

Retro-review: New on BluRay from [The Shout Factory!](#)

## THE AMITYVILLE HORROR TRILOGY BluRay Collection: AMITYVILLE II: THE POSSESSION (1982)

Directed by Damiano Damiani

Written by Tommy Lee Wallace (screenplay), Hans Holzer (book)

Starring James Olson, Burt Young, Rutanya Alda, Jack Magner, Andrew Prine, Diane Franklin, Moses Gunn, Ted Ross, Erika Katz, Brent Katz

Retro-reviewed by [Ambush Bug](#)

Last week, I checked out the first AMITYVILLE HORROR film ([full review here](#)) and recognized it for some scary scenes in an otherwise pretty mundane film. I can recognize the film for the classic it is since it did influence a ton of

haunted house movies afterwards in sequels and other franchises. That said, I think I find the sequel AMITYVILLE II: THE POSSESSION to be a much more creepy endeavor.

While the original AMITYVILLE had James Brolin and Margot Kidder (both fine actors), the sequel has something much better: PAULIE! That's right--fresh from his stint as the lovable drunk in ROCKY, Burt Young plays Anthony Montelli, patriarch of the Montelli family which took residence in the Amityville house before the first movie occurred. Young basically plays Paulie in this film too, though in much more of a drunk, abusive and asshole-ish manner. Rutanya Alda (from MOMMIE DEAREST) plays the abused yet hopefully religious mother and Jack Magner plays Somy, who becomes possessed by a demon residing in the house.



And then there's Diane Franklin. Sigh. Let me pause this review right now to admit that one of my biggest screen-crushes was on that French Girl from BETTER OFF DEAD, one Diane Franklin. Franklin's plucky demeanor, sunbeam smile, and caring brown eyes had me at Bonjour in BETTER OFF DEAD, and though she kind of fell off the map, she'll always be an actress that puts a little extra spring in my step every time I see her in a film.

Well, my screen crush is raped by her demon-possessed brother and then develops an incest crush on him that lasts through most of the film, which fucked my world up when I saw this film not long after I developed my crush on the actress. Her performance in AMITYVILLE II is really well done as she plays the naïve victim suffering probably the worst fate of the Montelli family, as she actually cares about her brother who rapes her, as she confesses later to a priest, "to punish God." Incest in order to piss off the maker is a far cry from a house whispering "Get out" in the first film, and AMITYVILLE II is a much darker and more disturbing film because of

the incest subplot as well as the shocking night when Somy cracks and takes out the family with a rifle.

AMITYVILLE II is not a perfect film. Because it's a possession pic, there has to be the obligatory priest showing up at the door and ascending upon the house ominously and from the shadows. Holy water must be sprinkled and rites have to be shouted at pitched volumes. There's much wind out of nowhere and lightning crashing and furniture tossing as if the filmmakers were reading straight from THE EXORCIST playbook. Had the film chosen to end with Sonny's killing spree, I think it could be revered as a damn fine and creepy film, but they had to go ballz deep with this one and have a special effects extravaganza with pulsing vein and cracked open head prosthetics. Tonally, the over-usage of special effects just doesn't fit the slow burn of the first hour of this film, but I guess they wanted a barn-burner ending.



Crappy over-effected ending aside, I'll take the first hour of AMITYVILLE II against any haunted house flick any old day. With the creepy-ass incest vibe and the slow possession along with the creepy religious symbolism running rampant in the first hour, it makes for one film you're not going to forget. If you haven't seen AMITYVILLE II be prepared for a trip to some dark corners of that infamous house. And though her role is creepy as it gets in this film, another plus is that the lovely Diane Franklin is featured prominently. So you've got that to look forward to.

New on DVD from [Wild Eye Releasing!](#)

## MURDER UNIVERSITY (2012)



Directed by Richard Griffin

Written by Lenny Schwartz

Starring Jamie Dufault, Samantha Acampora, David Adams Murphy, Nick Apostolides, Elyssa Baldassarri, Timothy Bonavita, Theresa Dern, Jesse Dufault, Christopher L. Ferreira, Dana Haley, Aaron Peaslee

Find out more about this film on [Facebook here](#)

Reviewed by [Ambush Bug](#)

From the director of EXHUMED ([which I liked a whole hell of a lot](#)) and THE DISCO EXORCIST ([which I found to be pretty amusing](#)) comes MURDER UNIVERSITY, a fun blend of horror and humor set in that wellspring of nostalgia, the '80s.

The best part about MURDER UNIVERSITY is the way it doles out its hokey humor just like those raunchy college comedies that flooded the market after ANIMAL HOUSE hit it big. In MURDER UNIVERSITY, there's lots of sex, gay dancing, wet t-shirt contests, a grumpy guy who tells a guy who wants to plow his daughter not to plow his daughter, and even a MILF or two. Director

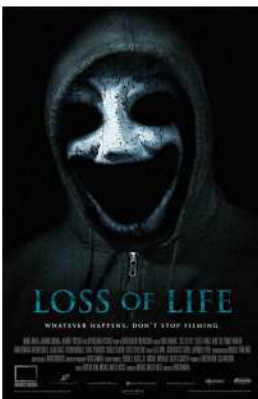
Richard Griffin captures the fun of those films of that era with all of the hokey and hammy trimmings that went along with them.

On top of all of the raunchy comedy, MURDER UNIVERSITY is filled with buckets and buckets of gore. Heads are lopped off by axes. Bodies are cut in two by axes. Limbs are chopped off at the joint by axes. Did I mention the axes? Well, there's a lot of axe murderery murder in this film, mainly because there are three axe wielding murderers wielding axes and murdering folks through this entire film. And the gore is actually pretty primo stuff, as quality as the copious amounts of laughs that go along with this one.



None of the actors in MURDER UNIVERSITY are going for an Oscar, but the films from the 80's this one homages weren't doing that either, so the hammy acting feels fitting here. The story about a nerdy student in his first days of college running into bullies by day and axe-wielding murderers at night is a pretty compelling one, and I have to give the film credit for the ballsy ending which actually wraps things up on a pretty profound and somber note.

MURDER UNIVERSITY isn't going to win any awards, but it's got its fair share of solid laughs and tons of the red stuff splattered everywhere. If you're a child of the Eighties and didn't know better, MURDER UNIVERSITY just might have had a home at that mom and pop video store you used to go to.



New this week on DVD, BluRay, & Digital Download!

## LOSS OF LIFE (2013)

Directed by David Damiata, Michael Matteo Rossi

Written by Britton Hein (story), Michael Matteo Rossi (story)

Starring Randi Leigh Borden, Charlie Glackin, Melvin Gregg, Matthew Jordan, Chris Tyler Link, Trevon Morales, Chris Petrovski, Reggie Range, Elijah Vegas, 'Ace Primo' Niko Warren

Find out more about this film on [Facebook here](#)

Reviewed by [Ambush Bug](#)

There are a lot of found footagers out there, and though I am not the type to dismiss a film because it is following a well tread path, I do want to give note to any filmmaker out there planning on making a found footage film: please make an effort to do something different. Maybe it's focusing the found footage motif on a subject matter that hasn't been filmed in this way before. Maybe the method of recording is different. Maybe (and I shudder to think this) the story is something we haven't seen before. Anyway, if you don't have anything new to say with your found footage film, honestly, there's no reason to do it.

Case in point: LOSS OF LIFE a new found footage film, shot so cheaply you can almost see the tags on the wardrobe so it can be returned after the shoot. Now, I am a fierce supporter of all things indie. When I see an indie film, I'm not the kind of person who shies away from it or puts it down for the budgetary limits. But in this film, three kids are trapped in a van with two hooded axe and gun wielding masked killers stalking outside of it. The kids know the killers are out there. The killers know the kids are in there. But nary a door is hacked open or a window is shattered for the killers to get the kids. Why? Because it wasn't in the budget to break a car window, that's why. If you find yourself making a found footage film (or any film for that matter) and you get to a scene where the most logical thing to do would be to break something and it's not