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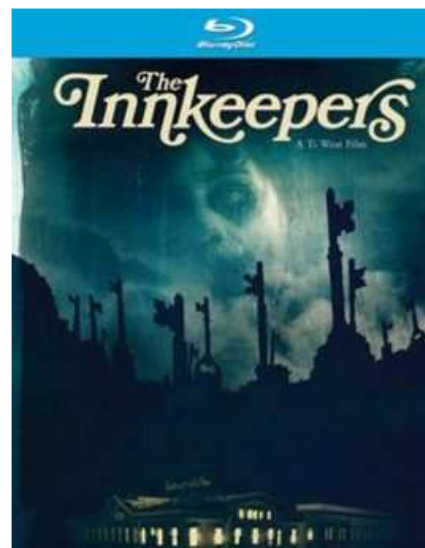
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Claustrofobia (2010/MVD Visual DVD)/**Dark Night Of The Scarecrow** (1981/VCI Blu-ray)/**The Innkeepers** (2011/Dark Sky Films Blu-ray)/**Martha Marcy May Marlene** (2011/Fox Blu-ray)/**Survive!** (1976/VCI DVD)

Picture: C+/B/B/B/C+
 Sound: C+/B-/B-/B-/C+
 Extras: D/B/C/C/B- Films: C-/B-/C/C/C+



Now In the 1970s, there was an interesting intersection between Horror, Drama and Documentary filmmaking that still connects them all to this day. I was re-reminded of this when the following films arrived about the same time on [home](#) video.

The newest here is Bobby Boerman's **Claustrofobia**, a 2010 Dutch thriller which starts with a young girl playing games with a young man in a morgue (Abandoned? How did they get there?), then cuts to a modern tale of yet another young woman abducted and held hostage. I thought this would be a torture porn import when that happened, but instead, it is just an outright woman-in-jeopardy thriller that has possibilities, but the makers have no idea what suspense is and it all seems an ambitious waste of what could have been something special if the script was actually good.

Paul Verhoeven has nothing to worry about, but that is a shame because the locations (outside of the usual underground locale) and the actors are a plus, but this makes more of the same formulaic mistakes I just suffered through with **The Hidden Face** (reviewed elsewhere on this site) with a slightly more upscale take on the same un-suspenseful bore. Too bad, but it at least tries, even though it fails badly. There are no extras.

Based on popular demand, the great horror telefilm **Dark Night Of The Scarecrow** (1981) has been issued on Blu-ray by VCI following the highly successful DVD version we liked and covered at this link:

[http://www.fulvuedrive-in.com/review/10485/Dark+Night+Of+The+Scarecrow+\(1981\)](http://www.fulvuedrive-in.com/review/10485/Dark+Night+Of+The+Scarecrow+(1981))

Once again, we have another TV on Blu-ray gem and the first telefilm (in the U.S. market) to become a U.S. Blu-ray (**Regan** (which became the pilot to the U.K. classic **The Sweeney**) already hit Blu-ray in the U.K. and is reviewed elsewhere on this site) beating the usual first telefilm on any new video format in the U.S., John Moxey's **The Night Stalker** (1972, reviewed elsewhere on this site) but is really impressive and holds up

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Confused (2008/Cinema Epoch/U.S. NTSC DVD version)/Fix: The Ministry Movie
 (2012/Gigantic/Blairwood DVD)/Unauthorized: The Story Of Rock 'N' Roll Comics (2005/MVD Visual DVD)

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- > The Muppets: The Wocka Wocka Value Pack (2011/Disney Blu-ray/DVD/Digital Copy/Soundtrack)
- > Logan's Run: The Complete Series (1977 - 1978/Warner DVD Set)
- > Doctor Who: The Robots of Death (Special Edition/Tom Baker/BBC DVD)
- > Webster - Season Three (1985 - 1986/Shout! Factory DVD Set)
- > The Adventures of Tintin - Season Two (Shout! Factory DVD)
- > A Dangerous Method (2011/Sony DVD)
- > The Darkest Hour (2011/Summit Blu-ray 3D + Blu-ray 2D)
- > Into The Abyss (2011/IFC/MPI Blu-ray)
- > The Little Shop of Horrors (1960/Legend Blu-ray)
- > Doctor Who: The Tomb Of The Cybermen (BBC Special Edition DVD)
- > Immortals (2011/Fox Blu-ray)
- > Spin City - The Complete 6th Season (2001 - 2002/Shout! Factory DVD Set)
- > Snow Flower & The Secret Fan (2011/Fox Blu-ray)
- > Designing Women - The Complete Fifth Season (1990 - 1991/Shout! Factory DVD)
- > Danny Phantom - Season 2: Part 1 (Shout! Factory DVD)

better than many of its theatrical counterparts of the time.

On Blu-ray, you can even appreciate the film more than anyone (including die hard fans) could have ever imagined and only those somehow lucky to see it on film could have enjoyed before until now. Night is actual nighttime, unlike too many TV productions which faked nighttime to be commercial and not turn away viewers. As amazing as the DVD was, this is even more impressive and we'll get to the playback performance below, but it is a big improvement over what was a [top](#) rate DVD.

In addition to that, the original extras including a feature length writer/director commentary to hear after you see the film and the CBS Network World Premiere Promo that told everyone the film was coming is joined by **new extras**!!! We also get a rebroadcast promo, Behind-the-Scenes Photo Gallery, Production Documentary and Q&A with Larry Drake, Tonya Crowe and J.D. Feigelson. All great classic telefilms deserve this kind of treatment and I hope this heightens the bar for this truly creepy, suspenseful thriller.

Ti West's **The Innkeepers** (2011) is a haunted house/hotel thriller by the talented filmmaker who just cannot get his films to work. Following his celebrated but only so effective **House Of The Devil** (reviewed elsewhere on this site), he has some more money and another interesting cast, yet this only has a few so-so shocks, a mixed ending and cannot overcome films that have done this kind of thing better, especially Kubrick's **The Shining**.

Sara Paxton plays a young woman who stays and works at an old hotel, but slowly starts to realize the idea it is haunted may be more than a myth. All the guests (even a mother and son) seem out of place and one particular woman (Kelly McGillis) turns out to be a former TV star who may know more than she initially says.

The film has a slow pace that will remind some of M. Night Shaymalan, but smarter and more substantive, but especially with the distinct feel of 1970s thrillers that linger in knowing ways that all the great thrillers of the time had. That is not easy to do, but West just can't seem to do anything with it once he does it. I hoped this would work and be a surprise, but I was disappointed, yet I want to see what he does next. At least it was ambitious. A trailer, two feature-length audio commentary tracks and a Behind-the-Scenes featurette are the extras.

Like **Innkeepers** and even **Scarecrow** to some extent, Sean Durkin's **Martha Marcy May Marlene** (2011) also happens to have that same slow look and feel, though not as distinctly 1970s as **Innkeepers**, the feel is effective enough as a young woman (Elizabeth Olsen in a bold performance) plays a young lady who has found herself lost in an abusive cult where the combination of brainwashing and rape nearly destroy her. She is able to escape and go with her sister but does not tell them what she has been through. Upset, she tries to act normal, but the return of the repressed and denial comes out in bad ways and she is not well.

Instead of being checked into (or checking into) a clinic, she is with her sister and male companion with increasingly problematic results. She cannot come to terms with her trauma and even tries calling the cult back. We also get extensive flashbacks and her increased sense of paranoia. Unfortunately, this offers limited suspense, is nothing we have not seen before and is not the most memorable film or work on this subject, despite again being ambitious. The acting is good and there are some disturbing scenes, but sometimes I wonder if Durkin is not certain if he is doing a drama, character study, psychological thriller or mood piece. Unfortunately, it does not add up enough and it ends where it should have begun.

Extras include *A Conversation With The Filmmakers*, a Music Video, *Spotlight On Elizabeth Olsen*, *Making Of* featurette and the short film **Mary Last Seen** which inspired this film and is very similar remarkably in the most creepy ways.

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Finally we have another thriller that has a 1970s feel because it is from the 1970s. Rene Cardona's **Survive!** (1976) is one of the most shocking and graphic of the disaster and natural disaster films of that decade that began with **Airport!** in 1970 and peaked with **The Poseidon Adventure**, **The Towering Inferno** and (when it is in the form of a living monster/animal(s) as was the case in Hitchcock's **The Birds** (1962)) Spielberg's **Jaws**, but not until all the imitators played the cycle out. While that was mostly a U.S. cinema phenomenon, this film was made in Mexico and is based on the terrible 1972 incident where a small plane crashed in the Andes Mountains and left its survivors stuck in the middle of nowhere.

This includes a soccer team, but soon, they are stuck up there in the middle of a blizzard winter without hardly any resources and the odds are they will not live. But the reason the film was infamous is that as in real life, those who live after the crash resort to cannibalism (already a Horror film theme thanks to zombies, et al, at the time (think **The Hills Have Eyes** and **Raw Meat**)) so the film was advertised in its U.S release as too strong for general audiences. Even though it had an R-rating, the disclaimer acted in a way we would associate with unrated film releases.

VCI has issued the film in two versions on one DVD, the shorter U.S edition and as a bonus (because it sadly does not have subtitles) the longer Spanish version and both are on the graphic side, though after the torture porn cycle seem somewhat tame for a film that was considered cheap and somewhat exploitive, I actually think it is not that bad. Robert Stigwood (the late one-time manager of The Bee Gees and Peter Frampton) and Alan Carr (together they gave us hit films like **Saturday Night Fever** and **Grease**, as well as duds like **Can't Stop The Music** with The Village People and **Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band** with Frampton and Gibbs as The Beatles, et al) backed the U.S. version.

They cut 23 minutes, had Gerald Fried do a more upbeat score and used black and white photos to begin and end the tale, changing the context from a terrible event to a survivors' story. They did not desecrate the event or history, but it is a touch of Hollywoodizing something that cannot easily be so without getting into trouble. As you may already know, Disney's **Alive**, directed by the capable Frank Marshall, also tried to make a "human drama" (meaning a near fell good movie) about the event into a more "acceptable" film but despite a good cast, did not work any better.

There is more character development and exposition in the Spanish version and though you will not know what anyone says unless you speak the language, we get the usual clichéd scenes we have seen dozens of times, plus some of the U.S. English dubbing seems similar when compared to this cut. There are no cannibal jokes, the makers and actors take this seriously and this is more ambitious than you might think. Only the special effects have dated it outside of 1970s clothes and hair, but it does take place 40 years ago, so this DVD also serves as a commemorative release. Extras include that Spanish version and a Spanish trailer.

The 1080p 1.33 X 1 digital High Definition image transfer on **Scarecrow** is as impressive as just about any full color TV on DVD we have seen to date that uses later color film stocks, with a brand new print and very few issues, save a few shots with minor detail limits. The color range is amazing and even better than its DVD counterpart, plus detail, depth, Video Black, Video Red and Video White handily outdo the impressive DVD. That this looks better than so many later theatrical films on Blu-ray amazing, but I really liked it and it is as solid as any disc here.

The 1080p 2.35 X 1 digital High Definition image transfer on **Innkeepers** was shot in the Super 35mm film format and despite some styling choices, has many of its own great shots throughout. The 1080p 2.35 X 1 AVC @ 32 MBPS digital High Definition image transfer on **Marcy** is also stylized, usually to be naturalistic and is also shot in the Super 35mm film format. Yet it has more outdoor shots and outdoor lighting down to a 1970s soft look. All three Blu-rays have interesting and even demo shots for your HDTV.

The anamorphically enhanced 2.35 X 1 image on **Claustrofobia** uses the ARRI Alexa to good effect, but it can also be softer than I might have liked. Wonder how much better it would look on Blu-ray.

That leaves two transfers on **Survive!** One is the shorter U.S. edition in an anamorphically enhanced 1.78 X 1 image and the other the longer Spanish edition in a 1.33 X 1 frame. They both have advantages and disadvantages. The U.S. version has some shots with more depth, sometimes more detail and better Video White, but that white blows out the color and detail a little in some shots. The Spanish version has more frame information, better color range, but has poorer Video White, may lack detail in scenes and have more print damage, but I liked it just a bit more.

The DTS-HD MA (Master Audio) 5.1 lossless mixes on **Marcy** and **Innkeepers** are well recorded enough, but quiet in nature often and may have their moments when music and sound effects kick in, but purposely have toned-down soundfields and dialogue that is in the center channel and sound sometimes towards the front speakers. The lossy Dolby Digital 5.1 on **Scarecrow** is actually better than the same on the DVD by having a smoother soundfield and better than the lossy Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo on **Claustrofobia** and either choice of lossy Dolby Digital 2.0 Mono on **Survive!** which have not been overly compressed and sound as good as they are going to get. The English dub sounds like a dub, while the Spanish version definitely has some post production work, but that as expected from such a low budget film. We're lucky it survived after being written off as an exploitation film when it is something more than that, if not great.

- Nicholas Sheffo

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