

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!

## DAY OF ANGER

I'm a novice when it comes to Spaghetti Westerns but I still think I know a good film when I see one and **DAY OF ANGER** is not only good...it's great.

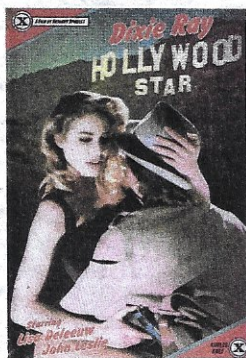
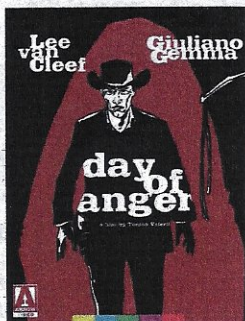
Lee Van Cleef (my preferred star for a western...forget Clint Eastwood) stars as Frank Talby. He strolls into the seemingly peaceful town of Clifton and immediately stirs things up. He befriends (?) a 'bastard' by the name of Scott Mary (he never had a last name considering his mother... Mary...was a whore). Begrudgingly they form a partnership. A matter of \$50,000 propels the action forward as Talby aims to collect the loot. Scott however goes from garbage man to gun fighter in no time flat. Soon enough the town of Clifton is theirs...but it becomes apparent it's too big for the both of them.

In what amounts to a re-telling of the Oedipus Rex tale (in order for a young man to grow up he must kill his father) **DAY OF ANGER** amazes and delights at every turn. With assured and lively direction from Tonino Valerii, a memorable score by Riz Ortolani and terrific performances (including Giuliano Gemma as Scott) this one holds up extraordinarily well nearly fifty years later.

Arrow Video has preserved this magnificent movie on Blu-ray in a stunning presentation sure to wipe out all previous editions. You get two versions of the film (the longer Italian cut is preferred) both with English dubbing options (essential to hear Van Cleef's rich voice). Also on tap are interviews with director Tonino and script writer Ernesto Gastaldi (who has one of the most impressive resumes on cult films you would ever hope to see) plus a deleted scene and trailer. Simply put this is a package fans of cinema won't want to miss!

## DIXIE RAY— HOLLYWOOD STAR

John Leslie is a private investigator who narrates this hard boiled tale of murder, lies, incest, corruption and sex...lots of it! The case he's involved with concerns aging Hollywood starlet Dixie (Lisa De Leeuw) and some unflattering pictures taken of her, presumably by her husband (the negatives are highly sought after). Through the course of the film the case is unraveled, but not before bodies and semen has hit the floor. Leslie is a literal one man show, plowing through starlet after starlet including Juliet Anderson (who is first seen dead on the floor), Kelly Nicols (amazingly playing De Leeuw's daughter!) and Samantha Fox to name but a few. The film dovetails into several flashbacks with book ending scenes highlighted by none other than Cameron Mitchell playing a cop. What's interesting is that this XXX feature from 1983 was re-edited into an R rated version dubbed **IT'S CALLED MURDER BABY!**

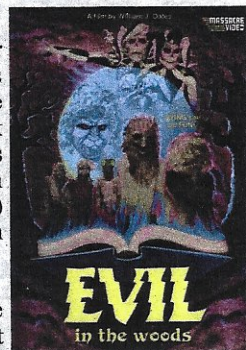


Vinegar Syndrome has plundered the vaults and released both versions on one DVD. The R rated affair contains several additional scenes with all of the principal characters...helping to...ahem...flesh out the story more. Mitchell has more screen time...always a good thing. In fact story-wise this edition is superior but it's missing all of the hardcore footage. Said footage amounts to quite a bit since director Anthony Spinelli (who cameos in the R rated cut) lets them go on a little longer than need be. Perhaps the biggest disappointment is that De Leeuw never gets to perform with Leslie, aside from a quick blow job. The film appears headed for a grand climax, but instead we get poorly edited scenes with Kevin James performing with De Leeuw instead. Yet the R rated version has no such problem.

It is a testament to the fine folks at Vinegar Syndrome that both cuts can be appreciated and analyzed in this great package. The film(s) are newly restored in 2k presentations that'll blow 'yer mind. The original (XXX) trailer is included as well. This is quality entertainment and another fine release from Vinegar Syndrome that deserves your hard earned cash.

## EVIL IN THE WOODS

A little kid (who happens to have a bitchin' **IRON MAIDEN** Live After Death poster on his wall) goes to the library and checks out a book called...what else...**Evil in the Woods**. This fable (often read with hick narration by one of the cast members) tells the story of filmmakers (shooting a film entitled Bigfoot vs. The Space Killers) who fall prey...one by one...to the evil in the woods.

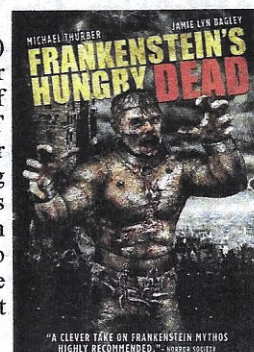


On one hand this could be seen as some sort of riff on **THE EVIL DEAD**. In fact one scene is staged to perfection from Raimi's movie. However the film as whole never even comes close to achieving what the Michigan team did on a miniscule budget. The filmmakers in the story are a sorry lot. They do drugs and make out but this is all rendered in strictly PG fashion. The group that is supposed to be "the evil" resembles inbred, imbecilic circus performers. They either kill or capture the cast (and believe me there are a lot of characters) before meta-morphing into weird looking creatures (displayed on the DVD cover). The FX design on their suits is half-way decent. Yet in order to get to these 'transformation' scenes you do have to wade through a lot of boring nonsense. When we return to the book reading kid, he too transforms and the camera pans over to the **IRON MAIDEN** poster while the end credits roll.

Massacre Video has unleashed this 1987 obscurity onto DVD for the first time. I'd never heard of it before and I doubt you have either. It's an odd curiosity worth seeing but as for repeat viewings...well...

## FRANKENSTEIN'S HUNGRY DEAD

A group of misfit kids in high school (?) are suffering boredom in detention. Their teacher screams at them in some sort of silly 'homage' to **THE BREAKFAST CLUB** but decides that they can go to tour the local wax museum instead of serving their detention in school. One chick gets turned on by the monsters & madmen on display and makes a date with her man to come back 'after hours.' For some strange reason the rest of the group follows suit and they are all in 'Cushing's Wax



## CONTAMINATION

This squishy Italian splatter platter was served up in 1980, riding high on the coattails of numerous productions such as Fulci's **ZOMBIE** and Scott's **ALIEN**.

When a mysterious ship sails into the New York harbor with entrail exposed crew members and crates of coffee stuffed with large, green eggs (?) the

investigating team doesn't know what to make of it. Of course one of the intrepid members accidentally unleashes the eggs contents all over the rest of the men (save for one dude) as their chests burst open in slo-mo sanguinary spillage sure to delight gore hounds! Another team of 'experts' trace the shipment to South America (where life is cheap) and discover the truth surrounding the mysterious eggs.

Director Luigi Cozzi (masquerading behind his Lewis Coates pseudonym) stages one helluva entertaining opening and climax that bookend a lethargic middle section. The exploding body angle is terrific and makes for some fun gore at the expense of the cast members. However said cast is unremarkable (save for genre fave Ian McCulloch) and the plodding attempts to solve the mystery induce sleep more so than surprise. Yet Cozzi at least manages to pull the rabbit out of the hat by unveiling a terrific alien cyclops at the end. Never before has this creature looked as good as it does in Arrow Video's Blu-ray presentation. Fans who may have thought it was cheaply rendered better think again, 'cause it really is something special. When it 'stares' down unsuspecting victims you can actually see the sweat pouring down their face (it's a similar effect Fulci used in 1980's **CITY OF THE LIVING DEAD** albeit with blood).

The aforementioned presentation of the film on Arrow Video's Blu-ray will no doubt impress fans who thought **CONTAMINATION** couldn't possibly resemble a million dollar production. The pulsating sound of the eggs and music from 'the Goblin' are rendered front and center with clean audio replication. The extras include a vintage segment where Cozzi narrates behind the scenes footage from his 'latest' film (which was known as **ALIEN CONTAMINATION** when released to the states). Cozzi again goes solo for a (new) revealing 42 minute interview spanning his entire career. He spends a lot of time talking about the various publications he wrote stories for (he holds up original copies of nearly everything he mentions) including his stint as 'foreign correspondent' for Famous Monsters of Filmland. Equally impressive is the fact that he was only a teenager during this fruitful period in his life being asked to interview the likes of Mario Bava and Ricardo Freda! The final minutes include Cozzi talking about his welcome return to film-making with **BLOOD ON MELIES MOON**. A clip is included with Barbara Magnolfi getting stabbed by a wax statue (?). It sure looks interesting seeing as part of it is staged in Cozzi's Profundo Rosso shop. The film isn't scheduled for release until 2016 so this will merely whet the appetites of fans until then.

Not to be outdone there is another welcome segment devoted to the Italian film industry's knack for ripping off (nee imitating) popular genres and/or films with Chris Poggiali and Maitland McDonagh. The two of them tackle stuff like **THE LAST SHARK** (with bonus footage thrown in for good measure) and the various **ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK/THE ROAD WARRIOR** riffs such as 1990 **THE BRONX WARRIORS**. It's a terrific and lively discussion that frankly could've been longer (at 16 minutes it appears they are hitting their stride just as the credits start to roll).

Fango scribe Chris Alexander provides a 'fan' commentary that proves he has a knack for the gift of gab. He is one person that clearly relishes talking about subjects that are near and dear to his heart. There are other bonus features here including a photo gallery showcasing the graphic novel of **CONTAMINATION** (the prior Blue Underground release had this as a DVD-ROM feature). Even more stuff is packed into this thing that shows why Arrow Video is becoming so popular with stateside fans. For those weaned on pasta land chunk blowers they would be wise to add this to their menu.

## COSPLAY FETISH BATTLE DRONES

I'd like to offer up my own synopsis but the one provided on the back of the DVD cover will suffice... "A hallucinatory journey to the throbbing and cancerous heart of 21<sup>st</sup> century nostalgia: a frenetic collage of pop cultural ephemera that weaves together everything from Eastern mythology and postmodern philosophy to oversexed tokusatsu warriors and time traveling hip-hop musicians."

That's pretty accurate but what they *didn't* mention is that all of this **MAKES NO FUCKING SENSE!** Here we have some artsy fartsy shitty nonsense masquerading as film. Characters spout inane dialogue (using big words nyuk nyuk!) while making goofy faces in order to propel the action forward. A lot sex is tossed in as well... rape by cucumber, fellatio that is freeze framed so the girl can cut off the dudes pubic hair, and some schmuck jerking off to tongue piercings. All of this is scored by rave/electro music.

Even at 75 minutes this is an endurance test that I DARE viewers to sit through. Granted the colorful look and solid determination by all involved to appear focused on delivering bullshit is admirable, but enough is enough. This horrible tripe should've never been released to the public. If this had been used in some sort of drug program I could understand...or at least marketed to people with severe psychological disorders...but for those of us on the up and up its nigh impossible to understand let alone enjoy.

## CRYPT 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 Brattling's... a dysfunctional family where one brother is supposedly suffering from an

