Physical

By Max Erin James

Growing up, moving from physical discs to digital felt convenient, saving me money, time spent driving to purchase or rent a product, and space. Finding copies somewhere throughout the vast internet was also a nice touch, although it can be tough finding content to watch without paying unless you know the right spots to look. After several warnings found in the mail, I eventually submitted to paying for streaming. Had to do less with the threat of fines and imprisonment, and more to do with the effort required to find exactly what I was looking for, and at an acceptable quality. Depending on the studio and persons involved, I also wanted to give my coin. At this point, I am a typical user of the variety of streaming services offered, with an overwhelming amount of content that left most people looking for more services to purchase since they prefer to be presented what to watch on the home screen instead of putting in the effort to search for something new that may peak their fancy. Looking at the ridiculous monthly expenses, I eventually cut back to only one service, occasionally paying for a month of another just to binge all the content released that year, then cancel it before getting hit with that second monthly charge. I am sure they will catch on as they did with password sharing, but companies are typically very late to the party, so enjoy it while you can.

One of my fondest memories, that I remember so vividly, is when my father picked my little sister and I up from elementary school one Friday to watch Spider-Man (2002). I was so excited, walking behind Dad, talking to my then-friend, Zak, bragging about this great theatrical experience I am about to have. Ended up going to the movies about two more times to watch it. My parents bought the VHS, and I rewound and watched it over and over again. I still remember staring at the VHS box in my room, thinking how cool Spider-Man looks, hand extended just before ejecting web from his wrist. This would be just about a year before we got a hold of a DVD player and bought a CD case to store all the movies we would collect, including all the special edition, multi-disc sets I would personally purchase and add to my own collection, keeping the cases to gaze at on my spare time. They lines up on my bookshelf beside the book adaptations of the movies. Maybe it was weird, but I would buy the book written for the movie, finish it within a week and watch the movie afterwards, and the movie experience was never ruined.

My love for film only grew as I aged, leading me to read screenplays, learn about writers and directors, eventually becoming a screenwriter myself, thinking up story after story that I could see playing so well on the silver screen…or black screen if it was a series. Now, at this ripe age of 29 I start to miss the touch of a CD case. Maybe it is nostalgia; maybe it is the fear of a government collapse from all the movies I have watched over the years, and I’ll need something to occupy my time in a bunker I hope to find; maybe it is to build a collection for that home I hope to have soon, hidden in the trees, away from the world, with limited internet access; maybe it is the fear of certain films becoming harder to acquire digitally as businesses try their hardest to squeeze every penny out of consumers. Whatever the reason or collection of reasons, I have found myself on the prowl for physical copies of movies and shows I hope to forever have access to. There are dozens of movies, and several shows I have purchased digitally, but considering what some people have had to deal with, losing what they have paid for because a company is choosing not to keep a license or switch up on platforms or services, I can rely on a physical copy any day. I will not be taking away my movies and discarding them into the abyss. Scorsese, Tarantino, Dickenson, Villeneuve, and Peele can stay with me. Oh, and if you find a physical copy of The Warriors, let me know. Yeah, I lost focus somewhere in the middle while reminiscing.