

CREEPSHOW OR CRAPSHOW?

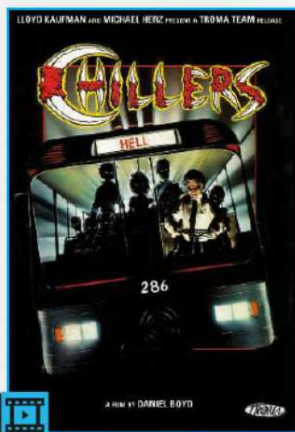
CHILLERS (1987) DVD

Starring Jesse Emery, Marjorie Fitzsimmons and Laurie Pennington
Written and directed by Daniel Boyd
Troma

Pulling off a successful anthology feature can be tricky. From genre high points such as Mario Bava's *Black Sabbath* (1963) to head scratch-inducing failures such as *Trapped Ashes* (2006), these collections of shorts can soar or suffer at the hands of their individual tales. Considering that the finest examples more often than not come courtesy of established directors, first-timer Daniel Boyd's 1987 direct-to-video effort *Chillers* never really stood a chance. It is, however, not the worst of the bunch either.

In an average bus station, five stranded strangers take turns describing the scary dreams they had the night before. In the first story, a swimmer with a fear of heights falls in love with a hunky high diver, who teaches her a few things about confidence, love and how best to rock a bikini after death. Up next, a young boy describes his dream of a camping

trip interrupted by a gun-toting hillbilly and a force for which no one is prepared. The third tale is of an obsessed fan, her anchorman love interest and their one night stand that goes way too far. The film's fourth (and least successful) entry sees a young Wendy's employee gain the power to bring the dead back to life... with idiotic results. And finally, a college anthropology professor accidentally revives the spirit of an ancient Aztec goddess, who wreaks havoc during one of his boring lectures. When all have delivered their part, the bus arrives to take them to their presumably final destination. Here's a hint: it's south. Very south.



While the film is easy enough to get through, *Chillers* does not only suffer from the lack of a marquee director. Despite some choice titles, 1987 was hardly a banner year for horror. The direct-to-video market was booming, but the genre itself was headed into a particularly weak phase. The bare walls of the following decade bear the results of the trends (poor humor and that damned blue backlight that still makes cameos in dream sequences and similar otherworldly settings). *Chillers* is dated and forgettable, more *Crapshow* than *Creepshow*, but you could do worse.

TAL ZIMERMAN

THE LITTLE SPERMAID

GUMS (1976) DVD

Starring Paul Styles, Brother Theodore and Terri Hall
Directed by Robert J. Kaplan
Written by Sam Cohen, Paul E. Cohen and Robert J. Kaplan
Sinful Mermaid

I make it no secret that I love both porn and parody, but porn parodies – *Edward Penishands*, *It's a Wonderful Sex Life*, *Paranormal Cracktivity* ("They're possessed... by anal cravings!"), etc. – are pretty much a guaranteed snooze for me. Accuse me of having unrealistic expectations, but when every joke falls flat and every sex scene is undermined by said flat jokes, well, just turn the goddamn thing off and leave me to the ladies' underwear section of the Sears catalogue.

Sadly, that's not even where the caveats end for the feeble-ass *Jaws* satire *Gums* (1976), in which a nymphomaniac mermaid terrorizes a beach town by giving male swimmers fatally intense underwater blowjobs. (And yes, at one point she also proves her pussy-eating skills are equally lethal.) The jokes are terrible even by porn parody standards, the optical effects make most Troma films look like a George Lucas highlight reel and the picture quality is so washed out you can barely distinguish T from A.

Oh, and then there's just one more piddling matter, Gentle Reader – this is the CENSORED version. That's right, the distributor couldn't be bothered to put out the original hardcore film, so instead we're treated to truncated fuck scenes with little cartoon drawings and unfunny captions stuck over anything that involves the touching of wobbly dangly bits, because God knows, nobody interested in a film like this wants to see anything penetrated.

Is there one single selling point to be had here? Well, there's cult comedian and one-time David Letterman regular Brother Theodore, although he has to spout dialogue from the same shitty script as everyone else, so that's not exactly a recommendation. Don't buy it. Don't rent it. Don't bother with a bigger boat.

JOHN W. BOWEN

LUCHADORKY

MST3K: SAMSON VS. THE VAMPIRE WOMEN (1962) DVD

Starring Mike Nelson, Trace Beaulieu and Kevin Murphy
Directed by Jim Mallon
Written by Mike Nelson, Trace Beaulieu and Kevin Murphy
Shout! Factory

El Santo – a legend in the wrestling ring, and an even better guy to have on your side in case of an

