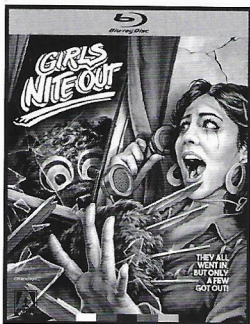


Hollywood multi-million-dollar cyberpunk efforts from that era. The Blu-ray includes a commentary with Thomson, Rains, Cutter, and co-producer Mike Schneider; a new interview with Thomson; a 1997 series sales-pitch teaser; and more.

Director Robert Deubel's 1982 slasher romp **GIRLS NITE OUT (Arrow Video)**, which initially played theaters as *THE SCAREMAKER*, barrels along at a decent pace and features a sizable ensemble, a few familiar faces and plenty of fresh young corpses... At Dewitt University, the basketball team is celebrating their latest win with a "golden oldies" costume party and we're introduced to a smorgasbord of college stereotypes — cheerleader Lynn (*REVENGE OF THE NERDS* hottie, Julie Montgomery), her wandering-eyed boyfriend Teddy (James Carroll), rowdy jocks, goofball stoners, a bespectacled dork, et cetera. But elsewhere around town, institutionalized murderer Dickie Cavanaugh, who once attended this college, attempts suicide and disappears, which pisses off campus cop MacVey (Hal Holbrook!),

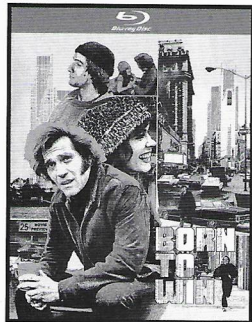


since his daughter was one of Dickie's past victims. The first half-hour is all college hijinx, hook-ups and break-ups, until a kid named Benson, who plays their school's "bear" mascot, is slaughtered by an unseen fiend and his crude, misshapen costume is stolen — so that the killer can wander

about incognito, slicing up female students with his makeshift serrated-kitchen-knife claws. Other potential suspects also emerge, such as doughy Mike (David Holbrook, Hal's son), who was pissed at Benson for sucking face with his girlfriend (*FRIDAY THE 13TH PART 2*'s Lauren-Marie Taylor)... Although the performances vary, everyone involved is enthusiastic and seems to be having fun. Hal Holbrook's more-competent-than-the-actual-police security guard only pops up sporadically, but the four-time Emmy winner plays this throwaway gig with the same level of commitment he'd bring to a major Hollywood project. And let's not forget about Rutanya Alda running the campus diner and Richard Bright as a detective on the case. Despite its lack of originality, *GIRLS NITE OUT* is decent fun that (unlike a lot of low-budget '80s horror outings), never gets too egregiously stupid or annoying, thus making it well suited for a six-pack viewing. The Blu-ray includes a commentary with Justin Kerswell and Amanda Keyes, plus new interviews with Montgomery and supporting castmates Laura Summer, Lauren-Marie Taylor, Lois Robbins, Paul Christie, and John Didrichsen.

Director Ivan Passer first impressed critics with his 1965 Czech debut, *INTIMATE LIGHTING*, but shifted to New York City for his follow-up feature, 1971's **BORN TO WIN (Fun City Editions)**. Adapted from David Scott Milton's one-act play "Scraping Bottom" (based on his personal experiences with late-night customers while running an East 72nd St. restaurant), scriptwriters Passer and Milton spent months talking to former and current junkies in preparation for this film. But instead of the usual dose of gritty, harsh reality, the result was a quirky, episodic, often-comedic slice-of-life... George Segal plays 'J', a fast-talking addict, recently out of prison and always hustling for his next fix. He and pal Billy (Jay Fletcher) try to steal a safe from a Midtown restaurant in broad daylight; while boosting a

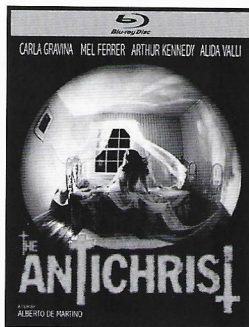
car on Lexington Ave, 'J' instead ends up in bed with the auto's ditzzy owner (Karen Black); a pimp named Vivian (Hector Elizondo) recruits 'J' for a delivery job; he runs into estranged-wife-turned-whore Veronica (Paula Prentiss, second-billed but given little to do); and plainclothes cops (including a young Robert De Niro) pressure 'J' to help them bust Vivian. Also look for Burt Young, Marcia Jean Kurtz, Paul Benjamin and José Pérez... As desperate 'J' gets deeper into trouble — lying, stealing and willing to turn on anyone in order to score — Passer often focuses



on the absurdity of his life (e.g., 'J' running about busy Manhattan streets in a frilly pink nightgown while fleeing guys he's ripped off), which gives the whole film a rather schizophrenic vibe. And while Segal tries hard and has a nice rapport with Black, George's upbeat, energetic demeanor doesn't make the most convincing scumbag dope fiend. Though fitfully amusing and beautifully shot — with cinematographers Jack Priestley (a veteran of NYC series like *NAKED CITY* and *EAST SIDE/WEST SIDE*) and Richard Kratina capturing everything from Times Square and the Upper West Side's Needle Park, to an Avenue C/11th Street shooting gallery — some portions feel utterly authentic, others are broad and contrived. The film was savaged by critics upon its initial release, but it's definitely gotten richer and more intriguing with age. The Blu-ray includes a commentary by Fun City Cinema podcast's Jason Bailey and Michael Hull.

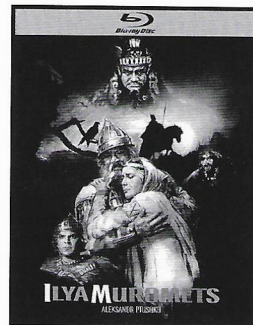
The worldwide success of *THE EXORCIST* opened the floodgates for a variety of cheap rip-offs, including 1974's **THE ANTICHRIST (Kino Lorber Studio Classics)**, an Italian demonic possession shocker from director Alberto De Martino. Blending exotic locations, ludicrously cheap effects, a handful of veteran American stars with a high tolerance for public embarrassment, and a steaming pile of recycled horseshit posing as a script, this gloriously overripe drivel didn't turn up in US theaters until 1978, chopped down to 96 minutes and retitled *THE TEMPTER*. The new Blu-ray (for better or worse) contains the uncut

112-minute version... Traumatized as a child and unable to walk, now-adult Ippolita Oderisi (Carla Gravina) lives in Rome with wealthy father Massimo (Mel Ferrer), who searches for a cure or religious miracle. Ippolita is one morose, sexually frustrated woman — not only due to being stuck in a wheelchair, but because dad is currently boinking a hot journalist (Anita Strindberg). A quack psychiatrist makes matters even worse by using "regressive hypnosis" so Ippolita can revisit the auto accident that killed her mother, as well as a previous life as a heretic convicted by the Inquisition for belonging to a sect of devil worshippers. Before long, possessed Ippolita is walking about on her own, seducing a younger man (and leaving behind a twisted corpse, post coitus), while her wild-eyed cackling, drooling, obscen-



ities, and supernatural parlor tricks (like making furniture fly about the room) freaks out her family and longtime caretaker (Alicia Valli). Mind you, absolutely none of this is remotely scary — just incredibly dopey and mildly gross. It's also padded out with dreary subplots, wooden performances (with the exception of Gravina, who never allows her energy to drop throughout this silly yet highly physical role) and derivative exorcism scenes featuring bright green vomit, an off-screen wind machine, *CITIZEN KANE* alumnus George Coulouris as an elderly monk, plus a final showdown against five-time Oscar nominee Arthur Kennedy as Ippolita's cranky old uncle, Bishop Ascanio. Plus you know that a motion picture is a mess when cinematographer Joe D'Amato is one of its most competent participants. The Blu-ray includes a commentary by author Lee Gambin and critic Sally Christie, plus a 2002 featurette with De Martino and composer Ennio Morricone.

Initially released to US theaters in 1960 in an English-dubbed version by distributor (and future *SUPERFLY* director) Sig Shore — who also fibbed about its USSR origins, since the Cold War was in full bloom — director Aleksandr Ptushko's 1956 historical-fantasy epic **ILYA MUROMETS [The Sword and the Dragon] (Deaf Crocodile)** has been beautifully restored on Blu-ray, in Russian with English subtitles. Spanning decades and based on regional folk tales, this strange and astounding medieval adventure — the first Soviet film shot in color CinemaScope! — overflows with stunning production design, lavish costumes, larger-than-life performances, plus over 100,000



extras! In the 11th century, a peaceful village is raided by vicious, pagan Tugars, with fair Vasilisa (Ninel Myshkova) kidnapped. Miraculously cured of his longtime paralysis and gifted with a legendary warrior's sword, title hero Ilya Muromets (Boris Andreyev) heads to the Kiev capital in hopes of retrieving his true love. Eventually knighted by the Prince and sent on a noble mission, Ilya is betrayed by sniveling traitors close to the throne and tossed into the dungeon, which gives evil Tsar Kalin (Shukur Burkhanov) and his Tugar army the chance to invade defenseless Kiev. Of course, since Ilya's son was stolen and indoctrinated by Kalin years earlier, you can bet there'll be an awkward father-son reunion on the field of battle. Far from a serious spectacle, the film is often highly theatrical and intentionally outlandish. Likewise, Ilya is no standard-issue hero, but instead a burly, bearded, barrel-chested lug with a big heart, an unwavering love of his homeland, as well as the strength to rip tree trunks out of the earth with his bare hands. Ptushko's enormous battle scenes in the last half-hour are particularly staggering, but the entire film is awash in crazy moments, including a dancing girl wriggling atop a stage balanced on the backs of male slaves; Nightingale the Robber, a creature whose powerful "song" can send people flying; a mountainous dogpile of living soldiers; and Kalin unleashing his secret weapon in the final minutes — a hilariously cheesy, three-headed, fire-breathing dragon! *ILYA MUROMETS* is bold, thrilling, unapologetically romantic, and insanely entertaining. The Blu-ray includes a commentary by Stephen R. Bissette and reprinted VIDEO WATCHDOG essays about Ptushko.