

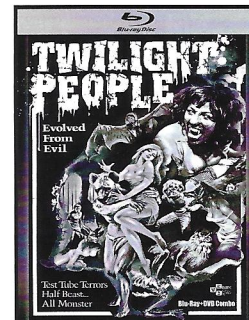
emasculated pig (Ben Bigalow) nearly castrating him on the way to the precinct! After three years in the slammer, Charles says he's a changed man, but it's difficult to do the right thing when the motherfucker who tried to cut off your manhood is still on the street. Eventually, Fanaka ditches reality altogether in favor of sketchy supernatural retribution, with Charles using a mystical power to mesmerize and seduce white women, but doesn't unleash his giant killer penis(!) until the final reel. Reatha Grey (37 years later, a regular on the hidden-camera show *BETTY WHITE'S OFF THEIR ROCKERS*) co-stars as a hooker who inexplicably cares about inconsiderate jackass Charles. Judged as a student film, this is impressive as hell; as a legit theatrical feature, it's an amateurish hodgepodge. Technically rough and overlong, it features gritty atmosphere and genuine anger about institutional racism — the white cops are either racist shitstains or lazily complicit — while also hilariously exploiting the myth of black male sexual prowess... Fanaka's 1976 drama *EMMA MAE* (his grad school master's thesis, released on VHS in the '80s as *BLACK SISTER'S REVENGE*) is a much more interesting curio, with a cast rounded up from LA-area colleges and community theatres, and a story focusing on a young black woman from rural Mississippi adjusting to life in Los Angeles. Stepping off the bus with a country-ass perm and a suitcase held together by rope, 18-year-old Emma Mae (theatrical arts major Jerri



Hayes) is staying with her aunt, uncle and female cousins. Though she might be unfamiliar with such regional delicacies as tacos and secobarbital "fender benders," this girl is far from innocent. She can handle herself in a fight and is soon shacking up with a suave stoner, until he goes on the run after beating up two cops during a traffic stop. Fanaka (who passed away in 2012) had a similar childhood, growing up in Jackson, Mississippi and moving to Compton with his parents at age 13, and he sprinkles the film with authentic trappings (check out those fashions at its college dance party!). While there are scattered moments of action (e.g., a half-assed bank robbery), it's more often focused on everyday reality, like Emma Mae raising bail money for her man by organizing a neighborhood car wash. Shot by Stephen L. Posey (*SAVAGE STREETS*), the acting overall is raw but earnest, amidst heavy speeches regarding black empowerment, an uplifting message about the strength of community and Emma Mae kicking some serious ass. It includes a Q&A with Jerri Hayes following a screening at Brooklyn's BAMcinématek and a half-hour featurette about the LA Rebellion, with insights about UCLA's resistance to black filmmakers, plus Fanaka's life and work.

Director Eddie Romero gifted the exploitation world with such low-rent Filipino fare as *BEAST OF THE YELLOW NIGHT*, *MAD DOCTOR OF BLOOD ISLAND* and, in 1972's *THE TWILIGHT PEOPLE* (VCI Entertainment), a ridiculously cut-rate knock-off of H.G. Wells' 1896 novel *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, starring and produced by former American-International hunk John Ashley (*HOT ROD GANG*), who shifted his career overseas after getting too old to convincingly appear in '60s beach movies. Kidnapped while scuba diving, soldier of fortune Matt Farrell (Ashley) ends up on a remote jungle island lorded over by Dr. Gordon (Charles Macauley), who humbly confesses to

engineering "the single most important scientific event in the history of life on this planet." This disgraced crackpot plans to save humankind through mutation, has a dungeon full of caged, animalistic test subjects (e.g., a hairy wolf girl, a horned antelope boy, plus 22-year-old Pam Grier as Ayesa, the Panther Woman) and, in Farrell, has found a perfect specimen for his work. But Gordon's pretty daughter Neva (Pat Woodell, now obviously regretting her decision to quit *PETTICOAT JUNCTION*, two years into that top-rated series' run, to pursue a singing career) is attracted to this studly new arrival, rescues Farrell from upcoming brain extraction and aids in an escape attempt. Though only 81 minutes long and pocked with amusingly hokey moments (watch out for that flying Bat Man!), its second half is one long, dull trek through the jungle, as escaped beasts pick off Gordon's thugs. Ashley and Woodell both look bored; TOM CORBETT, *SPACE CADET*'s Jan Merlin plays an Aryan-esque henchman; while Grier (only a year before packing grindhouses in Jack Hill's *COFFY*) is equipped with a mouthful of fake chompers, has no dialogue, but does get to gruesomely chew out attackers' throats. From its cheap-ass sets to its ludicrous make-up, this is the very definition of disposable drive-in rotgut. In addition to the wide-screen feature, it includes a chatty commentary with filmmaker David DeCoteau and David Del Valle, plus a fascinating, hour-long conversation with Eddie Romero, who passed away in 2013.



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