

# Dr. Ed's Movie Reviews 2021

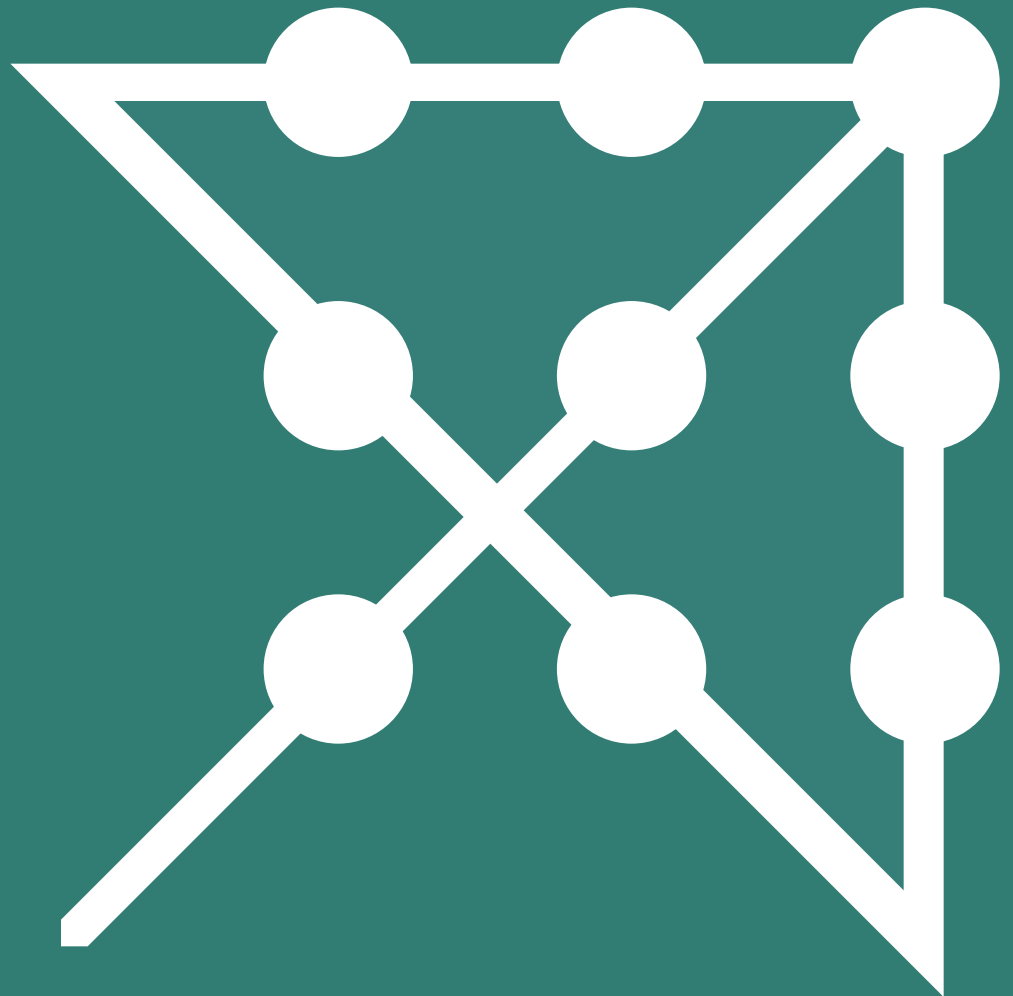
Yardeni Research, Inc.

**Dr. Edward Yardeni**

516-972-7683

eyardeni@yardeni.com

Please visit our sites at  
[www.yardeni.com](http://www.yardeni.com)  
[blog.yardeni.com](http://blog.yardeni.com)



*thinking outside the box*

**“A Private War” (+ + +)** is a 2018 biopic about Marie Colvin, who was an extraordinary American war correspondent for The Sunday Times of London. She wore an eyepatch after losing her left eye in 2001 when she was covering the civil war in Sri Lanka. Despite suffering from PTSD, she covered the conflicts in Iraq and Libya, interviewing Qadhafi before he was killed. In February 2012, she was interviewed on CNN from Homs, Syria, where she reported that Assad’s army was committing war crimes against civilians on a massive scale. Rosamund Pike’s performance as Marie is top notch.

**“De Gaulle” (+ +)** is a docudrama about the life and times of Charles de Gaulle just before and during World War II. He was a French army officer and statesman who led Free France against Nazi Germany in World War II. He chaired the Provisional Government of the French Republic from 1944 to 1946 in order to reestablish democracy in France. He served as the president of France from 1959 to 1969. Objecting to the French government’s armistice with Germany, de Gaulle fled to England. He worked relatively well with Winston Churchill. In regular radio broadcasts over the BBC, he called on his countrymen to resist the Nazi occupation and to support the French resistance.

**“Dopesick” (+ + +)** is a sickening docudrama series on Hulu about how Purdue Pharma reformulated OxyContin and, starting in the late 1990s, marketed the opioid as a miracle drug to relieve pain without the risk of addiction. That turned out to be grossly false advertising, as millions of Americans became addicted to it and many died from overdoses. The company attributed the problem to illegal “drug diversion,” which was also grossly false and criminally negligent. However, while prosecutors eventually shut down this homegrown drug lord and imposed a huge fine on the company, no one from Purdue went to jail. The series strongly suggests that a key Federal Drug Administration official turned a blind eye and was rewarded with a cushy job at Purdue. “Regulatory capture” can be a deadly consequence of crony capitalism. The cast of the series, including Michael Keaton and Kaitlyn Dever, is outstanding.

**“Dune” (+)** is a sci-fi flick based on the 1965 book with the same title. My wife enjoyed the movie more than I did. That’s probably because I didn’t read the book, but she did and told me that the movie’s script is true to the original. She is also a Trekkie, while I am not even though I did quote Mr. Spock in my new book, saying “Live long and prosper.” The movie is visually impressive, especially since we saw it on an IMAX screen. It’s also very dusty, as it was filmed mostly in the deserts of Jordan and Abu Dhabi. It’s reminiscent of the “Star Wars” movies and “Lawrence of Arabia.” I would love to fly in one of the film’s dragonfly-like helicopters. I just don’t understand why the battle scenes included old-fashioned hand-to-hand sword fights instead of fights using laser swords or guns. Climate-change activists undoubtedly would see this film as prophetic.

**“Finch” (+)** is a post-apocalyptic sci-fi comedy starring Tom Hanks in a movie similar to “Cast Away” (2000), in which Hanks is stranded on a deserted island in the Pacific. His only companion is “Mr. Wilson,” a volleyball that he talks to in order to keep sane. In this movie, Hanks is one of the few survivors of a solar flare that destroys the ozone layer and turns Earth into a wasteland. His companions are a rescue dog named “Goodyear” and two robots, named “Duey” and “Jeff.” The star of the show is Jeff, who looks like a skeletal version of C-3PO in “Star Wars” and is very funny. I am hoping for a sequel starring Jeff and Goodyear in a buddy road-trip movie. Hanks won’t be needed in that film.

**“Gangs of London” (-)** is a British action TV series about rival criminal gangs in London. The key questions are: Who killed Finn Wallace, the head of the Wallace gang, and how many gangsters and innocent bystanders will be gunned down until his son Sean gets the answer? The series does state-of-the-art mayhem perfectly and regularly. There always seems to be yet another gang to mow down in a hail of machine gun fire. The moral of the story is that running a criminal enterprise is stressful and dangerous. Now if we could aim all that firepower at the Covid-19 virus, 2021 would be a less stressful and safer year for all of us.

**“Godfather of Harlem” (+ + +)** is a television miniseries based on the life and times of a black gangster named “Bumpy Johnson,” who defends his turf in Harlem from the Italian Mafia during the 1960s. He does so by skillfully forming alliances with some of the families. Forest Whitaker, who plays Bumpy, stands out in an outstanding cast of actors, who portray Malcolm X, Mohammed Ali, Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Vincent Gigante, Frank Costello, and Joe Bonanno. Like The Sopranos’ character Tony Soprano, Bumpy is a likeable family man but involved in a dirty business. The civil rights movement of the 1960s features prominently in the series. A great deal of progress was made legislatively during the 1960s, but today there is still plenty of room for everyone to do more to get along respectfully and peacefully with one another.

**“Halston” (+ + +)** is a Netflix biopic series about the American fashion designer who rose to international fame in the 1970s. His first big hit was the pillbox hat he designed for Jacqueline Kennedy, who wore it to the inauguration of her husband, President John F. Kennedy, in 1961. His designs were usually simple—minimalist yet sophisticated, glamorous, and comfortable at the same time. During the 1980s, his lifestyle was much more complex, full of s\*x, dr\*gs, and rock & roll. He was a regular at Studio 54 with his BFFs Liza Minnelli, Bianca Jagger, Joe Eula, and Andy Warhol. The script is very well written. And the cast is superb, with an outstanding performance by Ewan McGregor as Halston.

**“Hemingway” (+ + +)** is an excellent three-part documentary about Ernest Hemingway, the great American author, airing on PBS. Ken Burns and Lynn Novick are two documentarians who continue to produce top-notch films about American history and personalities. The six-hour film is a starkly honest appraisal of Hemingway’s strengths and weaknesses as a writer, husband, father, and role model for his fans. Hemingway chose to be a larger-than-life personality because he based most of his writings on his personal experiences. He needed the drama in his life to give him material for his short stories and novels.

**“House of Gucci” (+ +)** is a docudrama based on the life of Maurizio Gucci, who badly mismanaged his dysfunctional family and his family’s fashion empire. His ambitious wife contributed to his rise and fall. He is played by Adam Driver. Lady Gaga’s performance is outstanding as his wife Patrizia, whom the Italian press dubbed “La Vedova Nera,” or “the Black Widow.” The cast includes Jeremy Irons and Al Pacino as Maurizio’s father and uncle. Jared Leto also stands out as his cousin, Paolo, who was a certifiable idiot, the Fredo Corleone of the Gucci family. The film, which is based on the 2001 book “The House of Gucci: A Sensational Story of Murder, Madness, Glamour and Greed,” by Sara Gay Forden, covers all the bases mentioned in the title.

**“I Care A Lot” (+ +)** is a very entertaining black comedy with Rosamund Pike’s great performance as a cold-blooded court-appointed guardian who seizes the assets of elderly people for herself and keeps the people locked up in retirement homes for “their own good.” The underlying theme is best summarized by former President Ronald Reagan’s famous quote: “The nine most terrifying words in the English language are ‘I’m from the Government, and I’m here to help.’” The evil guardian’s scam goes awry, recalling another famous quote. To paraphrase poet Robert Burns: “The best laid plans of mice and women often go wrong.” In a case of life imitating art, actor Lindsay Lohan’s father was arrested on Friday for alleged “patient brokering,” meaning he is accused of bringing addicts to drug treatment centers in Florida in exchange for illegal kickbacks, according to charging documents reviewed by NBC News. Apparently, he cares a lot too.

**“Judas and the Black Messiah” (+ + +)** is an intense docudrama featuring a remarkable performance by Daniel Kaluuya as Fred Hampton, the murdered chairman of the Illinois Black Panther Party. Hampton was a late-1960s activist who aspired to unite a “rainbow coalition” of people of all races against racism. He was betrayed and set up by an FBI informant in his organization. The biggest villain in the movie is J. Edgar Hoover, who treated civil rights activists as threats to the country.

**“Land” (+)** features an excellent performance by Robin Wright, who also directed this film. She plays Edee, a bereaved woman who has lost her husband and young son. She hopes to overcome this tragedy by moving to a remote cabin in Wyoming surrounded only by the natural beauty of the mountains, forest, and nearby river. She chooses to live off the grid, chucking her cell phone in a trash can and having her car towed away. She wants no contact with people, either through social media or directly. However, she does come to depend on a hunter to teach her some basic survival skills since nature not only is beautiful but also can be deadly. The movie will make you want to connect with nature. However, our national parks are likely to be more packed than ever this summer as inoculated Americans take to the road. They are likely to reconnect with other humans in the national parks more than with nature.

**“Mare of Easttown” (+ +)** is an HBO drama series starring Kate Winslet as a detective in a small Pennsylvania town. Her performance shines throughout the show, especially during her darkest challenges, when she struggles to solve crimes while dealing with her very complicated home life. The basic theme of the show is that life is hard, and everyone has their own agenda, so deal with it as best you can.

**“Mudbound” (+ + +)** is a 2017 drama on Netflix about life in rural Mississippi during and right after World War II. It’s about the corrosive impact of poverty and racism on people’s lives. It’s an unrelenting tale of misery without much relief other than from family support, which is tested often and hard. Particularly poignant are the parallel struggles of two World War II veterans—one white, one black—who return home and are forced to deal with racism and PTSD.

**“My Octopus Teacher” (+ + +)** is a remarkable documentary about the friendship that develops between Craig Foster, a South African snorkeler, and a remarkably intelligent octopus. Then again, this very liquid and fast-moving animal is known to be one of the smarter ones swimming about in the water kingdom. The star of this show doesn’t disappoint. However, the human with whom she interacts has some serious flaws. I’m a sucker for animal movies. I often find myself rooting for them rather than the humans, even in “Planet of the Apes.”

**“News of the World” (+)** stars Tom Hanks as a weary veteran of the Civil War. He plays Captain Jefferson Kyle Kidd, a Texan and a former member of the Confederate Infantry who now makes a living traveling town to town reading newspapers for the populace for ten cents per person. The last land battle of the Civil War took place near Brownsville, Texas, and it was won by the Confederates. Texas was then basically occupied by Union soldiers to enforce the peace agreement. In the movie, Captain Kidd is on a danger-filled mission to return a young girl who was kidnapped by Native Americans as an infant to her last remaining family. The action is a bit too slow-paced for a Western. But “News of the World” is worth watching if only to remind us that our current period of social unrest and political partisanship is a walk in the park compared to previous periods of turmoil in American history.

**“Nine Perfect Strangers” (+)** is an eight-episode mini-series on Hulu about nine very different people who are hoping to find peace from their demons at Tranquillum House, a secluded retreat run by a mysterious wellness guru, Masha, played by Nicole Kidman. Masha’s treatments include the usual Zen rituals such as meditation. But she also spikes her guests’ breakfast smoothies. The acting is good, especially by Melissa McCarthy, Michael Shannon, and Bobby Cannavale. The series is entertaining but not a must-see.

**“No Sudden Move” (+)** is a quirky crime drama directed by Steven Soderbergh in a style reminiscent of similar quirky movies directed by the Coen brothers and Quentin Tarantino. It has something to do with stealing a top-secret 1950s document about the first design of a catalytic converter, which Detroit’s auto industry has conspired to bury. However, it has more to do with the great cast of odd-ball characters played by Don Cheadle, Benecio Del Toro, David Harbour, Jon Hamm, Ray Liotta, and Matt Damon.

**“No Time To Die” (-)** was very disappointing. The highlights were the usual thrill-packed opening of the James Bond films and a shootout in Cuba. The other car chases and shootouts weren’t thrilling at all. Daniel Craig looks totally bored once again, as he did during the previous four films in which he played Bond. This will be his last time playing 007. So far, 12 male actors have had the role in 27 movies over the past 59 years. The next 007 might be a female. Rami Malek, who was great in “Bohemian Rhapsody,” was awful as the villain in this film. He mumbled a lot. Most of the scenes could have used more lighting—unless the filmmakers were trying to hide the movie’s lame plot and dialogue? “Goldfinger” is still the best of the franchise, and Sean Connery was the best “Bond, James Bond,” of them all.

**“Nobody” (+ +)** is an amusing action film with lots of mayhem committed by a nobody by the name of Hutch Mansell, played with cool detachment by Bob Odenkirk. It was like watching an adult version of “Home Alone” with lots more lethal boobytraps. Back from the future is Christopher Lloyd, who plays Hutch’s semi-retired dad, who certainly knows how to use a semi-automatic rifle.

**“Oslo” (+ + +)** is a fascinating docudrama about the previously secret back-channel negotiations that led to the 1990s Oslo Peace Accords between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The Israelis agreed that the Palestinian Authority would have limited self-governance of parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The PLO acknowledged Israel’s legitimate right to exist. However, numerous critical issues were left unresolved and continue to cause conflict between the two sides. Nevertheless, the movie shows that peace is possible if and when both sides really want it.

**“Promising Young Woman” (+ + +)** is an enlightening movie about a very dark subject. It stars Carey Mulligan as Cassandra. She deserves an Oscar for her performance. This movie explores the uglier consequences of the all-too-wild college party and dating scenes. In Greek mythology, Cassandra was a Trojan princess whose accurate prophecies were ignored.

**“Quo Vadis, Aida?” (+ + +)** is a searing docudrama about the mass murder committed by the Serbian army in Srebrenica during 1995. When Serbian General Ratko Mladic and his soldiers invaded the town, which was supposed to be a safe zone protected by the United Nations, thousands of Bosnians fled to the UN base camp begging for protection. The movie was nominated for Best International Feature Film by the Academy Awards. In yet another sign of how clueless Hollywood is these days, the winner was a Danish film about getting drunk to find happiness.

**“Respect” (+ +)** is a biopic about the life and times of Aretha Franklin, the Queen of Soul. It really doesn't do justice to either. Instead, the movie focuses on Aretha's soulful songs, which clearly reflected the challenges she faced in her life. She was haunted by “demons” and bad relationships with various men, including her father. She contributed greatly to Martin Luther King's civil rights movement by appearing at fundraisers for his organization. Jennifer Hudson does a great job playing Aretha and belting out her songs.

**“Silk Road” (+ +)** is a crime thriller docudrama based on the true story of Ross Ulbricht, who developed Silk Road—essentially an “Amazon” for illegal drugs on the Darknet. Ulbricht built his empire from 2011 until his arrest in 2013 after attracting the attention of the FBI and DEA. In February 2015, Ulbricht was convicted of conspiracy to commit money laundering and computer hacking and to traffic fraudulent identity documents and narcotics via the Internet. In some ways, bitcoin steals the show. Ulbricht's illegal drug trades all were conducted in the cryptocurrency and recorded in the blockchain, a public log that provides anonymity to users who don't link their identities to their online “wallets.” This raises the question of why so few governments have banned the cryptocurrencies that facilitate criminal activity.

**“Squid Game” (+)** is a dystopian television series produced in South Korea and distributed worldwide by Netflix. I've watched only the first two episodes, but I thought that the show might be a cautionary tale about the Fed. While the Fed hasn't forced investors to buy stocks and bonds, lots of them have felt compelled to play the game because the alternative yields available in the money markets are close to zero thanks to the Fed's zero-interest-rate policy. Meanwhile, the gains in stocks and bonds since last March have been spectacular—all the more reason to keep playing. The Fed has provided a bright green light for investors. So the bulls continue to charge ahead, especially in the stock market, knowing that at some point the Fed will say “Red light!” Nevertheless, a lot of investors could get killed when that happens.

**“Stillwater” (-)** is a movie that turns the old proverb on its head. In this case, still waters don't run deep. It stars Matt Damon as the oil-rigger father of an American girl who was convicted of murdering her college roommate in Marseille, France. It's loosely based on what really happened to Amanda Knox in Italy. Damon's acting is stiff and one-dimensional as he does his best to find evidence of his daughter's innocence. She is played by an actress who must have studied melodrama.

**“The Courier” (+ +)** is a Cold War spy thriller based on a true story. British and American intelligence agencies had an informant in the Soviet Union who provided very valuable intelligence on his government’s plans to install nuclear missiles in Cuba during 1962. His handler was a British salesman who was recruited to act as the go-between in communications between the informant and MI6. While the Cuban Missile Crisis ended when the Soviets pulled out of Cuba, the current world geopolitical situation remains fraught with risks. The Cold War between the US and Russia is heating up again. So is the new Cold War between the US and China.

**“The Eyes of Tammy Faye” (+ + +)** is a biopic about the rise and fall of Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker, whose praise-the-Lord quirks are brilliantly portrayed by Jessica Chastain and Andrew Garfield. They rose from humble faith-based Christian beginnings to create the world’s largest religious broadcasting network and theme park. The televangelist couple was revered for their message of love, acceptance, and prosperity. Their empire came crashing down when it was toppled by financial and personal scandals. Jim Bakker was indicted, convicted, and imprisoned on numerous counts of fraud and conspiracy in 1989. Tammy divorced Jim and remarried in 1992. Chastain deserves an Oscar for her remarkable performance.

**“The Father” (+ +)** is a movie about getting old and suffering from dementia. It stars ... I just forgot ... now I remember: Anthony Hopkins. Sorry, I couldn’t resist the senior moment, though it’s obviously not a funny subject and very painful for those who suffer from the degenerative ailment and for their close relatives. Hopkins’ emotional performance is remarkable as he bounces between anger and fear over what has happened to him. Sadly, it is a movie for our times, as millions of baby boomers are aging seniors. Dementia keeps the mind from clearly seeing reality—which has become a problem throughout our society these days, resulting from increasingly deranged partisanship among people no matter their age.

**“The Flight Attendant” (+ +)** is an HBO Max mini-series starring Kaley Cuoco, who plays an alcoholic flight attendant with severe childhood-related PTSD. The show revolves around a murder mystery. The series starts off as light comic entertainment in the first few episodes. As it continues, however, the convoluted twists and turns of the plot barely come close to the ups and downs of the emotional rollercoaster so brilliantly portrayed by Cuoco. Watching her remarkable acting performance as a woman on the edge is as thrilling as watching a high-wire act with no safety net.

**“The Gentlemen” (+)** is directed by Guy Ritchie, who has previously explored the darkly comedic exploits of British gangsters. He does it again in this flick. Matthew McConaughey plays a marijuana kingpin in the UK who is trying to sell his business. Mayhem results when rival criminal gangs get involved.

**“The King” (+ +)** is a historically inaccurate war drama film based very loosely on the life and times of King Henry V of England as depicted by Shakespeare’s “Henriad,” a collection of three of the Bard’s history plays. Mel Brooks once declared, “It’s good to be the king.” The reality was that kings have always had to fear getting overthrown if not assassinated. To unite their countries behind themselves, they often started wars with other monarchies. To keep the peace, they had to lay siege to the castles of foreign monarchs or at least marry into the royal family of their adversaries. Occasionally, they ordered the beheading of their enemies and the execution of all unarmed prisoners of war. Palace intrigue came with the turf. That all seems like a very stressful occupation. So it is in this film, which has a great cast and script, even though it takes liberties with

history. If you think that we live in crazy times, this is one slice of history (among many) showing that craziness tends to be the norm. By the way, Henry V, who was a great warrior, died from battlefield dysentery. Those pesky microorganisms have been out to get us since the beginning of time. Kings have been just as vulnerable as the rest of us.

**“The Little Things” (+ +)** is a crime film with a twist. The cops are played by Denzel Washington and Rami Malek, and the psycho is played by Jared Leto. While the film fits into the serial killer genre, it doesn’t follow the usual scripted formula. It focuses more on the characters, blurring the lines between “good guys” and “bad guys.” It leaves ambiguous the questions of whether the suspect is the actual perpetrator and whether the good guys themselves become perpetrators in their passionate pursuit of justice. The warning that “it’s the little things that get you caught” is expressed several times.

**“The Many Saints of Newark” (- -)** is a fictional history of Tony Soprano, recounting the events of his childhood that would shape him into the troubled mafioso. The movie is a prequel to the long-running HBO series “The Sopranos.” It’s fun to get a little background on Tony’s wonder years. However, the movie is slow paced and mostly boring—a big disappointment. More time should have been spent on the events and people in Tony’s life that would explain why he needed to see a psychologist during his adult life.

**“The Mauritanian” (+ +)** is a docudrama based on the book Guantanamo Diary, published in 2015, which became a bestseller around the world. It was written by Mohamedou Ould Salahi, who served 14 years at Guantanamo Bay prison even though he was never charged with a crime. He was arrested from his home in Mauritania shortly after 9/11 on suspicions that he was a key recruiter for the attacks. The only link he had to the terrorists is that one of them spent a night on his couch when he was a student in Germany. Tahar Rahim admirably portrays the remarkable resilience of Salahi, who was severely tortured until he confessed. His lawyer, Nancy Hollander, is consummately played by Jodie Foster. Lt. Colonel Stuart Couch (played by Benedict Cumberbatch) seeks to defend the government’s case but discovers that Salahi’s confession was extracted under extreme duress, which made it inadmissible evidence.

**“The Mosquito Coast” (+)** is an Apple TV+ series about Allie Fox, an anti-government radical. We know that government agents are trying to track him down, but we don’t know why. He lives off the grid somewhere in America with his wife Margot and two teenage children, who are home schooled. When the agents manage to find where they are living, they are forced to escape to Mexico. The first season drags out the story, testing a viewer’s patience but managing to hold interest in where this is all going. I hope that the second season, when it airs, isn’t a big letdown. The series is a bit like watching Tony Soprano and his family going on a road trip.

**“The Serpent” (+ + +)** is a chilling docudrama based on the real-life story of Charles Sobhraj. He was a thief and murderer who preyed on clueless hippies roaming around Asia in the mid-1970s. His girlfriend was his accomplice. They befriended their victims and drugged them for a while before killing them. The evil couple stole their victims’ travelers checks and doctored their passports to cash the checks. The show reminds us to beware of cold-blooded hucksters in our midst, especially those who pretend to want to help us for our own good. They are especially dangerous when they take over countries, as we’ve seen most recently in places like China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran.



**“The Titans That Built America” (+ + +)** is a History Channel docudrama series about the remarkable entrepreneurs who transformed American industry after World War I. The new generation of Titans included Pierre Du Pont, Walter Chrysler, J.P. Morgan Jr., Henry Ford, and William Boeing. They literally drove the prosperity of the Roaring 1920s by inventing the auto industry. However, FDR attacked them as “economic royalists” to get elected as president and blamed them for the Great Depression. He then had to do an about-face when he needed their skills to build an “arsenal of democracy” to defeat Hitler. They did so, producing tens of thousands of bombers and other weapons. One of the remarkable heroes of this story is Edsel Ford.

**“The United States vs. Billie Holiday” (+ + +)** is another recent biopic/docudrama depicting Hoover’s FBI as obsessed with civil rights activists, who were deemed by Hoover to be un-American. Andra Day provides a remarkable performance as Billy Holiday, the famous blues singer. She refused to stop performing one of her signature numbers, “Strange Fruit,” a protest song about the horror of lynching. She had a serious drug problem, and the FBI used that weakness to hound her. Holiday’s chief tormentor was Harry Anslinger, the commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics.

**“The White Tiger” (+ +)** is a searing social drama on Netflix about the dark side of human nature. It’s about discrimination, corruption, violence, and income inequality. In other words, it is another sign of our times. The storyline follows the life of Balram, who grows up in a dirt-poor village in India. He aspires to become a driver for a rich family that runs a lucrative extortion racket and uses some of the proceeds to bribe local and national officials with bags full of cash. His wit and cunning land him the job, and he looks forward to a long career as an obedient servant of the clan’s youngest son and his wife. He quickly discovers that his masters abuse, rather than reward, his loyalty to them. That cements his determination to rise above his underclass status and break out of servitude. The movie implies that Balram’s entrepreneurial spirit is as rare as a white tiger, which comes along only once in a generation. That’s debatable, since what he becomes could be viewed as just another crony capitalist rather than an entrepreneurial one. You decide.

**“The Woman in the Window” (+)** is a dark crime thriller on Netflix starring Amy Adams. It is literally so dark that brightening the TV screen didn’t make any difference since it takes place in the dimly lit home of a psychologist who lives alone and rarely goes out, suffering from agoraphobia. She does have a white cat who is easy to spot. She begins spying on her new neighbors and witnesses a violent crime, which she might have imagined since she pops pills and drinks wine all day. The thriller is a bit too slow paced to be very thrilling. However, Amy Adams is a really fine actress and shines in the darkness of the film, which was originally set for release in October 2019, but was sent back for re-writes and a re-edit following audience reaction at test screenings.

**“Vertigo” (+ +)** is a 1958 psychological thriller film directed and produced by Alfred Hitchcock. It seems especially relevant today given all the head-spinning developments on so many fronts. The film is often included in the lists of greatest films ever made. This timeless classic stars Jimmy Stewart as a detective who had to retire early in his career after one case caused him to develop acrophobia (an extreme fear of heights) and vertigo. An old acquaintance hires him as a private investigator to follow his wife, who has been behaving strangely. Today, many investors are getting vertigo from following developments in Washington and some even acrophobia from the stock market’s record highs. Don’t look down!

**“West Side Story” (+ +)** is based on the classic 1957 musical conceived by Jerome Robbins with music by Leonard Bernstein and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. This film is fondly directed by Steven Spielberg. I have fond memories of the play because it marked the beginning and end of my acting career. I played Chino in the 1967 production at New Rochelle High School. The music is eternally great, and the choreography is really wonderful in this remake of the original 1961 film starring Natalie Wood.