

RUE MORGUE

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BLOOD ON A BUDGET

BLOOD ON A BUDGET HAS AN APP FOR THAT

[PATRICK DOLAN](#) ON JULY 10, 2013 | [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)



Featuring *To Jennifer* and *Standards of Living*

Even besides their penchant for dying or malfunctioning when you need them most, mobile phones have played a big role in recent horror films. Whether it be an evil wireless signal (*Pulse*), a harbinger of doom (*One Missed Call*), or even a method of harassment (the *Scream* series), cellphones have had a frightening presence in front of the camera. What we haven't seen much of yet, are mobile devices being used as creative tools behind the scenes.

As mobile technology improves, we can expect that to change. Shot on an iPhone 5 and iPad 2 respectively, the two films featured in this entry could be an indication of what's to come.



TO JENNIFER

Starring Chuck Pappas, James Cullen Bressack and Jody Barton
Written and Directed by James Cullen Bressack
Psykik Junky Pictures

BLOOD: Not much until the very end

BUDGET: Undisclosed, but quite small

Shot entirely on an iPhone 5, this vlog-style thriller follows a spaz named Joey (Chuck Pappas) who receives a sexy text meant for someone else from his long-distance girlfriend, Jennifer (Jessica Cameron). Hurt by the mobile mix-up, he enlists the help of his wanna-be-filmmaker cousin, Steven (James Cullen Bressack), to travel to Jennifer's home in order to catch her infidelity on camera. Initially intended as an anti-love letter to Jennifer, the purposely poorly-made video, recorded mostly by Steven, captures their entire trip.

Starting off innocent (or at least as innocent as an undertaking like this can be), tension mounts as Joey becomes more and more agitated the closer they get to Jennifer. After joining Steven's wild friend, Martin (Jody Barton), the duo get into a series of misadventures along the way, such as going to a strange party, getting into a fight, and dealing with unwanted hookers in their motel room, while Joey grows increasingly irate and desperate to see his girlfriend.

Despite clocking in under 75 minutes, *To Jennifer* is slow going as the guys make their way to their destination. But thanks to very natural acting and flawed yet likable characters, the time spent seemingly doing nothing, serves to suck you into the story. It is also well worth the wait for the brutal and suspenseful climax.

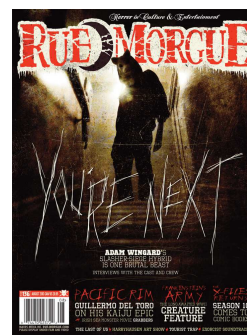
To Jennifer, writer/director James Cullen Bressack's second found-footage movie (*Hate Crime* was the first), is not a perfect piece of filmmaking, but it feels fresher than similar

experimental projects such as *V/H/S* by playing off more current technology. It certainly marks Bressack as a frightening filmmaker to keep your eye on.

STANDARDS OF LIVING

Starring Scott Yarborough, Bill Ferris and Derek Houck
Written and directed by Aaron Mento
Ocular Migraine Productions

BLOOD: Some red stuff here and there



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BUDGET: \$12,000

Complicated to say the least, this sci-fi thriller navigates the iffy yet intriguing terrain of alternate dimensions with surprising aplomb.

This strange fantasy focuses on a terrible stand-up comedian named Peter (Scott Yarborough), a.k.a. "The Soothsayer," who gets a gig at the residence of the mysterious Mr. Randall (Bill Ferris). It turns out, however, that Randall and his odd man-boy servant Stu (Derek Houck) aren't interested in Peter's Soothsayer schtick – they have another job in



mind for the comedian.

Randall has the ability to make things disappear for 10 minutes and then reappear somehow improved. Unfortunately, years ago, a scary-looking goth-raver appeared out of nowhere and murdered Randall's pregnant wife. As his wife lay dying, he attempted to use his power on his unborn child but only managed to make her disappear altogether. Desperate to see his daughter, Randall has lured Peter to his house in hopes of convincing him to have the disappearing trick done on him. Randall's theory is that when

things vanish they go someplace else – a place where he imagines his daughter is still living. Unwisely, Peter agrees to the experiment.

But that only scratches the surface of this twisty story. Playing like a superhero-free Grant Morrison comic, the film manages to take an acid-like trip into psycho sci-fi while still respecting its own cracked-out logic.

Apart from its video quality, *Standards of Living*, which was shot entirely on an iPad 2, doesn't let its low budget stand out too much, despite its far-fetched story. It keeps the production deceptively simple, while still managing to boggle the brain and horrify its audience with plane-shifting shocks and an utterly devastating finale.

To Jennifer will be released October 15th through [MVD Entertainment](#), (the same day *Hate Crime* is released on DVD through [Unearthed Films](#)) you can also keep your eye on its [Facebook page](#) for future developments and check out a trailer [here](#). *Standards of Living*, on the other hand, is available to watch for FREE at [StandardsofLivingmovie.com](#), so you have no excuse not to see it.

PATRICK DOLAN

Do you have or know a film that you think should be reviewed here? Contact patrick@rue-morgue.com

TAGS: Aaron Mento, caught in the act, comedian, Indie, iPad, iPhone, James Cullen Bressack, Standards of Living, to jennifer

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