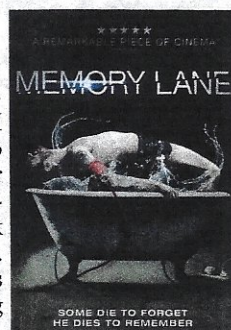


It's oh-so-refreshing to see well written and acted characters that evoke sympathy from the audience. Ada and Calvin clearly love each other despite their problems and will do anything to make things work. Both actors deserve a round of applause. Director Lex Lybrand milks a lot of mileage out of a low budget. The location shoot gives off the vibe that they really are in a town with a population of seventy-something. There are some eerie black and white dream sequences that convey a dire mood as well (I should point out that the photos on the back of the DVD case imply the entire film is shot in B&W but that's not the case). The film is allegedly based on real life events and nightmares of Destiny Talley but there isn't any further information on this anywhere in the DVD extras (which are sparse to say the least). One wishes to know more.

MEET ME THERE is a crowning achievement of independent horror cinema which plays like nothing else in the market...thus earning your viewing time. This is something unique and different and is well worth seeking out. Available on DVD from MVDvisual.

MEMORY LANE

Young war veteran Nick (Michael Guy Allen) meets a troubled girl named Kayla M (her last name is kept secret). She is about to commit suicide but falls in love with Nick (or is it the other way 'round?'). The two seemingly have a strong relationship until Nick finds her in the bathtub with her wrists slit. He's convinced she was murdered and seeks to find the truth. He does this by committing suicide (!) or at least stopping his heart... allowing him to go back in time and piece together clues leading to the ultimate truth.



The story is unique, even if it does borrow from Mario Bava's **HATCHET FOR THE HONEYMOON** (substituting murder for suicide). The lead performances are strong, especially Allen who does yeoman's work with a flawed but tragic character. His dialog about what happened in Afghanistan (with flashback) is suitably grim.

The director/writer is Shawn Holmes who deserves credit for hammering out a compelling drama with sci-fi elements out of a low budget and short (70 minute) running time. The DVD from Wild Eye Releasing contains director commentary, deleted scenes and short films. A welcome break from the usual slop cranked out in direct-to-DVD land. Worth your time.

MOMOE'S LIPS

In 1979 the paparazzi weren't quite as relentless to get their 'scoop' as they are now. However in Japan things were a little different. This is reflected in the Nikkatsu production of **MOMOE'S LIPS**.

Our story revolves around Toru who wants to get all the dirty little secrets out of Yoko, a hot pop singer. He's convinced that she is being fed drugs by her manager. So what does he do? He forces her to piss on her panties so he can use them as evidence! Before the soiled 'proof' can be used he gets the shit beat out of him for his trouble. He continues to pursue the story, even though it usually ends with a beat-down. One day he spies 3 rapists accosting her. They whisk her off in a van while one of them quips "I'm sick of just jerking off while looking at your photos." The real thing seems better no? Anyway Toru gets involved (again) after these dudes get their just desserts. However Toru is then faced with a dilemma...will he give in to Yoko's pleas or will he give her up for blackmail money?

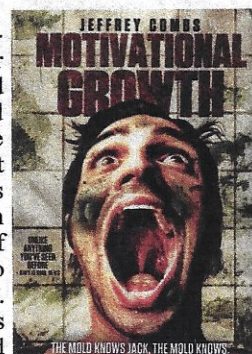
Despite the fact that the character of Momoe doesn't even figure into the story (the onscreen title is subtitled RAPE

SHOT) it's still a wild romp that needs to be seen to be believed. The character of Toru is one of the sickest and most depraved paparazzi's you'll ever see. The sex scenes are not as abundant in this title as they are in others. However rape and piss once again find their way into the proceedings...more often than not they are staples of the Nikkatsu 'brand.'

Fans won't be let down. This has enough sleaze, violence and intrigue to keep the viewer entertained for less than 70 minutes. It's another example of why the Japanese always seem to operate on a different planet when they cranked these efforts out nearly 40 years ago. This is another winner from Impulse Pictures (Volume 23). The DVD includes the trailer and detailed liner notes by Jasper Sharp.

MOTIVATIONAL GROWTH

Ugh. Here's a film that will test your patience. Our tale revolves around Ian, a poor slob that sits on a couch in a rot infested apartment watching television all day (and night). One day his T.V. gives up the ghost. He flips out because he doesn't know what to do with himself. He attempts suicide but falls and cracks his head. When he wakes up he notices a small section of mold in his bathroom. The mold begins to talk to him (voiced by Jeffrey Combs). From this point on the mold controls Ian's actions offering up advice ("The mold knows Jack, the mold knows") every step of the way.



Ian meets several characters in his apartment, from the landlord to a grocery delivery girl to a T.V. repairman right down to a pretty next door neighbor. Some of them meet grisly demises, others get puked on and others survive (?). Frankly it's all a jumbled mess that resembles a one man play more than a coherent film.

To be fair director Don Thacker injects plenty of interesting visual touches to catch the viewer off guard. He seems intent on creating video game scenarios, and I'm talking '80s era stuff. The music sounds like something lifted off an old Nintendo cartridge. Several set pieces play out in (simulated) 16-bit graphics (clever). What's interesting is that Thacker was born in 1979 so by the time he was a teenager cartridge based systems were suddenly considered passé.

Anyhow...the film offers up inane dialog and nonsensical situations. Our leading man is not charismatic or interesting enough to gain our sympathy or dissent...he just exists. He speaks directly to the camera pontificating on taking a shit...that's about the highpoint (?) of his rambling monologs.

It's great to hear Combs doing the voice over but horror fans would be wise to avoid this. It aims more for the lobster, hipster crowd than anything. These sad sacks will be the first to tell you how "gross" and "touching" the film is. I say its "insulting" and "idiotic."

ON TENDER HOOKS

Described as "reveals a subculture of body modification devotees, endorphin junkies and thrill seeking masochists" this fascinating documentary pulls no punches with its emphasis on human suspension.

I'm not into the whole sadomasochism thing but I'm certainly fascinated by it, and I'm sure others will follow suit. Director Kate Shenton simply goes to various 'conventions' where people have their backs, arms, legs and necks punctured by hooks, then hung up either to swing around or meditate. There are various taking heads (be forewarned that some of the European accents are quite thick) who reveal what this

directed but essayed the titular character as well. His early films were also based around samurai concepts. The result of his finished directorial debut has echoes of the spaghetti western (both the scenery and guitar driven score hammer home that point) and the gore film. However one drawback is the violence is rendered with (mostly) subpar prosthetic work, including a poorly designed baby being ripped from the womb. The FX at times sink to Troma level...not a good thing. Likewise with the various limbs getting hacked off...not terribly convincing. Some of the blood is sub-standard CGI that draw's attention to itself...meaning it resembles a cartoon more than anything.

The film also contains a surprising amount of voice over narration...not from any of the characters but someone 'explaining' the ways of the samurai...as if the audience has *no idea* what is going on and needs to be 'informed' of the action taking place. This technique seems completely unnecessary and (once again) takes the viewer out of the action.

However the good outweighs the bad as Mitsutake offers up stunning visuals including black and white freeze frame montages that are skillfully done...lending a ton of class to the proceedings. The 'look' and atmosphere are likewise top notch...conveying the grind-house vibe along with a graphic novel sensibility.

Synapse Films gives this 2009 production a sterling presentation on Blu-ray with a great 5.1 audio mix matching the colorful print. A 90 documentary is on hand giving viewers plenty of insight as to how Mitsutake accomplished the film the independent way. Mitsutake offers up an audio commentary along with producer Chiaki Yanagimoto and editor John Migdal. There's also sword fight choreography, blooper reel and a trailer. All in all this is a swell package that won't waste your time.

SCHOOLGIRL REPORT VOLUME # 13

Sadly this is the last entry in the famous German sex series. By 1980 porno was all the rage and sex flicks such as this seemed old fashioned. 35 years later however they hold up remarkably well and deserve a second (and more!) look.



Students are rehearsing ROMEO & JULIET when their teacher decides to acknowledge stories from the class. Each person has a tale to tell about love and sex. First up is a gorgeous Greek girl who decides to steal panties from a store. She is caught and soon enveloped into some rough blackmail (i.e. sexual favors). The outcome isn't pretty...a dead body. How did this happen and who is responsible?

Next up we see a few buddies make a bet that the stud of the bunch (who resembles Peter Frampton) can't get a girl's panties in one week's time. He sets about his goal but it proves to be way too easy. The girl's grandmother has a little something to say about the famous panties however!

A shorthaired girl likes to drink hard liquor. She loses the love of the bottle when her uncle (from India) shows up...and its love at first sight...with a *human* this time! However her romantic interlude doesn't wind up as she envisioned it, so it's back to the booze. She winds up in the arms of several men...none of which can satisfy her. It all ends up in a loony bin.

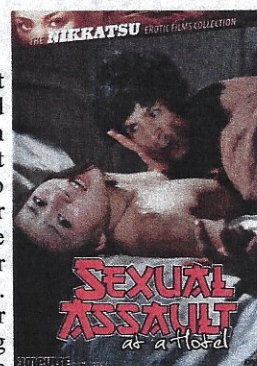
Two couples (and one lonely sister) decide to screw...only they need condoms to do the deed. Their quest takes a few bumps (including another Frampton look-a-like who stutters). However the biggest bump of all occurs with two old fogeys on vacation as the hay comes tumbling down! You'll just have to see it for yourself to understand what I'm talking about.

Finally another set of couples can't decide who they are in

love with. After much back and forth (including some drunken behavior) it all ends happily ever after.

The moral of the story (as if the subtitle "Don't Forget Love During Sex" didn't already clue you in) is that without love there is no sex...or without sex there can be no love. Each story features both, but the end results aren't always pretty. The cast certainly appear to be having a blast and the mix of humor and harsh reality never seem at odds with each other. Fans of the series know what to expect, yet for those readers looking for quality exploitation (heavy on skin) should seek this one out...better yet grab 'em all from Impulse Pictures...they make great stocking stuffers!

SEXUAL ASSAULT AT A HOTEL



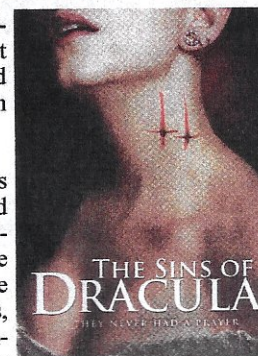
Ryoko has a problem. She's a virgin but can't admit as much to her friend (and school chum) Rumiko. Oh sure they can have their girl/girl trysts but when it comes to men Ryoko clams up. Rumiko on the other hand doesn't care...whether it's nude modeling, tending bar (where patrons openly fuck and pop pills) or getting raped...she willing takes it all. She finally gets the gumption to have her middle aged lover 'seduce' Ryoko hoping that'll do the trick. Yet a chance rape scenario seemingly changes everything...with the dude falling from a high rise building. Ryoko is traumatized by the event since it brings about painful memories from her past. Suddenly on the path to sexual awakening (or something like that) she becomes a pawn to university professors who have very strange sexual rituals planned for her.

Despite the harsh title and cover image, **SEXUAL ASSAULT AT A HOTEL** plays out as a brooding character study of sexual inhibitions. Ryoko is a multi-faceted character who is hung up on the past and can't move forward. The bonding the two girls share is actually tender (not just sexually either). While rape and masturbation by beer bottle do play a part (thus gaining fans approval who come to expect this sort of thing from a Nikkatsu production) the film as a whole doesn't rely on simple shock value in order to sell a story.

This is volume number 24 of Impulse Pictures Nikkatsu erotic films collection. The 1977 production is presented immaculately on DVD with English subtitles. Fans of this series might want to warm up to this one a bit...it takes a while to get going but most definitely sticks with you long after 'stop' is pressed.

THE SINS OF DRACULA

After the abomination that was **FRANK-ENSTEIN'S HUNGRY DEAD** I wasn't too keen to experience another Richard Griffin flick but I was presented with an opportunity so I took the plunge...



Young Billy wants to expand his horizons away from the church choir. He's devoted to Jesus but also desires to honor his girlfriend's plea to join a theater group. Once he gets a whiff of 'mainstream' society he is faced with Dungeons & Dragons, drugs, a homosexual and last (but certainly not least) a theater director in league with Satan who attempts to resurrect Dracula!

Once old man Dracula is brought back to life (?) the core members of the troupe (who were asked to appear in a production based on Jim Jones!) turn into bloodsuckers with Billy the last one on their list. Billy enlists the help of his pastor (who happens to be a descendent of Van

