

HORROR REVIEWS



WHAT'S HOT IN THE WORLD OF DVD, BLU-RAY, STREAMING AND DOWNLOAD

THE UNNAMABLE

THE FILM: Although H.P. Lovecraft is somewhat of an acquired taste for some it's important to remember that we wouldn't have films like *Re-Animator* or *From Beyond* to enjoy without his inspiration. So, when I was asked to review Jean-Paul Ouellette's *The Unnamable* I was excited to discover a Lovecraft adaptation that I had never even heard of before.



So, in what was his feature debut, Ouellette has crafted a creepy gothic tale that seeks to embrace all the tropes of 80s horror. With it, he delivers is a small-scale monster movie about a group of high school students who find themselves on the wrong side of a monster that has been trapped in a vault for over a hundred years.

Right from the outset, Ouellette works quickly to build a spooky atmosphere. He even manages to maintain its effectiveness despite some questionable performances from the cast. Speaking of which, everyone here is largely forgettable but that's understandable considering the majority of the cast only exist as cannon fodder for the monster to kill.

Thankfully there's more to be enjoyed elsewhere. The creature effects here are pretty solid and there's a fair amount of gore on offer to keep horror fans engaged. In fact, one of the things I like the most about the film is the way it teases his audience. Showing brief glimpses of the monster during the first two acts of the films keeps a sense of mystery brewing throughout and it's only really in the third act when we see the monster and believe me when I say it's worth the wait.

Overall, *The Unnamable* is average at best. As a horror film, it works well. However, it is hindered by an unsteady sense of humour which I failed to appreciate. That said, despite the flat jokes and poor performances by the cast, the film is worth checking out if you have a penchant for all things Lovecraft.

Rating: 🧠🧠🧠🧠

SPECIAL FEATURES: In this special edition, audiences can look forward to enjoying quite an extensive amount of extras which is always good to see. In fact, between its audio commentary track with the cast and crew as well as the bundle of video interviews too, there's plenty of behind-the-scenes anecdotes that give a detailed insight into the making of the film which is genuinely interesting to discover. The only thing missing from the extras is a more detailed look into the creature effects. If the disc had this then I would have been so much happier.

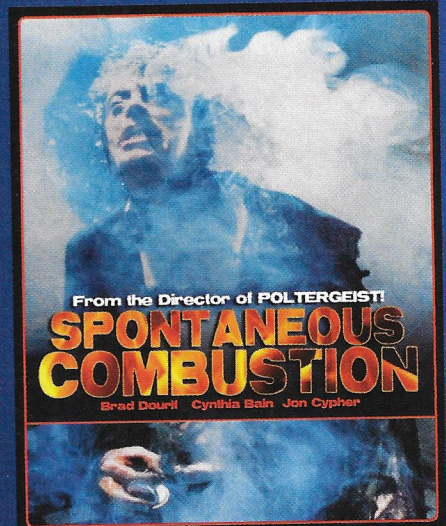
Rating: 🧠🧠🧠🧠

THE UNNAMABLE is out now on **US DVD** and **Blu-ray** courtesy of MVD.

REVIEWED BY JON DICKINSON

SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION

THE FILM: Tobe Hooper's *Spontaneous Combustion* is a muted but fun sci-fi thriller about a young man called Sam. Unbeknownst to him, his parents were



involved in atomic-weapons experiments and the side effects of that bestow Sam with hidden pyrokinetic powers. So after discovering his roots, Sam's powers begin to manifest and the danger truly begins.

Under Hooper's direction, *Spontaneous Combustion* is a thrilling ride fuelled by solid performances and surprisingly effective visual effects. The film starts off a little choppy at first but by the time Hooper charges through his first act, the rest of the film is a very tense ride as audiences get to watch a true anti-hero struggle to contain his explosive powers before it's too late.

In the film, Brad Dourif delivers another fantastic performance as Sam. As the lead, Dourif is great and he does a solid job in selling the more crazier moments of the film. The remainder of the cast isn't quite up to par with him but they do a good job to make the film credible. Throw in a cheeky cameo from the legendary John Landis and what you have is a well-acted thriller that shouldn't be taken too seriously by anyone.

A part of *Spontaneous Combustion's* charm resonates from how small-scale the film is. Although the plot is ambitious, Hooper's efforts here will no doubt ruffle a few feathers of any *Firestarter* fans out there but I urge you to put those fears aside. Hooper reins in the films

crazy moments and steers his audience towards an explosive third act that's surprisingly fun to watch and that's why I urge you to check it out.

Rating: 🧟🧟🧟🧟

SPECIAL FEATURES: There's not much to enjoy here. There are a handful of trailers for largely unknown low-budget horror movies that I didn't even know existed until now. That said, I'm not trying to yuck anyone's yum here. After all, if a bevy of low-budget horror movies is your idea of fun then have at it. I'm simply saying that there are no extras offering an insight into the making of the film.

Rating: 🧟🧟🧟🧟

SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION is out now on **US Blu-ray** courtesy of MVD.

REVIEWED BY JON DICKINSON

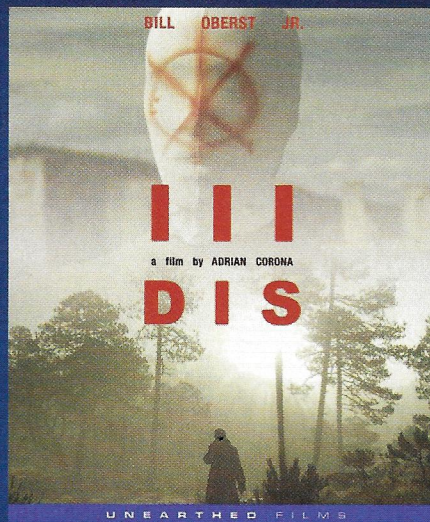
DIS

THE FILM: In Adrian Corona's latest offering an ex-soldier takes refuge deep in the wilderness as a means to escape a criminal past. Whilst searching for a way to atone for past sins the soldier comes across an abandoned building that's haunted by a demonic figure. Not too long after the man finds himself at the mercy of its reign of terror.

Appealing more to arthouse enthusiasts, DIS is a surreal nightmare that harnesses what little it has in resources to craft an unpleasant visual assault for audiences to endure. With DIS Adrian Corona refuses to pander to his audiences and strides forward to craft an unforgettable viewing experience for his audience. His bare and rough sense of direction is a stark contrast to the films stunningly smooth cinematography and it creates an interesting dynamic to the piece that helps maintain the films fever-dream aesthetic.

Although easily distracted viewers may fail to appreciate the effort on display here, those willing to work through the films glacial pace and harrowing visuals can find solace in the solid performance from Bill Oberst Jr. Here he hits every emotional beat of his character using it as raw energy to help drive the dramatic intensity of the film. It's just a mighty shame that the rest of the cast and the overall big bad of the film is so easily forgettable by comparison.

Addressing the bigger problems with this film, Corona's portrayal of sexual violence is problematic. It might serve as a reason why the demonic figure does what he does to victims but there's no need to show it in detail. Simply put, it's pornographic and for that reason, I found it wholly inappropriate. So, when the rest



of the film does very little to entertain its audience elsewhere, DIS becomes a lot of work for very little payoff.

Rating: 🧟🧟🧟🧟

SPECIAL FEATURES: This presentation from MVD Visual comes with a filmed introduction by the director of DIS Adrian Corona. There is also a very brief behind the scenes and photo gallery which, when combined, provide an insiders point of view on how the filmmaking team were able to achieve Corona's vision for the film.

Also included is an interview with the actor Bill Oberst Jr. who talks openly about how he got involved with the project, his initial reaction to the script and about the difficulties experience shooting DIS. Beyond that, Oberst attempts to dive deeper to provide a greater understanding of the motives of the film and about its power to affect its audience.

Lastly, and perhaps my favourite addition to this presentation is the inclusion of Adrian Corona's 19-minute short film "Portrait". In it, a frustrated artist works against adversity and his own sanity to create the perfect work of art. I loved this and it shows that as a storyteller Corona certainly has the chops needed to deliver upon expectation.

Overall, there are a fair amount of decent extras on offer here. So, if DIS is your sort of movie, there's plenty to consume here. A decent effort to flesh out what I thought was a dull film overall.

Rating: 🧟🧟🧟🧟

DIS is out now on **US DVD and Blu-ray** courtesy of Uneathed Films.

REVIEWED BY JON DICKINSON

AMERICAN NIGHTMARES

THE FILM: American Nightmares is an anthology film from the creators of Tales From The Hood and Tales From The Hood 2. Written and Directed by

Darin Scott and Rusty Cundieff, the wrap around follows a pair of millennials whose computers are hacked by a mysterious figure only known as Mr Malevolent (played here by Danny Trejo). Unable to stop him the duo is forced to face their own culpability and are made to watch several horror stories.

I love the concept behind American Nightmares. Through several segments, Cundieff and Scott deal with themes of abusive relationships, corrupt officials, hate crimes and other equally abhorrent activities to teach us all a very important lesson... don't be a dick to others.

There are seven segments in total. MATES explores the dangers of abusive relationships and embracing new technology. THE PROSECUTOR follows a man running for the governor of Texas when his corrupted past comes back to literally haunt him. WHITE FLIGHT is an interesting portrayal of the phrase "be careful of what you wish for".

In THE SAMARITAN a sex worker is asked to service the needs of a dying man. HATE RADIO, when a radio host's sexist attitudes are reversed on him. Next up is THE HEALER and the final segment is titled THEY WILL BE DONE.

Although the film brings some very important topics to the table, the efforts here are very hit and miss and suffer from its lack of creativity and hurried pace. However, it's not all doom and gloom, as the writers and directors of each segment Cundieff and Scott are able to maintain a consistent level of effort throughout the film and the overall viewing experience benefits from it.

As a whole, American Nightmares has plenty on offer but it shouldn't be taken seriously at all. Each segment is reasonably paced and does enough to keep audiences engaged but anyone

