

eos. Day (*It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*) is moderately amusing as a guy who just spins his wheels deeper as he tries to dig himself out of the mess he's created. Ice Cube does nothing but scowl. Not even the blooper reel tacked to the end of the film garners many laughs. *Fist Fight* is not a complete dud, but it does grasp at the lowest hanging fruit for its humor. (02/17/2017)

★ - Marjorie Baumgarten
ALAMO LAKELINE, ALAMO SLAUGHTER LANE, BARTON CREEK SQUARE, FLIX BREWHOUSE, HIGHLAND, GATEWAY, MOVIEHOUSE, WESTGATE

HELL OR HIGH WATER

D: David Mackenzie; with Jeff Bridges, Ben Foster, Chris Pine, Gil Birmingham, Katy Mixon, Marin Ireland. (R, 102 min.)

This West Texas crime movie barrels in with the force of a full-gale dust storm over the flat, dry plains of our parched movie summer. *Hell or High Water* is a good but not great movie with sensational lead performances that elevate it to enjoyably memorable status. We've seen all the tropes before: the bank-robbing brothers (Foster and Pine), the bloated Texas Ranger (Bridges) who's due to retire in a few weeks, the Mexican-American partner in law enforcement (Birmingham) who bears the brunt of his superior's casual racism, the Indian casinos, the loyalty to family, and signs everywhere of widespread poverty, underemployment, and the greed of bankers. But the go-for-broke performances by Bridges, Foster, and Pine are just so damned enjoyable that little impedes the fun while the movie is unfolding. (08/12/2016)

★★★★ - Marjorie Baumgarten
ARBOR, CM HILL COUNTRY GALLERIA

HIDDEN FIGURES

D: Theodore Melfi; with Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer, Janelle Monáe, Kevin Costner, Mahershala Ali, Kirsten Dunst. (PG, 127 min.)

Delightful, informative, and engaging is this story about the black women mathematicians whose work helped NASA launch the first manned vessels into orbit. Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer, and Janelle Monáe portray the three women at the core of the story, and each actress creates a captivating character. As the math prodigy Katherine Johnson, Henson plays both nerdy and feisty; Monáe is Mary Jackson, whose ambitions are stymied by her race, sex, and beauty; and Spencer is the computers' supervisor Dorothy Vaughan, who creates her own path to advancement by realizing the potential of the new IBM mainframe. While *Hidden Figures* is likable and illuminating, it is, nevertheless, routine and predictable. Competent and heartwarming, director Theodore Melfi's technique seems better suited to the TV-movie-of-the-week format than big-screen storytelling. Still, this affecting story of reclaimed history is something to enjoy and celebrate with family members of all generations. (01/06/2017)

★★★★ - Marjorie Baumgarten
ALAMO LAKELINE, ALAMO SLAUGHTER LANE, ALAMO S. LAMAR, ARBOR, BARTON CREEK SQUARE, CM HILL COUNTRY GALLERIA, FLIX BREWHOUSE, GATEWAY, MOVIEHOUSE, VIOLET CROWN, WESTGATE

I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO

D: Raoul Peck. (PG-13, 95 min.)

When the great author, essayist, and public intellectual James Baldwin died in 1987, he left behind 30 pages of an unfinished manuscript that was to be titled *Remember This House*. The book was to be a personal account of the assassinations of his friends Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King Jr., which occurred over the course of five years (1963-68). *I Am Not Your Negro* uses the words of Baldwin's manuscript to explore the genesis and depths of America's so-called "Negro problem." Haitian filmmaker Peck blends an array of historical and contemporary footage, film and television clips, still photographs, written words onscreen, and music with Baldwin's words to excavate the roots of America's self-perpetuating fantasy of itself. Baldwin is a writer whose work belongs on every bookshelf in America, and now with this film, his words can be heard on every movie screen in the land. This new essay might also be titled *Even More Notes of a Native Son*. (02/03/2017)

★★★★ - Marjorie Baumgarten
ALAMO S. LAMAR, ARBOR, VIOLET CROWN

JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2

D: Chad Stahelski; with Keanu Reeves, Common, Laurence Fishburne, Riccardo Scamarcio, Ian McShane, Ruby Rose, Lance Reddick, Peter Stormare, Claudia Gerini, Bridget Moynahan, Franco Nero. (R, 122 min.)

The second chapter to 2014's out-of-nowhere hit has the same verve and flair for inventive set-pieces as the first film. It picks up moments after the initial film ends, with an intense car chase on fuchsia-drenched streets as John

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