

Rob Freese's DRIVE-IN DELIRIUM!

VCI ENTERTAINMENT/
MVD VISUAL

(2-disc Blu-ray + DVD \$29.98 each) 1/18

THE AFTERMATH (1982) 88 1/2

D: Steve Barkett. Steve Barkett, Sid Haig, Lynne Margulies, Christopher Barkett, Forrest J Ackerman. 96 mins.

Returning from a long space mission, macho astronaut Newman (Barkett) and his crew find the world decimated by nuclear war. They fight bands of psychotic mutants and come up against the evil Cutter (Haig) and his group of bloodthirsty mercenaries. Newman vows to protect a young boy named Chris (Barkett, Son of Steve) when The Curator (Ackerman) admits he won't be around much longer to raise the war orphan. Newman also meets and falls in love with Sarah (Margulies), a wasteland woman who escaped Cutter's clutches. Tensions build until Cutter goes berserk and Newman turns *my loco*, seeking vengeance against the evildoer and his greasy henchmen. **The Aftermath** is an effective low-budget post-apoc entry that flaunts some great Don (**The Alien Factor**) Dohler-style forced perspective shots as well as '80s-era gore like exploding heads, severed limbs and juicy gunshot wounds. (The production also sports some fantastic matte paintings of a nuclear war-ravaged L.A.) The flick is basically an "everyman's" fantasy, with writer-director-producer-star Barkett blasting bare-chested into the action, bedding down the damsel in distress while taking on an army of bad guys singlehandedly. It's a family affair as Steve puts both his son and daughter in the action, as well as FX ace Jim Danforth as a fellow astronaut and the late Eric Caidin as an expired broadcaster. Barkett has had a nice career in films, starting as an actor for Ted Mikels in **The Corpse Grinders** and moving on to roles in front of as well as behind the camera for Fred Olen Ray and Jim Wynorski. **The Aftermath** gained a little notoriety when it found its way onto the DPP Section 3 List during the U.K.'s silly Video Nasties era. This is a rather charming little time machine back to when independent films were made with a lot more heart and real creativity. VCI packs its 2k presentation with a Barkett commentary, interviews, trailers, stills and more. Although I've read plenty about this film over the years, this was the first time I've had the opportunity to view it. I hate that I didn't catch this film on VHS back when I was 15 and gorging on all the wonderful flicks I was discovering for the first time. Definitely worth a watch.

THE TWILIGHT PEOPLE (1972) 88

D: Eddie Romero. John Ashley, Pat Woodell, Jan Merlin, Charles Macaulay, Pam Grier, Eddie Garcia. 80 mins.

American Good Guy Matt Farrell (Ashley) is abducted while scuba diving and taken to the secret island fortress of diabolical Dr. Gordon (Macaulay). Gordon is trying to create a race of supermen by melding humans with animals, and he needs the superior minds of guys like Farrell and Juan Pereira (Garcia) to inject into his wild "manimals" to heighten their intelligence because, it turns out, mixing men with wild animals is a tremendously horrible idea. Neva Gordon (Woodell) eventually realizes her father has been kind of a nut since her mother died (what's that lurking just beyond the trees?) and she falls hard for Farrell, who thwarts her suicide attempt and turns it into a make-out session. This flick stretches five minutes of plot and story over 80 minutes of runtime. Not once does Ashley's hair get messed up while on the run. Woodell is fetching as the big-hearted daughter, while Merlin is obviously having fun as his character constantly tries to steer the plot more toward **The Most Dangerous Game** material. Garcia is wasted in what is basically a quick cameo (he must have owed Romero a favor). All the Play-Doh-faced manimals are jerks, with Grier receiving the least amount of beauty-altering makeup as the perpetually screeching Panther Woman Ayesa, the jerkier one of the bunch. (Cats are jerks?) This was on the first double bill for Larry Woolner's Dimension Pictures, which helped to kick-start a truly fantastic run for the much-beloved distribution company that folded way too soon. **The Twilight People** is a fun movie but not nearly as much fun as Romero and Ashley's earlier **Blood Island** films released by Hemisphere Pictures. (I do wonder if Ashley's Matt Farrell here was related to his Jim Farrell character from **Brides of Blood**.) The flick was made for drive-ins, where you could play kissy face with your date during the talky parts. VCI offers up this 2k restoration with such extras as an entertaining and informative commentary by Davids Del Valle and Decoteau, a video interview with the late Romero, the incredible original theatrical trailer and TV spots. Essential viewing for fans of Filipino horror flicks and anyone interested in checking out what the kids were watching at the old ozoner over the summer of '72.

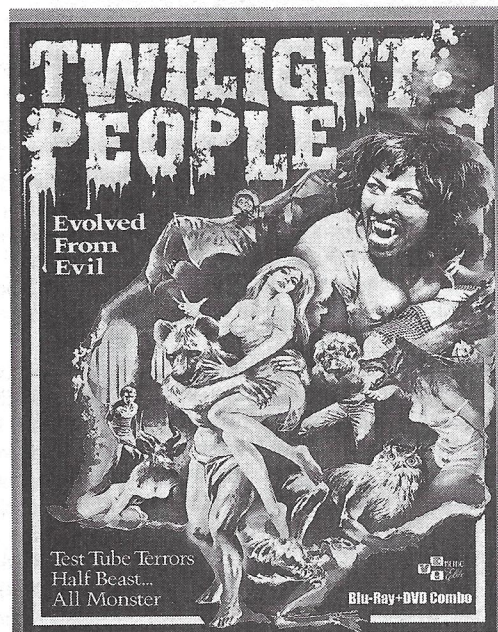
VINEGAR SYNDROME

(2-disc Blu-ray + DVD \$32.98) 1/18

LUCIFER'S WOMEN (1974) 88

D: Paul Aratow. Larry Hankin, Jane Brunel-Cohen, Paul Thomas, Norman Pierce, Clair Dia. 91 mins.

Author John Wainwright (Hankin) has written a book about the reincarnation of Svengali and even claims to be the vessel for which the famed fictional (?) character has chosen for his return. Sir Steven Philips (Pierce), his publisher, prac-



tices black magic and Satanism. When Wainwright falls for bored-looking sorta stripper Trilby (Brunel-Cohen), Sir Steven tells the author he needs her for a sacrificial satanic sex ritual to ensure that he and his coven receive eternal life, or some dang thing. The motivations of the characters are thin to nonexistent at best. Thomas plays Roland, a coke-snorting jerk who owns the club where Trilby performs as the world's least enthusiastic stripper. Characters sit around talking a lot, mostly about "chasing kicks" and "making it" and "turning on." Trilby reads underground sex comics and experiments with lesbianism before agreeing to an awkward, hairy and not very sexy three-way with her roommate and Roland. The ending moments make no real sense and I wondered if it was all a dream. I get it, in '74 this was a "heavy trip," mixing sex and nudity with Satanism, which was making headlines at the time. (Anton LaVay, founder of the Church of Satan, was a technical advisor for the black mass scenes.) It's kinky and it's kooky, but it's also an incomprehensible mess that will make your head ache. Until now this version has been unseen except for a brief theatrical run. It has never been available on home-video and was considered lost. Scenes existed only in a patched-up, reworked version from Al Adamson and Sam Sherman under the title **Doctor Dracula**, which was re-edited with a bunch of new actors and sold to TV. For years people have been complaining about how awful the **Doctor Dracula** version is, but for me that version is a masterpiece compared to this original "lost" version. Extras include both versions, a brand-new Sam Sherman commentary on the **Doctor Dracula** cut, which delves into how I-IP acquired the original film and how it was altered, an interview with Paul Thomas, trailer, an essay by Samm Deigham and a **Lucifer's Women/Doctor Dracula** reversible cover. If you're a fan who's been waiting for the uncut **Lucifer's Women** to finally be released to home-video, your dark day of joyous hellfire has at last arrived. 8