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• THE FIRST IN FRIGHT SINCE 1979 •

## INDIE DIRECTOR

For years, this writer had been avoiding the work of enfant terrible filmmaker Bill Zebub for no other reason than they just didn't speak to me. Zebub's greasy oeuvre includes such quaintly christened features like ANTFARM DICKHOLE and JESUS, THE TOTAL DOUCHEBAG and I've seen enough no-budget junk in my time to be wary of pictures like this: movies that bait their audiences with cheap shock tactics, the cinematic equivalent of the grade school brat in the corner of the class with the cone hat, farting and making faces while the teacher contemplates murder-suicide. Just not my speed.

But a DVD of Zebub's latest opus, the meta faux-doc INDIE DIRECTOR, ended up in my mailbox, its cover displaying a shaggy coiffed Bill aiming his lens at a gartered girl's crotch, her derriere pushed square at our eye level. It was a slow night and I couldn't resist. I popped it in the player. Sat back, and gave it a shot. I'm glad I did.

Essentially an improvised, free-fall peek into the hapless director's endless battles trying to make subversive art and get a bit of respect, the movie hilariously lampoons horror magazines (the woes of getting covered in the elitist "FANSOFGORE" magazine are discussed endlessly) and the raw deal many vendors and guests on the low-end get at conventions (the covertly named "PIT AND THE PENDULUM" magazine's yearly con is ruthlessly skewered) while Zebub himself gets burlesque strippers naked, pontificating hysterically like a cracked-out Shakespearean thesp and groping their parts.

With INDIE FILMMAKER, Zebub comes across as a kind of Woody Allen of backyard trash cinema, sans the alleged pedophilia but with the added unsavory aura of accused racism and sexism. Sure, on the surface it would be easy to accuse him of such trespasses, but a closer look reveals quite the opposite. Zebub is actually rather sophisticated of thought, an observer of the often ludicrous infrastructure that barely contains society and the idiocy pop culture places upon our terminally confused species. And on that note, INDIE FILMMAKER isn't even a movie, really. Rather, it's an angry, self-deprecating, furiously funny skewering of the laughable, pointless politics that hamper the niche genre film culture community; a Carlin-esque feature-length rant penned and performed by a guy who may or may not be out of his mind, but is clearly living in the moment. Oh, and there's tons and tons of nudity. *Tons* of it. And it's all female. You've been warned.

Outside of being genuinely surprised by just how funny INDIE DIRECTOR is, the most alarming thing about immersing oneself in Zebub's cluttered psyche is that he's actually a sharp, sweet guy who just wants to make movies that have a personal language. The man has a reputation in some circles as an asshole loudmouth brawler doofus—a persona he perpetuates with glee—though I suspect his bravado might hide a certain degree of pain. Really, I think he's a kind of mad artist pretending to be a guy who makes soft-core crap.

INDIE DIRECTOR is not necessarily a good movie, or an easy watch. It's outrageously self-indulgent, over two hours long (apparently there's a three hour cut... gadzooks to that!) and a little of it does admittedly go a long way, with the topics it skewers being rabidly "inside baseball." There's an energy though, an attitude and a kind of New Wave middle finger to convention that I find wildly appealing. When the next Bill Zebub flick shows up in my box, I'll make sure to make some time for it.

