

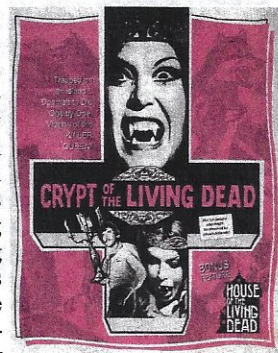
remind me of the times the Brady's visited the island (alas with Vincent Price in tow!). Also the various shots of a family home (which we are supposed to believe exists in Hawaii) looks kinda/sorta like the famous Brady residence. The film centers on a family with Mom and Dad (Jessie St. James & John Leslie) along with their two daughters (Danielle & Rhonda Jo Petty) and two sons (Jesse Adams & Jon Martin). Yeah I realize they are two kids short of the Brady's but whatever. Anyhow times are tough financially; they can only eat so much spaghetti. To make ends meet they decide to offer one of their bedrooms for rent. They get an offer from two young 'oriental' girls...one Chinese...one Japanese...in the form of Jade Wong and Mai Lin! Obviously things get sexy from here as the fucking commences with girl/girl encounters and orgies galore!

While the majority of the running time (80 minutes) is spent on sex at least it's *hot*. The pervert in me has to complain however that Rhonda Jo doesn't get any male action going until the final reel when she takes on John Leslie (father/daughter) but even then it's just not enough. Most of the time she's content to have fun with her 'sister' played by a perpetually stoned Danielle (at one point they even share joints) who is appearing in one of her earliest features (the credits lead you to believe this is her first film but that isn't the case). Also Mai Lin shares a 'natural' pill with Dad so he can get some sleep. Well it turns out the 'medication' leads to some kaleidoscope effect on the screen where orgies occur (in his mind) but in reality (?) he screws the hell out of his wife (seen in flashback). All of this screwy (in more ways than one) behavior is lighthearted and makes for quality entertainment!

ORIENTAL HAWAII is another stellar presentation with the original trailer tossed in for good measure. Both films incidentally feature great music...endless rock jams with keyboard accompaniment. Another Peekarama Big 2 Unit Show double feature that comes highly recommended!

CRYPT OF THE LIVING DEAD/HOUSE OF THE LIVING DEAD

This is the U.S. version better known as **HANNAH QUEEN OF THE VAMPIRES** from 1973. A young man (Andrew Prine doing his best to resemble John Holmes) goes to an island somewhere in Turkey (!) to find out what happened to his dad. Daddy suffered his fate by getting crushed underneath a tomb then getting decapitated (seen in the prologue). He was researching the myth of alleged vampire Hannah who is sequestered in the aforementioned tomb. A brother and sister (Mark Damon & Patty Shepard) are aboard to suss things out but the villagers aren't as helpful. Hannah is more than a legend. She eventually rises and seeks human blood. Will it be too late, or can her reign be 'staked' out before things get out of hand?!!



A slow burner, **CRYPT OF THE LIVING DEAD** manages to maintain interest for the first fifty minutes based on the three main leads. Prine, Damon and Shepard all have genre credits to their resume and each holds their own. Damon in particular gets to show off during the last thirty minutes in a loony performance that threatens to steal the film. As Hannah, Teresa Gimpera (a prolific Spanish actress) looks good but doesn't have a menacing appearance. It's interesting to note that Shepard would've been better suited for the role of Hannah considering how amazing she was as Wandesa in **WEREWOLF SHADOW**. I will say that Hannah's final appearance in the film is pretty damn cool. The film also has plenty of atmosphere to burn which also helps set the requisite 'horror mood.'

Vinegar Syndrome's presentation of the U.S. version (under the Hannah moniker) is presented on Blu-ray scanned & restored in 2k from a 35mm negative. It looks amazing. The alternate title sequence and trailer (which tries passing it off as some hip, Blaxploitation flick...dig it!) make up the extras.

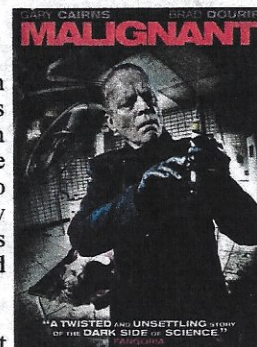
As a bonus the disc also contains **HOUSE OF THE LIVING DEAD**. This boring family 'drama' revolves around the Bratling's... a dysfunctional family where one brother is supposedly suffering from an accident which rendered him insane. He's conducting experiments trying to capture the soul. When 'good' brother Michael takes a bride things spin out of control.

This dull and plodding tale offers up scant scenes of horror instead focusing on equally drab characters. When the family 'secret' is finally revealed it won't impress anyone. Hardly worth recommending the film wasn't given any restoration thus giving it a basic DVD presentation (albeit on a Blu-ray disc).

Regardless of the turd that is **HOUSE OF THE LIVING DEAD**, Vinegar Syndrome has delivered a quality disc with **CRYPT OF THE LIVING DEAD** that is most welcome by seventies horror fans like myself. It is a limited edition release of 2,000 copies so grab one today before they are gone for good!

MALIGNANT

Here's an independent effort that fires on all cylinders. Alex has problems. His lovely wife passed away from a brain tumor (it's really never explained). He falls deep into depression, preferring to wash his pain away with alcohol. One day he receives a text message that says "Don't drink." He thinks nothing of it and continues to drown away his sorrows.



When Alex wakes up from an apparent blackout, he notices a scar (complete with eleven stitches) on his chest. Too further complicate things he is sent a video via e-mail. It purports to show a man killed by a crowbar, and the attacker has the same wedding band as Alex. Alex has no memory of the event and hits the bottle again. Repeatedly ignoring the mysterious warnings to stop drinking Alex finds himself committing acts of murder with no recollection of the events. Is he crazy, or is someone pulling the strings?

The answer isn't hard to figure out when you look at the DVD case. I'm not spoiling anything by saying genre heavy Brad Dourif is behind all of the mayhem. Dourif is arguably the best of the 'old horror guy club' filling up independent features. He's always interesting to watch, regardless of the productions he appears in. His mad scientist shtick is filled with nuances that don't always paint him as strictly "bad." Yet his actions do have dire consequences and that's the driving force behind the film.

There's so much to like here. As Alex, Gary Cairns wins our sympathy and confusion with a detailed look at a man who has seemingly lost it all but struggles onward. His quest to discover the truth is compelling; clearly bringing the viewer along for the ride. Also watch out for some queasy ocular violence...fans of **DEAD & BURIED** will know what I'm talking about!

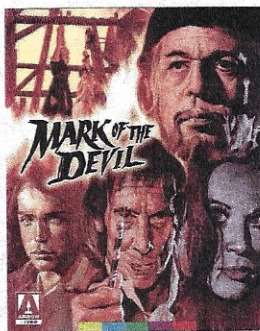
Director Brian Avenet-Bradley certainly has talent to spare. **MALIGNANT** is but one stepping stone on a budding career that should propel him forward. Fans are advised to keep an eye on this guy. Go and check this one out, it comes highly recommended. Available on DVD from MVDvisual with a 38 minute documentary.

MARK OF THE DEVIL

Long considered a staple of exploitation/horror cinema this scathing shocker now comes to life in a brilliant Blu-Ray edition courtesy of Arrow Films (making this title their American launch). The idea of God fearing folks committing murder (as well as rape) in the name of the Lord was a profound act hundreds of years ago. Millions were executed as 'witches' which the film is quick to point out in the opening credits. Yet unlike the Holocaust or slavery this heinous part of history seems to fly

under the radar.

Herbert Lom stars as Lord Cumberland who comes to a German town to enforce his will on the people. The local witchfinder Albino (Reggie Nalder) doesn't take too kindly to this intrusion. He fiddles around with a local bar wench (Olivera Vuco) and has her accused of witchcraft. Cumberland's understudy Christian (Udo Kier) believes in God's will, but his trust is broken when he spies Cumberland committing murder. Things go awry from there as torture and insanity (plus rebellion) become the name of the game.



Produced in 1969, the film has lost none of its impact to shock and horrify. The interplay between Nalder, Keir and Lom is quite palpable and one can literally 'feel' the tension. The gross torture sequences (labeled by Hallmark Releasing as rated 'V' for violence) hold up quite well. The famous tongue pulling scene always manages to impress. However an eye poke still has that goofy kaleidoscope effect to it, which seems like a bit of self-censorship. The notorious alternate ending featuring ghouls rising from the grave is sadly nowhere to be found (not sure if the footage will ever show up). However plenty of stills exist to prove that it was shot.

Arrow Films present a new print of this grindhouse classic and what a beauty it is. We can now savor Keir's finely tuned face (and wonderful eyes) as well as Nalders perfect set of chompers (whether or not they are real is a different matter!). Some would argue that such a sleazy, sick film wouldn't benefit from a 1080 upgrade but that's just not true. The wonderful location scenery (castles and whatnot) all retain their colorful appeal.

Extras include audio commentary by Michael Armstrong, as well as interviews with the likes of Gaby Fuchs (who is presented with a vomit bag!), Udo Kier (who doesn't want to speak past the allotted ten minutes!) and Herbert Fux to name a few. These are in German with English subtitles.

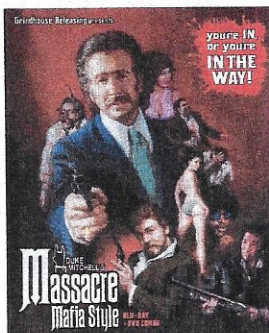
Elsewhere there's a 47 minute documentary on the New Wave of British Horror films of the '70s with recollections by Norman Warren, Michael Armstrong, Kim Newman and David McGillivray about the changing face of British horror. Fangoria managing editor Michael Gingold tackles the history of Hallmark Releasing and their many attempts at retitling popular American and European efforts.

This edition of **MARK OF THE DEVIL** will delight fans all over again (like it did for me). Anyone with an interest in vomit bag cinema need look no further!

MASSACRE MAFIA STYLE

The life and times of the late, great Duke Mitchell is explored extensively in Grindhouse Releasing's superb Blu-ray of **MASACRE MAFIA STYLE**.

Duke Mitchell stars as Mimi, a son of a notorious mafia leader who transports himself from Italy to America in order to establish his own identity. The movie opens with (arguably) the greatest shoot-out you'll ever see as Micheli and his partner Jolly take out an entire room of people. Their rise to the top of the crime heap comes with a price, especially when they overstep their bounds on their rivals. Of course things don't end well and the alternate title **LIKE FATHER LIKE SON** takes on a new meaning.



fans who are reading this will probably agree with Grindhouse alumni David Szulkin when he opens his liner notes stating he'd rather watch **MASSACRE MAFIA STYLE** instead of Coppola's more famous mobster movie. I agree with him one hundred percent.

Duke Mitchell makes for an imposing figure. He has numerous impassioned dialog passages in the film which completely engross (and impress) the viewer. Of course the violence is also gratuitous and over-the-top, which is as it should be. Duke Mitchell was famous as a night club singer, which means much of the music in the film features him on vocals. The entire production, despite its low budget, remains an exercise in sheer exploitation brilliance that is *never* boring.

Duke Mitchell is celebrated in numerous ways on the Grindhouse disc. Fans will get a thorough look at his life through a series of interviews including lengthy portions from his son (Jeffrey Mitchell). Heck Jeffrey's own life is documented, including an impressive rock and roll resume that features time spent in the Suzy Quatro band! Mitchell's love of rock music clashed with his dad's and the stories about Jimi Hendrix (for example) are interesting to say the least.

There are numerous Duke Mitchell home movies on display (never before seen), as well as an audio recording of Duke in concert from 1960. A bonus television special entitled **AN IMPRESSIONISTIC TRIBUTE TO JIMMY DURANTE** is included, as are numerous radio spots, still galleries and trailers. However the biggest (and best!) surprise was an HD presentation of **BELA LUGOSI MEETS A BROOKLYN GORILLA** (1952). Seeing this camp classic is icing on the cake. Mitchell didn't get along with his co-star Sammy Petrillo, but that doesn't deter their act in the movie one bit. They were riffing on Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, but their gig is still pretty funny.

Fans looking for a detailed history of the **MASSACRE MAFIA STYLE** will enjoy Szulkin's aforementioned notes in the stylish, and lavishly illustrated 12 page booklet tucked inside the case. Clearly in the running for Blu-ray presentation of the year, **MASACRE MAFIA STYLE** is mandatory viewing for everyone reading this and belongs on every self-respecting movie fans shelf.

MEET ME THERE

Two strangers meet at a bar discussing the merits of the San Antonio Spurs and the Los Angeles Lakers. They are both headed to the same location...Sheol. Yet their purpose remains a mystery until they sit in a field...back to back...with shotgun pointed at their heads...



We then flash forward to our story proper which involves young couple Ada (Lisa Friedrich) and Calvin (Micheal Foulk) along with their dysfunctional sex life. It seems that every time Calvin makes the moves she freezes up. Their shrink suggests it might have something to do with a traumatic event that Ada has blocked out of her memory. She suggests a trip back home to see if that will trigger deep memories and/or emotions thus unlocking a secret.

As they wander deep into the scarce population of Sheol (under 100 residents) they discover a group of people with dysfunctions several times worse than their own. It seems that everyone is out to kill them...from the religious nutbags at the local grocery store to Ada's drug infested Aunt. The only person who reveals the nature of their trip is a pastor (cannily executed by WWE Hall of Famer Dustin 'son of Dusty Rhodes' Runnels). It appears that Sheol (a mythic land of the dead or literal Hell) is a place where people come to die (i.e. suicide). Yet our couple wants nothing more than to *live*. Will they survive or come under the curse that apparently awaits them?



Released to unsuspecting theaters in 1974 the film was overshadowed by **THE GODFATHER**. Yet