

Straight to (C0)Video: We're finally getting around to watching these things

Sure, CES 2009 had a remote-controlled beer koozie and an indoor duck hunting game, but CES 2010 brought us TV Hat: "The hat holds your iPhone or iPod Touch in front of your face, with a lens between your eyes and the screen giving things some magnification. We're sorry we didn't grab a few for the plane ride home."

reader comments

30 with 26 posters participating

Share this story

Choice paralysis is real, and the only evidence we need sits a click or two away. Maybe the cord-cutting era has largely done away with the act of channel surfing, but many of us rack up an equally large amount of idling time these days. Rather than clicking from PBS through TNT, instead we're perusing what's available on various streaming services and saving the interesting stuff to our lists. Once something hits that list, of course, there's no guarantee it'll ever get watched anyway (perhaps making channel surfing more productive in retrospect).

But, like seemingly everything, our viewing habits and rituals have changed drastically in the last month as society settles into its temporary, at-home COVID-19 reality. Around Ars, some of us have taken advantage of the extra time in proximity of a screen and hit "play" on the stuff that has forever been "eh, I'll watch it next time." Others face new realities from ever-

present kids to newly shared selection duties that make us regret never revisiting those queued up films and shows beforehand.

All of us, however, undoubtedly have more time to think about how our streaming queues have been affected. These are those stories (*Law & Order: SVU* marathons not yet included).

[embedded content]

Have you watched episodes one and two of *The Irishman*, yet? Us, neither.

tfw, you finally have three and a half hours to spare

The Irishman (Netflix) is an obvious choice for a list like this: it's well-reviewed, it has legendary stars, and its titanic three-and-a-half-hour runtime should be less of a burden when I can't leave the house. But, yeah, that.

This isn't a controversial stance, but I'm kind of a Martin Scorsese fanboy. His highs (*Raging Bull*, *Taxi Driver*, *GoodFellas*) are almost incontrovertibly brilliant, but I've appreciated his genre work (*Shutter Island*, *Cape Fear*), period pieces (*Gangs of New York*, *The Age of Innocence*), tortured religious epics (*Silence*, *Kundun*, *The Last Temptation of Christ*), even the kid's movie (*Hugo*). *The Wolf of Wall Street* might be the most scorched-earth takedown of American greed, temptation, and self-indulgence put on film, and *The King of Comedy* might be more relevant today than it was in the early '80s. All of them are so considered, so committed on every level to furthering whatever questions Scorsese wants to ask with a given piece. I can always count on them to entertain but not pat me on the head and hand me meaning on a plate.

The Irishman is a sweeping gangster film starring Robert De Niro, so it seems to be right in Scorsese's wheelhouse. Feedback from friends has been mixed, but I'll give it the

benefit of the doubt. “I don’t have the time” is less of an excuse these days, at least for me.

–Jeff Dunn, *Commerce Editor*

- The basic premise: Claire returns from her job as a nurse in World War II, only to time travel back to eighteenth century Scotland.

Starz/Sony

- Claire (Caitriona Balfe) and Jamie (Sam Heughan) wear nothing but plaid wool in season one of *Outlander*.

Starz Entertainment/Sony Pictures Television

- Black Jack (Tobias Menzies) in the first season of *Outlander*.

Starz Entertainment/Sony Pictures Television

- A scene from *Outlander* season 2, with Claire and Jamie.

Starz Entertainment/Sony Pictures Television

- In *Outlander*’s second season, Jamie and Claire visit France and try to change history for the Jacobite rebels in the Scottish highlands.

Starz Entertainment/Sony Pictures Television

***Outlander*, and one Friday the 13th binge nightmare**

I jumped on a six-month Starz subscription in January solely so I could watch season five of *Outlander* (Hulu) in 2020. Our family has “yours, mine, and ours” entertainment, and that one is mine, *all mine*. And since not even my husband’s interested, I usually end up sneaking the show in during breaks, in chunks. Normally, weekday daytime hours have proven to be optimal, as the show’s bare Highlander bottoms and equally naked swords are not really appropriate for children.

Except, well, you know. Schools have been closed, and my children have been home with me at all times since Friday, March 13—at which point I was still only halfway through the

second episode. I've read the books, so I know what's coming, but it's driving me crazy that I have the perfect binge-watch sitting right there and can't ever bring it up.

Other shows I'm not binge-watching right now due to perpetual child presence include the third season of *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* (Amazon Prime), which has less nudity than *Outlander* but twice as many jokes and choice phrases I don't want to spend my time avoiding explaining.

—Kate Cox, *Tech Policy Reporter*

Enlarge / I mean, who among us could deny this?
Jim Salter

When at home, why not get weird?

For me, being stuck at home hasn't become so much a case of "working through saved movies" as it has become "watching the weird stuff I didn't know about." Case in point: the Major

Lazer cartoon (Hulu).

For those who aren't familiar, Major Lazer is a quasi-Caribbean electronic dance music group consisting of three DJs: Diplo, Walshy Fire, and Jillionaire. Diplo is a garden-variety white dude, Walshy Fire is Jamaican, and Jillionaire is Trinidadian.

It's sort of a "concept" music group, with album images and occasionally musical themes revolving around the exploits of a burly, quasi-military Jamaican dude whose right arm has been chopped off and replaced with an enormous laser cannon. The actual songs are all EDM club bangers, heavily influenced with Caribbean beats and instruments.

With me so far? OK, great: now that you understand what Major Lazer is, I can tell you that Diplo broke off and made a *Major Lazer* cartoon—without involving (or at least without crediting) Jillionaire or Walshy Fire.

In the cartoon, the titular pseudo-Rastafarian Major Lazer smokes tons of weed and saves music, white girls, and the world, in roughly that order. All four of these elements are important plot points—themes, if you're being generous—across the entire 11-episode (yes, *11*) run, now streaming on Hulu.

—*Jim Salter, Technology Reporter*

<https://arstechnica.com/?p=1669295>