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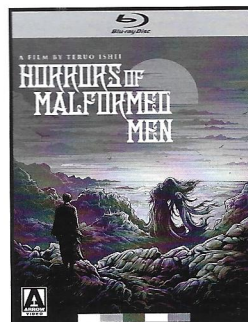
drums, this film's cost-cutting Joel mostly uses garbage bags). But Hand also turns his budgetary limitations into an advantage by focusing firmly on Rifkin — he's in every scene, with other characters making only peripheral appearances, including most of Joel's not-long-for-this-world pick-ups — with this claustrophobic approach emphasizing the desperation and creepiness of Joel's behavior and, in fleeting moments, nearly humanizing this dirtbag. The DVD includes a 40-minute making-of featurette, director's commentary and outtakes.

The "Nikkatsu Roman Porno Collection" of classic Japanese exploitation continues to grow, and 1982's **WHITE ROSE CAMPUS: EVERYBODY GETS RAPED** [Shirobara Gakuen: Soshiite Zen'in Okasareta] (Impulse) certainly delivers on its tawdry title, with schoolgirls terrorized and sexually abused for a majority of its 66 minutes. From women-in-prison outings, to nunsploration, to stylish S&M, Kôyû Ohara was one of the studio's more eclectic directors and this is one of his most spectacularly tasteless efforts, overflowing with anti-social behavior. The teenaged female students of White Rose Academy (all played by actresses obviously in their twenties) are going on a three-day field trip, boarding a bus in their school uniforms and heading for the Lake Shirakaba resort, where they're to learn boring etiquette and sing hymns to "disabled people." One rebellious girl has a scheme to rendezvous with a boy at a rest stop, but her plan backfires spectacularly when an armed trio — two young thugs and a gross, perverted janitor, all in ludicrously inept disguises — sneak onboard instead and take the group hostage. After discarding all of the "ugly" students at a passing bus stop,

these degenerates force the schoolgirls to strip, with the slobbering janitor molesting them in various ways. Plus their pretty teacher (Nami Misaki) gets raped in the middle of the aisle. Add a couple of passing truck drivers, who learn what happened and are determined to track down this bus. And whenever you think the filmmakers have achieved maximum twistedness, they'll surprise you — like when we learn that all of this raping and brutality is simply a response to school bullying and mean girls! Still, it's hard to take any of this too seriously, since one of the young hijackers sports an oversized, greaser pompadour. Character development is non-existent, except for their teacher and one obviously troubled schoolgirl with a bandaged wrist (SEX HUNTER's Ayako Ôta). Meanwhile, having most of the film take place on a moving bus is an ingenious way to keep your budget in check, but the scenery ever-changing. Capped off with a conclusion that's even more casually fucked up than you could imagine, it's the perfect caper for this gleefully reprehensible outing.

An amnesiac exploring his murky past is drawn into deception, murder and madness in **HORRORS OF MALFORMED MEN** (Arrow), a warped and dreamlike 1969 masterpiece from director Teruo Ishii. Based on the work of Japanese horror/detective author Edogawa Rampo, the script grafts ideas from various short stories onto his 1926 novel *Strange Tale of Panorama Island*, and the end result is absolutely mindblowing... Set in 1925, Hirotsuke Hitomi (Teruo Yoshida) is locked away in a grim insane asylum, without any memory of his previous life. Despite Hitomi's

pleas that he isn't crazy, he's drugged by doctors, attacked by other inmates and finally, one night, escapes this hellhole. Wandering the streets of Tokyo, clues lead him to the Sea of Japan, after he notices that the recently-deceased head of a wealthy family, Genzaburô Komoda, could've been his twin. Faking his own suicide, Hitomi pretends to be the resurrected Genzaburô, fooling the entire Komoda clan, including wife Chioko and mistress Skizuko. As Hitomi works hard to maintain this ruse, even in the midst of unexpected tragedy, it's during the film's second half that Ishii goes totally, gloriously bonkers, when Hitomi



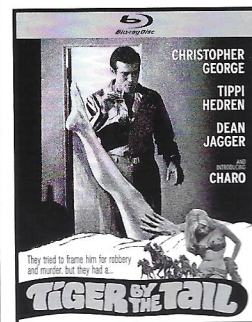
and his faux family visit a nearby island, where Genzaburô's web-fingered hermit father Jogoro (dancer and "Butoh" choreographer Tatsumi Hijikata) currently resides. So prepare yourself for a tapestry of hallucinatory imagery and naked women — some act like savages, others are bodypainted, a few are glimpsed underwater — along with dancing, fire and bizarre pageantry, which is all part of Jogoro's deranged plan to create his own private society of fabulously deformed freaks. Along with the perverse truth about Hitomi's past, multiple villains, surprising twists, and particularly sadistic forms of revenge, there's even an appearance by Rampo's famed private detective Kogoro Akechi. It's an incredible, one-of-a-kind vision, with Ishii often leaving the viewer as disoriented as its damaged protagonist. The Blu-ray includes a commentary with author Tom Mes, and another with *Japan Times* film critic Mark Schilling; an interview with scriptwriter Masahiro Kakefuda; filmmakers Shin-ya Tsukamoto and Minoru Kawasaki discuss Ishii's influence; plus footage of Ishii and Schilling attending Udine, Italy's Far East Film Festival.

A psychopath with a heavy metal fixation fuels the low-budgeted, ridiculously entertaining **BLUE VENGEANCE (Vinegar Syndrome)**, a 1989 action-thriller from director/co-writer J. Christian Ingvordsen, the brains behind such '80s outings as **SEARCH AND DESTROY** and **COVERT ACTION**. Shot in 10 days across New York City, the film never got a US theatrical release, despite being the type of violent, weird and wonderfully half-baked idiocy that's best enjoyed in a Deuce grindhouse with a bag full of cold PBR's... When serial killer Mark Trex (John Weiner) escapes from the State Hospital for the Criminally Insane, NYPD detective Mickey McCaule (Ingvordsen, credited as "John Christian") is determined to stop this sicko from his past. After making a pitstop at his mom's place for an ornate battle-axe, Trex begins tracking down and slaughtering the members of a long-dissolved metal band that he once adored. The film is a mess, but a wildly enjoyable one — blending cop-movie clichés with never-remotely-believable gore effects, loopy conversations and even a sword-and-sorcery fantasy sequence! Ingvordsen make a barely passable lead, Weiner plays a nutjob with laughable intensity, but the real find here is Garland Hunter as sexy punk-rock photographer (and Mickey's unlikely sidekick) Tiffany O'Brian. Alas, Hunter's acting career went fallow following her marriage to British artist/sculptor Matthew Ritchie, though she did appear in Lena Dunham's **LITTLE FURNITURE** [fun fact: Hunter owned the TriBeCa artists' loft where Dunham's parents lived]. Best of all, cinematographer Michael Spiller (who later shot most of Hal

Hartley's early features) incorporates location work, from the Staten Island F New York City subway, to a foot ch Brooklyn Bridge and the unmistakably terior of CBGBs. The Blu-ray/DVD se commentary with Ingvordsen, modera Gingold and chock full of cool anecdotes about New York City guerrilla filmmaking, plus a second track with Weiner; a making-of featurette in which crew members reminisce about '80s Cinema Sciences projects; as well as the previously-unreleased, 1997 bonus film, **THE FIRST MAN**, directed by BLUE VENGEAN

Danny Kuchuck and featuring a surpressive cast. This moody, meandering stars Michael Raynor as a government assigned to kill aliens that are hiding human form. His latest mission? Stop extraterrestrial who's irresistible to w Ann Warren and Roxana Zal play fi who fall under the blue-blooded b Heather Graham and Ted Raimi have moon interrupted by this bald alien, a Victor turns up briefly as a superviso nicely unaffected performances and imagery, the film's detached appro admirably ambitious yet vaguely unsi

A returning veteran faces death being framed for murder in **TIGER E (Kino Lorber Studio Classics)**, a crime-thriller with a colorful supporting much picturesque footage of New M doso Downs Race Track that you'd t promotional film for the place. Shot in the title **DEAD HEAT**, this was the fir director R.G. Springsteen (a veter and '50s B-westerns), and his flat, style often makes it feel more like a



effort. enough popped works months function theatrical THE Christo stars as aelis, a war h back fr Return New hooks up with older brother Frank (rick), majority owner of the area's rit track, just as its bookkeeper (Lloyd B dinates an elaborate heist — stealing lars from the track, with unplanned b Steve becoming the prime suspect. minority stockholders (led by Dean wig banker) plot to take control, Ste own investigation into the crime, as pals (State Policeman R.G. Armstr expert Glenda Farrell, and Tippi Hed ex-lover). Charles Wallace's script is stuff, but it provided George with a suited to his limited, TV-rooted act Steve barrels through this convol searching for the stolen cash. Hede both receive prominent billing, but t