

On The Shelves

By **Brittanie Roberts**

It is a custom in my family to view certain films at specific times during the year. For example, saved for July 4 are *Die Hard 4: Live Free or Die Hard* and *Independence Day*. *He's Just not That Into You* and Jane Austen films are saved for Valentine's day. *A Christmas Story* and *Die Hard* are saved for Christmas (and a new addition to our Christmas list, *Fatman*, starting 2021). For this particular time of year, where summer is tapering off and fall is coming full swing, there is a trio of films that perfectly set the tone for the upcoming months. Moreover, they all happen to highlight the horrors of suburban living. Thankfully, this is one of those abstract horrors that exists "out there", beyond the borders of our town; hence, the title.

So, if you would like some seasonally appropriate entertainment, read on fearless reader as I give you my review of a trio of movies you are sure to want to check out from our Vernonia Public Library.

The Suburban Hell Trifecta

The 'Burbs starring Tom Hanks, Carrie Fisher, Rick Ducommun, Bruce Dern, and Corey Feldman (1989): An end of the '80s send-off, this dark comedy pokes fun at suburban environments and exaggerates their sometimes eccentric dwellers. This film follows Ray Peterson, played by Tom Hanks, and his odd neighbors as they try to determine if the *new* neighbors are responsible for the disappearance of the grumpy old man down the block. After all, the new neighbors

are strange, to be sure! They never come out during the day, they have yet to introduce themselves to the cul-de-sac, and Ray and Art have seen someone peering out from the curtains! While Ray's wife insists there is nothing wrong with the new neighbors wanting their privacy, Ray and the rest of the gang are appalled! After all, who wouldn't want to get to know this window-peeking, binocular spying, fence-climbing, noisy and intrusive group! *The 'Burbs* brings hilarity and over-the-top antics to what is supposed to be a run-of-the-mill, vanilla suburb. Don't be afraid to watch this film with children, as it manages to pack fun and frights in without breaking a PG rating.

Disturbia starring Shia LaBeouf and David Morse (2007): This film highlights Shia LaBeouf's abilities as a young star. It also does a swell job of taking the average and mundane and making them suspenseful and sinister. This film's pace was much inspired by Hitchcock's film, *Rear Window*, and given the premise of the film, does an excellent job keeping the viewer on the edge of their seat despite the majority of the film occurring in a single setting; the protagonist's house. *Disturbia* follows high school student Kale Brecht (LaBeouf) who becomes somewhat detached and troubled following the death of his father. After assaulting a teacher at school, he is placed on house arrest for the duration of summer break, with the promise of juvenile detention if he breaks the conditions. Kale quickly learns that being confined to your

own home for months on end is not the vacation he thought it would be, and begins taking note of his neighbor's comings and goings to entertain himself. A bright spot occurs when a new neighbor moves in next door, a young female Kale's age. An unlikely friendship starts and Kale shares his observations of the neighborhood with Ashley (Sarah Roemer). There is one neighbor, however, that Kale cannot seem to figure out. And it's really killing him...

Suburbicon starring Matt Damon, Julianne Moore, and Noah Jupe (2017): *Suburbicon* is certainly the darkest film in this trio, and contains much more mature content than *The 'Burbs* or *Disturbia*. Nevertheless, it is an intriguing film to watch, and while nothing is laugh-out-loud funny or chuckle inducing, it has numerous bouts of irony, contains many examples of humor found in cringe worthy situations, and is a perfect example of surreal humor, giving a very nightmarish feel to the film's progress. Overall, I still very much enjoy the film and am impressed with the storyline and the surprise ending.

The film stars Matt Damon as Gardener Lodge, a mild-mannered father with a wheelchair confined wife, and young son living in a quaint 1959 suburb. The Lodges endure a home invasion that results in the death of Gardener's wife, Rose (played by Moore). Friction takes place in the home when Rose's sister moves in to help with Nicky, the son (Noah Jupe). The sister appears to be a replacement for Nicky's dead mother as

she begins wearing Rose's clothes, bleaching her hair like Rose, and sharing Gardner's bed. All of this occurs amidst racial tensions rising after an African American family moves in to the previously all-white neighborhood, just across the street from the Lodges. I have never seen Matt Damon so unlikable, yet intriguing, and Julianne Moore pulls off a double whammy as her own twin. The story is suspenseful, intricate, and original, and the different threads that may or may not intertwine make for one heck of a guessing game of how this film will end.

Don't try and watch one of these films alone; they are a trio of fun and thrills, and should be binge watched together. You can watch them in any order, chronologically by release date (*The 'Burbs*, *Disturbia*, *Suburbicon*), or chronologically by the time-period in the film (*Suburbicon*, *The 'Burbs*, *Disturbia*), it won't matter, so long as you make a night (or three) of it! So once again, don't miss your chance to catch the Suburban Hell Trifecta here at our Vernonia Public Library, and be grateful we live far from the horrors of suburbia.

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Senator Johnson Announces Run for Governor *continued from front page*

Capital Construction. She has been an outspoken critic of the management at the Oregon Department of Forestry, current Governor Kate Brown in general, and more recently of Democratic House Speaker Tina Kotek's handling of the redistricting process; Kotek has also announced her plans to run for Governor next year.

"I will be a no-nonsense leader with the backbone and life experience to tame the partisan excesses and with the humility to know that delivering results matters more than who gets credit," wrote Johnson in her announcement. "As Governor, I will force the two parties to work together to put Oregon ahead of narrow partisan politics."

As an unaffiliated candidate, Johnson will avoid the primary election in May, and will need to collect just 23,750 valid signatures to place her name on the November 2022 ballot.

She will also be required by law to give up her Democratic Party registration. "Rest assured, my bedrock values will not change," she wrote. "I was raised in a moderate Republican family and became a Democrat because the Republican Party had moved too far to the right. For twenty years, I've been an independent-minded, pro-choice, pro-jobs Democrat proudly serving the people of

Northwest Oregon. This is who I am."


Johnson, who lives in Scappoose, is a licensed commercial pilot, who operates Transwestern Aviation, Inc, which is managed by her husband, John Helm. She earned an undergraduate degree in History from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, and a law degree from Lewis and Clark College in Portland. Her father, the late Sam Johnson, served in the Oregon House as a Representative from Redmond.

Johnson joins what is certainly shaping up to be one of the most interesting races for Governor in recent Oregon history. With current Governor Kate Brown's contentious rule coming to an end due to term limits, the race is wide open and already growing crowded. On the Democratic side, Yamhill County Commissioner Casey Kulla and State Treasurer Tobias Read, along with Kotek and six others have all announced their candidacy. Former *New York Times* columnist, Yamhill resident, and author of the book *Tighrope*, Nicholas Kristof announced last week he has formed an Exploratory Committee for the Democratic nomination. Other prominent names considering a run on the Democratic ticket are current Multnomah County Commissioner Chair Deborah Kafoury, Oregon Attorney General El-

len Rosenblum, and Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler. For the Republicans, former nominee Bud Pierce of Salem and City of Sandy Mayor Stan Pulliam are among 14 candidates who have all announced they will seek the state's highest office.

Johnson hitched her campaign to another former dark horse candidate for Oregon Governor in making her announcement. "Governor Tom McCall,

in his first inaugural address, urged Oregonians to 'put aside the temptations to be guided by regionalism, factionalism, or anything which fragments the public interest.' Tom McCall was a maverick Governor the likes of which we have not seen since. I believe we need leadership that reaches beyond partisan labels and geographic boundaries and that unites Oregonians around our shared values."



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