

Aladdin, Red Joan and Rafiki

 By [Daniel Dercksen](#)

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Films opening in South African cinemas this week are the live-action remake of Disney's *Aladdin*; *Red Joan*; *Rafiki*; *Long Shot*; and *India's Most Wanted*.

Aladdin

Loosely based on a Middle Eastern folktale from *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights*, *Aladdin* is a timeless story, and, as luck would have it, was one Disney was looking to revive as well. It tells the exciting tale of charming street rat Aladdin (Mena Massoud) – who is eager to leave his life of petty thievery behind, believing he is destined for greater things – and the courageous and self-determined Princess Jasmine (Naomi Scott) along with the Genie (Will Smith) who may be the key to their future.

Directed by Guy Ritchie from a screenplay by John August and Ritchie based on Disney's *Aladdin* animation screenplay by Ron Clements and John Musker and Ted Elliott and Terry Rossio, Alan Menken provides the score, which includes new recordings of the original songs written by Menken and lyricists Howard Ashman and Tim Rice and new music written by Menken and songwriters Benj Pasek and Justin Paul.

Read more [here](#).

Red Joan

It stars Judi Dench as an elderly lady living a quiet life in suburbia at the turn of the millennium whose tranquil life is suddenly disrupted when she's arrested by MI5 and accused of providing intelligence to Communist Russia.

In 1938 where Joan (Sophie Cookson) was a Cambridge physics student who falls for young communist Leo Galich and through him, begins to see the world in a new light. Working at a top-secret nuclear research facility during WWII, Joan comes to the realisation that the world is on the brink of mutually-assured destruction. Confronted with an impossible question – what price would you pay for peace? – Joan must choose between betraying her country and loved ones or saving them.

Directed by Trevor Nunn from an adapted screenplay by Lindsay Shapero and based on Jennie Rooney's best-selling novel of the same name – which was inspired by a true story.

Read more [here](#).

Rafiki

Kenyan director Wanuri Kahiu's film represents political filmmaking at its most crucial, centring a sweet queer love story in the middle of a small town election. The film follows two stylish teens, Kena (Samantha Mugatsia) and Ziki (Sheila Munyiva), who crush on each other despite their families' political rivalry. When love blossoms between them, they must contend with small-town busybodies and the judgment of their conservative society.

The film is inspired by Ugandan Monica Arac de Nyeko's 2007 Caine Prize-winning short story "Jambula Tree". The film's title *Rafiki* (meaning "friend" in Swahili) was chosen because partners in a same-sex relationship – due to homophobia – often need to introduce their partner as a "friend".

Long Shot

At the heart of this laugh-out-loud comedy about an epic romantic mismatch is a charming fairy-tale premise for our times. Charlotte Field (Charlize Theron) is a bold, brilliant woman about to run for leader of the world. Fred Flarsky (Seth Rogen) is a renegade Brooklyn journalist who can barely run his life. Can they really find happiness together?

The two have nothing in common, except that she was his babysitter and childhood crush. When Fred unexpectedly reconnects with Charlotte, he charms her with his self-deprecating humour and his memories of her youthful idealism.

As she prepares to make a run for the presidency, Charlotte impulsively hires Fred as her speechwriter, much to the dismay of her trusted advisors. A fish out of water on Charlotte's elite team, Fred is unprepared for her glamorous lifestyle in the limelight. However, sparks fly as their unmistakable chemistry leads to a round-the-world romance and a series of unexpected and dangerous incidents.

From the celebrated team of Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg – creators of outrageous comedy hits, including *This Is the End* and *Neighbors* – it is directed by Jonathan Levine from a screenplay by Dan Sterling and Liz Hannah. Story by Dan Sterling.

India's Most Wanted

Five unlikely heroes embark on a dangerous covert operation to capture one of India's deadliest terrorists in this Bollywood action-thriller directed by Raj Kumar Gupta starring Arjun Kapoor.

The film is about tracking a terrorist in a secret mission and arresting him without firing bullets. It pays tribute to unsung heroes of our society and is inspired from the arrest of proscribed organisation Indian Mujahideen (IM) terrorist Abdul Subhan Qureshi (also known as India's Osama) in January 2018 by Delhi Police

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