

# MVAH ZOOM Movie Club

June 15, 2021 3pm

Next movie club: July 20th at 3PM

## Attendees:

Host: Barbara Brennan

Cher Terry
Betsy Stephens (in absentia)
Louise and Bob McClean
Carol and Joe Mattaino
Kathi Hanrahan

### Movie 1. Zookeepers Wife

**MVAH Movie Club Average rating: 4.9 out of 5.**

– Netflix - 2017 Historical fiction – based on a true story – there is a book of the same name. As war brews over in 1939 Warsaw, and while life is still running its course, the Germans are gradually making their presence felt, with Adolf Hitler secretly preparing for the invasion of Poland. Under those volatile circumstances, the couple of Jan Zabinski and Antonina Zabinska continue with their daily routine as owners of the Warsaw Zoo; however, their life's work, and the city, will turn to ashes when the Luftwaffe's horrific Stukas begin to hammer the capital. Now, with the zoo liquidated for the war effort, and many of its animals tragically perished, what was once a menagerie, will now serve as a sanctuary, where the pair of veterinarians can hide the persecuted Polish-Jewish people in plain sight. Indeed, that was the dangerous plan of the two altruists, who, regardless of the consequences, refused to wither before the Nazi menace, and sheltered three hundred Jewish men, women, and children right under the noses of the enemy. Will the world remember the zookeeper's wife?

### Movie 2. Ma Rainey's Black Bottom

**MVAH Movie Club Average rating: 4.7 out of 5.**

Ma Rainey's Black Bottom

Screenplay by Ruben Santiago-Hudson

Based on Ma Rainey's Black Bottom by August Wilson

Starring Viola Davis Chadwick Boseman Glynn Turman Colman Domingo Michael Potts

Music by Branford Marsalis

Viola Davis and Chadwick Boseman both Oscar nominees for best actress and actor. Tensions and temperatures rise over the course of an afternoon recording session in 1920s Chicago as a band of musicians await trailblazing performer, the legendary “Mother of the Blues,” Ma Rainey (Academy Award® winner Viola Davis). Late to the session, the fearless, fiery Ma engages in a battle of wills with her white manager and producer over control of her music. As the band waits in the studio’s claustrophobic rehearsal room, ambitious cornet player Levee (Chadwick Boseman) — who has an eye for Ma’s girlfriend and is determined to stake his own claim on the music industry — spurs his fellow musicians into an eruption of stories revealing truths that will forever change the course of their lives.

## July Movies

### **Movie 1. Guernsey literary & potato peel & pie society** - 2017– Netflix

In 1946 a London-based writer begins exchanging letters with residents on the island of Guernsey, which was German-occupied during WWII. Feeling compelled to visit the island, she starts to get a picture of what it was like during the occupation.

### **Movie 2. Nomadland** - 2020– Amazon Winner of Best Actress (Frances McDermott). Best Movie and Best Director 2020 Academy Awards

Nomadland, written and directed by Chloé Zhao is based on a book of the same name by Jessica Bruder. The 2017 nonfiction book is a sweeping account of post-recession contemporary nomads like the fictional Fern. While researching the book, Bruder spent years following nomads across the country, and in doing so, showcased an invisible but significant portion of the American workforce. The author spent months living in a secondhand van, which she named “Halen,” in an effort to better understand her subjects, like Linda May and Swankie, who play themselves in the movie. Nomadland’s loosely unfolding narrative follows Fern as she navigates life on the road, working several jobs, meeting and befriending fellow nomads and adjusting to her new normal. “The filmmakers refer to Frances as a docent, which I really love,” Bruder tells TIME. “She guides us down this road, and we meet all these people. We follow her narrative, but she’s also this backbone, and all these other things spoke off of her story.” Like in Zhao’s previous films Songs My Brothers Taught Me and The Rider, the director cast non-professional actors, in this case real-life nomads, to play versions of themselves. In adapting the book for the screen, Zhao told Deadline that the real-life elements helped shape the character of Fern. “Everything happens simultaneously, because once we meet someone like Swankie, we realize she has to be in the film, and that informs the journey that Fern is going to take,” Zhao said.