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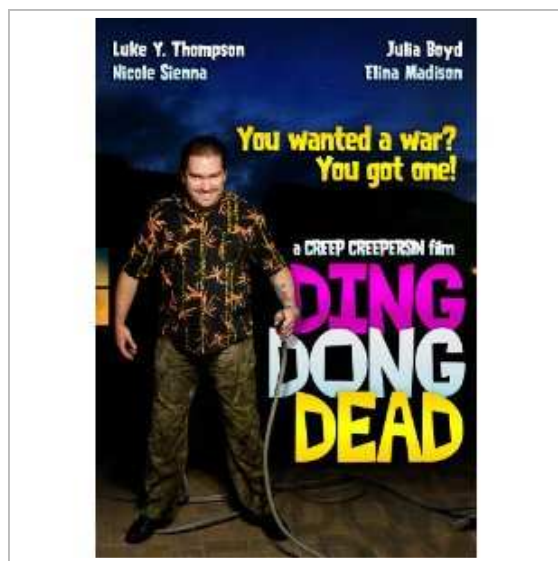
Through the writings and photography of Robert Barry Francos, a view of the arts and culture, including everyday life.

THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 2011

DVD Reviews: Two by Creep Creepersin: *Ding Dong Dead* and *Corporate Cutthroat Massacre*

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Images from the Internet

I was pretty blown away from writer / producer / director Creep Creepersin's *Frankenstein*, which was reviewed earlier on the *FFanzeen* blog. So, I was grateful to get the chance to review a couple more of his indie, shot-on-digicam releases. The reason I put these two together is that they were filmed bam-bam-bam, and have some overlapping features, such as being comedy mass murders, and they both contain Elina Madison.



Ding Dong Dead

Directed by Creep Creepersin

MVD Visual, 2009/2010

70 minutes (bonus: 9 min), USD \$14.95

creepersinfilms.com

MVDvisual.com

In the commentary, Creep posits that this has been his most “funniest”

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About Me

[Robert Barry Francos](#)

Currently living in Saskatoon (email at RBF55@msn.com for address). From 1977-88, I used to publish a print version of a music magazine in New York called *FFanzeen*, which dealt with the wide-ranging independent music scene. I also photographed many bands from the period (and since). Now I write this blog, and have a column at [jerseybeat \(dot\) com](http://jerseybeat(dot)com)

film to make. It's also kind of silly, actually. The premise is the story about Doug, a guy who is hanging on by just a thread on many levels. He is targeted for pranks by a gang of beautiful "Mean Girls" after he calls the cops on them for hanging around his neighborhood and being a nuisance. Their revenge on him? Well, they, keep ringing his doorbell and running away (hey, even Groucho mentions this practice in an early Marx Bros. film). Apparently, it's called *ding dong ditching*. But they ring *this* doorbell one too many times, and after a misunderstanding, this escalates until the story lives up to its title.

While other films are referenced by Creep during the commentary as influences, possibly the one it comes closest to it - and is *not* mentioned - is Peckinpaw's amazing *Straw Dogs* (mousetraps included... hmmm wonder if it's available on DVD...).

Luke Y. Thompson stars as Doug, the main character of the film, playing him with just the right amount of pathos, hopelessness, and anger. Creep lights him mostly in a blue hue, reflecting his life. Doug's running diatribe during a long driving scene, complaining about other drivers and pedestrians, is telling (though I admit to doing that myself). He may occasionally walk kinda funny, but it's easy enough to put that in as part of the character. With loud shirts and a short temper, the film starts off with him losing his job (overslept) with few future prospects, or the will to do anything about it. Doug lives a life of both inertia and hostility, living alone, with his mother being the only one who phones. A long clip of Doug brushing his teeth (seemingly a Creep signage) perhaps shows his loneliness, as it did in another of his films, *Creepersin's Frankenstein*.

Doug has a crush on his neighbor across the street, played as an extended cameo by Elina Madison, who also stars in *Creepersin's Corporate Cutthroat Massacre* (reviewed directly below). He imagines himself being suave and turning her head, but in reality he's a shy, fearful man. Besides, she's too distracted by the loss of her husband who was killed in action. Just one more frustration for Doug to help build up his anger.

And the pranks by the mean girls (all of whose names reflect the doorbell practice, such as D.D. Diane, D.D. Debbie, D.D. Dana, and my favorite, D.D. DeeDee) are just what push him over the edge into insanity, which leads to an obvious conclusion, well at least to someone who watches a lot of crime dramas.

It's hard to feel any sympathy for *any* of the characters, as they are just plain nasty. The gang gets knocked off one by one by various methods; however, I thought the fate of the leader of the D.D.s was a bit much, even for the now clearly insane Doug (you know he's nuts because he keep referring to himself in third person, such as "Doug is going to war" or "Doug likes to play games."). While all the other assassinations are of the moment, her fate is more deliberate, which seems out of character to me.

com (slash) quietcorner (dot) html. And the beat goes on.

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There are some really nice shots in the film, two of my favorites being Doug sitting in his living room chair watching television while the girl gang view him through a big picture window behind him. It reminded me the Tall Man standing over Mike's bed in *Phantasm* (in my mind I hear: "We've been waiting to ring your doorbell...boy!"). Another great shot is as Doug is walking past the kitchen door, and one of the gang is standing in the shadows of that room, unnoticed by the dull-witted Doug.

The locale for this film is the same house as in *he* (i.e., Creep's childhood home in Cypress, California; review to follow. No, I'm not that observant about the house, but Creep mentions it in the commentary (in-between near-constant throat-clearings; perhaps time to put down the ciggy-butts the listener can hear you lighting up a few times?). There are actually two commentaries, one by Creep and one with Creep and star Luke. Both keep up the interest on the filmmaking process with anecdotes, and the story of how Luke met his real-life girlfriend, one of the D.D.s, is pretty cool, since the first time they met was her death scene; supposedly she was genuinely scared of him. Now they live together. Nice. If you visit, though, be sure to *knock*.



Corporate Cutthroat Massacre

Directed by Creep Creepersin

MVD Visual, 2009

70 minutes (33 min bonus), USD \$14.95

creepersinfilms.com

MVDvisual.com

This near-bloodless black comedy slasher film is based on a 17 minute short co-written by Tyger Torrez and Elina Madison, the later of whom plays the same lead character in both (the original short is included here, in the extras).

The original, *The Late Shift*, is strong and never lets up, hardly a comedy. And while there are elements in the earlier version I find superior to the full lengther (e.g., revolving around the Rusty/Crusty character), Creep did a fine job filling out the story into a feature. He adds more characters, more plot lines, and elongates some scenes, usually with success.

In his commentary...hell, even on the box, Creep mentions how much his additional material was inspired by the US version of *The Office*, of which he and his partner/wife, Nikki Wall (listed as Mrs. Creepersin on some of his films) are fans. He even declares which characters in this film are based on which ones in the show (some are pretty obvious).

Elina Madison plays Brandy Babcock (spelled Brandi in the short), a hard-nosed boss who states firmly that she "expects perfection" from her employees ("Is that so much to ask?" she further queries, rhetorically). The company she works for is going down the tubes, and she has to fire two people, so she makes her handful of fuck-up employees stay after hours and do sales reports until she decides who stays and who gets axed. Elina, who played the unrequited love neighbor in *Ding Dong Dead*, handles her character here chillingly well. Creepersin gives her a more human side than is presented in the short, which is a nice touch, though I thought that scene should have been earlier in the film; without giving anything away, before the scene where she shouts, "Will someone answer that phone!" When you see the entire film, you'll understand. The *only* nit-pick I have about Elina is, in this film, she tends to add an extra "ah" vowel at the end of some words to show disgust, which is distracting ("What are you doing-gah?" "Get back to work-kah"). Perhaps it's a California thing? I notice Penny does that on *Big Bang Theory*, as well.

As for the employees, there's the married couple who want to go home and fool around, the alcoholic looking for her next drink, the two screwing in the copy room, and Bernie, the smartass (though not expressed, I'm guessing based somewhat on the Dwight character). One by one (or two-by-two in some cases), they start to mysteriously disappear. The name of the film should somewhat answer any curiosity.

Creepersin definitely has some auteur moments. While no one eat breakfast or brushes their teeth at length here, as in other films of his, there is a long unbroken one-shot of Elina putting on a fresh layer of make-up in a bathroom mirror.

The ending is a nice twist and handled well in both short and long versions. The whole *The Office* homage is a bit overdone, including

the shaky camera, but just taking this film for what it is, it's a good effort by the extremely prolific Creepster. Each of his films usually take two-three days to shoot, so adding pre- and post-productions, he could conceivably do a film a month. I know since seeing these two films and having reviewed another, I've already received another. And I'm happy about that.

There are two *making of* shorts in the Extra section, the first of which is a pretty extraneous one with short interviews with various cast members. Much of what is said by Creep and actor Charlie Vaughn had already been said in the commentary, so it feels redundant. The second short, obviously shot the same time as the first, is a bit more interesting that has them all talking about their *own* jobs from hell.

The first film-length commentary is Creep by himself, and he does an excellent job getting the viewer into what was happening on the set at the time of the scene, or what technical issues were behind others. In the second commentary, Creep is joined by Vaughn, who plays the Dwight-ish ne'er-do-well Bernie. He is good in the film, but I'm not sure why he is on the comment track, other than being a friend of Creep. Personally, I would have liked to have Creep joined by either Elina (first choice) or Tyger Torrez (second), as she was the executive producer of both films, and Torrez was the original director; it would have been interesting to compare notes on the shoot, especially as there are a couple of scenes where Creep actually used the footage *from* the short (which he verbally acknowledges).

For the kinds of films Creepersin makes, he has a keen eye and a way of telling a story. He also consistently gets some good work out of his actors. Sure there are continuity issues, which he is willing to address in commentaries, unintentional cameos in reflections, and the like, but one thing I learned from working as an usher in a cinema, no matter what the budget, there is no such thing as a perfect movie in that way. Every film contains some errors. Now, I'm going to watch Creepersin's *Peeping Blog*, which will be reviewed here anon with another of his films, *he*.



Posted by Robert Barry Francos at [12:01 PM](#)

Labels: [Corporate Cutthroat Massacre](#), [Creep Creepersin](#), [Ding Dong Dead](#), [DVD review](#), [Elina Madison](#), [FFanzeen](#), [horror films](#), [independent cinema](#), [Richard Gary](#), [slasher films](#)

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