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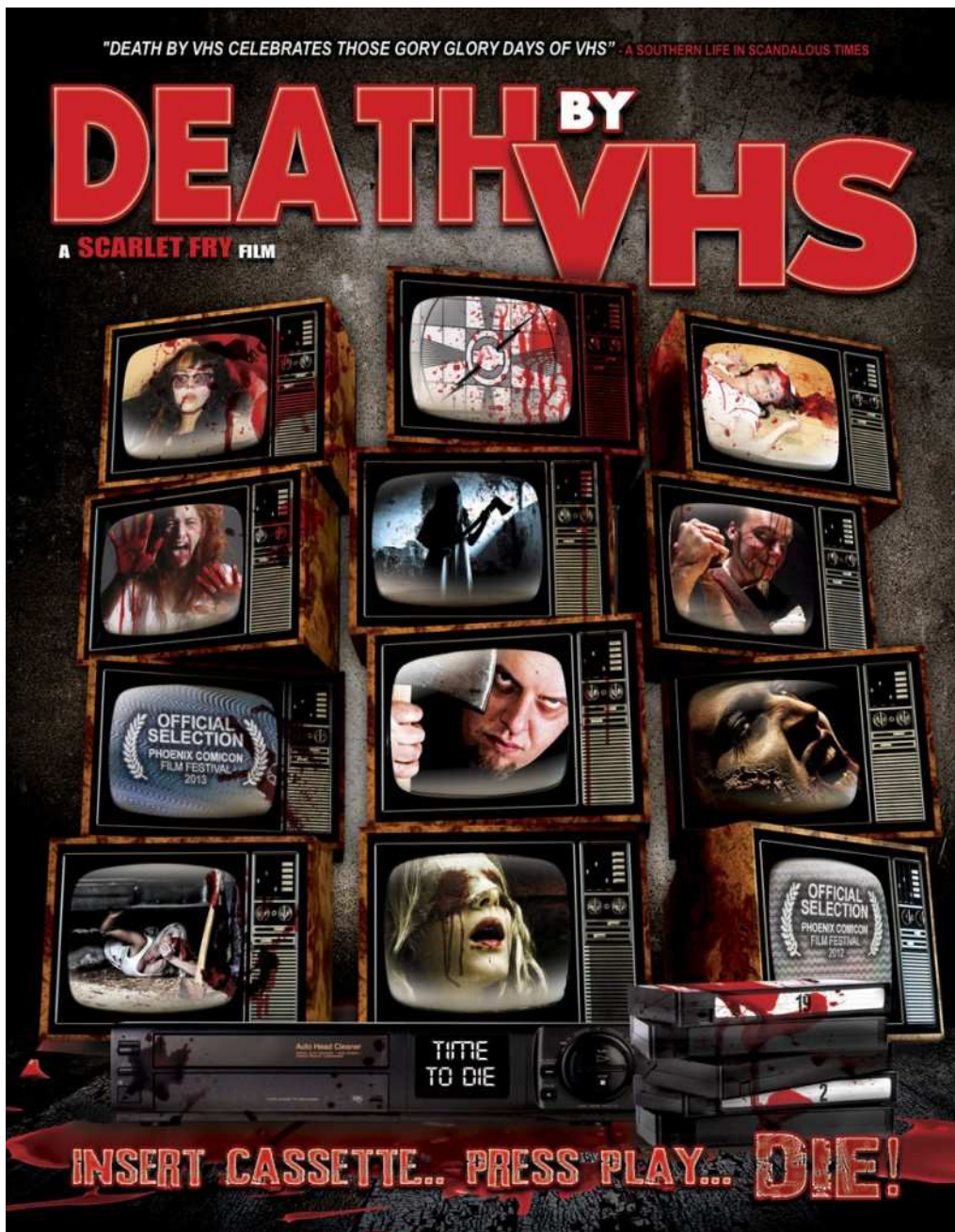
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Indie filmmaker Walter Ruether AKA Scarlet Fry pays homage to his favorite format with the new horror anthology DEATH BY VHS!

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With a history in home video and an undeniable affection for the format, filmmaker Walter Ruether aka Scarlet Fry has recently aimed his latest anthology endeavor at the almighty VHS. His new film *Death by VHS* is a set of stories sure to appeal to fans of trashterpiece cinema filled with blood, babes, bong rips and a cast of archetypal bogeys that'll send you into a whirlwind of B-grade bliss. Read on, fellow tapeheads, and learn how this here analog assault just may be your last...



The poster for DEATH BY VHS. The time display is the best.

LM: Can you tell us a little bit about your history as a filmmaker?

SF: I started making movies for fun with friends as early as age 12. I've always loved horror movies, so when the VHS boom hit in the 80's I would rent tons of schlock horror... just about everything I could find! It was then that I realized I could do something just as cool, so I began working on my first film: Scarlet Fry's [Horrorama](#). It was originally released on VHS in 1991, and only a few are in existence today. I later did a sequel called Scarlet Fry's [Junkfood Horrorfest](#) which featured Calico Cooper (Alice Cooper's daughter!). After that [Nightmare Alley](#) & now [Death by VHS](#)...

What got you into making movies?

I originally wanted to be a singer and have a gimmick similar to Alice Cooper with Horror theatrics, but it never got off the ground. I took that character idea & decided to be a Horror Host, so my first 3 anthologies have Scarlet Fry as the Host. *Death by VHS* has no host... we decided to do something different, although I appear in the film, I do not host it.



Scarlet and Calico Cooper have a little dance. GET ON DOWN.

You worked for Camp Video in the late 80s, right?

Yes, I worked for Camp in 1987 when [*Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers*](#) came out! It was a blast and we

had a lot of classic clamshell [and] big box titles which are very collectible today. That was a great time indeed.

What was the inspiration to create *Death by VHS*? Did the current resurgence of interest in the format have a hand in it?

Yes... the funny thing is we came up with the idea before we even knew or heard of the popular film *V/H/S*... so once I saw that, we knew we were on to something.



And it begins! Clickity-click the VCR feeding ritual to get a glimpse at the DEATH BY VHS trailer, mang!

The original title for this flick was *Scream Machine*. What made you change up the name?

Well, once we knew that VHS had made such a comeback in the genre, we decided *Death By VHS* was a more appropriate title. “Scream Machine” was the original title referring to the VCR....



A look at the Killer Santa from the flick. Santa's lookin' ROUGH this year. Too many cookies, man.

What's the film all about? Can you give us an idea of the vibe, some of the stories, etc.?

Basically it's about a tweaker couple who want to score the ultimate drug. They hear about a dealer who sells video tapes that are supposed to make you feel high. They end up realizing that they can't stop watching the tapes, and they gradually become sicker with every story ranging from She Freaks, Zombies, Re-animated bodies, a Killer Santa Claus, and vigilante Jesus. What they don't know is the tapes hold a curse. I don't want to give too much away, but if you love B-movies as much as I do, you'll love to die watching this movie.



The Vigilante Jesus is gonna reserve you a seat in the Ninth Circle of Hell. But, first, he's gonna explode your head.

I personally love anthologies, man. What are some of your favorites? Any influences from those anthologies of yore shine through in *Death by VHS*?

It's funny, I love those old Amicus and Hammer anthologies the best like [*Vault of Horror*](#), [*The House that Dripped Blood*](#), [*Asylum*](#), ect. Then, of course, the later stuff like [*Creepshow*](#). My films actually resemble more of the John Waters or Herschell Gordon Lewis category, though... [They] are two of my favorite directors. I'm also a huge [*Twilight Zone*](#) fan, but if you watch closely, I think the H.G Lewis influence shines through the most in my work. Some more recent great anthologies are [*Slices of Life*](#), [*Drive-in Horror Show*](#) and [*The Theater Bizarre*](#)... those were all pretty good, as well. Oh, and of course [*V/H/S*](#)... I loved the first one but the second one not so much.

I know this is getting a DVD release sometime... but are you planning on a VHS release? It only seems right!

Yes, the DVD comes out on Sept 17 of this year. I'm still working on trying to do a limited VHS run... if that happens it will be after the DVD release sometime. [ED NOTE: Man, I hope it does!!]

What is it about the VHS format that's so attractive to you? What do you really dig about the format?

I love the old art. The boxes were so cool to look at... I miss the days when renting movies was an American pastime. There were video stores on every corner in every town across the USA. It was a great time. Also, the fact the VHS were actually on tape and not digital was really cool, I have recently (re)started my own VHS collection. I just wish I had all the tapes I had in the 80's. I sold them to convert to DVD before I knew they would ever make a comeback. It was a huge mistake because I had it all at one time.



THIS is what happens when you don't rewind, kiddies!

What are your thoughts on the resurgence as a whole? Pros, cons, etc.?

I think it's great. I don't really see any cons... the only thing I can think of is always making sure there is a working VCR in the house. [Laughs]

What do think about the future of VHS fandom?

I think it will make an even bigger comeback like vinyl has and it will eventually spread through all genres. I love what I'm seeing... it takes me back to the old days.



Oh, man... that looks infected for sure. You might wanna change that dress. That thing's gonna pop any minute now...

What's next for you? More VHS-centric flicks?! Maybe a killer BETA flick?!

I've been making movies nonstop since 2005... I'm gonna take a little time off and plan something really cool, like a full-length feature. So far I've done four anthologies... I also plan on doing a box set, or a Scarlet Fry's greatest hits compilation. Or Death by Beta... now that could be a sequel?

Death by Beta? How about Death by Laserdisc?! Kinda reminds me of that scene in [I Come in Peace!](#) You can stay up with Scarlet and all his indie adventures on the *Death by VHS* Facebook page [RIGHT HERE](#). Give 'em a shout and tell 'em to c'mon and put this puppy on VHS!