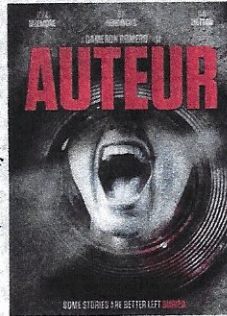


MOVIE REVIEWS

AUTEUR

Mysterious movie director Charlie Buckwald directed a horror film called **DEMONIC**. The problem is it was never released to the public. The film (and director) becomes the stuff of legend. A dedicated aspiring filmmaker by the name of Jack Humphreys decides to make a documentary detailing the notorious Buckwald. **AUTEUR** is the result of his efforts.



This fake documentary includes interviews with several key personnel involved with the making of **DEMONIC**. Perhaps the most surprising talking head belongs to Tom Sizemore (playing himself). The segments with Sizemore are candid and seem to stray close to reality, especially when he details his lapse from the public eye. He even discusses **SAVING PRIVATE RYAN**. However Sizemore doesn't seem like a good fit for a low budget horror film so his scenes have a 'tacked on' effect. The rest of the cast appear more authentic. The key figure is Kate Rivers as played by Madeline Merritt. When Buckwald couldn't get a convincing performance out of her for an exorcism scene he went to drastic measures which would reverberate years later. Buckwald himself is tracked down, but Humphreys gets much more than he bargained for. The film ends up becoming more than a documentary...

There's a lot to like in **AUTEUR**. The project is the brainchild of George Romero's son Cameron. Cameron does play the character filming the interview segments. Also the character of Humphreys is modeled after Romero in the sense that he too is the son of a famous movie director (which explains why he never reveals his last name). The movie bends reality in several ways which adds to the fun. While the notion of a 'lost' and 'fake' horror movie has been done several times over the years, Romero keeps things interesting and offers up a wild plot device which amps up the terror aspect quite a bit. Even with some minor rough edges in the acting and FX department, the film rises above its meager budget to capture some choice dialog and heartfelt performances.

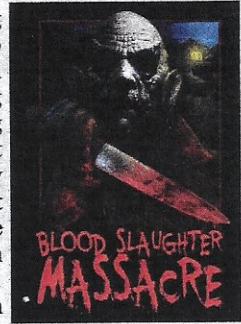
The film is available on DVD from MVDvisual. The only extra is a trailer. Bonus points for the simple but effective cover image. Definitely worth a look.

BLOOD SLAUGHTER MASSACRE

Here's another 'throwback' slasher flick. The triple titled film focuses on "the ripper" a deranged psychopath who wiped out an entire party at some point in the 70s. We flash forward 10 years later (presumably stuck somewhere in the '80s) and it seems the ripper is at it again, this time preying on the children of the parents he murdered prior. It seems he needs seven victims to complete some sort of ritual to bring back his own daughter. One determined cop is on the case, hoping to derail his killing spree before it's too late...

There are so many things wrong with this production. At the top of the heap is the obscene running time...1 hour and 53 fucking minutes! The editor (Manny Serrano...who also happens to be the director, writer, cinematographer, etc.) clearly needed to shave at least 30 minutes off of this as there is way too

much filler. Second is the laughable acting by most of the crew. One girl is about to get chain sawed and she seems intent on holding in her laughter versus looking scared. Third is the poor sound recording as well as the shaky camera work. I'm not talking about the 2000's style of 'reality T.V.' type shakiness; I'm talking about somebody having a mile seizure while holding the camera. Finally the suspension of disbelief factor is unusually high... characters are stabbed all the way through their body and shot point blank yet they act as if nothing has happened. This occurs several times.



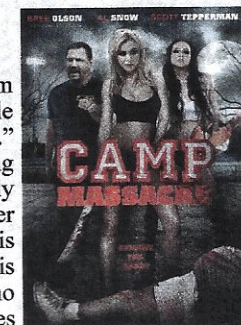
Yet despite all of the negatives the film plays better if you judge it by the spirit in which it was created. The focus is grim, with the character of the ripper (actually looking creepy) being threatening and truly sadistic. Most of the killings happen off screen, but the brutality that he exudes is evident. The music (for the most part) is eerie and effective, with some sparse piano key notes that work well whenever the ripper shows up. As long as you keep expectations low some fun can be had with this.

The DVD from Wild Eye Releasing includes a ton of extras including a trailer for another Serrano title "**ATTACK OF THE BRAIN PEOPLE**" along with fake trailers for **BLOOD SLAUGHTER MASSACRE** sequels that feature re-created scenes from the original film disguised as 'new.' The VHS theme that permeates these trailers is neat.

BLOOD SLAUGHTER MASSACRE is low on the slasher totem pole but I'll give credit where credit is due since it didn't insult my intelligence and isn't the worst thing I've seen lately. Bad movie aficionados would probably appreciate this the most, but anyone who enjoys low level Michael Myers and Freddy Krueger slop will get a kick out of it as well.

CAMP MASSACRE

The film opens with three girls (2 of 'em sisters) milling about in a hotel room while on vacation at an undisclosed "island." They talk about going out and meeting some dudes but since one sister is grossly overweight (and sports a cold sore on her lip) she needs encouragement by her big sis (Bree Olson). Bree takes a shower and is killed. Keep in mind this opening has no bearing on the rest of the film, nor does Bree show up again (stroke fans take note).



After a completely silly animated credit sequence we are introduced to a group of overweight dudes appearing on a reality show to lose pounds. The contestants are picked off one by one until only a handful remain. Oh by the way the killer wears a chicken bucket on its head. That's it.

Fans expecting some campy slasher flick better look elsewhere. At a staggering 129 minutes this is more of an endurance test to see who can sit through the entire thing and not lose their mind. To be fair some of the characters are mildly entertaining, none more so than Greg, played by co-director Daniel Emery Taylor. He comes off as an

obese Seth Rogan.

WWE fans might be lured in by the promise of Al Snow headlining. Well Al is in there all right but his screen time is very limited since he plays another victim. For some reason his character is named Ritz who loves the crackers of the same name?!

The most interesting scene involves the heaviest guy out of the bunch...you know...the ones who can't walk anymore...that rely on a cart to get around. He has a sex scene with a good looking tattooed girl (probably some porn star I've never heard of). It's amazing since this guy is really that big, no special effects or CGI. Of course having sex would be all-but-impossible but bonus points for including it none-the-less.

The horror aspect is painfully inept. The 'FX' consist of characters getting stabbed with the camera pointed at their head while someone squirts fake blood on their face. The killer is stupid as well. I'll assume the creators are horror movie fans but their execution of this material leaves a lot to be desired. Perhaps to the casual 14 year old this might be perfectly acceptable but anyone else will feel insulted instead of entertained.

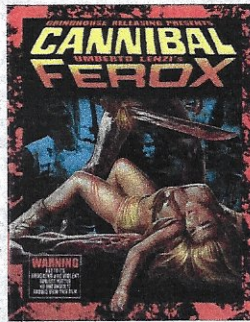
Originally titled "Fat Chance" this is miserable material marketed to fans of wrestling and porn (by the way prior to screening this I had never heard of Bree Olson before, nor did I know she was a porno star) but even they will be let down when their 'heroes' are barely in this.

The DVD (put out by MVDvisual) lists some awards on the back of the case. Apparently the film won "best horror" at the Dark Zone Film Festival. That's pretty sad. It was also an official selection for "Creative Con" but I gather that was for 'worst horror' which would make complete sense.

CANNIBAL FEROX

Chas Balun once called this "a greatest hits package of depravity" which sums things up nicely. I'll add that it's possibly one of the greatest exploitation films of all time.

No sense trotting out a boring synopsis since everyone reading this should be familiar with Umberto Lenzi's famous gut muncher by now. The film rides on Ruggero Deodato's coattails via **CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST** and isn't nearly as effective, yet it remains more pleasing as a rabble rousing crowd favorite. It doesn't wallow in mean spiritedness nor does it set out to beat you over the head with messages on the human condition. Instead it showcases the aforementioned "greatest hits" in the form of penis whacking, coke sniffing, whore bonding, tit piercing, pig killing, twat calling, brain scarfing and a super funky score that never gets old!



Grindhouse Releasing new Blu-ray set is arguably the greatest thing released in the first half of 2015. The new 2K transfer is a beauty, but it never sacrifices film grain for digital cleanup. Likewise with Buddy Maglione's brilliant score. It has never sounded better. Grindhouse went one up however by releasing the music on a separate compact disc tucked inside the case. You get 48 fucking tracks including the complete original score as well as another complete round of 'alternate' takes with Buddy 'introducing' each one (not really but it sounds good 'no?'). Without a doubt it's the most complete pressing you'll ever hear or need from this legendary composer.

The extras are equally mind blowing. For starters is Calum Waddell's 85 minute documentary **EATEN ALIVE! THE RISE AND FALL OF THE ITALIAN CANNIBAL FILM** that pretty much covers it all. You get interviews with Lenzi, Deodato, Sergio Martino, Robert Kerman, Giovanni Lombardo Radice, Me Me Lai (!) and British writers John Martin and Kim Newman (amongst others). It covers everything from **THE MAN FROM DEEP RIVER** all the way up to Eli Roth's **THE GREEN INFERNO**. It is interesting to hear Deodato say 'he is the grandfather of the cannibal film' while Lenzi hates his own movie but loves the fact that he makes so much \$\$ on it!

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Not to be outdone there are separate interview with Lenzi (who gets so animated discussing his 'feud' with Radice that he needs to constantly wipe spittle off his mouth!), Radice (an epic 50+ minute discourse on his entire career), Zora Kerowa (who never even had to audition... Lenzi just glanced at her and she was off to the Amazon), Danilo Mattei (not looking so good these days) and effects tradesman Gino DeRossi. Lenzi talks about bringing two cases of spaghetti along for the trip to Letica (in South America where **CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST** was also filmed) but the actors all say that food was either scarce and/or hard to come by. I guess Lenzi had meals all by himself! There are so many other fascinating tidbits revealed in these interviews that they are never boring and give a very thorough account on the making of this legendary film.

There are trailers, still galleries and superb packaging that contain liner notes/blurbs from REAL writers (Bill Landis, Chas Balun, Rick Sullivan, etc.) and not those bullshit, faceless, no-name 'horror' website assholes that populate DVD and Blu-Ray covers on current releases. In short this is a masterful release of a seminal film that will remain a fan favorite as long as cinema is kept alive by people like you and me. Essential.

CEMETERY WITHOUT CROSSES

A lone gunman, Emanuel, is given an opportunity for revenge when a women's lover is hanged in front of her. She approaches him to settle the score with the killers...an intriguing idea since their relationship isn't clearly stated. He accepts the offer and quickly establishes himself as a foreman within the enemies' ranks. His next plan involves kidnapping their lone daughter which leads to disastrous results...for everyone.



The spaghetti western (billed as such since they were the product of the Italian film industry) was popularized due to Sergio Leone's success with Clint Eastwood. Director/star Robert Hossein was friends with Leone and made this film as a tribute to the great director. In fact Hossein reveals in an interview segment on the Blu-ray that Leone directed a dinner sequence in the movie. Another interesting aspect is that Hossein credits this as the first *French* western which I'm sure may be debatable but I'm no expert to question that. In any event Hossein stages long stretches of the film with no dialog what-so-ever. The focus is squarely on the eyes of the participants. The emotion apparent in several scenes is at turns haunting, beautiful, sorrowful and mournful. Hossein essays the gunman character with plenty of coolness... such as fitting a black glove on his right hand whenever action is called for.

CEMETERY WITHOUT CROSSES (alternately known as **THE ROPE AND THE COLT**) is western cinema at its epic best. The opening and closing moments are filmed in black and white...fitting since none of the characters could be considered either good or bad... somewhere in the middle actually. Hossein doesn't merely ape Leone, but strives for something a little different and the results are excellent. The Blu-ray from Arrow Video includes a splendid transfer of the 1969 film along with two vintage, black and white French television excerpts with behind the scenes footage and a brief interview with Hossein. The man returns for a brand new interview where he sheds some light on the film, alas this is way too short but welcome none-the-less. Fans of spaghetti westerns and action cinema should definitely enjoy this.