



Episode4_Ian01_Intro.wav

Hello again!

I'm Ian Smith and you're listening to Episode 4 of the weekly **UK Blu-Ray Review** podcast, recorded on Sunday 23rd January 2011.

Intro music starts (NetworkAffiliate_Full.wav)

Episode4_Ian02_IntroOverMusic.wav 00:18

The two big releases this week are **Grown Ups** - an American comedy starring **Adam Sandler** and **Chris Rock** amongst others; and **The Hole** - a children's horror film from **Joe Dante**, the director best known for his work directing **Gremlins**.

I'll be reviewing those titles shortly, alongside **Certified Copy**, **Soul Men**, **The Switch**, **Good Morning** and **Equinox Flower**.

At the end of the podcast we'll find out which of these, if any, have made the **Top 10** in the new Official UK Sales Chart for the last seven days.

Remember that you can always download a complete transcript of this episode on the podcast blog at ukblurayreview.blogspot.com and that over the next seven days you'll also find extra stuff related to the titles reviewed this week appearing on the blog, including trailers, hi-res screen captures, and links to external reviews.

If you're a **Twitter** fan don't forget you can keep track of the latest updates by following the podcast Twitter account **@UKBluRayReview**.

End music intro

OK, with seven titles to cover, there's no time to lose but first....

Clip: And now the news.... 01:27

Background music AKG_Technology_Olympic.wav

Episode04_Ian03_News.wav 01:29

News: Amazon buy LoveFilm

Amazon have bought out the rental film company **LoveFilm**, in a deal rumoured to have been worth 200 million pounds.

The week got off to a good start with the heads of the film and music industry making a public announcement, via a letter to **The Times**, in support of troubled High Street retailer **HMV**. The high profile representatives stepped in after HMV shares, already battered following the announcement of the imminent closure of 60 of its stores, fell to a new low when bank guarantors removed trade credit insurance to its suppliers.

Reading between the lines, the industry's head honcho's stepped in because they dread the threat of being held in thrall by the only alternative to HMV: the online stores – which, let's face it, basically means Amazon, and the supermarkets - whose whole business model is based on stocking only those items that sell in volume, with limited choice for us consumers and close-to-zero profits for squeezed suppliers.

It seems that buying out **Imdb** wasn't enough for the Amazon, who already dominate the world of online retailing, and **LoveFilm** was next on their shopping list of items to purchase. They now pretty much dominate the world of film rental, film purchase and online film information.

I'm a big fan of **LoveFilm**, and I'm not at all a fan of **Amazon**, for reasons too long and convoluted to go into in this podcast. So, for me, this takeover is bad news and I'm already preparing to cancel my **LoveFilm** subscription.

But it's not just bad news for me as a fan of **LoveFilm**'s postal rental service. It's bad news for anybody who like competition over monopoly, individual service over no service at all, or the general convenience of being able to buy or rent from the High Street.

HMV are already buckling through the Amazon onslaught and the demise of another High Street name, **Blockbuster**, can only be accelerated by this latest news.

And that's not good news for any of us.

But enough of the doom and gloom. Let's see if there's any cheer for us in this week's reviews of new Blu-ray releases. Let's start with the title that's been absolutely everywhere in the High Street stores this week, and therefore pretty much a dead-cert for this week's Top 10 Sales Chart: **Grown Ups**, Certificate 15.

<Musical Sting> 03:48

This Week's Release Reviews

Grown Ups (2010) Certificate 15 (102 mins)

Imdb: 5.8

Rotten Tomatoes: 10%

Box Office \$80/\$272 million

Episode4_Ian04_GrownUps1.wav 03:52

With the tagline “Boys will be boys.. some longer than others” this already sounds like yet another excuse for **Adam Sandler** and his comedic chronicles to start behaving like children... again. Cue the endless wee-wee and fart jokes?



Adam Sandler plays a Hollywood agent

Well not quite, but be prepared to set your annoyance to high and comedy expectations to low based on previous Sandler outings. The premise this time around is the reunion of members of a kids' basketball team many years later after the death of their coach. With a disappointing 5.8 rating from the public on **imdb**, and a damning 10% rating from the critics on **Rotten Tomatoes** can this “good times” comedy vehicle really be that bad?



The guys go fishing. The audience go sleeping.

Clip: GrownUps_Clip1 04:36

<Overly sentimental, saccharine film music plays in background>

Reverend conducting funeral service: Coach Robert “The Buzzer” Fernando was a caretaker by profession. What a wonderful word that is to describe his devotion to his fellow man. He truly took care. When Robert knew that his time was short he told me there was one specific man he wanted to say a few words to memorialize him. So I’d like to ask Lenny Feder to come up now.

Lenny Feder (Adam Sandler): I’m sorry; I’m not prepared at all. I feel very honoured that coach asked me to do this, but .. I also feel terrible because I haven’t seen the coach in so long. And he always wanted me to come to town and see him and I got caught up in what I’ve been doing and I regret it. I understand that the St Mark’s team of 1978 was the only championship team that the coach ever had and that’s very impressive I gotta say judging from the talent we had to offer. I mean, believe it or not Robbie and Marcus were actually shorter back in 1978.

<Congregation laughs loudly>

Eric Lamonsoff: But those guys had a skill you never mastered. They knew how to pass the ball.

<Congregation laughs even louder>

Lenny: Looks like somebody has to learn how to pass the Kentucky Fried Chicken.

<Congregation laughs. Overweight Lenny is not amused >

Lenny: We’re saying goodbye to a big part of our lives. All of us. You affected everybody in this room. And I hope we get to live our lives like you. Have no regrets when life’s final buzzer sounds. So let’s all bow our heads in silence.



Episode4_Ian05_GrownUps2.wav 06:26

Aww! Gets you right there doesn't it?! That was **Adam Sandler** playing rich Hollywood agent Lenny Feder, making possibly the only funny joke in the movie at an overweight **Kevin James** expense there. As the film continues the former players and their partners and families hang out together at a lake house for a weekend and just muse about their lives.

And that's the real problem with the film. Nothing much happens other than a bunch of past-it comedic writers sitting around and "hanging out" with their unfeasibly beautiful other halves. There's a few basic jokes: a "big black momma" grandmother who farts, a four year-old who hasn't been weaned, the fact that Kevin James is fat and two of the other guys are short. But these same "jokes" are repeated endlessly and there's only so many times you can fake a weak smile at any of them.

You can imagine the cast turning up on a Monday, asking to see the latest version of the script.

Adam Sandler: I'm sorry, I'm not prepared at all.

And on Tuesday.

Adam Sandler: I'm sorry, I'm not prepared at all.

And by Friday, it's still...

Adam Sandler: I'm sorry, I'm not prepared at all.

Episode4_Ian06_GrownUps3.wav (07:34

The problem is with no actual script, and a cast seemingly incapable of writing what could the filmmakers do? Shut up shop and go home? Not when there's a 200 million pound box office profit up for grabs for just an 80 million dollar "budget" on the table. There's been enough precedent set on these formulaic Hollywood films that the profit/earnings ratio can be predicted long before a script even thought of, let alone written down on paper.



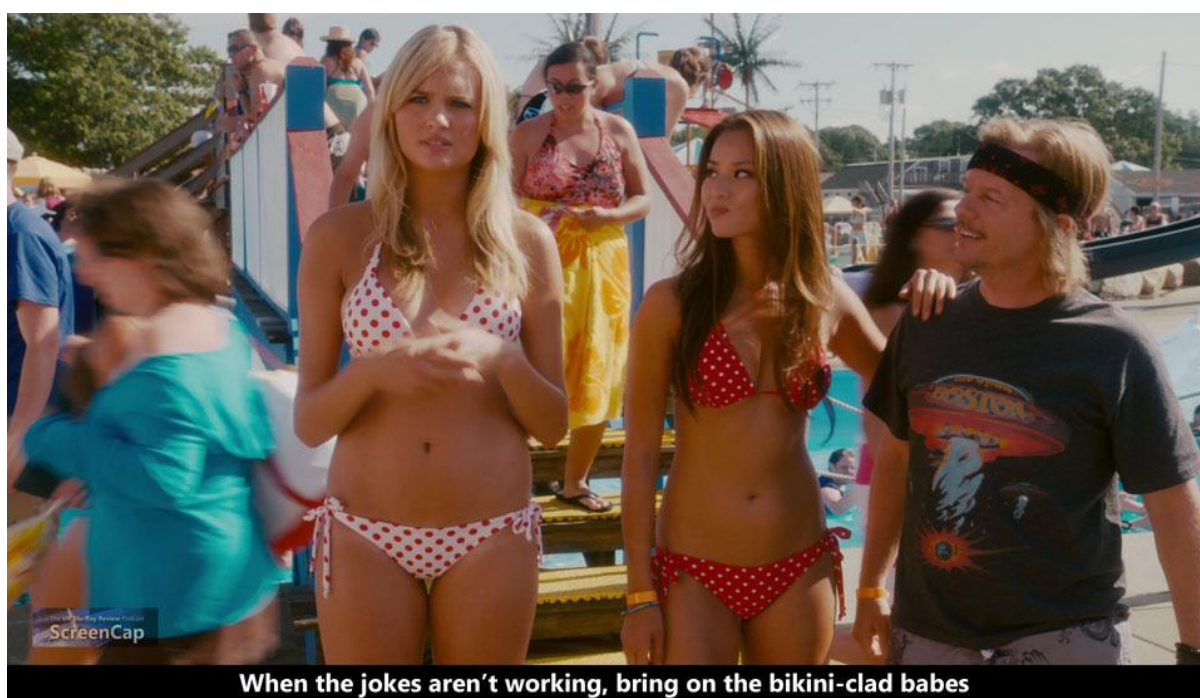
Chris Rock plays a stay-at-home father (but didn't stay at home while the movie was being shot :-)

And with enough marketing: “Heh we can get Chris Rock to fly to the UK and promote it with Adam and the rest of the cast. That’ll put the required bums on seats. Let’s just wing it”

It’s just depressing that almost the entire 80 million dollars appears to have been spent on salary, which just fattens the wallets and already over-inflated egos of a small group of principal players who are well past their “Sell By” date, at least when it comes to writing and performing stuff that actually makes people laugh. A couple of million for an actual writer wouldn’t have cut too much into profits, and might have actually guaranteed the viewers at least a couple of laughs?

Episode4_Ian07_GrownUps4.wav 08:41

One reviewer on imdb advises that you’d be better off lighting a candle and watching it burn, rather than wasting time on this film, and honestly it’s hard to disagree.



But at least the cast aren’t so self-delusional that they don’t feel guilty about charging so much whilst failing to deliver. At least that’s my reading of why they feel they have to guffaw with hilarity or high-five each other every time one of their members speaks a line, regardless of whether the line is intended to be funny or not. It’s as if they feel so bad that they figure if they pretend what they’re doing really is hilarious then maybe they’ll get away with the con trick they’ve pulled in trailing this movie and that maybe folks might get to think this stuff really is funny.

GrownUps_Clip2.wav 09:25

Marcus Higgins (David Spade): *Who’s that girl? That’s not a nanny is it?*

Lenny: *No, no, this is a friend of ours from China*

Marcus: *Oh yeah. No, I’ve been on that website*

Lenny: *No, no, no, no. Like an exchange student that.. My wife brought her into the house.*

Marcus: *Oh, your wife’s into chicks. Oh, that’s nice.*

Lenny: *Hollywood*

Kurt McKenzie (Chris Rock): *Hollywood!*

Lenny: Just an exchange student.

Kurt: I always thought something like that...

<Eric Lamonsoff and family pull up in an open top Cadillac>

Eric: Hey, now.

Lenny: Lamonsoff! Rolling up in a Caddy?

Eric: That's how we do it!

Lenny: And you, you've grown up on me, man. Are you a B-cup now? <laughter>

Eric: Hey, nice ears. You get the NFL package on those? <more laughter>

Kurt: Nice Caddy. You selling lawn furniture and crack?

Eric: Come on, I'm the co-owner of Branchville Lawn Furniture, man.

Kurt: Glad you brought your mother this time. <laughter>

Eric: Oh, that's a good one <much high-fiving and laughter> Wow. It's like shaking hands with an Eagle. I'll see you later <much more laughter>



The cast get to see their first reviews. Not pretty!

Episode04_Ian08_GrownUps5.wav 10:20

The Blu-Ray itself features a nice transfer, and thankfully saturated colours – none of that digital grading desaturation or colour-coercion nonsense here. There's a commentary, including subtitles, with director **Dennis Dugan**, 10 minutes of outtakes and deleted scenes, about six four minute featurettes that just have the cast constantly telling us how hilarious they are and endlessly laughing at their own lines. I can see why one's called "Gag reel" because I wanted to gag all the way through it the cast are so up themselves.

<Musical Sting>

The Hole (2010) Certificate 12 (92 minutes)

Imdb: 6.0

Rotten Tomatoes: 86%

BoxOfficeMojo: N/A

Episode4_Ian09_TheHole1.wav 11:94

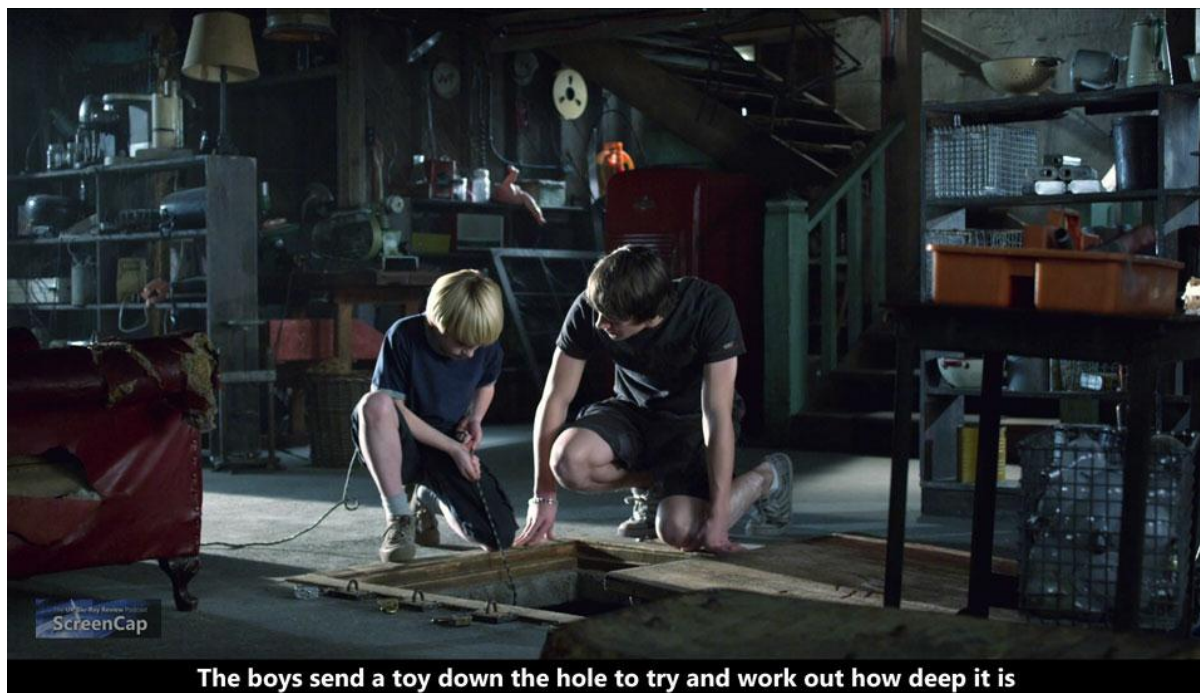
The Hole, or ***The Hole in 3D*** to give the movie its theatrical release title, is the latest film from director Joe Dante, best known as the director on ***Gremlins***.



Advertised as a family movie with scares this is, somewhat surprisingly, given its poor theatrical performance the second high profile release of the week, and the only of this week's new releases, other than ***Grown Ups***, to be stocked by the supermarkets and High Street retail stores I checked. The imdb average score of 6 from the general public is rather low, but the critics really liked the film, as evidenced by the **86% rating on Rotten Tomatoes**.



The film tells the tale of a single-parent family – mother Susan and her two sons: teenager Dane and younger brother Lucas – who move into a new house only to accidentally uncover an old rug in their garage which hides the hole under a locked floorboard. After some initial experiments to try and fathom how deep the dark hole is, Felix picks up one of his toys - a talking South Park doll and reels it down the hole using a long piece of rope:



TheHole_Clip2.wav 12:15

Dane: Do you hear anything?

Lucas: uh-huh (no)

Dane: That's really weird. Maybe it's like some kind of tunnel or something.

Lucas: To where?

Dane: I dunno. I mean, it's gotta have a bottom, right?

Lucas (shouts): Hellooooooo....

<Creepy music starts>

<Felix picks up a puppet with a pull-string and sends it down The Hole, still squawking...>

South Park doll: You're being totally immature. Ah, wig! Kick arse!

<getting fainter>: I would never kill somebody. Not unless they pissed me off.

<getting more faint>: I'm not fat. I'm big boned. You're being totally immature. Ah, wig! I would never... <stops suddenly after loud bang>

Dane: What did you do?

Lucas: Nothing. I think it just got caught on something

Episode04_Ian10_TheHole2.wav 13:24

Even before the boys discover the hole it becomes apparent that the family are running away from something....

TheHole_Clip1.wav 13:31

Susan (the mother): Please don't take this out on Lucas, OK? It is not his fault that we had to move. I

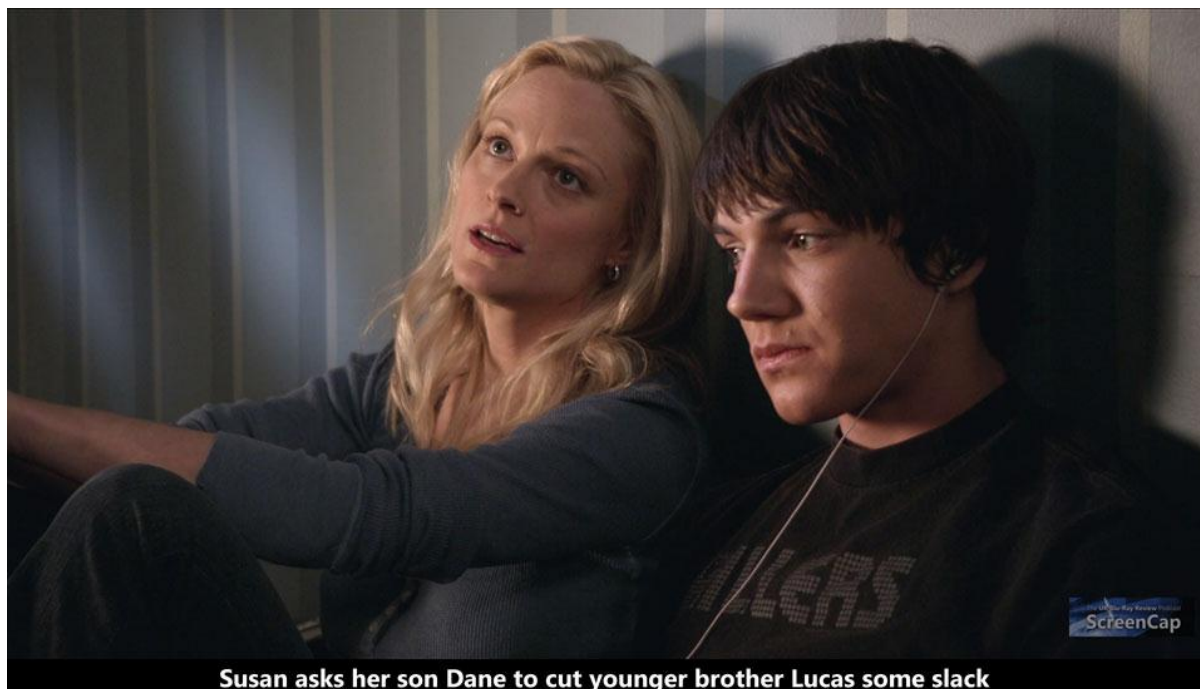
had to do this - I could not take a chance. I am sorry about your friends. I'm sorry about having to move – again! But I would really like this to work out. I would like you to help me make this work, which means no more fighting, no more trouble at school. I need you to be better than the things that you have seen.

Dane: *What's that supposed to mean?*

Susan: *<sighs> That means that I would like us to be happy, OK? We could all use a little bit more 'happy' in our lives.*

Dane *(mouth full of a pizza slice): I am happy! I am!*

Susan: *That's great.*



Susan asks her son Dane to cut younger brother Lucas some slack

Episode04_Ian11_TheHole3.wav 14:18

The discovery of **The Hole** leads to all manner of strange events, and numerous jump-scares. Scary shadowy figures, cute little girls who turn out to be evil, slightly scary puppet toys that suddenly come to life in a really malevolent way are all thrown into the mix and flawlessly presented.

What the film lacks in originality, it makes up for in execution. But the film works largely because of the excellent acting, especially from the two brothers, and the overall realism of their relationships, not just with their mother but also with Julie, the girl from next door and her yappy dog Charlie.

However the film is not at all suitable for young children, being much too scary for kids, and sometimes the dialog seems rather risqué even for adults...

TheHole_Clip3.wav 15:07

Julie *(girl next door): So, you two didn't kill each other?*

Dane: *Not yet.*

Lucas: *Erm, she's Julie*

Julie: *Hi, Dane, the boy who hates it here.*

Lucas: *Hey, do you wanna come and look at our hole?*

Julie: *I'm sorry?*

Dane: Nothing. We... We got this hole in the floor. It's no big deal.

Julie: Is that what you do for fun in Brooklyn? Play with your holes?

<looks down the hole>

Julie: What is it?

Felix: Our hole

Dane: Well we're really not sure what it is

<Julie's small dog Charlie yaps furiously, peers down hole, yaps more furiously and then runs away>

Julie: Charlie doesn't like your hole very much.



Episode04_Ian12_TheHole4 15:57

The Blu-ray presentation of the main film is fine, but the extra's – just three ten minute features, one of which is just the raw interview footage used in the other two – are disappointing and are presented in scrappy-looking Standard Definition. Nevertheless **The Hole** is my **Disc of the Week**, and it's encouraging to see the film's distributors have sufficient faith in it to pay the premium prices required to get the title stocked in High Street stores. I recommend it, whether you have kids who like to be scared or not.

The Switch (2010) Certificate 12 (

Imdb: 5.9 Rotten Tomatoes: 51% BoxOfficeMojo: Cost USD 19 million, made 50 million

TheSwitch_Clip1 16:31

Wally Mars (narration voiceover): Look at us. Running around. Always rushed. Always late. I guess that's why they call it the Human Race. What we crave most in this world is connection. And for some people that happens at first sight. It's "When you know, you know". It's fate working its magic. And that's great for them. They get to live in a pop song, ride the Express train. But that's not the way it really works. For the rest of us it's a bit less romantic. It's complicated and it's messy. It's

about horrible timing and fumbled opportunities and not being able to say what you need to say when you need to say it. At least that's the way it was for me.

Episode4_Ian13_TheSwitch1 (17:41)

That was **Jason Bateman**, and not **Patrick Bateman** as I mistakenly stated last week, introducing **The Switch**, a rom-com that was released theatrically at the tail end of last year. Jason plays the part of **Wally Mars**, the best friend who's secretly in love with **Jennifer Aniston's** character **Kassie Larson**.



I think Jennifer Aniston gets a rough ride from the media. Whether it's jealousy because of her success in **Friends**, or delight at the lack of success in hanging on to Brad Pitt or finding a new man in her private life, isn't clear but it's seemed like the media equivalent of school bullying to me. Of course she hasn't always picked the best films in her long, essentially "rom-com" –based career, with **Marley and Me** being a particular filmic low point, but she is usually able to deliver a fun, believable performance no matter how dreadful the script or acting partner she's given.

She came in for a particular brutal verbal beating when **The Switch** was theatrically released and, alas, I have to report that the film is as bad as everybody says it is.



Ostensibly this is the story of a woman who can't find a man, even though he's right under her nose. Aniston's character decides time is running out and so chooses to have a baby by artificial insemination instead, not knowing that – you can see what's coming can't you – the sperm donor is going to turn out to be the friend who's right under her nose.

TheSwitch_Clip 2 (19:06)

Kassie Larson: *Wally, this is what a woman's fertility looks like after a certain age.*

Wally: *So?*

Kassie: *So I would like you to be the first to know .. I'm having a baby!*

Wally: *You're pregnant?*

Kassie: *No, not yet. But I'm working on it. Went to the doctor – she said all my levels are really great... considering. And she said that my cervical mucous is gorgeous by the way.*

Wally: *Thanks for that.*

Kassie: *And then she started giving me this lecture about my age and I was .. recently started to hear about timing and why wait? And you know I.. it started..*

Wally: *(hums tunelessly)*

Kassie: *Would you please stop having sex with your food?*

Wally: *Sorry. You know I don't know when I'm doing it*

Kassie: *And then I thought to myself 'I can do this. I've got a killer new job at the network and I don't need a man to have a baby .*

Wally: *Technically speaking, you do! Where's this all coming from? Is this about Paul? Because if it is why don't you just chalk it up as another one of your disasterous flame-outs and move on.*

Kassie: *This has absolutely nothing to do with Paul*

Wally: *Well I think it does.*

Kassie: *And thank you for bringing it up*

Wally: *All I'm saying is 'Don't kick that can down the road'. You need to look at your relationship...*

Kassie: *No*

Wally: *.. instead of biting off the next step. Deal with the one before.*

Kassie: *You know what, I'm just tired of thinking about how this is supposed to go. Alright? I'm just ready to do it now.*

Wally: *Really?!*

Kassie: *Life is in session!*

Wally: *Is that from an infomercial?*

Kassie: *No*

Wally: *Really?*

Kassie: *Yes*

Wally: *Did you buy the DVD?*

Kassie: *One. But it was really something that resonated with me. Wally, I don't .. what?! You know what I'm going to do this. I want to have a kid and I am in the market for some.. semen.*

Episode4_Ian14_TheSwitch2 20:36

I should warn you that that's probably the best written scene in the whole film, but alas, **The Switch** defies all sense of rationality or logic, even when contrasted to other rom-com genre films where admittedly the bar has already been set incredibly low.



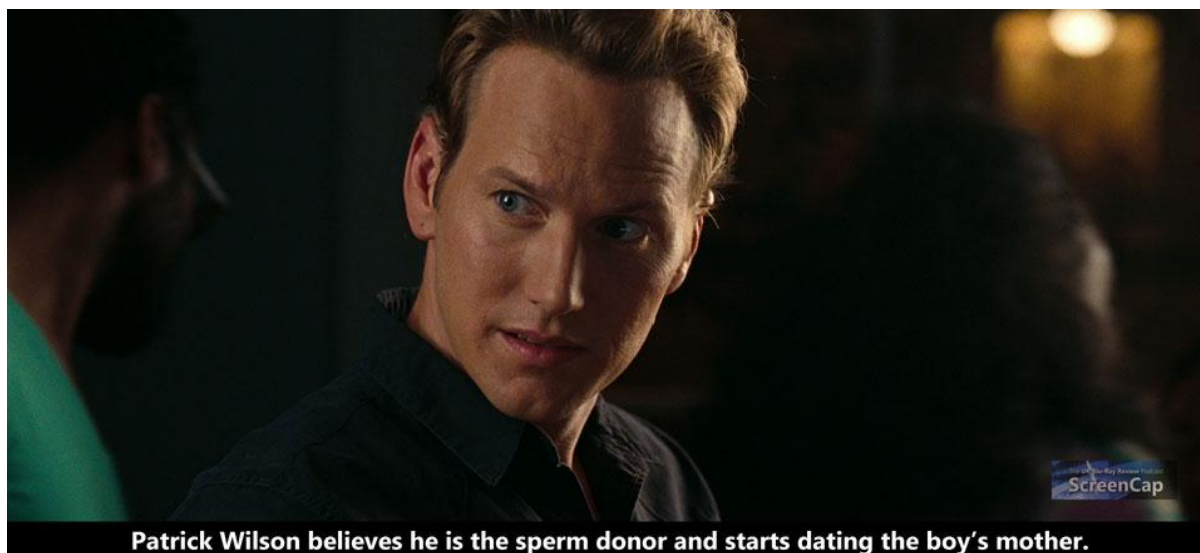
Honestly, this guff makes *Sex In the City 2* look like *Citizen Kane* by way of comparison, it's that bad. Half an hour in I was seriously considering stabbing my own eyes with a fork if it meant I could avoid having to watch any more of this tedious, worse-than-watching-paint-drying drivel. The script is dire and the acting terrible.

The best scenes feature a character played by **Jeff Goldblum** in some short, quirky comedy sequences, but even in those it's obvious that the actor is just phoning in his performance.



The normally affable Jason Bateman comes across as just plain ridiculous, and totally unlikeable to boot. He has absolutely no chemistry with Aniston so that we don't believe for a second that he likes her, let alone is secretly in love with her.

The film is so lazy that when the script requires everybody to suddenly jump forward in time by a decade nobody could be bothered to change their clothes or even their hairstyles.



The film cost 20 million and made 50 million at the box office despite all the terrible reviews. Please don't encourage the film-makers to make even more of this sort of dreck by buying or renting the Blu-Ray too. It's dire and Aniston is already rich enough with her hundreds of millions from Friends, without giving her more for dross like this too. I guess saying that officially makes me a Jennifer Aniston hater like all the rest too. Oh dear!

Soul Men (2008) Certificate 15

Imdb: 6.4 Rotten Tomatoes: 45% BoxOfficeMojo: N/A but made USD12 million (not released in UK?)

SoulMen_Clip1 (21:19)

Episode4_Ian15_SoulMen1 (24:25)

That was the introduction, setting up the back-story for 2008's **Soul Men** which I don't believe ever got a theatrical release in the UK, possibly because the American reviews were luke-warm at best. The film, stars **Samuel L. Jackson** and the late **Bernie Mac**, and tells the tale of two estranged soul band singers **Louis** and **Floyd**, who decide to undertake a potentially lucrative road trip tour despite being out of shape and out of practice.

The two try, without much success, to settle a 25 year-old grudge they have with each other along the way. Here's Louis reacting to the suggestion of a 50/50 split of all the profits the two will make while on tour.

Clip 2.

Jackson has developed a reputation for dialling in his performance and just taking the money and running when it comes to his most recent films, so it was a pleasure to find him actually acting, and acting rather well, in this film.

However, it's **Bernie Mac** who steals the show, in a performance that's heart-warming and heart-breaking but also laugh-out-loud funny in all the right places. I enjoyed this a lot more than its **6.4** rating on imdb and pitiful **45% fresh** rating from the critics on Rotten Tomatoes implied I would.

Soul Men is not a clever or original in any way, but if you've had a bad day at work and want something uplifting that will give you a few laughs I'd recommend this one for your rental or purchase list. With some good belly laughs and great music which even features an appearance from Isaac Hayes at one point, there's not much to dislike here. The picture quality is less than stellar, with a lot of grain in evidence, but this wasn't a big budget film and there are lots of short standard definition featurettes and a budget price to make up for its shortcomings in these areas.

Certified Copy (2010) Certificate 12 (106 minutes)

Imdb: 7.2 Rotten Tomatoes: 84% BoxOfficeMojo: N/A but made USD \$3 million in Europe

Moving more away from the mainstream I come to **Certified Copy**, which is essentially a "two actor" talking heads film that wowed the critics at the **Cannes Film Festival** last year. The film won its female lead, **Juliette Binoche**, the coveted **Best Actress Award** at the festival and it's not hard to see why as she delivers a powerful, moving performance as the unhappy half of a couple whose relationship is never made fully clear.



James Miller: *Can I tell you my favourite joke?*

Elle: *Yeah.*

James: *A man is cast away on a desert island. One day he's walking along the beach and he finds a brass lamp buried in the sand. So he digs it up, dusts it off and a genie appears.*

"I am the Genie of the Lamp. I will grant you three wishes. What is your first wish?"

So the man who is hot and tired said "I know. I want an everlasting bottle of ice-cold Coca-Cola."

So the genie waves his hand, the bottle appears, the man takes an enormous drink and then the bottle just fills itself back up.

So the genie says "You have two wishes left. Hurry up!" and you know what the man says?

Elle: *Two more Coca-Cola's <laughs> I'm sorry.*

James <slightly annoyed>: *Ah, thank you! It's not the joke that was the point. It's the moral. Here's a*

guy...

Elle: It's the lamp, and nothing to do with "the moral"...

James: Here's a guy whose life is so simple that he doesn't need..

Elle: Relax!

James: he's satisfied with a bottle of Coca-Cola.

Elle: That was a pretty bad joke, I'm sorry. I knew it.



Certified Copy is truly an international film with an Iranian director, a British opera singer male lead and a French female lead. This international aspect flows through to the dialog and although there are large sections of spoken English, subtitles need to be read for equally large chunks of French and Italian dialog that also feature throughout.

The film-making is “minimalist” to say the least. The first six minutes are a mainly static shot of a speech from **James Miller**, played brilliantly by **William Shimell**, better known for his opera singing than his acting. Miller is the author of a book having the same title as the film, giving his speech at a public signing which is attended by **Juliette Binoche**’s character who is simply called **Elle** (which translates from French to “She” in English). Elle appears to take a shine to the speaker even though her young son is bored and forces her to leave before Miller’s talk is over.

In the accompanying “Making of” the director says that he thinks “In the first 6-7 minutes many in the audience will be unhappy and wonder why they came to see this film. The opening is special and one can’t guess that after 6 minutes a new atmosphere [will begin] to emerge ”.

“Special” to some, maybe, but not so much to others and audiences seem equally split between those who find **Certified Copy** “intelligent and beautiful” and those who find it “boring and pretentious”. Personally, I can’t quite make my mind up as to which side of the fence to sit on. There does seem to be a lot of “Emperor’s new clothes” nonsense about some of the more gushing film festival reviews.



Academic author James Ellison arrives to give a talk on his latest book: 'Certified Copy'

This is, essentially, a wordy and intense essay about male-female relationships and the differences between reality and perception, albeit a very intelligent discourse at that.

How successful an essay can be when presented as a film is open to debate, and although I stayed with ***Certified Copy*** right to the end, I'm not sure the approach taken by the director will work for everyone. I couldn't help feeling that while there was much to like – most notably, Binoche's heart-breaking performance – there was just a little too much artifice and smoke and mirrors designed to distract you from the fact you were simply watching two people read out loud an essay about life, the meaning of the universe and everything else. All the characters, even lowly waiting restaurant staff, speak far too intelligently and articulately, with the same identical "voice" which, for me, was an artifice too far, at least as far as a cinematic experience is concerned.



Elle tries to get a passing couple to take her side in an argument with James

Despite the high marks on both imdb and RottenTomatoes, and the rave festival reviews, I suspect the film is too “art house” for most people to even be aware of, never mind enjoy. As I hinted last week, nothing much happens and the film primarily consists of two people talking a lot in real time as they walk around a tourist area in Italy.

And what little story there is as backdrop to the discussion on reality vs perception just confuses. The two leads start off as apparent strangers trying to chat each other up, but then suddenly seem to transform into a very unhappy married couple of 25 years. At one point the male author explains the “Certified Copy” title of both his book and this film by telling a story of a mother and her son who’d intrigued him, and whom he saw several times admiring a statue. We assume the mother and son he is referring to, to be Elle and her son.



Elle becomes upset when James starts discussing a mother and son he saw admiring a “Certified Copy”

Clip:

James Miller: The mother was telling her son something about the statue. You know it's only a copy of the originals in The Academia. But the mother hadn't told the boy that, I'm sure. Am I right?

<He gets no answer>

Yep, well. The boy was looking up at the statue as though it were a genuine, original, authentic work of art.

So I was left slightly disappointed by **Certified Copy**. For me the film suffers rather ironically, and perhaps deliberately, from being a prime example of the very subject it's continually discussing, being a complete "certified copy" of the films **Before Sunrise** and **Before Sunset** - films that came out in 1995 and 2004, long before this film hit the festival circuit.

The Blu-Ray is presented in a slimline Amray case and the only extra is a poor quality Standard Definition 30 minute "Making of..." that shows a lot of "behind the scenes" home movie type footage as well as interviews with the two leads and the director.

Equinox Flower (1958) Certificate U

Imdb: 8.0 Rotten Tomatoes: 86% Box OfficeMojo: N/A

Good Morning (1959) Certificate U

Imdb: 7.9 Rotten Tomatoes: 82%

There's just time for me to briefly mention two other releases from last week that I really enjoyed, somewhat to my surprise as they're Japanese films that date from the late 1950's. **Equinox Flower** and **Good Morning** released in Blu-ray/DVD combo-packs by the British Film Institute this week give the lie to the belief that different cultures are intrinsically different or have radically divergent values, concerns and worries from our own society.

Good Morning was my personal favourite of the two titles, although **Equinox Flower** received slightly higher ratings in the 8 and 80% range on both imdb and rotten tomatoes. Set in a Westernised Japanese suburb it's a film mainly about conversation, and the importance of the seemingly trivial. The suburb is populated by a wide array of characters who are archetypes still recognisable today: the gossipy housewives who suspect one of their number may have stolen their subscriptions to pay for a new washing machine – wouldn't be out of place on Coronation Street today; two young kids who decide that adult talk is full of inanities and go on a speech strike when their parents won't buy them a new TV - could just as easily be kids wanting a new iPad or iPhone in the Western world of the noughties.; And the men-folk going for a beer to escape the prattling of their wives wouldn't be out of place in any British town in 2011.

Good Morning is a film, presented on Blu-Ray in 4:3 ratio colour in a superb transfer, that is full of great humanity and gentle humour. It is presented with a 16-page booklet about the film and a second disc containing a DVD copy of the main Blu-Ray feature as well as another of Japanese Director Yasujiro's Ozu's films "I Was Born, but...", although it should be pointed out that this is of very poor quality, being heavily scratched, and presented in black and white only on the DVD.

Equinox Flower was made a year earlier, in 1958, by the same director and was his first film in colour. Concentrating on the decline of paternal authority between a father who outwardly

presents liberal views on marriage while actually harbouring very old-fashioned attitudes, and his modern, free-wheeling daughter, it's a powerful work full of gentle humour and, again, a great humanity. Both films in the series come highly recommended if your tastes lean towards the classic or greats of foreign cinema.

That's the reviews. Time for the Top 10

Top 10 for week ending 23rd January 2011

Episode3_Ian_Clip13.wav 26:04

There are two new entries to the Top 40 for the week commencing 24th January 2011, both of them inside the Top 10.

We say goodbye to **Scott Pilgrim vs The World** and **Toy Story 3** from the Top 10 as they fall to no. 12 and no. 19 respectively.

Down five at **no. 10** is **Piranha 3D**, a fun B- movie that riffs on **Jaws**.

Down 2 to **no. 9** is **Avatar The Collector's Edition**. Buy this if you want to show off your new home cinema system.

Up 1 to **no. 8** is **Robin Hood**, **Ridley Scott's** bland re-telling of the hero of Sherwood Forest, with **Russell Crowe** seeing how many different accents he can give the famous archer.

New in at **no. 7** is **The Hole**, reviewed earlier, and my Release of the Week. Now if they'd only paid off Blockbuster as well as Sainsbury's and Tesco's they might have had a Top 5 on their hands. Oh well!

Down 2 at **no. 6** is **The Expendables**, a tired, retread of 1980's action movies. Old farts **Sly Stallone**, **Bruce Willis** and **Arnold Schwarzenegger**, join Jason Statham for a by-the-numbers action yarn.

Up 3 at **no. 5** is **Kick-Ass**, a fun, colourful super hero flick directed by **Matthew Vaughn**, presumably doing well again after those who purchased **Scott Pilgrim vs The World** for Christmas have all their friends tell them how much better this movie is.

Down 2 at **no.4** is **The Girl Who Played with Fire**, the second part in the detective thriller series The Millennium Trilogy. The picture quality in this made-for-TV episode is poor and proves that sometimes Blu-Ray really isn't any better than DVD.

Down 2 to **no.3** is last week's highest new entry **Resident Evil: AfterLife**, the fourth in a game-based action series that looks pretty and sounds noisy. Just check your brain in at the door before viewing.

Straight in at **no. 2** is **Grown Ups**, reviewed earlier in this podcast. Hopefully it will get flushed out of the chart sooner rather than later once the distribution payments to Sainsbury's and Tesco's run out.

And back at **no.1**, on its second rebound to the top, proving you just can't keep an intelligent blockbuster down, it's **Christopher Nolan's Inception**.

Remember you can view the whole of the official Top 40 Blu-Ray chart, as published by The Official Charts Company at <http://www.theofficialcharts.co.uk>

Next Week's Releases and Wrap Up

Episode3_Ian_Clip14.wav 28:37

There is an absolute deluge of new titles next week, with 23 titles in total debuting on Blu-Ray for the first time, including a swarm of budget titles from the 70's, 80's and 90's. We're running over the half hour on this podcast so there's no time to summarise them here, but check the podcast blog for a full list an indication of the titles I'm expecting to review on next week's podcast. The podcast blog address again is <http://UKBluRayReview.blogspot.com>

My name's **Ian Smith** and this has been the **UK Blu-ray Review** podcast. Thanks for listening, and see you next Monday.

NetworkAffiliate_10Seconds music play-out.