

hollywood q&a

By Adam Thomlison
TV Media

Q: I recently watched the first Austin Powers movie on Netflix for the first time in years. Throughout those years I kept a steady watch of "Seinfeld" reruns. While watching the Austin Powers movie, I noticed several actors who played small roles on "Seinfeld" (the Soup Nazi, the Wig Master, and one or two others). Is there any connection between the two?

A: There seems to be no direct link between "Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery" (1997) and "Seinfeld," other than a shared need for a huge number of funny people for small roles, and the budget to get good ones. That and the North American comedy community, which is sometimes smaller than you think.

By all reports, star Mike Myers was directly involved in many of the casting decisions for "Austin Powers," the smash-hit film that he starred in, wrote and co-produced.

For example, Larry Thomas, who played the Soup Nazi in a 1995 episode of "Seinfeld," said that Myers approached him directly for the role of a casino dealer in "Austin Powers," after having seen his "Seinfeld" bit.

Brian George, who played Babu in "Seinfeld" and the Secretary General of the United Nations in "Austin Powers," has shared no such story of being approached by Myers, but they share a different, geographic link: Both of them came up in the Toronto comedy scene, specifically in the famed Second City comedy troupe there.

It was a different comedy troupe that brought Myers together with Patrick Bristow, who played the Wig Master in "Seinfeld." Myers did a guest appearance in a show put on by the Groundlings troupe in Los Angeles, which Bristow was a part of at the time. Myers soon called Bristow to do a part in another of his movies, "So I Married an Axe Murderer" (1993), and then called again for "Austin Powers."

As for the Bristow's "Seinfeld" link, it's even simpler: "Seinfeld" frequently cast Groundlings members when it needed to fill small but crucial comedic parts, which it needed to do often over its nine seasons.

Q: Were the Rambo movies based on books? I just saw an ebook copy of the second one, but I thought they were just movies.

A: Yes and no. The first one was based on a novel, the others were not. However, you weren't hallucinating that ebook of the sequel. Confused yet?

Author David Morrell wrote the novel "First Blood" in 1972, and 10 years later it was turned into the movie that introduced John Rambo to the movie-going world.

The film was a huge success, and star Sylvester Stallone immediately started working on a sequel. He wrote the screenplay himself, with help from fellow Hollywood hitmaker James Cameron. However, he called Morrell in to write a novelization of his script — a book based on a movie, instead of the other way around.

Morrell repeated the trick for "Rambo III," which was released (film and book) in 1988.

Morrell didn't adapt the fourth film, simply titled "Rambo" and released in 2008, nor the fifth (and reportedly final) film in the franchise, "Rambo: Last Blood," due for release in September.

However, if you're hungry for more Rambo on the page, Morrell wrote a memoir of sorts called "Rambo and Me," in which he recounts the influences and process behind the creation of his famous hero.

And if you've developed a taste for Morrell's voice, he's written many other novels over the years, which can be found on his website, davidmorrell.net.

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

STREAMING THIS WEEK



Finn Wolfhard and Caleb McLaughlin in "Stranger Things"

By Shona Dustan
TV Media

NEW ON NETFLIX:

"Stranger Things" Season 3

Reunited and ready for anything, the "Stranger Things" kids are back for more horror, comedy, sincerity, horror, friendship, romance and horror. Did I mention horror? The terrifying Upside Down has more surprises for our heroes this season, and while they deal with the normal struggles of growing up, small-town life, budding relationships and more, they must also face terrifying demons from another dimension. Now that I've adequately primed you for the horror bits, I can also tell you to expect a lot of touching and hilarious moments. Showrunners have promised to give us more of the charming friendship that has developed between Dustin (Gaten Matarazzo, "The Blacklist") and Steve (Joe Keery, "Chicago Fire"), while Max (Sadie Sink, "American Odyssey") and Eleven (Millie Bobby Brown, "Intruders") begin to bond as the only two girls in their group of friends. We're in for another wild ride when the much-anticipated third season of this fantastic Netflix original premieres Thursday, July 4.

"Madam Secretary" Season 5

Back in May, CBS announced that Season 6 of this legal drama, premiering this fall, would be its last, but you can binge the penultimate season (and all that came before it) starting Sunday, June 30. The series stars Téa Leoni ("The Family Man," 2000) as Elizabeth McCord, a former CIA analyst who is thrust into the role of secretary of state when her predecessor is killed in a plane crash. She's been through a lot since Season 1, enduring and resolving crises both at home and around the world, but this season finds Elizabeth at a crossroads. The season finale is a game-changer, and an exciting setup for the final 10 episodes that will air later this year. Tim Daly ("Wings") also stars as Elizabeth's long-suffering husband, who also happens to be the head of a special division of the CIA. Rounding out the cast are Patina Miller ("Mercy Street"), Zeljko Ivanek ("Damages"), Geoffrey Arend ("Body of Proof"), Erich Bergen ("Jersey Boys," 2014) and Keith Carradine ("Deadwood").

NEW ON AMAZON PRIME:

"Rocky" (I-V)

If you're craving action, suspense, an underdog story, a love story, Oscar-caliber performances or just a quality 1980s training montage, Prime has you covered. The first five Rocky films are available for streaming as of Sunday, June 30, and there's nothing quite like going back to the beginning and watching Rocky Balboa (Sylvester Stallone, "The Expendables," 2010) go from small-time boxer to heavyweight champion all over again. The first film of the series may have won three Academy Awards, but "Rocky IV" (1985) is my personal favorite — it'll hit you right in the feels, and Ivan Drago (Dolph Lundgren, "Universal Soldier," 1992) is the best villain ever to step into the ring.

If you've never seen these classics, a binge is just what the doctor ordered, and if you're a longtime Rocky fan (which, let's face it, is far more likely), make yourself some popcorn and hunker down for a nostalgic viewing experience.

"Desperately Seeking Susan" (1985)

Here's another 1980s classic that's ready and waiting for you as of Sunday, June 30. Before she was hitting it out of the park in "A League of Their Own" (1992) or winning the love of working-class Argentinians in "Evita" (1996), Madonna was Susan, and someone was seeking her. Desperately. Rosanna Arquette ("Ray Donovan") stars as Roberta Glass, a bored housewife who follows an intriguing personal ad all the way to New York City, where she finds Susan and gets caught up in a her strange life. This movie has it all: amnesia, mystery, mistaken identity and a young Aidan Quinn ("Elementary"). This quintessential '80s film is worth a watch.

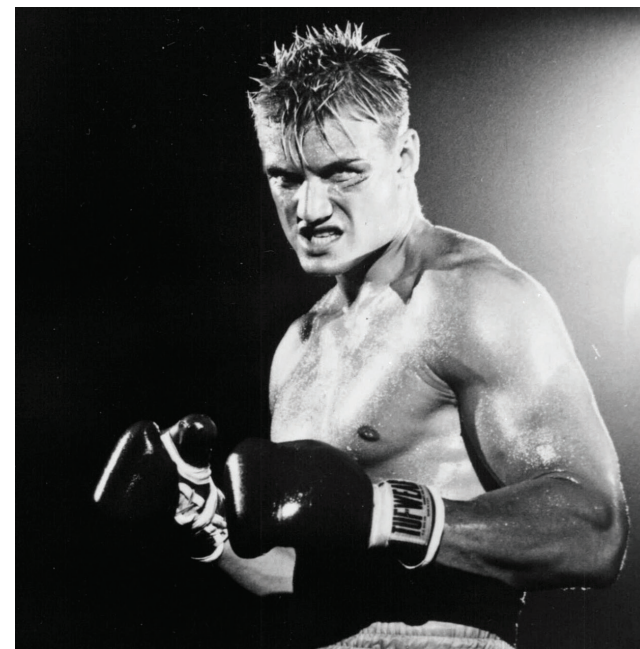
"Sleepy Hollow" (1999)

This fun and freaky film came out just after Johnny Depp's iconic performance in "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas" (1998) and just before his swooney turn as a Romani rogue in "Chocolat" (2000) — so we're talking peak Depp here. He stars as Ichabod Crane, a New York City investigator who is sent to the little town of Sleepy Hollow to look into some strange disappearances. With the help of a young apprentice (Marc Pickering, "Borgia") and a beautiful spiritualist (Christina Ricci, "Z: The Beginning of Everything"), Crane tries to unravel the truth about a homicidal headless horseman that's terrifying the town. It's a loose interpretation of Washington Irving's classic story, but the movie really goes for a period-piece feel. Check this one out if you're craving classic '90s fare, you can stream it starting Sunday, June 30.

NEW ON HULU:

"Into the Dark: Culture Shock"

This is the horror series that keeps on giving, and you can stream a new episode on Thursday, July 4. It should come as no surprise that the episode that premieres on Independence Day plays with themes of citizenship and patriotism. This one follows a young Mexican woman, played by Martha Higareda ("Altered Carbon"), who crosses into the United States illegally in the hope of capturing a little of the American dream for herself. But this is no feel-good series, so of course, things go terribly wrong and she ends up stuck in an American nightmare instead. Shawn Ashmore ("The Following"), Barbara Crampton ("The Young and the Restless") and Richard Cabral ("American Crime") also star in this installment.



Dolph Lundgren in a scene from "Rocky IV"