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## LETTER FROM THE GUEST EDITOR: VINCENT D. VILEIN

Greetings readers and bleeders. I am honored to have been asked to take on the reigns of guest editor for this issue. I know that some of you may be wondering just who the fuck I am. Well a little about me: while first and foremost I am a whore for horror, I am currently in the process of selling my first feature length screenplay *Diddling the Devil's Pussy*, I have also self-published a semi-autobiographical children's book entitled *Poop on Pop*, and if Freddy showed up while I was sleeping it would most certainly be a wet dream.

My love for all things that go bump and hump in the night began when my mom let me rent *The Karate Kid II*. Inside was a copy of *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> Part V*. And let me tell you, it was a new beginning for my young and incredibly impressionable mind. I was provided with more than enough spank and shank material with this entry in the classic slasher series. But don't worry, I eventually got to see *Karate Kid II* much later and got some more spank material in the form of the hottie Tamlyn Tomita.

This issue we go obscure. We go so obscure it's like we're a Where's Waldo illustration seen from ten yards away during the hour of the wolf. We're the girl who was hiding in the attic in the building next to the one Anne Frank was in.

We're like the pop quiz on the audio book version of *Gravity's Rainbow*

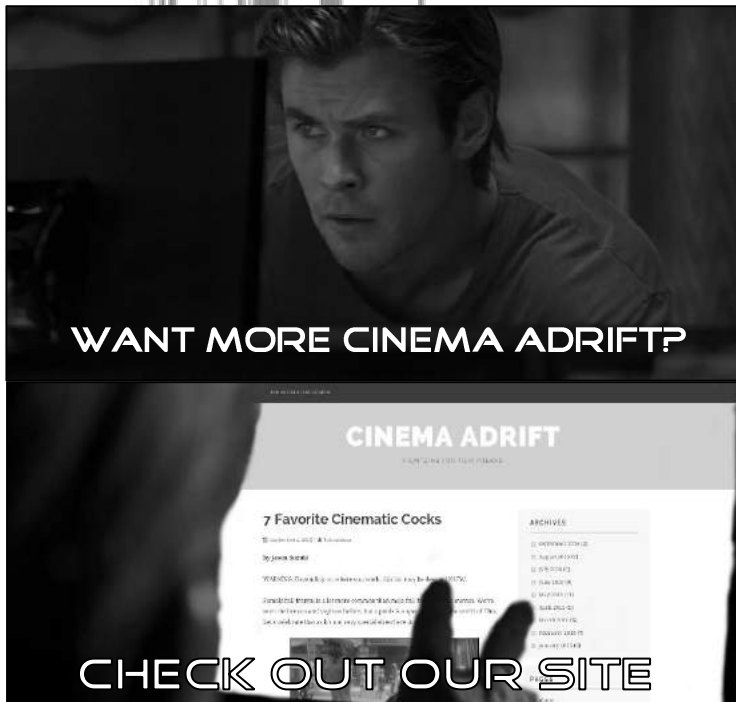
translated into Khitan. This swan dive into the shot glass that is hidden gems of cinema all leads back to a celebration of all things horror: from the in your face gore to the genre's inherent penchant for subtext.

Inside this issue you will find all sorts of goodies from a throw down between those sickest of omnibus films *The ABCs of Death* to a look at whether the quality of horror films is determined by the political affiliation of the president at time of release. We have book recommendations if you're into that and a shout out to an underrated TV show. And as is usually the case, the stuff in the backside is the juiciest; we have collected a series of film writings/praise pieces that we have categorized into three sections, each one getting deeper into the anal (lol) of horror.

Also throughout make sure to stop and smell the fake VHS cover art, each one lovingly thought up by their respective artist.

Hope you enjoy this special edition of Sin Enema Adrift.

-Vincent D. Vilein



### Vincent's Celebrity Crush

**Sandra Peabody**  
(*Last House on the Left*,  
*Massage Parlor Murders*)

"I'd let her pee on  
my body."

-Vincent D. Vilein





Demons (Lamberto Bava, 1985)

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## Should we vote Republican to ensure another horror film renaissance?

by Jason Suzuki

Rebranded from his column Thinking Out Loud, itself a version of his blog My Thoughts and Me, a spin-off of his bi-weekly advice column Electronics and You.

The short answer is, of course, no. You don't even have to vote to ensure that next horror film renaissance. But for some it's enticing to try and find a link between horror films and American politics, or rather a specific political party. One theory proposes a correlation between zombie films with Republican presidents and vampire films with Democrats. In an article from 2008, Peter Rowe cherry picks his way to support the correlation, even going so far as to including *Dracula: Dead and Loving It* as one of the many (he only lists three others) vampire films to emerge during the Clinton administration. While the theory is fun and interesting, all defenses of it throw out numbers of films produced as evidence but include no list of the films included in the zombie or vampire count. Annalee Newitz, editor of io9.com suggests as the reason why for this correlation that, "Democrats, who want to redistribute wealth to 'Main Street,' fear the Wall Street vampires who bleed the nation dry," Newitz notes that *Dracula* arose from aristocracy and, "Republicans fear a revolt of the poor and disenfranchised, dressed in rags and coming to the White House to eat their brains." This suggests that filmmakers have no personal alignments with their material willing to reflect hypothetical viewpoints those in power may have rather than catering to the audience who will actually see these films.

From this theory comes a more general one: that booms in horror film in general, not just the zombie ones, come during Republican presidencies. Stuart Gordon sums up this line of thought the best:

"There is a theory, that the more repressive the society is the more extreme horror movies become and the more popular they become. It's very interesting that the last big horror boom was in the 80s during the Reagan administration. And now we've got another one under Bush. There's even some people who say that the horror movie renaissance is the result of 9/11. That everyone expected after 9/11 that people were going to be shying away from anything that was scary to comedies and romances and so forth. The opposite proved to be true. There's so much fear in the world now that people really need horror movies to get the stuff out of their systems."

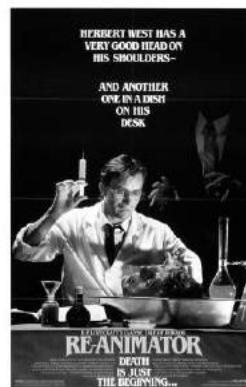
This theory uses era like the 50s, 30s, and 20s as evidence as well, ignoring the party's evolution to the modern day version where social conservatism takes precedence over that of the fiscal variety. So to better put it: there is a link to horror with times of repression throughout the ages.

With this theory it turns out you have to do a lot of cherry picking to support it. And what determines a horror renaissance? Is it the quality of films or the quantity produced? Is it the attendance of those films or the critical reception? Something like *Cabin in the Woods* was written during the tail end of the Bush administration, filmed during the beginning of Obama's tenure in office, and not released until 2012; released to great fanfare and critical acclaim, more than making its budget back. Elements of surveillance might resonate

in a post-Patriot Act era but what can we say could have changed from script to production and then to release?

If we look at the amount of films produced as an indicator then how do we adjust for copycats? Films that latch onto another film's success or trend with no consideration for making a commentary on current events. The more accessible camera equipment has become the easier it is for people to make films with *The Blair Witch Project* and *Paranormal Activity* as paragons. Anyone can potentially make an effective found footage film which is at an all-time high during the Obama administration. It's not a horror renaissance but a renaissance for a subgenre, in other words a fad.

Looking at something in this way is inherently flawed, but it speaks to the wish that viewing habits and film production are largely influenced by the need to reflect some sort of social concern. It's a refusal to believe that horror movies have always largely been successful thanks to their low budgets and loyal fan bases, and the studios will always be behind surefire moneymakers. Horror films exploit personal fears like clowns, heights, and being watched, and even on a more general level death itself. So if horror films thrive on such individual fears then why can't they also thrive on collective fears as well?



Stuart Gordon's two masterpieces, *Re-Animator* and *From Beyond*, both made during the Reagan era.

Instead of repressions it seems like fears are just as strong a creative force. Steven Spielberg's 2005 remake of *The War of the Worlds* was a major departure for the director of *E.T.* (Reagan) and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (Carter); a director who wanted to portray aliens as friendly instead of the usual reactionary, xenophobic view that poses extraterrestrial life as a threat to humanity. But following 9/11 Spielberg made his *War of the Worlds* with Tom Cruise, a film whose protagonist is not our hero but rather a coward who manages to keep him and his family alive by luck and running away. A director who once stayed true to his optimistic stance on aliens through the Carter and Reagan



administration now turns on it, “I’m more cynical in the new century than I was in the 1980s and ‘70s. It’s time for me to show the dark side of space.” Is this the cynicism of an old man, much like when you compare the pessimism of *Yojimbo* and *Throne of Blood* with the pessimism of *Ran*? Or is indicative of something else? There are many threads to consider when examining the viewpoint of a film.

The other question is what constitutes a horror renaissance? Is it the quality of films or the amount produced? The attendance of these films, which in turn would influence the amount produced. Something like *Cabin in the Woods* was written during the tail end of the Bush administration, filmed during the start of Obama’s tenure in office, and not released until 2012 to great fanfare and critical acclaim. And if we look at the amount of film produced as an indicator then how do we look at copycats? Films that latch onto another film’s success or a trend with no consideration for conveying a message.

Something must also be said that if horror films are a way of breaking from repression it is a repression of violence. The usual for a horror film is sex and gore, but when the gore is the result of punishment for sex it suggests that while our fears are being expressed by the scares, they are reflecting a reward for abstinence. A trope established/most commonly associated with the 80’s slasher fad. And if repression is our indicator then Japan’s horror boom would be constant.

There are certainly films that work as catharsis for the repressed, rebellions against good taste. The PMRC of then is the PC police of today. Standards for proper behavior are always enforced by those in power, so films meant as reactions will always be produced. During Reagan’s time in office two interesting films were made, each on opposite sides of the aisle yet both well done and able to use genre to convey its viewpoint. They

were *Alone in the Dark* from 1982 and the much more well-known *They Live* (1988) from John Carpenter. *They Live* is an indictment of Reagan-era conservative values and issues with conformity while *Alone in the Dark* is an indictment of what it sees as another form of conformity, that of Reagan-era liberalism. It’s most brilliant aspect is how a group of escapees from the mental institution (led by Jack Palance) find that they fit right on in with the punks and the protesters.

Regardless of whether you agree with the films or not, these are quintessentially what these theories are getting at, that horror films have the power for quite a bit of subtext. The other-worldly qualities



**“We were all sick fucks in that movie.”  
-Jack Palance on his time filming *Alone in the Dark*.**

of the genre, which have always and will always lie outside the boundaries of pomp and good taste, give unique spins to potentially tired viewpoints. You’re never going to see a horror film nominated for an Oscar despite having the potential to be just as political, and just as skillful or didactic about it as films like *American Sniper*, *Selma*, and *The Imitation Game* pulling just from last year’s Best picture nominees.

Jason Suzuki is a contributor to Cinema Adrift. He is voting for the Green Party in the hope of a Ralph Nader documentary renaissance.





# 31 Days of Halloween

31 films in 31 days. HERE IS A CALENDAR TO HELP  
YOU PLAN YOUR MONTH.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

## NEWS: ARGENTO RESTORED

In December of this year we can expect the definitive edition of Argento's ***Deep Red*** (1975) from Arrow Video. Their brand new 4K restoration will be housed in a limited edition 3-disc set which includes 2 Blu-ray discs with both Director's and International Theatrical Cut, but a third disc with the complete original soundtrack.

On the other side of the pond we have Don May Jr. and his Synapse Films working on restorations of three Argento titles: ***Tenebrae*** (1982), ***Phenomena*** (1985), and ***Suspiria*** (1977). Being a passion project for May these will almost certainly be definitive editions as well. When asked what Argento title will be released first Synapse states the order of ***Tenebrae***, ***Phenomena***, and then ***Suspiria***.

## Weekly Suggestions for Your 31 Days of Halloween:

Slasher Sundays

(*Graduation Day*, *Final Exam*)

Bava Mondays

(*Rabid Dogs*, *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*)

Naughty Tuesdays

(*Vampyros Lesbos*, *Nekromantik*)

Hammer Wednesdays

(*The Hound of the Baskervilles*, *The Mummy*,  
*Taste the Blood of Dracula*)

In Memoriam Thursdays

(*Shocker*, *Wes Craven's New Nightmare*)

Freaky Fridays

(*Lake Mungo*, *The Vanishing* (1988))

Silent Saturdays

(*Der Golem*, *A Page of Madness*)





*A is for Apocalypse*  
(Nacho Vigalondo)



Both of these shorts are great ways to start off this alphabet journey but the one that hits the hardest, and uses its setting to explore more personal and trivial horrors (as the director has done in the past), is *Apocalypse*. Katz, who made the great *Cheap Thrills*, does deliver a really funny film. Slight bias towards Vigalondo.



*A is for Amateur*  
(E.L. Katz)

**A**



*B is for Bigfoot*  
(Adrian Garcia Bogliano)

**B**

*B is for Badger*  
(Julian Barratt)

*Badger* is our first encounter with the "punch line short film" so prevalent in the two films. *Bigfoot* wins out by not being a punch line but being a clever twist on what happens to the people who make up stories to frighten kids just to have sex in peace. Slight bias towards Bogliano.



*C is for Cycle*  
(Ernest Diaz Espinoza)

**C**

*C is for Capital Punishment*  
(Julian Gilbey)

While neither short is awe-inducing, *Cycle* is striving for something greater even though it doesn't entirely succeed. Diaz Espinoza has always reworked favorite genres and here he takes on the paradox narrative.



*D is for Dogfight*  
(Marcel Sarmiento)



*D is for Deloused*  
(Robert Morgan)

**D**

Our first letter where both films are very strong, *Deloused* is so bizarre that you have to like it. But for something totally visceral and works more as a complete narrative than a half-assed arc or punch-line, the win has to go to *Dogfight*.



*E is for Exterminate*  
(Angela Bettis)

**E**

*E is for Equilibrium*  
(Alejandro Bruges)

While both go for the laughs, and both are nothing special, *Equilibrium* has more cheese. And apparently the effects for Bettis' short were done by a Colorado company.



*F is for Fart*  
(Noboru Iguchi)

**F**



*F is for Falling*  
(Aharon Keshales and Navot Papushado)



*G is for Gravity*  
(Andrew Traucki)



*Gravity* is a slow burn showing us a POV of someone committing suicide. It's low key nature is a rare commodity amongst these films and ends up giving it an edge over *Grandad* which also wants to perplex you as to what you just saw but is not as successful.

*G is for Grandad*  
(Jim Hosking)



16

THE FOLLOWING FEATURE FILM W  
FROM AROUND THE WORLD. EACH  
OF THE ALPHABET AND ASI

THEY THEN CREATED A SHORT TA  
THEIR CHOSEN WORD. THEY HAD  
REGARDING THE CONTEN

In the hopes of creating  
a better alphabet of  
death we pit the *ABCs of  
Death* against its sequel  
and see which film wins  
letter by letter.

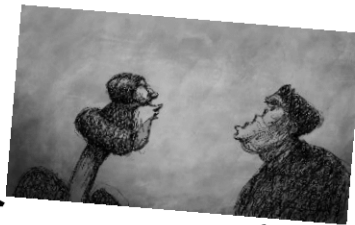






**H** is for Hydro-Electric Diffusion  
(Thomas Malling)

Plympton's is one of the strongest animated pieces in the series so far but Malling's film is basically a live action Tex Avery cartoon. The execution of *Hydro-Electric Diffusion* would make for a welcome feature length.



**H** is for Head Games  
(Bill Plympton)

**I** is for Ingrown  
(Jorge Michel Grau)



**I** is for Invincible  
(Erik Matti)

Jorge Michel Grau used the invitation to make a short as a way to get a political message out in regards to the number of women being murdered in Mexico. While you wouldn't know this until you see the credits which read: 2015 women murdered in the last 10 years in Mexico, 200 women a month, the horror is not on the screen. The piece is upsetting enough just on its narrative level. Its social level is a welcome change of pace for the series.

**With any anthology film there is going to be winners and losers. But what if we were to create even more winners and losers from the winners and the losers?**



**J** is for Jidai-geki  
(Yudai Yamaguchi)



**J** is for Jesus  
(Dennison Ramalho)

While *I is for Ingrown's* politics might not have been revealed enough, *J is for Jesus* makes them too obvious, amounting to nothing more than a shallow revenge fantasy. Yamaguchi's piece makes a mockery of the *seppuku* practice as the samurai charged with slicing off the disgraced's head finds his painful face contortions hilarious. Another good use of makeup for cartoon-esque visuals.

**WAS CREATED BY 26 DIRECTORS  
I DIRECTOR WAS GIVEN A LETTER  
I HAD TO CHOOSE A WORD.**

**THE FILM OF DEATH THAT RELATED TO  
GAVE COMPLETE ARTISTIC FREEDOM  
TO EACH OF THEIR SEGMENTS.**

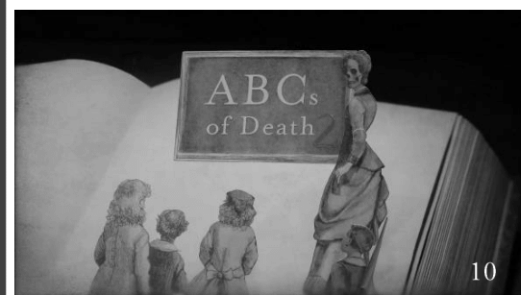


**K** is for Klutz  
(Anders Morgenthaler)



**K** is for Knell  
(Kristina Buozyte and Bruno Samper)

*Klutz* was yet another instance of when the first *ABCs of Death* went for the toilet humor (the avoidance of which apparently became the only rule for the second go around), and not even the best of potty stuff. *Knell* on the other hand is one of the best shorts to come out of the films; something that's abstract and haunting. A woman looks outside to see a strange object floating in the sky. From there it's a continuous series of images both haunting and beautiful.



10

*Libido* is bottom line extremely fucked up. Despite that its narrative is complete and within a few minutes is able to provide an arc covered in all sorts of bodily fluids. Let's not talk about *Legacy*.

**L** is for Libido  
(Timo Tjahjanto)

**L** is for Legacy  
(Lancelot Oduwa Imasuen)

**M** is for Miscarriage  
(Ti West)

**M** is for Masticate  
(Robert Boockcheck)

While both films are of the punch line variety, the win goes to *Masticate*. Despite having a superb track record for features and a total shit one for short films, this is still Ti West at his laziest.



*N is for Nuptials*  
(Banjong Pisanthanakun)

*N is for Nexus*  
(Larry Fessenden)

Neither entry is particularly strong. Both are predictable. Nexus edges out for being slightly more ambitious. Nuptials is a take on a classic joke that's been done better by the likes of Robin Williams.



*O is for Orgasm*  
(Bruno Forzani and Helene Cattet)

*O is for Ochlocracy (mob rule)*  
(Hajime Ohata)

Kudos to *Ochlocracy* for being a fresh take on the world of zombies, *Orgasm* beats it out by interpreting death differently. Again, Forzani and Cattet take the colors and sounds of *giallo* to create something that makes looking at it feel like a physical act.



*R is for Removed*  
(Srdjan Spasojevic)



*R is for Roulette*  
(Marvin Kren)

One of the best matchups and the toughest to call a winner. Kren's *Roulette* starts out as your standard Russian roulette sequence in which the tension comes from the impending shot. But it's the reveal at the end that flips the premise on its head that makes the short stand out. *R is for Removed* works on many levels: it's gross yet deals in metaphor. One of the most interesting takes on how we treat our film history. Once you know what's up in *Roulette* it may not hold up again. Spasojevic's short is the one that will come back to you after you've seen it and have you rewatching it for its rewards.

*S is for Speed*  
(Jake West)

*S is for Split*  
(Juan Martinez Moreno)

**S**

My bias for split screen wins out even though *S is for Split* is annoyingly manipulative and uses homosexuality as a shocker. If I think about it too much I might have to give it to *Speed* which doesn't do a whole lot to wow you as it moves towards its reveal.



**W**

*W is for WTF!*  
(Jon Schnepf)

*W is for Wish*  
(Steven Kostanski)

Following what happens when two boys find themselves transported into the world of their favorite action figures, *Wish* casually gives us more WTF moments than *WTF!* can. Schnepf's short is something the old Adult Swim would have rejected and that the current one would have played incessantly.

*V is for Vagitus (The Cry of a Newborn Baby)*  
(Kaare Andrews)

*V is for Vacation*  
(Jerome Sable)

It's amazing what Andrews was able to do with the time and budget he had. With a short you can either condense a feature idea to the point of ruin, or you just turn out something slight. *Vacation* wins in the hopes that *Vagitus* becomes a feature.



**X**



*X is for XXL*  
(Xavier Gens)

*X is for Xylophone*  
(Julien Maury and Alexandre Bustillo)

While *U is for Utopia* also tackled social norms for body image, it felt easy and slight. *XXL* is still easy but it goes all out to make you feel sick. *Xylophone* might do that too but it still has a "That's it?" quality to it.





**P** is for Pressure  
(Simon Rumley)

**P** is for P-P-P-SCARY!  
(Todd Rohal)

Rohal's film does get points for being supremely bizarre but Rumley uses the prompt of death to explore the pains of living. Cat lovers might want to close their eyes for the other use of the word pressure though.



**T** is for Toilet  
(Lee Hardcastle)



**T** is for Torture Porn  
(Jen and Sylvia Soska)

Another very tough choice. Hardcastle's Claymation piece was fan submitted and voted to be included in the final film. It's a great piece of animation and finally a toilet-centric story that doesn't suck. *Torture Porn* is just another example as to why the Soska sisters are some the best new voices in the genre scene. I almost want to say T is for Tie but if this was a fight to death *Toilet* wins out as we've seen these same ideas from the sisters done so much better when allowed to develop in a feature length like *American Mary*.

A hard choice as both are fantastic. *Hobo with a Shotgun's* Jason Eisener make a slick music video that serves to provide some energy back to the audience this late in the alphabet. But Umezawa, someone who has not directed before, makes another one of those great shorts that deal with a metaphorical death. Being an effects guy the practical make up effects are inventive but overall *Y is for Youth* feels personal and somber while also being extreme. This series has seen established filmmakers take the lazy route while first timers like Umezawa take the opportunity to deliver a worthwhile short.

**Y** is for Youngbuck  
(Jason Eisener)

**Y**  
**Y** is for Youth  
(Soichi Umezawa)



**Q** is for Quack  
(Adam Wingard and Simon Barrett)

**Q** is for Questionnaire  
(Rodney Ascher)



Both are a lot of fun but despite my bias towards Wingard and Barrett, and self-reflexiveness in general, Ascher's piece moves along at a snappy pace, almost recreating an overwhelming feeling that comes with intelligence testing. Once he's done making frightening documentaries he definitely has potential in the oddball narrative department.



**U** is for Unearthed  
(Ben Wheatley)

**U** is for Utopia  
(Vincenzo Natali)

My thoughts on *Utopia* are below in the letter X fight but *U is for Unearthed* is interesting because it reverses the focus to the monster instead of the monster hunters, all from the POV of the monster. The feel of it seems like it's taking place in a world between those of Wheatley's own *Kill List* and *A Field in England*.



**Z** is for Zetsumetsu  
(Yoshihiro Nishimura)



**Z** is for Zygote  
(Chris Nash)



Like Umezawa, both directors here have a background in special effects and makeup, something that both *Zetsumetsu* and *Zygote* make spectacular use of, but as we have started with the end we should finish with a zygote. Probably one of the most satisfying and disturbing pieces that has come out of this series of films.

What drew me to watching *The Strain*, now in its second season, is the artistry of del Toro's beautiful and frightening creations that I first saw in his film *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006). The special effects and attention to detail of the creatures, how they manifest their symptoms, how the virus spreads and how the monsters infest the city is the strength of the show. Del Toro has done his monster research and the Master vampire looks like classic vampires from *Nosferatu* (1922) by F.W. Murnau, and *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979)

by Herzog. The infected have a zombie look to them as they roam the streets stalking their victims.

When infected people behave like bad neighbors with aggression and anger, the disease sends them home to infect their loved ones. It is a vampire/zombie cult with one Master who sees through the eyes of each infected. The infected suck their prey through a tentacle like tongue that shoots out five or six feet like a fast moving cobra. When the series begins, the Master has been transported from Germany to New York City via aircraft, everyone on board in a slumber only to re-animate several days later. The infected are only able to roam at night or in subway tunnels, sunlight and Ultra violet-rays burn them to cinders on the spot. The story set in New York moves storylines through different Burroughs showing outbreaks in various areas of the city. The main area of infestation is the Stoneheart Corporation in midtown Manhattan run by a frail CEO Eldritch Palmer; he has made a deal with the Master in order to find renewed health and possible immortality.

The storyline follows the assemblage of a rag tag crew with knowledge and skill to destroy the Master, the main host of the virus. Killing him will kill all the infected and end the epidemic. They end up in Red Hook as a home base. They are thrown together by the gravity of their circumstances each flawed in very human ways. Our group of heroes include a city exterminator, Vasily Fet, two CDC infectious disease experts, Nora Martinez and Ephraim Goodweather, a recently relapsed alcoholic dad, and his son Zak, whose infected zombie mother is in hot pursuit, with a nest of blind zombie spider children, immune from UV light, they move lightning fast and can scamper up walls as her helpers. Also in the crew is a computer hacker, Dutch Velders who has the knowledge and crass to crash the entire internet which enables the plague to spread more quickly at the beginning of season 1.

The leader of their gang is the elderly pawn shop proprietor Abraham Setrakian – he is the ultimate vampire hunter who first encountered the Master as a young man while incarcerated in a concentration camp during WWII. He was summoned by the Master's right hand man, SS officer Thomas Eichhorst, to build a large coffin the master lives in containing the soil of the worm spreading



virus. Another main character is Gus Elizalde, a skilled fighter, who before the epidemic lived in the building above the pawn shop. In season 1 he is paid to secretly transport the Master's coffin into the quarantined city and realizes the grave mistake he has made. The crew explores the streets in an old bread truck that they acquired one harrowing night as they escaped an infested convenience store in season 1. Each member of the vampire fighting crew has a different set of skills. The battle is for the city, their individual freedoms and control of their lives. The Master's main plan is total control, total conformity feeding his own needs. The show breaks down the battle between power and control versus the varieties of human expression and the fight to preserve humanity even in its humbled flawed form.

If you only are keeping tabs on the *Strain* on-line through synopsis reviews and comment threads you are really missing out. The strength of the show is the cinematography, use of lighting and camera movements that create a show with mounting tension, scary monsters and the suspense built into the storylines. It is a clever new take on many old vampire and zombie tropes. The attention to detail is what makes watching the *Strain* rewarding. It is not so much about plot points but how the stories move around the settings in NYC with tension and suspense that gives the show its strength. The best thing about watching the *Strain* is it is fun to watch, scary, visually appealing and the monsters are awesome to look at. The play of light and shadows bring out the best elements of a good vampire story filled with darkness of the boogeyman lurking behind each shadowed door.

-Mara Norman co-editor of Cinema Adrift.





**Wes Craven  
(1939–2015)**

## A Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors (1987)

**Story created by Wes Craven and Bruce Wagner**  
**Screenplay by Wes Craven & Bruce Wagner**  
**and Chuck Russell & Frank Darabont**  
**Directed by Chuck Russell**  
**Music by Angelo Badalamenti and Dokken**

A Nightmare on Elm Street has a huge fan following and this little review is a shout out to those fans who opened my eyes to the scary world of Mr. Krueger and the work of Wes Craven. Thank you Sine!

According to several fan sites the original script for Dream Warriors written by Craven and Wagner was much darker and more gruesome than the final rewritten film. Fan sites have both scripts on-line to enable people to study the differences in-depth. After the initial script was completed in 1986, it appears the script was reworked changing aspects of the script without further input from Craven and Wagner. The bad experience of having his work taken away from him and changed drastically enabled Bruce Wagner to transform the experience into material for his first novel *Force Majeure* (1991), which for me as a fan of his novels is an interesting side note and subtext in studying his work.

Another tidbit of film history is that this film is Patricia Arquette's first film role. She is one of my favorite actors of all time, and you can see the beginnings of her craft being shaped in this horror romp.

Dream Warriors is set on an adolescent psychiatry ward, the clients all suffering from haunted pattern nightmares. The doctors believe it is a group delusion of the boogeyman and try in group therapy to convince the clients of the repressed nature of their nightmares; in the meantime, the patients know full well they are being stalked in their dreams to be killed off one by one. Nancy from the original A Nightmare on Elm Street (1984) directed by Craven returns employed at the hospital as a clinical intern. She is able to bond quickly with the teenagers and appears to have more empathy and understanding of what they are dealing with. She herself is on a non-FDA approved anti-psychotic that suppresses dreams and believes the children are in real danger. Patricia Arquette's character Kristen is a powerful dreamer who has the ability to bring others into her dreams. Early on Kristen cries out for Nancy and pulls her into a nightmare where Kristen is being eaten by a large snakelike Freddy. Nancy realizes and convinces one of the main doctors that group hypnosis may be a key to working on their nightmares. This is when the dream warriors ban together in the dream world to fight Freddy. Each character has a power in the dream and a limitation in the real world, which Freddy uses to turn their true weakness against themselves in order to kill them. In reality it appears as if the patients are killing themselves. The stakes are high because each night another character is killed. Wes Craven recalled, "We decided that it could no longer be one person fighting Freddy. It had to be a group, because the souls of Freddy's victims have made Freddy stronger."

The strengths of the film are the dream sequences and the sometimes use of stop motion. The film moves from dreams to reality in the blink of an eye and a slight nod of the head. The teenagers slip into their nightmares easily with Freddy in control. There are also moments of humor which helps move the story along with laughs, gross-outs and scares.

If you are not a Freddy Freak yet this may be the film that can pull you in. Watch Dream Warriors first then explore the entire Krueger Kanon(sic).

For further reading of all the dirty deeds check out A Nightmare on Elm Street Companion site on-line or watch the 4 hour documentary, *Never Sleep Again: The Elm Street Legacy* (2010).

By Mara Norman co-editor of cinema adrift. Her fall plans include revisiting Bruce Wagner's *Force Majeure* (1991) and tackling his *Dead Stars* (2012).

## Books for the Coffee Table (Glass or Otherwise)

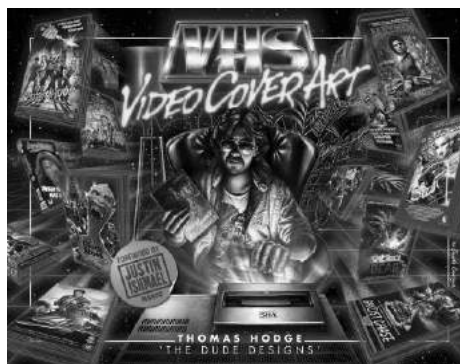
In light of two recent, contradictory studies, it is still uncertain whether there is a direct correlation between number of visitors with the quality of books left out on the coffee table. With origins tracing back to late Victorian era, the concept of low tables are also seen in practice during the Ottoman Empire and in 19<sup>th</sup> century Japan. Books started to be placed on these tables when it was discovered that the coffee cups took up a very minor portion of table space.

References to books used to “lay in the parlor window” date as early as 1580 by Michel de Montaigne, and this reference referenced in *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*. It wasn’t until the 60s when the modern coffee table book was found, with “page sizes big enough to carry a given image’s dynamic” by Sierra Club director David Brower and his idea for a series of books with nature photography and writings.

Now these conversation pieces are thriving, transcending the negative connotations used by de Montaigne and now transcending the association with a function solely for entertaining guests. The modern coffee table book is now to be used for reference material as well as to archive whatever the images may be. This act of preservation can be found in Thomas Hodge’s collection of VHS cover art and Dark Horse comics collection of *The Art of Satoshi Kon*, the late filmmaker responsible for masterpieces like *Perfect Blue* and *Tokyo Godfathers*. These books are large enough to give enough space for readers to discern every detail in Kon’s art as well as these VHS covers, which sometimes, or most of the time depending on your taste, had a better cover that the film housed inside could never live up to. On a side note, Darren Aronofsky’s letter of condolences to Kon’s friend and producer, Masao Maruyama, is not quite the introduction advertised on the cover and further proof that Arronoifsky should put up the funding to finish Kon’s last work, which has been on hiatus since 2010. It’s the least he could do after the unofficial remake of *Perfect Blue* called *Black Swan*. Not yet out at the time of this writing, Nicholas Winding Refn’s *The Act of Seeing* seems to be in the preservation mode yet with a more personal, fantasy aspect to it. From his collection of rare American exploitation film posters, Refn recreates what he felt it would have been like to walk down 42<sup>nd</sup> street, in the hopes to change the way we see these films.

And what better way to start conversations than a photography book of girls licking doorknobs? If you’re into importing oddities this collaboration between artist Ryuko Azuma and photographer/doorknob girl Ai Ehara is something to scour eBay for. The photos are simple yet tell mini stories (the clothes, the items on the floor, the location of the door), parodying manga tropes. And finally, Scott Campbell’s series of great movie showdowns returns with the third installment: *The Revenge*.

When you’re not lying under the table,  
check these books out:



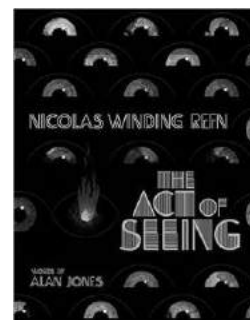
VHS Cover Art: 1980s to Early 1990s  
Thomas Hodge (The Dude Designs)  
Schiffer  
264 pages  
9.1 x 1.0 x 11.8 inches  
MSRP: \$34.99



The Art of Satoshi Kon  
Dark Horse Manga  
136 pages  
9.3 x 0.7 x 12.4 inches  
MSRP: \$29.99



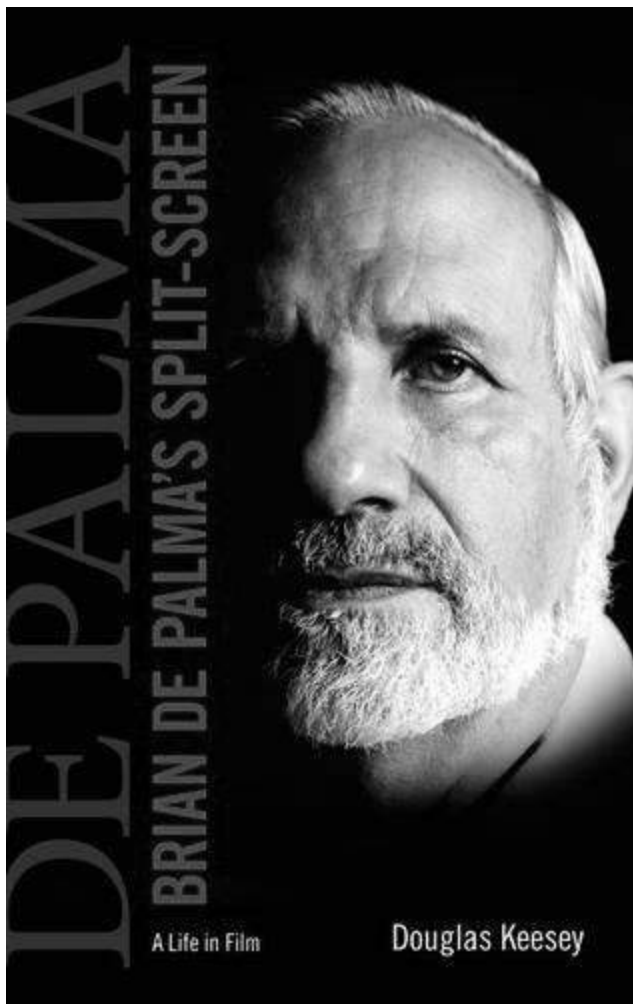
ドアノブ少女 (Doanobu shoujo)  
Ryuko Azuma & Ai Ehara  
Asupekto  
136 pages  
8.2 x 0.6 x 5.8 inches  
MSRP: ¥1619



The Act of Seeing  
Nicholas Winding Refn  
FAB Press  
324 pages  
12 x 1.5 x 14 inches  
MSRP: \$100.00



Great Showdowns: The Revenge  
Scott Campbell  
Titan Books  
144 pages  
7 x 0.6 x 7 inches  
MSRP: \$14.95



Brian De Palma's Split-Screen: A Life in Film  
Douglas Keesey  
University Press of Mississippi  
362 pages  
6.1 x 009 x 9.2 inches  
MSRP: \$55.00

Despite being deeply embedded in the pop-culture conscious, films like *Carrie*, *Scarface*, and *The Untouchables* are seen as stand-alone cult classics, the man behind the films overshadowed. Just recently I have started to go deeper into De Palma's body of work, and above all really start to appreciate it. Douglas Keesey's book, *Brian De Palma's Split-Screen: A Life in Film*, could not have come at a better time for the guy who in the past two years has discovered the joys of *The Phantom of the Paradise*, *Blow-Out*, *Body Double*, and *Snake Eyes*. Yes, *Snake Eyes*.

Keesey's starting point is the device De Palma is most commonly associated with, the split-screen. Keesey sees De Palma's films constructed around splits; even De Palma himself and how his films have been viewed as a series of splits. Whether it's Independence/Hollywood, Originality/Imitation, Feminism/Misogyny, and Humility/Megalomania, De Palma's films are contextualized around these ideas, drawing from facts from De Palma's own life. Keesey knows it's not the only way to read these films but felt as though De Palma has never been considered a personal filmmaker like how his contemporaries (Spielberg, Coppola, etc.) were and are.

But the book doesn't just focus on biography as film criticism, it looks at these films from many angles: filtered through details of De Palma's upbringing, through the lens of his other films, and even singular film analysis; for instance when discussing all the possibilities of meaning the use of split screen may have for the prom scene in *Carrie*. In one of the best chapters of the book, the one about *Body Double* Keesey gives an amazing analysis, looking at the similarities between hero and villain (something that De Palma seems to constantly return to) and looking past the Hitchcock references, seeing the film as De Palma's own where he finds his own voice and explores voyeurism in a much more meta fashion than Hitchcock did.

The book is divided into individual chapters devoted to a single film, presented in chronological order. The book can be read front to back but thanks to some careful repetition, each chapter can be read and enjoyed on its own. You can go through the book as you watch De Palma's films in whatever order you want. When De Palma uses split-screen you can look at which side you want, making it fitting that there is a similar freedom applied, unique to the format of a book.

De Palma's films are something much more personal than the conventional wisdom which pigeonholes them as exercises in Hitchcock rip-off.

I liked *Passion* when I saw it; after reading Keesey's chapter on it I now appreciate the film. Keesey gives each film, whether considered major or minor, a fair chance. Who else besides the French gave *Mission to Mars* a fair shot?

If you are wondering whether this book is right for you here is an excerpt from the introduction:

De Palma once expressed the fear that he will forever be “remembered by everyone as a misogynist and as the man who ripped off Hitchcock.” He came to believe that most critics have these “preconceptions” about him “going in” to his films, which they review “against their preconceptions”; “they don’t really watch” the films. This book was written for those who want to watch the films.



# TOKYO BATSU

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日本映画のレビュー

## Asato Mari: A Bright Voice in J-Horror



**Bilocation** (バイロケーション)

**Fatal Frame** (劇場版 零 ゼロ)

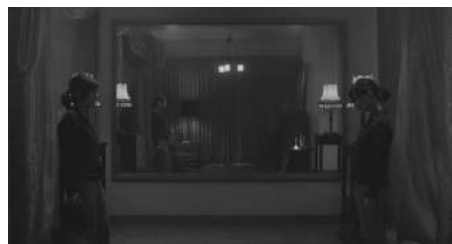
Asato Mari, 2014

Where to see them: English subtitled Chinese imports.

Does the lack of American remakes of recent Japanese horror films signify a decline in quality? Or has the remake focus been placed elsewhere (the 80s slasher)? Our recent J-horror exports have been the over the top gross outs from labels like Sushi Typhoon (which Nikkatsu seems to have let die after quality releases like *Cold Fish*, *Karate-Robo Zaborgar*, and the apex that is *Mutant Girls Squad*). But these films were more J-gore than J-horror, which was more dread than anything so explicit. Asato Mari seems to have been quietly making these kinds of slow-burns that seek to unsettle rather than shock. And it's not a surprise given her studies under Kurosawa Kiyoshi and scriptwriter Takahashi Hiroshi (*Ringu*).



2014 saw the release of two standout titles from the Okinawa born Asato: the exploration of alter-egos and divides in individuality that is *Bilocation* and the film adaptation of popular video game series *Fatal Frame*, in which cameras allow us glimpses of the ghosts that haunt us. *Fatal Frame* gets high marks for possibly being the best videogame adaptation although the core mechanic of the game does not feature at all in the movie, arguably a necessity when evaluating the transition from this medium to another. But what we do have is a great film that choose not to accent its creepy visuals with hard music cues, but rather lets them be. It's not much more than creepy, the fact that it doesn't strive to make the heart race is a welcome change of pace for horror films, and is inherent to Asato's focus on the characters wrapped up in this supernatural mystery taking place in an all-girls school where budding romances form, being developed along with the mystery.



*Bilocation* on the other hand, while focusing on mood rather than jumps, takes an ambitious premise to explore a similar theme to that of *Cure*; the manifestation of our repressions. In Asato's film these manifest in bilocations, doubles that appear in the vicinity of the original, able to lead their own lives. Mizukawa Asami plays a woman wanting to enter a painting competition who around the same time meets and marries a young blind man. What we see is her divide between being a wife and pursuing the completion of her painting. Asato doesn't let this divide be that tired though, showing it's not as simple as that binary. Most films deliver the statement that these two things can't coexist, in *Bilocation* it is the characters who put limit themselves with this mindset. The version I saw came with two endings, one manifesting itself after the credits as if it were a bilocation of the film itself, complete with its own credits and alternate takes on scenes.

### Asato Mari Filmography

- ◇ Samurai Chicks (2004)
- ◇ The Boy from Hell (2004)
- ◇ Have a Nice Day (2006)
- ◇ Twilight Syndrome: Dead Go Round (2008)
- ◇ The Grudge: Girl in Black (2009)
- ◇ The Chasing World 3 (2012)
- ◇ The Chasing World 4 (2012)
- ◇ The Chasing World 5 (2012)
- ◇ Bilocation (2014)
- ◇ Fatal Frame (2014)

Asato Mari, to continue the Kurosawa link, seems to be in her *Suit Yourself or Shoot Yourself* phase, on the precipice of her *Cure*. Even now though, she is more than due for some more recognition, something that is likely to not happen on the scale of a Kurosawa Kiyoshi thanks to her not abandoning the horror genre at this time. But don't let yourself miss out on the development of an exciting voice in J-horror or otherwise.



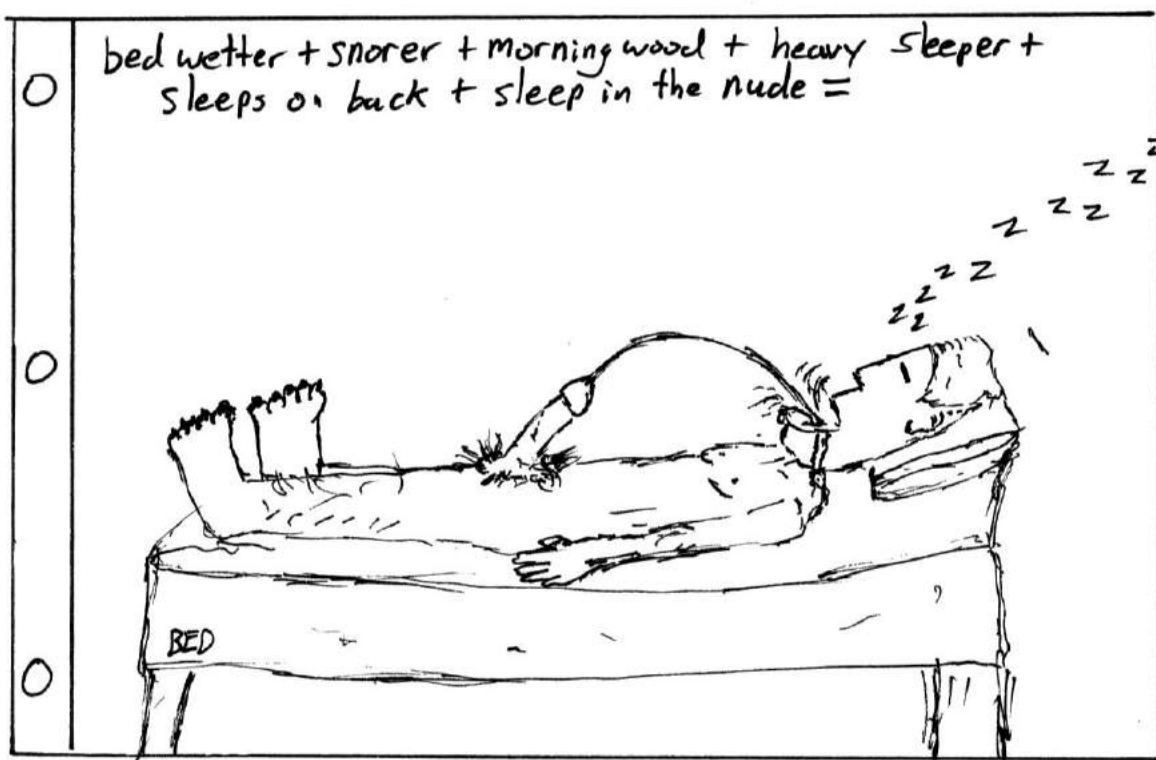


# Girl or Die 0.2

Math Homework by ジェイソン



["Create your own equation..."]

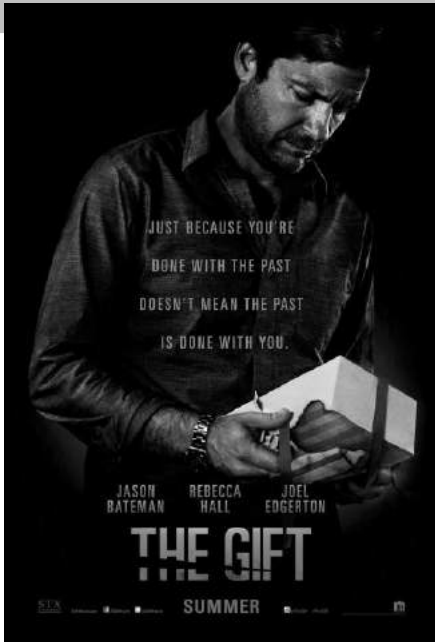


["Create your own equation..."]



## RECOMMENDATION: THE GIFT

Joel Edgerton, 2015, USA



Joel Edgerton's directorial debut seems to be this year's "little movie that could" as its theatrical legs have proven to be quite long. Certain audiences have praised its twists and turns but if you've seen a certain Spanish thriller from 2011 then you might already know the finale as early as the halfway point. But thankfully the film doesn't dwell on its major reversal, which is all the better because that's not the point. The real reason audiences have been drawn to the word of mouth is the execution of it all.

Edgerton's direction is not flashy, choosing simple visual ideas to convey the dynamics of the thriller sometimes before they are revealed by the narrative itself. In the opening scene husband and wife, played by Jason Bateman and Rebecca Hall, are looking to buy a new house, the house they decide on is essentially a glass house. Already this idea serves to provide suspense, the characters can always be watched thanks to wall sized windows. But it speaks to larger themes of things being obscured/revealed. When they decide on purchasing the house Bateman breathes on the glass and draws a heart inside the fog, which starts to disappear around the heart. Such a great image that foreshadows a good deal, and Edgerton does not give it a close up, a level of trust he displays throughout the rest of the picture.

Other small touches deftly handled are the repetitions of obscured/revealed imagery: a showering Hall wipes the mist away to look out the bathroom, Edgerton's Gordo is seen in the mirror of the department store, looking in through the windows. Edgerton visually presents the idea of the past coming to haunt the present all in a moment that serves to forward the narrative and create suspense. He continually gives us moments that accomplish all three of these things while making it seem effortless, this is also thanks to the cast and the natural interactions between them.

The principal three are a great set of actors, Jason Bateman in particular playing both into and against his type; his character sort of the underside of the bland nice guy role he has perfected and last year completely threw out the window in his own directorial debut, the extremely enjoyable **Bad Words**.

**The Gift** is a showcase of both rules that less is more and to not talk down to your audience. And the best part of it is that it worked, the film seems to have stuck around in mainstream theaters just as long as **Mad Max** and others of its ilk. Blumhouse Productions has had a hell of a year so far and **The Gift** will be one of the standout titles down the line when looking back at the company's output.



### *Vincent's Celebrity Crush*

**Linnea Quigley**

(*Night of the Demons*,  
*The Return of the Living  
Dead*)

"She gets me all  
quigley down under."  
-Vincent D. Vilein



**MISSING:**



**LAST SEEN: ???**

**IF FOUND PLEASE LET US KNOW**

# Bitching and Pitching: Pajama Party Holocaust

by Vincent D. Vilein

(screenwriter *Diddling the Devil's Pussy*, author *Poop on Pop*)

Dear prospective film buyers,

It's Friday and we all know what that means: the teenagers will be especially carefree until homework resumes Sunday night and Monday morning. We focus in on Candy French, a high school senior with poor grades and a bra size to match. After PE class we see her interact with her friends in the locker room showers. Her goth friend Darcy sits by the lockers while Candy showers with childhood friend Becca and her gay guy friend Alan. This weekend Candy's parents are out of town and that means the pajama party to end all pajama parties will be had, along with wet and sloppy pizza and the goodies in mom's pill/liquor cabinet. Little do these teens know that the kids' elementary school teacher, Mr. Finley, is ready to enact his murderous plan for revenge on his former students. And little does the killer know, that Candy has some plans for the pajama party as well.

My first choice for the teacher would be Brad Pitt, but if he is unavailable Ryan Gosling is my strong second choice. As a third option I am willing to star in this film. The gay friend should be played by the gay guy in *Glee* and likewise for the goth character. With Candy it should be an unknown actress, fully committed to the role and the nudity required. Jennifer Lawrence would be a great get for Candy's friend Becca.

What makes this film so exciting is that it is a brand new take on the 80s slashers that I grew up on while at the same time being one of those types of films. The killer will utilize teacher-centric manners of murder like clapping together two blackboard erasers with spikes in the middle. And he also carves a grade into the foreheads of his victims, something that Candy doesn't figure out the significance of until the third act of the film.

The first letter of the characters names play into the order in which they are targeted by the teacher. Throwaway character Female Student 4 is the first to go, and then Darcy (murdered by a brutal text book bashing), and then an unsuccessful attempt on Candy's life which leads to Mr. Finley murdering a kid whose name starts with C.

Snooping around in Candy's room while she is taking a shower, Alan and Becca discover Candy's diary. After reading the entry about her budding sexuality, they discover entries written for the coming days, detailing Candy's visits to each of their funerals. Realizing the intentions of their friend for holding the pajama party, Alan and Becca now have to run away from two killers: Mr. Finley and a towel-clad Candy, whose weapon of choice is the lid to the toilet tank. Candy and Finley forced to fight one another while also chasing their targets. We fade to black.

At the end Candy's parents pull up to their house. Inside they look around, empties pizza boxes stacked by the front door. "Looks like someone had a pajama party" says the dad. Candy is in the kitchen, eating cereal. Candy's mom notices the oven is self-cleaning. "How was your weekend?" asks the mother. Candy smiles and starts to laugh to herself. Upstairs we track into Candy's room, the body of Mr. Finley stuffed under her bed. All of sudden he opens his eyes. Cut to black. Credits roll. "I'm Not Okay" by My Chemical Romance plays.

**All film pitches featured here are property of Vincent D. Vilein. Sole ownership of the pitch belongs to Mr. D. Vilein and no one else. Cinema Adrift and Schlitty's Incorporated do not own and do not necessarily share the opinions and views expressed by Vincent D. Vilein and the contents of his film pitch.**

**If you are interested in optioning this pitch please contact Vincent D. Vilein either through his website, his FaceBook profile, or his professional email: [periodstainedheart6669@yahoo.com](mailto:periodstainedheart6669@yahoo.com)**

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## The Asshole Ratio: Blu-ray by Jason Suzuki

More and more I meet people who still have not purchased a player for the Blu-rays. Despite knowing the space differences between a DVD and Blu-ray, a few of these detractors insist Blu-ray is a transitional format, a transition to that oh so coveted all

digital future. Until download speeds greatly improve there is now way to stream Blu-ray quality video. But on a different note, which is perhaps not so widely used as a defense for Blu-ray, it is another way of watching a film closer to the intended appearance of the film by the filmmaker. The larger storage space on Blu-rays allows for less compression of the film and thus the quality of the image is

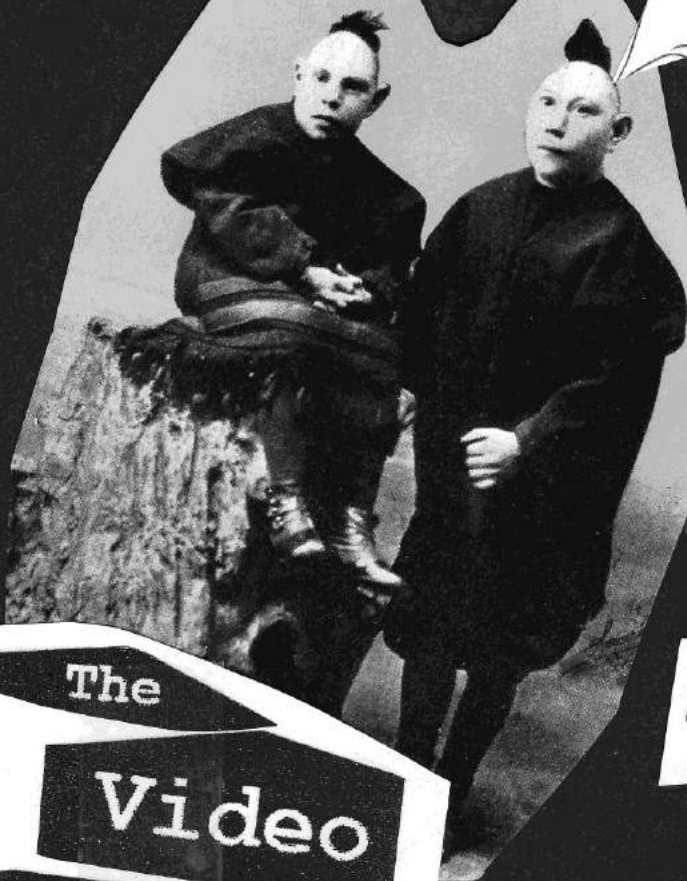
closer to what it looked like when it was being made. Regardless of whether seen on a big screen or not, filmmakers and cinematographers most likely would want the depth of their visuals to be as easily seen as possible. Also, Blu-ray cases are thinner and shorter than DVDs which means more shelf space for more movies.



Hey P.P!  
Are you still planning  
on BINGE WATCHING  
season 5 of Downton  
ABBEY  
with me this  
WeeKend??

Absolutely,  
Schlitzie!  
But 1<sup>st</sup>, I need to finish  
watching the Oeuvre  
of F.W. Murnau  
I rented from  
VIDEO STATION.

Try finding  
that shit on  
NETFLIX....



The  
Video  
Station

5290

Arapahoe Ave

Boulder Co

303/440-4448

Experimental

CULT · Foreign

Classics · BBC

Silent · Blu-ray.

Complete  
**Criterion**  
collection  
and everything  
else



We're going to have  
to let you go...

**ALL OF YOU!**



Through the Looking Glass

--Thesis

--Behind the Mask:

The Rise of Leslie Vernon

--TETSUO Trilogy

--The Tenant

--Cure

--Sharknado 3: Oh Hell No!

--Ghost World

# HOSTILE TAKEOVER

STARRING KENNETH MCNEIL ROBERT MCANTERY JASON JACOBSON

MUSIC BY JOHN REAM PRODUCED BY ROGER MANCINI WRITTEN BY TYLER MAN DIRECTED BY STEVEN USMAN



Artist: Mike Dunn

instagram: @lookatmahshit





## Concerning Angela's Dream: *Tesis* (Alejandro Amenábar, 1996)

by Jason Suzuki

*Thesis* is about horror films, those who make them, those who love them, and those who detest the genre. No matter which side of the aisle you fall under the fascination with violence is still there. And even the creators of such entertainment, who say they are only giving the people what they want, are also indulging in what they want. Amenábar's film works on both the level of it being a university set thriller, about one student's uncovering of a snuff film racket at the audio visual communications school she attends, and the metacinematic level of the above concern.

Angela (Ana Torrent, who between this and *Spirit of the Beehive* proves she has the perfect set of eyes to react to horrors witnessed) detests violence, but you wouldn't get this from what the film *shows* us about her as opposed to what she *tells* about herself. Our opening scene which sets up theme as well as her character sees her veering from the group in order to see the grisly remains of a man who threw himself onto the tracks. It's a great character setting scene as it visually distinguishes her from the others (though as we see later maybe her fascination with death is the norm).

But back to the meta now: our film professor Castro (nice name...) who is also the editor of the snuff films, teaches his students that filmmaking is about giving the audiences what they want. This film definitely "gives the people what they want" by basing its overall feel and structure around the Hollywood thriller but it's the smaller hints at other things that give the film its bite. Despite her status as the clever "final girl" we still see Angela's psychosexual dream involving a Bosco who goes down on her while holding a knife to her throat. We also see footage of her kissing Bosco's image on her TV (linking with *Videodrome*). This footage filmed by our other hero Chema, who is revealed to be voyeuristically involved with Angela. And finally, Professor Figueroa, while essentially being killed by watching one of the snuff films still knew of their existence yet did nothing. The film posits that those who detest these films are secretly the most twisted, those who stay uninvolved are part of the problem, and even those who do like these films still fall under the freaky side. It's only when they've actually been behind the scenes, surrounded by and threatened by the danger of violence do Angela and Chema close themselves off from the footage.

Much like Haneke's *Funny Games*, even if you disagree with the thesis at least return the favor for the respectable way it treats its audience when getting on its soap box.

*Tesis* is available on Blu-ray from Bayview Entertainment.





“You have no idea how much cardio I have to do. It’s ridiculous. You gotta be able to run like a fricken’ gazelle without getting winded. Plus, there’s that whole thing of making it look like you’re walking when everyone else is running their asses off. I gotta stay with with ‘em! It’s tough!”  
 -Leslie Vernon



### Behind the Mask: The Rise of Leslie Vernon

(Scott Glosserman, 2006)

Before *Cabin in the Woods* and after *Scream* there was *Behind the Mask: The Rise of Leslie Vernon*. The film follows an aspiring journalist and her crew of two who follow the preparations of a man who desires to join the ranks of the slashers before him. In this world Freddy, Michael, and Jason exist and serve as

inspiration to the eponymous character. It’s a movie truly about the deconstruction of the slasher, while *Scream* was more about a generation who defines their lives through pop culture. It’s also a film about those who make these films, and the moral implications of the genre, which *Cabin in the Woods* did as well. But *Behind the Mask* doesn’t get on its high horse so it can have its cake and eat it too.

Taylor Gentry (Angela Goethals) points her focus to Leslie (Nathan Baesel) as he is in the final stages of his preparations to turn his name into that of a legend. Baesel plays Leslie with a similar energy and charm as Jim Carrey. It’s very easy to fall for Leslie and his plans.

*Cabin* criticizes the blood lust of the viewers and the creators, a sentiment encapsulated in the moment when the final girl is being brutally attacked, her beating seen on all the monitors in the control room as the orchestrators of the sacrifice celebrate in the foreground. But then it veers into the realm of crowd-pleasing catharsis as horror film references are unleashed on the staff of the facility. It’s wrong to watch the slaughter of college kids but it’s okay to derive joy from the slaughter of the office workers. On a first viewing it’s all incredibly entertaining but on repeated viewings the sentiments of the film are revealed to be half-baked. The resulting film is a clever meta-twist on the horror genre where already shallow criticism is quickly forgotten when the films wants to have its own conventional fun. *Behind the Mask* deconstructs the slasher sub-genre and then becomes it, yet with twists from the leftovers of its deconstruction. Taylor’s preparation to become the final girl, in Glosserman’s film referred to as the “survivor girl,” was her time with Leslie, helping him with his preparations. Despite being morally opposed to what Leslie plans to do Goethals portrays Taylor as someone who has fallen for him. She is jealous of Kelly, the girl Leslie says he has chosen to be the survivor girl. The importance of having a face-off between good and evil which Leslie repeats is why he does what he does speaks to the link between good and evil and thus the connection between Taylor and Leslie. It’s the horror movie couple you wish would happen, and can happen. It’s hinted at that Leslie’s mentor and his wife originally met as slasher and survivor girl before getting together. But with Taylor and Leslie it’s not just slasher and victim but film and fan, creator and viewer.

It’s amazing how *Behind the Mask* tackles the same ideas as *Cabin* on a much smaller budget, and to much smaller fanfare, but it never throws away all it explored before when it comes time to drop the mockumentary style and morph into what it put under the magnifying glass.



# T E T S U O    T h e    T r i l o g y    R e v i e w

by Matt Strackbein

If the second or third film had been my introduction to these movies I may never have bothered to see the first installment. Oh, I don't discriminate against sequels. My favorite movie of all time is *Star Wars The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), and it's been that way since I was a kid. So growing up I'd watch sequels no problem, although still, they often fail to meet my expectations or live up to the original. Fortunately, in this case, I did see the original first, *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* (1989), or should I say unfortunately. See, I don't think the two sequels, *Tetsuo II: Body Hammer* (1992) and *Tetsuo: The Bullet Man* (2009) compared, but to be totally fair, nothing does. *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* is one of the most graphic movies I've seen, and - no matter how it describes itself - pure horror. I can make a case for why I liked it so much, but there's more to it than my reasons, which made the sequels seemingly subpar. They weren't, by the way, only seemingly so.

I'm just going to tell you right now that the third installment does it's best to answer the "what does it all mean" question for the entire trilogy. But I think you should also know that it doesn't matter, and will not limit your enjoyment whatsoever. Look, if you make it through (literally) the first five minutes of the first film then you'll realize this is an experience in itself. And if it feels like the plot is ever left open to interpretation then it's likely intentional. By the way, the very next five minutes is equally as crazy as the first, just so you know, and it does not stop there.

OK, if someone told me that, I'd quit reading this review and go watch the thing, but if you're not feeling so bold then please read on and I'll try to prepare you.

*Tetsuo: The Iron Man* was my introduction to live-action Japanese cyber punk. I was hanging out with a bunch of buddies in this guy's basement, back in high school, when one guy hit play on the VCR and showed us *Tetsuo*. None of us had ever seen anything like it, and, like I said, that still holds true for me. As teenagers we typically did things our parents didn't approve of, which included watching messed up movies. Even still we were shocked, and not just over one or two scenes, because the entire film is, well, there's never a dull moment. Seriously, this isn't your everyday watchable popcorn movie. It's the opposite of that. There's no rating on the copy I own, and it's described as a "Black and White Japanese Sci-Fi". (It's also labeled *TARTAN ASIA EXTREME*, which will begin to mean something to anyone who watches enough of their films - extreme to say the least.)



TETSUO: THE IRON MAN  
(1989)



TETSUO II: BODY HAMMER  
(1992)



TETSUO: THE BULLET MAN  
(2010)

Many years later, when I bought *The Iron Man* on DVD, I realized there were sequels, which made me a bit too excited for the store clerk I think. She said something like, "Weird, I've never seen anyone so excited about *these* movie." I make no apologies though, and as it turned out, I didn't have all that much to be excited about.

I get it, OK? There was a demand for sequels, the fans wanted it, and director Shin'ya Tsukamoto has a cult following worldwide. I also believe he was fleshing out his story, finishing what he started, so to speak. It's like I said, I dig sequels, but this time my expectations were way too high based on my deep appreciation for the original. Not just for my nostalgia, but the fact that I've never seen it's like since. Certainly not in the same artistic manner. For all of it's horrible content *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* is a masterpiece disguised as a spectacle. The sequels are disturbing in their own right for sure, although they're polished, grown up even, and focused on the story's dramatic notes. They're cool, more Noir Sci-Fi, but they're not the same, and I find it difficult to lay blame of any sort because it's probably my fault. I ruined it for myself, but even that doesn't matter because I'll always have the original. And that is what everyone who is disappointed - for whatever reason - with a sequel should remember, there's always the source. Assuming you began at the beginning.

Matt Strackbein is an Apparel-Designer working in the Outdoor and Ski industry. He is also a self-published comic book creator, as well as an accomplished Letterhack with over 200 printed letters in comic book letter columns.







## The Tenant (Roman Polanski, 1976)

by Mara Norman

“They are trying to turn me into Simone Choule.”

Adapted from the novel by Roland Topor, **The Tenant** (1976) set in Paris is a kind of stranger-in-a-strange land tale. In the English version most characters appear to have American accents which already sets the story askew. The film was shot in both English and French allowing the actors to act with whichever language they felt more comfortable. The film was later dubbed by the actors in both French and English in post-production. Polanski dubbed himself in three language versions, English, French and Italian. Wikipedia notes: “The English version is notorious for poor audio quality, voices were recorded at vastly different levels – Modern reviewers differ as to whether the audible American accents and the poor audio quality distract from the French setting and destroy the illusion or add to the films creepy surreal atmosphere.” I agree with the latter. The jarring American accents add to the distortions the main character encounters. The bizarre audio in the film is like a distorted dream. There is an

awkwardness to the way the main character relates. He tries to come off as strong and confident and yet retreats into a passive position when confronted. Polanski is the main character Trelkovsky, a man with a polish accent but with French citizenship. He is questioned about his status at different times in the film. At one point he pulls out a worn copy of his identity card and is scolded for not updating the address. His timidity is amplified as he interacts with others. This film explores the question of identity, fitting into a culture, finding a home, but also how place is perceived on an internal emotional level.

He rents the apartment of a woman who recently attempted suicide by throwing herself out the window landing on a garden patio shattering the glass below. The hole is visible from the view of his apartment. As Trelkovsky is shown the apartment by the concierge, played by Shelly Winters, she announces “The previous tenant threw herself out the window,” and then lets out a short intense laugh. “She’s not dead yet but she might as well be,” she continues. Trelkovsky asks, “But what if she gets better?” “Well don’t worry. She won’t get better.”

He goes to visit the woman in the hospital. She is severely injured, leg hanging in traction, bandaged from head to toe, one open eye looking out, a bloodied mouth with a missing front tooth. At the hospital her friend Stella is also visiting. Stella is shocked saddened and emotionally upset. They attempt to talk to Simone; she yells out in an anguished shriek. They are asked to leave the scene is chaotic and unnerving. This foreshadows his later loss of identity, the bandaged body hiding the identity within the body beneath. Later he calls to find out she has died.

He moves in but the former tenant’s belongings remain. He is enchanted by a dress in a mirrored wardrobe in the apartment. He begins his transformation into Simone putting on her blood red nail polish buying high heels and a wig. He applies make-up and becomes Simone looking in the mirror calling himself a goddess divine and sticking out his stomach saying “I think I’m pregnant.” with a coying look. It is a creepy image; as a viewer I am reminded of Polanski’s wife Sharon Tate and her unborn baby.

As the story progresses Trelkovsky begins to get more and more confronted from his neighbors and the landlord, Monsieur Zy played by Melvyn Douglas. They knock on his door, accost him on the stairway confronting him of being too loud. He begins to grow paranoid as he is alone in his new apartment. His own paranoid fight with the apartment begins. He moves furniture around to change and block views. Across his window over a high courtyard is the bathroom for the entire floor. At night he looks out to see still figures not moving, flat as photographs in the window, sometimes even seeing himself and once seeing Simone, a bandaged mummy slowly unwrapping herself.



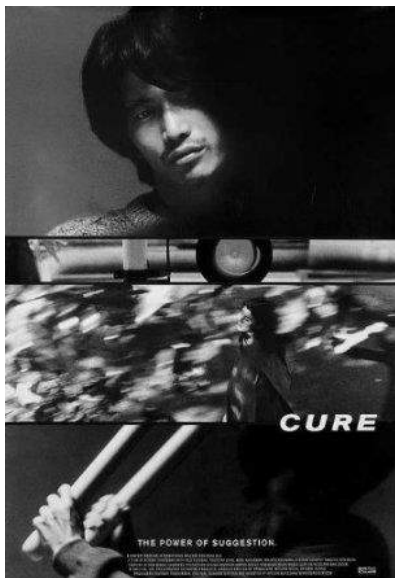
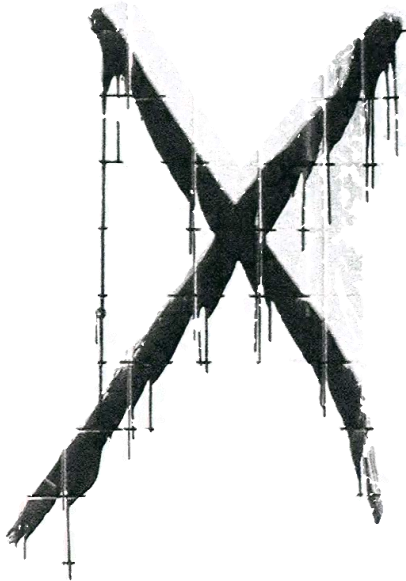
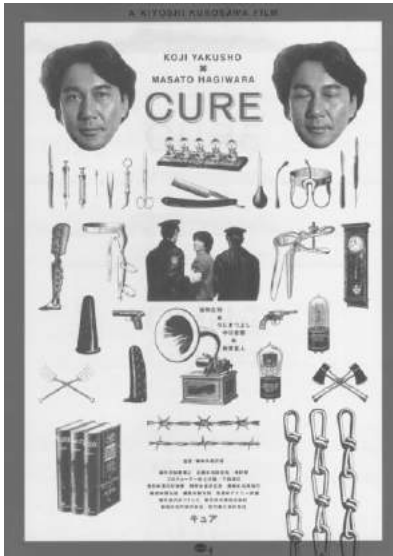
His mannerisms are controlled and self-conscious. In the film he asserts himself only to change his mind. He asks for a beer, a coffee then a martini. He wants French cigarettes in the blue pack and settles for the Marlboro reds. At one point his anger peaks, like a child having a tantrum, he yells at the waiter “I don’t want chocolate, I want coffee . . . you always bring me chocolate.” The waiter is taken back. “You want coffee, the machine is broken.” Another point he yells out “I know what you’re up to, you’ve got no boundaries.” He begins to slip away his battle internal yet manifested out.

In **Repulsion** (1965) Polanski studied the main female characters paranoia and delusion. In the tenant he becomes the character who suffers. As a viewer we experience him become the victim but we also know him to be the director and his public persona as a public figure. The film comes after the Manson murders, after the huge success of **Chinatown** (1974), and before his legal problems in the United States in 1977, which forced him to flee the country. That controversy still haunts him, most recently he was questioned in Krakow as late as 2014.

Mara Norman co-editor of cinema adrift and is sometimes conflicted loving both Polanski and Cassavetes films. We have seen what Polanski did with Cassavetes, but what if Polanski was cast as Moskowitz.

## Cure (Kiyoshi Kurosawa, 1997)

by Jason Suzuki



It's almost twenty years since Kiyoshi Kurosawa emerged with his first true masterpiece. While I do hold a special place in my heart for *The Excitement of the Do-Re-Mi-Fa Girl* (1985), *Cure* is most assuredly where the promise of his genius is maintained in every single frame. Even his two V-cinema films made in the same year of 1997 don't play at the same level, which in the spirit of fairness the production conditions of V-cinema titles are at least in part, most likely to blame. From there Kurosawa has had quite a few other largely undisputed masterpieces for his relatively short career that began in the 80s. There's *Pulse* (2001), *Charisma* (2000), and *Tokyo Sonata* (2008) as well as fan favorites like *Doppelganger* and *Bright Future* (both 2003). Despite winning best director at Cannes for his film *Journey to the Shore* (still no US distribution...), many longtime fans now watch his recent films (*Real*, *Seventh Code*, *Penance*) and declare it's "more of the same." This description certainly applied to a great deal of Ozu's work, but also to his best. And regarding a director with such a command of mood as Kurosawa, more of the same might not be such a bad thing. Since he's not as insanely prolific as Miike or Sono, his misfires have the greatest potential to turn out to be just misunderstood.

Back to *Cure* and its depiction of a detective searching for clues to a bizarre string of related murders. Detective Takabe is played by Koji Yakusho who you might recognize as the shy salary man who takes up ballroom dancing in *Shall We Dance?* (1996) or perhaps in the realm of fantasy as the gun-owning father to Rinko Kikuchi in *Babel* (2006). With Takabe he plays a character type, the determined yet fragile and burdened detective. This character type he has since both revisited and warped as seen in Kurosawa's *Charisma* and the more recent *World of Kanako* respectively. Detective Takabe is the only one capable of figuring out the cause of the murders, and at the same time is the one most susceptible to becoming the next victim as he is stressed by the divide between his private life and his work; he wears two masks at odds with each other. Identity is at the core of the horror in *Cure*, characters are asked who they are and they are defined by their occupation, through their choice. The person each murderer kills speaks to a pent up frustration. For the man Mamiya meets on the beach it is his wife. For the police officer it's his by-the-books partner. For the doctor it's men in general, who have looked down upon her despite her profession. For Mamiya when he was still a student, it was his studies, taken out on the monkey test subject his paper was on. And for Takabe, we get the most obvious clue: as his wife reads the story of Bluebeard during her visits to the doctor.

There is no slack in the film, each scene serving its purpose to further the film's message, or to further the detective narrative, sometimes both. Two scenes taking place at a laundromat come off as prime cutting room floor material until we realize these scenes introduce the idea of bottled emotions, and what Kurosawa suggests is the cure for these is the most haunting element of the film, made even bleaker by the fact that our hero uses the knowledge of the cure to not stop the killings, but to continue them. And with much greater ability than Mamiya had.

*Cure* is so much more than the easy comparisons to *Seven* and *Silence of the Lambs* as it is the closest we will ever get to seeing a horror film by Tarkovsky or Hou Hsiao-Hsien in terms of Kurosawa's command of atmosphere and the subtle blocking of his wide shots. It's this style of unsettling static camerawork that leads us to believe we can catch how Mamiya takes hold of his victims, and gives the film its own power of hypnotism over the viewer.

According to Third Window Films' Facebook page, the materials for *Cure* are not so hot. And the Spanish Blu-ray release of the film is nothing to write home about (25 interlaced frames per second for some reason). Janus has the rights to the film, and it's up on Criterion's Hulu Plus page in what looks like a straight rip of the now out of print HVE DVD. So at this moment the likeliest company to release a proper edition is Criterion, since Kadokawa has no restoration plans. But each October passes with no *Cure* announcement from Criterion.

*Cure* plays October 14 at 2pm and 7pm at the Landmark Chez Artiste.

## Sharknado 3: Oh Hell No! (Anthony C. Ferrante, 2015)

by Jim Norman

What do you get when you cross a tornado with hundreds of man eating sharks? A Sharknado! *Sharknado 3: Oh Hell No!* is the third installment of Sharknado tale originals from the SyFy channel network. The 'Nado movies have been called B movies and cult films. I found *Sharknado 3: Oh Hell No!* to be a creatively fun and silly ode to the horror/disaster spoof film genre (if there is such a genre). Playing on the fear created by the killer great white shark in 1975's *Jaws*, and phobia of killer tornadoes (*Twister*-1996), *Sharknado 3: Oh Hell No!* somehow makes the absurd fusion of storms and sharks fun to watch. It reminded me of going to see bad horror movies as a kid in the 1970's. Movies like *Squirm*, a film about electrified earth worms that burrow under their victim's skin and kills them. And *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (original 1977 version) portraying an insane Dr. crossing humans with wild animals on a secluded island (the 1996 version with Marlon Brando and Val Kilmer is one of the few remakes I've seen that was much better than the original). And in 1984 the cult classic *The Toxic Avenger* debuted, showcasing a meek young janitor who falls into a vat of toxic waste and is transformed into a huge mutated beast with a bad attitude that kills his enemies with his mop. *Sharknado 3: Oh Hell No!* brings that same kind of old school entertainment to the television screen.

The plot is simplistic: a giant tornado hits the Atlantic coast, touches down in the ocean, sucks up hundreds of killer sharks, and makes its way from Florida to Washington D.C. causing death and mayhem in its wake. What happens to Universal Studios theme park? Destroyed! My favorite amusement park scene is when a shark falls out of the sky and lands on the track of the giant loop roller coaster, somehow rides around the loop forward, then backward, killing everyone in its path. Daytona 500 race? Destroyed! Lincoln Memorial? Not destroyed but severely damaged! A shark lands in Lincoln's lap. The rest of Washington D.C., including a top tier military base are also nearly annihilated. The film's hero, and only hope for saving humanity, is Fin Shepard (Ian Ziering - *Beverly Hills, 90210*). Fin is married to April (Tara Reid - *Big Lebowski, Urban Legend, American Pie*) who's missing an arm from the elbow down that she covers with a long black glove. She lost the arm in an earlier Sharknado chapter. This isn't Fin and April's first jaunt with shark infested tornadoes. Fin is a decorated Sharknado destroyer and is joined by Nova (Cassie Scerbo - *Sharknado* AND *Sharknado 3: Oh Hell No!*) and Lucas (Frankie Muniz - *Malcolm in the Middle*) in his quest to somehow destroy the



Sharknado and save what's left of the Atlantic coast. The action is primarily centered around killing individual sharks that launch out of the Sharknado. Fin's weapon of choice is a custom double-bladed chainsaw, but he'll use any chainsaw, sword, or gun. In fact early in the movie Fin is awarded the golden chainsaw award. The trophy is a real golden chainsaw and comes in handy when sharks break through the ceiling of the White House after the award ceremony. Unique weapons are prevalent throughout the movie. My favorite is Nova's shotgun that fires giant bullets made out of mascara tubes.

One of the most entertaining aspects of *Sharknado 3: Oh Hell No!* is a number of cameo appearances and minor roles played by well know celebrities. David Hasselhoff (*Bay Watch*) plays Fin's dad. Mark Cuban (crazy rich guy) plays the President of the U.S. Bo Derek (*10*), Ne-Yo (rapper), and Lou Ferrigno (*The Incredible Hulk*) all play minor roles. And well known T.V. personalities Al Roker, Matt Lauer, Kathie Lee Gifford, and Hoda Kotb play themselves. Roker, of course, tracks the Sharknado and gives updates on shark precipitation levels. As the Sharknado grows in size and strength (actually multiple sharknados merge and create a super sharknado), any hope of Fin and friends finding a way to destroy the Sharknado fades. Things are bleak, and time is running out. Even Fin and Nova as they're flying through the air in fighter jet seem desperate. When all seems lost Nova seeks assurance from Fin asking "How do you do it Fin, you've been to the same place as me?" Finn answers "I think about my family. I'm thinkin' about them. I'm not thinkin' the sharks." And Nova sadly replies "When you pulled me out of that shark I thought I was dead. Since then nothing's been the same." High drama. And when things go from bad to worse, and the sharknado is so big that it cannot be conquered, Finn and his Dad (Hasselhoff) come up with a plan. But I won't spoil the ending. I'll just say that the plan involves commandeering a space shuttle and attacking the sharknado from high above the earth's atmosphere. Will there be a Sharknado 4? Oh Hell Yes! At the end of '*Nado 3* we're left hanging after Fin's wife April delivers their new baby while she's trapped in the belly of a shark. It just so happens that her prosthetic arm is a little baby chainsaw. Would I see this movie again? Oh Hell No! Well, actually, I already did.



Jim Norman contributes to Cinema Adrift and lives in Dubuque Iowa where he can drive through Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois and cross the Mississippi river twice in under 15 minutes.

How perfectly goddamned delightful it all is, to be sure. The Horror genre typically brings together terror and the otherworldly to push the limits of an audience's anxieties when they perhaps just come for a cheap thrill – and possibly a glimpse into the unconscious. In Terry Swigoff's *Ghost World*, however, no one squirms or screams because masks mean nothing – all is visible, and all is mundane. There is no Being lurking in the shadows. Just a surplus of simulacra, as Jean Baudrillard called it, to be sifted, displayed, and recycled. Art is no different than Don Knotts. Authenticity merely congealed into plastic and dust. Even racism, as Seymour, the hero of the heap of cracked, flacking, malfunctioning kitsch, played by Steve Buscemi, points out, is still obvious and normal even as people disguise or deny it. And there is no exit, as Enid Coleslaw, our anti-heroine, played by Thora Birch of Sam Mendes's *American Beauty*, (1999) comes to learn. The cancelled bus always comes in the end.



More simply, *Ghost World* exhibits the horror of postmodern American nihilism – of self-ascribed marginal status left chuckling at the neon, the hilarity of post-identity adjustment strategies left in the ruins. The film depicts what it is like to grow up amongst the walking dead, aimless and lonely, amid nostalgia and seediness, drifting in between two worlds: one dead, the other powerless to be born. Here the Satanists are all too easily caricatured, as they innocently beside us sipping soda, only to lead us to retro diners – and eventually to Seymour who becomes Enid's attraction. Here the film becomes intimately attuned to its characters even while they keep fatally distant. For love is not to be, there are no soul mates, and there is no future.

"Devil Got My Woman" was merely only a record, and Enid's hookup with Seymour ultimately a dead-end. She had to get on that bus.

More cynical than either Swigoff's earlier *Crumb* (1994) or Mendes's *American Beauty*, *Ghost World* is also more dated. Although the movie still has staying power it is too slow and too contemptuous for millennials. It is the pre-cell phone world, the pre 9/11 malling of America, when the "creeps and losers" were "our people," as Enid puts it. It was a time when it was still possible, as Roger Ebert wrote in his review, to "send messages no one is receiving."<sup>1</sup> (Indeed the film may even be flattering to some. I still have a flip phone in 2015. I still receive Netflix DVDs in the mail, and I'm writing my first article for a zine!)

So where *did* that bus lead? Where are Enid and Scarlett *today*? One went on to a community college Art program to work retail and become a lonely mom who binge diets her way to becoming Target floor manager. Scarlett would become a breast-augmented yupster who substitutes detox for bro-pox after moving on to NYC, and still finds delight in downloading The Red Hot Chili Peppers to cope with abject failure. Brad Renfro, of course, would meet a much different fate than Sharia La Boeuf. Buscemi would find his way into the pantheon park bench, of HBO skullduggery. Do we even know what became of Teri Garr?

*Ghost World* is based on the comic series of the same name by Daniel Clowes. Both are defined by reactions and commentary on events happening around its characters. But Clowes's work is considerably darker and more psychological than Swigoff's. If the starkness of Clowes proffers at least a pretense of an ontological dimension, (e.g., sexual repression, perversion, even UFOs, and *really* scary Satanists,) Swigoff gives us the sumptuous banality of the absolutely quotidian to lure, capture, and captivate audiences.

Interestingly, the soundtrack by David Kitay, who worked on Swigoff's *Bad Santa* (2003) and *Art School Confidential* (2006), furnishes a pensive, even melancholic, mood to contrast with the white noise on the screen. Hence a dualism, we may wonder? Perhaps an extradiegetic impulse, after all, my dear viewer?

Soundtracks are traditional devices used to intensify the power and wonders of cinema. But soundtracks also make the audience's suspension of disbelief inevitable, i.e., "its just a movie...we audiences are the real ones!" So insofar a horror movie makes viewers suspend their critical faculties, as they cringe and shriek in their seats, as if they were on screen too, or at least getting their cues from violin crescendos when they are actually safely sitting in the dark, it can be said that cinema also enables audiences to ultimately look away, i.e., "it was just a movie...those were just violins and monsters, silly us!" But in Swigoff's *Ghost World*, where there is no screeching, Kitay's soundtrack only contrives a knowing perspective of spectators, as if it were just another point of focalization or camera-angle. As another formal element to mask the disappearance of the real, its descending cadences on a solo piano duplicate the void of audience reflection. *Ghost World* is not just a movie. We are its simulacra.

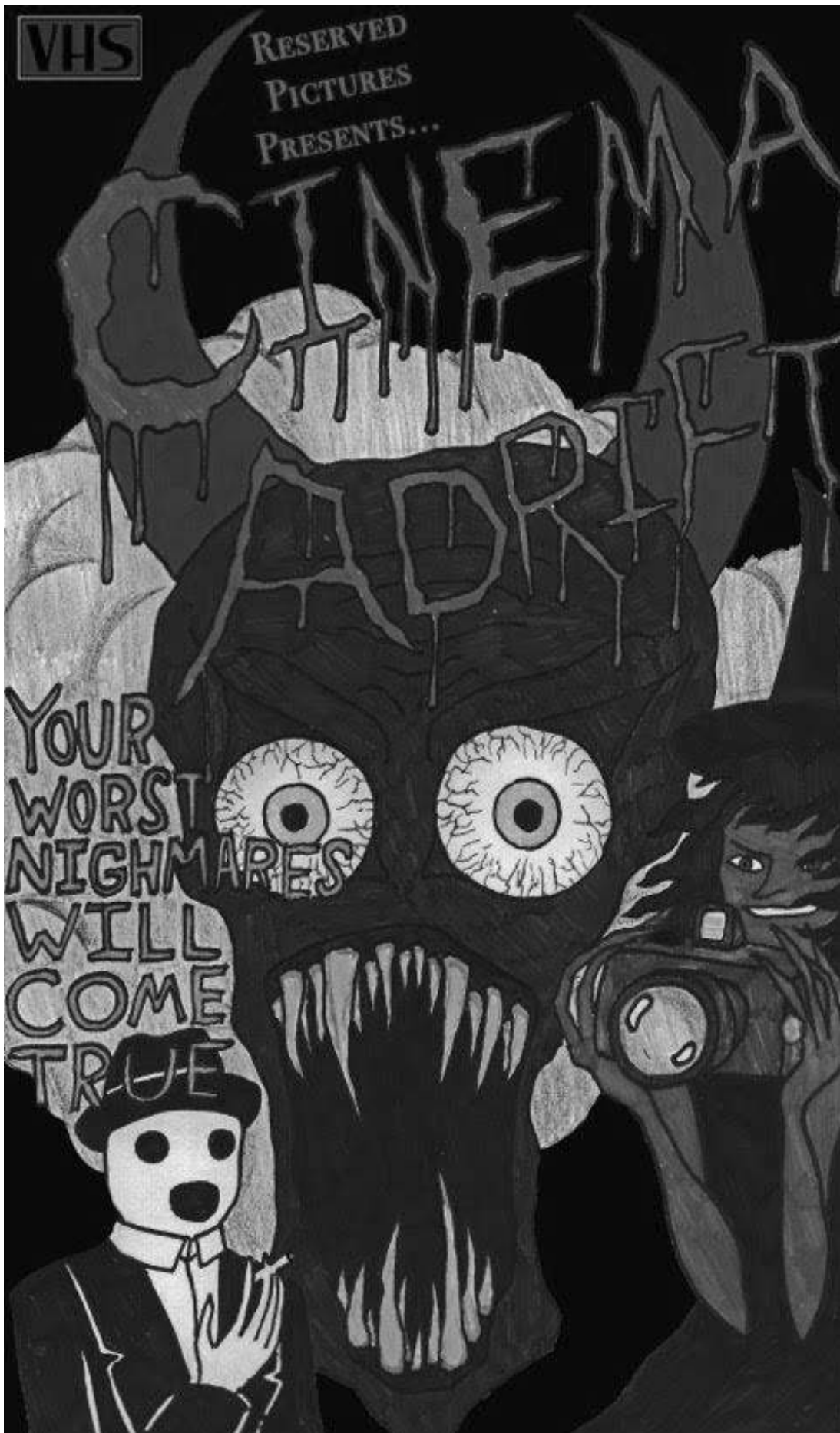


Pietro de Simone is a contributor to Cinema Adrift and despises the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

<sup>1</sup> Roger Ebert, *Ghost World*, August 9, 2001.

<http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/ghost-world-2001>





Down the Rabbit Hole  
--Blood Car  
--Penance  
--Toad Road  
--I Am a Ghost  
--Begotten  
--Dressed to Kill  
--Blood and Black Lace  
--The Beyond

Artist: Nick Arno  
instagram: @nick\_yaaaas

Let me set things up for you. It's the future. Like, two weeks from now. Gas prices are at an all-time high. Nobody drives anymore. Not even truckers. And a trucker who doesn't drive, well, you know. And you know that saying, 'If you can't take the heat get out of the kitchen'? People still say that but they don't drive cars. And teenagers having sex in cars? That still happens too, but in graveyards. Car graveyards. This is the story about the man who decided to change all that. It's a story about his invention. It's a story about society. It's a story about you.



## The Parody and the Politics of *Blood Car* (Alex Orr, 2007)

by Jason Suzuki

Sometimes a blackboard can be a window into a teacher's personality. If you're a student in Archie Andrews' classroom you'll find topics such as 'The Manhattan Project' and the 'Kyoto Treaty' written on his blackboard along with homework assignments like "Recycle Recycle Recycle" and "Never Lie" written. Archie (Mike Brune) is a kindergarten teacher by the way. And a vegan as well. In his spare time he is working on an engine that will run on wheatgrass, as you can deduce from the title, the car won't run on it.

Alex Orr's film, with a budget not breaking into the 6-digits, is extremely clever and wears its low budget on its sleeves. Speaking of sleeves, all characters wear t-shirts in the film despite the fact that we can see their breath in outdoor scenes. It inverts many story tropes. For instance the way we figure out the Veggie Stand girl Lorraine (Anna Chlumsky) has a crush on her only regular Archie is through her sketching a fantasy of them together, except in this film the sketch looks like this:



We also get a great, and hilariously low-budget, dichotomy for Archie in the form of placement of the meat stand the veggie stand:



But beyond the laughs we have a deeply cynical film. Archie's character, for all his commitment to being green, turns out to be the biggest sell out, going so far as to use the allure of puppies in the trunk to kill a hitchhiker. All this to continue being able to see, and be peed on, by Denise. Brune, who girlygeekblog on imdb thinks is pretty hot, plays Archie with little sympathy. Even though he freaks out when he starts killing people to fuel his car, he sheds more tears during the period when he thought it could run on the blood of animals. The film follows the journey of a self-righteous guy with righteous intentions, and how easy it was for him to abandon all his principles. Archie eventually becomes president, kissing the campaign baby before throwing it into the trunk.

In the very first part of *Penance*, during the moment which will be revisited in each subsequent chapter, Kurosawa carefully composes his frame to never allow us a glimpse at Emili's killer's face. In an extremely quick moment when he turns around we catch that glimpse, and it's the great Teruyuki Kagawa (who previously worked with Kurosawa in his best role as the father in *Tokyo Sonata*). By casting Teruyuki Kagawa as Emili's murderer, an actor whose voice and face is extremely easy to recognize and remember for a

Japanese film fan, Kurosawa puts his audience in direct contrast to the four girls who seem to have trouble remembering any details of the man who took their friend away. Through casting Kurosawa once again shows that the mystery of the killer is not as important as other things in the story. Akira Kurosawa cast Eijiro Tono as the kidnapper in *Seven Samurai*, a role in which Tono appears onscreen for under a minute, as a way to draw attention to the moment, and create importance. Kiyoshi Kurosawa does just the opposite with Kagawa's casting: the mystery is not the identity of the man but the identity of Emili's mother Asako Adachi (Kyoko Koizumi), which is the narrative focus of the fifth and final episode. Choices made in casting can help hone in on meaning, by either dispelling or drawing attention to a quality's importance. By utilizing character types of the actor, his/her casting brings with it previous roles, especially those with the same director.

As each episode goes on we don't get any closer to the identity of the killer. Not until episode 4 does Kurosawa propel the whodunit plot forward in a purposely forced moment of discovery. Kurosawa constantly reminds us through narrative decisions that the real tragedy of *Penance* is not the fact that Emili's killer is still at large, or even the death of Emili herself. It's how each of these five women's lives have turned out, tragedies caused not only by their own personal decisions but those decisions informed by each respective and unique crack in development caused by Emili's death.

Kyoko Koizumi plays the housewife again, as she did in Kurosawa's *Tokyo Sonata* (given the identity of Emili's father in *Penance*, Kagawa interestingly plays her husband in the film). Here she has more agency though, forcing Emili's four surviving friends to come up with their own penance until the murderer is found. Sakura Ando, the grown version of Emili's friend Akiko and the subject of the third episode, is cast yet again as her neer-do-well slacker type except this time deeply delusional. We expect redemption, something a slacker character is ripe for, but it's only accomplished in the world Akiko has created for herself.

## A Tragedy in Five Parts: Kiyoshi Kurosawa's *Penance* (2012)

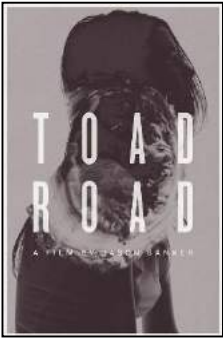
by Jason Suzuki

Our slight view of  
Teruyuki Kagawa.



Sakura Ando as Akiko

Going deeper into how Kurosawa uses the type-cast, drawing on previous histories with actors, he creates an evolution of meaning from film to film when utilizing the same cast. The casting of the Koizumi and Kagawa plays into an overarching theme within Kurosawa's work of the disintegration of the family unit. Back in 1997 Kagawa played a father seeking revenge for his daughter who was a victim of the snuff film operation he was the sales guy for, indirectly he is one of his own daughter's murderers because of this involvement. Later, Kagawa is the father in *Tokyo Sonata*. A man who loses his job yet in front of his family keeps leaving the house for work. Each family member's private lives are tracked, their daily stresses come out at dinner time when they are all together. We know what's bothering each of them but they do not. This culminates in the father hitting his own child. Now Kagawa plays a father who directly hurts his child. And finally, in *Penance*, he is a man who kills a little girl as an act of revenge to get back at the woman who had a part in his girlfriend's suicide. When he finds out the girl, Emili, was his own, the product of when he raped Asako, he now understands why he had this inexplicable feeling that he had to kill her when he saw her. Because she was his daughter. We have erased the move toward reviving the family unit as seen in the end of *Tokyo Sonata*. In *Penance*, the family unit is based on rape and murder. It shows that casting influences how we interact with characters in more ways than one: through the creative, character-building choices of the actors themselves and by the act of casting a certain person.



**TOAD ROAD** (2012) directed by Jason Banker

This low budget film blew me away at how visually interesting it looked under unusual circumstances of making it. Filmed cinema-verite style during many actual parties with bits of dialogue improvised; the plot of the film shows a bunch of young adults drunk, high, tripping on acid and mushrooms. The film is cast with non-actors improvising around a fictional story line about an urban myth, Toad Road: a place in the woods of Pennsylvania, a path with seven gates that lead to hell. The film does an excellent job of mirroring the hell journey on Toad Road with real life party scenes. Real perception blends with personal conflicts, down spirals, hallucination and chaos. One of the main characters gets so obsessed with the Toad Road myth that she leaves everything in order

to take more and more drugs in order to find the secrets into the seven gates of hell. In a creepy aside the actress in real life died of a drug overdose shortly after the film was released.

This film shows that with a good framework of an idea and a good eye for shooting and editing a decent film can be made with a very small budget and crew.



**I AM A GHOST** (2012) directed by H.P. Mendoza

This is another low budget mind bender along the lines of *The Others* (2001); shot in one week in a bed and breakfast with a budget of \$10,000. A ghost trapped in her daily life within her home is unaware she is dead. She has communication from the other side with a medium who has been hired to talk the ghost into truly understanding what is happening to her. The main strengths of this film are the use of repetition and perceptual confusion as a way to tell the story. Most of the shots are from a single camera mounted on a tripod delicately documenting the scenes as if a hidden camera has been placed to observe the character in her daily life. The moments the camera moves bring the ghost-like and scary elements into the story, still interior shots, narrow corridors, hallways and stairwells super imposed with a ghostlike figure around the house. Demonic terror moves quickly into the frame and blends all the basics of a good boogeyman scare.



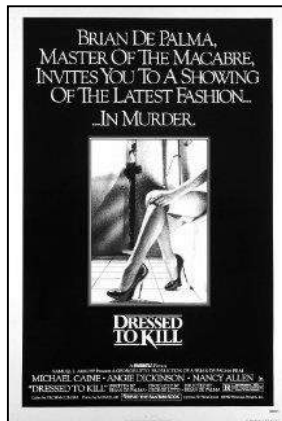
**BEGOTTEN** (1990) directed by E. Elias Merhige

Ten years before *Shadow of the Vampire* (2000) Merhige made a black and white film with a budget of \$33,000. The epic journey of the birth of the human onto the planet. Many film Synopsis' list the first scene as God disembowels himself with a straight razor. The mythic qualities dominate the film; it is a fever dream of creation. The exploration of the push of instinct to procreate, migrate, form communities, enslave others, cultivate plants, cut trees and build fires. Shot in black and white with scenes superimposed on top of exposed negatives. The film

is mostly silent with no dialogue, containing natural sounds as the only soundscape. Crickets chirp, water and soil move, sounds of dragging and scrapping amplify the tensions of human transformation within the physical confines of natural environments. The film explores the imagined organizing principles of human interactions with individuals and within groups in contrast to natural elements of physical spaces. The black and white images are striking and terrifying in that hooded figures with black eyes dominate others. Meat is cut, poked and dragged; organs spill out mixing with natural elements of soil. This is mythic exploration with staggered guttural movements. We see sticks poking into bodies and the gore that flows out mixing with water and mud. This is the movie that in the trailer tagline says "Makes *Eraserhead* look like *Ernest Saves Christmas*." Even in its most terrifying images curiosity leads the viewer on a journey watching humanity unfold.







## Dressed to Kill (Brian De Palma, 1980)

by Sandra Courtland

While his movies are certainly fun, I've never been much of a fan of Tarantino after discovering films like *City on Fire* (Reservoir Dogs) and *Lady Snowblood* (Kill Bill Vol. 1). I have no interest for his pastiche. So why is it that I love

Brian De Palma and films like *Dressed to Kill*, so obviously inspired by Hitchcock? While Tarantino quotes shots, De Palma treats Hitchcock like a language, and it's a language he gets more and more fluent with, twisting it in his later films. Instead of having a person look out their window at the apartments across the street, De Palma makes every character a voyeur. Hitchcock gave us singular moments at a time, aligning is with our own voyeurism, whereas De Palma has multiplied it, constantly making us aware of the characters, the audience, and his own identity as a voyeur as the film's director.

Once you realize that the major inspiration for this particular film is *Psycho* then two major aspects of the narrative should be of no surprise: the death of the initial protagonist a third of the way through, made all the more effective because of De Palma's direction and the fact that the murder is the finale to a good 15 minutes without dialogue, and the identity of the killer, a transvestite because of a split personality, despite being obvious who it is doesn't hinder the enjoyment of the film. The art museum sequence throws us off, figuring that *Vertigo* might be the source De Palma builds off of, potentially adding to the shock of Angie Dickinson's death, which De Palma makes more tragic. Instead of Leigh, who was a woman who had stolen money and skipped town, Dickinson is a woman who is unsatisfied at home and then shamed for when she acts on an impulse to be loved.

From Dickinson's death three separate investigations begin. Another instance on how De Palma keeps multiplying the layers: we have multiple voyeurs and now multiple investigators. De Palma lets his influences evolve through him, they are recognizable from their original sources and from the originality of De Palma himself.

"I'm gonna go powder my nose... and when I come back, I hope to find your clothes right next to mine. And if not, we can just get back to the mind fuck."

-Liz Blake (Nancy Allen)



## Blood and Black Lace (Mario Bava, 1964)

by JJ Iaconetti

What's so odd about Bava's landmark film, which is essentially a proto-slasher film, is how it seems to subvert genre expectations at every turn as if it had

been made after countless similar films had already come out. Because of this, the film remains vibrantly refreshing, just as much so as its color scheme. Once the killers and the reasoning behind their actions have been revealed it is then we see just how different this is than your typical take on the structure established by works like Agatha Christie's *Ten Little Indians* and films like *The Cat and the Canary* (1927).

Out of all the victims, the only one who was driving the plot along, the one who the murderer truly wanted to kill, the other victims meant to lead the police on a different trail, is the woman in the opening scene. Usually the most throwaway victim, the opening scene one, is actually the most important, and all the other characters who we get to know and see killed during the course of the film are really the throwaways. Continued appearances of mannequins and statues, the suit of armor in the antique store, reveals the film's self-aware nature for the treatment of its characters.

The killer's mask is interesting because it gives us the general idea of a face. And once we find out that the second person to don the mask to kill is a woman, we realize the mask is meant to be genderless. Instead the trope of a killer stalking around targeting beautiful women is a ruse by the killer in order to lead the police off his trail and onto the trail of a "crazed sex maniac." The brutality of the killings though might suggest that the front might have some basis in truth within the killer.

The police detective's investigation, despite the film spending quite a bit of time with, leads nowhere. They are easily fooled by the fiction of a sex maniac and never seem to become any wiser. Usually the detective is one step behind the killer until the end when they figure everything out, usually too late so that the survivor girl can defeat the killer. Our survivor girl in this film acts as accomplice to the killer, becoming one herself.

Bava's film is an exercise in the slasher done by someone who seems to have a clairvoyant boredom with the tropes.





Lucio Fulci's *The Beyond* (1981)  
by D.S. West

*The Beyond*-- *L'aldilà* in Italy, and *Seven Doors of Death* in its initial, censored U.S. release-- was created at a time when European film studios were turning profits exporting low-budget horror films to the international market.

*The Beyond* is among a cornucopia of films written and performed in English by European actors, and very often re-dubbed prior to release. These films were late-night, cult audience fare. The vast majority are unpalatable, remembered only for their grisly special effects. But art is an expert gem smuggler.

I've been trying to get to the bottom of why *The Beyond* continues to resonate with me, over a decade after I paid \$30 for the "collector's edition" VHS at an FYE record store, at the peak of my teenage obsession with horror movies. From its abrupt open, the creepy shots of the Seven Doors Hotel, the mob and the bayou and the crickets, watching *The Beyond* puts me in another world.

In an AMC documentary on horror films, Guillermo del Toro praises John Carpenter's impeccable sense of timing in *The Thing*. Carpenter has a musician's understanding of timing and manipulating the audience. This is the key to creating suspense, del Toro suggests. In making *The Beyond*, Lucio Fulci and cinematographer Sergio Salvati manipulate the audience on a hypnotic level, with sights and sounds that sloppy, disordered, but somehow comprise a devastatingly beautiful zombie nightmare.

It isn't the sheer weirdness of tarantulas eating tongues, or the ingenuity of a sequence presenting, visually, a blind woman revisiting the memory of recent footsteps to determine if she's alone in her room. Most old-school low-budget horror is ultimately forgettable. Of the few films that've achieve cult status, even fewer have more to offer than a particularly grisly effect or a depraved stalk sequence. But knowing when and where the Karo syrup runs like salmon through a dis-assembly line in *The Beyond*, the film remains beautiful and engaging. There's more to be savored than exploding heads and zombie plumbers. When the credits roll, it isn't the splatter that sticks, but the uniqueness, and the utter hopelessness, of the world that's been splattered across one's senses.

A number of sights and sounds from Fulci's film are seared into my brain, as indelibly as great paintings I've seen, but one takes the cake: Liza, driving a deserted bridge in broad daylight, spots two figures ahead at the center of the road. Liza slows, then stops her car in front of these figures-- a blind woman and her Alsatian guide dog. The

image of water on both sides of the bridge is as striking as a William Blake engraving. The blind woman, Emily, knows Liza's name, and the history of the hotel she's inherited. When the camera cuts to Emily's face, her eyes are a dingy, milky white.

Fulci successfully translated what's known today as 'Lovecraftian horror' to the screen. H.P. Lovecraft wrote about evil gods descending on the world of man. His work was hopeless, because the scenario was hopeless. What hope does humanity have, against absolute corruption? In the *The Beyond* and its lesser companion film *City of the Living Dead*, a gateway to hell is opened. Fulci's hell isn't the ghouls and zombies it happens to reanimate, but a disease of order and meaning. *The Beyond* is founded on a brilliant, unstated concept: that reality has terminal cancer. That meaning, and life itself, are rotting from the inside out.

This idea elevates the stilted acting, wooden characters and corny dialog. Nonsensical dialog and dubbed audio doesn't feel as out of place as they should. The film unfolds like a child's nightmare. Age has only strengthened this effect, and I'd argue strengthened *The Beyond*'s accessibility. The color, the grain, and the baroque score feel dated... remote... alien.

The beauty of *The Beyond* is its execution. I don't think there's a prettier 'splatter flick' out there. In the scene where Liza investigates the scene of Schweik's murder in 1927, I'm not paying attention to the character, or the story, but the camera. The music and cinematography don't tell the story, they *are* the story, leading the viewer around the room by the nose.

Fulci was influenced by playwright Antonin Artaud and avant-garde drama. *The Beyond*, following Artaud's example, attempts to cut past rationality and terrify viewers on a sub-conscious level. The plot could almost be called a decoy, but it's an irrelevance regardless. The narrative seems to eat its own tail as it progresses, growing increasingly vague. Characters who see too much, or make important discoveries, are immediately and brutally killed. Knowledge isn't power, but certain doom. In the infamous tarantula scene, a character finds an expanded blueprint of the hotel in the library. He's immediately rocked off his ladder, and dies one of the most outlandish infamous deaths in all of horror cinema. As the camera hovers over the hotel blueprint he's discovered, the hidden rooms disappear from the page.

To add to the cruelty-- there's no indication that knowledge of the original blueprint would've made any difference.

*The Beyond* has influenced me more than most 'great films.' I haven't encountered anything like it before or since. Budgetary and practical limitations may have obscured their innovative approach to the material, but in *L'aldilà*, Fulci and his collaborators created a gruesome, existential, tongue-in-cheek-- even if that tongue is bitten by tarantulas-- work of seminal horror art.

D.S. West is a contributor to Cinema Adrift. A list of his publications is available at [icexv.wordpress.com](http://icexv.wordpress.com)

The Further

--Anguish

--Promiscuities

--The Nightcomers

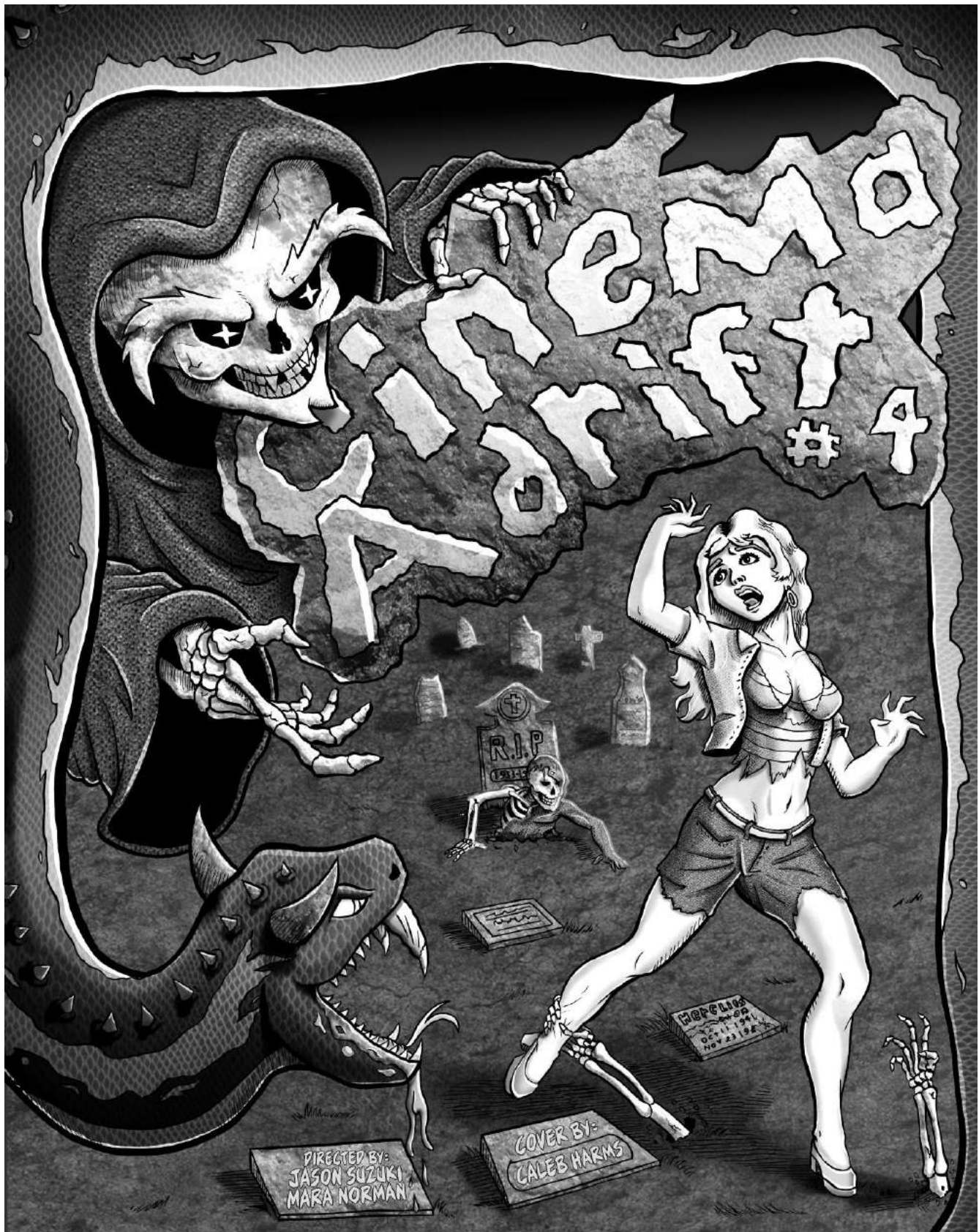
--Miss Zombie

--El Desierto

--LOST REALMS/HIDEN SHADOWS

--Sometimes Aunt Martha Does Dreadful Things

--Nightmare Weekend



Artist: Caleb Harms

[www.facebook.com/calebharm1996](http://www.facebook.com/calebharm1996)

WARNING: If you want to experience this film the best way possible, DO NOT read if you have not seen the film.

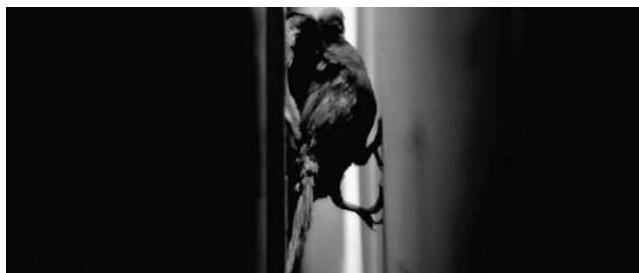
## Anguish (Bigas Luna, 1988) – Spain

by JJ Iaconetti

In *Demons* (Lamberto Bava, 1985) something very inspired happens: the film being shown at the theater which *Demons* largely takes place in is, mirrors what's going on in the theater. Characters are attacked and thus turned over to the demon side in the film, and in the film within the film. Bigas Luna's *Anguish*, unfortunately his only genre effort to date, uses this device. But whereas *Demons* does it as an entertaining parallel, to make the build up to the creature goods engaging rather than something to endure, Luna's film is about how we interact with the movies.

John Pressman (Michael Lerner) is a neurotic ophthalmologists' assistant, his neurosis is certainly derived from his mother (Zelda Rubinstein) who hypnotizes him to murder people, remove their eyes, and bring them back to her.

We get twenty unfiltered minutes with the film within the film, entitled *The Mommy*, before we pull back to the theater it's being shown in. Our focus is directed to two teenage girls Patty and Linda (Talia Paul and Clara Pastor) and from here we will watch *The Mommy* with them. Patty is having a hard time making it through the film, physically upset by the gore. She voices her discomfort to Linda, leave or stay and shut up are the options Linda gives Patty in between tossing popcorn into her mouth. "This is fun," Linda says. Between the two we have been given a



range of affect, one manifested as entertainment and the other on a deeper level that causes anxiety. Patty looks around to her fellow movie-goers and sees others rubbing their eyes while John is onscreen, carving out the eyes of his victims. Her reaction to the film is shared.

Eventually the range of affect gets broadened as our focus shifts more in favor of the movie theater in *Anguish* than the movie theater in *The Mommy*, where John goes to pick off people in the back of the auditorium for their eyes. This naturally sets into motion the reveal that in Patty's theater there is a killer lurking as well. Instead of a screwdriver this killer uses a silenced pistol to first kill the theater employees before locking himself in with theater goers, still watching *The Mommy*.

Because of recent tragedies of violence at the movies, the shooter in *Anguish* makes the film uncomfortable and probably makes it something that won't be touched for a while as far as repertory screenings go. The shooter though is the character that really begins the back and forth between the world of the film and the world of the film within the film. If *Anguish* is about how we interact with the movies it now posits that this interaction is a two way street. Moments in the one world seem to trigger the other and vice versa. Sometimes it seems that a character will look to the screen to decide what to do next.

*Anguish* remains to be a one of a kind film. I also recommend staying for the end credits and see the humorous link that form.





## Promiscuities

(Jonathan Leder, 2014, 24min) – USA

by Jason Suzuki

Diane (Amy Hood) seeks help from a psychotherapist for her problems with addiction. His method is to sit her in front of a camera and have her open up about her past. What this does is open a psycho-sexual can of worms as Diane. The narrative is split between these tapes and narration from her husband Phillip (Phillip X Levine), recounting the suspicions and turns that manifest themselves with Diane.

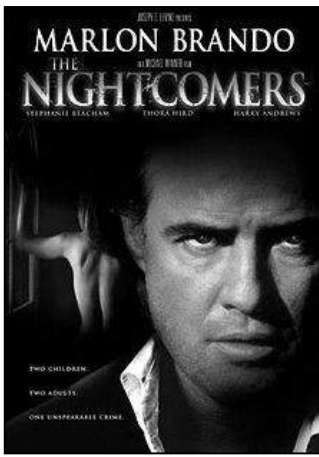
We get to watch excerpts from these tapes, from this perspective Diane seems a prisoner trapped in the television despite how free she seems when discussing her sexual neurosis, the seductive nature in which she tells the psychotherapist/the camera/the audience is certainly influenced by the fact she is being recorded. Delivered in a constant montage fashion are flashes of her infidelities. Quick moments where Phillip confronts the psychotherapist are the most plot-driven aspects to the film, choosing instead to deliver a feeling of the disintegration of their marriage through the recreation of desires and insecurities, as well as past traumas.

Jonathan Leder is an erotic photographer, co-founder to Jacques Magazine, who has directed shorts before, but these were more along the lines of photoshoots at 24 frames per second. Leder is very adept at creating a dark and sexual tone, mirroring that of Diane and Phillip's confessions. The fantastic visuals seem almost second nature as is the case with photographers turned directors. Leder prides himself on creating visuals with little to no artificial lighting and minimal retouching.

The director and lead actress have collaborated before on a magazine called "Fetishisms Manifesto," inspired by under-the-counter nudie mags of the 1950s. And since its release last January have put out a volume two. Hood shows more interest in ventures other than modeling, ones that give her more space of expression. Leder and Hood are currently working on a feature film entitled *American Ecstasy*, which we can expect from the trailer available online to be darker, more explicit, and perversely sexy.

You can buy *Promiscuities* online from Leder at [promiscuities-movie.com](http://promiscuities-movie.com). Included are the uncut tapes of Diane's sessions.





## When Night Comes Falling: *The Nightcomers* (1971) by Wm Wilder

There's a scene in *The Nightcomers* (1971) in which Marlon Brando preens before a mirror preparing for a mysterious ceremony. The image itself is haunting. He is not full-faced gazing, but casually combs back his hair. He smooths it flat into a small pony tail at the nape of his neck, reminiscent of mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century Louis XV style. It's Brando at his most deliberate intensity. He turns profile to camera and picks up a generous hand full of flowers, crushing their petals. Slowly he rubs the crushed flowers inside his shirt, a perfume he sniffs before fastening his collar button. He pauses, furrows his brow and the tip of his tongue protrudes to gently touch his upper lip as he slowly opens and closes his eyes. He's clearly in a deep, pensive mood. The entire scene reeks of charisma and sensuality. It's easily three-quarters into the film--a sharp contrast to his courting skills in earlier scenes, ropes and all...

Michael Winner, directed Michael Hastings' screenplay of *The Nightcomers* (1971). Winner respected Brando's ability to subtly interpret Quint's character. The actor and director, who met for this film, remained friends for life. Hastings envisioned a tale that's a prequel to Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* novella (first published in serial form, *Collier's Weekly*, 1898). The film received positive reviews. "Brando's performance earned him a BAFTA Best Actor nomination" ([britishhorrorfilm.co.uk](http://britishhorrorfilm.co.uk)). Now, the film feels dated, but considering the time period, it makes sense. Brando gives Peter Quint, the valet turned gardener, a far different personality than the ghost vision of the decade-earlier classic horror film *The Innocents* (1961), directed by Jack Clayton (hot off his success of *Room At the Top* (1959). Some Jamesian perfectionists objected to the *The Nightcomers* use of the characters' lives pre-novella, an early extrapolation of Reader-Response theory. But, Hastings' credibility stands on its own (see his film adaptation of *Tom & Viv* {1994} based on his stage play {1984} as well as numerous other fine works.)

Brando's Peter Quint charms the children, Flora and Miles, as he tutors them in the ways of nature and the reality of death. He reminds them how he's taught Miles to place bread crumbs in the palm of his hand to catch a sparrow. Some of his lessons border on voodoo--fashioning dolls of household members. He places pins in Mrs. Grose the housekeeper's effigy. She is Quint's nemesis. Her goal is to keep him out of the house or, preferably, completely off the grounds of Bly estate. Despite her protestations, he's already established himself as the children's half guardian/half playmate. Although classified as a horror film, the actual horror is that Quint takes over parenting the children even before they are orphaned. Since their biological parents are too busy with their own desires, specifically what Quint classifies as "travel and machines." They are left, as were most upper-class children of the time period, to be taken care of by hired help. When their Uncle, the legal guardian, leaves Bly, he makes it clear that even though Quint's master's dead (he was formerly valet to Miles & Flora's father) and he's out of his previous duties, he needs to tend the gardens and watch



over the housekeeper, the governess and the children, "which should be employment enough." Quint, in other words, despite Mrs. Grose's intolerance and belief he is a ne'er-do-well, has been given free reign of Bly estate by its owner.

The film opens with Quint's eerie whistle calling the children to play and discover the ways of nature. Later, he answers their questions with a frankness that is too abstract for Miles and Flora. He leads them into a labyrinth of misunderstanding. Their young minds' failure to grasp metaphorical language traps them into concretized actions. Things that go "bump in the night" as he spies Quint with Margaret Jessel, the governess, don't shock Miles. Instead, he engages his sister in what he believes he's witnessed as "having sex." He ties her to the bedposts and climbs on top of her, both of them fully clothed, comic relief juxtaposed to what we've seen previously in Margaret Jessel's bedroom. When Flora protests to Miles wanting to undress her, he exclaims they have just bathed together recently. He's clearly confused because he believes with all his heart that Quint's "always right" and what's he's viewed the night before must be how grown up's have sex. He doesn't understand the relationship between Peter Quint and the governess. When asked if he loves Miss Jessel, Quint tells them, "We just trick around, that's all..." It's more of a game--a force of nature breaking through Margaret Jessel's classism and frigidity. At night she succumbs to her need for Quint, but during the day she maintain her façade of being "a lady."

This façade/persona prevails in *The Innocents* (1961) as well. In fact, the new governess's "possession," many critics argue, are her own projected hysteria stemming from her sexual repression (see, Robert B. Heilman, "The Freudian Reading of *The Turn of the Screw*"; Ned Lukacher, "Hanging Fire": The Primal Scene of *The Turn of the Screw* in A Norton Critical Edition, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Deborah Esch & Jonathan Warren, c. 1999, 1966) One could spend countless hours studying the various critical arguments the novella instigates, but there's no doubt *The Innocents* ranks as a rare gem. "This is absolute classic British black-and-white horror, creepy and atmospheric despite—or perhaps because of—the elegance and gentility of its visuals. Adapted fairly freely from {the novella}...via William Archibald's play and Truman Capote's dialogue..." (The Innocents: No. 11 best horror film of all time, [theguardian.com/film/2010](http://theguardian.com/film/2010))

Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* is a ghostly possession in and of itself. There are "...numerous adaptations and reworkings in a variety of media, and these reworkings and adaptations have, themselves, been analysed in the academic literature on Henry James and neo-Victorian culture." It's an opera by Benjamin Britten, a ballet, a Broadway play directed by Harold Pinter, plus numerous television adaptations over the years. Recently, 2009, a BBC film adaptation by Sandy Welch joined the list. (see, [Wikipedia.org](http://Wikipedia.org) for no less than 7 pages of details!) Clearly, we haven't seen the last of it. In Henry James's own words from the preface to the New York Edition (c. 1908, Charles Scribner's Sons) "The good, the really effective and heart-shaking ghost-stories (roughly so to term them) appeared all to have been told...the new type...the mere modern "psychical" case...clearly promised little, for the more it was respectably certified the less it seemed of a nature to rouse the dear old sacred terror." He then elaborates on how he does incite the *dear old sacred terror*...



"...The exhibition involved is...a fairy-tale pure and simple... [it springs from] a conscious and cultivated credulity. Yes, James's "once upon a time" begins with a prologue that captures us from word one, "The story had held us, round the fire, sufficiently breathless...on Christmas Eve in an old house a strange tale should essentially be, I remember..." He's got us! We are around the fire, we are caught by a coziness of Christmas Eves remembered or camp fires-- roasting marsh-mellows, telling ghost stories to cast a remembrance of our *own* fears.

In defense of Brando's charismatic enchantment of the children in *The Nightcomers*, he's entirely within James's authorial "intent." "...I recognize again, that Peter Quint and Miss Jessel are not 'ghosts' at all, as we now know the ghost, but goblins, elves, imps, demons as loosely constructed as those of the old trials for witchcraft;...fairies of the legendry order, wooing their victims forth to see them dance under the moon." (James, preface to New York Edition, 1908) And the moon dance that Peter Quint calls forth ends not in play, but in a macabre twist of fate. The Irish elf, Quint, tutors his young charges in the ways of nature, life and love, but suffers the horror of Miles and Flora's misunderstanding of death. A true terror.



#

Wm Wilder contributes to Cinema  
Adrift and loves horror movies.

Cover illustration

"Miles and the Governess" by Charles Demuth



# Double Feature Review



# El Desierto/Miss Zombie

(Christoph Behl, 2013)

Argentina

98min

(SABU, 2013)

Japan

85min

The modern day zombie film, apart from gory throwbacks that act as loving parodies, uses a pacing to match the speed of the undead. That term itself, "the undead," doesn't just refer to the infected but just as much if not more refers to the survivors of the outbreak in the modern day zombie film. Two fantastic takes on these current zombie trends and zombie films in general come from Argentina and Japan. Each focuses in on a group of people closed off from the rest of the world, and how these interactions amongst the group are affected by the introduction of an undead pet. The first film to watch would be Christoph Behl's *El Desierto* released in the UK on DVD as *What's Left of Us*. The film's setting is clearly post-apocalyptic as the principle three characters, two men and a woman, are holed up in a bunker. Utilizing microphones they are able to hear the outside, our first direct hint at what caused

this apocalypse. But what happens inside the bunker is the main concern of the film as a love triangle forms between the three. Each one is able to have their own privacy by locking themselves into a room with DV camcorder and tape their confessions. It's not until the third act when the two men bring home a zombie after one of their hunts outside the bunker. The tensions have risen so high between all three of them that there is a sense everything that happens after the introduction of the pet zombie would have happened anyway.

*Miss Zombie* on the other hand begins with the arrival of the pet zombie. A young woman arrives in a cage, ordered by the father of the family to help around the house. She has a minor form of the zombie strain so no threat is posed as long as she is not fed meat. A gun is included in the zombie package in case things go wrong. Almost like a zombie version of Pasolini's *Teorema*, SABU's film is another chamber piece like *El Desierto* except this time the focus is on the zombie, and her life after death. The house includes a father, mother, son, and two workers who are the first to take an interest in the zombie, albeit a sexual one. What's most interesting about the film is the connection SABU created between the mother and the zombie. When her son suffers a fatal accident the mother has her helper turn him to bring him back. From there the two begin a *Persona*-esque transposing when the boy starts to treat the zombie as his mother.

These two films, *Miss Zombie* in particular, make the gap between zombie and human much smaller, treating the genre as a way to twist the chamber piece, giving the characters a situational device to bring out the hidden insecurities of its characters. But for anyone needing to cleanse their palette after this double dose of gloom should look at another recent Japanese zombie film for their third pick. Noboru Iguchi's *Zombie Ass* is pretty much what you would expect from that title alone and if you've ever seen a film by Iguchi. Surprisingly, the humans are linked with the zombies as well due to farting abilities.



# Triple Feature



Zombie Ass  
(Noboru Iguchi, 2011)

Japan

85min





**In order to get free shipping on [vinegarsyndrome.com](http://vinegarsyndrome.com) make sure your cart is over \$35. Here are some ideas on how to do this.**

## THE HYSTERIA CONTINUES PACK

From the dudes behind The Body Count Continues and Hysteria Lives! is this amazing group of four slasher film loving friends who have provided audio commentaries for some of the slashers in Vinegar Syndrome's library. These commentaries are just like watching these films with some good friends, enjoying the bad and the good of these types of films. You'll be surprised to find a film immediately rewatchable when joined by The Hysteria Continues gang. Plus, the eternal battle between Siouxsie and Toya continues.



**CART: Madman, Don't Go in the Woods... Alone, Graduation Day, Night Train to Terror**

## THE HARDCORE PACK

If you're ready to jump into the more penetrative side of their catalog, start out with these entertaining XXX films. These three films combine sex with insanity, delivering much more than titillation. In *Dracula Sucks* a man gets the vampire bite on his penis, which is so big it may as well have been his neck anyway. The release of Walt Davis' *Evil Come, Evil Go* is actually a triple pack with two other films of his, the best of the three is *Widow Blue*.



**CART: Jungle Blue, Evil Come Evil Go (triple feature), Dracula Sucks**

## THE ESSENTIALS

These are the films that make you believe anything is possible, and that it can be put on film. From a Christmas-set descent into a troubled man's madness to a woman's journey to find the world's greatest dirty phone caller, these are some of the gems that Vinegar Syndrome have given the polish they deserve. A perfect introduction to the label and the range of stuff they've given loving treatments to.



**CART: Runaway Nightmare, Christmas Evil, The Telephone Book, Raw Force**

## THE SLASHER HOLIDAY CALENDAR





## Sometimes Aunt Martha Does Dreadful Things (Thomas Casey, 1971)

The more films you watch the more you hope to find a film that transports you back to when you first started getting into film, when anything felt possible and it was impossible to even begin to imagine what sort of things could

happen in a film. For me, *Sometimes Aunt Martha Does Dreadful Things* did just that. The moment I was overcome with this feeling is a scene where a man, dressed as the titular Aunt Martha, is having your typical crime film conversation with his partner, both in crime and something more as the film alludes to, about not blowing their cover while attempting to lay low after a robbery/murder.

The film is hard to describe because you're not sure what it's trying to be and it's hard to tell if the filmmakers knew what it wanted to be. What we're left with is a great mash up of so many elements: we have a crime story featuring two homosexual characters, this aspect of the film made even more confusing how the film doesn't choose to pander to either side of the sexuality divide being neither vilifying nor reveling in it despite being at times a gay psycho-sexual killer film. Every now and then there are strong slasher elements despite the lack of gore. Scenes of T&A are crosscut with scenes of Paul (Abe Zwick) dressing in drag. Paul's younger cohort Stanley (Wanye Crawford) is a sexually confused stoner, who howls for Paul whenever confronted by a woman's sexuality. When Aunt Martha chides him for his drug use the movie becomes an after school special on drug culture. Yet it's hard to figure out what the movie's trying to say, never fully committing to identifying what Paul is.

The third film released in a partnership with the American Genre Film Archive, after *Super Soul Brother* and *Night of the Strangler*, Vinegar Syndrome's DVD of *Aunt Martha* looks very good and includes a very informative audio commentary from filmmaker David DeCocteau and Nathaniel Thompson of Mondo-Digital. They express the same wish to find out who Abe Zwick is. At least his fully committed turn as Paul/Aunt Martha has been preserved.



## Nightmare Weekend (Henry Sala, 1986)

Yet another film made in Florida, this time with a French crew but still aligns the state as a garden where completely bizzaro films grow. An attempt at a plot synopsis would read something like this: a computer scientist has invented a super computer that can reverse the personalities of disobedient animals.

Behind his back his colleague Julie decides to use the same computer to turn young women into debauched mutants. The computer scientist's daughter Jessica (Debra Hunter) meets and falls in love with one of Julie's lackeys and they proceed to have a romance while the experiment goes on at the mansion. Really, you'd need to write a page devoted to each minute to fully convey this 86 minute oddity. Oh and by the way, the computer is named George and he's the hand puppet hooked up to the computer system who becomes Jessica's confidante, giving device on what color dress to wear (white) and the best way to run into her crush (hitchhiking).

Apart from George the puppet, this film has a few other pretty fun details, which you feel would have made for a better horror film had the filmmakers known what they were doing but instead we still get something great. One particularly striking detail is whenever someone has been targeted by the computer they are stalked by a silver ball, and once that ball is consumed a hypnotic light is shined on their face. It's such a great detail as it's 1) cheap yet 2) effective at conveying the debauching process while inadvertently 3) creating a hypnotic experience for the viewer.

Included on the disc are two interviews with Marc Gottlieb and make-up artist Dean Gates. They detail the experience of working on a film with a crew who didn't understand English and a director who was good at sex but had never done horror. That explains the amount of sex in the film and also explains the feel of the film that is fascinating even if it doesn't completely make sense. It also explains the amazing combination of awkward dialogue and awkward dubbing. Jessica tells her dad he has it made with his two-hundred patents. "Two twelve" he coldly corrects her. Come for the strange concoction and stay for computer buddy George, or the other way around.



TURN PAGE FOR  
NEXT PAGE →





# HIKIKOMORI YEAH!

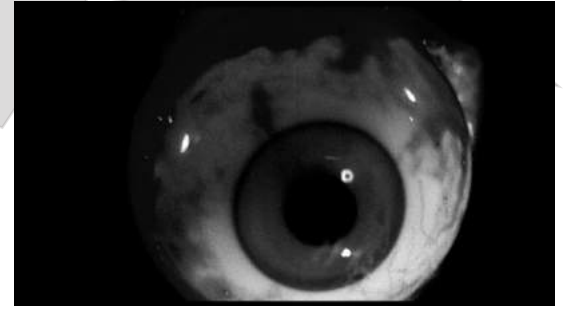
home video and digital recommendations

## BLU-RAY REVIEW:

### X: THE MAN WITH X-RAY EYES

ROGER CORMAN, 1963, USA, 79MIN

KINO STUDIO CLASSICS BLU-RAY, BD25 1080P, REGION A



Dr. Xavier (Ray Milland) has developed eyedrops that increase the powers of vision. By using himself as his own human test subject he gives himself these powers of deeper sight: through clothes to ogle younger women at a dance party and through the flesh, acting as a more accurate X-ray machine and thus making him a doctor more capable of diagnosis and treatment. This range of activity and ability gives you an idea that the film is not purely an exercise in sleaze, in fact it is never that. As the film goes on, and as Xavier applies more drops the film reaches for the metaphysical. When told that only the gods can see everything, Xavier replies that he's "closing in on them." You appreciate his obsession yet know that it will be his downfall. Roger Corman delivers one of his best films to not star Vincent Price, and the script comes from Ray Russell who worked with Corman on *The Premature Burial* (also starring Milland and also out from Kino Studio Classics).

A common thread between those who discuss the film in the extras, mainly Joe Dante and Corman himself on the commentary, is the possibilities of what the film would be like had it been given a bigger budget or if it were made today with advanced effects technologies. A bigger budget is one thing but if it were made today we would be losing Ray Milland who gives a fantastic performance that some would say is more than the film deserves. But comments like that come off as elitist, looking down on genre work which arguably gives its actors a bigger challenge: to accurately portray the heights of emotion and situation sometimes inherent to genre, but also the subtext of character and message. Milland does a perfect job of not coming off as the typical mad scientist but is able to give his obsession for seeing beyond the norm a grounding that is empathetic and at other times allows it to gradually spin out of control.



In comparison to the Tim Lucas commentary, new for this release, Corman's comes off as sparse. Yet the director calmly remembers the film and discusses the choices made. He knows what he is doing despite the subject matter of the film and the lack of belief Mick Garris, Dante, or Lucas may have regarding Corman's recollections of the rumored extended ending to the film which may or may not have been filmed. Overall Corman is surprisingly a filmmaker's filmmaker when talking. Tim Lucas delivers a commentary that is essential to the film; there is rarely dead air as he goes into the background on the film and gives miniature bios on each of the people involved. He also connects the plight of Dr. Xavier with Corman as filmmaker. The Lucas commentaries were the reason to get the majority of the Arrow Video Price/Corman/Poe films instead of the Scream factory releases, and here it is a reason to get Kino's release, that gets the job done but doesn't necessarily wow. Compared to other Kino Studio Classics releases, this is a wealth of extras.





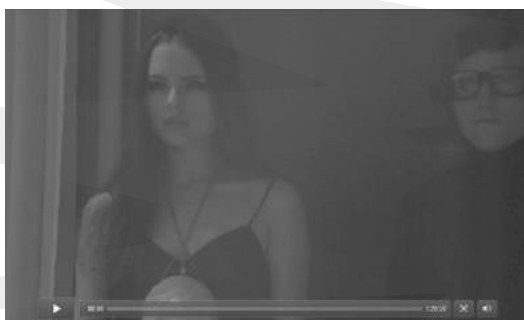


Since *The Telephone Book* is my favorite Vinegar Syndrome title, it is also my favorite on Exploitation.TV



Cast: Dennis Price, Paul Muller, Soledad Miranda  
 Director(s): Jesús Franco  
 Studio: Severin Films  
 Horror - Feature

A look at the details section of a film.



A still from the film appears in the player window enticing you to click the play button.

# Netflix, Get the Fuck Out of My House

As far as streaming services go, while Netflix is fine and all, my main one has been Hulu Plus thanks to its partnership with the Criterion Collection. It turns out Criterion has the rights to more stuff than they can release and that the majority of it is Japanese films (entire Kinoshita filmography, entire Oshima filmography, etc.). To this day I have not used it for TV shows or any non-Criterion movies found on the site. Thanks to the growing popularity of Netflix, certain companies have tried to brand their own services, most notably Warner Bros. and their Archive branch. With the launch of their own streaming service Exploitation.TV, Vinegar Syndrome have provided the missing niche in the world of streaming: the weird.

Unlike other distributors, this is not a half-assed attempt to cash in on the rise of the stream. Not only does it give exploitation fans something Netflix doesn't, many of these titles can't be found elsewhere. According to the site's FAQ, about 80% of the films are exclusive to the site, many not having ever seen a physical release. And it's not just Vinegar Syndrome titles on the site either, deals have been worked with companies like Severin Films (*Vampyros Lesbos*, *Video Nasties: Draconian Days*, *Castle of Blood*), Distribpix (*Opening of Misty Beethoven*), and Vagrancy Films whose only title is *Colour Correct My Cock*, which was immediately added to my watch list. They promise to add titles every Friday, around 10 or more a month. For some reason I see this as a promise that will be kept, though I have been burned in the past as Criterion's Hulu presence has been extremely sparse and irregular with updates of added titles.

Exploitation.TV is available on both Roku and ChromeCast as well as on the web, which is how I primarily used it. I was able to use a friend's Roku to test out how it works and there is definitely a lot to be desired with the UI, especially when compared to the design of the browser based experience. If you have a nice selection of bookmarked titles ready, called your Watch List, then you should be fine to start watching. But it's a lot harder to kind of freestyle explore and come across an impulse watch like you can with the way the site has been designed. You are forced to choose by genre, needing to load each one in order to go to the next. In other words, you're screwed if you want to see all the Thrillers, needing to load Action, Arthouse, Comedy, Drama, and Horror on your way to the desired category. The films play just fine though, I didn't have any stutters watching two films in a row, something I have encountered with both Netflix and Hulu.

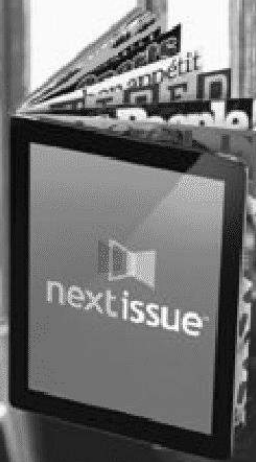
I absolutely love the site though. When you look at a movie you can click through to see other films potentially on the site from the same director, the actors, and even the distribution company. It's a feature I believe wasn't always with Netflix and something that Hulu Plus doesn't have, which would come in handy when looking for films starring Mariko Kaga. Thankfully here though, I can see through my newfound crush on Sandy Dempsey by searching for a movie I've seen her in and just clicking on her name. They could include more cast members for each film though, especially with a film with a nice ensemble like *Dracula Sucks*. I guess my only real gripe with the site is that it's a little hard to distinguish films you have rated with films you haven't. Hopefully you can judge how great a site this is out the gate from how small that inconvenience is.

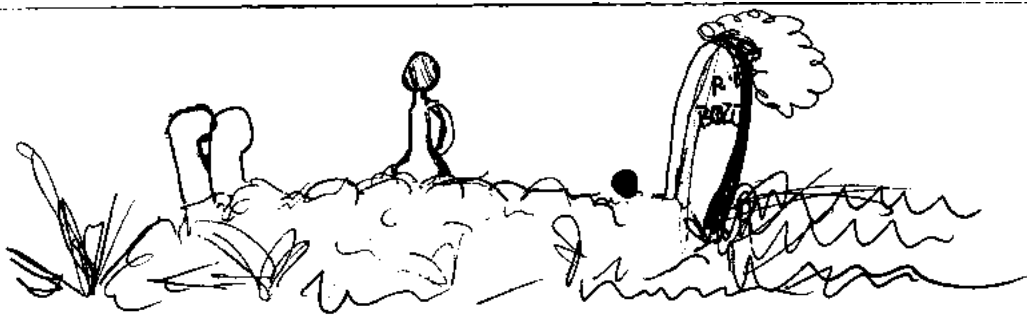
Apart from films you can also watch short films and even trailers. There is even a section called Extras which includes essays and films of the week, making this the first streaming site to have supplemental materials. Just another indicator that this site was made by true film lovers, a quality that Tim League was able to create for his theater chain. This is probably the reason this site is so exciting, because you know it will always be improved, and that it is in the care of people who are not disconnected from those who would use the site.

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### Editors:

Jason Suzuki & Mara Norman & Vincent D. Vilein

October 2015

Front Cover Artist: Matt Strackbein

Table of Contents: *Demons* (Lamberto Bava, 1985)

Page Numbers: Jennifer Salt, *Sisters* (Brian de Palma, 1973)

Above: "Clown Grave" by Robin Hyden

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### Thanks:

The Video Station

Vinegar Syndrome

We are always looking for contributors. If you ever want to write for Cinema Adrift please contact us at: [cinemaadrift@gmail.com](mailto:cinemaadrift@gmail.com)

LOVE ~~and~~ (for)  
~~and~~ Sex

② Rosemary's Baby -

Love between a mother  
and her Baby Antichrist

① Rosemary's Baby -

Sex between Mia Farrow  
and ~~the Prince of~~ His  
~~Darkness~~ Lord Majesty,  
the Prince of Darkness

③ Deliverance - Sex

between a human and  
a hillbilly ~~(a fun moment)~~

④ Bob, Carol, Ted and Alice

~~Sex~~ <sup>sex</sup> between  
four people in love.  
Nothing wrong with  
that.

Above: We asked a coworker to give us a list of his favorite romantic films. This is what we got.



**Vincent's  
Celebrity  
Crush**

**Olivia Hussey**

(*Black Christmas*)

"..."

-Vincent D. Vilein





# CINEMA

# ADRIFT

VOL. IV



## DIY AND DIE!

"IT HAS REDEEMING FEATURES."  
-STEPHEN THRAPILLOUGH,  
THE WEIRDO REVIEWS



The two co-editors of a budding film 'zine are looking for contributors for the October issue, the unlucky 4<sup>th</sup> issue. But before anyone can review any films they turn up dead. The search begins for the identity of the killer as well as page filler. As the deadline approaches the body count and word count will rise. Will they overcome their crippling tetraphobia? Or succumb to the powers of the demon goddess accidentally summoned during a last minute crunch? This is Cinema Adrift Part IV: The Fourth Volume.

Running Time: 94 minutes



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persons of  
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