

horror host theorizing about life on other planets before the credits even roll. The credits, I may add, are superbly done, seemingly plucked right out of a Roger Corman feature. Once the movie truly starts, you have a couple of teenagers necking alone in the woods, when something crash lands. Something not of this Earth. No self-respecting alien invasion movie would be without the boy fiddling with whatever is in the crater, and so unleashes the gooey brain invasion. There are girls in tight sweaters; men who are doing science; switchblade carrying greasers; four-star generals who give high school lectures on the facts about nuclear radiation; framed pictures of Eisenhower; even the king of rock 'n roll makes an appearance, treating us to a musical number at the halfway point.

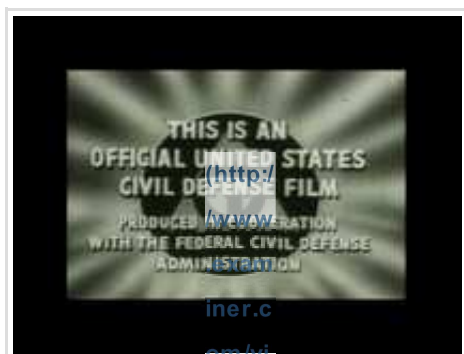
View slideshow: Atomic Brain Invasion, The Disco Exorcist

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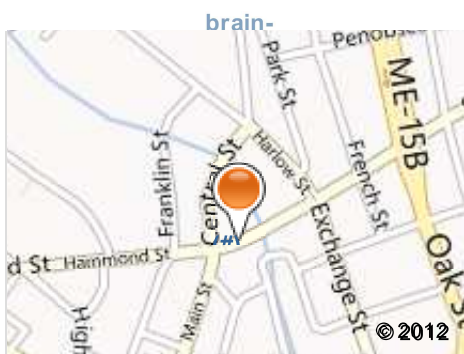


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Atomic Brain Invasion Poster
Photo credit: Scorpio Film Releasing



Video: [Atomic Brain Invasion Trailer](http://www.examiner.com/video/atomic-brain-invasion-trailer)
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The film is centered around nerdy Sherman (David Lavalee, Jr.), who has a crush on pretty and brainy Betty (Sarah Nicklin). With the help of greaser bully Lukas (Michael Reed), geeks Kevin and Jim (Daniel Lee White and Colin Carlton, respectively), friendly aliens who look like intergalactic cheerleaders (Alexander Lewis, Ruth Sullivan, and Alexandra Cipolla), and [Elvis](http://www.examiner.com/topic/elvis) (Brandon Luis Aponte), the heroes hole up in a greasy spoon diner in order to fend off the brain creatures and gooey-faced zombies.

Being true to the genre, there's no nudity or gore, but there is slime. Lots and lots of dripping, gooey slime. The monsters themselves look intentionally silly, seeming to be little more than a plastic brain with a pair of googly eyes attached, and human hands from underneath (which reminded me of the Swedish Chef Muppet). The dialogue is hilarious, peppered with such gems as "It's a present of death...wrapped up in a shiny package of doom!", and "All this nature is giving me a headache; let's go have a smoke." Also, the movie-within-a-movie scenes had me in tears!

The Disco Exorcist is a take on those grainy 'boobs and blood' flicks which dominated the grindhouse theaters on New York's 42nd Street during the Ford administration. It's full of sex, gore, sex, drugs, sex, grittiness, sex, and more sex. So much sleaze, in fact, that you'll feel incredibly dirty after, but in a good way. The movie is about disco dancing stud Rex Romanski (Michael Reed), whose very being exudes sexual passion in ladies the moment he walks into a room. Each night, he goes from gal to gal, doing lines of cocaine which would choke Tony Montana. His latest bed-and-burn sexual conquest is Rita (Ruth Sullivan), who is the last woman you'd want to scorn. In fact, she makes Glenn Close's character in *Fatal Attraction* seem like Dora the Explorer. You see, Rita practices the dark arts of satanic ritual, and when Rex drops Rita for porn goddess Amoreena Jones



Location: Bangor, ME

(Sarah Nicklin), there's blood rites, voodoo dolls, and demonic possession involved. Can Rex get help from his Catholic priest brother (Alexander Lewis) to expel the demon from his possessed porno-star girlfriend? You'll have to see.

This is one of my favorite grindhouse homages ever made. The acting, camera angles, music, and film quality makes me feel like I'd traveled back in time. In addition to all the drugs, sex, and gore, there is a lot of very smart humor in the mix. Some of the comedy is played silly, like when Rex is casually talking to his best friend Manuel (Brandon Luis Aponte) in a sex theater, watching Amoreena Jones on the big screen while, shall I say, "enjoying" the film thoroughly. At times, you need to pay attention for the jokes, like in the case of the hilarious lyrics in some of the disco songs played while Rex is on the dance floor. There is also comedy gold in the form of porno director Bernie Munghat (Babette Bombshell), with some ad-libs that had me laughing out loud.

The gore is very well-done, and I have to audibly admire Griffin for not taking the CGI route in today's computer age, but for using practical effects which look great, and add to that '70s feel. The red stuff flows right from the start, and does not let up, but crescendos at the end, at an orgy held by an Anton LaVey doppelganger (Michael Thurber), which is not unlike the 4th of July party in *Jaws*. This is sleaze done right; it does not take itself too seriously, and you can tell that the filmmakers are having lots of explicit, raunchy fun.

Griffin is smart to keep using a lot of the same cast and crew members for his films, as it must deliver a feeling of family, where everyone is comfortable working with each other, as well as giving the viewer a sense of being familiar with the faces, and having fun seeing what roles these actors will be performing next.

If you're a fan of horror, science fiction, comedy, cult, or a mixture of all of them, do yourself a favor and check out both of these wonderful films. I for one would love to see Griffin make more of these kind of retro throwbacks, perhaps filling in the gaps by giving us a '60s beach party monster and an '80s slasher flick.

You can buy both of these on DVD from Scorpio Film Releasing directly:

<http://scorpiofilmreleasing.net/> (<http://scorpiofilmreleasing.net/>)



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Bill has been a horror movie fan since the age of 3, when his mother took him to the movies to see "The Exorcist." Since then, he has written, done special effects makeup, and has acted in several feature films. He lives in Bangor, Maine, and can be contacted at Bill.cassinelli@gmail.com.