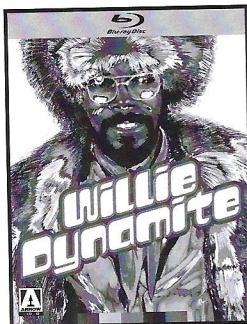


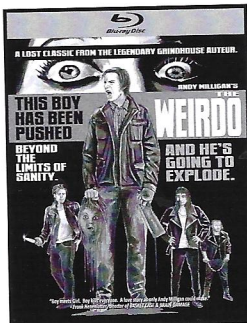
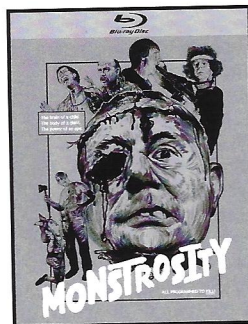
Blaxploitation Pimp Movies enjoyed a brief burst of popularity in the early-'70s, and one of the most colorful, cartoonish entries in this sub-genre was 1974's **WILLIE DYNAMITE** (Arrow Video). The film kicks off with nostalgic Times Square footage, a funky "Willie D." opening tune, a bevy of hookers working their way through a Midtown convention hotel, and our title mack (Roscoe Orman) sporting mindroasting, fur-trimmed, fuchsia threads. Alas, it's all downhill from there... Bald brother Willie is one of New York City's baddest pimps, but when he balks at the idea of working with the other neighborhood hustlers, his successful world begins to crumble. His ladies are busted, his ridiculously ostentatious car is towed, the IRS investigates him for tax evasion, plus self-righteous social worker Cora Williams (Diana Sands)



vows to bring Willie to justice, even if it means breaking the law in the process. It's hard not to dig the wild footage of Willie strutting about Manhattan in his day-glo wardrobe and platform shoes, but while the film features a sprinkling of action and violence, there's also excessively saccharine melodrama courtesy of Willie's hospitalized mom and Cora's traumatic backstory, with a final reel that's nose-deep in sanctimonious horseshit. Making his feature directing debut, Gilbert Moses (THE FISH THAT SAVED PITTSBURGH) keeps it fast-paced but inauthentic, with cinematographer Frank Stanley (CAR WASH) unable to make any of its Universal Studios soundstage interiors look remotely realistic. And though technically R-rated, it's surprisingly soft at times, with Willie preferring to blast holes in a competitor's limo, instead of gunning down any actual human beings. Orman effectively pulls off his cliché-strewn lead (and snagged the role of SESAME STREET resident Gordon soon after this gig); Sands (who died of cancer before this film premiered) is stuck in an implausible role, as her strident do-gooder tries to convince Willie's girls to seek out more glamorous work, like high-class fashion modeling; Thalmus Rasulala plays Sands' bland Assistant D.A. boyfriend; Albert Hall is a NYPD detective on Willie's trail; in addition to Juanita Brown (CAGED HEAT), Marcia McBroom (BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE DOLLS) and Judy Brown (THE BIG DOLL HOUSE), with Robert DoQui and future Tony-winner Roger Robinson as fellow pimps. Despite its solid cast and a score by jazz great J.J. Johnson, the whole thing is rather disappointing. The Blu-ray has a commentary by film historian Sergio Mims.

After moving from Staten Island to Los Angeles in the mid-1980s, notorious schlockmeister Andy Milligan only helmed a handful of films before passing away in 1991 at the age of 62. But thanks to **Garagehouse Pictures**, a pair of his late-career efforts are now on Blu-ray. First up, we have 1987's aptly-titled **MONSTROSITY**, with Milligan not only responsible for the direction, script and cinematography, but also editing, costume design, art direction, and set decoration... When his girlfriend is raped, beaten, and then disemboweled in her hospital bed by a roving gang of sadistic miscreants, grieving Mark (David Homb) decides to take the law into his own hands. But what initially appears to be a gritty tale of revenge quickly morphs into absurd monster-movie territory, complete with '80s-slob-comedy humor, unlikely romance and half-baked tragedy, after Mark

and two college buds create an avenging "golem" in his garage, stitched together from human and gorilla body parts. And whaddaya know, it's alive! Naming their frizzy-wigged, platform-booted, pop-eyed creation Frankie (played by longtime Milligan acting-troupe member Hal Borske), this child-like monster slaughters the city's slimeballs, but after saving ditzy punk chick Jaimie (Carrie Anita), the two fall in love. The acting is abysmal, particularly from the three lead bros; its bloody effects range from barely competent to astoundingly lame; the production is often laughably amateurish (e.g., its threadbare, makeshift hospital room set has a front door?); and pointless scenes drag on and on. Still, Milligan keeps it all strangely watchable thanks to his shamelessly-crude, anything-goes sensibilities (such as the inexplicable appearance of an actual guardian angel!). Like its title creature, the film is a patchwork mess, but also remarkably enjoyable rotgut. The **MONSTROSITY** disc includes a wonderfully in-depth commentary by Milligan-biographer Jimmy McDonough (who also worked on the film as production manager and assistant editor) and production coordinator Charlie Beesley; a new featurette with make-up effects artist Rodd Matsui; plus a jaw-dropping array of outtakes and deleted scenes... Also new to Blu-ray is 1989's **THE WEIRDO** [a.k.a. **Weirdo: The Beginning**], with romance blossoming between two misfits, even in the face of hatred and violence, and Milligan reworking an idea that he first filmed in 1970 as a (never released, apparently lost) short... Stammering, slow-witted Donnie Raymond (Steve Burington) lives in a squalid little shed and gets nervous around others — particu-



larly women — while also constantly hassled by a trio of biker bullies. Thankfully, the poor guy finds a soulmate in 18-year-old Jenny (Jessica Straus), a gimpy neighbor girl who ignores the warnings about Donnie's uncontrollable violent impulses, since she has her own traumatic history. In fact, she ends up popping Donnie's cherry in his rundown hovel. The story has a nicely misanthropic attitude, since every awful supporting character tries to butt into the couple's potential happiness — there's a judgmental Reverend and his bitchy wife; Donnie's outwardly-sweet old landlady slaps Jenny and calls her a "slut"; plus his alcoholic mother (who nicknamed him "cabbage head") tries to sell her son into slavery! But when Donnie gets pissed off, watch out, as several moments of messy carnage erupt in the final half-hour, along with a chaotic, downbeat climax. The story is fairly conventional, the performances aren't totally pathetic (Burington's sniveling gets tiresome quickly, but Straus is likeably earnest), Milligan's dialogue is typically over-ripe, plus its budget is as bargain-basement as you'd expect. Lacking the loopy anarchy and ineptitude of **MONSTROSITY**, **THE WEIRDO** might be the slightly better film, but it's also less amusingly brain-damaged. In addition to

the beautifully restored feature, there's a commentary with executive producer Paul Maslak, producer Neva Friedenn, make-up FX man Rodd Matsui, and Patrick Thomas (who played biker shithead Dean), plus another track with *DVD Drive-In* editor George Reis and Cinefear's Keith Crocker.

Director Greydon Clark has been responsible for such dopey, braincell-destroying efforts as **BLACK SHAMPOO**, **SATAN'S CHEERLEADERS** and **JOYSTICKS**, but actually managed to exceed schlock expectations with 1987's **UNINVITED** (Vinegar Syndrome), which corralled three slumming, character-actor legends — George Kennedy, Alex Cord, Clu Gulager — into its ridiculous science-gone-wrong storyline... A top secret lab goes on high alert when one of their test subjects, an adorable little cat, makes a run for it. But this feline isn't as defenseless as she might appear, because whenever threatened, a feral mutant creature wriggles out of its mouth, with this dime-store parasite shredding any and all annoying humans. Meanwhile, crooked Wall Street associates Cord, Clu and Kennedy plan on avoiding the Feds by fleeing to the Caribbean on their palatial yacht, accompanied by a pair of bikinied Fort Lauderdale beach bunnies (Shari Shattuck, Clare Carey), a trio of boneheaded Spring Break dudes, plus female Captain Rachel (Toni Hudson). Of course, our deadly pussycat comes along for the ride as well, with no one at all concerned that it's wearing a fucking "Genetic Lab" collar! No surprise, once out on open water, the cast is torn apart or infected, one by one. The premise is ingeniously dopey, but despite its handful of grisly moments (e.g., Kennedy getting his foot gnawed by a mangy hand-



puppet), the film's second half becomes a tad predictable, with these interchangeable college clowns bickering or breaking down after their food supply is contaminated by the toxic tabby. Still, the old pros do their damndest to bring some fun to these cut-rate proceedings — grumpy Kennedy bellyaches about these "punk kids"; cocky Cord puts the moves on the girls, without any success; while Gulager's soused goofball accidentally sends the boat off-course — and Clark packs the plot with dopey complications (can you *really* turn a sextant into a makeshift microscope?) and never takes any of this nonsense too seriously. No, question, one of the most mindlessly entertaining 'killer kitty' films ever made. The Blu-ray/DVD includes a commentary by Greydon Clark; an international cut of the feature (with additional footage of the dumbass younger characters, a few topless shots of Shattuck and a slightly different ending); plus an interview with cinematographer Nicholas von Sternberg, who recalls how difficult it was to get cats to behave on-camera.

Overflowing with pitch black humor, over-the-top mayhem and increasingly-absurd complications, 2017's **SNOWFLAKE** (Artsploitation) is a gonzo German crime-tapestry, courtesy of director Adolfo J. Kolmerer and scriptwriter Arend Remmers. Imagine a dystopic Eurotrash PULP FICTION that's been twisted into a Charlie Kaufman-style surreal mindfuck — such as when two of its leads stumble across a fragment of the film's screenplay and, confounded by the realization that they're simply characters from someone else's imagination, angrily track down the author! That's only the tip of its casual, calculated weirdness...