



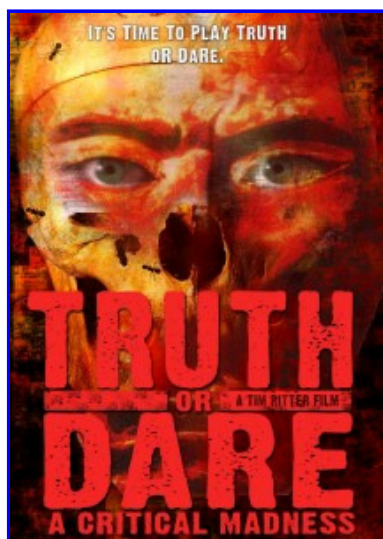
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DVD Review: Truth or Dare? A Critical Madness

29 June 2010 No Comment



Truth Or Dare?: A Critical Madness (1986)

Studio: SRS Cinema

Release Date: June 29, 2010

Directed By: Tim Ritter

Cast: John Brace, Mary Fanaro, Kerry Ellen Walker, Bruce Gold & Priscilla Duff

Review By: Annie Riordan

Nerdy dorkapotamus Mike Stauber has it all: a great job, a house in the suburbs, a pretty wife and his own personal theme music which sounds a lot like a synthesizer skipping over the opening strains of Miami Vice. His carefully structured world comes crashing down around him one fine day however, when he arrives home early to find wifey porking Mike's best friend Jerry in their bed. Heartbroken, Mike splits the scene and burns rubber with no clear destination in mind. Along the way, he picks up a pretty hitchhiker who agrees to camp out with him overnight. Rather than making good on their sexual innuendos, the girl suggests they play a few rounds of truth or dare. As the dare part of the game grows bloodier and more sadistic, we realize – without much surprise – that the girl is, in fact, a shard thrown out of Mike's shattered psyche.

A mutilated Mike is locked away in the Sunnydale Insane Asylum, but is quickly released due to lack of funding. Thus begins Mike's new career of vengeance and murder. With a featureless mask hiding his ruined face, Mike goes on a psychotic rampage. Well, maybe "psychotic rampage" is a bit strong. How about "Mike goes on a half hearted, kindasorta violent excursion for the final reel of the film?"

Not since "Silent Night Deadly Night 2" have I witnessed such ineptitude masquerading as mayhem. Everything about this film – from the acting to the story to the piss poor sets – is so excruciatingly bad it made my fillings hurt right down to the dead nerves. I spent several sizable chunks of this film averting my eyes, not because the gore on display was too graphic for my puritan sensibilities but because I was so embarrassed for the cast that I simply couldn't face them.

And yet...

If there's one redeeming quality to be found in this landfill of a flick, it lies with director Tim Ritter, who was 19 years old when he made this film. This wasn't even his first film – that honor would have to go to 1984's Day of the Reaper, made when he was a mere 17 year old wisp of a lad. Granted, his resume hasn't improved much over the years, and I stand by my assessment of Truth Or Dare as a total bag of shit – and not even stale, hard, dried shit either: I mean, fresh, steaming, runny shit that looks like Campbell's beef barley and reeks like paper mill runoff.

But, for a nineteen year old working on a shoestring budget with a cast of nobodies and a strict 8:30pm curfew so he could get home in time for dinner and reruns of Barney Miller with mom (yeah okay, I made that last bit up), this is reasonably impressive. I said REASONABLY impressive. If he'd been any older or had had any more experience, I would have slammed him outright. But I'll give him a break based solely on his age and because, when I was 19, I actually thought that Headbanger's Ball was worth watching, so who am I to judge?



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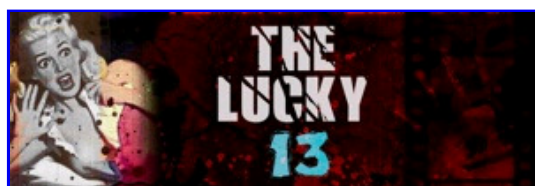
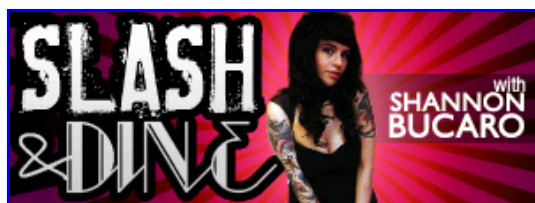
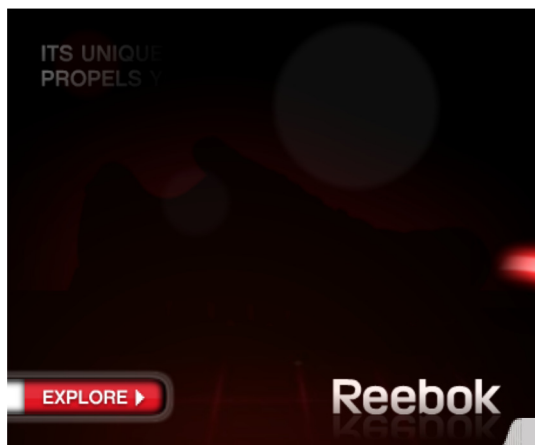
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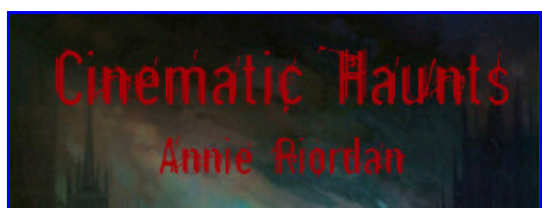
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