

# 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.

Monday, February 25, 2013

## 2 DVD Reviews: The Dark Dealer, RepliGator

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Images from the Internet

*Whacked Movies* is a label with a double entendre name that specializes in reissuing cheesy, straight-to-VHS indie films from the 1980s and '90s. And for that I salute them by reviewing two of them. Other than these films being released a year apart, there are other factors that group them. One is that Wynn Winberg co-directed the first, and produced the second, and both have actor Rocky Patterson. The other is that both were filmed in Texas.



### The Dark Dealer

Directed by Tom Alexander and Wynn Winberg

85 minutes, 1995 / 2013

*Whacked Movies*

[www.whackedmovies.com](http://www.whackedmovies.com)

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Mostly during the 1970 through 1990s, one of the common themes of horror films was the anthology, perhaps kicked into high gear by the EC Comics-inspired *Tales from the Crypt* (1972), and continued with the likes of *Campfire Tales* (1997), and Snoop Dog's *Hood of Horror* (2006). Heck, I recently saw a film that uses this device called *Johnny Dickie's Slaughter Tales* (2012), directed by a 15-year-old. The way it works is there are some standalone stories that may be connected in some way by an overarching framework. Sometimes it is just someone telling the story, or in this case of this film, there is a link via a mysterious room at the entrance of (death?) (hell?) where one plays a round of poker with, yes, the sarcastic and unsympathetic Dark Dealer (Mark Fickert)

Although this Texas-filmed – er – film was produced in the early-to-mid 1990s, there is a whole lot of '80s going on, from the tight dresses to the very, very, very big hair. And much like the direct to VHS of the period, the acting is generally not very good. There are some who shine a bit, like Gordon Fox as a milquetoast basement apartment dweller, and there are some that stand out in their audacity, such as Rocky Patterson as Pete, a collections enforcer for the mob, or Jeff English as Cracker, a wise-cracking drug dealer.

There are three stories. I won't go into too much and give a lot away, because even though you can see it coming, I still don't want to ruin it. One story deals with two lower-echelon gangsters hiding out in an apartment, terrorizing the meek occupant. Another focuses on a scummy entertainment lawyer who tries to steal a dead man's music. The third has some poor young schmuck forced into breaking into a pharmaceutical company to steal drugs with his substance abuser girlfriend and her hyper

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dealer.

This is everything we used to love about the genre, when scouring the aisles of the local video store before the major chains ran them into the ground (neh, neh, Blockbuster, where are ya stores now?). The stories are outrageous but totally enjoyable, the gore is laughable (though a split body is well done), and the special effects pretty decent for the time period, which are both person-in-rubber suit, and digital. There is a computer in one scene where you can tell they were just starting to get to graphics; gotta love older technology, and appreciate how much has changed in such a short time.

Another aspect of the genre that this film uses extensively is the way it is lit. Dark rooms mean the use of primary color lighting. *Creepshow* (1982) used this a lot, for example. Splays of green, blue, and especially red fill the screen to indicate emotions, like fear, in the visual paradigm of the way music is often used.

Two of the short films, "KSS-X" (the bookended wraparound) and "Cellar Space," were directed by Tom Alexander, while the "Blues in the Night" segment was directed by Wynn Winberg (who produced *RepliGator* [1996], also released on Whacked Films), though the film flows seamlessly. While both Alexander and Winberg have been active in the film business for many years; this is their only listed directing credit.

So, if you want a fun, empty calorie stuffer, this is a perfect way to spend a rainy evening, or just to veg out and have a giggle or a few.



### Repligator

Directed by Bret McCormick

Whacked Movies

84 minutes, 1996 / 2013

[Whackedmovies.com](http://Whackedmovies.com)

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"It is a silly place."

- King Arthur, in Monty Python and the Holy Grail (1975)

Oh, where to even start on this film... Let's begin with the basic premise. In a secret government laboratory hidden in deep in the desert, a bunch of feuding scientists create a replicator (i.e., transporter) that is combined with a brainwashing software which turns males into luscious females who are programmed with "rampant nymphomania," but when they have orgasms, they turn into upright human alligators (hence the film title).

Yes, this is a comedy, at the most base level possible, but it doesn't really try to be anything else, which is why it succeeds, such as it is. For example, some of the characters include Dr. Kildare (played by the original Leatherface, Gunnar Hansen), Dr. Goodbody (scream queen Brinke Stevens, in a later shot scene shown twice!), Dr. Stanley Oliver (get it? Stan and Ollie...), Colonel Sanders, General Mills, Colonel Sergeant, Pvt. Lapdance, and Pvt. Poontang. You see what I'm saying.

Now, this is not to say this is lacking in entertainment. Actually, I found this more enjoyable than most of the output of anything associated with Seth Rogan, the Wilson Brothers (Owen and Luke), or especially Adam Sandler. This film is more like *Porky's* (1982) meets *The Lord of the G-Strings: The Femaleship of the String* (2003): outrageous humor mixed with *lots* of nudity (though sex is discussed constantly, almost none is shown).

Dr. Oliver, played by Keith Kjomes, who is about the size of Oliver Hardy but with less hair, is also