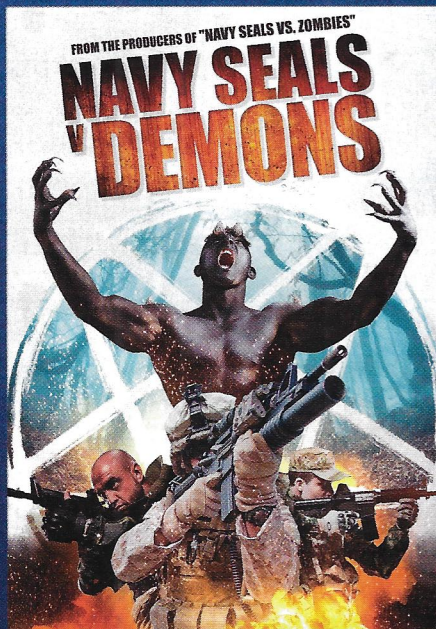


hard-nosed ex-navy seals as they head deep in the bible belt of America to take on a team of demons intending to steal virgin blood.

It is clear from the outset that this film is low budget fodder and the result is an entertaining mess. As such, the low quality of the film shows in abundance but there is no denying that Reyes has a keen eye for style which is brought to life here by Pedro Avila's slick cinematography. That said, the film suffers badly from its cheap looking effects, simple plot and its little to no attempt to flesh out its characters. However, despite the cheap look, Navy SEALS V Demons does carry with it micro budget thrills and nicely paced action scenes.

As far as the cast goes, Mikal Vega leads the film as Warren LT Carr, the leader of the Navy SEALS. He's big and someone you'd want in your corner. He nails every bit of his character with gusto and cements an element of realism which is unsurprising considering Vega served in the military for 20 years. Moving on and completing the team of Navy SEALS are Matthew R. Anderson and Les Brooks Jr. Both actors match Vega's impressive frame and screen presence but that's pretty much it. As for the rest of the cast, they are largely forgettable and stay that way until the end credits begin their crawl.



Overall, perhaps the biggest issue I had with this film is not the lack of plot or likeable characters but the awful demon make-up effects. Not only does it resemble something you'd see in an episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer but the make-up looks so cheap and proved to be nothing but a distraction. Thankfully the performances from the cast help ease the pain here but not completely due.

On reflection, Navy SEALS V Demons sadly fails to deliver on its promise. As an action horror, it should offer audiences the

best of both worlds but it doesn't. It's horror moments are mild and its action scenes are underwhelming so you know that I won't be rushing to watch this again anytime soon.

**Rating:** 🧟🧟🧟🧟

*NAVY SEALS V DEMONS is out now on US DVD courtesy of MVD Entertainment.*

REVIEWED BY JON DICKINSON

## THE ZODIAC KILLER

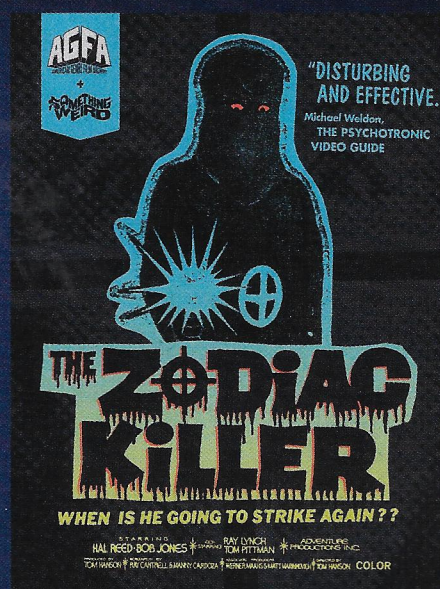
**THE FILM:** The Zodiac Killer is a highly fictionalised take on the infamous Zodiac investigation and sees Hal Reed take on the titular role in this overtly creepy experience. The film follows the Zodiac serial killer as he butchers his victims and taunts the local newspaper and police with cryptic messages about his identity and motives for committing his ghastly crimes. In reality we don't know the identity of the infamous Zodiac, however this film takes liberties with the real police investigation by providing a name and a back-story for the titular character.

Certainly, a product of its time, The Zodiac Killer as a film stumbles from scene to scene and hasn't aged well against today's standards. As Director Tom Hanson has delivered a thriller that has plenty going for it. Sure, it's hindered by some truly awful acting and over the top performances from its cast but Hanson offers audiences something much darker to think about... anyone could be a potential serial killer waiting to claim their next victim. Let that sink in for a moment...

Anyway, as Jerry aka The Zodiac Killer, Hal Reed easily gives the best performance in the film. He perfectly executes both sides of the character's personality. He works hard to anchor every emotional note of his character and his stark difference in behaviour makes his murder scenes even darker. Rounding up the cast are Ray Lynch and Tom Pittman. Both men play the policemen hot on the trail of the Zodiac. Neither one of them particularly adds to the quality of the film but they fill out the standard cop stereotype and help move the film along.

Intrigued by the Zodiac investigation I was excited to see this film but to my disappointment the film has not transferred well to digital. The film is grainy and the sound is awful in places and it brings down the overall quality of the film which is a shame. That said, it remained a compelling watch and carries some deeply chilling moments which at the time of its release would have easily shocked 70's audiences.

Overall, The Zodiac Killer is not a bad film but it does disrespect the source material (albeit unintentionally) which is a bit of a deal breaker for me. So, if you're looking to watch something of quality about the Zodiac



investigation, all you need to know is that Fincher did it better in 2007.

**Rating:** 🧟🧟🧟🧟

*THE ZODIAC KILLER is out now on US Blu-ray and DVD courtesy of MVD Entertainment.*

REVIEWED BY JON DICKINSON

## THE DARK TAPES

**THE FILM:** For the first half of The Dark Tapes, it's difficult to know what we're in for. Its most generic of found footage titles may set expectations low, but when scientist Martin (Cut! director David Rountree) addresses the camera to explain his theories around sleep paralysis (which involve "trans-dimensional" demons operating on a hugely expanded time scale, accounting for their brief visibility to sufferers of the condition) it becomes clear that something slightly more ambitious is in store. When we then cut to a segment entitled The Hunters & The Hunted however, we are taken into entirely familiar found footage territory. A couple – Karen and David – explore their lavish new dwellings with a video camera but their excitement is short lived when parts of the house begin to produce strange noises and even stranger physical manifestations of unseen forces. The appearance of a blistered, misshapen handprint on David's back prompts them to call in paranormal investigators, who soon capture footage of the couple's dead daughter in the house. Familiar? Very much so, but also not ineffective, with sustained dread throughout, before ending with a twist that is both frustratingly silly and entirely unexpected, setting the stage for a horror anthology filled with such contrasts.

We return to the sleep paralysis experiment (the segment is entitled To Catch a Demon, and stars Zombeavers' Cortney Palm, the most recognisable face here), before moving on to Cam Girls, which is seen entirely through chat windows on a computer screen,