



Joe Barlow
Scranton Horror Movie Examiner

"They're coming to draw you, Barbara!": Classic zombie film gets animation facelift

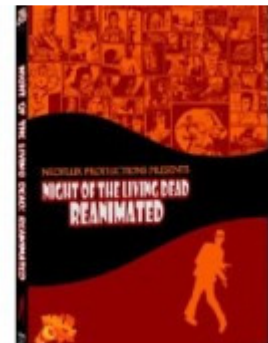
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Few horror movies have achieved the degree of critical appreciation bestowed upon the original *Night of the Living Dead*. A favorite among film buffs since its 1968 release, this creepy black and white zombie movie successfully blends action, suspense, and horror with an unexpected layer of social commentary, resulting in a film that has aged better than many of its cinematic peers. As such, it remains just as relevant to modern viewers as it does to those who originally saw it in the late '60s.

Due to a legal snafu, *Night of the Living Dead* long ago fell into the public domain, thereby allowing anyone to modify, alter, or distribute the work in any way they wish. In recent years, we've seen the movie colorized, re-edited with brand new scenes, and even remade in (very poor) 3D. But now a group of [animators and visual artists](#) are taking advantage of this same creative freedom to pay loving homage to George Romero and John Russo's original masterpiece.

Led by Mike Schneider, this group of international creators has harnessed modern technology and the collaborative power of the Internet to reshape and remix the movie. They have isolated the film's audio track while scrapping every frame of the visuals, and recreated the tale start to finish through animation, which has then been re-synched to the original audio. In an [interview with *The Deadmontonian*](#), Schneider explains that he wanted to "take a film and treat [it] as an art space," thereby granting his collaborators tremendous artistic leeway, while at the same time forcing them to work within the framework of a beloved story.

The skill levels and animation styles of the artists vary greatly, with charcoal renderings cheerfully, even recklessly, intercut with Pixar-like computer graphics, stop-motion sequences, Flash animation, and even (my personal favorite) sock puppets. No effort has been made to blend the styles; it's a free-for-all remix. The only requirement for participation was a love of the original movie and the desire to creatively reinterpret it. In fact, the film's jagged, but intentional, sense of skitsofrenia is a big part of its charm.



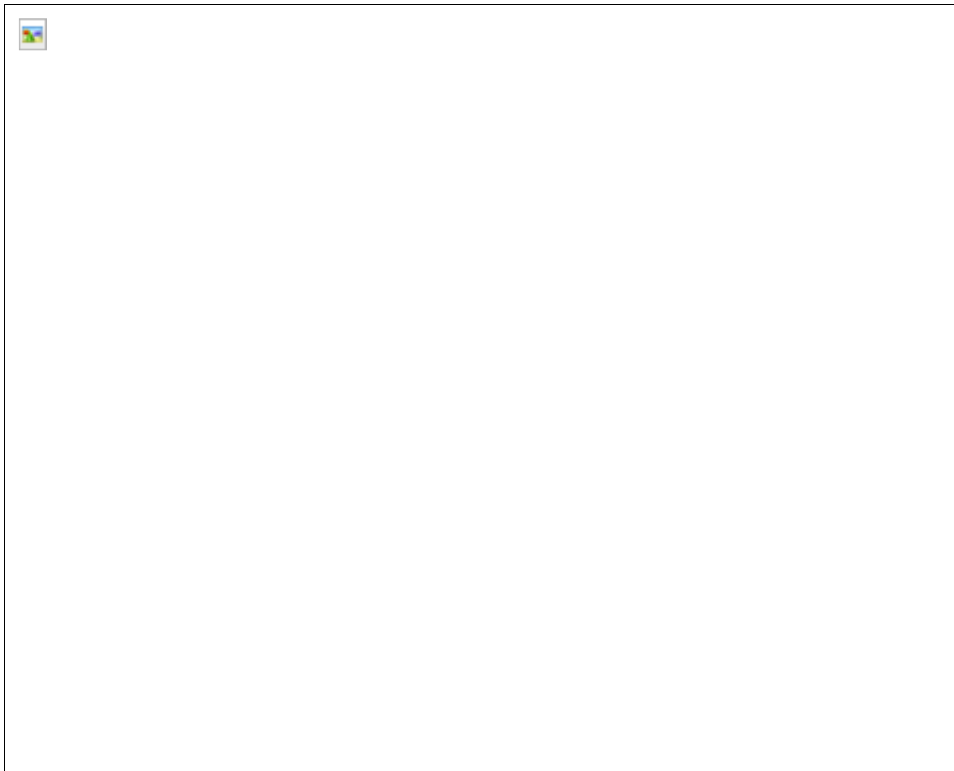
George Romero's "Night of the Living Dead" has been reinterpreted by modern animators.
Photo: Photo: Amazon.com

Night of the Living Dead: Reanimated is being released under a [Creative Commons](#) license. Although anyone will be able to (legally!) stream, download, and share the movie as of its August 24th release date, a [DVD version containing many bonus features and interviews](#) can now be pre-ordered.

Although certainly not a replacement for the original movie, *Night of the Living Dead: Reanimated* is an ingenious way to re-experience a genuine classic through new eyes. According to [the movie's website](#), the creators plan to follow up this project by animating some classic horror/mystery radio shows using the same techniques.

You can view the most recent *Night of the Living Dead: Reanimated* trailer below.

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