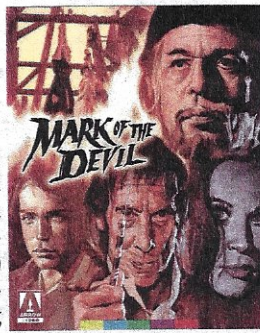


under the radar.

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.

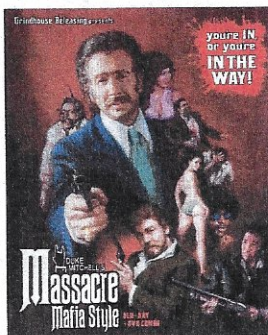
Elsewhere there's a 47 minute documentary on the New Wave of British Horror films of the '70s with recollections by Norman Warren, Michael Armstrong, Kim Newman and David McGillivray about the changing face of British horror. Fangoria managing editor Michael Gingold tackles the history of Hallmark Releasing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



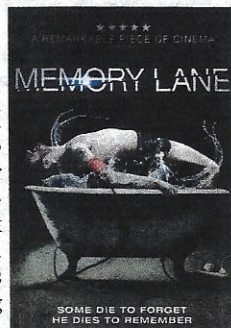
Released to unsuspecting theaters in 1974 the film was overshadowed by **THE GODFATHER**. Yet

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? Anyhow 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?

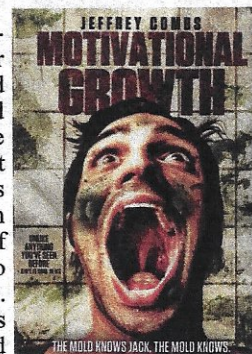
Despite the fact that the character of Momoe doesn't even figure into the story (the onscreen title is subtitled **RAPE**

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