, you need to look elsewhere. Also, with the recent destruction of Japan, the images of the great tsunami in this film may be a little haunting.

*Also*

**The Switch** unwed pregnancy and swapping sperm samples  
**Battle of the Warriors** Chinese film on tribal dominations in 370 B.C.

**A Shine of Rainbows** award-winning Irish film on the difficulties of assimilating an adopted boy into his new family





## DVD RELEASES, continued

March 22



**The Tourist** (PG-13 for violence and strong language - Sony Pictures) ([Watch the trailer.](#)) Angelina Jolie, Jonny Depp, Paul Bettany, Timothy Dalton and Rufus Sewell. This one was a tourist in the theaters—stopped in and moved on.

Was roundly cited as a bomb and was the target of jokes throughout the awards season. Host [Ricky Gervais](#) [mocked it](#) during the Golden Globes:

“I tell you what, I’m jumping on the bandwagon, because I haven’t even seen *The Tourist*. Who has? But it must be good because it’s nominated, so shut up, OK? And I’d like to crush this ridiculous rumor that the only reason *The Tourist* was nominated was so that the foreign press could hang out with Johnny Depp and Angelina Jolie. That was not the only reason; they also accepted bribes.”

Life is too short to sit through bad movies.



**Skyline** (PG-13 for intense action, violence, language, brief sexual content - Universal Pictures) Aliens invade Los Angeles and suck peoples brains out. They actually manage to make this tedious and boring. ([Watch the trailer.](#)) Eric Balfour, Donald Faison, Scottie Thompson.

CGI has glutted the market and become so overused we now have films sporting the latest and greatest technology but are no longer good enough to carry the day. It doesn’t matter if you have high-tech video and audio, flashy lights, and loud explosions—once the hocus-pocus fades, a film needs a story, a well structured story, in order for a movie to be worth sitting through.

*Also*

**How Do You Know?** billed as a romantic comedy

**Yogi Bear** based on the long-running cartoon





## DVD RELEASES, continued

March 29



**Tangled** (PG for brief mild violence - Walt Disney) Disney returns to its fairytale roots in this rework of the Rapunzel story. Full of clever animation with the Disney signature look. Added bonus is the non-irritating musical routines and some humor. A good pick for a date with your daughters. ([Watch the trailer.](#)) Mandy Moore, Zachary Levi, Brad Garrett, M C Gainey, Ron Perlman,

Donna Murphy. ([Read the review.](#))

I have a soft spot for this movie because it was the first movie I took my daughter to see in the theater. She is tiny for her age and I had to hold down her seat to keep it from closing up on her little body.



**Black Swan** (R for strong sexual content, disturbing violent images, language, drug use - Fox Searchlight Pictures) Director Darren Aronofsky can create touching and real moments that are riveting—seen throughout his film *The Wrestler*. On the flipside, he can revel in the ugly and wander too far into the darkness of humanity—seen throughout his film *Requiem for a Dream*. His current film about a ballet dancer who succumbs to evil is another of his yarns on human depravity. ([Watch the trailer.](#)) Natalie Portman, Mila Kunis, Vincent Cassel, Winona Ryder, Barbara Hershey.

Aronofsky is capable of capturing internal disorder on screen; he helped Ellen Burstyn capture a nomination for Best Actress for her portrayal of a mentally ill woman in *Dream*, and his lead in this film, Natalie Portman, won the same prize this year. While it is questionable that Portman

[continued pg 9](#)





## DVD RELEASES, continued

deserved the statue, it is unquestionable that Aronofsky has a gift for pulling the best performances from his actors.

This is a dark movie with plenty of hideous content that many people probably would be better for not seeing. Unless you're a film geek or really into overstated, stylized drama, you may want to skip this one.

### *Also*

***Fair Game*** docudrama/thriller on CIA operative Valerie Plame

***All Good Things*** love story/murder mystery loosely based on a true story

***Made in Dagenham*** docudrama on the 1968 strike over sexual discrimination at the Ford Dagenham car plant (interestingly released after Ford became the only auto manufacturer to not accept government monies)





## Culture Links

**[THE WEINSTEINS GET SUED FOR BEING TOO LOONEY TO MAKE A CARTOON](#)** While a very long document, the legal complaint [linked here](#) gives a stark look at the kind of unbelievable nonsense involved in making a movie.

The suit involves filmmakers who have been through the wringer with the Weinstein Brothers over the creation of an animated movie. It is reported that the Weinstein's offered money to keep the suit from moving forward until after the Oscars so voting for *The King's Speech* wouldn't be impacted.

**[UN PUSHES FOR MORE GLOBAL WARMING PROPAGANDA IN THE MOVIES](#)** Why be slowed down by an international scandal which proved manmade Global Warming is a lie?

“...the beleaguered multi-national agency, fresh from a disappointing round of climate negotiations in Cancun, wants something more concrete: actual storylines in movies, television and social media drawing attention to the dangers of global warming.”

Cancun.... Hmm.

Always assume Hollywood movies are being used to promote propaganda and to change how you think about your world.

**[YOUR EDITING LACKS CONTINUITY HERE IS A FUN LITTLE VIDEO WHICH PLAYS OFF OUR NEED FOR CONTINUITY IN FILM EDITING. MILD LANGUAGE WARNING.](#)**

There are whole websites dedicated to finding continuity mistakes and other flubs, such as <http://www.moviemistakes.com/>.

Spotting errors is actually a fun pastime if you're stuck watching a lousy movie.





## Culture Quote

**Note how Mr. Mayer “welds together” the importance of “cultural and spiritual influence in entertainment of popular appeal.” Wouldn’t it be a great revolution to return to this way of thinking!**

**Louis B. Mayer :** It is a very real pleasure to join with you tonight in welcoming another *Good News* season. I find particular significance in tonight’s reunion with you since this also marks the opening of motion pictures’ greatest year—a season pledged for the achievement of the finest entertainment in the world of dramatic arts for the further fulfillment of the ideals and ambitions for which the screen has strived. Radio and screen are joined together in this common bond of reaching for higher standards in entertainment. Their aims are mutual, their efforts welded toward a greater appreciation of cultural and spiritual influence in entertainment of popular appeal.

In the motion picture *Boys Town*, which Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer offers as one of its first contributions to this season, we find combined inspirational and entertainment qualities. *Boys Town* is vastly more than a motion picture story; it is a dramatization of the life of a great human being—his dream of establishing a sanctuary where boys, adrift in the tenderest years of life, might grow to manhood free of the temptations of the streets. Since first founded in Omaha, Nebraska, twenty-one years ago, Boys Town has sent more than 4000 good citizens, God-fearing, honest men, out into the world. The realization of the dreams of a young Irish priest who believed as he believes now, that there is no bad boy. *Boys Town* pictures the lives of all these boys. It is the story of the good priest, the discouragements, tragedies, [unintelligible] ... found as he toiled that these friendless, abandoned boys might be saved. From its humble beginnings in a ramshackle rooming house, Boys Town has grown through these years into the wonderful institution it is today—a city of Little Men and a magnificent inspiration to all mankind.

— Recorded in 1938 during a CBS Radio live presentation. Transcribed from the Special Features section of the *Boys Town* DVD.





## Movie Watching Tip

# Scene Design

The villain lives in a dark, creepy abode. It's common for the villain's lair to be an abandoned house, a mysterious, dimly lit penthouse office, a dark apartment with the shades drawn, or a dank laboratory. This kind of environment is so commonplace for the villain that we hardly give it a second thought. His lair is an extension of his soul—a dark, haunting hole.



Other environments also show us the condition of the characters on screen. Travis, at the opening of *Paris, Texas*, wanders in a desert, alone in the world, barren of human contact—a soul without sustenance.

The recruits of Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* struggle through boot camp in sterile, symmetrical barracks and featureless obstacle courses. They are all the same, all being made into cookie-cutter soldiers. By the end of the film, in Vietnam, their environment drastically changes. Like the landscape of shattered concrete, spewing fires, and snarled iron, each man is broken apart and the once clean recruits have become jaded killers.



A director and his designers don't simply choose where the actors stand and the camera points. They make decisions regarding what the on-screen world will be. Their choices intentionally reflect what occurs within the story and within the characters—and what they want you to experience.

Be aware of how their deliberate setting of each scene, each mood, each change in character is intended to affect your perception of not only what is on screen but of life.





# At Rest

[Daniel 12:13](#)

Frank Alesia (1944-2011)

Actor/Director



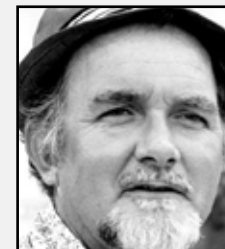
A character actor from the 1960s who was seen in such films as *Bikini Beach* (1964), *Pajama Party* (1964), *Beach Blanket Bingo* (1965), and *The Ghost in the Invisible Bikini* (1966), Alesia was also a common presence on television (*Bewitched*, *The Odd Couple*, and *Laverne & Shirley*). He

later moved to directing the kids show *Captain Kangaroo* (a personal favorite of mine as a kid) and was nominated for a daytime Emmy in 1979.

Charles Jarrott (1927–2011)

Director

Following service in the Royal Navy during World War II, Jarrott became a noted director of British television and film. He directed over 40 productions including *Anne of the Thousand Days* (1969), *Mary, Queen of Scots* (1971), and *The Amateur* (1981).





# Information

Learn more about Story. Buy the book: [YouAreWhatYouSee.com](http://YouAreWhatYouSee.com).

Find Scott Nehring's latest film reviews: [GoodNewsFilmReviews.com](http://GoodNewsFilmReviews.com).

Scott is a film critic whose reviews have been published on a number of websites across the United States, Australia, and India including Reuters.com, USAToday.com, *The Chicago Times*, FoxNews.com, and a variety of local news stations across America.



As a former screenwriter, Scott is focused on balancing his love of story structure and cinema with his Christian faith. He loves to teach film studies to Christians, showing them how to read films and how to deal with the sometimes thorny subject of engaging modern culture.

Scott was a co-founder of the [Catholic Media Review](http://CatholicMediaReview.com). His current reviews can be found at [Good News Film Reviews](http://GoodNewsFilmReviews.com) and at [ChristianCinema.com](http://ChristianCinema.com).

Good News Film Reviews (GNFR) was established in June 2007 to discuss film and culture from a Christian perspective. From the first post onward, Scott has called for Christians to change both the way they view film and how they engage in culture. GNFR fell quiet following a short sabbatical, was re-launched in January 2008, and has been going strong since. GNFR is also home site for the Carnival of Cinema, a bi-weekly collection of film-related posts submitted from around the world. The Carnival of Cinema has been in operation since September 2006.



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