

it literally takes us to the point of his fatal car crash in January, 1962. The material here benefits from being less primitively recorded and surprisingly diverse. The compilation includes 8 more episodes from Kovacs' national morning show; 18 bonus sketches, featuring many of his beloved characters; 3 complete episodes of "Take a Good Look," his anarchic answer to "What's My Line?"; the pilot for the sitcom, "A Pony for Chris," co-starring Buster Keaton; the only existing filmed solo interview; and a 2011 post-screening panel at the American Cinematheque, with entertainers who worked alongside Kovacs or were heavily influenced by him. There would be plenty more material available if it weren't for the fact that short-sighted executives at ABC and Dumont hadn't taped over the stored shows or dumped them in the ocean. A similarly fate awaited kinescopes of Johnny Carson's "Tonight Show" while it was still shot in New York.

In June, Omnivore Recordings did all fans of Kovacs a great favor by releasing – for the first time – the album upon which the comedian was working at the time of his death, "**Ernie Kovacs Presents Percy Dovetonsils ... Thpeaks.**" His shows' outrageous "poet laureate" would register very low on the Meter of Political Correctness today, I'm afraid. He was to poetry what Liberace was to the piano, an unabashed and unapologetic caricature of his own outrageous persona. Sadly, Percy possessed none of Liberace's estimable talent. Routinely introduced with a flourish of harp music, Dovetonsils was distinguished by heavily slicked hair, with two spit-curls plastered to his forehead; extraordinarily thick glasses, whose lenses are dominated by large eyeballs; a zebra-patterned smoking jacket; an ever-present martini glass and cigarette holder; and a decided lisp. He delivered his poems in a self-satisfied style that emphasized how goofy they were. Among the titles are "Thoughts While Falling Off the Empire State Building," "Ode to a Housefly (Philosophical Ruminations on a Beastie in the Booze)," "Ode to Sam, the Taller of the Two Monkeys" and "The Night Before Christmas on New York's Fashionable East Side." You might want to hit pause on the DVD, so you can see Percy while listening to him read. It's easily half the fun. – *Gary Dretzka*

## **Wrong Turn 5: Bloodlines: Blu-ray**

### **Dropping Evil**

#### **Bloody Christmas**

Like most every other states in the union, West Virginia has a state motto, slogan, color, bird, animal, fish, flower, tree and song. For some reason, legislators also saw fit to choose an official state insect, reptile, rock, butterfly, fossil, gemstone, soil, fruit and tartan. What it doesn't have is an official state movie franchise. May I suggest the five installments of the "Wrong Turn" series? What, besides a John Denver song, says West Virginia quite as well as mountains, forests, rivers, automatic weapons in the hands of crazed mass murderers and in-bred cannibal hillbillies, all of which figure prominently in all five episodes? "**Wrong Turn 5: Bloodlines**" differs from the other four episodes very little. Once again, a group of clueless tourists (this time, college kids) encounters a family of grotesquely disfigured hillbillies while on their way to the annual Halloween Mountain Man Festival. The town is so small it has one only cellphone tower and no replacement generators, both of which are put out of commission by the killers. The twist here is that the hillbillies' self-proclaimed father – a relatively normal looking fugitive serial killer – has been arrested and he's thrown in the hoosegow with one of the students. His "sons" will do anything in their considerable powers to spring the old man from jail. In fact, it's only matter of time. Before that can happen, though, the pinheads find it necessary to slaughter more than a dozen people who get in their way. The result is a bloodbath that, while gory, isn't at all frightening. What's scary are threats hurled at the town's only surviving sheriff, a woman, by the "father," who's played with great menace by Doug Bradley, a.k.a., Pinhead in the "Hellraiser" series. The Blu-ray comes with the behind-the-scenes pieces, "A Day in the Death," "Hillbilly Kills" and "Director's Die-aries"; and commentary by director Declan O'Brien

By all appearances, the micro-budget "**Dropping Evil**" was intended as a franchise product. Three years and very little demand later, director Adam Procter and writer Louis Doerge are fortunate to see "Dropping Evil" being released on video, with three mini-sequels included in the bonus package, along with deleted scenes and other material. This is one very strange movie, by anyone's standards. It begins with an aborted camping trip, during which a religious fanatic is slipped a dose of LSD by his three companions, if only to shut him up. Instead, he demands to be let out of the moving vehicle, so that he can pick up a stick and beat the crap out of his "friends." Meanwhile, somehow, the evil ValYouCorp is monitoring the incident via a camera embedded in one of the young people's eye. The company believes that God's "disappearance" can be solved by teenagers, but only if they're involved in the procedure. It's goofy, if not to the point where it could reach cult status. Any movie in which Tiffany Shepis is the brightest star and best actor – no offence, intended — is one with which no one needs to reckon.

Sometimes, it's easy to give micro-budget indies of the DIY persuasion the benefit of a doubt. There's usually a grain of something interesting lurking therein or worth staying awake for 90 minutes to find. Unless an aspiring filmmaker has robbed a convenience store to get the money to pay the actors, it's better to encourage talent than condemn ineptitude. Michael Shershenovich's "**Bloody Christmas**" uses horror to deliver a message about rampant consumerism and the people who have "taken Christ out of Christmas." His avengers include a sad-sack Santa and killer priest, while the victims come in various shapes, sizes and colors. Unlike Chanukah, Kwanza and Ramadan, Christmas has provided a solid launching pad for slasher specialists ever since the 1974 release of "Silent Night, Evil Night" and "Black Christmas." Shershenovich's only previous experience in feature films was as production coordinator and set designer on "Bad Biology." Here, he's cited as director, writer, cinematographer, producer, editor and actor. That's five too many responsibilities for any first-time filmmaker to take on and it shows. – *Gary Dretzka*

## **The Slut**

### **Tokyo Playboy Club**

#### **Climb It, Tarzan!**

#### **Cherry.**

Of all the loaded words in the English language, "slut" carries one of the most explosive charges. Sexual semantics allow for as many different interpretations as there are people who use such four-letter words – longer ones, too – as nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, expletives, slurs and terms of endearment. The elasticity of the English language can be a wonderful thing. In a review I read of the recent Israeli export, "**The Slut**," the author argues that the title has been mistranslated or purposefully changed to something more provocative than "The Giver." Not being adept at the Google translator app, I'll take his word for it. Having watched "The Slut," I would suggest that the latter title is the more accurate one. Freshman writer/director/star Hagar Ben-Asher plays the single mother of two young daughters, living in a cooperative agricultural settlement that seemingly is bereft of any women, let alone attractive ones in their mid-thirties. Some people might consider Tamar to be a woman who defines the term, slut, because she willingly has four men on her sexual string and demands nothing from them in turn. I think that Tamara more closely resembles a "giver," for the simple reason that she doesn't appear to derive any sensual pleasure from her encounters and appears merely to be servicing several of the men in the settlement. They come to her when they need to get off and she willingly complies. If anything, it's charity. The movie's drama, such as it is, derives from the position in which she finds herself when an old acquaintance returns to the area and they enter into a romantic relationship. This would be swell, except for the fact that Tamar eventually comes to the conclusion that she's more interested in personal freedom than monogamy and she truly does enjoy making men happy. I wish I could report there was something more to "The Slut" than that, but I couldn't find it. The only truly disturbing thing about it is watching her pre-teen daughters watching mom in flagrante delicto and aping some of her gestures. The rural setting was interesting, at least, if only because it's so different from the usual views we get of Israel.

Anyone looking for Bunnies at the Tokyo Playboy Club will be sorely disappointed. The closest this movie comes to Playmate of the Year material are three giggly hookers who dress up in costumes and don't seem to have many customers. Anyone looking for a terrific yakuza flick from out of left field, though, will find one in writer/director Yosuke Okuda's "**Tokyo Playboy Club**." Any resemblance between the cheesy brothel of the title and the nightclub atop the Palms resort in Las Vegas wouldn't merely be coincidental, it would be impossible. Action star Nao Omori ("Ichi the Killer," "The Vulture") plays an out-of-work businessman, Katsutoshi, who kills a wiseass student with a monkey wrench, because he was making too much noise and the tool was handy. The assailant decides to make a quick trip to Tokyo, where his cousin, Sekichi (Ken Mitsuishi), runs the aforementioned nightclub for the yakuza. It doesn't take long for Katsutoshi to take advantage of his cousin's generosity by beating a mob associate to a pulp in the men's room of a restaurant. The ante is raised when the two men find themselves in possession of the