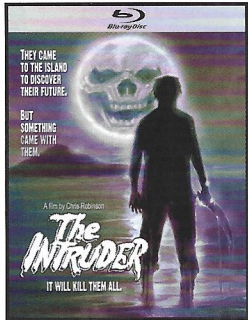


DVDementia

Over the last few years, **Garagehouse Pictures** has been unearthing and dispersing some of the most obscure exploitation films imaginable, from Zoltan G. Spencer's 1968 nudie-horror **THE SATANIST** to Ralph Hirshorn's 1962 regional macabre-comedy **THE DISMEMBERED**. And now there's **THE INTRUDER**, a never-before-released, 1975 low-budgeter from writer-director Chris Robinson (best known to soap fans as **GENERAL HOSPITAL**'s dreamy Dr. Rick Webber). Restored and transferred from the only remaining 35mm print, this *Ten Little Indians*-style slasher-mystery features a cast that includes Robinson and then-current wife Phyllis, **THE ADDAMS FAMILY**'s Ted Cassidy, **THE MUNSTERS**' Yvonne De Carlo, plus the perpetually-strapped-for-alimony-payments Mickey Rooney! A Criss Craft yacht (piloted by Rooney) drops a diverse group on a remote island with a spacious yet creepy mansion, and

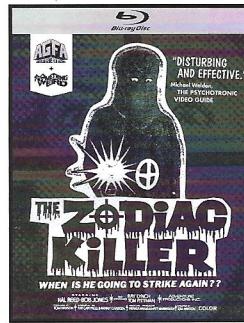


each one of these greedy bastards is after a long lost fortune in gold. With this mysterious host MIA, our justifiably-paranoid guests settle in for a typically dark 'n' stormy night, with several sniffing about, looking for this treasure. But after one of them is found murdered the next morning, with

all communication to the outside world cut, the body count soon soars (with the higher-paid names dispatched early on). Who's responsible? Since the culprit leaves behind huge, bloody footprints and the only prominent cast member who hasn't yet checked in is 6'-9" Cassidy... well, you know... Thankfully, the story is a *little* more complex than that. And although Rooney isn't given much to do, he's featured in one of the more stylish sequences, inside a lighthouse. No surprise, Mrs. Robinson ends up with one of the juicier roles. Unfortunately, the end result isn't as amusingly bonkers as Robinson's previous two Florida-lensed efforts, **CATCH THE BLACK SUNSHINE** and **THUNDER COUNTY**. The script is talky, the demises are bloody but never too extreme, and it isn't until the final reel that Robinson pulls out the stops with an absurd fight scene that has two guys chasing, kicking and pummeling each other for five solid minutes, as well as a wonderfully idiotic caper. The Blu-ray includes a 2008 interview with Robinson, plus an informative director's commentary about the making of this \$25,000 quickie.

Mixing a few loose facts about the infamous Zodiac killings, which had made headlines over the previous two years, with a buttload of adorably inept, low-budget bullshit, 1971's **THE ZODIAC KILLER** (MVDvisual) is a deliciously schlocky slice of "true crime" exploitation from pizza-chain-owner-turned-director Tom Hanson (who followed this up with the equally nutty **A TON OF GRASS GOES TO POT**, a.k.a. *The Big Score*). The first release from the American Genre Film Archive (AGFA) and *Something Weird*, it opens with a written prologue by *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter Paul Avery — who received a threatening Halloween card from Zodiac in 1970, and was portrayed by Robert Downey, Jr. in David Fincher's **ZODIAC**

— but any serious intentions are quickly quashed as some schmuck wearing a fright wig and novelty store glasses repeatedly stabs a young woman on a sunny suburban sidewalk. Even as a pair of Police Sergeants (Ray Lynch and Tom Pittman) use Zodiac letters mailed to the local newspaper to link recent violent crimes, we meet mailman Jerry (Hal Reed) and his ill-tempered truck driver friend Grover (Bob Jones). Ironically, "doped up" drunk Grover eventually becomes a Zodiac suspect, when it's actually mild-mannered, animal-loving Jerry who's responsible! That's intercut with sequences of random people being

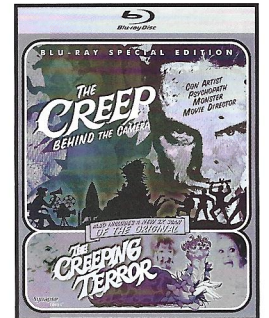


slaughtered by this fiend (some vaguely based upon the actual Zodiac crimes) — a dating couple parked near a reservoir; two diner employees, just after closing in their car; oblivious young hitchhikers and sunbathers — until it reaches ludicrous levels. There's the slapstick sight gag of Zodiac pushing an elderly invalid down a steep hill. Or how about shooting out an old woman's tire, pretending to be a good samaritan, then beating her to death with the spare? There's even Jerry roaming about in public wearing a blood-spattered hoodie emblazoned with a big ol' Zodiac symbol, without anyone noticing. Plus several supporting characters inexplicably go by their actual names (e.g., LA actor Aaron Koslow plays 'famed psychic' Aaron Koslow). Meanwhile, Hanson continually undercuts any serious intentions with ridiculous hairpieces, meandering conversations, pointless supporting characters (look, it's Doodles Weaver as Jer's lovable old misogynistic neighbor!), or unhinged Jerry praying at his home-made satanic altar. It's amusingly daft and utterly riveting in its blissful wrongheadedness. The Blu-ray/DVD package includes a commentary by Hanson and producer Manny Nedwick, accompanied by AGFA's Joseph A. Ziemba and Sebastian del Castillo; cool trailers from the AGFA vaults; a brief making-of featurette; plus a booklet containing Chris Poggiali's interview with Hanson... The set also contains a bonus feature, 1977's **ANOTHER SON OF SAM** from writer-director Dave A. Adams. Painfully amateurish and surprisingly tame, the film might namedrop NYC's .44 Caliber Killer in its title, but actually has zero connection to David Berkowitz. Instead, this North Carolina lensed feature is centered around a long-institutionalized psychopath who escapes from the loony bin. After murdering an orderly, beating up his pretty blonde psychiatrist (Cynthia Stewart) and pissing off Police Lieutenant Claude Setzer (Charlotte area TV-weatherman Russ Dubuc) — who happens to be the shrink's boyfriend — this madman sneaks into a girl's dormitory and takes hostages. A mind-bogglingly inept SWAT team arrives to handle the stand-off, with our nutjob ultimately shooting at civilians using the officers' appropriated firepower! Though fitfully amusing (witness the musical stylings of Johnny Charro, Florida's shittiest cocktail lounge answer to Peter Lemongello!), this no-budget snoozefest is also haphazardly slapped

together, flush with lousy production values and wretched acting, plus instead of actual thrills, Adams repeatedly resorts to shaky POV sequences of the killer staggering about, or close-ups of his glaring eyes. It's a dreary, 67-minute dud.

Generally acknowledged as one of the most inconceivably amateurish films of all time, 1964's **THE CREEPING TERROR** stars Vic Savage (also the director of this meandering mess) as small-town Deputy Martin Gordon, who returns from his honeymoon just as a cardboard alien rocketship lands in a nearby field and a large, lumpy monster begins traipsing about the countryside. While dumbass cops, soldiers and a hotshot scientist investigate, this mangy creature is rudely devouring teenage picnickers and lovers' lane canoodlers or crashing a dance-party at a local gym. Packed with pointless padding and narration in lieu of actual dialogue, it's stunningly incompetent... Meanwhile, the asshole responsible for this mega-stinker takes center stage in writer-director Pete Schuermann's 2014 docudrama **THE CREEP**

BEHIND THE CAMERA (Synapse), which reveals the twisted truth about inveterate scumbag Art Nelson, who adopted the name 'Vic Savage' and screwed over everyone around him. In its terrific interview sequences, scriptwriter Allan Silliphant describes his more ambitious, tongue-in-cheek original story, along with grim recollections from Nelson's first wife, Lois Wiseman, actor-producer Bill Thourlby, cinematographer Andrew Janczak, and several other participants. Alas, its dramatic reenactments are more hit-and-miss. Although Schuermann does an amazing job of recreating the chaotic shooting of this penny-ante monster opus, complete with a spectacular carpet-monster lookalike, this compelling tale is continually undermined by ham-handed drama. Nelson (Josh Phillips) is portrayed as a sweaty, manipulative hustler — sweeping first wife Lois off her feet, only to



reveal himself as a cheating, sadistic prick; conning dopes into investing in "the biggest, best monster movie of all time"; duping his leading lady into an illegit marriage; ripping off his actors and crew members; as well as drugs, whores, child porn, bizarre connections to Mamie Van Doren, Charles Manson and Carl "Alfalfa" Switzer, plus the film's ultimate fate after Nelson abruptly skips town. Yeah, we get it. The guy was an insufferable, controlling sleazeball, but his cruelty is pitched at such a cartoonishly overwrought level that we're less captivated by this creep's abhorrent behavior than simply bored, though Jodi Lynn Thomas does bring some welcome nuance and sympathy to abused spouse Lois. Far from a total misfire, the film nicely captures Nelson's moviemaking ineptitude, but misses the depth to this mind-blowing true story. The Blu-ray includes a new 2K scan of Savage's hilariously threadbare sci-fiasco; a commentary with the director, producer, Phillips, and Thomas; deleted scenes; an alternate ending; a making-of-featurette; separate building-a-Carpet-Monster shorts; plus a *Screamfest* Q&A.