

Arts & Entertainment

Kam's Kapsules: Movies Opening Friday, April 6

BIG BUDGET FILMS

Blockers (R for crude humor, pervasive profanity, graphic sexuality, drug use, partying and frontal nudity) Prom night comedy revolving around three parents (John Cena, Leslie Mann and Ike Barinholtz) who join forces to thwart their daughters' (Geraldine Viswanathan, Kathryn Newton and Gideon Adlon) plan to lose their virginity. With Ramona Young, Miles Robbins and Graham Phillips.

Chappaquiddick (PG-13 for smoking, profanity, mature themes and disturbing images) Historical docudrama recounting Ted Kennedy's (Jason Clarke) summer of '69 car accident that claimed the life of 28 year-old, campaign worker Mary Jo Kopechne (Kate Mara). Featuring Andria Blackman as Joan Kennedy, Clancy Brown as Robert McNamara, and Taylor Nichols as Ted Sorensen.

The Miracle Season (PG for mature themes) Inspirational true tale about a girls' high school volleyball team that tri-



Kam Williams
Kam's Kapsules Movie Reviews

umphed in spite of the tragic death of its star player (Danika Yarosh) in a moped accident. With Erin Moriarty and Oscar-winners Helen Hunt (for "As Good as It Gets") and William Hurt (for "Kiss of the Spider Woman").

A Quiet Place (PG-13 for terror and bloody images) Haunted house horror flick about a family that finds itself hunted by mysterious creatures who use sound to locate their prey. Cast includes Emily Blunt, John Krasinski, Millicent Simmonds and Noah Jupe.

INDEPENDENT & FOREIGN FILMS

ACORN and the Firestorm (Unrated) Investigative post-mortem deconstructing how the country's largest anti-poverty organiza-



'ACORN and the Firestorm'

tion was defunded after the airing of an embarrassing, hidden-camera video shot by a couple of right-wing activists posing as a pimp and prostitute seeking advice about tax evasion and child smuggling.

The Heart of Nuba (Unrated) Reverential biopic about Dr. Tom Catena, the selfless American physician who, for the past decade, has been the only surgeon available to a million people living in the wart-torn Nuba Mountains of southern Sudan.

Lean on Pete (R for profanity and brief violence) Coming-of-age drama, set in Portland, about the bond forged

between a 15-year-old stable boy (Charlie Plummer) and a retired racehorse slated for slaughter. With Steve Buscemi, Steve Zahn, Travis Fimmel and Chloe Sevigny.

Spinning Man (R for profanity and sexual references) Pierce Brosnan plays the title character in this whodunit about a philandering philosophy professor suspected of foul play after a student (Odeya Rush) he's sleeping with disappears without a trace. With Jamie Kennedy, Minnie Driver, Alexandra Shipp and Guy Pearce.

Spiral (Unrated) An eye-opening documentary chronicling the recent rise of anti-Semitism in France.

Where Is Kyra? (Unrated) Michelle Pfeiffer plays the title character in this NYC saga as an unemployed woman whose life spirals out of control after the death of the mother (Suzanne Shepherd) she'd become financially dependent on. With Kiefer Sutherland, Babs Olusanmokin and Sam Robards.

Film Review: Gamers Search for Easter Egg in 'Ready Player One'



Wade (Tye Sheridan) and Aech (Lena Waithe) in 'Ready Player one'

by Kam Williams
For The Skanner News

It is 2045, a time when the planet has devolved into a desolate dystopia marked by a combination of pollution, overpopulation, poverty, corruption and global warming. Most of humanity lives in slums where they escape the misery by disappearing via virtual reality into the Oasis, a popular parallel universe co-created by James Halliday (Mark Rylance) and Ogden Morrow (Simon Pegg).

The characters were ostensibly inspired by Apple co-founders Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, since the former seized the reins of the company after the latter sold his stock citing concerns about its direction. Here, we have Halliday in control of Oasis and a skeptical Morrow no longer associated with the firm. The picture's point of departure is an unrecognizable Columbus, Ohio, a now devastated metropolis whose skyline has been reduced to a vast wasteland of vertical "stacks," mobile homes piled high atop one another.

That's where we find

Wade Watts (Tye Sheridan), an orphaned teen taken in by his Aunt Alice (Susan Lynch).

Wade's a gamer who goes by the avatar Parzival whenever he's online. His best friend is Aech (Lena Waithe), though they've never actually met. That's apparently par for the course, since everyone prefers escaping into the Oasis to facing the post-apocalyptic squalor that is reality.

A glimmer of hope arrives in the will left behind by the recently-deceased Halliday. By way of video, he announces a treasure hunt for an Easter egg hidden in the Oasis. The finder will not only be awarded control of his company but stands to inherit half a trillion dollars to boot.

So, Wade forms the High Five, a rag-tag team composed of himself, Aech, Art3mis (Olivia Cooke) and geeky siblings Sho (Philip Zhao) and Daito (Win Morisaki). Sure, millions of other "Gunters" (egg hunters) join in the search, but their chief competition is a video game conglomerate run by the maniacal Nolan Sorrento (Ben Mendelsohn). Given the mammoth army of indentured players at his disposal, it's hard to see how the High Five might prevail.

Not to worry. You can always trust Steven Spielberg to work his movie magic. And, after establishing that implausible premise, "Ready Player One" takes off at a dizzying pace, with the legendary director even carving out space for a little romance.

You see, Wade has a big cyber crush on Art3mis, even though he has no idea what she looks like in real life. Can the High Five find the Easter egg first? Far be it from me to spoil this thrill-a-minute, virtual reality roller coaster ride riddled with allusions to pop culture and classic computer games. Vintage Spielberg!

Excellent ★★★★★
Rated PG-13

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