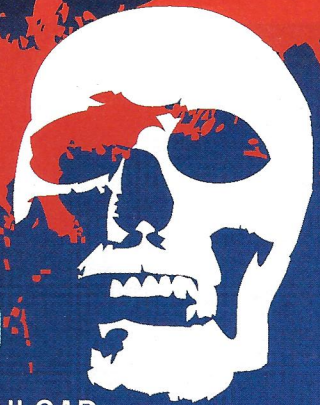


# HORROR REVIEWS



WHAT'S HOT IN THE WORLD OF DVD, BLU-RAY, STREAMING AND DOWNLOAD

## DEATH HOUSE

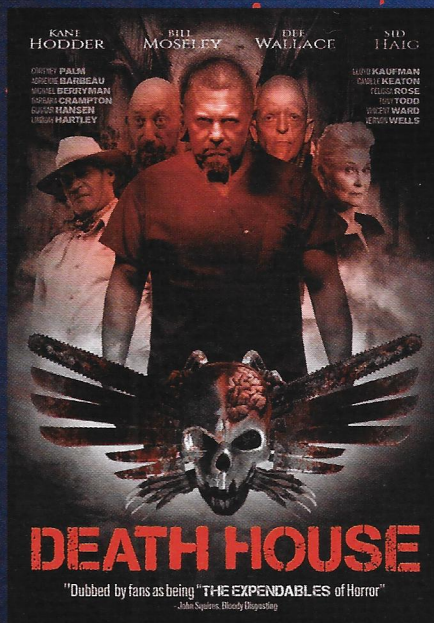
**THE FILMS:** Death House, Harrison Smith's so-called 'Expendables of Horror' features an ensemble cast of horror icons including Kane Hodder, Barbara Crampton, Bill Moseley, Dee Wallace and Tony Todd. On paper, it reads like every horror fan's wet dream. But in reality, it's 95 minutes of lacklustre entertainment complemented by budget visual effects.

In the film, Courtney Palm and Cody Longo play two agents who are forced to fight their way through a secret prison. Whilst being pursued by an army of inmates, they discover a group of supernatural beings that are being housed within the deepest levels of the facility who might hold the secret to their escape.

Despite every good intention behind the camera, Death House doesn't quite work as a whole. The plot of the film is far too ambitious for what Smith is able to achieve. It plays out like a cheap imitation of Resident Evil (2002). The film attempts to blend faux-science, computer graphics and live-action set pieces with the occasional strong moment of horror. However, Death House looks incredibly cheap and its scenes are haphazardly spliced together.

It's not entirely bad though. Both Palm and Longo are decent enough to keep the movie going between its actions scenes. Joining them on screen as prison scientists, Barbara Crampton (Re-Animator) and Dee Wallace (Cujo) also give great performances and deliver their lines as expected. However, the MVP is clearly Kane Hodder. He plays Seig, one of the film's antagonists. It's great to see Hodder deliver actual lines of dialogue and remind us all just how scary he can be.

I'd excuse you for thinking that Death House is worth your time on first glance. I thought the same. It's a shame that it doesn't deliver the horror all-star extravaganza that it's marketed as. That said, if you are interested in checking this one out, then do so. After all, Harrison delivers some very effective horror set



pieces. Just don't set your expectations too high... you have been warned.

**Rating:** 🧟🧟🧟🧟

**SPECIAL FEATURES:** Although the film might not be up to par, the extras that come with this disc make it worth the purchase. First of all, there's an interesting director's commentary track with Harrison Smith which offers some insight into the filmmaker's creative choices whilst making the film.

There is a large volume of interviews with members of the cast and crew to be enjoyed. These include interviews with Dee Wallace, Barbara Crampton, Producers Rick Finkelstein and Steven Chase and many more. However, I think they missed a trick to not include an interview with Hodder considering the role he has in the film.

Beyond that audiences can look forward to a slideshow of photos from the set and the official trailer for Death House. Oh, and there's an additional trailer reel for other films from Cleopatra Entertainment.

**Rating:** 🧟🧟🧟🧟

*DEATH HOUSE is out now on US DVD courtesy of MVD.*

REVIEWED BY JON DICKINSON

## ZOMBIE

**THE FILM:** Lucio Fulci's Zombie (aka Zombie Flesh Eaters) serves as an unofficial sequel to Romero's Dawn of the Dead. It gained its notoriety as one of the Video Nasties banned during the 80s thanks to its lashings of gore and strong violence. Fulci's efforts create remarkable eerie atmospherics and in this stunning 4K restoration from the good people at Blue Underground, horror fans can revisit it and enjoy every gory detail.

The film follows Anne, a scientist's daughter who travels to a remote island after her Father's boat turns up abandoned in New York City. Joined by a journalist and a couple sailing through the area, Anna arrives at her destination. She soon discovers the island's voodoo curse and a horde of zombies attacking the living forcing the last few survivors to band together to stop themselves from becoming members of the undead.

Created to follow Argento's re-cut of Dawn, Zombie went on to receive critical and financial success in Italy upon its initial release before going on to wow audiences across the globe. Since then it has developed a reputation for the high intensity of its gore and suffocating atmospherics. Featuring some sights that you would not have seen before (Shark vs Zombie anyone), the efforts here are ultimately unforgettable.

What I love the most about the film is Fulci's attention to detail which is second to none. The overall design of the film from its set designs, cinematography, action scenes, dramatic elements, everything is top notch here. Even the style of the zombies is fantastic. It ignores the blue make-up that plagued Dawn and replaces that with more detailed and ghastly designs that look fantastic in 4K. Further complemented by Fabio Frizzi's hauntingly perfect score, Zombie is a practically flawless horror film.

It's been almost 40 years since its release and it gives me great pleasure to say that it still has the ability to shock its audience. So,



regardless if this is your first watch or not, I strongly urge you to treat yourself to one of the most iconic zombie films ever made.

**Rating:** 🧟🧟🧟🧟

**SPECIAL FEATURES:** In this fantastic 40th Anniversary Limited Edition, fans can look forward to hours worth of content to enjoy. On the first disc, there are two audio commentaries. The first is with author Troy Howard. The second is with Ian McCulloch and editor Jason J. Slater. Both cover a multitude of different topics and add something new to the viewing experience.

Rounding up the extras available on the first disc is a 33-minute featurette 'When The Earth Spits Out the Dead' and a complete overview of the marketing materials used to promote the film. Meanwhile, on the second disc, fans will find plenty of interviews with the cast and crew of the film. These include interviews with stars Ian McCulloch, Richard Johnson and Al Clive.

Every interview here is given the same level of attention regardless of their length.

However, my personal favourite on the disc has to be *Zombi Italiano* which features interviews with special make-up effects artists Gianetto De Rossi & Maurizio Trani and Special Effects Artist Gino De Rossi is 16 minutes well spent. They go into great detail about the process they followed to develop their zombie designs but what I appreciated the most was their insight into the making of the Shark vs Zombie scene and the infamous eyeball splinter scene.

Moving on, if that was enough, Blue Underground continues to spoil fans with three more interviews. Notes on a Headstone is a fascinating interview with composer Fabio Frizzi (whose score is also included in the presentation as an additional CD for you all to enjoy). Those who are well versed in Frizzi's amazing score can look forward to discovering how it came to be. All in the Family catches up with Antonella Fulci who talks openly about her father and his dedication to his work. Finally, in *Zombie Love*, award-winning filmmaker Guillermo del Toro waxes lyrically about his love for the film.

As a whole, there isn't much else that Blue Underground could have included in their 40th Anniversary 4K restoration that they haven't already. There are hours of content for fans to consume and it is the perfect way to celebrate the film a provide a full viewing experience for fans.

**Rating:** 🧟🧟🧟🧟

*ZOMBIE* is out now on **US Blu-ray** courtesy of Blue Underground.

REVIEWED BY JON DICKINSON

## CLASS OF 1999

**THE FILM:** The late eighties and early nineties saw a spike in films featuring unruly schools and *Class of 1999* takes this concept and sticks it into a dystopian alternative reality. We find ourselves in the familiar crime ridden city where teenage gangs run riot and hold control of a lawless area known as a 'free-fire zone'.

Losing the battle on discipline a beleaguered Principal, as played by the prolific Malcolm McDowell, is seduced by the radical opportunity presented by the extremely evil looking Dr Bob Forrest (Stacy Keach) who, along with a terrific haircut, has managed to combine military androids and educational programming.

These androids come in the form of a History teacher (John P. Ryan), a Chemistry teacher (Pam Grier) and an overly aggressive PE teacher (Patrick Kilpatrick) who set about restoring order both in and outside of the classroom through some rather dubious methods. But this rather novel approach is not where the real story can be found as writer C. Courtney Joyner gives us our protagonist Cody Culp; freshly released from prison and operating on his last chance.

Tying to go straight proves hard for Cody and despite his attempts to stay out of trouble he finds himself in the centre of several fire fights throughout the films runtime as both rivals and teachers conspire against him paving the way for gang warfare, emotional turbulence and the inevitable complicated love interest.

Coming across a mixture of teen injustice and an educational Robocop gone wrong the film benefits from director Mark L. Lester's action background and the explosive set pieces are always impressive and somehow grow in stature culminating in a frantic, fun, Fx-laden ending.

Meanwhile for those looking for a little more meaning behind the carnage may identify several themes, for example the mental stress on military veterans (yes even robots revert back to past actions) or even the necessity of oppression for order let alone the rebellion of youth, but these all

## 3-DISC LIMITED EDITION

# LUCIO FULCI'S ZOMBIE

NEW 4K  
RESTORATION!

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