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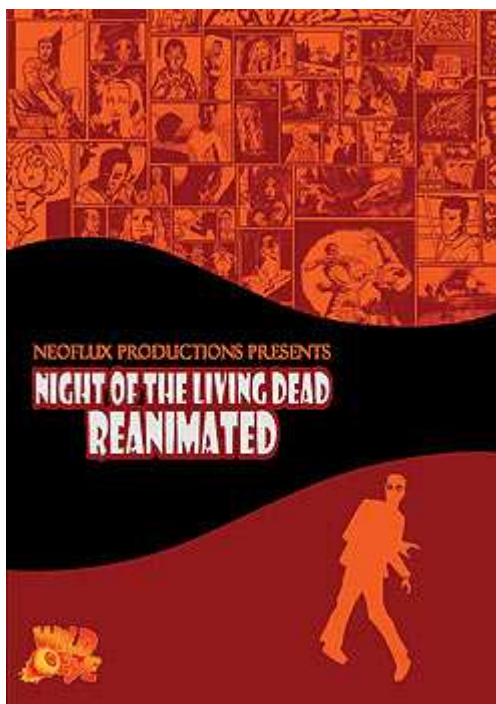
[Night Of The Living Dead: Reanimated](#)

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By Less Lee Moore

In the intro to the *Night of Living Dead: Reanimated* DVD, horror host [Count Gore De Vol](#) refers to the film as “quite the exquisite corpse.” It’s a wickedly good double entendre and one that is also rather [accurate](#).

For those who have not seen the original *Night of the Living Dead* . . . okay, I must interrupt myself at this point to ask you, “why the hell not?” It’s one of the most influential horror films ever, not to mention one of the earliest works in the Zombie Canon. It was even remade in 1990 by special effects guru Tom Savini and has been quoted and referenced in every piece of zombie media since.



Although it was shot in 1968 by director George Romero, in black and white, and for a modest budget of \$114,000, it is spectacularly spooky. Duane Jones (who went on to star in the terribly underrated vampire flick *Ganja and Hess*) portrays Ben, who assumes leadership of a group of frightened citizens running from something grotesque and evil, in this case, hordes of flesh eating undead mutants.

He has quite the task on his hands. Before we meet Ben, we are introduced to Barbara, who becomes practically catatonic after being attacked by one of the freaks and separated from her brother Johnny. Then there are the Coopers, who seem on the verge of divorce (and when you witness what a total dickweed Mr. Cooper is, you will understand completely) and their mysteriously wounded child Karen. At least Tom and Judy, a younger couple, seem to have half a brain between them and enough bravery for Barbara and the clueless Coopers (hey, that's not a bad name for a band. . .)

The setup for *Night of the Living Dead: Reanimated* is thus: an impressively vast array of artists and animators from all over the world picked their fave scenes and re-imagined them, with all the disparate parts synched over the original film's audio. With the focus taken off the typically invisible synch of original sound and video, the first thing the viewer may notice is the sound. What is most remarkable is how iconic and frightening the score is, especially when the majority of it was stock music (talk about an exquisite corpse).

At first the visuals are stark and quite spare in detail, then the action on the screen shifts to more three-dimensional, quasi-realist styles, once the dialogue between Barbara and Johnny commences. This was a good choice on the part of the curator and organizer of the whole shebang, Mike Schneider, as it acclimates the viewer to what is actually going on. Even in scenes where the visuals are more surreal and ambiguous, the sound is creepy and effectively sustains the atmosphere of dread and tension.

There is also a nice juxtaposition of styles, such as placing scenes of LEGO animation next to shots of stop motion dolls and then layering between those line drawings of what looks like a child's version of an artist's model doll. One of the best interpretations of a scene is when Barbara breaks her silence and begins to tell her story, in a disturbingly detached fashion. The animation style is a simplistic line

drawing, highlighting the idea that Barbara's more developed self has long disappeared and all that is left are the tattered remains of a soul.

There are also ironic and humorous interpretations, such as the weirdly animated video game style that is frequently used during scenes of heightened conflict or the way that the cop cars are labeled with the words "PO PO!"

For those who haven't seen the original *NOTLD*, or who haven't watched it recently, it's probably best to check that out before watching this *Reanimated* version, although I'd be curious to know the impact of seeing this new movie cold, with no background to fall back onto.

Overall, *Night of the Living Dead: Reanimated* is another chilling chapter in the never-ending narrative of the undead.

The DVD also features commentary tracks from Mike Schneider and horror author Jonathan Maberry, plus artist call-in commentaries. There are also alternate and deleted scenes, short films, horror comics and art, and even a Zombie Encounter panel discussion video with Maberry, David Barr Kirtley, John Joseph Adams (*The Living Dead*) and Stoker-winner Dr. Kim Paffenroth (*Gospel of the Living Dead*).

Night of the Living Dead: Reanimated was released by Wild Eye Releasing and MVD Visual on September 21 and can be purchased through [See Of Sound](#).

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