



THE PURITAN POST

A Movie & TV Blog

| by Hank W. Mardukas |

NOW STREAMING

***Just Mercy* (2019)**

In response to the killing of George Floyd, Warner Bros. has made *Just Mercy* available for free on nearly every streaming platform imaginable to help educate the public about systematic racism. The movie, directed by Destin Daniel Cretton (*Short Term 12*), is the true story about a young defense attorney, Bryan Stevenson (Michael B. Jordan) who travels to Alabama to represent death row inmates who can't afford legal help. The story centers on one particular client of his, Walter "Johnny D." McMillan (Jamie Foxx), a Black man wrongfully accused of murdering a white woman. Stevenson discovers that the case hinges on a dubious testimony of a convicted felon (Tim Blake Nelson), and takes the case all the way to the Alabama Supreme Court. *Just Mercy* is a stirring, heartbreaking, but ultimately uplifting film about the innate good in humans and our ability to triumph over evil. It is a classic legal film, naturally evoking a spirit the likes of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Jamie Foxx is astounding as always as the lovable Johnny D and continues his work as one of the most versatile and transformative actors working today. The film really stands out as a big step forward in the career of Michael B. Jordan, who delivers a career performance. As does Tim Blake Nelson as well as Brie Larson, who continues to do her best work under the direction of Cretton. *Just Mercy* is an important and timely film that everyone should see and is free to stream nearly everywhere.

Director Spotlight: Ava Duvernay



Birth: 8/24/72 Long Beach, CA

Notable Works: *I Will Follow*, *Middle of Nowhere*, *Selma*, *13th*, *A Wrinkle in Time*

Fun Facts: In 2012, she became the first African American woman to win the Best Director award at Sundance for *Middle of Nowhere*.

- Worked as a publicist before directing her first feature at 39.
- With *Selma*, she became the first African American female director to be nominated for the Golden Globe award for Best Director.

10 MOVIES by BLACK FILMMAKERS That are NOW AVAILABLE to STREAM

The past few weeks in America have been some of the most devastating in its history. While I am but a transplant Canadian, I wanted to address the matter briefly. It goes without saying that myself and everyone at both THE PURITAN POST and PURITAN PICTURES condemn racism and hatred in all forms. We hope and pray for peace in our nation, justice for the victims, equality for all, and that terrible atrocities like police brutality may be forever abolished. That said, this is also a movie and TV blog; thus I wanted to recognize and honor ten incredible pieces of cinema from a fantastic group of African American filmmakers that are now streaming.

CREED II (2018) directed by STEVEN CAPLE JR. | Hulu

If you're a fan of *Rocky IV*, *Creed II* is a must see for its *Creed/Drago* rematch. But even more casual *Rocky/Creed* fans can appreciate this stellar Michael B. Jordan led chapter of one of cinema's most longstanding sagas.

SORRY TO BOTHER YOU (2018) directed by BOOTS RILEY | Hulu

The Gold Medal winner of our 1st annual HANKS. I adore this movie, and personally find it to be one of the most profoundly original films of the last decade. And one that also has an important socioeconomic message.

US (2019) directed by JORDAN PEELE | HBO

I gave *US* a lukewarm review in Issue No. 32, but Prudence and I recently rewatched it and it's only gotten better for me. Not only have I grown a new appreciation for it, but it almost surpasses Peele's *Get Out* for me.

13th (2016) directed by AVA DUVERNAY | Netflix

This doc, an important, startling and highly informative look at America's prison system and its horrifying roots in racial inequality, was nominated for the Best Documentary Oscar in 2017, and honestly, should have won.

MOONLIGHT (2016) directed by BARRY JENKINS | Netflix

Speaking of 2017, *Moonlight*, a poignant, gorgeously shot movie about three chapters in the life of a man struggling with his sexuality, won Best Picture that year. Mahershala Ali won as well for his stellar performance.

INSIDE MAN (2006) directed by SPIKE LEE | Netflix

My second favorite Spike Lee flick, and certainly his most commercial, *Inside Man* is an intense, satisfyingly twisty thriller with an all star cast led by Denzel Washington about a heist turned hostage situation.

MALCOLM X (1992) directed by SPIKE LEE | Netflix

Without a doubt my favorite biopic ever made and a true cinematic epic. Lee's attention to detail in this film is next level from the costuming to the legendary and profoundly accurate performance by Denzel Washington.

FRUITVALE STATION (2013) directed by RYAN COOGLER | Roku & Tubi

A devastating and remarkable debut from Ryan Coogler about the events leading to the death of Oscar Grant, who was tragically killed by a police officer in Oakland. A beautifully shot, acted and directed must-see film.

FRIDAY (1995) directed by F. Gary Gray | USA

One of the best comedies ever and another inspiring debut from the great F. Gary Gray who was only 26 at the time. A movie that revolutionized both stoner movies and Black comedies and Ice Cube's writing/producing debut.

BOYZ n THE HOOD (1991) directed by JOHN SINGLETON | Showtime

An all time classic, *Boyz n the Hood* is an immense achievement made more historic by John Singleton becoming both the youngest person ever (24) and the first African American to be nominated for the Best Director Oscar.

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