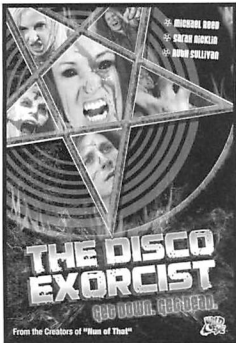
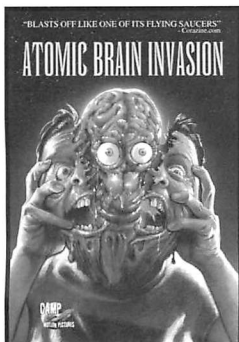


Rhode Island filmmaker Richard Griffin has been banging out low-budget features for over a decade, and this pair of cinematic send-ups — celebrating radically different time periods — begins with 2011's **THE DISCO EXORCIST (Wild Eye)**, a hilariously schlocky horror-comedy with a terrific cast and loads of retro trappings. It's time for lava lamps, reel-to-reel tape players, bushy mustaches,



and snortin' coke. Yes, it's 1979, kids. And when disco-playboy Rex Roman-ski (Michael Reed) puts his slick moves on a chick named Rita (Ruth Sullivan), he's unaware that this foxy one-night-stand is actually a green-eyed black magic priestess. So when Rex shifts his attention to adult film starlet Amoreena

Jones (Sarah Nicklin), there'll soon be hell to pay, with the pair cursed by freaky, pentagram-writhing Rita. Amoreena's workplace co-stars are soon transforming into demonic killers, and what's a poor guy to do when his girlfriend keeps turning into a possessed sex fiend? How about asking assistance from the disco's janitor, who happens to be an ex-priest exorcism expert? What could've easily been a one-joke dud is instead a rip-roaring dose of sex, skin, gore, sleaze, and twisted laughs, with Griffin nailing the old-school grind-house look — from the tacky furnishings and wardrobe to its intentionally-weathered print. And while some might argue that the film's central disco looks more like a two-bit dump, I can personally attest to having hung out in even crappier night-clubs during the late-'70s. High praise also goes out to the cast (many of them Griffin regulars), who fearlessly embrace anything the script dishes out, including a Vietnam-themed porno featuring topless women on roller skates and a disco orgy interrupted by zombies. Extras include deleted scenes and a commentary with Griffin, Nicklin and Reed... Another newly released effort from Richard Griffin is 2010's **ATOMIC BRAIN INVASION (Camp Motion Pictures)**, a comic-homage to



1950's sci-fi creature features, with the Earth once again under siege by pesky aliens and an assortment of small-town teenagers to the rescue. Sarah Nicklin stars as Eisenhower-era high schooler Betty Kimble, who's both a beauty and a brainiac, with David Lavallee, Jr. as nerdy classmate Sherman and Michael Reed as a delinquent jack-off whose dad happens to be the General in charge of the military's nearby A-bomb testing. Their town's stuffy, blue-haired matrons are incensed when a sinful rock-'n'-roll singer named Elvis Presley is scheduled to perform locally, but they should be more concerned about the slime inside an alien projectile, which is infecting the populace and turning people into goofy, puppet-looking creatures with bare brains. When Betty and Sherman join a search party to locate some missing kids, it quickly leads to an extraterrestrial craft containing a trio of dozing humanoid space cheerleaders, some teenage puppy love, as

well as cinema's most unlikely Hispanic Elvis, who rocks out at a local diner during a peanut-butter-and-banana-sandwich pitstop. It's a cute enough concept, but the film doesn't kick into high gear until the final half-hour, with not-particularly-swift brain-monsters on the prowl, Elvis aiding the kids, plus some ridiculously silly twists. This sort of pop-culture pastiche isn't a new idea, but the savvy script merrily cobbles together every possible genre cliché and absurdity, along with a winning cast led by Nicklin's fast-talking, feisty heroine. The film never rises to the inspired insanity levels of **DISCO EXORCIST** (heck, this one is barely PG!), but it's still likeable, lightweight fun. The DVD includes a director-producer-cast commentary.

Over the years, the Michigan-lensed, 1988 schlock-fest **THOU SHALT NOT KILL... EXCEPT (Synapse)** has become an unequivocal cult favorite, with much of the credit belonging to director Josh Becker, who ingeniously stretched his threadbare budget while maximizing the cheap



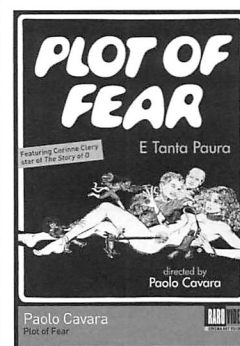
thrills, macho attitude and outlandish carnage. A Vietnam prologue introduces us to a band of badass Marines, led by Sergeant Stryker (Brian Schulz), but most of the flick takes place back in the States, when wounded Stryker returns home to his peaceful cottage, falls for a blonde cutie and soon has his rural R&R interrupted when psychotic hippie burn-outs begin offering innocent townfolk (including death by lawn dart!). They're led by a Manson-esque "savior" played by future **SPIDER-MAN** director Sam Raimi (sporting a moth-eaten Rasta wig and mouthful of gnarly teeth), who brings the perfect combination of cosmically-awful acting and ridiculous over-commitment to this creep. Stryker eventually reunites with his rowdy, hard-drinking combat buddies and it's time to go back to war, with such a gleefully excessive death toll that you're liable to bust a gut. Though often spectacularly crude, the cast and crew's D.I.Y. amateur enthusiasm keeps it mindlessly enjoyable from beginning to end. The DVD/Blu-ray combo is also stuffed with cool extras, including a half-hour making-of documentary featuring new interviews with Becker, co-writer Scott Spiegel and Ted Raimi (who played "Chain Man"); Becker's 48-minute **STRYKER'S WAR** (1980), a Super-8, micro-budgeted take on the same story, except with 22-year-old Bruce Campbell as our war-hardened Sarge; and two commentaries — one with star Brian Schulz, plus an amusingly self-deprecating track with Becker and Campbell (who couldn't appear in this non-union feature because he'd gotten his SAG card, but let Becker shoot many of the interiors in his garage). The two longtime friends laugh about the film's flubs (like how you can see the soldiers' icy, Michigan-winter breath in the midst of Vietnam), point out recycled **EVIL DEAD** props and recall using both actual liquor and live ammo on-camera.

Yet another in the burgeoning trend of new exploitation features based on classic grindhouse genres, **DEAR GOD NO! (Big World Pictures)** puts an unapologetically tasteless and hilariously sick spin on the biker movie, packed with bloodshed, sadism, naked chicks, Pabst Blue Ribbon, as well as the occasional monster! When we first meet The Impalers biker club, these rowdy hairballs have just finished raping and murdering (not necessarily in that order) a vanload of nuns, and

their recent anti-social behavior has become so extreme that it's actually pissing off the other local criminals. Impalers' leader Jett (Jett Bryant) simply wants to be "free to bang life in the ass," and that includes gunning down cops, shopkeepers, children... in other words, pretty much anyone they choose. In addition to this biker mayhem-fest, there's crackpot anthropologist Dr. Marco (Paul McComiskey) and his oddball daughter (Madeline Brumby), who're studying a prehistoric mutation that has infected the area and is making the local wildlife go crazy. Oh, and they also have *something* locked in their basement! But just wait until The Impalers bust in and decide to throw themselves a party, unaware that there's a Bigfoot-like, hairy whatzit on the loose. The slim storyline is padded out to 81 minutes with gratuitous nudity (including topless strippers with machine guns and Richard Nixon masks), drug-induced hallucinations, outlandishly over-the-top gore effects, spot-on period trappings, and unruly facial hair. Plus every time you think the film couldn't get any nastier, writer-director James Anthony Bickert takes it a step further. Hell, this film even repulsed me a couple times, and just wait until you see how these bikers deal with a pregnant chick. Extras includes behind-the-scenes footage, two commentaries, promos, and a Red Band trailer.



Despite its ingratiating international cast, 1976's **PLOT OF FEAR [E Tanta Paura] (Raro Video)** remains a fairly disposable Italian crime thriller. A mysterious murderer has already struck twice, killing two members of an exclusive Fauna Lovers Club — a perverse clique of ritzy "animal lovers" — and leaving children's book illustrations at the scene of each crime. Inspector Lomenzo (Michele Placido, star of the '80s organized crime series **LA PIOVRA** [The Octopus]) is on the case,



but even as more fresh corpses pile up (a woman burnt alive, a hit-and-run, another gunned down on live TV), our busy detective still finds time to get dumped by his macrobiotic girlfriend and quickly rebound with a sultry fashion model (YOR, **THE HUNTER FROM THE FUTURE**'s Corinne Clery), who attended one of these Fauna

Club bacchanals at which a young woman named Rosa died. What precisely takes place at this club? In flashbacks, we see the group — men, women, plus a chimp(?) — lounging around their palatial villa, watching kinky cartoons and playing dirty party games. Meanwhile, Lomenzo's investigation eventually uncovers deadly secrets, additional crimes and unexpected culprits, with a pre-**ALIEN** Tom Skerritt in a thankless supporting role as a police colleague, Eli Wallach faring slightly better as the wealthy head of a high-tech detective firm, and Clery displaying some of the physical attributes that led to her casting in **THE STORY OF O**. The film's biggest weakness is its lackluster script, but director Paolo Cavara (**BLACK BELLY OF THE TARANTULA**) tries his best to pump up