

# Blindspotting, Dumplin', Luis and the Aliens



By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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This week at the cinema: *Blindspotting* looks at race and class in the rapidly gentrifying American city of Oakland; a young woman rebels against her mother and ends up revolutionising a beauty pageant in *Dumplin'*; a 12-year-old makes some otherworldly friends in *Luis and the Aliens*.

## Blindspotting

Lifelong friends Daveed Diggs and Rafael Casal co-wrote and star in *Blindspotting*, a timely and wildly entertaining story about the intersection of race and class set against the backdrop of a rapidly gentrifying Oakland.

Bursting with energy, style, and humour and infused with the spirit of rap, hip-hop, and spoken word, *Blindspotting* - boldly directed by Carlos López Estrada in his feature film debut - is a provocative hometown love letter that glistens with humanity.

A story about a man trying to stay out of trouble for just three days in a rapidly changing and charged Oakland, *Blindspotting* walks a tightrope. From its hilarious but hellaciously tense opening moments, the film pulses to the vibrant beat and energy of Oakland, yet bristles with urban fury and fears that can explode at any moment. From that

incendiary mix of opposites comes something unexpected.

Collin (Diggs) must make it through his final three days of probation for a chance at a new beginning. He and his troublemaking childhood best friend, Miles (Casal), work as movers, and when Collin witnesses a police shooting, the two men's friendship is tested as they grapple with identity and their changed realities in the rapidly-gentrifying neighbourhood they grew up in.

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## Dumplin'

Dumplin' (Danielle Macdonald) is the plus-size, teenage daughter of a former beauty queen (Jennifer Aniston) who signs up for her mom's pageant as a protest that escalates when other contestants follow her footsteps, revolutionising the pageant and their small Texas town.

The film is directed by Anne Fletcher.

## Luis and the Aliens

Growing up as half-orphan with a ufologist dad (Armin Sonntag) who's obsessed to prove to the whole world that aliens exist, 12-year-old Luis hasn't had an easy and certainly not a normal life. As nobody believes Armin Sonntag, not even Luis, it's quite a big surprise when one day, three awkward little aliens (Mog, Nag, and Wabo) crash-land right in front of Luis. Excited and without bias, Luis wants to show his dad his discovery and finds out that his father would 'shockfrost' his new friends.

Meanwhile, the school principal suspects that Luis cannot be getting the attention and upbringing from his father that the boy needs and decides that Luis should be sent to a boarding school. A wild adventure starts when Luis and his friends from outer space try to reach the huge mothership, to bring the aliens home. And perhaps Luis should just leave with them to get away from all these problems here on Earth.

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## ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit [www.writingstudio.co.za](http://www.writingstudio.co.za)

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