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- > **Walk The Line** (2005/Fox Blu-ray)
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Isle Of The Snake People (1971) + The Velvet Vampire (1971/Cheezy Flicks DVDs)

Picture: C- Sound: C
Extras: C- Films: C-/C+

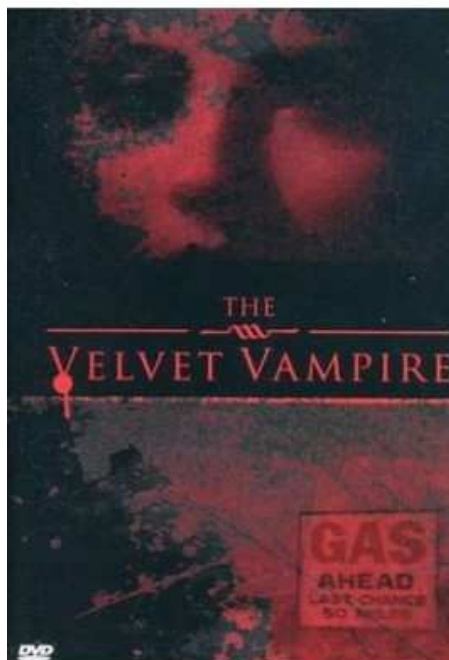
Two very different horror films made that arrived the same year show us the end of one era and the in-progress beginnings of the next. Writer/Director Jack Hill, who gave us the infamously bad **Spider Baby** in 1968, made one of the last of a few films Boris Karloff made as he was ill but still in need of money with **Isle Of The Snake People** (1971), a goofy Voodoo-meets-LSD flick co-directed by Juan Ibanez that takes place on an island of some kind. It is bad and has been issued on DVD before.

Not so good, it is a dated old-style Horror film trying to add a new element to no avail. On the other hand, Stephanie Rothman's **The Velvet Vampire** (1971) may not be a masterwork of the genre, but handles the sexuality aspects in unusual ways and ones that speak of a mature female prospectus missing from the many films in the genre. It pays particular attention to the married couple (Michael Blodgett and Sherry Miles) in a way most coupes in this genre did not. They are happy together, a loving couple (the nude scenes are not just a joke) and the screenplay by Rothman, Maurice Jules (**Scream Blacula Scream**) and husband Charles S. Swartz (**Terminal Island**) is one of the first instances in the genre to accomplish this.

So when the title predator (Celeste Yarnall) shows up to challenge their union spiritually, sexually and physically, the results have more impact, are not the through-police lesbianism of Hammer Studios and other low-budget companies and result in unique juxtapositions you rarely see in the genre today. I also liked the editing style, the mood and some of the twists. Making the vampire an art gallery owner is also a nice touch.

Director of Photography Daniel Lacambre (later of **Lady In Red, Humanoids Of The Deep, Battle Beyond The Stars**) delivers an interesting mix of surreal and naturalistic cinematography. I would like to see this one restored.

The 1.33 X 1 image in both cases is soft and color poor, while the PCM 16/48 2.0 Mono is a little better than expected in clarity than most of the Cheezy Flicks releases we've encountered so far. Trailers and Intermission shorts are the only extras, though I could see a special



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edition of **Velvet Vampire** for there must be an interesting behind the scenes tale to tell.

- Nicholas Sheffo

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