

Indie Horror Films

All genres of suspense, terror, and horror will be reviewed by Richard Gary. His address to send preview copies supplied upon request to rbf55@msn.com.

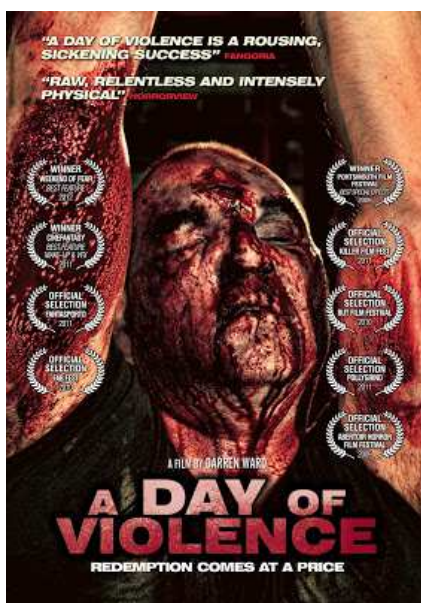
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Two DVD Reviews: A Day of Violence; Slice

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Images from the Internet

These two films have some common threads. First, they are international cinema, from other sides of the world; second, they both deal with crime and punishment in the gangster genre; third, they are exceedingly graphic in their portrayal of violence and its aftermath, which you can tell from the titles alone. They make good companion pieces because they are so different in their approach and story, and yet have many overlapping themes.



A Day of Violence

Written and directed by Darren Ward

Giallo Films / Jingai

78 minutes, 2010 / 2012

www.Giallofilms.com

www.MVDvisual.com

The Brits definitely have a history of ultra-violent crime films, evident in the likes of *The Long Good Friday* (1980) and *The Cook, the Thief, his Wife and Her Lover* (1989). But there is a difference between those and this one, other than those above both having Helen Mirren as the female leads.

Both *Friday* and *The Cook*, while unflinching looks at the mob for the time, they were both relatively mainstream films that played in the theaters and though pushing the envelope, had limits if they wanted to maintain a relationship with the theaters. *Day* is 30 years later in the post-torture porn era. The gloves are off, the appliances are on, and the blood and body parts *will* separate.

The story focuses on a very low-end gangster, Mitchell Parker (Nick Rendell), who works for the mob as a collector of money owed. After an extended sex scene with his wife, the next shot is of him on the morgue table, still giving a *Sunset Boulevard*/William Holden (1950) type of voice over. He had found an incredibly large sum of cash held by one of his marks, Hopper (played by Giallo legend Giovanni Lombardo Radice, who was in such classics as *City of the Living Dead* [1980], *The Church* [1989] and *Cannibal Ferox* [1981], often under the pseudonym of John Morghen), who he then murdered and took the cash. From there, things start falling around him.

We watch as a number of people involved in the missing money get beaten, tortured and... No, I'm not going to give too much away, but it all shown in glorious and gruesome detail. This is to gangster behavior what *Trainspotting* (1996) was to addiction, and *Kids* (1995) was to adolescence. If the viewer is anywhere near squeamish, hopefully the title alone will inform them, never mind the cover art

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shown above. The first two-thirds of the relatively short film are hard to watch, even though there really aren't many sympathetic characters.

Keeping that in mind, the last third is a grand old shoot-em-up with lots of collateral damage that everyone can enjoy who likes these kinds of action things. Perhaps a bit more bloody than a *Die Hard* film, but it matches the firearms.

If you're taking anything I'm saying about the film as a negative review, that is not how I mean it. Darren Ward does a great job of directing in Guy Ritchie territory (without the humor). The camera angles are sharp, as is the editing, and the color saturation is of earth tones, highlighting the oppressive and colorless lives and to play up the "claret" as the blood is described more than once.

The story tries to justify Mitchell's stealing of the cash, hence the "redemption" in the catch phrase, but that does not reason out his brutal killing of Hopper. For me it was one of the flaws of a very strong, yet simple story at its core. There are no grand twists, no unexpected duplicities, including the multiple double-crosses, just a grand meat and 'taters tale. Nuthin' wrong with that.

The extras are plentiful. The Making Of documentary is as long as the film, broken up into four segments. About half it is fascinating, the other half you may want to zoom through here and there. But let me digress here for a second. Much of the added footage is about Radice, who essential has an extended cameo. Yes, I know he is a "legend," but he gets first name credit, and so much of the footage in the extras is about him; setting up for his kill, showing how they made the fake neck for it, and quite frankly boring interviews with him (mixed with some interesting comments by him). It seems a bit obsessive to me. Yeah, I love those old Giallo films too, but c'mon. Okay, back on track: other shorts include some extended scenes which are mostly good and enjoyable, but rightfully taken out, especially the car ride with the big boss and the schmuck underling.

I'm not sure if this is a commentary about modern British society, or the government (as *The Cook* was back when), but even if it isn't deeper than the *Platte River*, it gets the job done, with little budget that looks much larger on the screen. If you can take realistic violence (as opposed to "cartoon" aggression of a Steven Segal type), odds are this will be worth your while, even with the sometimes incredibly thick British accents, mate.



Slice (original Thai title: Cheun)

Directed by Kongkiat Khomsiri

Casino Crush / Five Star Productions

99 minutes, 2009 / 2012

www.MVDvisual.com

Tai is an assassin for an underworld boss. He gets set up and sent to prison for 10 years for wounding a cop, and while in the joint, he's told who to kill in there. However, after a few high-profile and bizarre serial slayings that angers a politician, he's taken out of prison and sent to find the possible killer, who may have been a childhood friend.

The killings, which we get to see in full detail, are carried out in quick, brutal fashion by a figure in a full and flowing red cape and hood, carrying a large red rolling suitcase that will eventually house the cut-up bodies (which we also get to see; the corpses, that is). The victims seem random, though they are all despicable, including child molesters (a big industry in Thailand, and I'm sure this is a commentary on that subject) and spoiled, oversexed political scions. Though you would think someone walking in a flowing bright red full-body cape and hood with matching luggage would be easy to spot... I'm just saying...