

## LIFE

## Movies and TV shows to binge on while waiting out the virus

When you are semi-stuck at home during an outbreak that is stretching from winter and into spring, sometimes there is very little else to do but

binge on whatever shows are available on the television.

During that time, my family of two opted to take in shows off our cable TV.

The last movie I had watched before the virus hit was *The Farewell*, the

Golden Globe award-winning movie starring Chinese-American comedian and rapper Awkwafina. The cinema was practically empty when we watched it a day into Chinese New Year.

Shortly after that, all the movie theaters shut to prevent COVID-19 from spreading.

We began trawling our VOD for movies and TV shows to kill the time.

Most of the time, we would click on the movies and put them in the archive section of our service so we can go to them at our leisure.

Normally, that means trying to buy some chips and setting aside some time to talk about the movie afterwards.

The list of movies we particularly liked includes *Knives Out* and *The Highwaymen*. For TV series, we tuned into *McMafia* and the canceled series *Me, Myself and I*.

We took in *Knives Out* one Sunday evening when we could not find anything else. I had seen the trailer, which I found intriguing.

*Knives Out* is like one of those whodunits popularized by Agatha Christie and her iconic detective Hercule Poirot. The character has appeared in 33 novels, one play and over 50 short stories between 1920 and 1975.

The flick is a flat out tribute to Christie. It features 007 star Daniel Craig as Detective Benoit Blanc investigating the apparent suicide of very rich crime novelist Harlan

Thrombey, played with delightful verve by Christopher Plummer.

The only thing that seemed a little annoying to me is listening to Craig try to speak in an accent that seems to be a cross between New Orleans, Louisiana or somewhere in Alabama. Southern drawl mixed in with a lingering British accent.

The performance by the ensemble cast, led in part by Captain America (Chris Evans), is wickedly delightful. I still think of Evans throwing that shield of his in the Marvel movies. The newest Bond girl — Cuban-Spanish actress Ana de Armas — portrays the heroine of the flick.

The whole thing was done with wit and style by *Star Wars* director Rian Johnson. The movie gives new meaning to the phrase "your family is your own worst enemy".

The other film we particularly enjoyed is *The Highwaymen*, which we took in on a Saturday afternoon in the middle of Chinese New Year.

Starring Kevin Costner and

Woody Harrelson as two aging former Texas Rangers, the film is about their pursuit of Bonnie and Clyde in Depression-era America. The weariness of the two actors drips from the flick like molasses.

The two very good actors make the film work despite the stodgy pacing, even though you kind of knew how it was going to end. The film can be overly long and I found myself sneaking off to the kitchen to make a sandwich and pour myself a Coke Zero.

Still, there were parts that were riveting, especially when the Rangers were waiting with a few other lawmen to end the career of Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow. No prisoners were taken.

The TV series *McMafia* is a slow-motion depiction of how the son of a Russian gangster transforms from a well-heeled London investment banker into a crime lord. We watched this over a series of days and took about a week because we were not in a hurry to finish it off.

It took about 8 episodes before

the transformation of the lead actor was done. The only thing I did not like was that I wish the actor portraying the lead, James Norton, would show more emotion other than the stony-face he put on like a mask throughout.

On the sentimental side, *Me, Myself and I* is a series that has been canceled in the United States.

The show focuses on the life of a man who was 14 years old in 1991, 40 during the present day and then 65 years old in 2042. The man's name is Alex Riley.

The 14-year-old is acted out by Jack Dylan Grazer, 40-year-old Riley is portrayed by comedian Bobby Moynihan and the 65-year-old version is played by veteran actor John Larroquette.

The episode switches from one story line to the next. The plots range from childhood crushes to going gaga over *Star Wars*.

An abiding theme is that Riley, in all his age groups, is a fanatic of the Chicago Bulls led by Michael Jordan and he absolutely detests

the Los Angeles Lakers.

The series had 13 episodes, is endearing and just grows on you. But the ratings did not catch on in the US and the show was axed a few years back.

There were other shows during the time we were in practical quarantine like *The Mandalorian* and a Netflix movie that is so familiar: *The Pandemic*. I even got started on *Westworld* and *Humans*, a pair of series set in a near future where synthetic androids are your next must-have entertainment devices or household appliances.

At this time, I am now trying to work my way through *Picard*, reliving my days as a long-time Trekkie. I am up to episode 5 and waiting for the rest to drop in.

Winter is almost over, but bingeing never seems to go out of style. As Spock says oh so long ago in a different Trekkie universe, "Live Long and Prosper."

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## Candid camera: A special day out



Residents enjoy their leisure time by the East Lake in Wuhan, Hubei province, on Saturday. As the city's lockdown will be lifted on April 8, life is getting back to normal. WANG JING / CHINA DAILY



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## New York nurse talks of challenges

By ZHAO XU in New York  
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"The youngest patient I've handled over the past few weeks was just one-month-old. She had tests but I don't know the result, because the next day I began a long-overdue break from work, if only to get better prepared for tougher days ahead," said a nurse from the Elmhurst Hospital Center in Queens, New York, last Thursday.

As she talked, news emerged that 13 people had died of COVID-19 within the previous 24 hours in the hospital.

The nurse, who agreed to speak on condition of anonymity, was back at work last Saturday, the day when the New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo warned New Yorkers to gird for a "war" as the state-wide death toll soared by 209 from 519 over the previous 24 hours, bringing the total number to 728. As of Sunday night, that number stood at 965.

"The current situation is: if you are experiencing minor symptoms including coughing, headache and fever, you will not be tested and will be asked to go directly into self-quarantine at home," said the nurse. "We test those who are suffering from chest pain and breathing difficulties — clear signs that the patient's condition has deteriorated."

"On a number of occasions, a patient who had slight discomfort and had been turned away comes back a week later, having developed more severe symptoms," she continued. "On other occasions, they keep coming back out of anxiety."

Largely populated by people of Hispanic, Chinese, Indian and Paki-



Charity organization Samaritan's Purse sets up an emergency field hospital in New York's Central Park on Sunday. JEENAH MOON / REUTERS

stani origin, Elmhurst is a typical working-class neighborhood where more than two-thirds of the residents were born outside of the United States.

According to the nurse, who lives in Elmhurst, the current coronavirus crisis has hit the neighborhood hard, keeping in mind the limited numbers of means many have for self-quarantine.

"In this part of New York, it was not uncommon for a family of four or even five to be crammed into a one-bedroom apartment. This has made effective self-quarantine difficult, even if one is willing to wear a mask all day long," she said.

John Thomson is a veteran diplomat who was first stationed in Beijing in 1978, to prepare for the normalization of the relationship between China and the US.

"I think shelter at home is a mistake," he said, referring to the widely-adopted practice in the US where

the non-critically infected patients are required to be quarantined at home. "We need to have those large, temporary housing areas like they (the Chinese) did in Wuhan. When you put everyone who's not a critical case on effective quarantine and appropriate care, you're able to stretch it out and avoid the most-feared scenario as has happened in Italy."

The hospital nurse, who lives in Elmhurst with her parents and two children, said that the local Chinese population has been hit less hard compared to other ethnic groups.

"The Chinese have generally been more aware of the imminent danger due to the fact that the disease had caused immense suffering in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, before the alarm was raised here," she said. "They, therefore, got better prepared, through limiting their outings at a relatively earlier stage of the outbreak in the US, and through

wearing masks long before it was recommended by officials and medical experts in this country."

But that doesn't mean that the Chinese are not feeling the scourge of the pandemic. In fact, the nurse, who's an ethnic Chinese, said that she herself feels the pang of angst from time to time.

"I ask myself: what if one day I go to the hospital and I'm told that there are not enough masks?" she said. Currently, the doctors and nurses are given one N95 mask for a day, which means that very often a mask has to be taken off and worn again more than once a day.

A man who identified himself as a New York State emergency medical technician recently tweeted about his own experience. Feeling unwell, he was told by doctors to stay at home for 14 days without getting a test, while his boss was hoping that he could get back to work within 72 hours given the number of patients who are in desperate need of the service.

The Elmhurst Hospital Center has been getting donations of medical masks and gowns from various sources, including members of the local Chinese-American society. Due to a lack of ventilators at the hospital, two patients have to share one.

Earlier at a press conference, Cuomo blamed "non-compliance" for the worsening of the situation and begged all to stay at home and fulfill their "public health responsibility," to use his words.

"I don't know what's going on in the head of those who had consistently ignored the warnings," said the nurse. "They only need to take a look at what we are going through now."

## 'Rose couple' see dreams blossom

GUIYANG — Although the warm spring is not the harvest season of *Rosa chinensis*, known commonly as the Chinese rose, Haohuahong township, located in Southwest China's Guizhou province, is now filled with blooms and fragrance.

Haohuahong was a small and undeveloped town in the mountainous area of Bouyei-Miao autonomous prefecture of Qian-nan. That was until the unremitting efforts of one couple over the past few years changed the fate of the town.

Zhou Hongying and Jin Ping are researchers from the Guizhou Botanical Garden of the provincial academy of sciences. They have been dubbed as "the rose couple" by local residents.

Having started work in the botanical garden in 1988, Zhou and her team had carried out decades of research on rose species which can adapt to the unique climate, the high humidity and limited sunshine in Guizhou.

Many research programs were located in Haohuahong township, however, the development of the flower industry was slow due to a lack of systematic technical support.

In 2016, Zhou and Jin were invited to the town with their advanced planting technique, but things were not as simple as they expected.

Zhou found that Haohuahong has fertile land, but the Chinese rose cannot endure the excessive water in the soil, but she didn't want to give up.

"My husband kept encouraging me, and we decided to try it out," says Zhou, who overcame many challenges with her team in the following years and managed to grow over 20 hectares of roses in a flower industry demonstration

park from 2016, which has now become the largest rose park in the province that integrates flower viewing, leisure and entertainment.

Meanwhile, Zhou also shared their experience and achievement with other places across the province, to promote the development of the provincial flower industry.

The town now has over 333 hectares of flower and plant cultivation areas and flower growing has become its pillar industry.

"It is a labor-intensive industry, which needs about 30,000 to 40,000 workers per year," says Luo Jixiang, head of the town, adding that before the couple came, the planting scale of flowers and plants was only 66 hectares.

In 2018, Haohuahong township held the first Chinese rose exhibition, which attracted more than 10,000 tourists and generated tourism revenue of 50 million yuan (\$7.1 million) within days, according to Luo.

Since tourism in the countryside has become more popular, the couple and local residents are busy preparing for the province's first rose festival, which is scheduled to open in Huishui county, which administers Haohuahong township.

Aside from fresh flowers, Zhou has worked with enterprises to develop rose-related products such as wine and enzymes, and also joined hands with the local government to introduce more technologies and draw rural residents into the industry.

Statistics showed that more than 50,000 rural residents, including over 7,000 poor people, are engaged in the industry across the province.

XINHUA

## Online platform aids medics in pandemic

HANGZHOU — Online platforms have become an important channel for doctors across the globe to join forces in the fight against the novel coronavirus disease.

Over 490 medical institutions from 109 countries and regions have applied to join the Global MediXchange for Combating COVID-19 program — an online platform jointly set up by Jack Ma Foundation and Alibaba Foundation — to fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

Most are medical institutions and practitioners in the United States, Turkey, Britain, Pakistan, Spain and Germany.

Designed for medics around the world to communicate and share experiences on treating COVID-19, GMCC provides doctors with free teleconferencing and live chat.

Medical practitioners can either communicate individually or in a

group chat with the help of an artificial intelligence translator that can interpret real-time in 11 languages. Doctors at the First Hospital of Zhejiang province, for instance, have shared information with medics from 44 countries on the platform.

"Knowledge is power! We launched an online platform for doctors and nurses around the world to exchange ideas, lessons and know-how to fight the virus. We welcome all hospitals to join Chinese hospitals on this open platform," Ma tweeted on Thursday.

Chinese medical institutions that have joined the platform include Zhongnan Hospital of Wuhan University, which now takes charge of Wuhan Leishenshan Hospital — a makeshift hospital built in less than two weeks to treat COVID-19 patients.

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