

hollywood q&a

By Adam Thomlison
TV Media

Q: In "A League of Their Own," one of the players on the yellow team looks very familiar. I think she was No. 3. Is she anyone of note?

A: Téa Leoni is pretty notable, though no one was noting her at the time — her character in the 1992 sports-movie classic "A League of Their Own" didn't even have a name.

Despite that, it wasn't Leoni's first acting role. Her most notable prior turn was a brief run in the short-lived (by soap standards) daytime drama "Santa Barbara," playing a character named Lisa DiNapoli for a few episodes in 1989.

After that there was another unnamed bit role in the 1991 film "The Switch," then "A League of Their Own."

We talk about the small size of that role, but someone must have noticed it, because her star started to rise pretty quickly after that.

It started with playing sizable female roles in a couple of movies that didn't spend a lot of time on their female characters — "Wyatt Earp" (1994) and "Bad Boys" (1995) — a little ironic considering she got them in part thanks to her place in a feminist film classic.

In 1998 she had an even bigger role in the blockbuster sci-fi hit "Deep Impact," and her fame was secured.

The roles continued to get bigger from there, leading to her current gig as the titular secretary of state in CBS's hit drama "Madam Secretary," where she's been for five seasons (the upcoming sixth season will be its last, though).

Q: I vaguely remember an action movie starring the bad guy from the Karate Kid movies, but I can't remember anything else about it. Can you help?

A: I don't know if I'm helping you by directing you towards a movie most would say is better forgotten, but you asked.

"Steele Justice" was released in 1987 and starred Martin Kove as John Steele, an ex-cop and Vietnam vet who is determined to bring down

a former general in the South Vietnamese army who is now a rich and powerful drug lord.

If that sounds like just about every other '80s action story to you, you're in good company. When it was released, the great New York Times film critic Janet Maslin accused writer/director Robert Boris of trying "to meld 'Rambo' with 'Miami Vice,' throwing in a touch of the Chipendale's calendar." She further said that the film "isn't designed as a comedy, but it does earn high marks for inadvertent humor."

Kove was in the midst of his success as Kreeese, a.k.a. the bad-guy sensei, in the popular Karate Kid films at the time. He exuded tough-guy charisma in those, and studios were crying out for tough guys, so it seemed natural to give him a movie of his own.

Giving him such a "Rambo"-ish movie was a bit surprising, though, considering he played a bad guy in 1985's "Rambo: First Blood Part II" as well.

But he got it. He didn't do much with it, though — "Steele Justice" was a flop at the box office and did not get a sequel (which was the only real bar for success in '80s action cinema).

Q: Is "Lucifer" coming back for another season? I'm really into that show.

A: I've got ambivalent news for you, which is fitting. I suppose, for a show where you're supposed to be cheering for the devil.

"Lucifer" has been renewed for a fifth season, but it will be its last.

There's no word on when the fifth season will air, but the fourth only came out in May, so it could be a while.

Back on the bright side, this news means the show will get a satisfying (or at least conclusive) ending. "We're thrilled that 'Lucifer' fans around the world have embraced this series on Netflix, and we can't wait to give them the big finish they've all been waiting for," said the official statement announcing the renewal/cancellation.

Have a question? Email us at questions@tvtabloid.com.

▶ STREAMING THIS WEEK



Jessica Brown Findlay stars in "Harlots"

By Jacqueline Spendlove
TV Media

NEW ON HULU:

"Harlots" Season 3

Alfie Allen of "Game of Thrones" fame joins the cast of this period drama for its third season, which airs weekly and premieres Wednesday, July 10. The series takes place in 18th-century London, and follows the denizens of the city's brothels — in particular, the Wells family, headed up by Margaret Wells (Samantha Morton, "Minority Report," 2002), a madam and matriarch hoping to improve her situation. The new season is set a year after the previous one, which ended with Margaret being shipped off to America in chains. That leaves eldest daughter Charlotte (Jessica Brown Findlay, "Downton Abbey") in charge of the brothel, and though her mother's longtime rival, Lydia Quigley (Lesley Manville, "Phantom Thread," 2017), has been committed to Bedlam, Charlotte has new enemies to contend with in the form of the Pincher brothers: new pimps in town played by Allen and "Hamilton" actor Ash Hunter.

"The Real Housewives of Orange County" Season 13

The one that started it all, the OG Real Housewives series delivers its 13th season for streaming on Sunday, July 7. Vicki Gunvalson is the only remaining cast member who's been in it from the start, and the new season follows the drama and lavish goings-on of her and fellow housewives Tamra Judge, Shannon Beador and Kelly Dodd, with Gina Kirschenheiter and Emily Simpson joining the fray. The reality TV series has spawned a heap of spinoffs, giving viewers a peek into the lives of wealthy, mouthy and Botoxed housewives in Atlanta, New York City, Beverly Hills, Dallas and more, as well as a number of international versions.

"Gone Baby Gone" (2007)

Oscar winner Ben Affleck directed his little brother, Casey ("Manchester by the Sea," 2016), in this acclaimed mystery thriller. The younger Affleck is joined by Michelle Monaghan ("Kiss Kiss Bang Bang," 2005) to play a pair of private investigators searching for a little girl who's been abducted from a rundown Boston neighborhood. The stellar cast also includes Morgan Freeman ("The Shawshank Redemption," 1994), Ed Harris ("The Truman Show," 1998) and Michael K. Williams ("The Wire"), as well as Amy Ryan ("Birdman" or "The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance," 2014), who received an Academy Award nod for her performance as the mother of the missing child. The movie is well worthy of its positive reviews, and Ben Affleck proved himself a laudable director in his first feature-length effort. You can stream it on Friday, July 12.

NEW ON AMAZON PRIME:

"Airplane!" (1980)

This hilarious spoof comedy has a home on many a "Funniest Movie" list, and the sophomoric humor and wonderfully silly slapstick gags still hold up today. Robert Hays ("Starman") stars in his first big-screen role as Ted Striker, a traumatized ex-fighter pilot who is terrified of flying, yet must land a commercial plane when the captain falls ill, along with the flight crew and several passengers. Bolstered by the hilari-

ous Leslie Nielsen ("The Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad!" 1988) as fellow passenger Dr. Rucker, and his ex-girlfriend Elaine (Julie Hagerty, "What About Bob?" 1991), Ted manages to land the plane, but not before a whole lot of entertaining nonsense and zingers ensue as chaos reigns in the air. The movie is an enduring favorite, and you can stream it, as well as "Airplane II: The Sequel" (1982), now.

NEW ON NETFLIX:

"Point Blank"

This remake of the 2010 French action-thriller is available to stream Friday, July 12. Marvel actor Anthony Mackie ("Captain America: The Winter Soldier," 2014) stars as Paul, an ER nurse who finds himself in a mess of trouble courtesy of Abe (Frank Grillo, "Kingdom"), an injured murder suspect who lands in the hospital. When Abe's ruthless brother (Christian Cooke, "The Art of More") kidnaps Paul's very pregnant wife and uses her as collateral, a desperate Paul is forced to spring the wounded man from the hospital and keep him alive long enough to make the trade. The two end up making an unlikely team (the best kind!) as they're pursued by rival gangsters and crooked cops, with Paul stopping at nothing to save his wife and unborn son. Boris McGiver ("House of Cards") and Marcia Gay Harden ("Code Black") also star.

"Parchís: El documental"

This Spanish documentary looks at Parchís, an immensely popular children's music group that became a social phenomenon in the 1980s. Between 1979 and 1985, the group of youngsters sold millions of albums and toured the world, before disbanding and going about the comparatively banal business of growing up and leading more or less regular lives. The film features candid interviews and testimonies from the now middle-age members of Parchís, who tell of their personal experiences not just as part of the group, but in the years that followed as they transitioned to adulthood following a mega successful childhood in the spotlight. You can stream the doc starting Wednesday, July 10.

"Bonus Family" Season 3

Foreign series have found a comfortable niche on streamers in America, and you catch watch the latest season of this Swedish drama starting Friday, July 12. The show follows the ups and downs of a blended family, headed up by Lisa (Vera Vitali, "Brimstone," 2016) and Patrik (Erik Johansson, "Walk the Talk"), who move in together with their kids following their respective divorces. With two 10-year-old boys and a 15-year-old girl thrown together, plus an ex-husband and ex-wife still in their lives, there's no end to the activity and contention in the couple's new (or, three seasons in, new-ish) home. Lisa and Patrik are hit with some difficult news in the new season, while Martin (Fredrik Hallgren, "112 Aina"), Lisa's ex, is settling into life with a new partner and a baby.



Casey Affleck and Ed Harris in a scene from "Gone Baby Gone"