

By Adam Thomlison
TV Media

Q: Why isn't Richard Moll still doing things? He was always the best part of "Night Court," so I assumed he'd be getting roles forever.

A: Well, you weren't wrong. It's just the type of roles that have been giving him a profile problem.

Richard Moll was a fan favorite as Bull Shannon in all nine seasons of "Night Court." The always-serious but good-hearted Bull was never a lead character, but he often got the best lines.

That sort of role in a smash-hit sitcom can be an actor's blessing and curse. It gave Moll a very high profile but left him typecast as a gentle giant (though his combined six-foot-eight frame and infectious smile didn't help matters).

That's all an explanation for why he never quite reached, let alone beat, his "Night Court" fame again. However, that's not to say he hasn't been busy.

He's been taking supporting roles pretty steadily since then, so that today he has a whopping 173 different films and TV shows on his resume.

They've mostly been comedies — such as notable turns in 1996's "Jingle All the Way" and the cult-favorite 1999 indie film "But I'm a Cheerleader" — but he's also kept up a sideline in horror cinema.

Some of his best roles have been in places where the two genres meet, including big-screen hits "Scary Movie 2" (2001) and "House" (1985). That also describes his most recent role, in last year's schlocky, Christmas-themed horror comedy "Slay Belles."

That's not to say Moll hasn't tried to stretch his legs, so to speak — they haven't all been imposing characters that played on his size. In the aforementioned "But I'm a Cheerleader" he played an activist rescuing gay teens from a conversion camp, and in 2003's "Cats and Mice" he played a cross-dressing brothel owner. He's even gone the heartwarming route as

Big Jim in "Thomas Kinkadee's Christmas Cottage" (2008).

In an interview with People magazine back in 2003, Moll summed up his approach to working as an actor: "The more work the better, as far as I'm concerned."

Q: When will the History Channel reshoot "Vanished," the movie about strange disappearances in the national parks?

A: It has no plans to yet, but that's not to say it won't. And what is "Vanished" about if not choosing to believe?

"Vanished" is a feature-length special starring David Paulides, who was already known to History viewers as one of the talking heads in its hit series "Ancient Aliens."

I don't want to give away the ending, so I'll just say that the documentary also comes to a pretty otherworldly explanation for a number of disappearances from American national parks.

It aired just twice on the U.S. History Channel, on Jan. 5 and then again the next night. However, that "U.S." bit I put in there gives reason for hope.

The Canadian version of History (which has different ownership but keeps the same branding and many of the same programs) has shown a bit more faith in the special, airing it multiple times between January and March on the main channel and its spinoff channel, H2.

Furthermore, the fact that he had already appeared in "Ancient Aliens" suggests there's a chance, at least, that both History channels may want to stay in the David Paulides business. Also, the special was made by Prometheus Entertainment, the company behind "Ancient Aliens" and fellow History hit "The Curse of Oak Island."

In the meantime, all I can say is keep watching the listings — for when History watches the skies.

Have a question? Email us at questions@tvtabloid.com. Please include your name and town. Personal replies will not be provided.

▶ STREAMING THIS WEEK



The cast of "The Chosen One"

By Jacqueline Spendlove
TV Media

NEW ON NETFLIX:

"The Chosen One" ("O Escolhido")

This Brazilian thriller follows three young doctors who travel to the Pantanal, a sprawling tropical wetland in Brazil, to provide vaccinations against a new mutation of the Zika virus. The job is no easy one, however, as the residents of the secluded community they're working in reject modern medicine, putting their faith instead in an enigmatic healer who has a supernatural ability to cure disease. Secrets and mysteries unravel for the newcomers as "The Chosen One" (Renan Tenca, "3%") and his fervent devotees force them to entertain a power beyond their scientific understanding. The series premieres Friday, June 28.

"Mike Epps: Only One Mike"

Netflix's latest standup special drops Tuesday, June 25, and shines a spotlight on Mike Epps, the irreverent and inappropriate comedian known for roles in "Next Friday" (2000) and "Friday After Next" (2002), "The Hangover" (2009) and the short-lived "Uncle Buck" TV series. The no-holds-barred show comes from Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C., as Epps riffs on his childhood dyslexia, the highs and lows of raising four daughters, the wisdom of the elderly and more.

"Dope" Season 3

The new season of this insightful docuseries streams Friday, June 28. The show gives a frank look at the war on drugs in America and beyond, providing a view from both sides of the drug trade, from the perspectives of dealers, law enforcement officials and the users and addicts caught in the middle. Past episodes have looked at the heroin epidemic in Baltimore, the influx of drugs being smuggled in from the Caribbean, meth addiction in Indiana and more. Each episode delivers first-hand accounts and interviews from those involved in the trade: new and longtime users, high-profile and small-time drug dealers speaking from behind masks, and cops fighting a never-ending battle to keep the problem at bay.

"Motown Magic" Season 2

This animated series brings the sounds of Motown to life for a young audience. Executive produced by Motown legend Smokey Robinson, the family-friendly series follows Ben, an imaginative boy who uses his magic paintbrush to bring his neighborhood's colorful street art to life. Creator Josh Wakely acquired worldwide rights for Motown music to feature in the series, and each episode is backed by hits from Michael Jackson, The Jackson 5, The Temptations, Stevie Wonder, The Supremes and more as Ben and his pals have adventures and learn life lessons. The second season is available Friday, June 28.

NEW ON AMAZON PRIME:

"The Spy Who Dumped Me" (2018)

"Saturday Night Live" darling Kate McKinnon and Mila Kunis ("That '70s Show") make up a winning team for this action/comedy spy

spoof. They star as best friends who get wrapped up in a bullet-riddled chase across Europe after Audrey (Kunis) gets dumped by her boyfriend (Justin Theroux, "The Leftovers"), who, unbeknownst to her, is a CIA agent. Car chases, knife fights and shootouts abound as the girls flee pursuers across Europe's finest cities, from Vienna to Prague to Amsterdam to Berlin. The flick won Favorite Comedy Movie at last year's People's Choice Awards and the leads' performances have earned positive words from critics. You can stream it Friday, June 28.

"True Grit" (2010)

Some big names are attached to this Coen brothers Western, which streams Saturday, June 29. Besides being executive produced by Steven Spielberg, it counts Jeff Bridges ("The Big Lebowski," 1998), Matt Damon ("The Martian," 2015) and Josh Brolin ("No Country for Old Men," 2007) among its stars, as well as an absurdly talented Hailee Steinfeld ("The Edge of Seventeen," 2016) who, at 13 years old, was chosen from 15,000 other hopefuls gunning for the key role of Mattie Ross. The frontier tale follows the gutsy young Mattie as she and boozy lawman Rooster Cogburn (Bridges) set out to track down the man who murdered her father. The film was nominated for heaps of awards, including 10 Oscars, and though it didn't take any of those home in the end, it definitely warrants a watch and a rewatch.

NEW ON HULU:

"Juliet, Naked" (2018)

This charming romcom is based on the novel of the same name by Nicholas Hornby, the same writer responsible for books-turned-movies "High Fidelity" (2000), "About a Boy" (2002) and "Fever Pitch" (2005). Rose Byrne ("Spy," 2015) stars as Annie, a woman in an unhappy relationship with Duncan, played by Chris O'Dowd ("Bridesmaids," 2011). She finds herself drawn into an unlikely romance with Tucker Crowe (Ethan Hawke, "Training Day," 2001), an obscure American musician of whom Duncan is an ardent fan, after she posts a negative review of one of his albums, impressing him with her honesty. The movie is an easy summer watch with a great cast, and you can stream it Monday, June 24.

"Diane" (2018)

This drama did well for itself at its world premiere at last year's Tribeca Film Festival, where it won Best Cinematography, Best Narrative Feature and Best Screenplay. Mary Kay Place ("Being John Malkovich," 1999) plays the titular Diane, a woman in her 70s with not much going on in her life beyond taking care of others. When she's not feeding the needy at the local soup kitchen, she's playing cards with her terminally ill cousin (Deirdre O'Connell, "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," 2004) or checking in on her opioid-addicted son (Jake Lacy, "I'm Dying Up Here"), who just wants her out of his hair. It's a sad but moving look at an everywoman trying to avoid facing the memories of her past, and Place shines in the role. You can watch it Saturday, June 29.



Kate McKinnon and Mila Kunis in a scene from "The Spy Who Dumped Me"